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HIGHLY SKILLED INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF MIGRANT PAKISTANI PROFESSIONALS IN LONDON'S BIG FOUR ACCOUNTING FIRMS

(full name of student)   **AISHA RAHIM**

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Abstract

Current Migration Studies literature in Europe can broadly be divided into two major strands. First is dominated by studies on the East-West migration of working class or asylum seeking, postcolonial ethnic groups and problems associated with their subsequent integration/assimilation into the host society. The second, more recent, strand of migration research is that of highly skilled professional migrants, usually hypermobile white men moving across highly-developed countries (for example within the EU), or from developed to less developed countries.This thesis aims to fill a major gap in the existing migration studies literature by focussing on a group of highly skilled Pakistani professionals. Based on a combination of participant observation and in-depth interviews with thirteen Pakistani male accountants and their partners in London, this thesis will explore their personal and professional lives in detail. In particular, it aims to compare this group with a) other highly skilled migrants in Europe and b) working class Pakistani immigrants who have dominated the migration stream to the UK. In terms of their social background, this group is strikingly different to the latter due to its urban, middle class origins where all men and most women possess tertiary level degrees. They do not follow the typical migration channel of chain migration to the UK and do not tend to live in ethnic clusters as other Pakistani migrants. Marital status sets them apart from European migrants of similar professional background.

The thesis shows that experience of working in the one of the biggest accounting firms in the UK is overall positive for many participants but the overemphasis on social skills over technical expertise in the firm's appraisal system is a major problem since the centrality of drinking in after-work socialisation meant they could not fully participate in such bonding activities. This thesis also captures the life experiences of migrant spouses in terms of marriage, migration, children and "incorporation" into husband's work. Last, the thesis explores the future

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aspirations of the participants which mainly include a long term plan of acquiring British nationality as the means to a more lucrative job in the Middle-East. The Middle-East as a permanent destination was considered perfect due to its booming economy, proximity to Pakistan (still viewed as "homeland") and most importantly Islamic culture which was seen fundamental in upbringing of their children. However, some women were apprehensive of such a move due to the restrictions on women in some Middle-Eastern countries.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The current Migration Studies literature in Europe can broadly be divided into two major strands. The first is dominated by studies on the East-West migration of working class or asylum seeking, postcolonial ethnic groups and problems associated with their subsequent integration or life chances in the host society. The second strand of migration research is largely dominated by studies on highly skilled migrants, usually moving across developed countries (for example within the EU), or from developed countries to less-developed countries (expatriates). Compared to working class migrants, highly skilled workers are believed to add to the wealth of their destination countries by contributing their human capital and by spending a considerable amount of their earnings on consumption and housing (Pethe, 2007). Their social integration is not considered a problem as their "middle-class characteristics, and, for most, their colour and culture, render them socially invisible" (Salt and Koser, 1997: 288). Therefore, it is not surprising that the majority of the academic literature on the topic of highly skilled migration has ignored ethnic minority professional migration except in the context of discussions of the problems of a 'brain drain' for the 'sending' society. This study aims to fill a major gap in the existing migration studies literature by studying a group of highly skilled Pakistani professionals which, despite its significance, has been ignored by researchers in this field. Based on a combination of participant observation and in-depth interviews with thirteen Pakistani male accountants and their partners in London, this study will explore their personal and professional lives in detail. In particular, it aims to compare this group with working class Pakistani immigrants in terms of their social profile, migration experience, career trajectory, social networks, family life and social identity.

Based on a total of seven chapters, this study begins with a comprehensive review of the existing literature in the field of migration studies. It points towards a gap

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in this body of research in the form of highly skilled professionals originating from less developed countries like Pakistan and moving without restriction across the financial hubs of the world. It covers the long history of male labour migration from districts of Mirpur in North Punjab to British factories in Birmingham, Bradford and Lancashire. Studies on the first generation of these migrants are occupied with issues of low levels of integration exhibited by the men who seemed primarily concerned with maximizing their savings to remit back to their families in Pakistan. This low participation in the British society was seen as a consequence of the "myth of return" which essentially rendered the stay in Britain a short transit on the route back to Pakistan. The other major aspect under study was the era of "family reunification" where single men sponsored the migration of their wives and children to the UK. This gave rise to a whole new area of study which involved women in the domestic domain, particularly, the issue of marriage of their British bred children. The significance of Pakistan in the lives of Pakistani families continued despite their years in Britain predominantly due to the Muslim tradition of cousin marriages between children of siblings. This form of marriage ensures self-perpetuation as each newly arrived bride has an incentive to maintain contact with her kin back home. Consequently when her children reach marriageable age, she looks back to her family to bring yet another bride and fulfill the demands of family honour and maintain the process of migration.

This chapter will also acknowledge the recent changes in these patterns of marriage and issues of identity in the second or third generation British Pakistanis. These studies focus on the crisis of identity faced by young men and women who cannot reconcile the patriarchal culture of their parents with the literalist Islamic text they get bombarded with in the social media. The resulting gap in communication between mostly illiterate Pakistani parents gives rise to a heightened sense of Muslim identity which provides a sense of security and strength in a confusing world. In a post 9/11 world, Pakistanis have been subsumed under research on radicalization of Muslim youth. The second part of the literature review chapter deals with the other end of the spectrum of migration

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studies which is based on highly skilled migration. This type of migration, particularly, from less developed countries caught the attention of researchers in the sixties due to its perceived negative effect in the form of brain drain on the economy of sending country. Certain developments on the global scale during the nineties in the form of globalization, formation of regional blocs and increasing deregulation coupled with advancements in technology changed the scope and magnitude of skilled migration to an unprecedented level. Therefore, the focus of research also shifted towards understanding this new breed of highly mobile professionals moving back and forth across financial capitals of the world. These men exist in a world without borders where movement was a form of "being" but this notion was strongly challenged by Favell's (2008) study of European movers who were often young frustrated middle-class professionals who faced barriers to integration in a supposedly "denationalized" Europe.

The glaring lack of professional women in these studies due to their focus on male dominated sectors is another criticism leveled against this strand of migration studies. However, Fechter's (2007) study of Euro-American expatriate women in Jakarta is a breath of fresh air in this regard. My literature review deals with another prominent body of work relating to the issue of gender in skilled migration studies: expatriate or trailing wives. As accompanying spouses, these women endure disruption of their career and a corporate culture where they are expected to contribute emotionally and physically towards their husband's careers. The issue of ethnic minority professionals has received negligible attention in migration research except some attempts at establishing the stock and flow in the UK or some studies focusing on Indian doctors in the UK. The last section of the review covers highly skilled migration within the field of accountancy, studied extensively by Beaverstock (1996), as a result of intra-corporate transfers in the advent of massive global expansion of accounting firms in the recent years.

The "Methodology" chapter is an elaboration of the purpose, execution and result

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of the research process from start to end. It is written in a narrative form that includes details of thoughts and concerns faced by me as a researcher. The research method can be broadly divided into two phases; participant observation and in-depth interviews. For the first part of this process, selection of a research group was primarily driven by the ease of access to potential participants due to my personal position as wife of an immigrant Pakistani accountant. The research setting was, therefore, the natural setting of my informal daily interactions with a group of families with a similar background. The primary mode of research at this stage was note taking and participant observation with the consent of subjects. The aim was to identify potential research issues in the form of recurring themes and practices in order to explore them in greater detail later in the interviews.

Another important reason for adopting participant observation in the initial phase of research was to build networks within the Pakistani professional community in order to access participants for interviews. Over a span of six months, I had accumulated and analysed significant amount of material to form the basis of the next phase of research: interview schedule. There were separate schedules for the men and women in the study, but both versions included basic biographical information such as age, place of birth, parent's occupation, school etc. The men's experience of migration was intertwined with work, therefore, the interview schedule aimed to encourage them to talk about their motivations, feelings and experiences of pre-migration work, migration to the UK, current job, marriage and children, life in the UK, social networks, and future plans. From my close contact with the female participants, I knew what topics were of significance to them and tried to cover them in the interview schedule. It included areas such as the experience of marriage, feelings about moving to the UK, career aspirations, managing family, keeping contact with relatives back home, and social networks. Interviews were conducted in a very informal and open manner and tape recorded with the participants consent. They were later transcribed, coded and analysed for the purposes of the study. The last section of the methodology chapter discusses in detail the issue of reflexivity in qualitative research which involves laying bare

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all the personal, cultural, institutional or political affiliations of a researcher in order to put the research in context. With the help of anecdotal evidence I attempt to provide a very personal account of my awareness of my position as a middle class, educated, migrant Pakistani woman in the context of the research process.

The chapter titled "Social profile" is an attempt to give a human face to the statistics that make up the stocks and flows of migrants in migration studies. At the outset, it is very clear that the group under study is vastly different from the majority of Pakistanis that form the core of the British Asian community. The foremost difference is the area of origin/sending region which due to historical and political reasons happens to be the village of Mirpur in Northern Punjab for most Pakistanis in Britain. Despite the recent influx of remittances, Mirpur remains one of the least developed and neglected regions of Pakistan which presents a sharp contrast to the large urban metropolises of Karachi and Lahore. Almost all the participants in my study hailed from one of these two enormous cities with the only exception of two men who were brought up in Quetta which is again the capital city of Baluchistan province. This difference is crucial as it bears significant repercussions on all other markers of social profile of the participants.

The next major distinguishing factor of these participants is their high level of education which is not only reflected in their professional skill set but also their proficiency in English language. As explained in detail in the chapter, colonial legacy in the Pakistani education system has led to a harsh divide between English and Urdu medium schools which form the foundation of huge income disparity in the society. In terms of class, participants were clearly from a middle-class professional background with some from business background as well but any discussion on class in Pakistan would be incomplete without the mention of caste. Majority of participants belonged to the "Memon" caste which has historically been called the "commercial caste" as members tend to be involved in business or financial sectors of the economy. The discussion of their social profile separates this group from other Pakistani migrants as well as the white

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professional migrant population as analysed by Favell (2007, 2008). Apart from the obvious distinction in terms of race and background, a prominent difference is also the marital status of migrants. In the case of Pakistani professional migrants, almost all of them were married with children whereas European migrants tended to be single despite being in the same age bracket. This reflects a particular cultural attitude towards marriage and family life. The participants in this study earned their professional accountancy degrees and work experience in Pakistan. The chapter brings forth their opinions about both aspects which is a mix of pride, prestige and disappointment. There was an extremely positive attitude towards their degree which was considered a very significant achievement in their life but the work experience was the complete opposite. Men described the work environment in Pakistan as hostile and authoritarian with no respect for the individual person. As trainee accountants they particularly felt the pinch and felt disillusioned about the high ideals with which they were imparted during their education.

The next chapter is a continuation of the journey of the participants and the next significant phase of their life: *Migration*. It begins with an analysis of the reasons at both macro and micro level which led to the decision to migrate in participants. The improvement in the health of the UK economy leading to a surge in job opportunities particularly in the skilled sector coupled with lenient legislation created a unique opportunity for men to migrate to the UK. At home, the push factor was the ever deteriorating security situation in Pakistan along with rampant corruption, lack of economic opportunities and justice giving rise to tremendous frustration in young men who see a move abroad as the only hope for their future. Perhaps the most important factor in this equation was the change in the global accountancy industry where, due to a change in EU legislation, all companies were forced to follow international standards of accountancy (IFRS) rather than national standards. This created a sudden dearth of accountants conversant in IFRS and the fact that Pakistani accountants were trained in IFRS meant the perfect window of opportunity for a move.

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At a personal level, international experience for any young Pakistani accountant held great lure as it presented enormous learning opportunity. London held a special attraction as the financial capital of the world for all participants. However, UK was not the first destination for many accountants who had migrated to the Middle East after their qualification with an intention of using their experience there as a launching pad to move to London. The migration route/channel utilised by all participants was the opposite of the chain-migration pattern followed by traditional Pakistani migrants to the UK. All participants followed the western corporate model of online recruitment process followed by a firm-sponsored visa. However, after the smooth visa process and actual physical relocation to the UK, participants did not find adequate support from their firms in the process of early settlement. They had to rely on personal networks or in most cases online resources to secure housing for themselves. Housing choices made by these migrants are again in contrast to their ethnic group who prefer living in areas concentrated with other Pakistanis, whereas, the primary factor considered by participants was commute to work.

The most significant aspect of work related migration is of course the work experience in the new setting which is the focus of the next chapter titled "Work in the UK". It begins with a brief introduction to the evolution of the "Big Four" accounting firms in the world which employed all the participants at the time of interviews. It covers one of the most prominent literatures by Anderson-Gough et al. (1998) conducted on the development of a professional identity amongst young trainee accountants in Big Four firms in the UK. The sample population in my study is different as participants were not "home grown" accountants and have previous work experience abroad. Therefore, most of the discussion revolves around comparison between the work environment in the Middle-East and the UK where the latter was invariably assessed in positive light for providing an open, non-hierarchical work culture. In terms of the nature of work itself, participants attached great importance to the social side or client service in their job rather

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than public service. The primacy of the client meant primacy of commercialism in accountancy where pressures of making a profit forced many managers to under-report actual number of hours put into work. The chapter also deals with the issue of appraisal criteria at length as all participants seemed preoccupied with getting a promotion in their current job.

The appraisal process is thorough at the surface with a combination of assessment of technical knowledge and client service. However, in reality the participants admitted that the process was not as objective as it claimed and involved a significant degree of personal judgement of seniors. The element of personal liking/disliking necessitated maintaining a good relationship with co-workers which proved particularly challenging for Pakistani migrants due to their lack of involvement in social activities. The most important opportunity to create social networks at work came in the form of after-work drinking sessions at pubs. The centrality of the "pub culture" presented a deep conflict with the strongly held Muslim beliefs of all the men in the study. There were degrees of flexibility across participants on this issue as some completely avoided any situation involving drinks while others attended them but avoided the actual act of consuming alcohol. In either situation, they faced considerable stress of "not fitting in" as they also struggled to find common ground with their British colleagues whose interests were very different to their own. For all married participants, after work socialization was particularly hard to manage as it came at the cost of precious family time. These barriers to socialization had negative repercussions on the careers of men in question as they believed it portrayed them as unsociable. It denied them the opportunity to build networks and form positive impressions on their seniors. As a result, participants alluded to a "glass ceiling" like effect in the firms where they were not overtly discriminated against but systematically kept out of the echelons of high power. This was substantiated by the glaring lack of Asian or coloured people in top positions in the firm. As a coping mechanism, participants tended to engage in co-ethnic socialization after work. Some also believed that they could build their career elsewhere after

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acquiring valuable work experience in a city such as London.

So far we have only looked at the experiences of male participants in the study which form the backbone of the analysis presented here but this research also encompasses the life stories of wives who migrate due to their husbands work. The chapter titled "Family life" begins with an overview of the literature on "family formation" amongst early Pakistani migrants and the subsequent focus on the phenomenon of transnational cousin marriages in second generation British Pakistanis. These studies failed to capture the experience of skilled professional migrants who do not face the same issues as rural migrants. The other strand of literature that offers an analysis on the "trailing wife" of professional migrants is biased towards the experiences of white expatriates working in less developed countries. The biographical profile of the Pakistani wives in this study is very similar to that of men in terms of their middle- class, urban family background and higher education. However, these women did not possess the same work experience as men as they faced resistance by parents who deemed full time work to be inappropriate for young girls. In fact, they were expected to settle down after marriage which is why the chapter concentrates on their experience of the process of marriage.

This chapter draws attention to a new phenomenon of "love marriage" as opposed to the traditional arranged marriage in the upper middle-class families in Pakistan. This type of marriage not only involves the consent of the bride and groom but also a relationship prior to marriage between the couple which is then rubber stamped by parents to give it semblance of an arranged affair. All participants fell somewhere on the spectrum encompassing the extreme case of elopement and strictly arranged marriage. Another change in the process of marriage amongst urban Pakistani women has been a change in the attitude towards the role of in-laws in the marital life. All women were against the idea of living in a joint family structure after marriage and a move abroad was therefore seen as a welcome step in this regard. Women displayed very dissimilar motivations to migrate than men,

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who were primarily concerned about their career, as they viewed migration as an opportunity to assert their independence vis-à-vis in-laws. Migration in terms of physical relocation was very smooth for all women and the settlement phase was not particularly hard due to their familiarity with English language and to some extent English culture. For women who wished to pursue a career, the next logical step was to find a job but it proved challenging in the recessionary environment gripping UK at the time. So only few women managed to find work while the rest settled down to have a baby. They all enjoyed a social life that primarily revolved around their husband's Pakistani friends from work. However, the social activities were not as benign as they seemed on the surface as they were organised with a very political motive of enhancing their husband's reputation in the firm. This was not a consciously planned or acted out affair but there was a tacit understanding that the role of the women in the socialization process was in many ways to boost her husband's standing in the firm.

The last chapter titled "Future Aspirations" is an attempt to look into the future plans, ambitions and concerns of the men and women involved in this study. Invariably, men approached the "future" question in terms of career and expressed apprehensions about climbing up the corporate ladder in the UK due to reasons discussed in detail in an earlier chapter. The other major issue raised by many men was the financial strain of living in London due to its high cost of living on top of the regressive tax system of Britain which penalized the wealthy. The health of the UK economy was yet another concern at the time of interviews and the increasingly negative attitude of the government towards immigrants was very disturbing for all men. In comparison, the Middle-East with its zero tax policy and demand for skilled professionals seemed like an attractive prospect. However, the crucial determinant of the men's decision to migrate was the acquisition of British nationality as they were aware of the differential pay scales in the Middle East based on a hierarchy of nationalities. Thus, a British passport is viewed as another tick on their CVs which ensured higher rewards in the future. The other major motivation for relocating to the Middle East was the belief that it would provide

the perfect Islamic environment for their children to grow up in instead of the western culture of Britain. Many men brought attention to the case of British-born Pakistanis who, in their opinion, had "lost it" and had taken either the extreme route to religious fanaticism or the opposite world of crime and drugs. However, the women were not concerned about these issues as they firmly believed that they could instill a strong sense of morality in their children with the right training at home in the UK. While men lamented the lack of joint family system in passing on the cultural values to their children, women viewed the role of the extended family as mainly interfering. They preferred living abroad as it gave them greater control over decisions regarding the upbringing of their children. Therefore, most women were vehemently opposed to the idea of returning back to Pakistan permanently but it must be mentioned that working women mentioned the absence of support available in a nuclear family system. Pakistan was not the destination of choice even for the men due to their disillusionment with the current political and economic situation of the country which was described by some as "unlivable". Cities such as Dubai or Doha, on the other hand, were seen as a blend of modernity and Islamic culture as well as being geographically close to "home". While these positive aspects along with the prospect of a luxurious standard of living were appreciated by women, they had strong reservations about the freedom of women in the Middle East. The restriction on driving in countries like Saudi Arabia and the general lack of recreational opportunities seemed worse than Pakistan in many respects.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

The current migration studies literature in Europe can broadly be divided into two major strands. The first is dominated by studies on the East-West migration of working class, asylum seeking, postcolonial ethnic groups and problems associated with their subsequent integration/assimilation into the host society. The second strand of migration research is that of highly skilled professional migrants, usually migrants moving across highly-developed countries (for example within the EU), or from highly developed countries to less-developed countries. A vast proportion of the research on Pakistani immigration to the UK falls into the first category of migration research. However, the focus of this study is Pakistani migrants who do not fit into any of the available research groups due to their professional status and ethnic origin. First we will examine in detail the literature covering the long history of Pakistani migration to the UK and then we will turn our attention to more recent literature on skilled migration in the global professional market.

Pakistani Migration to Britain

According to the UK 2011 Census, Pakistanis constitute the second largest ethnic group in the UK after Indians with a total population of 1,125,000. This population is dispersed throughout the country, with the highest proportions in the West Midlands, followed by Yorkshire and Humberside but the most diverse population of Pakistanis (meaning Pushto, Punjabi, and Sindhi) lives in London. While the majority of Pakistanis are Sunni Muslim, there are different strands within Sunni Islam, such as Deobandi and Barelwi, both of which are present amongst Pakistanis in the UK (Robinson, 1988). Despite the lack of precise statistics, it can be safely assumed that the majority (well over half) of Pakistani migrant population hails from Mirpur district in (Azad) Kashmir (Shaw, 2001). Mirpur is an under-developed area with the majority of its population engaged in small-scale farming, artisan or craft-work (Ballard, 1983).

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Some of the pioneering works on the phenomenon of Pakistani migration to and settlement in Britain were carried out by Dahya (1973), Khan (1975, 1976), Ballard (1982, 1983), and Anwar (1979) who studied the migration pattern of pioneering single, male settlers to Britain from rural Pakistan (particularly Mirpur) during the 1950s and 60s. They cite economic pull factors and lack of opportunity in Pakistan as the major determinants of the decision to migrate to Britain. This decision was not motivated by "individual" interest, but a desire to uplift the entire family, where resources to fund migration often came from family savings (Dahya, 1973). Ballard (1982) traces the history of migration from Mirpur in detail and describes how under the British rule in 1870s Mirpuri ex-seamen were able to grab the opportunity to work as stokers on British steam ships and thus pioneer migration to Britain. Later in the 1950s and 60s, men sought unskilled work in the still growing textile sector of the British industry thereby leading to a process of chain migration. Another reason for the large scale migration from Mirpur during this phase was the construction of the *Mangla* Dam which displaced thousands of villagers. The government reimbursed these people by granting vouchers facilitating their migration to Britain (Ballard, 1994). As a result of this chain migration, Ballard (2003: 36) explains:

> Transnational activity began to grow exponentially. As soon as each new arrival had established himself, he would promptly set about assisting his own kinsfolk to join him. Having thereby constructed a whole series of conveyor belts which led straight to the heart of Britain's industrial cities.

Shaw (1994) also highlights the crucial role of kinship/ *biraderi*[1] networks in the dynamics of chain migration and subsequently in finding employment and accommodation in Britain. This process led to clusters of Pakistani population from the same village of origin, or family, in areas such as Bradford, Birmingham and Lancashire. The preference amongst the migrants to live with their own kin

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[1]   *Biraderi* is an Urdu word which translates into extended clan

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group served as a means of mutual assistance, social control and information (Dahya, 1973). Lack of knowledge of English language and customs also meant that new migrants were dependent upon their fellow more experienced migrants in dealing with the British society (Shaw, 2000). Most importantly, Dahya (1973) argues that these early settlers considered themselves transient migrants whose primary purpose was to save and remit the maximum amount of money back which was then invested by the family's head in Pakistan for acquiring capital goods or arranging marriages.

The idea of the "myth of return", identified by Dahya (1973), was solidified by Anwar (1979) in his extensive research on the first generation of Pakistani migrants in Manchester. He argued that Pakistanis are in Britain to save, invest and eventually return to their villages back home and therefore show a resistance to change and non-participation on an individual level in British institutions (1979: 9). For example, these migrants did not organise any opposition to exploitation and racism in Britain or engage in trade unions like some other migrants because they believed their suffering was only temporary (Bolognani, 2007). Their "real life" or point of reference was their village back home rather than Britain which resulted in limited interaction with the wider society, or what is referred to as "social encapsulation" (Robinson, 1981). The accompanying social stresses experienced by Pakistani migrants arose, then, from three main factors: traditional culture and interaction with village back home, migration process, and settlement in an alien society (Saifullah Khan, 1979: 38).

 The myth of return and social encapsulation of Pakistanis in Britain also led to spatial encapsulation whereby Pakistanis clustered in rented, inner city dwellings. For example, Rex and Moore's (1967) classic study of racial discrimination in the housing market in an inner area of Birmingham showed that immigrant Pakistanis only had access to very poor quality housing in overcrowded areas. However, Dahya (1974) criticized this study for its failure to consider the views and opinions of Pakistanis themselves. Unlike the white working class, they did not

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place the same value on "good housing" and in fact found cheap inner city housing compatible with their aim to accumulate wealth and eventually to return to Pakistan. Similarly, Jeffery (1976) studied the differential attitudes towards assimilation amongst Muslim and Christian Pakistanis in Bristol. She observed that, unlike Christian families, Muslims showed resistance towards assimilation by maintaining their cultural and economic ties with Pakistan in the hope of returning to their homeland. In order to understand the differential level of social integration reached by Sikh Jullundaris and Mirpuri Pakistanis, Ballard (1983) compared marriage rules of these two groups. He concluded that the Muslim practice of close-kin marriage eliminates the distinction between affines and consanguines and leads to tightly knit kinship networks rather than cross-cultural weak ties.

Although most of the early settlers began as factory workers, there was soon a move towards self-employment in ethnic business niches. Anwar (1979: 126) identifies this attraction towards self-employment in terms of independence, respect and freedom from discrimination at the workplace. Anwar (1979) and later Werbner (2004) have highlighted the role of kinship and friendship networks amongst Pakistani migrants in raising start-up capital for businesses such as ethnic grocery stores, halal food, restaurants, ethnic garments and transport (see Kalra, 2000). Due to the reluctance of British banks to lend to Pakistanis, people relied on "institutionalised system of long-term, interest-free loans between fellow migrants, money saved (often by wives) in rotating credit associations known as *kommitti*, and, in the food and clothing industries, by credit extended to new retailers by established South Asian wholesalers" (Werbner, 2004: 480). Shops and restaurants had a particularly "Pakistani" dimension to them as they displayed signs in Urdu, put up pictures of holy shrines and Pakistani national heroes, sold Pakistani newspapers and spread information about job opportunities (Anwar, 1979). Despite the success stories of Pakistani businesses (such as the Joe Bloggs jeans label), one factor which relatively retarded business growth in the Pakistani community as compared to other South Asians was the significant investment of

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personal capital back in Pakistan (Werbner, 2004). Most of the early settlers had bought property in their villages, mainly for personal purposes rather than business, which decreased the pool of savings available to spend in Britain.

While many studies have attempted to touch upon the close-knit nature of early Pakistani community, few have looked at the stratification within this group. Dahya (1974) mentions the political influence yielded by big entrepreneurs and religious personalities sitting on the "Mosque Committee" in mobilising public opinion. Saifullah Khan (1977) is also one of the first researchers to point towards this "urban middle-class" leadership which does not have grass root following but is able to interact with the British authorities. She also mentions (1979) the migration pattern of the small urban-educated migrants who were less dependent upon chain migration and more integrative in their social behaviour. However, it is Werbner (1980) who provides a nuanced account of the diversity within the Pakistani community in Manchester in terms of class, caste and power structures. She points towards the presence of a large middle-class population consisting of urban educated professionals.

Family Reunification and the Lives of Women

The most important feature of the early phase of migration was that men left behind their wives and it was as late as 1960s and 70s that they reunited with their families in Britain. However, Shaw (2000) raises an interesting point by asking why men would want to reunite at all if they considered their life in the UK temporary? She seeks an explanation in terms of political and social factors amongst which the impact of 1962 Immigration Act is significant. As it became difficult for adult men to migrate due to immigration control, there was an incentive to bring over wives along with cousins or brothers posing as sons. Moreover, as the news of wayward moral behaviour of some Pakistani men in Britain spread to their villages there seemed to be an urgent need for a form of social control in the shape of wives (Shaw, 2000). Robinson (1981) adds that with

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the extension of social networks of Asian men in Britain, men required services of women to make hospitality arrangements in order to maintain status and honour within the Asian community.

The arrival of women and children obviously led to a move towards single-family dwelling often in terraced housing near the city centre (Robinson, 1981). Family reunification has also been associated with the growth of Muslim organisations such as mosques, *madrassas* and a "raised awareness of the need for a variety of forms of communal religious education of the young, formal associations for local and national coordination with regard to funding, and liaison with government authorities to lobby for religious accommodations and safeguard collective rights" (Vertovec, 2002: 21). Does this mean that family reunification weakened the previous ties with kin back home and gave way to a more inclusive approach towards the British society? Many authors argue that the strength of kinship obligations was far more durable, for example, Jeffery (1976) shows that with the arrival of sons, men had to rely on other family members to look after their investments in Pakistan. Saifullah Khan (1979) also notes that the women acted as a force strengthening the social ties with back home. Ballard (2001) presents a more detailed understanding of the dynamics of transnational kinship networks in the context of marriage amongst Mirpuris in Britain. He argues that the late arrival of Mirpuri families as compared to other South Asian groups meant that by the time the children reached Britain they were approaching marriageable age. Due to the strong preference for close-kin marriage and a desire to fulfill their obligations towards their kin, parents arranged marriages of their children with cousins in Pakistan. This ensured the maintenance of strong ties with the families back home and a continued process of chain migration through marriage.

One of the earliest works on the domestic sphere of Pakistani migrants after family reunion was conducted by Zaynab Dahya (1965) in Bradford. She identified the problem of social isolation experienced by these women as a result of migration. In Pakistan's extended family living arrangement, *purdah* or

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segregation of male and female domains confines women but never isolates them as they can interact with other women in the extended family. However, Dahya (1965: 320) argues that the practice of *purdah* in a British-style nuclear family pattern not only secluded Pakistani women but isolated them from other women in a similar situation. Saifullah Khan (1979) has presented a detailed discussion of the everyday lived experience of migrant Asian migrant women, including their rural background, living conditions in Britain and daily activities of these women. She shows that all first-generation Asian women came as dependents, legally and actually, upon their husbands. They were faced with limited educational opportunities, pressure to conform and loyalty to kin back home. These women experienced problems of adjustment due to the change in climate, in-door life style, and lack of social networks. However, she also notes that some women viewed their new situation positively and often appreciated their freedom from in-laws. Saifullah Khan (1979) points to the diversity within the South Asian population by showing the existence of a number of Indian women who work and learn English. She picks up this theme of female employment in her work titled "Work and Network" (1979). She argues that unlike Indian women, Pakistani women had to face stronger cultural restrictions on working outside and therefore often sought homework. While homework provides the flexibility in hours and security of family honour, it rarely gives the opportunity to these women to develop their social skills.

Social networks of first generation of Pakistani immigrant settlers in the UK were along the lines of kinship and extra-familial relationships known as *biraderi* which were essential in providing financial and emotional support (Anwar, 1985). Werbner (1990) also recognizes the importance of *biraderi* networks in the social and economic existence of Pakistanis in Britain but she also draws attention to friendship ties which originate from work and neighbourhood relationships. Werbner (1988) explains how these relationships are articulated in a system of ceremonial gift exchange or *lena dena* (taking and giving) where women play a

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central role. Here, women are seen as active and influential in initiating, maintaining and extending social networks which often includes the men. They save money by taking part in credit rotating associations known as *kommitis* with other Pakistani women in Manchester. Werbner (1988) views *lena dena*, *Kommitis* and other female centered rituals such as Koran reading as an attempt by migrant women to regain their agency in the role of a "transactor" (Werbner, 1988). However, two factors make women in Werbner's study powerful: a) they are working women with an independent income which can be invested in the gift exchange system and b) they live in a central cluster with many other Pakistani families. They were also relatively established in terms of time spent in the UK. Mirpuri women in Saifullah Khan's study do not display these features and therefore show signs of seclusion and isolation.

Second Generation and Beyond

Despite the ambiguity in the definition of the term, I will refer to the children of foreign born migrants as second generation. Inter-generational social mobility is an issue that emerges in the literature on the second or third generations of Pakistanis in Britain. After the ethnic question was introduced in the 1991 census, many researchers could study the same questions as Roger Ballard (1999: 3): How are they faring? How far have the older generation of settlers – many of whom were now reaching retirement age – managed to overcome the sub-proletarian status to which they were initially assigned? And yet more pertinently still, have members of the locally-born second and third generation been any more successful – given their much greater familiarity with English ways – in overcoming the obstacles of exclusionism than were their parents and grandparents? Modood et al.'s (1997) landmark report "*Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Disadvantage and Diversity* showed the extent to which these groups had progressed in terms of education, employment, income, health, housing and discrimination. Regarding Pakistanis, the study revealed that along with Bangladeshis they consistently occupied the most disadvantaged position.

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Each of the themes identified by the report has been picked up by researchers trying to understand this differential achievement of Pakistanis. Education has received a lot of attention as it is seen as one of the important means of attaining upward mobility. Common explanations for the underperformance of Pakistanis in education were offered in terms of social class along with racism in general and teacher's discrimination against certain minority groups in particular (See Modood, 2004). Abbas (2000) argues that these factors are not sufficient and by comparing Pakistanis with other South Asian groups suggests that religious and cultural factors also play an important role. Modood (2004) adds the dimension of social capital, or what he calls the "ethnic capital", to explain why some South Asian groups despite their low class status and disadvantage are more likely to enter and pursue higher education than their white peers. Gender is an important theme within the literature on participation and performance of Pakistani girls in school, cultural attitudes towards education and career aspirations (Shain, 2003: Ahmad, 2001: Basit, 1997: Afshar, 1989: Tyrer and Ahmad, 2006: Abbas, 2003). These studies have consistently found that South Asian Muslim parents greatly value education of girls but show particular concerns in relation to religion and culture. However, these studies do not support the stereotypical image of an oppressed young Muslim girl but point out strategies that give them agency to maximise their benefits and work around these constraints. Low labour force participation and barriers to economic activity of South Asian women have also been studied by many authors (Joshi et al. 1996: Holdsworth and Dale, 1997: Dale et al., 2002: Lindley et al., 2004: Salway, 2007) in relation to life stage and educational qualification factors.

I have noted that transcontinental links with their families back home played an instrumental role in the lives of early migrants. Therefore, researchers have tried to understand if these links have persisted in the second generation or their strength subsides with time. They have identified the continued preference for

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arranged close-kin transnational marriage as a result of (i) pressure of cultural obligations towards kin on parents in Britain, (ii) enhancement of social status by fulfilment of these obligations (iii) means of ensuring migration of a relative (Shaw, 2001). Apart from these strategic motivations, Charsley (2005) cites emotional considerations by parents who see marriages with kin as a protection against the natural vulnerabilities associated with a daughter's marriage and a way to bridge the distance with their distant siblings. Shaw (2009: 108)) supports this view and argues that from both parents and young adult's perspective "marriages involving close and trusted kin are thought to minimise the risks of deception and marital insecurity that are perceived to be greater with marriages arranged outside the family". It is also worth noting that despite the seeming incompatibility between British raised Pakistanis and their cousins back home, global communication and travel has reduced the social distance between the two (Shaw, 2009). Charsley (2005) in a very influential study has drawn attention to the rising phenomenon of male marriage migration and the associated transformation of traditional gender roles in a marriage. Other issues regarding Muslim practice of close-kin marriage have been debated publicly, for example, the genetic risk associated with such marriages (Shaw, 2009) and concerns about forced arranged marriages, highlighted by cases of so-called 'honour' killings in the British Pakistani community (Samad and Eade, 2003). However, Fauzia Ahmad (2006) questions the way British Asian families are represented in popular media in relation to their marriage practices. She argues that arranged marriages are often seen as oppressive patriarchal practices and as a result British Asian have been "pathologised" and problematised in public.

Until the 1984 "Rushdie affair", Muslims in general were considered a law-abiding minority and the only disputes Pakistanis seemed to be engaged in were concerned with factions within the local mosques (Werbner, 2004). However, the global mobilization of Muslims following the Rushdie affair and subsequent events such as Gulf war and, most importantly 9/11, "Islam has become a flag of political dissent" (ibid. 476). In this context, what we witness is an ascendance of

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Islam as an identity for young British Muslims and a shift of research focus towards the issue of identity politics. While most people view this increasing assertiveness amongst Muslims as antagonistic to integration, it can be argued that political mobilization is a primary way of integrating Muslims into the British society. Explanations for the move towards religious identity vary, for example, Mirza (2007) argues that young Muslims in Britain turn to Islam as a reaction to the current political and social environment in West rather than allegiance to *imams* (religious leaders) back home. Reeves et al. (2009) place this phenomenon in the context of heightening Islamophobia but add that the economic and social deprivation prevalent amongst most Pakistanis in Britain further alienates this population and feeds radicalism. "Islamophobia" has indeed become the most significant, recognised form of racial discrimination against Muslims today after the Runneymede Trust's Commission on Islamophobia report (1997). In contrast to the structural arguments, culturalist explanations often highlight the conflict that many young British Muslims face in negotiating between the two contrasting worlds of home and outside.

Samad (2004) identifies a language gap or a "language loss" in Pakistani youth as their parents communicate in Punjabi or a regional language which children don't speak very fluently. Moreover, the majority of the British born children can only read and write in English whereas their parents, if literate, use Urdu. They are more likely to access religious knowledge through modernist interpretations of Islam in books rather than from their parents. Thus, the "oral traditions, customs and religious practices are, at best, only partially transmitted and this produces difference between generations in Islamic understanding and identity" (Samad, 2004: 17). As the South Asian linguistic and cultural traditions are lost, a rise in Islam as a primary identity amongst British Muslims takes their place.

Gender remains a topic of interest, particularly in the context of rising religious identity amongst second generation Muslims. Many scholars have tried to understand how young Muslim girls negotiate gender, religious, cultural and

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ethnic identity (Afshar, 1988: Basit, 1997). Claire Dwyer's (1997, 1999, 2000) work with South Asian Muslim women is significant in this regard as she shows how dress becomes a signifier or marker of identity but also a means through which they can negotiate their gender roles. She argues that by adopting a hybrid form of dressing which is both fashionable and in line with Islamic dress code, working class girls are able to challenge parental restrictions and re-work acceptable gender identities. For those who faced lesser parental control over dress, hybrid styles were a way to challenge their stereotypical image as a Muslim girl (Dwyer, 2000). Samad (2004: 20) also observed that for British Muslim girls from working class backgrounds, scriptural Islam becomes a shield against patriarchal norms and a means to argue for greater education and freedom. Others such as Mc Loughlin (1998) and Afshar (1994) also consider the liberating role of Islam for many Muslim women. The public and academic discourse still mostly remains focused on Muslim women's problems within a restricted domain of issues such as veiling, family, and marriage (Ahmad, 2006). However, Bolognani (2008) has concentrated on a previously untouched area of deviance amongst Pakistani women in Bradford. She notes that while there has been a moral panic regarding Pakistani men as potential terrorists, women have been largely perceived as unthreatening. Pakistani women who engage in deviant behaviour such as drugs suffer from a double stigma as they are carriers of family honour. Bolognani (2008) discusses the mainstream discourse which sees deviance as a result of stresses from Pakistani cultural practices such as veiling and marriage. On the other hand, the community's own discourse blames the corrupt western influence on deviant women. Both these discourses serve to deny women their own agency.

Middle-class Pakistanis?

There is no dearth of literature on migration of Pakistanis to the UK but the scope of research is restricted to only a handful of themes highlighted above. Most of the research assumes migrants from a rural, unskilled, uneducated background

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and thus runs the risk of glossing over the diversity within the Pakistani migratory stream. The issue of class in general, and problems of middle-class Pakistanis from urban backgrounds in particular, have been researched by very few academics. Earlier works include Werbner (1990) and recently Ramji's (2005) study of the intersection between ethnicity and class amongst professional second-generation Pakistanis. Ramji shows how these middle class professionals created a new space to challenge stereotypes and rationalise choices in education and careers. Dwyer et al. (2008) lend support to Ramji in their analysis of a 'middle-class masculinity' which was shaped by attitudes towards education and employment. Interestingly, Dwyer et al. note (2008: 125):

> It was made most explicit in the ways in which these young men positioned themselves in contrast to other young Muslim men they know. They emphasised their own outward looking, more liberal, less ethnically restricted outlook through an implicitly cerebral masculine identity that is contrasted to the narrow, territorial and more embodied masculinities of young working-class Muslim men.

In a similar vein, Cohen and Rustin (2008) have identified a "class evasion" effect amongst middle-class Pakistanis in London as they tend to geographically distance themselves from their co-ethnics of a lower class such that an inverse relationship between class and spatial concentration has developed. In the ethnic entrepreneurial sector, there is a growing tendency amongst minority groups (including Pakistanis) to move away from traditional sectors and into professional services such as accountancy (see Ram and Carter, 2003).

As noted in the discussion above, there is some scanty research evidence highlighting the divisions and diversity within the ethnic population of Pakistanis in Britain. However, this information is primarily based on the experiences of second generation British born Pakistanis. It ignores the stream of urban,

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educated, middle-class Pakistani migrants who come to the UK to work in professional services. This group is not only demographically and socially different from the mainstream Pakistani immigrant population but it also has a unique experience of labour market and society. If this group has not been captured in the volume of literature on Pakistani migration studies, it should have been addressed by the growing body of research on international "highly skilled migration".

Highly Skilled Migration: Definition and History

Far from having a unified definition, the term "highly skilled" is fraught with conceptual, definitional, and data problems (Salt, 1997). There is a divide on whether "highly skilled" people should be classified in terms of qualification, occupation or both. An attempt to harmonize the variety of definitions across countries resulted in the *OECD Canberra Manual on the Measurement of Human Resources Devoted to Science and Technology* 1995. According to these criteria, highly skilled means any person who has either "successfully completed education at the third level in an Science & Technology (S&T) field of study or if not formally qualified as above, is currently employed in a S&T occupation where the above qualifications are normally required" (OECD, 1995: 16). However, this definition is restrictive as it only applies to the field of science and technology. The most widely used definition of highly skilled is that of persons with a "tertiary" education, who have completed a formal two-year college degree or more. The issue of definition is directly linked to the purpose of study, for example, for studies which look into the flows and stocks of highly skilled people between countries it is crucial to have a uniform definition across countries. On the other hand, if a study focuses on a particular group of highly skilled professionals such as doctors or engineers, occupational classification would play an important role along with qualification. The present study falls within the latter category as it concentrates on a group of accountants. Therefore, it uses the term highly skilled interchangeably with that of professional workers.

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Large scale movement of skilled personnel from the developing countries to the developed world caught researchers attention in the 1960s due to its impact on the sending country's economic development (Pethe, 2007). This perceived adverse impact came to be popularly known as "brain drain". Explanations for this phenomenon consisted of ''push'' factors from countries of origin including economic desperation, political or religious persecution or population pressure and ''pull'' factors from destination countries such economic opportunities and/or political or religious freedom (Iredale, 2002). However, some researchers pointed out that skilled emigration was not a zero sum game for the developing countries as they benefited from remittances, return migration, transfer of technology and investment (Findlay and Lowell, 2001). Furthermore, in the 1980s researchers began to discover new complexities in the nature of highly skilled migration. It was clear that a pattern of "circular migration", temporary migration *between* industrialised countries in the North or to the south, was emerging (Pethe, 2007). Some scholars pointed out that in fact 'migration' may not be the most accurate term to describe this phenomenon, instead, "movement" or "mobility" should be used as "migration" has connotations of permanency or long-term stay, whereas the movement of many highly skilled persons tends to be intermittent and short-term (Salt and Koser, 1997). Second, with globalization, a growing number of international transfers within the internal labour market of transnational companies were observed.

The 1990s witnessed an array of changes on the world's political and economic horizon deriving from neo-liberal policies of de-regulation and increased globalization. This brought forth further developments in international migration studies. Firstly, there was an increased opening up of borders for highly skilled workers in response to skill shortages in many OECD countries (Pethe, 2007). Second, corporate structures changed with an increased emphasis on collaboration with other firms allowing more inter-firm mobility (Salt and Koser, 1997). Third, the revolution in electronic communication meant that people could contact

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prospective employers abroad with greater ease. Some of the latest changes in this field have occurred due to formation of regional blocs such as EU and NAFTA along with international agreements such as GATS and WTO. Free movement within these regions has led to an "internationalization of professions" (Iredale, 2001). Another emerging issue is the internationalization of higher education and its consequences for the migration of students, but literature in this regard remains limited (Salt and Koser, 1997).

Literature on Highly Skilled Migration

Salt and Koser (1997) conducted a review of the themes in the literature on highly skilled migration. They noted that most of the theoretical developments in the field have placed more emphasis on the demand side rather than the supply side. This has led to theories which highlight a pattern of movement determined less by the aspirations of individual migrants themselves and more by changing patterns of demand and the development of an organisational infrastructure within which migration takes place (ibid 289). Salt and Koser (1997) choose to divide the literature in terms of the unit of analysis in the studies on international highly skilled migration. First, "macro-level models" look at global economic conditions or national factors such as state of the economy that cause disparity in the demand and supply of highly skilled people. Second, "meso- level models" focus on the role of the state and multinational corporations (MNCs) in the management of the process of migration. Third, recently developed "micro-level models" which focus on the individual migrant's intentions and experiences of migration. Last, "multi-level modes" tend to integrate different range of scales. Mahroum (2000: 170) chooses to divide the literature on the migration and mobility of the highly skilled into two general categories. In the first are studies that trace the inwards and outwards flows of highly skilled people for various countries. The second category includes studies concentrating on particular professions within highly skilled categories, such as medical practitioners, bankers and scientists etc. or on particular nationalities. Within this group there are studies which look at the

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impact of emigration on sending countries and receiving countries. My main concern in this study falls within Salt and Koser's "micro level models" and Mahroums's second category of migration studies literature. I will thus look at studies which focus on the individual, international freely moving professionals and later explore the literature on the particular profession of accountancy.

Adrian Favell's (2006,2007,2008) work on the mobility of European professionals in the post-EU era of open borders is particularly relevant to this study. Unlike macro theories of a virtual space of flows and global networks by world cities theorists, such as Sassen (1996) and Taylor (2004), Favell (2006) gives a "human face to global mobility" through use of intimate oral history and participant observation methods. He, therefore, focuses on the choices, career trajectories, professional and personal issues faced by mobile Europeans in a foreign city (Favell, 2003). He dispels the myth of these international movers as highflying elites and presents them as "provincial, career frustrated "spiralists", who have gambled with dramatic spatial mobility in their education and career abroad to improve social mobility opportunities otherwise blocked at home" (Favell, 2007: 17). In "Eurostars and Eurocities" (2008), Favell questions the common perception of a "denationalized" Europe where freely moving, highly educated Europeans do not have to face the discrimination and integration barriers at work and in the domestic sphere. By taking case studies of three Eurocities, Amsterdam, London and Brussels, he reveals the persistence of barriers to integration and strong national identities amongst foreign residents. Kennedy (2004) in a study of social networks formation by mobile foreign architects and engineers working in London and Manchester also identifies a feeling of relative social exclusion from the host society. However, he points to the construction of what he calls a "post-national form of sociability" (2004: 176); a multinational, friendship circle amongst the foreign workers. These multinational networks were crucial in providing emotional support and access to important business information. Amongst other themes within the literature on transnational moving professionals is their construction of "home" (see Nowicka, 2007: Wiles, 2008)

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and how this collective imagination generates a strong sense of community identity amongst them.

International migration of the highly skilled is largely addressed as a male dominated phenomenon despite the presence of women both as labour migrants and through family migration. The presence of Irish nurses has been recognised since 1960s and skilled female migration is becoming increasingly important as more households need to rely on two incomes, women gain higher education and more independence (Kofman, 2000). Why is there still a gap in the literature on such female workers? According to Kofman (2000) the problem lies in researcher bias towards certain sectors of the economy such as financial services as opposed to feminized sectors like health and education. In Britain, the focus on intra-company transferees reflects the "neo-liberal agenda" of the government after 1980s. Furthermore, a "methodological individualism" prevails which assumes a single, freely moving male migrant disconnected from familial and other relationships (Kofman, 2000). Liversage's (2009) review of the limited literature on highly-skilled female migration points to the difficulties that these women have to contend with. Their relative lack of success as compared to their male counterparts can be attributed to four main factors: i) As opposed to the technical and managerial skills possessed by majority of men, most of women's skills are neither internationally transferable nor in high demand ii) the dependent entry route means difficulty in finding work and work restrictions due to lack of access to work permits iii) burden of care responsibilities in a new environment with high costs of childcare and iv) labour market discrimination against female workers. However, not all women suffer from these barriers as witnessed by the growing proportion (19% in 1979 to 43% in 2004) of professional migrants leaving Britain to work overseas being female (Coles and Fechter, 2007: 6).

In Fechter's (2007) study of female Euro-American expatriates in Jakarta, the women were more likely to be young, unmarried, single without children and the sectors they work in abroad are likely to reflect the division of labour at home.

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They had a strong sense of "having choices" but far from shattering traditional gender roles these girls wanted to get married and have a family life. The issue of "trailing wives" or the more politically correct term "accompanying spouses" is particularly highlighted in the literature on expatriate British or European workers in other parts of the world (mostly less developed). A major contribution in this regard has been "Gender and Family among Transnational Professionals" (2007) edited by Coles and Fechter. They pick on the changed nature of gender roles in the family when husband becomes lead migrant. Apart from disruption of career, women have to contend with an increasingly "macho work culture" where they are expected to contribute emotionally and physically towards their husband's careers (2007: 9). This concept of the wives' "incorporation" into the organisation, expatriate community or an economic system is the key theme which runs through all the chapters in the book. It tries to understand the extent of incorporation in different expatriate situations such as the military, a multinational, diplomatic service and development agencies.

Apart from gender, ethnicity is another important aspect of highly skilled migration which is rarely touched upon. There are studies on migrants from particular nationalities to the UK but few present a detailed discussion on the subject of ethnic identity. It seems like the question of ethnicity is only considered to be relevant in the context of conventional, low skilled migration from developing countries. Robinson and Carey (2000) show that the migration of Indian doctors to the UK appears to be economically driven but further investigation through qualitative methods shows that it is a cultural and social phenomenon also. Apart from the medical profession, the working lives of Indian men in the increasingly global hospitality sector in London have been investigated by Batnitzsky et al. (2008). There have been some attempts at estimating the stocks and flows of ethnic minority immigrants in the UK labour force from sources such as the census, international passenger survey and labour force

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survey[2]. However, little attention has been directed towards understanding the lives of those making up these statistics. Favell's work (2004) on the experiences of young French "freemovers" seeking an education or a career in London could be considered an exception but he does not exclusively focus on professional or highly skilled migrants. However, he traces migration, settlement and subsequent integration (or not) of these movers in very personalised accounts to show the micro procedures behind the macro phenomenon of global mobility. In a similar vein, migration of middle class, educated, mobile New Zealanders to London has been captured by Conradson and Latham (2005). The case of Irish nurses, as mentioned earlier, is another contribution to this literature (e.g. see Ryan, 2008).

Another dimension to the highly skilled migration phenomenon is migration or mobility within particular professions. We have already highlighted the case of the medical profession. Mahroum (2001: 18) tries to "unfold the dynamics of international flows of scientists to the UK", particularly, the push and pull factors of migration. My discussion on this topic would be incomplete without looking at the particular profession of accountancy. Beavorstock's (1991,1996,2007) detailed exploration of the recent trend of globalistation in large accountancy firms and the subsequent impact on the nature and demand for highly skilled migration in this sector is significant in this regard. He argues that professional services like accountancy depend entirely upon the knowledge and expertise of its staff and in a global context this means physical movement of staff to a particular client location (2007). In order to respond to this need, large multinational accountancy firms have produced what Beaverstock terms "flexible globalized labour markets" whereby professional staff are placed on secondments, transfers or exchange programs within the firm's international offices (1996: 321). This organisational structure is essential for the success of the firms as it checks skills shortages in newly opened subsidiaries and provides international experience and training to staff.

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[2]   See Home Office Control of Immigration Statistics (2006); Report of the United Kingdom SOPEMI Correspondent to the OECD (2007)

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Hanlon (1999) adds that it is also important for firms to "sell themselves" as world organisations to the increasingly globally oriented clients. He also analyses this heightened emphasis on an international career in accountancy from the perspective of a group of Irish accountants seem to adhere to a narrative of "core versus periphery" within professional migration. Their constant desire and ambition to pursue a career in one of the "progressive" sites such as London serves to reinforce an international hierarchy in accountancy. Thus, Hanlon concludes that "migration is as much about perception and conformity as it is about anything else. By going overseas one conforms to the narrative about these core regions and publicly indicates that one is ambitious and agrees with the perceived managerialist and capitalist values of the great economic and financial centres" (1999: 219).

While Beaverstock and Hanlon point to the phenomenon of highly skilled migration within accountancy, they fail to offer an analysis of the racial or ethnic dimension of this migration process. This is not to say that accountancy literature has turned a blind eye towards issues around ethnicity, race or gender in organisations (see Ramji 2007). Indeed, equal opportunities and diversity is large on the agenda of British accountancy as evidenced by the February 2009 cover of ICAEW's[3] Accountancy magazine. However, there is no research on these in the particular context of migration of accountants.

The case of Pakistani accountants, then, is particularly important because despite their significant numbers they are not represented in either of the two streams of migration research. They form part of a group which does not fit any of the existing categories as their education, urban background and migration pattern differentiates them from the images of traditional Pakistani migrants captured in the literature. At the same time, any similarities they exhibit with Favell's "Eurostars" (2008) are mediated by their ethnic, cultural and religious origin.

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[3] ICAEW stands for the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

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Therefore, my study aims to fill this gap in current migration studies and open a new area of research focusing on the issues of professional migrants from developing countries like Pakistan.

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Chapter 3: Methodology

In the initial phase of the research, my main methodological concern was to find an appropriate technique to discover and understand the living experiences of a hitherto unresearched social group. I did not begin with precisely formulated research questions or hypotheses as my aim was to understand the thought processes, values, beliefs and world views of participants in an open discussion. Therefore, the study was exploratory and descriptive in nature with an emphasis on context and personal experience. According to Creswell (1998), if the research topic needs in-depth exploration of participants in a natural setting and there is a lack of existing theories to explain behaviour then a strong rationale for adopting a qualitative approach exists. My personal experience of doing qualitative research in the past also drove my interest towards this mode of inquiry.

It is difficult to point out a single definition of qualitative research as its meaning changes across different disciplines and historical time periods (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). However, Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3) broadly define qualitative research as

> A situated activity which locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible…This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of meaning people bring to them

I could find a fit between my research aims and qualitative research framework, which I believe is a sufficient justification for its use. Many writers such as Marshall and Rossman (2006) propose critiquing quantitative methods as an effective strategy for justifying use of qualitative methodology but I agree with Barbour's (2007) argument that it is much better to emphasise the strengths of qualitative research rather than unnecessarily drawing a comparison with

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quantitative methods. Moreover, the former approach ignores the increasing blurring of boundaries between qualitative and quantitative research in the context of mixed methods (Crotty, 1998). Any discussion of methodology that preoccupies itself with the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative methods, Morgan and Smircich (1980:499) argue, "obscures the link between the assumptions that the researcher holds and the overall research effort, giving the illusion that it is the methods themselves, rather than the orientations of the human researcher, that generate particular forms of knowledge". The recognition of these orientations and assumptions of the researcher are crucial in any reflexive exercise. The concept of reflexivity and its relevance to my research will be dealt with in greater detail in later discussion.

Selecting and Accessing Participants

My interest in studying migrant Pakistani accountants stemmed from two main reasons, which purely for the sake of analysis I shall term, academic and personal. It is difficult and futile to establish which motivation is primary because I consider both an inseparable part of myself. The academic reasons, as discussed previously, derived from the desire to fill the gap in current academic literature on migration and ethnic studies. This research will be a pioneering study in my field which gives me a sense of excitement and achievement as a researcher. At a personal level, the reasons for the choice of research group can be primarily linked to my own identification with it. As a Pakistani migrant professional married to a Pakistani accountant it is not surprising that I found this particular group interesting and, I must admit, accessible. The dilemmas, conflicts, ethical and methodological concerns arising from my "insider" status will be discussed later in the section on reflexivity.

After broadly identifying the research group, the next step was to establish contact with the individual participants. Decisions about access, sample size or sampling in general are directly related to the mode of inquiry or the research approach

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employed in the study. So for example, as Patton (2002) shows, quantitative methods rely chiefly on random sampling which ensures statistical representativeness and eliminates biases. However, these same biases become the very basis of purposeful sampling in qualitative research. Purposeful sampling focuses on selecting a small number of "information rich" cases which provide deep insights into the area of interest rather than achieving formally generalisable results (Patton, 2002). In light of these major differences in meaning and implementation, Maxwell (2005) argues that the term "sampling" is inappropriate for qualitative research as it implies representation of the population sampled. Therefore, drawing on Williams (2003) analysis, I prefer the use of the term "selecting" since it does not make any claims of generalisability. "Selecting" is particularly applicable to interpretive research (of a relativist variety) which is mainly concerned with micro-level interactions in a range of contexts and makes any attempt to generalise impossible (Williams 2003). Since my research falls within this category, I decided to use purposive selection, but this choice was further complicated by two factors. First, there is wide variety of selection methods, from extreme-case sampling to theoretical sampling, under the umbrella term "purposive sampling" as described by Patton (2002). Second, decisions regarding selection of participants or a research setting must keep in view the researcher's relationship to both. Reimer (1977: 467) proposes 'opportunistic research' whereby researcher's unique biography, at-hand knowledge and familiarity with a particular subject gives rise to an opportunity to study a setting he/she is already a part of. In this case, the question of selection or sampling does not arise in the same way as in conventional research because the research problem and research setting are inextricably bound (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

In light of the above-mentioned concerns, I found Sasha Roseneil's (1993) work on the women of Greenham Peace Camp very helpful in drafting my methodology. Although her research is retrospective in nature and draws heavily on feminist discourse, I could still find similarity with her position as an "insider"

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or "opportunistic researcher". She strategically uses this position in selecting participants by first utilising her personal network of friends and then moving outwards to develop a "snowball" of participants. Roseneil (2003) also attempts to introduce some diversity amongst her research group along certain characteristics that she is aware of due to her personal proximity with the Greenham protesters. She justifies her selection method by highlighting the fact that there was no pre-existing list of members or sampling frame which meant she had to rely on her personal knowledge of the networks. I encountered some of the problems Roseneil refers to, as a group never studied before I had to solely rely on my personal information on immigrant Pakistani professionals in London.

Thus, following Roseneil, I initially relied on my circle of friends which comprised of my husband's colleagues and their families. At this stage, my selection could be termed a "convenience sample" as it was only based on accessibility rather than any other criteria. This group included six male chartered accountants who had migrated to the UK from Pakistan to work in one of the Big Four accounting firms in London. Since my aim was to understand the holistic lived experience of these migrants, it was essential to include the perspectives of their partners who had migrated as a consequence of their husband's job. The average age of men was 30 years while for women it was 26 years. There was also an obvious difference in terms of employment status and education. Men, as expected, had all obtained tertiary level of education and were working at managerial positions in accountancy firms. Women displayed some variation in their educational levels, on average markedly below men, but despite their education, all women were full-time housewives taking care of children (except one). All the participants were migrants from Pakistan's urban cities of Lahore and Karachi and had been residing in the UK for at least three years. All but one couple had children less than 3 years of age.

At the time of this study, my husband and I were relatively new members of the group as my husband had joined the firm only six months ago. The rest of the

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male participants had a common background in terms of either current job or previous work experience. Therefore, the group is primarily based upon men's work networks which have extended to their families. I had a similar pattern of inclusion into the group. My husband worked with Ahmed in the same big four company, who once invited us over dinner to his house and introduced us to his family as well as rest of the group. These seven families (including mine) had a ritual gathering every weekend at a member's house which involved food, cards and a lot of chatting. These events opened up a unique opportunity for me to study and interact with these families in an informal, natural setting. It provided perfect ground for participant observation which I could use at this stage to narrow the focus of my study, develop and analyse tentative research question and theories. As Jorgenson (1989: 15) states, "the *here* and *now* of everyday life is important to the methodology of participant observation in at least two fundamental ways: a) it is where the researcher begins with the process of defining and refining the issues and problems of the study and b) it is where the researcher participates." I will elaborate in detail on the participant observation aspect of my research later but here I wish to address the important question of access.

Gaining physical access to a research population or setting is often a tricky, time consuming process, usually involving gatekeepers when the researcher sets off to study unfamiliar fields. These problems can be avoided when researching your own network of friends and it's not uncommon for PhD students to choose this option. Silverman (2009) shows how a number of his students used their existing relationships for their doctoral research. It is, however, crucial *to* not assume consent. I contacted each participant personally to explain the purpose and aim of my research, my data collection methods and possible consequences of the research for them. I also ensured confidentiality and protection of data. All participants gave a recorded verbal consent for me to conduct participant observation. However, there are many other ethical issues which spring from participant observation and those will be addressed in the following discussion.

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Participant observation

At the beginning of my research project, I intended to conduct in-depth interviews with approximately 40 participants (both male and female). Looking back at my PhD proposal, I identified some broad topics of interest in light of a preliminary literature review which included migration, work, family, social networks and religious identity. Without any prior research on the subject, I found it extremely difficult to prepare an interview schedule solely relying on the literature. In one of the many discussions with my supervisor, I proposed doing pilot research which led to the idea of utilising my existing circle of six families to conduct participant observation. It was clear from the start that participant observation was only a means to identify research issues to be explored later rather than as an end in itself. The aim was to formally record my interactions with the participants in everyday activities and use this data as base for conducting interviews with a larger population. The time frame I had in mind was six to nine months, much shorter than a conventional ethnographic research. Another important reason for adopting this strategy was to build networks within the Pakistani professional community in order to access participants for interviews. DeWalt (2002: 93) also recognises that:

> For some, in fact, participant observation is an approach to get deeper, more solid contacts with the people and situations rather than a method in itself. It is a backdrop to other research methods. The use of participant observation allows for greater rapport, better access to informants and activities, and enhanced understanding of the phenomena investigated using other methods

Here, I wish to emphasise that the use of multiple research techniques was not an attempt to attain "truer" or "more valid" results. I firmly believe that any particular research method is just one way of looking at a topic and by mixing methods, the aim is to understand the full context of research and present a holistic picture. Holstein and Gubrium (2002) in their critical re-reading of Becker

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and Geer's (1957) famous article "Participant observation and Interviewing: A comparison" point out that we must not approach this issue in terms of "truth" and "distortion". In mixing methods, we must not assume that our observations will correct or make up for the inaccuracies in the interview data. Such a view is based on the comparison between "what people do" and "what people say" in an effort to produce a factual account.

Definitional issues

There is no single agreed upon definition of what constitutes participant observation. First, there is a debate on whether it constitutes a *method,* a research technique, or a *methodology*, an approach to data collection (Savage, 2000). The most prevalent view is that participant observation is a *method* of data collection and analysis where, over a period of time, researcher participates "in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture" (Dewalt and Dewalt, 2002). However, others like Atkinson and Hammersley (1995) argue that participant observation is a "way of being" for social researchers rather than a specific technique. Yet another group of researchers has defined participant observation in relation to the role of the researcher in the research setting along a scale of "complete observer", "observer as participant", "participant as observer" and "complete participant" (Gold 1958: Junker 1960). On a similar note, Adler and Adler (1994) also introduced a taxonomy ranging from complete member researcher to peripheral member researcher. The confusion over definition of participant observation is further complicated by its synonymous use with the term ethnography in the literature. Seale et al. (2004: 218) clarifies, and I agree, that ethnography is the most inclusive term with participant observation as a description of the one of the many methods of data collection used in ethnography. Atkinson and Hamersley (1994) also define ethnographic methods as "partly or substantially relying on participant observation". It could include interviewing, focus groups, collection of documents

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or even statistical modelling alongside observation.[4]

I did not find it appropriate to commit myself to ethnography as a methodology in its entirety and decided to restrict myself to participant observation only. Moreover, traditionally in ethnographies the researcher participates/observes in a research setting over a long period of time and selects a few key informants to interview. The logic of my research was opposite, I began with participant observation in a small circle and then aimed to conduct interviews with a much larger population. Also, in ethnographic research the interviews are subsumed in the ongoing participant observation whereas in my case there was a break between the two phases of research. I conducted participant observation for almost 8 months (weekends mostly) after which I felt I had gathered sufficient data to give me a sense of the lives of the people I wished to study.

Doing participant observation

In practical terms, participant observation is an oxymoron because as Paul (1953: 441) argues, "participation implies emotional involvement; observation requires detachment". However, this tension between remaining objective and "going native" only arises when the researcher is an outsider or a stranger to the participants. As an established member of the group, I was already doing participant observation in one sense of the word. However, it was surprising to find out what a tremendous difference conscious, systematic observation made to the way I looked at things. I was not only able to analyse other's reaction to or understanding of certain events but also scrutinize the implication of my presence in the setting. An event, which previously seemed natural or given, now became an object of interest to be studied as I learnt at times to distance myself from the setting. I particularly began to notice and record patterns of group behaviour and communication which seemed to be governed by a certain understanding of

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[4] Ethnography could also refer to a monograph, a product of participant observation, which has been historically almost   exclusively associated with cultural anthropology (Seale, 2004)

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cultural/religious standards. I will elaborate on these observations in the subsequent chapters but here it is important to point out that my research was limited by certain constraints such as the norm of weekend gatherings which meant that I could only do participant observation on two days (apart from occasions such as birthdays and *Eid*) The most significant factor in conducting participant observation was my gender as it shaped the scope of my interaction with participants. My bond with the women was much stronger and interaction much deeper as I was included in their female-only network of wives which involved weekday get-togethers. Due to cultural demands of appropriate behaviour, I could not take part in men's activities like playing cards but this did not preclude observation. Furthermore, an often informal segregation in the male and female seating arrangements implied that I was not able to observe men as much as women.

Fieldnotes

Writing fieldnotes is at the heart of participant observation. Essentially, it involves keeping a written record of the happenings and observations in the field. As Emerson et. al (1995:353) elaborate, it is "a way of reducing just observed events, persons and places to written record… fieldnotes (re) constitute that world in preserved forms that can be reviewed, studied and thought about time and again". Still, the definition and practice of fieldnotes varies greatly amongst researchers as some advocate a clear distinction between observations and personal thoughts while other do not separate the two (Sanjek, 1990). These differences of opinion not only arise out of different views about the function of participant observation but are also tied to larger assumptions about the nature of reality. Since I find myself more inclined towards the social constructionist view (dealt with later), I believe fieldnotes are a form of representation. They do not capture some fixed, geographical "field" but present our own constructions of something which is produced in the process of our interactions with the participants. Fieldnotes are certainly partial accounts as a researcher would only

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choose to note and record some events or activities while ignoring others.

As a practical guide to taking fieldnotes, I chiefly relied on Emerson et al's (1995) book *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* because I found myself ideologically close to the authors. From the start, the authors acknowledge the partiality of knowledge, the interpretive and selective nature of fieldnotes and the blurring of boundaries between "field data" and "personal reactions". They advise fieldworkers to write fieldnotes continuously and contemporaneously rather than at the end of the process. They advocate a "microscopic", interactionist approach to writing which means documenting details of the processes of interaction between individuals (1995: 15). As an "apprentice" researcher, the first question that sprang to my mind was "what should I observe? Should I note down everything?" In real-time interaction, noting down and describing everything seemed like an impossible task. Here, I found useful guidance from Emerson et al (ibid: 29) who propose starting off broadly, writing about a range of incidents and interactions. Taking their advice I started taking note of (a) personal impressions including a description of physical setting and people (b) key events and incidents (c) personal reactions to people and situations (d) what sort of actions, problems, events participants deem important. With the passage of time certain regularities and patterns began to emerge and the focus then shifted towards looking for variations. The total time spent with the participants was six months. Deciding to end the participant observation phase was as tricky as starting it because of my continuous involvement in the group prior to and after the research. At the time I felt that the objectives for conducting participant observation had been fulfilled. We must remember that PhD research is constrained by time schedules and it was certainly time for me to move on to the next stage of my research.

As Emerson et al. (1995) also suggest, I arrived at my method of writing field notes through trial and error. In an attempt to be honest and overt, on the first few occasions I carried a notebook with me to the scene and from time to time jotted down key phrases. However, this led to awkward moments of silence and an

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uncomfortable feeling amongst the participants as they could not comprehend my new "note taking" role. It also distracted me from the ongoing activities since I was a "complete participant" in the setting. Therefore, for pragmatic reasons I decided to make a mental note of impressions, conversations or issues of interest during the time spent on the scene. Later in the night, I would make slightly more detailed, vivid notes of about four pages but still not in any coherent form. The process of writing "fieldnotes proper" was not only a time consuming process but required a different set of skills. The style of writing and the extent of detail depend upon the intended audience (Emerson et al. 1995). As a student researcher, I had to submit my fieldnotes to my supervisor and thought of him as an intended audience. Since he was not familiar with the participants or the setting, I included as much background detail as possible. I chose to write in first-person because first, it eases the process of recalling events and feelings and second, it reminds the researcher that he/she is part of the research process rather than an objective observer.

Analysis of fieldnotes

Research analysis, put simply, is the systematic process of breaking up the research materials into manageable units with an aim of finding meaningful themes (Jorgenson 1989: 107). Miles and Huberman and Miles (1994) argue that all data analysis fundamentally consists of three activities: data reduction, data display, and interpretation and verification. Tentative analysis begins as soon as a research proposal is drafted or a literature review conducted and continues to guide the researcher throughout the data collection phase. At each stage the researcher makes certain choices and decisions which influence the analysis.

Generally, the purpose of data analysis is to draw well-developed theories about the phenomenon at study. In my case the objective was not to make any final conclusions but to provide an understanding of the phenomenon and pave the way for interviews. With this goal in mind, I began to read and re-read all the

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fieldnotes in order to find recurring themes in the data which could be probed further in the interviews. The formal process of coding essentially means putting labels to a set of ideas or concepts that the researcher identifies in the data. For example, I observed that in different conversations people drew a "distinction between British born Pakistanis and Pakistanis". I used this theme as a label or a code which included all the instances or quotes where such a distinction was either directly or indirectly made. I did not rely on any computer software to do the coding because I found it time consuming and too mechanical.

In retrospect, the decision to conduct participant observation proved very valuable. I felt more confident and in control of my research topic.

Qualitative Interviews

Interviewing, the act of asking questions to acquire information, is so commonplace that Atkinson and Silverman (1997) suggest that we live in an "interview society". Amongst the various interview techniques, whether in the media or academia, I want to focus on qualitative interviewing as it fulfils the purpose of my research. The central concern of my research is to understand the lived experience of participants which requires a method that captures their words and actions. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) argue that the most useful way of getting this information is through participant observation and interviewing. Interviewing in qualitative research is exemplified by Kvale's (1996: 4) metaphor of 'interviewer as a traveller' in which "the interviewer wanders along with the local inhabitants, asks questions that lead to the subjects telling their own stories of the lived experience and converses with them in the original Latin meaning of *conversation* as 'wandering together with'". He adds that that this type of interview is literally an "inter view", that is an interchange of views between two people interested in the same topic. Thus, what really differentiates qualitative interviewing is its open-endedness, flexibility and continuous nature (Babbie, 2009). However, the degree of control by the researcher in terms of structure of

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the interview process varies on a spectrum from conversation (least control) to self-administered questionnaires (DeWalt and Dewalt, 2002). Between the two extremes is semi-structured interviewing where the researcher has an interview guide with a possible list of topics of discussion but allows the interviewee to bring up new subjects for discussion. According to Clark and Dawson (1999) semi structured interview operates within a less rigid framework which includes some standardized questions such as biographical details but many open-ended questions to encourage participants to talk.

Interview Schedule

I found semi-structured interviewing a particularly useful tool to further expand on my work during participant observation. With the help of my fieldnote analysis, I had gained considerable background knowledge of what the participants deemed important and it helped me in organising possible topics for discussion in the shape of an interview guide. For example, I had observed that men often talked about their dislike for office social events but I never fully understood the reasons behind such feeling. So one of the topics on my interview guide was "is socialisation in the office important?" which prompted a detailed discussion of the difficulties in participating in their office networks and deep emotions of frustration resulting from them. I had also assessed that male and female participants had to be questioned on different topics as their life experiences were different. This meant drafting two interview schedules catering to men and women but both versions included basic biographical information such as age, place of birth, parents' occupation, school etc. The men's experience of migration was intertwined with work and therefore their interview schedule aimed to encourage them to talk about their motivations, feelings and experiences of pre-migration work, migration to the UK, current job, marriage and children, life in the UK, social networks, conception of "home", future plans. From my close contact with the female participants, I knew what topics were of significance to them and tried to cover them in the interview schedule. It included

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areas such as the experience of marriage, feelings about moving to the UK, career aspirations, managing family, keeping contact with relatives back home, social networks and future plans. Here, I should re-emphasise that the purpose of the interview schedule is only to broadly direct the course of the interview and it should not be interpreted as a list of questions to be asked. I was aware that some of these questions might never be asked or new questions may arise during the interview depending on the particular circumstances at the time.

Interviews: Selecting and accessing participants

I had initially planned to conduct 40 interviews including both male migrant accountants and their partners. I am conscious of the fact that "representativeness" is not a major concern in qualitative sampling since we are interested in collecting information-rich cases, wherever and how many they might be. However, I did wish to provide a context for my study by showing the extent and nature of the phenomenon at study. Based on my personal experience and informal conversations with the participants, I had gathered some information about the scale and time of migration as well as the distribution of this population. There are no official or unofficial statistics on the number of Pakistani accountants who have migrated to the UK. I was aware of the fact that all these migrants, in the highly skilled category, arrived in the UK with a 5 year work permit sponsored by the employing firm. Therefore, I began looking at the number of work permits issued to Pakistani nationals in 2002 (Office for National Statistics) but this did not include a category of "accountants". The total number of work permits issued to Pakistanis in that year was 2,254 and the closest category of "Professional occupations" included 411 individuals. However, since I knew that the vast majority of Pakistani accountants came to the UK in or after 2005, I believed this figure was slightly problematic. Salt (2007) also compiled a similar set of statistics on work permit issued in 2006 which shows that the total number increased to 2,843 (26%) while category "Professional occupations" witnessed a phenomenonal increase of 130% to 970. In quoting these statistics, I do seek

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scientific verification for my previously acquired data but only wish to provide some background for the research population. I also contacted the Big Four accounting firms to find out the number of Pakistanis employed by each firm. Again, this was based on my knowledge that only the Big Four firms (and a very small number of mid-tiered firms) are able to sponsor work permits for non-EU nationals. Only one of these four firms responded with a regional breakdown of the total number of people who had declared "Pakistani" ethnic group in 2008. Although, these statistics did not provide information on the immigration status of these Pakistanis it was interesting to note that the highest percentage of Pakistanis worked in London.

On the basis of the above statistics and a lot of first-hand information from the participants, I estimated the migrant Pakistani accountant population in London to be approximately 500 at the time of the study. Since the majority of these people were concentrated in only four firms, there was a strong likelihood of them knowing each other which made snowballing an excellent technique for accessing potential participants. During my fieldwork, I noticed that most of the social networking occurred within the ethnic and professional group. So, I was introduced to many such Pakistani families either through my husband or the circle of six families forming part of research. I quickly became acquainted with them, especially the women, and often arranged visits to their homes and vice versa. However, this proximity did not automatically turn into an acceptance to be interviewed when I formally approached them. I contacted the participants over the phone and sent details of the interview process, issues of confidentiality and anonymity, and implications of the research. Upon request, I also emailed a broad list of potential topics to be discussed in the interview taking care to mention that it was not an exhaustive list of questions as the interview would not be too structured in nature. Amongst the ten couples I contacted, apart from the participant observation group, I only received a positive response from four. Here, I discovered the importance of the often talked about "rapport" with participants because the closer the friendship bond, the greater was the response rate. I

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immediately got an approval and interview appointment from the six families I had spent time with during fieldwork. They also helped me in generating the snowball of participants, for example, Rizwan[5] requested three of his colleagues to take part in the research and when they agreed he passed on the details to me. In total, 21 interviews were conducted including --men and -- women.

Face to face interviews were conducted on an individual basis, tape-recorded and transcribed. At the beginning of the interview, participants were given the option of conducting the interview in English or Urdu and only one participant chose Urdu. Couples were interviewed separately, usually on the same day, but in some cases the presence of the partner during the interview could not be avoided. All the couples chose to be interviewed in their homes but the single men preferred an outside location such as café. On average, the interview lasted for one hour during which the participants were first asked biographical questions and then more open-ended questions. I used the interview schedule to varying degrees but most often the discussion had a natural flow. I ensured eye contact with the participant, minimum interruption and avoided giving my personal opinion either directly or indirectly. I did not take any notes during the interview as it would have been distracting but after leaving the interview scene, I recorded my personal observations and impressions about the progress of the interview and participant's behaviour. This proved extremely helpful when reflecting about my input into the research process.

Analysing the interviews

As mentioned earlier, all interviews were transcribed word-for-word with attention to changes in voice signifying emotions or certain pauses. After reading the transcripts and my comments several times, I was able to identify persistent words and phrases which formed the basis of the coding mechanism. It must be remembered that the interview was semi-structured which implies that the data

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[5] All names have been anonymised.

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was already topically divided. Therefore, the aim of coding in this case was to find sub-categories within a particular topic. For example, "reasons for not working" is a category which can be easily identified in each interview with a non-working woman since it was part of the interview schedule. Maxwell (2005: 97) refers to such categories as "organisational categories" which primarily serve as bins for sorting out the data for further analysis. "Substantive" categories are sub-categories which are developed inductively usually from words of the participant as compared to "theoretical" categories which are assigned using researcher's concepts. These distinctions are important in understanding the systematic way of analysing interview data. For example, after identifying the organisational category "reasons for not working", the range of responses can be captured in substantive categories using participants own words such as "children are too young", "do not have a degree" etc. These categories can be further grouped together to form two separate theoretical codes "family reasons" and "professional reasons". However, none of these categories are fixed or mutually exclusive. There could be a danger of losing a sense of context of the data in an attempt to put everything into closed categories. Therefore, it is important to keep re-reading the transcripts to discern other data and the literature in order to revise any emergent categories.

After coding is achieved, it is time to put the whole picture together by exploring and studying the categories in greater detail. This process of analysis and interpretation involves "attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patterns, and looking for relationships and linkages among descriptive dimensions" (Patton, 1987: 144). It must be acknowledged that interpretation begins as soon as research begins and shapes the data collection. However, the formal process of data analysis is usually carried out once the data collection and organization phase is over. It could be done in different ways, for example, Huberman and Miles (1994) suggest a continuum of 13 "tactics" for transforming codes into meaningful data. I used the simple method of comparing categories and making connections between them in light of the original data and

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relevant literature. This involved not only looking for patterns and regularities but also looking at irregularities and asking the "why" questions. In earlier example about non-working women, I looked at the various themes within this category and tried to link these to other categories. For example, many women talked about the responsibility for taking care of young children which was closely tied to their beliefs about motherhood. This link was further analysed by referring back to my fieldnotes which includes discussions on women's view on being a "good mother" and certain incidents where these beliefs were demonstrated. Thus, such an analysis "puts the mortar between the building blocks" (Dey, 1993: 47) to present a holistic picture.

Reflexivity in Qualitative Inquiry

Reflexivity is a term usually associated with the "crisis of representation" in anthropology spurred by the publication of Clifford and Marcus's much acclaimed work, *Writing Culture* (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont, 2003). This crisis also has roots in the deconstructive ideas of postmodern and poststructuralist thought that shook the foundations of objectivism and other totalising discourses. It refers to the acknowledgement that as social researchers we are part of the social world and, therefore, any "representation … is always self-presentation" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 503). Reflexivity, put simply, means turning back on oneself or self-awareness, but its meaning can vary depending on the theoretical perspective applied. There is the humanistic-phenomenological and psychoanalytic tradition with an interest in introspection, critical tradition's (feminism for example) preference for socio-political aspects and the social constructionist and post-modern approach with an emphasis on discourse (Finlay and Gough, 2003: 1). Within this diversity of meaning and traditions, some authors have attempted to identify a typology of "reflexivities" within the social science literature. Finlay's (2002) five-fold typology of methodological reflexivity in contemporary research includes i) introspection (ii) intersubjective reflection (iii) mutual collaboration (iv) social critique, and (v)

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discursive deconstruction. Lynch (2000), building on the works of Ashmore (1989) and Woolgar (1988) on the sociology of scientific knowledge, also produces an elaborate typology of reflexivities (with many subdivisions) ranging from mechanical reflexivity, methodological reflexivity to radical referential reflexivity. Similarly, Foley (2002) classifies various approaches to reflexivity in four categories of confessional, theoretical, textual, and deconstructive reflexivity. Macbeth (2001) collapses these categories into two main types of reflexivity: "positional reflexivity" wherein an attempt is made to critically analyse, often in a confessional/autobiographical mode, the researcher's own position in the world s/he is studying. Second, "textual reflexivity" refers to the critical examination of the process of writing narratives of the "Other". Macbeth (2001) also draws attention to Garfinkel's ethnomethodological reflexivity which is seen an everyday, mundane form of reflexivity carried out by every individual in society.

Despite the diversity in definition, importance or the need for reflexivity is almost undisputed amongst qualitative researchers today. It is now accepted that social research is the product of an interplay between researchers and participants in a given context. Reflexivity, then, involves laying bare all the personal, cultural, institutional or political affiliations of a researcher in order to put the research in context. While the concept of reflexivity enjoys a wide popularity amongst academics, some have cautioned against the unexamined celebration of the merits of reflexivity (see Macbeth, 2001: Gough, 2003: Lynch, 2000). These critics argue that some researchers use reflexivity to enhance the "authenticity" of their research by accounting for the possible "biases" that a researcher's involvement might have introduced. This only serves to reinforce the very objectivism that reflexivity was initially aimed against. At the other extreme, some researchers in the post-modernist tradition are too concerned with the language and style that they shift the focus away from the actual research and produce a narcissistic text. Therefore, Gough (2003) suggests that a balance between the realist and post-modern reflexivities must be established such that "researchers need to take some responsibility for producing an analysis which can be applied to support a

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particular view of the world, whilst recognising the researcher involvement in the production of the account" (2003: 32).

Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology

Reflexivity in methodology then implies the recognition that the choice of a particular method is not natural or arbitrary but a product of interaction with the same reality it aims to uncover (Atkinson et al., 2003). Therefore, Lincoln and Guba (1994) suggest that the choice of a method is located within the larger question of an inquiry paradigm, defined as the "basic belief system or world view that guides the investigator, not only in the choices of methods but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (1994: 105). Following this argument, I would situate my methodology within my broader view on the nature of reality (ontology), relationship between the researcher and researched (epistemology) and the way of acquiring knowledge (methodology). Based on these criteria, Guba and Lincoln (1994) identify four paradigms in qualitative research: Positivism, Post-positivism, Critical Theory and Constructivism. In their more recent work, they (Lincoln and Guba, 2005) have added another paradigm – the participatory action framework- and an additional criterion - axiology or the ethical/moral stance - for identifying a paradigm. It must be noted that these paradigms are not "true" or "real" in any sense but are in fact human constructions that can neither be proved nor disapproved (Lincoln and Guba, 1994). Following Lincoln and Guba's work, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) identify the presence of "perspectives" such as feminism, queer theory, and cultural studies along with other paradigms. These perspectives are not as well-structured or solidified as paradigms but have developed their own set of methodological assumptions and criteria (2005:183). Crotty (1998) also recognises the importance of what he calls the "four elements"- epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods in any research. Again, the idea is that a particular method of research such as participant observation forms part of ethnographic methodology, which is embedded in a symbolic interactionist perspective derived

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from a constructionist epistemology. However, Crotty (1998) differs from Lincoln and Guba (2005) in the categories he assigns to each of the four elements e.g. he identifies positivism as a theoretical perspective with an objectivist epistemology rather than a paradigm in itself. He also differs in his assertion that ontological issues arise along with epistemological issues but not necessarily.

Despite the confusion over what constitutes a paradigm or a perspective, I find myself inclined towards the social constructionist school of thought. I was exposed to this perspective in an undergraduate class assignment which required an extensive reading of Berger and Luckmann's (1966) *Social Construction of Reality.* It seemed to provide answers to the much debated division between objectivism of positivism and nihilist relativism of post-modernism at the time. Constructionism is "the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 1998: 42). This view stands in clear contrast with positivism/objectivism which asserts that meaning resides in the object, independent of human interaction, waiting to be discovered. However, constructionism also differs from subjectivism and post-structuralism in a significant way because it does recognise the existence of "a world" but that world is meaningless without a human consciousness experiencing it. It is best summarized in the idea that "meaning of things in not inherent" (Harris, 2008). Therefore, it is possible to achieve different interpretations of the same reality, none having an edge over the other.

In terms of reflexivity, I aim to trace the impact of my intellectual leaning towards "social constructionism" upon my research design. At the fore, it means an open acknowledgement that my own account of the research problem is also a social construction developed out of mutual interaction with the participants. It also limits the focus of study to mainly how meaning is constructed through the everyday process of interaction between different actors in given social settings.

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This is based on the basic constructionist notion that anything that holds meaning in our lives is invented within "the matrix of relationships in which we are engaged" (Gergen and Gergen, 2000). If data is a co-construction in the research context then a researcher cannot enter the field with pre-determined theories which requires an open, flexible approach. The existence of multiple realities emphasises the need to present and understand diverse views. Clearly, naturalistic qualitative methodology fits in with the constructionist ontological and epistemological position as it provides the opportunity to interact with participants, understand their and one's own constructions of reality in an inductive approach to data collection.

Insider-Outsider Status

As mentioned earlier, Macbeth (2001) defines positional reflexivity as an often autobiographical critical examination and articulation of researcher's situation in the world. She elaborates (2001: 38)

> Positional reflexivity takes up the analysts' (uncertain) position and positioning in the world he or she studies and is often expressed with a vigilance for unseen, privileged, or, worse, exploitative relationships between analyst and the world…..Reflexivity leads the analyst to take up the knots of place and biography and to deconstruct the dualities of power and antipower, hegemony and resistance, and insider and outsider to reveal and describe how our representations of the world and those who live there are indeed positionally organized.

In practical terms, my understanding of reflexivity is to identify those aspects of my identity which might have influenced the research process. However, this is not a straightforward matter as it is impossible to know oneself with any certainty (Parker 1999). We simultaneously occupy multiple identities and it is a matter of judgement to decide which identity is relevant in a particular situation. In the

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feminist literature, the similarities and differences between researcher and researched in terms of certain social markers such as gender, race, class, sexuality and ethnicity has come to hold importance (Mauthner and Daucet, 2003).

Examining my own position vis-à-vis participants on each of those markers, I can immediately spot a similarity which would classify me as an "insider". My life experiences as a middle-class, professional Pakistani migrant to the UK puts me in social proximity with my participants. However, "insider" or "outsider" are not mutually exclusive positions on a continuum as held by Olson (1977). Any such dichotomous division is simplified because a researcher has multi-faceted identities which cannot be put into fixed categories. These identities operate in a fluid, flexible manner where a particular identity becomes salient according to the context and audience (Hodkinson, 2005). For example, during participant observation I often tried to emphasise or rely upon my gender and marital status and minimised my education and professional status in order to fit into the conversations with women. However, when the context shifted to discussions with men involving work or politics I shifted to my professional identity, banking on my education and knowledge of politics to participate in the conversation. As Haraway (1991) suggests, as a researcher I possess certain "maps of consciousness" based on my own gender, class, national and racial identity which prove useful in navigating through various locations in time. Any notion of insiderness then can only be transitory and changing, an incomplete concept. In fact, what I occupy are momentary "positional spaces", which create a level of trust during an interview by emphasising certain shared knowledge between me and the respondent (Mullings, 1999: 340). Thus, subscribing to the dichotomy between "insider" and "outsider" would be tantamount to freezing these positional spaces in time. Narayan (1993) summarises this position in her aptly titled article *How Native is a Native Anthropologist?* She shows how the assumption that a "native" anthropologist necessarily possesses an authentic insider view is untenable in the face of multiplex identities in an ever changing world. Thus, she states "instead of the paradigm emphasizing dichotomy between insider/outsider

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or observer/observed, I propose that at this historical moment we might more profitably view each anthropologist in terms of shifting identifications amid a field of interpenetrating communities and power relations" (1993: 671).

Choice of Research Topic

Kanuha (2000), like many other native researchers primarily identifies three reasons for conducting research amongst those identity groups she was associated with: a) as a marginalized, lesbian woman of colour she sought a greater understanding of her own self b) as a scholar she aimed to present a theoretical framework for understanding a rarely discussed phenomena, and c) as a social worker to enhance social benefits to such stigmatized groups. Thus, we can notice how Kahuha's multiple identities and life experiences coagulate to influence her choice of research topic. Similarly, reflecting upon my motivations to study professional migrants from Pakistan, I can trace the role of my own biography in the research process.

First, my interest in migration is closely tied to my own experience of moving to the UK in 2006. This time period witnessed the height of post 7/7 Islamophobia. Everywhere I went, from university seminars to the high street, I was acutely aware of my position as a Muslim. I knew I was not a "radical" Muslim but neither was I a "liberal". As a recent Pakistani migrant, I could neither associate with the ideas of the established British Muslim community nor the Pakistani community back home. As an educated, urban, professional migrant my interaction with the Pakistani migrants who mainly come from lower class rural backgrounds was limited. At the same time, in my own social class group, my minority status rendered me different. I felt I was a misfit, I found myself at the margins of all these dominant identities. There was no representation for people whose life experiences were similar to mine and from my connections I was aware of the existence of this group. It was this personal feeling that motivated me to choose my research topic. Second, as researcher I discovered that there was

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absolutely no academic literature targeting professional Pakistani migrants to the UK. It was an opportunity to add to the body of knowledge and hopefully open a new field of research. Third, by introducing this new category of research I aimed to draw policy *makers'* attention *to* the problems of this group. I was frustrated with the popular image of Pakistani migrants in context of integration, gender and education which seemed to direct most government policies. I felt Pakistan was as diverse a country as any other and there was a need to recognise this diversity within its population.

Data collection

Labaree (2002), in his review of the literature on "insiderness" suggests that it holds certain advantages in research. He divides these into four a) the value of shared experiences b) the value of greater access c) the value of cultural interpretation and d) the value of deeper understanding and clarity of thought for the researcher (2002: 103). In my experience, the second advantage of access was very evident right from the beginning of the project. Particularly in the participant observation phase, I did not need to negotiate formal access through gate keepers as I was already part of the group. Negotiating access for interviews was a more complicated process as I had to continuously employ different techniques, occupy different positions and highlight different identities to represent myself in a desirable manner. For example, one of my participants passed on information of his colleague, a senior manager at one of the firms, who was interested in the research and asked me to contact him. Without any prior acquaintance, I thought it was best to approach him as a professional researcher and have an intellectual discussion about the project. He responded in the same manner and on our first meeting we shook hands, an act which is rare between a Muslim man and woman unless it is a professional requirement. We were both Muslims, Pakistanis, middle class etc. but at that particular instance, in that particular context we presented ourselves as professionals. On other occasions such as interviewing couples, I tried to emphasise my marital status and wife role by talking about my husband and family life. In such cases I often introduced the man to my husband in an

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attempt to build relations as a couple.

Access, not only includes physical access to respondents and research settings but also cultural access to norms. An outsider might take a long period to find out what constitutes culturally appropriate behaviour, speech or dress but due to my shared background, particularly familiarity with the language, this initial process of learning was not as complicated. For example, I was aware that being a woman demanded adhering to cultural norms of dressing modestly, maintaining physical and emotional distance with men, and assuming domestic responsibilities. I already knew how to conduct myself during participant observation and interviews in order to build rapport with participants. While this insiderness was beneficial, it was restricting in terms of the pressure to adhere to the community norms which hindered research. So my interactions with men were limited during participant observation due to my gender and often access for interviews had to be negotiated through the women. Facio (1993) also recognises this barrier in conducting insider research amongst Mexican-Americans.

Third, access can also refer to privileged access to information in terms of respondents revealing personal information. Zinn (1979) argues that insiders are more likely to get such information because they can put respondents at ease about discussing personal matters. In my experience, this was true regarding certain issues such as talking about presence of indirect racism at work and religious/cultural views. Due to respondent's assumption of shared ethnicity, religious identity, and similar life experience there was often an "us" versus "them" division where I was included in the first category. This was typified in remarks like "you should know about it", or the use of the words like "we", "us Muslims". However, as an insider I was also part of the community and a possible source of spreading gossip. Many female respondents hesitated from talking about their marital relationship during interviews and showed a degree of anxiety about confidentiality. Here, I felt it necessary to emphasise my professional identity of a researcher and tried to reassure them that all information would be kept

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confidential. One male respondent confronted me at the end of the interview and asked me if I would talk about the interview with my husband who is his colleague. He was obviously concerned about his reputation in the firm but again I assuaged his fears by highlighting my professional commitment to confidentiality of information. Thus, I switched between my "insider" and "outsider" status according to the context and *my* perception of how I was being judged by the participants.

Literature on insider research also highlights the danger of "over familiarity" to the extent that the researcher begins to take things for granted during data collection (Hayano, 1979: Kanhua, 2000). After carefully reviewing some of the first transcripts, I noted that I often did not fully probe certain responses because I assumed I knew what the respondent intended. I tried my best to consciously think, hence be reflexive, about the impact of my personal opinions and assumptions on the interview process. The larger issue here is whether a native researcher can emotionally distance himself/herself from the subject in order to produce an accurate account (Labaree, 2002). Kanuha (2000) claims that her main methodological challenge as an inside researcher was to separate her personal experiences as a lesbian from the narratives of participant in order to maintain scientific "objectivity". This conflict is likely to arise when the researcher is both the subject and the object of research. Thus, "balancing multiple identities of being at once a participant observer and a researcher requires unique skills and understanding to distance emotionally and intellectually from the data in order to enhance analyses without predisposition" (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). However, I think this argument is essentially based on the realist assumption that researcher objectivity is an achievable quest. Second, rather than simply acknowledging multiplicity of identities, it seeks to "balance" them to produce an unbiased account. From this standpoint, the purpose of reflexivity then is a means to correct the biases introduced by researcher's predisposition rather than an end itself.

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Last, I want to discuss some of the ethical dilemmas my "insider" status accorded on my data collection process. Particularly, in participant observation I found myself wearing two caps at once: researcher and a friend. Even though I was conducting overt research, my previous relationship with the participants meant that there were many occasions when they shared their secrets or intimate feelings. It was hard for me to decide what exactly constituted "data", was it everything I saw and heard? Could I morally and ethically assume participant's consent to share all information regardless of whether it was intended as a friend or a subject? As Sikes and Potts (2008: 177) also suggest "inside researchers may find that those under study forget the researcher and his or her role and engage in normal everyday behaviours. However, this then entails balancing the desire for rapport with an obligation to adequately protect those being studied privately". Thus, protecting the respondents and respecting their privacy was a major concern for me at this stage. I chose not to include any information that was sensitive, private and not brought up in the interviews.

Power in the research relationship

So far I have only talked about visible markers of identity such as gender, race and class but complex relations in the field also demand attention to the dynamics of power. Feminists have long argued that the research relationship is inherently unequal as the researcher has power to represent research subjects, including or excluding certain information (Smith, 1998). Stacey (1991) adds that the inequality, exploitation and betrayal are endemic to ethnography as there is always a potential for breaking confidentiality, intruding on privacy and 'dissonance between fieldwork practice and ethnographic product' (1991: 114). However, others have argued that such a unidimensional concept of power feeds on the binary opposition between the oppressor and the oppressed and ignores the dispersed, multidimensional operation of power in different research relationships (Thapar-Bjorkert and Henry, 2004). Hsiung (1996) and Mullings (1999) demonstrate the complex interplay of power, gender, race and other positional

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spaces that both researcher and researched occupy in the field. Moreover, it is not always the researcher who outlines the rules of the game as there is a lot of scope for manoeuvring by the subjects as well.

In my experience my allegedly powerful position as a researcher was primarily mediated by my gender, role as a friend and my husband's position in the firm's hierarchy. This became evident in my encounter with my husband's bosses where I was primarily constructed as a wife of a junior colleague rather than a researcher alone. I had to access these individuals through my husband who was very concerned about the nature of questions I would ask his seniors. When the interview was finally arranged, I felt a sense of obligation towards them as my husband told me that how "they had done a great favour by giving up their important time". As I prepared to go for the interview my husband warned me "don't offend them", "don't press too hard". It was clear from the start that my subordinated position as a wife had significantly undermined my researcher role. My self-representation was confirmed by the respondents as well as two of them remarked "you know I could charge you my consultancy rate for this time". By referring to their status as highly paid senior managers in the firm's ladder, I was positioned in that hierarchy on the basis of my husband's position. This was not the case in interviews with other men who were not in my husband's firm. Here, I was often positioned as a researcher, as a "professional" and perhaps as an intellectual. These respondents showed a lot of interest in the research project and my academic profession in general as they carved out my role as a researcher. Did that mean I had authority over them? Not at all, if my researcher role accorded me any power, it was vitiated by my position as a female researcher. I could not escape the culturally prescribed gendered expectations for me to help console a baby, make tea or serve food during the interview process. Interruptions were very common in the household settings as Pakistani customs of hospitality meant that I had to stop for tea or lunch breaks. It was usually the wife who would enter the room with a tray full of food and I felt obliged to get up and assist her while my male respondent waited to be served. Thus my researcher role was

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never complete *as* it was deeply entrenched in my gender role.

If interviewing men causes obvious power imbalances, one would expect the power balance to tip in favour of the researcher when interviewing women. As a more educated, "independent" working woman, I was conceived as some sort of role model by women. This was revealed to me by one of the participants who confessed that "a lot of women in our group look up to you". During our conversations, some women would seek my advice on getting a job in the UK and once Rabia asked me to find a vacancy in my university. I did not feel the pressure of being wife of someone lower in the office hierarchy than their husbands. The female network was not hierarchical in terms of position of the husband but it had its own informal criteria including being a "good home maker". Paradoxically, my education and "independence" was seen in a negative light as I was often told to have children "before I get too old" and "give priority to family".

These contradictions highlight the complexity of the research relationship and its multi-dimensional nature. The next chapters will illustrate and analyse the results of this study in great detail with the aim of opening up a new stream of migration studies.

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Chapter 4: Social Profile

Who are these professional migrants? Does the group under study display any common features in terms of their social background? It is important to answer these fundamental questions to get an overall picture of the nature of this particular stream of Pakistani migration to the UK. Furthermore, I aim to make a comparison with the historically rooted, traditional form of migration from Pakistan as well as the recent phenomenon of European professional migration. As there are bound to be differences between the male and female population, I will analyse the two groups separately and limit my discussion to men in this chapter. It must be mentioned at the outset that this is not an attempt to present mere statistics on the migrant population but the objective is to offer a detailed account of their social background based on stories narrated by the participants themselves. Furthermore, any comparison with the "freely moving" European professionals must take note of the fact the Pakistani nationals are subject to visa controls and not free to move in the EU sense of the word. However, as "highly skilled workers" working in UK's top accountancy firms the participants fully recognized that they did not face the same level of visa restrictions that some other Pakistani migrants had to contend with.

Age

At the time of the interviews, the average age of the male participants was 30 years. However, these men had been living in the UK for about three to four years which means the average age at the time of migration stood at 26 years. This is in stark contrast to the median age of arrival of 19 years amongst immigrant working-age Pakistanis residing in Britain in the year 2000 (Dustman et al., 2003). These people had been residing in Britain for over 15 years and only 12% possessed a graduate degree. In contrast, Favell's (2008) "Eurostars" (European free- moving professionals) had an average age at the time of migration of 28 years with an eight year stay. It is very difficult to make any broad generalizations

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based on this information as there are too many problems with the comparability of the data such as sex variation etc. However, it is still interesting to note that, broadly, my sample population's age composition is closer to their professional group rather than their ethnic group. This is perhaps due to the fact that they have acquired a tertiary level of education and work experience in their home country before moving to the UK much like the case of European professionals (Favell and Rechi, 2009).

Sending Regions

As already indicated in an earlier chapter, the overwhelming majority of Pakistani immigrants to the UK originate from rural areas of Punjab with over half (60% by some estimates) belonging to the Mirpur district in Azad Kashmir (Shaw 2001). According to Shaw (1994), other main sending regions include the Faisalabad and Jhelum districts in Punjab, and Attock district in North West Frontier Province. In stark contrast to this picture, my sample population exclusively originates from large urban centres of Pakistan such as Lahore, Karachi and Quetta. With over 75% of the men born and raised in Karachi, the biggest city of Pakistan and second most populated in the world, it can be safely assumed that their social background is very different from that of traditional Pakistani rural migrants. One way to appreciate this difference would be to broadly compare the economic and social structure of Mirpur and Karachi. Geographically, Mirpur lies on the border of Azad Kashmir, one of the poorest, most marginalised and infrastructurally weak parts of Pakistan (Ballard, 2003). Describing Mirpur in the 1980s, Ballard (1983: 118) noted:

> Considerable areas of land lie uncultivated, and even that which is sown is not well looked after. There are few roads and little agricultural machinery, and industry is virtually non-existent. The economy of the whole area is now largely dependent on the continued flow of migrant

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remittances, and without them extreme poverty would soon follow.

Unlike rest of rural Pakistan, Mirpur now displays signs of relative prosperity in terms of presence of multi-storeyed buildings, cars, banks and even hotels due to the influx of remittances (Ballard, 2003). However, the large inflow of money from migrants has failed to increase the productive capacity of the local economy. Much of the growth has only been speculative and short-term in the real estate sector. There has been no major investment in agricultural machinery, irrigation systems or development of profitable fruits and crops (Ballard, 2003). In fact, agriculture is only practiced by the older men and most of the land lies abandoned as young men wait for their call by a family member to go fly abroad. Despite being "capital rich" Mirpur has not witnessed any significant industrial development. According to Ballard's analysis, transnational networks have not changed much of the social fabric in Mirpur as the rules of *biraderi* and gender segregation are particularly strictly interpreted.

In sharp contrast to Mirpur, the port city of Karachi is the financial and commercial hub of the country contributing 20% of Pakistan's GDP. According to the Asian Development Bank (2005: 3)

> Karachi handles 95% of Pakistan's foreign trade; contributes 30% to Pakistan's manufacturing sector; and almost 90% of the head offices of the banks, financial institutions and multinational companies operate in Karachi. The country's largest stock exchange is Karachi-based…it retains 40% of the total national employment in large scale manufacturing, holds 50% of bank deposits and contributes 25% of national revenues and 40% of provincial revenues.

Due to its economic status, Karachi has long been a centre of internal and external migration. It has witnessed three major waves of immigration a) in the aftermath of 1947 partition when around 600,000 refugees settled from India b) after the

separation of East Pakistan some 350,000 refugees from Bangladesh came to Karachi between 1972-1978 and c) massive migration of Afghan refugees between 1978-1998 (Raza, 2010). The impact of these successive periods of migration has meant that Karachi is the most ethnically and culturally diverse city of Pakistan. For example, one of my participants migrated from Quetta, capital of Pakistan's Balochistan province, to Karachi at the age of twenty to pursue his accountancy degree. Recounting his experience of living and working in Karachi, he emphasised the multicultural environment by pointing out that "Karachi is a great place to mingle with people from different backgrounds". Some other participants also talked about their friendship networks with accountants from diverse backgrounds during their professional experience in Karachi. However, the city has also seen its share of urban violence and ethnic conflicts particularly in the 1980s when the Afghan war brought widespread access to arms and drugs (Gayer, 2003). Since the nineties, MQM (the main political party) along with a host of small ethnic parties has dominated the political climate of Karachi and their constant conflict with central government has led to years of ruthless targeted killings, violent strikes, rampant street crime and police excesses (Hasan and Mohib, 2003). Apart from ethnic divisions, Karachi is sharply divided along class lines as access to housing, utilities, education and health vary greatly between what Gayer (2003: 4) calls "white" (planned) and "black" (unplanned) parts of the city. Regarding these conspicuous class divisions with slums on one hand and high rise buildings on the other, Hasan and Mohib (2003: 5) note:

> The high income settlements of the city are becoming increasingly isolated from the rest of Karachi. They are developing sports facilities, shopping centres, entertainment activities, libraries and educational institutions in their own areas. Their residents now do not have to go out of their areas except to work. In addition, most houses have armed guards and many are looked after by security companies with computerised security arrangements. Globalisation and corporate culture are also changing the city through new post-modern buildings and interiors, international food

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chains, the shifting of cultural activities from municipal buildings to five star hotels and private clubs, and the emergence of IT tuition centres and video shops throughout the city.

Language as proxy for Social Status

The comparison between economic and social structure of the two sending regions of Pakistan above should serve as a background to understanding some of the social differences between the two groups of migrants. This was nowhere as evident as in the high level of knowledge and fluency in English language of the overwhelming participants in this study as compared to migrants from rural origins. The former received their primary education in private English-medium schools and acquired professional education in English. In the age of globalisation, working for a big multinational accountancy firm also demands proficiency in English language which was acknowledged by many participants. Although, Urdu is their mother tongue (in one case, Pushto) they constantly move back and forth between English and Urdu in informal conversation. When given the option of being interviewed in a language of their choice, all but two participants chose English. This observation is significant because it gives a clue towards the class and social position of these people. The only male participant, Atta, who chose to be interviewed in Urdu was acutely aware of this as he began apologetically:

> Most of the people from Pakistan come from English-medium schools but actually I went to an Urdu-medium school. Everybody knows that my English is not very good. Whenever I meet an Indian or Pakistani I prefer speaking in Urdu. I know people are like 'oh don't speak in Urdu, speak in English' but I am comfortable with my language. I mean I've been here for a few years now but still I feel more comfortable talking in Urdu.

Atta's belief that "most" Pakistanis have an English education is of course

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contrary to fact and shows that his reference group is a particular class of Pakistanis. The above comments must be understood in the historical context of Pakistani society where English has always been the language of power. Rahman (2002) argues that during the British rule of India, civil service and the armed forces were elitist, anglicized bodies which adopted English as the official language as it differentiated them from the bulk of Urdu-educated masses. Above all, it gave them a form of cultural capital which had a "snob value" and constituted a strong class identity marker. Since independence, the Pakistani government has continued to pursue this elitist policy of privileging English through the creation of a parallel system of schooling where English is the medium of instruction. Thus, the current education system in Pakistan is greatly divided amongst two streams of education – English-medium and Urdu-medium – where the highest-status schools catering to the elite class continue to be English-medium (Shamim, 2008). Many urban middle-class parents see English as a key source of upward mobility and invest a great deal in their children's schooling (Rahman, 2002). Rahman (2002) further argues that the education system in Pakistan has perpetuated social inequalities and will continue to do so by producing generations of young people who have a direct stake in preserving English. On the global front, the Pakistani elite has another incentive in maintaining the unequal access to English as it enables them to reap opportunities offered by the multinationals controlled by the English speaking world.

Thus, access to English language, mediated through educational institutions, is a significant marker of class, power and prestige in Pakistan. The participant's ability to fluently converse in the language can then be considered one indicator of their relatively higher social class background.

Class and Caste

Unfortunately, there has been a major dearth of research on a sociological analysis of social stratification in contemporary Pakistan or its class structure.

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Rahman (2013) has tried to fill this gap by sketching the history of development of industrial capitalism in Pakistan by applying classic Marxist concepts such as historical materialism. He explores the transformation of Pakistan's class structure beginning in the pre-colonial Mughal era all the way to the agricultural reforms of Bhutto's time and subsequent privatization in the eighties. Rahman's "Class structure of Pakistan" is a welcome addition to the current research on class formation in Pakistan but for our purpose it is not entirely relevant as we do not aim to present any sophisticated class analysis in this study. However, in order to provide background to the kind of social structure of Pakistan we must look at studies such as Madison (2006) who notes the role of government's economic policy of "functional inequality" has produced a rich industrial class along with benefiting the already strong military-bureaucratic elite, landowners and a professional class.

Looking at social organisation at a more micro-level in rural Punjab, Lefebvre (1999), argues that it is not only based along occupational lines but strongly determined by caste, religion and ethnicity. At the basic level there is a division between the landowners and craftsmen with a higher status accorded to the former. However, these two categories are further divided into *zats* based on historical fame or religious leadership amongst the landowners and along occupational activities in the craftsmen. This system only resembles the Hindu caste system in "structure" rather than "culture" (ibid. 44). In fact, the landowners and craftsmen can be categorised as two social classes but their members do not show loyalty to their class but towards their *biraderi* (patrilineage) which order the kinship relations. Gazdar (2007) also notes that the kinship group (also known as 'zaat', 'biraderi' and 'quom') in various parts of Pakistan is a "key – perhaps the key – dimension of economic, social and political interaction…..The common practice of cousin-marriage – the small Hindu and Christian communities are exceptions in this regard – contributes to the strength of extended patriarchies" (2007: 87). It must be remembered that these *biraderis* are not equal in status and are a major form of social difference.

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Barth (1971: 115) conducted a study of stratification system in the Swat valley of north-west Pakistan and proposed a general hierarchical division between: 1) persons of holy descent 2) landowners and administrators 3) priests 4) craftsmen 5) agricultural tenants and labourers 6) herders 7) despised groups. Again, Swat's economy is predominantly dependent upon agriculture unlike the complex urban economy of Karachi where most of the participants in this study come from. The difference between social stratification in urban and rural areas has been acknowledged by Khan (1966) who argues that social class was more salient in urban East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). He divides the urban society into five main classes: 1) capitalists and industrialists 2) off shoots of the capitalist structure such as managerial or administrative personnel 3) high ranking officials 4) professionals such as lawyers, doctors, teachers etc. and 4) hereditary professional classes such as dyers, butchers and weavers. Arif and Irfan (1997) also observe that, in rural areas of Pakistan, occupations are caste related and the principal source of economic differentiation is possession of land, whereas in urban areas the caste system is not linked to occupations as such. The reason why class becomes significant in the urban life is that it is more visible and easier to determine than caste in the anonymous urban setting (Dickey, 2002). In the case of urban India, although it has different social dynamics, people have become more conscious of their class positioning in the wake of secularization, modern education, industrialization and geographical mobility (Chekki, 1974). However, this does not imply that the importance of lineage group and *biraderi* ceases to exist in the urban context. In fact, Beall (1995) argues that in the absence of any government welfare, informal kinship social networks along *biraderi* lines form a crucial safety net for the urban poor of Karachi. Gazdar (2007) points to the caste based social oppression, including taboos around food, against "untouchable" Christian sweepers that persists in Karachi and many urban areas of Pakistan.

Occupational class is the most commonly used measure of social class as reflected in the UK's official National statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC)

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as well as Pakistan Standard Classification of Occupations (PSCO) published by the Bureau of Statistics. It is beyond the scope of this study to undertake a detailed social class background analysis. However, based on information on parental occupation we can argue that the majority of the participants come from a "professional" class background. With a clear lack of literature on the subject, another way of understanding the social class background of the participants was to directly pose it as a question to them without giving any ready-made categories. It must be kept in mind that the aim was not to measure the disparity between "objective" social class and "subjective" class. Rather, the purpose was to understand the participant's identification with any particular social class background. The overwhelming majority of participants placed themselves in the middle class position in Pakistan's class structure. This was primarily based upon father's occupation which in most cases was a professional occupation such as engineer, doctor, banker, or insurance executive. Other factors included father's educational qualification and some also emphasised their family's history by talking about their grandfather's occupation. Mother's occupation was not considered in this assessment as the majority of the mothers were classified as "housewives". Symbolic markers of class such as a "big house", "comfortable life", "good school" were also important in the minds of the participants in determining their own class position. Interestingly, participants who came from business families were much more aware of the changing nature of class position. For example, Rizwan narrated his family's downward mobility:

> I would say we started with an upper class position but had some setbacks when my father moved back from abroad. We used to live in a big mansion, detached bungalow, but had some financial issues. In the gulf war in 1992, my father had a massive loss so from a six bedroom house we moved into a two bedroom apartment. So I would say we started with being upper class but then moved to lower middle class.

Similarly, Imtiaz who thought his family moved from an upper to middle-class

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position during his childhood said:

> My father used to be a very successful businessman back in 1970s and 80s
> but then in late 1980s the business collapsed and some misfortune
> happened. Since then he has not been doing very much really, my mother
> is a housewife and yeah, since late 1990s my father has just been doing
> bits and pieces here and there but nothing concrete

Apart from family income, derived from father's occupation, one participant based his class identification on the prestige factor. Tariq differentiated between "wealth" and "status" and argued that his father, a judge, would be middle class according to former criterion but upper class based on the latter.

As noted earlier, despite the complexity of urban stratification in Pakistan, caste remains an important factor in determining socio-economic status of families. Therefore, a word about the caste background of the participants would further help in placing them in the social hierarchy of Pakistan. An overwhelming majority of the participants hailing from Karachi belonged to the "*Memon*" caste. This bias could be attributed to the snowballing sampling method during research. Furthermore, informal conversations with the participants revealed that the accountancy profession was very popular amongst the *Memons* of Karachi. This was also confirmed by the fact that a sizeable proportion of Muslim commercial and professional class belonging to the Gujarati communities of *Khojas, Memons* and *Bohras* migrated to the Sindh province (Karachi is capital of Sindh) after partition (Levin, 1974). Charting the history of the *Memon* community, Levin (1974) mentions their reputation for religious piety, entrepreneurship, endogamy and hereditary professions. Despite the rejection of caste in Islam, *Memons* claim to be *descendants* of the warrior Hindu caste of *Kshatris* but Levin calls it a "commercial caste". He observes that "those who have come from these communities have seized supremacy in the Pakistan market. By 1971 they constituted the overwhelming majority of prominent capitalists in Pakistan and

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were the nucleus of the national monopolistic bourgeoisie which had formed in this country" (1974: 231). After 1972, the nationalisation policy of Bhutto dented the strong economic position of the *Memon* community but it still remains one of the strongest caste groups in Pakistan. Other caste groups amongst participants included Punjabi agricultural castes such as *Kamboh* and *Arrian*.

In terms of their social profile, the participants in this study can be located as urban, middle class, high caste professionals. In this respect, they show some similarity to Favell's (2008) "Eurostars" who also belong to middle class backgrounds rather than the perceived elite status. However, the group which most closely resembles the population in this study in terms of social background is that of Pakistani immigrants in the United States. Describing the "solidly rooted middle class" Pakistanis, Orlov and Handlin (1980: 768) state:

> Most Pakistani male immigrants have had some university or professional education. About 10 percent are physicians, another 10 percent are engineers, and most of the rest are scientists, academics and businessmen. They come primarily from major cities- Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Hyderabad, Peshawar and Faisalabad; at the time of arrival to the United States, the men are typically between 25-39 years old, married to women a few years younger, and have one child.

Marital Status

The difference with Favell's (2007) EU movers is most visible in terms of marital status *as majority* of the Pakistani men in this group (80%) were married and had at least one child (70%) unlike the "single or childless lifestyle" of the former. It could be argued that the predominance of married couples in this study is a product of the snowballing sampling method as married families tend to socialise with each other rather than with single men. In Pakistani culture, single men are

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viewed with suspicion. This was affirmed by Saqib, who was the only single participant and shares accommodation with another Pakistani accountant:

> If you are unmarried it makes socialising more difficult because if you are married then you can at least be part of the society of our own Pakistanis. You know, people would discourage a single man to interact with their families, it's difficult. So you try to find single people and it was difficult……

Saqib's comments about the difficulty of finding single men and my personal observations illustrate that the dominant pattern of social existence amongst this group of migrants is that of married couples. Most of the men had recently married at the time of their migration to the UK. Despite being in the same age bracket as Favell's (2007) research group, the two distinct marital choices must be understood *in the context* of Pakistani culture where "marriage is not only a religious duty, it is a social obligation besides being the main medium for sexual relationship and procreative activities" (Malik, 2006). Even those participants who were single were all engaged to be married soon which is again evidence of the strong preference for a married life as opposed to being single. When asked what factors influenced the decision to marry, most of the men cited age as the main factor as they felt it was the "right time" to get married. Imran clarified that in his opinion, 25-30 years was the perfect time for a man to marry. The average age of participant men at marriage was 26 years which also happens to be the national average for men at the Pakistan's last census of 1991 (United Nations, 2000). However, amongst reasons for marriage it was also important that they were "settled", "doing well in life" and therefore financially able to take on the responsibility of a family. When asked if the timing of marriage at the time of migration to the UK was a mere coincidence or a deliberate decision, all participants felt the two were events were unrelated. Age rather than migration was considered the catalyst for the marriage decision.

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Research on Pakistani marriage patterns and strategies, particularly in the context of arranged cousin marriages, has been the focus of research for many academics (See Shaw, 2001: Charsley, 2006: Donnan, 1988: Bittles and Hussain, 1998). In this group of Pakistanis only one couple were first cousins while the rest were unrelated. However, a common pattern was that of a marriage arranged by the parents. This group's marriage pattern resembles most closely to that of Fischer and Lyon's (2000) "model" of (what is judged as) an "appropriate" marriage in Pakistan. This involves a match arranged between two families that are similar and equal in status. Kinship, while reducing differentiation, does not necessarily accord similarity between families. They mention the case of urban middle-class professionals in Lahore who prefer an educated spouse for their children. There are often educational discrepancies between different branches of the family and since similarity of families is crucial, they usually opt for non kin middle class families. In the current group education was seen as an important factor in the choice of spouse along with belonging to a "good family". A detailed discussion of marital choice and interaction will be undertaken in the later chapters.

As mentioned earlier, literature on Pakistani male labour migrants to the UK also confirms that the dominant pattern for these men was to migrate alone leaving wives and children behind. Family reunification for Pakistani migrants occurred at a much later stage as compared to other ethnic migrants (refer to literature review chapter). However, the case of professional migrants is completely opposite as they were able to bring over their spouses within a few months of their migration. Their firms made all the arrangements for the visa process and in some cases also bore the cost of it. Therefore, the issue of family reunification never arose for these migrants.

Professional Education

As expected, all the male participants had achieved a tertiary level education in

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the form of a Chartered Accountancy (CA) qualification from Pakistan. They opted for accountancy at a fairly early stage of their education, for example, immediately after finishing the equivalent of A-levels in Pakistan. The much coveted CA degree is awarded by the Institute of Chartered Accountants Pakistan (ICAP), headquartered in Karachi, and includes a rigorous study and training programme of five years or above. All of the participants chose the entry route which involves a 2 year full-time private study programme known as the "Foundation and Intermediate course" and a subsequent 3 year training period with one of ICAP's approved accountancy firms[6]. During their mandatory work experience, trainees are also required to successfully pass a number of exams before they can obtain the charter to practice accountancy professionally. This process of accreditation is remarkably similar to the UK's where students are required to undertake a minimum of 3 years of on-the-job training alongside taking exams. The influence of British accounting practices and rules over the subcontinent during the colonial period cannot be discounted (Ashraf and Ghani, 2005). However, this similarity is also due to the recent move towards internationalisation of the accounting profession in the form of harmonization of practices and standards across countries (Ball, 1995). Thus, ICAP is a member of International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), Confederation of Asian and Pacific Accountants (CAPA) and South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA). Pakistani accountants are trained according to international standards and their degree is internationally recognised. In 2007 ICAEW (UK's issuing authority) and ICAP signed a Memorandum of Understanding whereby members of ICAP could register to become members of ICAEW after completing a few modules[7]. This was another testament to the high level of international recognition awarded to professional accountancy education in Pakistan.

Regarding their professional qualification, all participants acknowledged the

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[6] Source: ICAP official website www.icap.org.pk

[7] http://www.icaew.com/index.cfm/route/157505/icaew_ga/en/Qualifications/Train_for_the_ACA/ACA_international/ACA_training_in_Pakistan

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extremely competitive and demanding nature of ICAP's rigorous study programme whose completion gave a great sense of accomplishment to these men. Thus, the overall perception of their chosen profession was very positive in the eyes of all the participants. Fisher and Murphy (1995) also reached a similar conclusion when researching British accounting students perceptions of their chosen degree. They note that the students felt that their "subject is generally perceived as very highly placed in the status hierarchy of disciplines taught in institutions of higher education.…Attitudes towards accountants as people may be negative, but the profession's equity appears to be high in terms of both its relative status in society and the way in which it is perceived by those who study accounting in higher education" (ibid, 56). This feeling of belonging to a prestigious profession echoed throughout the interviews in this study as Kamran's comments below illustrate:

> Wherever we went, we were always welcomed, of course, it's a very reputable profession in our country. There are very few chartered accountants in Pakistan. Even if you are a student you get a lot of respect from people surrounding you. Your clients see you as a big man, so all in all, it's good.

Imran also showed a sense of pride in his professional degree:

> It is kind of prestigious; I mean probably you don't feel it here in the UK but if you go back to Pakistan. I would give you an example, I was travelling from Karachi to London and the person sitting next to me asked me "What do you do?" and I said "I am a chartered accountant". He was like "wow! You are a chartered accountant!" In total we have got 5000 registered chartered accountants out of a population of 130 million. So people think this is very prestigious and very difficult and I think that was the influencing factor.

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Imran's last remark confirmed that the honour and prestige of holding an accountancy degree influences the choice of subject for many in the early years of education. According to Lightbody et al. (1997), South Asian pupils in British schools particularly place a high value on the social standing of a career and therefore prefer a "respectable" job with a professional status. Financial remuneration was also a key factor in choice of accountancy for some like Usman:

> CA, you would know as well, has always been one of the most rewarding professions in Pakistan. I think it is probably the only profession where you get an assistant manager or manager level position as soon as you qualify with a very handsome salary. So that was also, money that was another motivation

However, a vast majority of participants lamented the lack of formal information and guidance for young Pakistani students wishing to pursue accountancy. Without any role models and a parental preference for conventional fields such as medicine and engineering, these men had to carve a career path for themselves. Many participants expressed feelings of "being lost" and "confused" after finishing school. Some attempted medical or engineering universities under parental pressure but after failing to gain admission moved to accountancy on their own accord. The role of parents in guiding or influencing the career choice of these participants was not very significant. This is contrary to the general research evidence that parents, particularly those of ethnic minority origin, are the single most important factor in young people's choice of career (Lightbody et al., 1997). In fact, Rizwan had an interesting and unique story about why he chose accountancy:

> Accountancy was in my mind when I was in seventh or eighth standard, I remember that and I have been telling everybody about this. There was a movie, I am a big fan of Bollywood, so there was a movie with Aamir

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Khan and this guy was a chartered accountant. It was a simple life of a chartered accountant, just routine life but something just clicked. I said this life looks good and I should do that and it just stuck in my mind. I don't know why, as I said, there was no counselling, no mentoring, it was just that everybody did what they felt like.

Many saw themselves as sort of pioneers in their families for opting for a different field of study. They prided themselves *on* the fact that they had inspired their younger siblings or cousins to follow them, for example, Tariq candidly shared his experience:

My family, like my maternal side, every single person is a doctor. They think if you are a human being, you are a doctor, otherwise you are not a human being! So I wanted to change that and I think now I have changed that.

There is clearly a narrative of agency running through the interviews in terms of being able to make their own decisions and carve out a life of their own. The above discussion highlights how this agency was exercised in making educational choices, at times against conventional norms or parental desires, by individuals who view themselves as the herald of change. While societ al. values and perceptions of a "good job" do shape career choices, the participants were keen to point out their own initiatives in making such decisions.

Pre-Migration Work Experience

As mentioned earlier, professional accountancy students are required to complete a minimum of three years' work experience in an accountancy firm. Therefore, all participants shared their experience of working in one of Pakistan's Big Four

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firms[8] and inevitably made a comparison with their current experience in the UK. There was an overwhelmingly negative opinion of the work culture in Pakistan as many participants picked on the problem of "dirty office politics" and "leg pulling". Asad was particularly vocal about his dislike for the office environment in Pakistan:

> Well the whole work culture, ethics, people… they are all nasty buggers there. Seriously! Well, the seniors were for some reason just stuck in their dirty politics. I was sort of moving up, the partner was talking to me more and they thought their position was getting threatened by me. So they got really angry or annoyed by it and in the end they tried to do things like trying to make me look bad or do stupid things. Politics is everywhere but that was pure dirty politics.

The environment was described as "hostile" by many who felt that as trainees they were treated with least respect in a very rigid hierarchical structure. Faisal complained about the lack of openness in the office structure as it meant that there were many protocols and as a junior it was nearly impossible to directly communicate with the senior most people. Reflecting on his experience, Tariq recollected how the "bossy" environment shattered his self-confidence and de-motivated him. One participant likened his harsh experience to that of military training and believed that if the culture been friendlier the trainees would not have to go through this "agony and *trauma*".

Saqib believed that the employees, particularly at junior levels, were exploited by the firm:

> I believe that there was a lot of exploitation. In terms of working hours,

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[8] In Pakistan, the Big Four are affiliates of the local audit firms: Ernst & Young (Pakistan) - formerly Ford Rhodes Sidat Hyder & Co; .KPMG Taseer Hadi & Co. - member of KPMG International; M. Yousuf Adil Saleem & Co — member of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu; A. F. Ferguson & Co. - Member of PricewaterhouseCoopers

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you were supposed to put in long hours and everything. The culture was not such that if you were doing good work it would be reflected in the feedback. There was no performance appraisal system. How it worked was that if you are not doing as much as you should, then how people used to react was "we will fire you!"

Many noted that, despite their multi-national status, the corporate culture in these Big Four firms was still very much dominated by national practices. Usman argued

Although globally they are part of the Big Four, locally, the partners are the owners. So they set the trend, they set the momentum and they enforce whatever culture they feel like enforcing.

Khilji's (2004) research on Pakistani corporate culture, although not specific to the accounting industry, strongly resonates with the observations in this study. She notes that the corporate culture is correlated with the national culture which can be described as "collectivist, status-conscious and having a large power distance" (2004: 142). The social set-up is dominated by the needs of the family rather than the individual and this leads to a disapproval of originality, independence in decision-making and questioning authority. Similarly, the corporate culture is bureaucratic and hierarchical where employee autonomy is limited by the lack of top to bottom communication. Overall, employee satisfaction, morale and organisation commitment is low due to a feeling of not being rewarded as well as existence of favouritism (Khilji, 2001).

The lack of a transparent appraisal system was also lamented as many felt that performance was only measured by how well you knew a manager rather than actual skill level. Interestingly, many of Khilji's (2004) participants also compared their culture to organizations in the West where a more participatory management style exists. Participants in this study had a first-hand experience of

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working in the Western countries and therefore it was not surprising when they noted the huge difference between the corporate culture in the two countries. However, they acknowledged that this consciousness only came about *after* they came to the UK as Abbas confesses:

> When I was there I didn't feel bad because I was part of it. For me, it was that this is how things are done. Only when you go to another country or get another exposure, you come to know that there is a different approach to work where everyone is respected and has equal rights

"Respect as individuals/employees" and "openness" are the two main themes which emerge from the participants' observations on the work culture in the UK. Some were struck by small things such as the fact that they could refer to their seniors by their first names rather than "sir", or that a junior employee could suggest something to a partner and his opinion would be taken on board. The strong backward and forward communication link throughout the hierarchy meant that juniors could freely interact with the seniors without any hesitance or fear. Many recalled that this was a particularly unique experience for them as they were so used to an authoritarian organisational structure back home. Bilal, for example, pointed out that in the UK seniority meant more "responsibility" rather than more "authority" whereas it was opposite in Pakistan. Also, participants deemed work culture as more "professional" which often meant more structured and organised as opposed to haphazard. Many also appreciated the fact that the firms in the UK promoted a culture of work-life balance which was unheard of in Pakistan. For example, Imran's comments illustrate this point

> They (UK firm) understand that its weekend, if its weekend then they would really understand it and they won't call you, they won't send you an email. That's the best thing here and I really like this. In Pakistan, forget about it! it doesn't matter if it's weekend or nine o clock in the evening or midnight. Here they have got that work life balance which I like.

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While the overall experience of working in Pakistan was extremely negative for the majority of the participants, some acknowledged certain positive aspects of this experience. These tended to be "technical" or work related rather than personal. For example, Rizwan noted

> The good thing about this was that in Pakistan everything was very raw so you didn't have programmes, computer softwares or books on things you are supposed to do when you are doing audit.... Then you explore and you use your own brain to do things which are not written somewhere. So you don't have a checklist to go through, you just use your brain, logic, common sense about how things would work. That was the best part so I think I managed to do some things which if I compare myself with people living in the UK, they cannot do because everything is so set and planned

Last, the experience of working in Pakistan for all participants in this study was in the early 1990s and Khilji (2004) shows evidence for a change in human resource management culture of Pakistan (particularly, in the private sector). As a result of successive government policies of increasing privatization and opening up of the economy to foreign investment there has been a greater exposure to a different value system. This influence has predominantly been American as the majority of the new multinationals operating in the Pakistan originated in America. She notes a generational gap in the management styles as a younger cohort of employees, educated in American business education and practices, has experienced as well as maintained a transition in the traditional value system. So, there is a move towards an organisational culture where "power distance is being reduced to allow for employees' autonomy, involvement and participation" (2004: 143). To what extent these changes have transformed Pakistan's accounting industry is unknown but many participants pointed towards this change. Usman picked up on

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the impact of multinationals which boast "well trained, qualified staff, and good practices" and Facial noted that

> Things are changing, there is a more computer based environment, there are methodologies out there, I think they are following the Western trend and making things more set and pre-planned but not in those days.

This chapter gives an insight into the personal lives of migrant professionals involved in this study by bringing forth their particular experiences of growing up, education and work. It shows how these men differ in their biographical details and background from majority of Pakistani migrants in the UK as well as those occupying a similar professional group. After getting a sense of the social profile of participants, the next chapter continues the story of their life and charts out the most important phase of their lives i.e. that of their experiences of migration.

Chapter 5: Migration

Motivation

Why do people migrate? One way of answering this question is seeking macro level/ structural explanations including economic reasons such as the existence of international wage differentials, unemployment, failures in capital and credit markets in sending countries etc. (Massey, 2003). The role of national government policies and international organisations such as United Nations cannot be discounted as they control and regulate flows of migration within and between different countries. Demography and ecology also play an important role in determining population growth, density and availability of arable land (Faist, 2000). However, at the micro level focus is on the decision-making individual entangled in a web of social relationships in places of origin and destination (ibid. 31). There is a third level of analysis where both macro and micro factors meet termed the "meso-level". It recognises that macro level structures limit the possibility of what is achievable in terms of migration and at the individual level how people muster up resources to achieve mobility. For example, at the meso-level there is a realisation that migration decisions are often made in the household or the community as a whole, highlighting the social and symbolic ties of individuals. Also, intermediary factors such as recruitment agencies bridge the gap between the individual and the larger polity (ibid 33). It must be acknowledged that the distinction between the three levels is not absolute and a migration pattern might not neatly fit into one of these oversimplified models. However, for the sake of analysis it is convenient to make these divisions and in this study we will primarily but not exclusively operate at the meso-level. We will first look at the larger dynamics which dictated the movement of professionals from Pakistan to the UK during the last decade or so and also analyse how individual decisions were made in these given conditions.

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Macro Level: Trends in UK and Pakistan

According to an analysis of migration trends in the UK (Hatton, 2005), net immigration increased dramatically between the years 1993-2000. This surge can be explained by several factors at the macro level, particularly, the growth in the economy and an increased demand for labour. Hatton (2005) notes that the fall in unemployment, rise in British GDP per capita, EU enlargement and most importantly an increasing income inequality[9] between Britain and a host of other countries accounts for this escalation in net immigration to the UK. The UK government from 1997 onwards pursued a policy of encouraging immigration, especially, highly skilled immigration under its work permit system. This is again confirmed by the sharp rise in the number of work permits issued from fifteen thousand in 1982 to eighty thousand in 1999. According to the official rhetoric, the rationale for the work permit scheme was to "enable employers to recruit or train people who are not nationals of a European Economic Area (EEA) country. ... This assists employers in their business development and helps them overcome short-term skill shortages that it would that it would not be feasible to meet by training resident workers" (Home Office, 2002). A work permit is initially issued for a period of five years by a UK employer firm and after a period of another year the applicant is eligible for UK permanent residence. In 2002 migration of skilled labour to the UK was further facilitated by the introduction a "Highly Skilled Migrant Programme" (HSMP) based on a points system. It is interesting to note that in 2005 the number of HSMP approvals increased by 140 per cent on the year before to reach 17,631. Under this programme, applications from citizens of over 100 different countries were approved but those from India and Pakistan accounted for half of them (Salt and Millar, 2006). This figure must be understood in the context of the long history of migration from these regions to the Britain.

Any discussion on why people emigrate would be incomplete without looking at

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[9] As measured by the Gini coefficient.

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certain "push factors" at home. Pakistan has always been an exporter of manpower. According to Azam (1995) certain macro-economic conditions in Pakistan over the decades have accounted for this trend of emigration: high population, low GDP growth, poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. Furthermore, he notes that the Pakistani government has always viewed emigration favourably as it generates much needed foreign exchange in the form of remittances. Therefore, the government has minimized controls over export of manpower through successive legislation over "Emigration and Overseas Employment". Ahmad et al. (2008) confirm these observations in a study of determinants of international migration in Pakistan by citing figures such as 9 percent unemployment rate, 10-12 percent food inflation and one-third of the population living below poverty line.

Global Trends

So far we have only looked at the state level factors which contributed to the rise in the flow of highly skilled professionals to the UK but it is equally important to analyse developments at the global level. The last two decades have witnessed an increased trend towards "internationalisation of the professions" which implies a shift away from nationally defined standards and practices towards global convergence (Iredale, 2001). This has opened up the professions to transnational movement of skilled labour at an unprecedented level. According to Iredale (2001: 11), four factors have significantly contributed towards this phenomenon: a) an increase in transnational recognition and accreditation with the creation of regional blocs such as EU, NAFTA and MRA[10] (b) role of international bodies such as GATS and WTO[11] in liberalisation of professional services (c) global activities of professional associations (d) emergence of new skilled labour markets that are relatively free of national controls such as the IT area.

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[10] EU: European Union   NAFTA: North American Free Trade Agreement   MRA: Australia-New Zealand Mutual Recognition Agreement

[11] GATS: General Agreement on Trade in Services   WTO: World Trade Organistion

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Globalisation and opening up of national borders has put pressure on national governments to decrease immigration controls on skilled labour to facilitate "global capital".

Trends in Accounting Industry

The impact of these global and national processes on the accountancy industry is another factor to keep in mind. The industry is not immune to global trends and has in fact been at the forefront of the globalisation project. When markets become international and cross-border trading becomes commonplace, there is a demand for internationalization of accounting information (Ball, 1995). Moreover, with multinational clients the accounting firms that audit their transactions need to go global as well. Therefore, there has been a trend towards mergers and acquisitions in the Big Six accounting firms. The result is an ever increasing level of intra-corporate transfers of skilled workers within different offices of large accountancy firms (Beaverstock, 2007). However, by far the most important development in the accountancy industry affecting the participants in this study came on 19th July 2002. On this day, "the European Union (EU) Parliament passed a regulation that required all companies listed in the EU to adopt International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) for fiscal years starting after 1 January 2005. Widespread adoption of IFRS will result in a fundamental change in the business environment, since prior to 2005, companies followed a variety of country-specific "Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)" (Soderstrom and Sun, 2007: 675). This suddenly created a major demand for personnel trained and conversant in IFRS to fill the temporary shortage in staff. It is no coincidence that all my participants moved to the UK in this time period (between 2004-2005). They were fully equipped with IFRS knowledge as Pakistan has always followed international standards as opposed to national standards as Asad explains:

At that stage (post qualification), the situation was improving in the UK

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and US for Pakistani accountants because international accounting rules were changing. In Pakistan we always study international accounting standards but in the UK people were not exposed to them. They used to apply their own standards but when the world changed and all of these countries adopted international accounting standards, there was a huge demand for people who knew international accounting standards. So that created demand for us and we found this opportunity. UK government also started issuing working visas.

Micro Level

It is fascinating to note how the macro level changes impact decision-making at the very basic individual level. All participants were acutely aware of the trends and opportunities in their industry at the global level and sought to gain advantage of the changing situation worldwide. This was evident in Saqib's decision to move abroad:

To gain some international experience because of the whole growth in the accounting profession and the corporate world. There were a lot of opportunities internationally. It seemed like this window would not be open for ever so if you don't use it or don't get such opportunities then a couple of years down the line when somebody would return from abroad with that kind of experience, that person will have an edge over you.

At the individual level, the motivation to migrate amongst urban, educated, lower-middle class Pakistanis has been studied by Hassan and Raza (2009) who suggest that in the wake of rapid social change in urban areas and rising inequalities there is a strong desire amongst this group to emigrate. Their participants cited reasons such as a) lack of justice in Pakistan b) terrible living, working and environmental conditions c) lack of affordable housing d) few recreational facilities and e) concern for their children's education. In another study of emigration of health

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care professionals from Pakistan, Syed et al. (2008) argue that medical students wish to migrate to developed countries due to better quality of educational programmes, salary structure, and poor work environment in Pakistan. In this study, the prime motivation to move abroad was to improve career prospects. Participants seemed frustrated with the opportunities available in Pakistan and believed that gaining "international experience" was the key to success in their field. Improving one's technical ability by getting exposure to a larger and more advanced market was also a common reason for moving aboard as explained by Ahmed:

> The reason I wanted to move out was that I knew Pakistan was a very small market and the products available or being dealt with in Pakistan are not the cutting edge. It's not world class; I was always interested in the financial institutions. If you look at Pakistani banks, they only offer simple loans and forwards. There are no derivatives being traded, swaps were recently allowed by SECP[12]. So what is happening is that we get to deal with what the world has already dealt with ten years ago. So I didn't want to be in a situation where I am just restricted just because of my surroundings. So I just wanted to get out of Pakistan and move to a developed market.

Hanlon (1999) observed a similar pattern when an overwhelming majority of Irish accountants in his study agreed to the proposition that a temporary move overseas helps one's career. Importantly, technical knowledge played a large part in the decision to migrate as many accountants believed that a move overseas would give them exposure to a "higher quality experience, larger business scale, and new areas of accountancy" (ibid 208). It is interested to note that neither in Hanlon's population nor in this study, better salary in the destination country was considered a motivation to move abroad. The average salary of a qualified

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[12] Securities and exchange commission Pakistan

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chartered accountant in the UK is nearly £80,000 per annum[13] but unfortunately there is no comparable figure for Pakistan. Some of the participants mentioned the fact that their profession is one of the highest paid in their home country and one participant insisted that he did not move abroad for a higher salary. In this regard, these migrants are very dissimilar to the bulk of Pakistani labour migrants described in the literature whose primary motivation is to seek a better life for themselves. However, many participants showed a great degree of frustration with the system in Pakistan which they often described as "corrupt", "unfair", "unequal". For example, elaborating on his motivation to leave the country, Bilal commented:

> Well at that stage it was purely the opportunity to excel further. In Pakistan unless you know some influential people, it gets very difficult. May be it's just a perception thing but it happens.

Pakistan is one of the most corrupt countries in the world as consistently shown by the figures of Transparency International. There is widespread belief that there is a severe lack of accountability, disregard of merit and nepotism in the country's administrative system (Transparency International, 2010). Seeking a sociological answer for this "culture" of corruption, Islam (2005) looks at Pakistan's colonial past, evolution of political structure after independence and most importantly the collectivist orientation. He argues that lack of adherence to universal rules or laws stems from Pakistani traditions of tolerance of inequality and highly skewed distribution of power. This system clearly works in favour of the elite and blocks out the middle classes and below. The awareness of corruption is highest amongst the middle class of Pakistan[14] and it is no surprise that Pakistan's "National Anti-corruption Strategy" 2002 targets the urban middle class population as it has

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http://www.icaew.com/index.cfm/route/149123/icaew_ga/en/Home/Press_and_policy/Press_releas es/ACAs_in_business_attract_average_salary_of_nearly_80k

[14] http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/pakistan/19-a-tale-of-two-classes-hh-03

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maximum potential to change things. Furthermore, Transparency International's survey mentioned earlier is concentrated on the urban and semi-urban middle class population which also makes up the population in this study. Annoyance with the current system in Pakistan was clearly one of the reasons for emigration amongst the men like Usman:

> I think it's just the frustration that every, I would say, the middle class young professional goes through at one point or the other. I mean if you are a struggling middle class person then there is so much you have to go through. There are so many hardships you have to face, when you have to face the government departments. I mean there are so many inequalities. At one point or the other you get that feeling of "somehow if I could only leave the country!"

Imran echoed a similar feeling:

> It was very difficult for me to work in Pakistan because nothing can happen in Pakistan without using your influence and bribe. I think one approach is that you face these things but it's difficult. Everyone back home is doing that, if you want something to be done you have to have some influential contact maybe in your family or friends or whoever. I would just give you an example, I was trying to make my driving licence which is a very simple thing. You should go to the office, you should stand in the queue, do the application and after three four days you will get your provisional. Then you should be able to take a test, that's the normal process but you never get that in Pakistan. Sometimes the officer is nor there, sometimes his boss is not there, you don't find a queue. It's a very small thing but it was definitely a consideration. I didn't like it and I did not want to be part of that process.

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Imran's comments about not wanting to be a part of it, or not wanting to face it, has resonance with Horvat's (2004) analysis of migration of highly skilled persons from the Balkans to western countries. He argues that most of these people leave the country because their perception of governance is based on meritocracy as opposed to the ruling elite which is mired by corruption and unrestrained capitalism. In this context, brain drain can be seen as "avoidance of direct social conflict and some kind of silent revolution" (ibid 90) by those who believe they should be valued on merit.

Intention of Length of Stay

The decision to migrate can also be studied in relation to the intention or expectations of the migrant about his/her length of stay (Iredale, 2002). The common distinction between temporary and permanent is no longer valid as demonstrated by the case of transient skilled migrants constantly moving across the globe. Favell (2008) also talks about the "assumption of temporariness" or a three to five year stay plan for a lot of EU movers in his study. When asked about their intentions regarding their length of stay at the time of migration, the majority of the participants in my study answered that they did not have a clear indication of it. Abbas claimed "I was on auto-pilot" while Imtiaz wanted "to go with the flow and see how things turn out". None of them put a figure on it as they acknowledged that "things could change". This has been corroborated by a longitudinal study of European migrant workers intention of stay in the UK which concluded that migrants seemed to be aware of the different possible factors which could affect their decision and therefore showed a "let's see" attitude. However, literature on early Pakistani labour migration clearly suggested a "myth of return" where men saw themselves as sojourners who would eventually return to their home country. Whether this myth of return exists in the group of professionals under study or their intention to stay changed over time will be discussed in later chapters.

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Destination Selection

The last section highlighted why the Pakistani professionals in this study decided to move out of their country but it is equally importantly to explore *where* they moved. These two decisions are not necessarily separate as the intention to move could be highly dependent upon the opportunity to move to a particular destination. The overwhelming majority of participants made a short move or a secondment (less than a year in all cases) to the Middle-East before migrating to the UK. They showed a strong desire to work in the UK at the time but the actual possibility of following this path was hindered by the dearth of opportunities there. Thus, destination choice can be different from the actual destination selected. Abbas called this situation a case of "beggars are not choosers" which shows the constraints upon destination choice. Waqas pointed out:

> I was interested in the UK or Europe but I found it impossible to go there so never really thought about it. Getting a job, work permit situation and all of that in the UK was impossible. UK was not issuing any work permits to any accountants at the time.

"Why UK?" or specifically, "why London?" was the next logical question. The most common reason was London's advanced financial market and its position as the "financial hub of the world". As accountants, many believed that London had to offer them the best technical skills and experience to excel in their field. Talking about all the latest developments in the financial sector, Asad explained:

> You will always find out that someone in London has developed it or someone in London is selling it or someone in London is doing it. I thought "wow! what am I doing here?" I was at the receiving end so I wanted to be in a position where I was creating and developing things which other people can use. So I thought the place to be is London and when I got this opportunity I said "perfect!"

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Kamran had a similar feeling on the subject:

> Then what fascinated me about London was that it's the hub of financial services. So there would be more learning experience there although my salary was less than what I had previously.

Umer's one line response to the same question epitomises the lure of working in a global city like London:

> Financial services, big names, corporate culture, Canary Wharf, the city!

London's position as a "world city" has been a hot topic amongst global sociologists and geographers. Friedman (1986) defines and grades cities on the basis of certain criteria such as corporate headquarters of MNCs, international institutions, growth of business service sector, major transportation node and dissemination of information. Most importantly, for our purposes, world cities such as London are points of destination for large number of international migrants. According to these criteria, Friedman produces a table of "core countries" and it is no surprise that London is amongst the primary cities in the world. It draws people like Saqib:

> I think it's like chasing stars. Europe or UK are more grown or mature markets than Bahrain or Pakistan so they inspire everyone. Definitely, they inspired me when I chose to join London.

The comparison of UK with other countries was a common theme and points towards a global taxonomy of cities. The move to the Middle-East before UK can be understood in this context as many believed that the experience of working in former countries was somewhere in the middle of Pakistan and UK. Regarding his short secondment to Bahrain, Rizwan noted:

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> People use Bahrain or other Middle Eastern countries as a jumping pad for moving out of Pakistan and then trying to venture into other things like moving to the US or UK. Everybody was just trying to elsewhere and I decided to go to the UK and tried applying there.

This theme also picked up by Hanlon (1999) in his study amongst Irish accountants. He argues that an international hierarchy has emerged in accountancy which is couched in the narrative of progression. The orthodoxy holds that migration to core centres such as London and New York is beneficial to an individual's career in a way that other sites are not (ibid. 219). By publicly conforming to this view, accountants show their ambition and adherence to the ideals of the firm. Hanlon (1999) challenges the assumption that migration to core financial centres necessarily leads to superior technical skills and argues that it is in fact the social and symbolic aspect of it that is more important. Favell (2006) also addresses the issue of "London calling" when he investigates the migration decisions of French professionals in London. London was perceived as "a privileged gateway to the wider world and bigger, better careers" (ibid. 248).

Apart from career related factors, certain other basis for destination choice have been studied by researchers. Prominent amongst these are a) geographical distance between origin and destination b) social networks c) access to amenities and c) presence of a large immigrant community at the place of destination (Fafchamps and Shilpi, 2009). A couple of these factors were mentioned by the participants in this study as additional considerations for selecting UK. Language familiarity and the benefits of having an already established Pakistani community in the UK were noticeable. For example, stating his destination preferences, Saqib said:

> I preferred going to the US, UK or Canada because they are English speaking countries. They are more diverse in terms of culture and there is

already a settled community there. You know, a lot of considerations like food, people, social life and everything which one would struggle with in other places.

Geographical distance between Pakistan and the UK as compared to some other western countries was an important factor for people like Bilal:

Well UK is somewhere in the middle. When I say middle I mean it's convenient as far travelling to and from Pakistan is concerned. If go to US you go too far, right? if you go to Canada its again too far, Australia was another option but again it's the other end of the world. So that was also a reason and the other reason was that there was a boom in the industry so there were a lot of opportunities.

Migration channel/route

We have analysed the various driving factors behind the decision to migrate to the UK amongst this group of Pakistani accountants but motivation alone is not adequate. In order to translate their intentions into actual actions, migrants use different channels or pathways to direct them to their destination. As noted earlier, at a macro level a number of factors such as immigration policies at home and abroad, can govern the path of entry chosen. In this case, the UK government's relatively relaxed policy towards highly skilled migration and issuance of work permits meant that Pakistani accountants could choose this particular route to entry. However, at a more micro level, migration channels can operate through a) friends and family guiding the potential migrant in his/her search for employment or accommodation b) recruitment agencies which act as "gate keepers" to international employment and c) transnational companies governing the flow of personnel within their internal labour market (Findlay and Li, 1998: 685). To this list, Iredale (2001) adds the rapidly expanding channel of online recruitment where international corporations post jobs on multiple sites, accept

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online applications, conduct online technical screening and interviews over the phone. The popularity of this mode of recruitment lies in its low cost and high efficiency for the employers as well as employees.

According to Iredale (2001:18) "a survey of 500 global companies found that in 2000 that seventy-nine percent of respondents used their corporate websites for recruitment, compared with sixty percent in 1999 and twenty-nine percent in 1998. The majority of participants in my study had also utilised this particular channel to find employment in the UK. Only one had opted for a global recruitment agency while another had asked his friend to put his CV forward to a partner in his firm. The online recruitment process was very similar to the one mentioned in Iredale's article, as explained in detail by Ahmed:

> I applied online and they called me to set up an interview. The first telephonic interview was with the HR people and it was very general. I don't think there were any technical questions, may be one or two technical questions because there was an audit guy sitting there as well. Then there was another interview. I got a call saying that I had cleared that one and there would be a final interview with the audit partner. The audit partner interviewed me for an hour on a Friday morning. Obviously it went well and I got an offer.

Ahmed and others who used this channel showed a great deal of satisfaction with the recruitment process and emphasised the fact that they did not use any "contacts" to get the job. For example Imtiaz said:

> It wasn't through anyone, no recruiter or anyone else. I just picked the job opportunity off the internet. I gave my interview, I got accepted and moved here.

This was in stark contrast to their experience of searching for a job opportunity in

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the Middle East prior to the move to the UK. The primary migration channel in this scenario was network of friends and colleagues. This observation indicates that the migration channels discussed above are not mutually exclusive and as Findlay and Li's (1998) research findings suggest, they influence or are influenced by the context in which they operate. So, different sets of migration channels are used by people within one profession, depending on the position and motivation of migrants. Migrants are active agents who utilise and tweak multiple channels to suit their requirements. For example, the majority of those who found jobs in the Middle East mentioned that they used the intra-corporate transfer route or a secondment first to enter the job market. During the secondment they established contacts with the local partners and others in the firm which was useful in finding a permanent job there upon the end of the secondment period. The impact of networks on the migration channel is crucial but these networks are embedded in social position and class. Vertovec (2002) argues that high occupational groups rely more on networks of colleagues or organizations and less on kin-based networks than unskilled workers.

This divide can be clearly observed in the case of Pakistani migration to the UK. As discussed in detail in the literature review, the "chain migration" route adopted by the unskilled workers from Pakistan involves a process whereby immigrants from the same village or family sponsor each other to migrate to a particular destination. Kin or *biraderi* ties played the single most crucial role in this migration channel as the migrants depend upon each other for social support. On the other hand, none of the highly skilled migrants in this study relied upon their kinship ties in either the migration or settlement phase. This was despite the fact that most of them had already established relatives in London. Asad's comments give an indication of this:

> Interestingly, I had some relatives living in London. I am kind of a fiercely
> independent person so I did not want to rely on anyone or seek anyone's
> help because I think Allah helps you if you want to get somewhere. My

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family said "no, you are going to London, you have to have somebody there". So they called the relatives up but I didn't go to them when I came here!

These migrants were able to remain "independent" as the employer firm substituted the role played by kin in making all the necessary arrangements for migration. All participants agreed that the visa process was "smooth" as the firm applied for the work permit on their behalf.

Early Settlement period in the UK: Housing

Before their arrival to the UK, most participants had built up certain expectations about their destination country in terms of work and living. Looking at settlement experiences of expatriates to New Zealand, Selvarajah (1998) found a degree of excitement, keenness, and anxiety about the prospect of going to a new environment amongst participants. He suggested that the availability of information or lack of information about the new environment influences the personal outlook of the expatriate prior to departure and on arrival. The primary source for developing such ideas for participants in this study was information from friends who had an experience of working abroad and online resources. For example Umer talked about his strategy for collecting information on London:

> So what I did was, spend three days and nights on the web trying to do research on London. I tried to remember the tube network, see which areas are good, which areas are bad, which areas are closer to work, and where will I be located. I used the BBC website to get a 360 degrees view of London bridge!

This is similar to the experience of Chinese highly skilled migrants to New Zealand who actively sought information from experiences of others and from a variety of publications and the Internet (Benson-Rea and Rawlinson, 2003).

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However, it is very dissimilar to the experiences of the vast majority of low skilled Pakistani immigrants to the UK who are dependent upon close kinship ties for information. Web access in Pakistan is a very recent phenomenon (1990s) and still extremely limited as only 10.6% of the population had internet access in 2009[15] as compared to 70% of households in the UK's[16]. Moreover, internet access in Pakistan is restricted to large urban cities like Karachi and Lahore where most of the participants in this study hail from.

The role of the employer firm in providing information on what to expect during the early settlement phase was negligible. The firm offered a generous "relocation package" which provided adequate financial support but did not ease the process of settling down for the new employees. Regarding this issue, Tariq stated:

> I actually fed this back to my office, that somebody who is a complete stranger would have no clue of how to go on the trains, what the underground system is, which hotel to go to? The firm should book them in a hotel something so that they can settle in for a week before starting work. It was not there for me.

The newly arrived migrants were left to "fend for themselves" which is a strange observation as acculturation of expatriates is a very important aspect of human resource management in multinational corporations (Aycan, 1997). However, according to the participants the firm's lack of experience in hiring overseas accountants was reflected in the way it handled this aspect of their migration. Rizwan explained:

> I think it was a new experience for the firm I joined. I was actually the first or second batch, when I say batch I mean 10 to 15 people who joined as experienced hire. [The firm] had never hired experienced people from

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[15] http://www.internetworldstats.com/asia/pk.htm

[16] http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=8

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abroad before. I don't blame them because they were still learning. When I joined I was not given accommodation for even a single day but now things have changed. The firm gave 15 day accommodation and they give support and tell them where to go, give them advice in terms of where estate agents are, who would be able to help you, what's sites you can go through but at my time nothing at all.

With a lack of support from the firm, participants tended to rely upon colleagues and friends in a similar situation. This usually translated into sharing a privately rented accommodation in an inner London area with a recently migrated Pakistani colleague. At this point in time the men had migrated alone (wives to follow in the next few months) and presented a picture somewhat similar to that of single Pakistani male migrants clustered together in cheap accommodation, or Favell's (2006) young French migrants living together in cramped hostels in London. However, the difference is that the geographical clustering of these professional migrants was not determined by the concentration of co-ethnics in the area. As opposed to the ethnic clustering witnessed in the case of unskilled Pakistani migrants, the geographical distribution of the men in this study was almost exclusively determined by the distance from work place. Thus, they were spatially dispersed in London in accordance with proximity from their place of work. For example, when asked why he chose to live in the Docklands area, Bilal answered:

Beautiful place, but mainly because my office was in Canary Wharf so it was easy access. Yeah, a bit of fresh air and it was close to the Thames and I think it was water side apartment. I quite like bigger space because I am used to it, back home and in the Middle East we had big houses. The apartment I moved into in Britannia village was really small, usual sort of apartments you see here in London. When my wife came here I thought I'd rather go for a bigger space now that I have a family.

Apart from a very small minority, none of the participants displayed a desire to

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live in an area concentrated by their co-ethnics. This is in contrast to Bowes et al. (2002) study on "housing careers" of Pakistanis in the UK where many respondents showed a deliberate preference to live with others of the same background, and especially near a Mosque, or specialist ethnic shops (for halal meat). However, a minority of their respondents "actively" avoided Pakistani areas, which is also the case of participants in this study as Abbas exclaimed:

> You can't live in those dodgy areas where unfortunately most of the
> Pakistanis live!

Bartel (1989) also found that more educated immigrants in the US were less concentrated to certain ethnic regions, and less dependent on ethnic ties in their location decisions. A report on the housing location of new immigrants to Sheffield (2007) concludes that the choice of destination is largely determined by the immigration status, associated legal rights and related opportunities. This leads to clear distinctions in the housing situations of different groups, for example, asylum seekers who are initially reliant on the National Asylum Support Service for accommodation and legal migrants who turn to the private rented sector for a place to live. Class, determined by occupational status, is a major determinant of choice in housing decision making. Again, in the Bowes et al. (2002: 395) study, Pakistanis in professional jobs (included professional migrants) did not face housing problems in the way that those less well-off did. They had a wider choice of neighbourhoods and could find appropriate housing for their household requirements. In sum, their housing experiences were in every way similar to those of others in the population at a similar level of affluence despite their ethnic minority status.

Apart from immigration status and socio-economic status, life cycle factors also influenced residential patterns of participants in this study. The "bachelor lifestyle" stage only lasted for a few months for most of the people as the wives

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entered scene. It must be noted that the two single men still live in an apartment sharing arrangement. With the requirements of a family, the size of the houses became larger and it became more expensive to live in inner city London. Participants talked about moving to certain "zones", referring to the six concentric circles on London's tube map. The majority of those who moved after marriage, still considered the commute to work as an important factor apart from space. Residential mobility has been linked to a number of life cycle events such as change in family composition including marital status and birth of a child (Rabe and Taylor 2010). Combining area based measures of deprivation and subjective perceptions of neighbourhood quality amongst British couples who move, Rabe and Taylor (2010) concluded that they move into worse neighbourhoods when a husband experiences unemployment and into better ones when they have a new baby. Couples assess current housing needs on different factor at each stage of the life course. We discussed how the commute to work was the single most important factor for men living on their own but this consideration became less significant after marriage. While birth of a child did not prompt an immediate move, age of the child was a strong determinant of residential mobility. For those with children reaching school going age, the main concern was living close to a "good school". Some, like Asad, were willing to compromise on space and commute to work to achieve this objective. He explained his move from South Woodford to Richmond:

> I have to think about my child's education needs now above everything else. I know I cannot afford a house in Richmond so I will be living in a much smaller flat but at least I will be able to provide best education to my kids.

Moving to a "good neighbourhood" also becomes crucial after having children, as Rizwan talked about his decision to move to Golders Green despite the higher price:

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> You would have noticed it's a very good area, it's kind of posh! Educated people around, lots of nice parks and above all good schools. It's expensive but I suppose it's worth it.

This chapter has provided an overview of the migration process of professional Pakistanis to the UK by looking into the reasons for this move, both, at a macro and micro level. It traces the factors influencing the destination choice for all men in terms of trends in global market for skilled accountants as well as personal reasons for preferring London over other cities. The discussion also looks at the channel of migration available to the men in my study and how this route is qualitatively different from the one adopted by unskilled labour migrants. After the phase of physical relocation, the chapter included an analysis of the early settlement period in Britain involving the important decision of residential pattern. The next chapter will continue the story of the lives of these migrants by delving into the perhaps most important part of their being: work.

Chapter 6: Working in the UK

Background: The "Big Four"

This chapter will aim to capture the work experience of migrant Pakistani professionals working in the UK's accounting sector. At the time of the interviews they were all employed by one of the "Big Four" accounting firms in the UK: Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC), Deloitte Touche Tomhatsu, KPMG and Ernest & Young (EY). Operating worldwide, the "Big Four" are the largest international accounting firms which provide Audit[17] and related services to a host of publicly listed companies. Together, they account for billions of dollars' worth of revenue and provide employment to thousands of people around the globe as shown by the table below[18]:

Firm	Revenue	Employees	Fiscal year
Deloitte	$32.4 bn	200,000	2013
PwC	$32.1 bn	184,000	2013
Ernest and Young	$25.8 bn	175,000	2013
KPMG	$23.4 bn	155,000	2013

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[17] Assessment of financial statements to determine if they present a "true and fair" picture of a company's financial performance).

[18] Source: Annual Company reports:
http://www.kpmg.com/Global/en/about/international-annual-review/Pages/default.aspx
http://www.deloitte.com/view/en_GB/uk/about/annual-reports/index.htm
http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/annual-review/
http://www.ey.com/GL/en/Newsroom/News-releases/News_EY-reports-2013-global-revenues-of-US-25-8-billion-dollars#.U2DLg_ldUms

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The Big Four are now mammoth in size but this was not always the case. Historically, there have been a very large number of small firms due to the relatively little capital required to set up a practice. In the UK, Mathews et al (1998) note that figures from 1958 showed the presence of more than 8000 accounting firms, but the scene changed dramatically in the 1970s. As client organizations expanded globally to reap economies of scale, audit firms inevitably followed them into new markets to sell required services. When international presence became a source of competitive edge and reputation, accounting firms pursued growth strategies through mergers and internal expansion. With commercialization gaining pace, many of the leading firms started operating like large business concerns. The result was the emergence of multinational organizations called the "Big Eight" in the 70s, "Big Six" and "Big Four" after the demise of Arthur Anderson in 2002 (Mathews et al., 1998:55).

Unlike multinational manufacturing firms, the Big Four do not operate as a single entity worldwide. In fact, each global firm is a *network* of many independent national firms or "local affiliates"[19]. These local member firms, run as partnerships, must abide by common quality standards and values in order to maintain consistency of client services throughout the world. While long-term governance strategies and policies are approved by a Global Board consisting of representatives of member firms, affiliate structure gives a large degree of autonomy to the local firm in terms of business management. However, the recent drive towards globalisation and diversification of services has made global co-ordination as important as ever. The commercial success of a firm is dependent upon knowledge sharing between its various offices and larger the networks become the greater the need for integration. National firms are bound to conform to international standards of practice.

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[19] While most local affiliates are based in a single country, there is increasing trend towards international integration. Recently some firms have combined member firms in certain regions to create a single cross-border firm.

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All but one participant were involved in Audit which is the primary accounting service provided by firms. All of those interviewed entered into their particular firm at the "Assistant Manager" level which was equivalent to their previous position. The majority had progressed to the next level of a "Manager" and in two cases that of "Senior Manager "at the time of the interview. In order to make sense of the firm's hierarchy, Chart 1 below is a basic illustration of the hierarchical structure, as described by the participants themselves. It represents the chain command within the particular specialised department that the individual interviewee works in rather than the global structure of the firm. For example, within the larger Audit department, the Financial services division would typically have the hierarchical structure illustrated below.

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        ┌──────────────┐
        │   Partner    │
        └──────────────┘
                │
                ▼
        ┌──────────────┐
        │   Director   │
        └──────────────┘
                │
                ▼
        ┌──────────────┐
        │    Senior    │
        │   Manager    │
        └──────────────┘
                │
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        ┌──────────────┐
        │   Manager    │
        └──────────────┘
                │
                ▼
        ┌──────────────┐
        │  Assistant   │
        │   Manager    │
        └──────────────┘
                │
                ▼
        ┌──────────────┐
        │   Trainee    │
        └──────────────┘
```
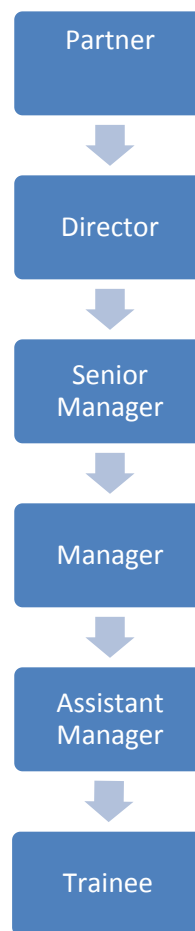
Chart 1: Hierarchical structure of a typical firm as described by the participants

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Working for a Big Four in the UK

For all but one of the participants, working for a "Big Four" was not a new experience as they had not worked outside of this group. Therefore, the discussion did not revolve around the general experience of working in a Big Four, rather the focus was working for a Big Four in the UK as compared to other countries. Only Umer, who had previously worked for a mid-tiered firm in the UK, brought up the issue of difference between the Big Four and a smaller practice:

> It's different because in small practice you do everything. In the Big Four, you don't do accounts production, you don't do bookkeeping, you don't do management accounts and budgeting and all. Small practice, you do everything including audit as well. It was a closed environment, everybody knew who you are so it was not easy to just sit on there. Most importantly, there was a very informal procedure in terms of your assessment of performance. If the partner likes me, he will give me a pay raise after three months but if he doesn't like me he wouldn't give me one in two years. So it all depended on the personal choice of the partners. It's very systematic in the Big Four so all the things have to be done at a time in a year whereas in small practice it doesn't happen that way. I would say it's more professional in the Big Four.

The significance of working for a Big Four in contrast to other firms was again only evident in Umer's account. For the rest, the question of "why Big Four" elicited the common response of "they are the best". Grey (1998) also mentions the frequency of slogans of elevation such as "BSF (big six firms) is different" and "BSF is the best" in the official material as well as the interviews However, Umer had the experience of looking at it from the angle of career progression:

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> They are big names and if these names start appearing on your CV, you know your worth in the market is good. There is progress in these firms and you can go up to a good level in your career whereas in small practices you normally do small and medium sized companies which are normally family owned or single owned. The experience of that is good but the progression is not there.

Regarding the general work culture/ job satisfaction in their organization, the overall response was positive. The participants showed a great deal of satisfaction with the open work environment where there were no strict hierarchical boundaries. They felt they were valued and respected as individuals and the salary was "not too bad". This perception of the audit firm is in sharp contrast to the one observed by Hooks and Thomas (2002) in their study of managers and senior managers in six large accounting firms in the US. They noted an overall negative perception of the firms in terms of: a) nature of the job b) compensation and c) the organization culture which was considered exploitative as it undervalued and overworked employees. The office environment was cited as "political" and female participants also voiced concerns over discrimination. Thus, Hooks and Thomas (2002) conclude that the message of the voices is that the culture is at odds with developing and retaining talented employees. It is surprising that the participants in this research showed a very different perception towards the firm culture but it must be kept in mind that these professionals are migrants. They invariably discussed their current organization with reference to their previous negative experience in Pakistan or the Middle East.

Professional Identity

A prominent issue in the literature on working in a Big Four is that of development of a professional identity. Anderson-Gough et al. (1998) and Coffey (1994) concentrate on the socialization process of trainees, within Big Four firms in the UK, which delineate what accounts as "appropriate behaviour". This

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organizational discourse, through formal and informal appraisal systems, governs dress codes, behaviour in front of clients, and appropriate time management. Anderson-Gough (2005) contributes to this literature by looking at key organizational processes which lead to reproduction of gender inequalities in audit firms. Amongst these factors, homo-sociality (male partners promoting men), women's inability to fulfil demands of firm social life and informal interactions are significant. However, these studies on professional socialization and formation of professional identity have been based upon the experiences of trainee accountants. Since the participants in this study joined the firm as migrants at a senior level, they did not go through the same process of socialisation. Many acknowledged this difference between "home grown" colleagues and themselves as elaborated by Ahmed:

> I am not a home grown, I mean [name of firm] grown, auditor like Rahim or Abbas. So that difference is there. These guys have it easy because they go through a process of training within the firm but we were just thrown into situations when we joined. When you join at a managerial level, they expect you to have all that background knowledge. There is no room for error. We have to adjust and learn quickly. But I think if you spend two, three years and they [the firm] like you and you are in the circle then it doesn't matter. Then they don't differentiate between who is home grown and who is not home grown.

Thus, while Anderson-Gough's trainee accountants were in the process of *becoming* professionals, the participants in this study were expected to have accomplished that feat. However, the crucial difference is the migrant status of these individuals which means that their professional socialisation occurred in a completely different environment. As highlighted in the previous chapter, international accounting firms do not operate on the pattern of other MNCs. In fact, the very independent legal structure means that there is little uniformity of

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corporate culture across the various firms globally. Usman picked on this issue:

> Although globally they are part of the Big Four, locally, the partners are the owners. So they set the trend, they set the momentum and they enforce whatever culture they feel like enforcing. I mean, generally, multinational organisations in Pakistan are pretty much at par with what you see here in the UK. You know, well trained, qualified staff, good practices which multinationals tend to implement across the board. But the work culture in the Big Four was not representative of the corporate culture that you see in the UK. I think there isn't the consistency in their culture that you see in multinationals in general.

The firm culture in Pakistan has been discussed in detail elsewhere so here we will concentrate on the professional's experience of adjusting to the new environment. Most of the participants noted that the first few months were difficult to cope with because of the sudden change in working environment. While graduate trainees in Anderson-Gough's study did not have any reference point, these professionals always compared with "how it was".   Rizwan gives a clue to this:

> First few months were difficult, very difficult, struggling with the culture, the environment here and adjusting to that. I had a few issues, few problems with my managers but then I realised that there was a methodology, there was a set way of doing things. As I said, I think in the past I was not used to that and I think I was trying to use my brain too much to try and experiment with different things. I observed a lot during the initial period, tried to see how partners did it or other managers did it.

Interestingly, the participants did not mention the "technical" side of the new job but rather the social and cultural aspect of it. The common theme, thus, was comparison with their previous work environment in Pakistan and the Middle

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East in terms of organizational culture. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, the overall assessment of work culture in the UK was extremely positive. The participants appreciated the management style which gave them more respect and freedom as individuals. The flexible hierarchical structure and open communication was in contrast to the tightly controlled environment in their previous work experiences. It could be argued that the participant's emphasis on the social side indicates that they did not find the technical side of the job different or difficult to adjust to. However, I believe it was also due to the fact that the UK firm itself assigned greater importance to the social side. This was acknowledged by majority of the respondents like Bilal:

> In Pakistan and even in Bahrain we were required to be superior in technical areas and that was what we were judged on. We knew our standards by heart! It's very different here, technical skills are just assumed and there is all this emphasis on soft skills and socialising.

The primacy assigned to the social or behavioural rather than technical side of the work experience has been recognised in the literature on professional identity in an accounting firm. Grey (1998) in his study of the meaning associated with being a professional in a Big Six accounting firm (UK) notes how for such an individual the meaning of being a professional is primarily bound up with a series of ways of self-conduct such as appropriate clothes, appropriate conversation style etc, rather than with issues of technical competence and accreditation. Participants in this study also carved out their professional identity in the firm with behavioral factors such as "selling skills". For example, Ahmed discussed qualities of an accountant in a Big Four:

> A lot people think it's just playing with numbers, profit and loss accounts and balance sheets but that's not really the case. Selling skills is one of the most important things. Then you have communication, interpersonal skills. You might have noticed that these are not really related to

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accounting but that's the point!

Anderson-Gough et al. (1998) observes that this meaning is instilled in trainee accountants at a very early stage in their career in the firm. She argues that the main rationale put forth by the firms is "service to the client". Everything is justified in the name of the client who becomes paramount to success in the firm. Formal appraisal processes clearly set out client service as a key area of performance assessment. Kamran put this in the following way:

> It's ultimately judged on your relationship with the client because partners want to spend their time where they can earn more money. As a manager you should be able to sort all the issues with client and inform the partner. He can sign the file in half an hour and he is happy, fee raised, higher recovery because our time is charged on hourly basis so if you have got higher recoveries it shows you have been efficient and effective. If the client is happy with you, you get good feedback from the client and the partner sees you as proactive. These are the main values and then there are technical skills as well but mainly client relationship.

The overwhelming emphasis on client service is a testament to the changing nature of the profession itself such that commercialism seems to override the "public service" ethic (Hanlon, 1994). Hanlon (1994: 121) argues that audit firms seek business acumen in their professionals and "it is this commercial acumen that has become the heart of making the professional, rather than the rhetoric of reliability, honesty or even technical ability, so that auditing can be envisaged as a business-oriented industry serving its own interests." The majority of the participants in my study fully recognised this fact and seemed oriented towards serving the "business" as opposed to the public. Imtiaz unabashedly admitted that he realised that he was working for a "business not a charity" which meant that making a profit was but a natural objective of the firm. As managers they

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managed profitability by squeezing the budget as much as possible to produce higher recovery rates.

This was done even at the cost of personal heath and strictly "ethical" considerations by working long hours but not "charging" them. Rather, the culture of working long (unpaid) hours was prevalent throughout the firms, particularly, during what the participants described as the "busy season" from December to March when final company accounts are prepared and signed off. Assistant managers and managers were especially vulnerable to this trend as it was their responsibility to complete the audits in time with maximum recovery. However, they have the flexibility of choosing the extra hours they want to put in. Saqib described the long working hours culture:

> Most of the time during the busy season, I would say December onwards to March/April, it's about 60 hours a week. It's demand of the job, I am just on my own and I have things to do. I have to complete them, irrespective of whether I do them on Saturday or Sunday, as long as it's done. I have even spoken to clients on a Sunday so you can't help it. Yeah, it's part of the job.

The issue of charging the extra hours was slightly more controversial as the participants hesitantly acknowledged that it was done and silently "accepted" by everyone. Again, the commercialism that Hanlon noted becomes apparent as Umer argues:

> If I charge the *actual* hours I work on a client, I would not be left with any budget. It's almost impossible to finish the work in that amount of time. We have to put in days and nights till the deadline for it to get completed. I cannot go up to the partner and say "oh look I have worked so hard but sorry I cannot give you any recovery". He would not be very happy with that answer I can tell you that! It's not perfect but that's the way it is and

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you have to do it.

Participants justified this under the "doctrine of necessity" to achieve success in the firm. Anderson-Gough et al., (1998) also picked up the issue of importance of time management in the Big Four firms where "seniors would often come to understand that recording hours was a politically sensitive game in which meeting the hours set for a job means only recording the hours worked up to the budget set for the job" (ibid:79). This cooking of the timesheets was seen as a sacrifice which demonstrated commitment to the firm. Furthermore, Anderson-Gough also observes that the culture of sacrifice increases with greater responsibility, as was the case of managers in this study, but seniority gives a degree of extra flexibility which junior staff lack.

Appraisal/Promotion

Appraisal was one of the most discussed topics in the interviews as the prospect of promotion within the firm was greatly dependent upon it. The formal appraisal method described by participants in each of the Big Four firms was very similar. Performance on each "job", in other words with a client, is evaluated on the basis on an appraisal form which is first completed by the manager and reviewed by a senior on the job. This process is relatively open ended as the manager is free to discuss or contest any points in his/her appraisal with the senior. Each manager has an assigned "counselling manager" who is supposed to promote his/her case for promotion and provide guidance. In addition, a "360 degrees feedback" form is completed by the juniors on the job in order to provide upward feedback. A final rating is awarded at half yearly and annually held "moderation meetings" of all managers and senior managers in case of trainees and assistant managers. Ratings and promotions for the manager level upward is decided by the partners but the process is similar. The appraisal form is a combination of both technical and behavioural aspects of a person. While the exact terminology differed from one firm to another, the overall criteria are very similar across the firms. The

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following is the summary of the main criteria described by the participants:

Client service (Build professional relationship with client.)
People skills (Build strong working relationship with other team members)
Technical knowledge/ability
Management skills
Social skills (Communication skills)

This thorough and objective formal appraisal process is a reflection of the change brought about by professionalization of human resource management in audit practices. It aims to replace the partner's traditional reliance on their "judgement" and "gut instinct" on matters of staff management (Anderson-Gough et al 2005). However, how far the system has been successful in eliminating the personal bias of evaluators is debatable. As mentioned earlier, there has been an ever increasing emphasis on behavioural aspects of a professional's identity over his/her technical ability and this introduces a judgement call in the evaluation process. How do you rate someone's behaviour? Imtiaz related a story to prove this point:

> Recently one of my friends was up for promotion. I mean he had done well, he had ticked all the boxes for promotion so he had met all the requirements but something happened and then they decided that they were not going to promote him and they promoted someone else. When I asked them why not him and the other guy? They said they think there is a lot of "potential" in the other guy. I mean there is no definition of "potential" is there? Sometimes you really feel things are not as clear as they might seem on the paper.

As identified by Anderson-Gough et al. (1998), the ratees and raters are engaged in everyday social relationships over and above these categories which means that there are prior judgements involved. Certainly, many participants believed that personal liking and disliking played a huge role in the moderation meetings as

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Umer elaborates:

> As a manager I have been part of moderation meetings and I have seen it all. Personal liking and disliking is sometimes very important as well. If one person does not like the other for some reason, then he will always talk about his negative aspects even if his work is OK. They can bring up some really minor things up. Then even though one person is not worth it, he will be promoted due to personal liking by someone senior.

If there is an element of personal judgement in promotions, then maintaining a good relationship with your seniors and other co-workers is crucial. The majority of the participants expressed this in comments such as "raising your profile" which meant increasing your "visibility" in the firm. This was typically achieved by engaging in aggressive social networking within the organization. Saqib explained:

> You can actually sit at a desk all day, looking at the screen, working on papers and stuff but it's useless unless you go out there and meet people. You wouldn't actually get chances for better opportunities, better roles, promotions because what happens in our system is that when they have these consultancy meetings where they say "OK so how has that person done?" If you are not socialising enough, you have not have that much of contact then a lot of people will say "we haven't heard of him, who is he? Has he been working here?" You might have worked with those people but failed to make contacts. So it's important to attend various functions or just a casual "hi, how are you doing?" or saying, "I am going down to get some coffee, any one wants coffee?" These kinds of things are helpful in creating your relationships and relationships are always important.

Social Networking

The firms themselves have a clear stance towards promoting socializing between employees. This is based on the premise that bonds developed through this process will create a general feeling of well-being amongst employees and make team work easier (Anderson-Gough et al., 1998). Thus, the typical "firm type" individual is someone with good social skills. Social events are organized by the firm regularly in the form of sports competitions, farewells, promotion parties etc. More specifically, the department "away day", a team building exercise where people are brought together in an informal environment is an obvious example of a firm's commitment to socialising (Anderson-Gough et al., 1998). From the participants' point of view, participation in social events becomes a "need" in order to be seen as a social person and get a positive appraisal. Asad called it a "networking mode" and differentiated it from general socialising:

> OK one thing is socializing and one is networking with your colleagues who can offer you better prospects. You can just go out on night outs and have long chats with people, this is purely recreational because you just enjoy being with them. If you are into a networking mode and you want to develop relationships, you want to focus on your seniors or partners then you have to make sure you are in like social events, in drinks you are on the same table or something. You can see that those who do this progress quite quickly as well.

The importance of large informal social networks for mobility in general and within an organization has been established after pioneering work of Granovetter (1973). His concept of "strength of weak ties" showed that unlike intra-group strong ties that are sources of redundant information, weak ties provide new information about opportunities. Therefore, the greater the number of weak ties in a person's network, the more likely he/her is to achieve extra valuable

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information. A similar idea of "structural holes" was propounded by Burt (1992) to show that the absence of ties amongst people in an individual's networks (i.e., more holes) leads to greater information and mobility. Within the audit firms in this study, the importance of these networks varies with the rank such that it becomes increasingly pivotal from managerial level upwards. Grey (1994) clearly recognises this trend as he argues that at managerial and senior positions networks gain such a paramount importance in careers of people that friends become "contacts" and social activity becomes "networking". Managers are required to get new business for the firm and in order to achieve that they have to demonstrate exceptional social skills. Usman points out:

> After a certain grade, your networking skills, your relationship skills, your business development skills become more important. These become the deciding factors in your promotions because every business places a lot of emphasis on how strong your business development skills are and that all depends on your networking skills and socialising skills

Apart from participation in the formal social events, many participants believed that the firm deliberately encouraged socialising at a subtle level in the form of an open floor office environment. An open floor office, unlike the traditional office layout of individual rooms, puts multiple people together in a large open space. The idea is to bring people closer in order to facilitate communication and reduce hierarchical divisions based on who has a private room and who doesn't. However, it has been criticised for lack of privacy, stress related to noise and a feeling of being watched (Burke and Jackson, 2007). In fact, as noted by many critics (see Thompson and Paul, 2003 and Markus, 1993) open plan offices are a perfect example of Foucault's panoptical surveillance. The continuous visibility means that subjects enter into self-disciplining regimes in the fear that they might be observed by seniors or peers. From the management point of view, it ensures productivity and an opportunity to reinforce adherence to firm's values through informal means. For example, on the subject of appraisal Umer remarked:

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> We have an open plan office system so partners do not sit in their offices. They can watch how a team of one trainee, an in charge and a manager sitting there are getting along. They can observe how you behave in a team or how good your interaction is with other members. Sometimes a trainee or in charge comes to me and talks about certain issues and if I am very helpful to them then they (partners) can see that things have been solved at the manager level and they are not being bothered.

Thus, appraisal is not solely based upon checking every box on the lengthy review forms. It involves subjective opinions, preconceived judgments and informal surveillance of employees rather than an objective evaluation of their work. How do people feel about this appraisal? Is it fair? The following section deals with this topic in detail.

"Something is just there"

A "fair" appraisal system, for the participants, implied one which is free from personal bias and based upon objective criteria. However, many felt that this was far easier to achieve on paper than in practice as the criteria in themselves left room for personal opinion. Some examples in the previous section highlighted the ambiguity in the definition of criteria particularly those relating to social behaviour. The rating system was still not entirely written off by the participants who often said it was not possible to have a "perfectly fair" system because of inevitable personal influences. This is in line with Grey's (1994) observation that the ratings were generally criticised for their lack of "objectivity" which was seen to arise from unavoidable "human factors". Thus, lack of objectivity for Grey's interviewees was not criticised on any moral grounds. However, in my study the subject of fairness drew attention to deep-seated structural issues which influenced the career path of participants in the firm. Was it racism? This was clearly rejected by all as they believed it was something more subtle than overt

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racism. For example, Usman argued that it was difficult to express the "discrimination" he felt:

> We all know there are very strict anti-discrimination and anti-racism laws here so no one can actually openly express it. It can't be, when it comes to the corporate world, the basis of any official policy. So on paper it's very rosy, very fine and it looks very fair but practically it's not that simple. The thing is that you cannot put in to words or you cannot prove it but when you are actually interacting with people, you know it's there.

Similarly, Imtiaz stated

> I mean I can't describe it, sometimes you really feel that there is a discrimination but not in an obvious way. No, you would never come across such a situation whereby you are confronted by a colleague or someone saying something but you would still feel it.

Many others said it was "hard to put a finger on it" because it operated at a sub-conscious level. It seemed like they pointed towards a form of latent discrimination in the existing system on upward mobility. It certainly bears comparison to the popular concept of 'glass ceiling', defined as a set of "artificial barriers based upon attitudinal or organisational bias that prevents qualified individuals from advancing into management-level positions" (Martin, 1999: 1). A glass ceiling is a barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so impenetrable that is prevents ascent of certain people to positions of authority (Morrison and VonGlinow, 1990). This term is most commonly associated with barriers to upward mobility of women although impediments for ethnic minorities might also be included (ibid. 1990). The effect of the glass ceiling is real and has been officially acknowledged by the US government's Report on Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) which revealed that 95% of the senior-level managers, in Fortune 1000 industrial and Fortune 500 companies, are men, and 97% of the men

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are white. The situation is no different in the UK where the Equal Opportunities Commission (2005) has highlighted that women accounted for only 11% of director level positions in British businesses in 2004 and 21% of senior positions in the public and voluntary sectors. The accounting profession is notoriously male, white, middle class dominated as 2002 figures suggest that only 7% of accountants are non-white and, of these, only 3% are women. In addition, the uppermost positions of the profession are showing the least amount of change, with only 1% of firm partners describing themselves as non-white (Ramji, 2007: 593).

In my study, many interviewees believed that a "glass ceiling" type phenomenon existed in their organisations at a higher managerial level and restricted access to the highest echelons of authority. Usman tried to explain it with the following example:

> Let me give you an example: in our department alone, our department is called Banking and Securities, I would say the ratio of white to non-white is 50-50. In some areas probably non-white are in a majority but if you look at the people who are at the helm of affairs then only 2 partners out of twelve are Asians. Only two directors out of fifteen are Asian. So after a certain point in time you realise that your colour, your language, your culture, your background does make a difference. Had I not been who I am, then I would have been operating at a higher level.

Imran shared a similar experience:

> What I have seen in the last four or five years is that you don't find South Asians in top positions, you don't find them in those senior partner positions or partner positions. I think it tells you something. What is the reason? Why don't you see these people? Probably because they don't fit in but then why don't they fit in? I am sure there is something! I am sure when the decisions at top management are taken, you can be a manager,

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you can be a senior manager but come to a director or partner or senior partner, it's something else you need. I think connection to their society, their own, the colour of their skin is important. That's what I have seen, it's not my personal experience because I am still a manager but I don't see people at partner positions. I know one Indian who is a partner, another Indian director, probably one from UAE. That's it, all white! There is something.

Tariq believed there was a racial hierarchy in the firm:

Broadly there are three categories, white or the original people, non-UK white and then brown or black. Obviously they will always be very comfortable with their own people. They are less comfortable with the second category which is white non-UK and then the third category which is black or brown and somehow they feel least comfortable with us.

The three quotes above could possibly be taken as prime examples of the existence of "institutional racism" defined by the Sivanandan, head of race relations at the time of the Macpherson report (1999), as that which "covertly or overtly, resides in the policies, procedures, operations and culture of public or private institutions - reinforcing individual prejudices and being reinforced by them in turn." (Sivanandan in The Guardian) The participants clearly draw upon notions of race and racism as they distinguish between differential access to success within the firm for white and non-white populations. However, it is striking that they were reluctant to use the word "racism" or acknowledge its existence. In fact, all interviewees clearly stated that they had neither experienced nor witnessed racism at their work place. They did not believe that it formed the basis of any decision regarding promotion, recruitment or pay scale in the firm. In fact, many recognised that their firms made special efforts to promote diversity at work by showing respect to people from different backgrounds. These efforts were not merely cosmetic, as some participants cited examples of how their

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personal needs were accommodated within the organisation. For example, Saqib shared his positive experience:

> I have found that people are really helpful, like people know that I go for my Friday prayers. You know, there was a lunch at [name of firm] at around 12:30 and I said oh I will have to go for my prayers and every one was already booked, the partners and everyone but they shifted everything for me. Here, in Ramadan they had audit meals, it was always done at lunch time but because they knew I was fasting, they arranged it at dinner time. So everyone stayed late and it was just for one person, me who was fasting in the team. So I know the people here do know about your different needs and everything and they do take care of a lot of things.

The apparent contradiction in the two observations could be an indication of the difference between what participants define as a "racist" practice. The argument is that latent form of discrimination is hard to define. Many tried to explain it with reference to their previous experience of working in the Middle-East, a society for which they did not hesitate to use the word "racist". A major factor in their move away from the Middle-East was the discriminatory treatment in terms of pay. Ahmed described this:

> It's a racist society! There is a lot of discrimination amongst different nationalities. It's quite official because you literally have three different pay slabs e.g. the top pay slab would be for the local Arabs, second is for the British and Americans and the last or the 'Bengali bucket' where all the Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis fall. Definitely, it hurts you every now and then. You stay calm for a couple of weeks but then you are like "what the hell is going on? I am putting all the effort and I am the one who is getting paid the least amount!" It creates a lot frustration.

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Homosociality

How exactly the glass ceiling systematically operates in the Big Four organisations is the issue at heart here. Anderson-Gough's (2005) work on the reproduction of gender relations through formal and informal socialization process in two UK audit firms provides a good starting point for the discussion ahead. She notes, for example, the phenomenon of "homo-sociality" in recruitment, mentoring and performance evaluation whereby male partners and seniors promote/support people with same background as themselves. Second, the identification of a future partner is a complex evaluation of not only technical and managerial skills but also an integration into firm approved social life. This social life blurs the boundary between firm and private life and makes integration particularly difficult for female auditors with family commitments (Anderson-Gough, 2005: 487). Participants in this study identified a somewhat similar process of systematic disadvantages which in their opinion hindered their career progression. An overwhelming majority of these men felt that the emphasis on social skills at a senior managerial level implied active participation in the firm's social life. We have already discussed the paramount significance assigned to social skills in an auditor's career progression. An important expression of this social life is official and unofficial drinks. Official drinks are usually organised by senior management to encourage bonding within teams, build relationships and mark events such as promotions, send offs or audit end. Higher up the hierarchy, drinks with potential new clients to bring more business into the firm are equally necessary. Partaking in these is thus seen as part of the job. On the other hand, "unofficial" drinks are after-work drinks with colleagues without initiation from the firm. Pubs not only serve as spots for socializing but spaces where networks are extended, impressions upon senior management are formed, and promotions are analysed. Research from the US indicates that social drinkers, on average, earn 14% more than abstainers in the same profession by accumulating more social capital at after-work drinks (Stringham and Peterson, 2006)

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The centrality of the pub reflects the white dominated environment of the firm. As practicing Muslims, all participants showed an aversion to the firms' culture of drinks. The conflict between their deeply held religious beliefs and a firm's expectations was irresolvable for some participants. They had resigned themselves to the fact that they could not fit into the model firm-type individual. Kamran was one of them:

> As far as I am concerned I can mingle with people up to an extent but not after that. For example I never go to any drinks party or I never attend annual dinners they have. I just avoid it because I can't give up my religion, my values. It affects my career in a big way but then my priority is not to become a partner.

For others, Kamran's reaction was extreme and a compromised position considered much more practical. Saqib commented:

> I know some people, because of their religious beliefs they are very good and strict but I am not that good. So they don't even step into a pub or those kinds of places and they actually suffer, they mention to me "oh this is not the place to be". But I say to them, you don't have to sacrifice your beliefs to fit in. For example I don't drink but I try to go to drinks.

These men felt compelled to mark their attendance at official drinks as they realized these offered opportunities to build fruitful relationships. They argued that their religion did not forbid them from entering into a pub but only the act of consuming alcohol. However, many participants described feeling "awkward" and "out of place" with their glasses of orange juice and diet coke amongst clinking bottles of beer. Asad related an incidence where a senior partner handed him a bottle which he felt pressured to accept. He secretly emptied the bottle in a nearby bin and pretended to have drunk it because he did not want to create an uncomfortable situation. Few found social events an enjoyable experience and the

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uneasiness pushed many to make a quick exit. Their attendance at such official drinks, therefore, was low and participation in unofficial drinks nil. Imran describes his experience:

> The expectation is to attend department's drinks every week. It is sometimes difficult; you can't be part of it. You can't just stand there and watch them drinking or talking about football or their boyfriends and girlfriends. That is not what I have grown up with, what I have learnt is a bit different. In my country I would celebrate by going to eat rather than the pub. I can be part of their culture to some extent but not completely. That's one aspect obviously and it does affect your progression. It effects how you are seen in the office which is not good obviously. You are seen as someone who is difficult, who doesn't want to mix with people.

Barring work, most of the participants admitted that they struggled to find common ground with their co-workers. They did not share the same interests as their predominantly white colleagues which made socializing an arduous activity. A cultural gap or, as Usman puts it, "compatibility gap" exists in terms of language (despite fluency, English is second language for all participants), sports, media, humour, and hobbies. Here, many participants argued that British born Pakistanis had a huge advantage over migrant Pakistanis as they shared a common knowledge base with the majority. Waqas pointed out:

> First of all, football, what the hell is that? Chelsea and Manchester United, they are crazy about it. I don't know about their culture, festivals, music, stars. I mean I don't know about Britney or Jackson or whatever. I don't know their old songs or dramas. I don't understand their jokes. I am not interested in any of that. It's a big gap and I personally find it very difficult to hold a casual conversation apart from work. I think its culture because Asians people who grow up here are up to the speed but people who come from a background like mine really struggle

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For all married participants, after-work socialising came at the cost of precious family time. Long working hours, especially in the busy season, squeezed the time available for family. Many found it impossible to achieve an optimal balance between work, after-work and family. After-work social activities were sacrificed the most in this triangle as family took central importance in their culture and formed the pivot of leisure time activities. Their life style was in sharp contrast to the single life of the average white manager in their age group who could fit in to the "work hard, play hard" culture of the firm. Bilal explained how the concept of non-family recreation conflicted with his cultural interpretation of leisure:

I am the sort of person who would work till 7 or whatever and head straight home to be with my family. It's complicated if you are married. If I want to go out, I would go out with my family to watch a movie or something rather than sit in a pub. We are family oriented people I think, spending too much time with your work friends is a bit strange.

Consequences

The above-mentioned barriers have negative repercussions on participant's career in many respects. First, as managers their performance is partly evaluated on how well they manage their team. Managers need to maximize the capacity of each team member through a combination of delegation and motivation. Knowledge about the character and personality of individual team members can prove essential in playing people to their strengths. Social events provide that opportunity to learn about others through informal interaction. Participants believed that it made "people management" a relatively easier task. Tariq argued:

You need these events to develop an understanding about other people working with you. So I would know that I can really joke with person X

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but I can't joke with person Y. As a manager you can use it to manage your subordinates. You will be in a better position to take work from them without much argument in the team. You will be seen as a good manager.

Second, after-work socialising is a primary source of networking with people apart from the immediate team. Social events are a stage where managers can form positive impressions upon seniors in the firm and build relationships. Investment in these relationships translates into someone putting a good word for them. When opportunities arise, this word of mouth praise can be the difference between a successful and unsuccessful candidate. Saqib explained how it worked:

If a partner knows someone already or has heard good things about him, he would definitely be more inclined towards this person than someone who maybe an Ox-Cam graduate but he is doubtful about his work ethics. You can call it nepotism but in the end partners are focused on business success. When selecting someone for a new opportunity, they would go for the one they know through some reference.

As with internal opportunities, external business opportunities can only be reaped through socialising with clients. Partners place a very high premium on the ability to extract new business from existing clients e.g. selling non-audit related consulting work from an audit client. Cross-selling is only successful when a person is laterally connected to key people within the firm as well as the client. It requires active social networking over and above firm specific social events. Participants believed that socialising with clients operated along similar lines as the firm and they lagged behind in it. Usman described this problem:

If a client needs tax advice on a matter and as auditors it does not fall in our domain, I can still capture this business opportunity if I have good connections with the client. I would basically get in touch with someone I

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know from our tax department. So I need to be aware of what's going in different departments in my firm and client. How do I do that? Again social drinks are a forum for socialising with clients. We, as Muslims, don't drink so all of a sudden that important channel or avenue is no longer available to us. I mean there are so many differences of interests and background between us and them that I feel like the odd one out. What are my chances of being successful at networking?

As a consequence of the perceived obstacles in developing cross cultural bonds, participants engaged in co-ethnic socialising at work. Due to the small size of the group, many participants came across people they had already worked with in Pakistan or knew through a common contact. They hang out together at lunch hour where work related issues, information and knowledge are exchanged. Friday prayers are also an important occasion for congregating as well as groups such as the Muslim network and cricket club. Friendships formed at workplace solidify in weekend activities involving families. This intra-ethnic bonding creates a group at work where members help out each other. Waqas explained the basis of this bond:

I think we share few things; we share language which is important. We celebrate certain events together. As a minority anywhere, you want to have some strength. You want people to be around when you need them most and what I have seen in my life is that you rely on or trust people who share certain attributes with you. In our case it is nationality, language and religion.

Along with an ethnic support network, participants had devised different ways of coping with the difficulties in surpassing social barriers. Some believed in permanency of the barriers and advocated a practical change of focus from the social to the technical. This entailed diverting extra energy and time towards building a specialist technical expertise. The idea is to get a competitive edge in

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the field to make up for the loss on the social side. Asad explained his strategy:

> One option is building soft skills and the other is excelling at your work and shining in that way. So you get more on the business side, building technical skills, and also giving ideas for improving the business. For example when at [name of firm] I did a few presentations and tried to be part of improving the business. So I was not just doing the work assigned to me but coming up with entrepreneurial ideas within the business and trying to help it develop further. Partners like that, so I approached it from that angle. I developed a specialist skill in hedge accounting and it all became useful. I progressed without being socially close to my boss.

Others believed that the structure of promotions worked in such a way that it made networking an inevitable requirement to reach senior positions. Therefore, instead of a defeatist approach, a proactive approach could help in surmounting some of the barriers. For example, participants believed that many Pakistanis in the firm used restriction on drinking as a mere excuse for not making an effort to integrate. In fact, such people did not want to move out of their comfort zone and bring about a change in firm's culture. Rizwan was one of those who met with some success in this regard:

> Basically there is one way of just ignoring any invitation to go to the pub and complaining that you can't socialize with people here. I think it's better if you go there and start explaining to people that there are other things they can do apart from going to pubs. I managed to influence few people to do something which was not pub related. For example, I took my whole department to Lahore Kebab House. Then on another occasion I convinced about twenty odd people to go for bowling and a Lebanese restaurant. You have to be proactive in putting across your point of view instead of hiding in your shell.

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A longer term strategy mentioned by all participants in the face of blocked route to promotion is onward migration to the Middle East. The Middle East offered growth as opposed to the (then) stagnant UK economy, tax-free income, and geographical and cultural proximity to Pakistan. Moreover, according to the participants, the work culture in the Middle East was more suited to their life style. Although some participants had a negative prior experience in the Middle East, they believed the stamp of London along with accumulated skills would ensure higher pay and better career prospects. Participants wanted to "capitalise" on their economic worth built through working in the world's financial capital. Asad simply put this strategy:

> I will try and excel in London as much as I can and where I feel there is a barrier or glass ceiling, I will cash my value in the Middle East.

Acquiring British nationality played a crucial role in this plan because British nationals are put in a higher pay slab as compared to a Pakistani national of equal qualifications in the Middle East. This will be discussed in greater detail in the last chapter.

This chapter highlights the issues faced by Pakistani accountants working in the Big Four firms in the UK. While the overall perception of the relatively open work environment was positive amongst participants, they were not entirely satisfied with the appraisal system. The ideal professional identity promoted by the firm places great emphasis on social skills including formal and informal social networking. However, men in this study believed that their path to acquiring these skills was hampered by the crucial role of drinking in socialising. Due to their religious beliefs, family commitments and a general communication gap many participants could not take part in after work activities with their British colleagues. The negative consequences on their career were resolved in different ways by participants. Some opted for a change in destination while others

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believed in greater integration.

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Chapter 7: Family Life

Any discussion on the lives of the participants would be incomplete without looking at the most important aspect of their personal lives: family. The pillar of the Pakistani household is the woman of the house; therefore, this chapter is dedicated to the wives of the professionals studied in the earlier sections. All the eight female participants interviewed during the study migrated to the UK due to their husband's career. Therefore, their case falls within the *domain* of two major research fields: transnational marriage migration and corporate expatriate wives. We will examine both these literatures before delving into analysis of our particular research group.

Pakistani Transnational Marriage Migration: Family formation

Spouses form the largest single category of migrant settlement in the UK amounting to almost forty per cent in 2009 but the academic literature on this topic has remained narrow in scope (Charsley et al., 2012). It has traditionally been dominated by studies focusing on the migration of South Asian females to join their husbands who were part of the unskilled labour migration in the 70s and 80s. The academic category used most commonly for such migration was "family formation", "family reunification/reunion", "tied migration" (where one spouse accompanies another), and more recently "transnational marriage" (Charsley et al., 2012). Marriage has long been established as the main form of Pakistani migration to the UK. Estimates of the proportion of British Pakistanis married to Pakistani nationals vary between forty eight per cent of men and fifty seven per cent of women (Dale, 2008).

One of the earliest works on Pakistani family reunion was conducted by Zaynab Dahya (1965) in Bradford. She focused on the post migration problem of social isolation experienced by women due to loss of extended family living arrangements in rural Pakistan. Similarly, Saifullah Khan (1979) has presented a detailed discussion of the everyday lived experience of migrant Asian migrant

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women faced with limited education and opportunities, pressure to conform and a loyalty to kin back home. The active role of women in initiating, maintaining and extending social networks through ceremonial gift giving has been highlighted by Werbner (1988) and Shaw (2000). The phenomenon of transnational marriage amongst first generation migrants usually gives way to marriages within the immediate community thus reducing the frequency of marriage migration (Ballard, 1987). Contrary to the expectations of academics and the Home Office, Pakistani marriage migration did not follow a downward trend due to its close connection with consanguinity and intra kin marriage.

The vast majority of marriages in the British Pakistani community are still arranged or semi-arranged marriages between cousins or more distant relatives – rates of consanguineous marriage appear to be higher in transnational than intra-national marriages (Charsley et al., 2012). The motivations are complex but primarily the closely-knit kinship networks (result of repeated consanguinity) can put immense pressure on parents to accept offers of marriage on behalf of their siblings' children back in Pakistan (Ballard, 1987). It is an opportunity to publicly demonstrate commitment to family honour, maintain family assets, and ensure further immigration of kin (Charsley et al., 2012). However, Charsley (2007) argues that it is insufficient to view such marriages, only in terms of migration strategies or kinship obligations. She includes emotional and practical considerations such as the inherent risks of arranged marriage, compatibility between members of same *biraderi*, and a notion of Pakistani women being less strong-willed than British born wives (Charsley, 2007). It must be mentioned here that as opposed to the traditional movement of Pakistani women to join their husbands abroad, a growing trend in recent years has been the migration of men to live with their British partners (*ghar damads*). Charsley (2005) brings attention to the new household power dynamics resulting from a man living in his father-in-law's house. The *ghar damad* represents a "subordinate variant of Pakistani and north Indian masculinity and, as such, may be perceived as emasculating or infantilising men aspiring to a hegemonic masculine role" (Charsley 2005: 399).

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Skilled Migrants Family

The discussion so far has been dominated by transnational marriage patterns amongst unskilled labour migrants of 1960s and 70s and their offspring. With increasing restrictions on this form of migration, the only acceptable migration has been that of skilled workers in the recent past. They certainly receive public attention in the media and government discourse but there is actually very limited body of academic work focusing on the family migration of skilled migrants. In fact, in terms of Pakistani migration there is no study on family formation to date. There are some examples of large scale quantitative studies in the USA and the UK (Boyle et al. 1999: Smits, 1999) showing the "professional sacrifice" or downward mobility women experience as a result of husband's migration. However, other researchers have critiqued this notion of wife's sacrifice by suggesting that mobility is also seen as an opportunity by many women to fulfil their aspirations outside of the labour market such as childcare and housekeeping thus highlighting the fundamentally masculine nature of the concept of employment sacrifice (Raghuram, 2008). Yet another stream of skilled labour migration is where the woman is the lead migrant and the husband joins the wife abroad (Raghuram, 2008) but the data on this topic is very limited. Feminisation of labour migration is still primarily dominated by unskilled labour such as domestic work (Anderson, 2000) and care industries comprising of occupations such as nursing, teaching and social work.

It is evident that the women in this research represent a unique category within the literature on tied migration (skilled and unskilled) as they do not fit into the typical British Pakistani model of marriage migration or the European model of professional women trailing their husbands. There is another large body of work which coincides with our research interest: Corporate expatriate wives.

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Expatriate wives/ Accompanying spouse

The modern day hyper-mobile professional has received attention in recent years in an attempt to broaden the scope of migration studies and shift the focus away from the tradional South-North unskilled labour migration typology. In this vein, important work has been conducted by Adrian Favell (2008) sketching the movement of young European professionals within the continent in the wake of lax EU immigration regulations. Beaverstock (2002) has also contributed to this body by concentrating on the corporate expatriates from Europe to different financials centres of the world. These studies mainly deal with the male, white, lead migrants and do not present any nuanced gender analysis. A closer look at the lives of western expatriates can be found in the ethnographic work of Fechter and Coles (2007). This research is important for our purposes as it extensively looks into the everyday experiences of the expatriate "wives". They take Callan and Arderner's (1984) concept of the "Incorporated Wife" as a starting point which explored the exploitative nature of the relationship between a wife and her husband's employing institution. They extend the concept to the modern day expatriate settings and examine the extent to which the concept has validity. They argue that the emotional demands on the family to support the man's high power career get magnified in an expatriate situation as the gendered division of labour gets skewed. Again, they highlight the impact of migration on the professional careers of wives which usually gets stalled and in turn causes a huge gap between income (closely linked to bargaining power) of the husband. This difference can get exacerbated by a "macho culture" of long working hours, higher salaries and mostly being the sole breadwinner that many expatriate men come to follow (Walsh, 2007). Over a period of several postings and constant uprooting, all these factors can lead to a considerable redistribution of gender roles and identities. These expatriate women try to re-create their sense identity by conspicuous consumption and expression of "authentic" home products such as a slice of Dutch cheese, Kellogg's cornflakes and even interior decorations (Hindman, 2007: Gordon, 2007). Such practices can lead to the creation of cliques or particular groups of expatriate women with their own conventions with strict rules

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of conformity, for example, the typical "Jumeira Jane" (a caricature referring to rich expat wives who don't work and spend their day shopping) who lives in posh expatriate compounds in countries like Dubai and spends her time in salons and malls (Fechter and Coles, 2007).

The literature examined so far does succeed in broadening the scope of migration studies in that it steers the attention away from unskilled migrants but fails to acknowledge another important facet of skilled migration: race. Modern day expatriation has deep roots in colonialism and authors like Fechter (2010) have brought forth the similarity between colonial officers (with families) and western corporate expatriates settled in less developed countries. However, their focus is mainly negative stereotyping of expatriate women, old and present, examining the tropes and myths regarding their attitudes and practices. "They typically include women's alleged idleness and laziness, their hedonism and sexual jealousy, the intensification of social and racial boundaries, an exaggerated status consciousness and the spreading of gossip" (Fechter, 2010: 1282). She does not aim to assess the truth value of these claims but the political and social function they serve. She argues that they partly serve to downplay women's incorporation into the postcolonial enterprise of global capitalism. Expatriate women with their consumer culture become the embodiment of the evils of global capitalism instead of their husbands who directly work in the multinational corporations (Fechter, 2010: 1293). This paper raises interesting questions regarding gender and global capitalism but again does not include expatriates from less developed countries to the North. Martin's (2007) in-depth analysis of the experiences of expatriate Japanese wives living temporarily in the United Kingdom comes closest to our research group although Japan has vastly different socio-economic circumstances than Pakistan. It focuses on the role of the 'housewife' in the context of the changing status of women in contemporary Japan, the lifestyle of Japanese company wives abroad and the long-term effects of transfer and reintegration into Japanese society. Perceptions of Britain and Japan from both outside and within are interwoven through this account of Japanese housewives and mothers who

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have experienced life in both countries.

Pakistani Migrant Wives: Social background

The biographical profile of my female participants is not entirely different from that of males. They all fall within the age group of 25-30 years. Five out of the eight women were born and educated in Karachi (largest city of Pakistan) while the remaining three belonged to Lahore (second biggest city). In terms of education, three women had earned professional degrees in medicine, accountancy and human resource management while the remaining had achieved undergraduate level of education. Here, it is important to mention that female literacy rates in Pakistan are alarmingly low. Just a glance at the official statistics reveals that overall literacy rate is 57 per cent with 69 per cent for males as opposed to 45 per cent for women (Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) Survey, 2008-09). In some tribal regions, the female literacy figures falls as low as 7.5 per cent. Many education experts cast doubt at these official figures and argue that overall female literacy is much lower than the government figure and majority of women are unable to do more than a mere signature. In the light of these social indicators, we can safely deduce that the women in this research represent the highest end of the Pakistani society. Education is an important measure of social deprivation but perhaps a more direct indicator is class. It is not our purpose to present any detailed class analysis, therefore, we rely on subject's self-appointed class. All the interviewees stated that they belonged to the Pakistani middle class, confirmed by father's upper managerial occupation in the service sectors of the economy. It is worth mentioning here that three participants had lived abroad, mainly Middle-East, at some point in their pre-marital life due to their father's work.

Work Experience

While a high level of education was present across the board, a similar pattern for

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work was absent. Only the three women who had obtained professional degrees had full time work experience as a doctor, accountant and HR manager. For the rest, work was less regular ranging from volunteering at a local school to giving tuition to schoolchildren at home. The primary reason stated was the lack of support from parents or a more direct disapproval to work. Afsheen, who did not have a job before marriage explained:

> In our family no girl has ever worked. It wasn't as such a problem for a girl to work per say, because, I did some teaching for a little while but that's all we could do. We couldn't go out and do a proper job. I had always seen it, my mother was a housewife, one of my sisters was a part-time primary school teacher and the other one was also a teacher in a religious sanctuary. So I always knew I would never do a job. It was OK.

Others like Rabia, who had a post-graduate degree, were less content with their situation:

> It was tough (restriction to work) but I had to accept it. When you study, you study with this motivation that, yeah you are going to go somewhere with your career, and it was so frustrating because I had people coming up to me and offering me jobs. My university is affiliated with American National School (ANS) so some teachers who had transferred themselves to ANS would come up to me and say look it's really fun, so why don't you join? It helps build confidence, it does, right? You're getting a chance to go out and do something. But my family was just not supportive at the time and that was tough

It is evident that even in urban areas of Pakistan, despite the drastic change in attitude towards women's education; the cultural attitudes towards female employment are still resistant to change. The majority of the women felt that their parents believed that the primary responsibility of the daughter was to get married

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and start a family of her own. In fact, education was a key element in securing a good match for their daughters. Sumaira admitted:

> Yeah they (parents) didn't have any problem with me getting a degree especially because it was the teaching profession. You know it is very respectful in Pakistan and very safe, people say it is very good for girls. So my parents also thought they could get me married easily if I had a good teaching degree. Nobody objects to teaching in Pakistan.

On the other hand, working in a male dominated profession such as IT can cause trouble for parents of young girls who feel insecure about their daughter's marital prospects. Sara had one such case:

> I thought that work experience, at least for women over there (IT sector), was very difficult. I found that the atmosphere was not good for you to work in because it was very male dominant. My parents were keen to get me out of that job. They were completely satisfied with me working as long as I was working with children!

Marriage

Since all women relocated to Britain as a consequence of marriage, it is important to analyse this aspect of their lives in detail. The most common assumption in the current academic literature on the subject is that Pakistani parents arrange matches for their children, often, within the extended family. The issue of cousin marriages and forced marriages has received a lot of public attention in the recent years with stories of young British Pakistani girls being brutally forced to marry the person of their parents' choice. While it is an important phenomenon that requires serious government attention, it is by no means the story of every Pakistani woman. There is an increasing trend towards "love marriage", semi arranged/approved marriage between couples who are already involved in a

covert relationship with each other. The term has come to broadly imply a marriage which includes the consent of the bride and groom. This is particularly common in the upper-middle class urban areas where girls are allowed to go to mixed-sex universities and offices where interaction between the sexes is not within the conventional realm of a Pakistani household. The overwhelming majority of Pakistanis still adhere to the notion of arranged marriage (87% according to a government survey in 1997) and "falling in love" is for the adventurous that are doomed to be shunned by society as portrayed by most songs and movies in Pakistan (Qadeer, 2012).

The sample population in our study is the perfect example of the increasing acceptance of love marriages in Pakistani urban centres. Four women said that their marriage was "arranged" by parents but on closer analysis it shows something of a cross between traditionally arranged marriages and the modern variety of love marriage For example, when Hajra explained the process of marriage she confirmed that the proposal was through a common family friend and the two families met before the couples did. However, at this point the parents allowed the two to have a chat on the phone and meet privately which turned the arranged marriage into a parent-approved love affair. This ensures that the family honour, derived from parents' ability to arrange marriages, is retained while acknowledging the growing role of women in taking control of their lives:

> When they (grooms' parents) came, they actually asked for my telephone number so that me and Asad could talk. Of course, our parents were deciding it but they thought it would be a good idea if we could talk. Asad called me and then we became friend and soon a good relationship started. We discussed a lot of stuff like what's the importance of me in his life and what will be my place in his family because he gives a lot of respect to his parents. It's always good if a man respects his parents and gives a lot of value to his family because only then he will give that value to the new relationship.

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It is evident that the couples had a final say in the marriages and the women were allowed to negotiate on several occasions such as Sara who was very young when she got married so her primary concern was if she would be able to continue her studies after marriage and this point was discussed beforehand with the groom.

On the other end of the spectrum, we have four interviewees who considered their marriage to be a "love marriage". This means complete agency of the actors involved from the choice of partner to finalising the marriage. The stories in these cases resemble the typical Bollywood theme of boy meets girl in college/work and they start a secret love affair until the boy feels financially secure to propose to the girl. At this stage the parents are involved to rubber stamp the marriage and give it a semblance of arranged marriage. Fatima cited her experience:

> OK so we actually knew each other for exactly a year before we got engaged. We met at a friend's place and we had been continuously in touch before we got married. We had a good understanding but I really didn't know for sure we would get married to each other because he was in London, I was in Karachi. So it was through emails and all. It was sort of an arranged marriage (laughs) because our parents were involved in the end so that confuses it a bit.

While the examples above are still within the bounds of socially approved marriage, the extremely dramatic elopement scenario was also present in our group. Sumaira was not hesitant to label her marriage as "totally love marriage":

> My husband's family doesn't like to marry outside their family, they are used to marrying in their own caste, they are *Kamboh*, and this was a problem in his family. We decided we had to spend our lives together. We had known each other for eight years, when I was only 18, it's a pretty long time so we didn't want to end it. My husband was in London at the

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time so he talked to my brother on a visit to Pakistan and we went through with the process of *nikah* but even after the *nikah* my husband's family pressurized him to leave me and forced him to continue with the engagement with his cousin. He didn't want that and he supported me for my spouse visa and everything. So I just quietly left the country and when I came here I got pregnant.

The factors traditionally considered in an arranged marriage are the groom's education, income, caste and family status still play a pivotal role in most marriages but the new breed of "love marriage" has other criteria which the women deemed important in their prospective husbands. These reflect their growing agency in the decision making process, far from the oft discussed image of Pakistani women in forced marriages.

The potential relationship with in laws was highlighted by all women as an important factor in choosing a suitable marriage partner. Traditionally, Pakistani women relocate to their husband's house where the joint family system often includes three generations of family members with a strict hierarchy system. The position of the new bride in such a situation is not very strong and horror stories of brutality by in-laws are staple discussion topics for Pakistani housewives. However, the nuclear family structure is becoming increasingly common in urban areas with men moving away from family businesses towards professional services. The women in this study were not living in extended families before marriage and therefore did not like the idea of sharing household with in-laws. Privacy, independence and freedom were high on their priority lists when it came to choosing a partner. In this scenario, a man living abroad alone provided a perfect opportunity to achieve these goals. Migration was "liberating" for a lot of women. Parents are happy with such matches as it significantly reduces their anxiety about a daughter's reception by the in-laws.

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When asked what was considered at the time of marriage, Fatima and Sara clearly stated that the fact that they would not be living with their in-laws after marriage was the single most important factor for them after the basic requirements of education and income. Hajra also described a similar situation:

> He (potential husband) should not be completely dependent on his parents and he should be able to take decisions for himself. He should not be a "mama's boy" and should have a strong personality. So the first factor that I asked them (parents) to consider was that the guy should live abroad! He shouldn't live in Pakistan because I didn't want to live with in-laws

Martin's (2007) Japanese wives living in the UK expressed similar delight at achieving freedom from in-laws upon migration. They enjoyed being able to be their own masters rather than getting directions from in-laws or even parents about the correct way to behave.

Migration

As seen in the discussion so far, women's motivations for migration are very dissimilar to those of men as economic factors are lower down their priority list. Instead, what we witness is an urge to assert their independence vis-à-vis in-laws and traditional Pakistani societal constraints. Sara showed frustration with the restrictive Pakistani culture:

> There is community pressure, there is social pressure basically about how to dress, how to talk, how to walk, how to behave, and you know the pressure of living in a family. I feel relieved here (UK) because I am relieved from pressure of family and stuff.

These women cannot be categorised as "trailing wives", a notion that reduces them to pets following their masters, instead they are active agents in the migration process. For all the women interviewed, migration was a means to

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achieve their desired goals whether that meant career, studies or just independence. This is particularly aided by the fact that they are not "trailing wives" per se as they chose men who were already in the UK. The migration decision is in fact a derivative of the marriage decision and we have discussed the degree of agency exercised by these women in that process.

Migration in itself was a standard family reunion style process for all women where the husband supported the visa for his new bride. The relative financial strength and job stability of the men ensured a smooth and quick visa process. All women were able to join their husbands in a matter of couple of months. The women recall their initial excitement at landing at London's Heathrow airport as for many it was a first experience of living abroad. The first few months were spent in sightseeing around London like a tourist and none of the women experienced any problems in travelling alone. Pakistani migrant women commonly originate from rural areas with low levels of education and language skills which make their initial move difficult. They are caricatures of Pakistani women struggling to communicate with their doctors and so on. Women in this study come from an entirely different segment of Pakistani society which is reflected in the relative ease with which they were able to get around their daily activities. Only one participant complained about language problems but she admitted it was "more about picking up their accents" rather than English language. She decided to address that problem by taking up voluntary work at a local charity shop and according to her it proved effective. Apart from language, the lifestyle difference between Pakistan and the UK proved slightly challenging for women. All women complained about "having to do everything on your own" as they were previously used to having servants in the household. Maira noted:

> I was very excited (about move) because it was a new country and I always sort of wanted to live outside of Pakistan. The only disappointment was that I had to do the entire house work- cook and clean- which I wasn't very used to. In Pakistan you have servants to take care of all that. I

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      manage OK, it's not that difficult but of course sometimes you feel like 'oh god I miss my maids!'

Post Settlement Phase

During the initial settlement period all women were faced with crucial questions regarding their future course of action. The monotony of daily housework and loneliness were major catalysts in pushing these women to make a decision. For some like Fatima who had a career in Pakistan, the move into the job market seemed like an obvious choice. Unfortunately, migration coincided with the economic melt-down of 2007 and getting a job proved much more challenging than expected:

> Initially it was all about having fun, travelling here and there, seeing things around London but then very soon it was clear that I had to get back to work. It was a very aggressive search for work but unfortunately not a good time. I used to blame myself but my husband was really calm and he said that it's just the situation and not you. I had loads of friends who had been here six months or a year before me. So they had been looking for jobs for quite some time and just gave up on it and became total house wives. I knew I didn't want to end up like that, not at all. So I think that was one very frustrating time for me because I really wanted to work. I was sick of going to town centre and stuff. I didn't want to give up HR because that was one thing I was really sure of.

Fatima did not give up her search although she faced tremendous pressure from family to start family and settle down. She also mentioned getting jobs that were "beneath her caliber" such as admin work but she did not feel the need to take up work immediately as her husband was well able to support her. However, not all women were as determined to have a career. Afsheen buckled under pressure from her in-laws in Pakistan to have a child despite her desire to wait for a couple

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of years. Komal, a chartered accountant decided to have children straight away as she felt she was quickly crossing the "ideal age" to have children. She was satisfied with her choice:

> At the moment, I don't want my baby to go to full time day care. It's *my* choice. I am enjoying my time here, I am already doing a lot as a house manager and I am loving my time managing my home and kids. I don't think I want to go back to work because I don't have to.

The element of choice was important for all women as they did not feel compelled to work due to financial pressure. Hajra, a doctor, claimed that she was not in any hurry to find work as it was purely for her self-fulfillment rather than money. The role of husband as the main income earner was accepted by all women but they believed they had the freedom to work when they desired.

I did not witness the same level of frustration amongst my group as the British expatriate women in Fechter's study. This is primarily because the women here enjoyed a level of independence that is far above the cultural expectations of women in Pakistan. The mere feeling of having the *choice* in deciding their career and family life is not taken for granted by these women. This was evident in Afsheen's case who grew up in a conservative household where women were not allowed to pursue a career and according to her "working after marriage is almost a sin". She admitted she did not expect her husband, a cousin, to be any different, or her post marriage life to be dissimilar to that of her sisters. However, she noted a change in her husband's attitudes after migrating to the UK:

> I never thought Rizwan would let me do any of that (work). Rizwan did not have this sort of mentality before but after living here he saw that so many women work here and you don't just sit at home here. So Rizwan thinks it's OK for me work now as it is good for me to have independence. He thinks women should be financially strong if God forbid something

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ever happened to the man.

All the women agreed that the UK presented them with opportunities to be independent whether that meant freedom from in-laws or pursuing a career. However, some had serious reservations about the benefits of living away from family. They pointed out that the Pakistani family structure, while imposing in many ways, undoubtedly provides a social net. For women with young children the burden of care sometimes became overwhelming and they felt a big gap in their support network. Lack of family support was also one of the important factors hindering women from having a career. Komal and Hajra were absolutely certain that they would have returned to work if they were living close to parent's house. In fact, Hajra planned to bring her mother permanently to the UK, as her father had died, in order to get emotional and physical support. Others mentioned how they missed "just leaving kids at grandparents" to go out alone. Long visits by parents of both husband and wife were a regular feature of these women's life in the UK particularly at the time child birth. Similarly, frequent visits to Pakistan on important family occasions such as weddings also ensured that women did not feel home sick. All women were well versed in latest technology and used social networking sites such as Facebook, Skype and Viber to keep in touch with their families back home.

Marital Relationship

The impact of migration on the relationship between the husband and wife in terms of quality of family life is an aspect picked up by Martin in her study of the Japanese wives in London. She concludes that women found more time to spend with their husbands and the involvement of the father in the upbringing of the children increased compared to Japan where women were the sole in-charge. This was a result of lack of after-work social network for men so they could return home early and also more provision for holidays than Japan. Even though the women in this study did not have the experience of married life in Pakistan, they were questioned about how they felt their family life would be different from their

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current situation.

The most common response, which is missing in the Japanese study, was the reduced role of in-laws in the relationship. As discussed earlier, it was considered in a positive light by all women. However, many women complained that the husbands worked long hours and had a much more stressful job, an observation made by Martin's participants based in London's financial sector. This meant that the burden of household work and raising children fell entirely on the women who were not used to this lifestyle in Pakistan. Komal felt that this proved a disastrous combination:

> Here (UK), you are under pressure because you have to do everything yourself. Over there (Pakistan), there are other people to handle things like maids and servants. I think there are more chances of your relationship being tested. Relationships get tested more if they are under pressure. Husbands are tired when they come back from work, wives are tired at the end of the day, you have lots of things to sort out, you have kids to worry about. Obviously there you have kids too but because of joint family system, it's not only you who is dealing with kids. Here it gets tested more.

Social Life

The most prominent feature of lives of expatriate women discussed in literature is the domestic sphere. Fechter also describes how the "Shell wives" in her study tried to create a feeling of familiarity through objects and furnishings in their rented houses that reminded them of "home" in a life on the move. Conspicuous consumption of items from "homeland" is source of security against fears of expatriate women in Kathmandu. Martin (2007) discusses the domestic role of Japanese wives in great detail as it is considered vital by her subjects. Cooking

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traditional, fresh and healthy Japanese meals for the family is a way women maintain links with their homeland. Procurement of authentic Japanese food items is a much loved activity for the women who often shared boxes of food brought from Japan or pooled in money to purchase an expensive breed of fish. In absence of wide availability in some areas, these women are particularly skilled at adapting British ingredients to Japanese tastes which shows their determination to maintain their culture. They try their utmost to convert their rented properties into typical Japanese households not only in terms of furniture such as *futon* but also in adhering to Japanese customs. Due to lack of English language skills, women tended to stick together closely in groups to deal with situations such as interacting with doctors or builders. Women are also in charge of maintaining relationships, both personal and those of husbands, and an important part of that duty involves gift-giving. Also, the wives of senior managers in the company have the essential role of "social engineering" in terms of arranging functions and get-togethers to provide opportunities for the wives of Japanese colleagues to meet regularly. This creates a strong sense of community in the workers overseas. The women also excel at taking an active part in community associations which do not only include Japanese organisations. They are very active in their British neighbourhoods as well and maintain friendly relations with their neighbours.

The social domain is again in control of the wives amongst the Pakistani households in this study too. Sara described the situation:

> He (husband) prefers to be on the decision making end most the times but arranging social gatherings is my decision. I consult with him only about the date but how many people to call over and whom to call over, what to make and what to do is my decision. So when it comes to social life or the social department I am the in-charge (laughs)

The social life of Pakistani wives is not very dissimilar to that of their Japanese counterpart in terms of arranging one-dish parties on weekends that include other

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Pakistani families in London. However, the major difference is the connection between the group members which is not based entirely upon current job as many men know each other from their previous work experiences in other countries. This difference does seem minor in light of the fact that the group is still based on the same professional occupation and revolves around the men's career rather than their wives.

During my fieldwork as a member of this social gathering, I discovered a very discreet but crucial role of socialisation as a tool in advancement of men's career. Women, although feeling in control of the social life, are nevertheless acting in conjunction with their husbands to fulfil his career goals in the firm. The most obvious indication of this was the completely inconspicuous, unspoken of, implicit hierarchy within the group derived from husband's rank in the firm. As the wife of an ambitious junior accountant at the time, I was able to feel this more than anyone else. As opposed to the experience of Japanese wives, where the burden of socialising fell upon the wives of senior ranking officials in a maternal kind of way, I felt the pressure to deliberately make friends with wives of other "important" members of the firm and penetrate their internal group. This inclusion was facilitated by the fact that it was an ethnically homogenous group but membership was not free. It came with the cost of arranging get-togethers at your house and entertaining guests who are not your personal friends but a carefully carved out group of people who could boost your husband's career. From the strategic decision of whom to invite to the details of menu was designed with the single purpose of impressing seniors. As mentioned in an earlier section, apart from the overt official criteria for promotion, there are more subtle factors that are purely based on personal liking and "putting in a good word" for a candidate.

As a Pakistani immigrant there is an obvious difficulty in blending into the firm-based socialisation which elevates the importance of guaranteeing the backing of senior Pakistanis in the firm. Therefore, it was absolutely clear to me that I had to earn the goodwill of the Pakistani wives to help my husband in his attempts to

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become part of the group. The role of the firm in either imposing or facilitating such a process of socialisation amongst its members is minimal. However, the structure of promotions indirectly makes this a necessity in such a way that one cannot put a finger on the phenomenon of incorporation of wives but its existence cannot be overlooked. I was able to collect ample evidence of hierarchy amongst men in the same firm in my fieldwork, particularly, during conversations where a junior member would readily make fun of his seniors from *other* firms but hesitate from directly passing any sarcastic or critical comments about his senior co-workers at his own firm. Once a junior broke this pattern and directly targeted one his managers in a joke who got seriously offended despite their outward "friendship".

Such obvious hierarchy was lacking from the female group but it was not completely absent. As the wife of a junior member I had to put in an extra effort to be helpful, to offer physical assistance and to be on the "good side" of others. This was not due to an expectation of the group as such but my awareness of the benefits of doing so for my husband's career.

The other aspect that needs to be analysed is that of women's interactions with the society at large rather than their own ethnic group. While all the women confirmed that they had not experienced any major negative event in terms of their daily contact with their neighbours, they confessed they struggled to form friendships. Komal elaborated:

> You feel comfortable with other Pakistanis because of the similarities in culture and religion. Mostly if you make friends with people with white British background, they would expect you to serve them alcohol when they come for dinner. That is something which is part of *their* culture, they cannot do without wine on their dinner table. They would never enjoy our sort of a dinner. That is one thing, then there's the issue of halal. We can't go to their house and ask them "oh can you please serve halal", they

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would have to go that extra distance for that. I mean I have had very good contact with whoever I know from my child's nursery or in the school. They are very nice to me and we are all chatty whenever we meet but we don't come and go to each other's places. I won't call them my friends.

The social life of these women consists of rings of people with varying degrees of closeness. Family constitutes the first ring and the white British population perhaps the farther most ring but there is another group that needs to be studied: the British Pakistani group. This is important because most current research does not differentiate between these two very distinct groups of Pakistanis. Migrant Pakistanis did find some common ground with the British born ones, particularly the religious aspect, but all the women agreed that they could not relate to their experience. While an outsider might not find cultural differences between these two groups, as a migrant Pakistani myself, I could clearly see the massive gap in culture and upbringing. The slang word widely used in Pakistan for those brought up in the UK is "BBCD-an acronym for British born confused desis (Asians)". Afsheen described the typical Pakistani opinion about British born Pakistanis which clearly shows that migrant Pakistanis consider themselves a clique which is "authentic" unlike the "confused" British Pakistani:

I have one teacher at my daughter's school who is a British born Pakistani. He is very nice, if I need any guidance I go to him. There are some neighbours as well but I think those are born and brought up here (UK) are so confused. They are neither here nor there. They don't stay one of our own because they try to become British but they will never be totally British so I think they remain confused. I can't really get close to them because I don't understand them.

The issue of identity as a "true" Pakistani was touched upon by many in relation to the British born but it is somewhat ironic that these true Pakistanis did not hesitate for a moment to express their desire to acquire British nationality. This

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factor will be elaborated in greater detail in the next chapter.

The last facet of the social life of Pakistani women in this study is their political or community level participation in the society. Unlike their Japanese counterparts, the Pakistani women were not active in any social organisation whether it was based on ethnic, religious or community criteria. Their political awareness was very low with most of them admitting they had no interest in politics, particularly, British politics. This can be attributed to the fact that the social circle, as previously studied, comprises of Pakistanis exclusively so the interests of the group don't get broadened. Amina explained:

> I don't follow British politics at all. I follow Pakistani politics to some extent but mainly I follow Pakistani fashion trends I would say and the cultural trends as well but not politics because the gatherings we have here are totally Pakistani. Nobody discusses British politics so you never get to know what's happening.

The women did not participate in any mosque related religious group activities as did most of older Pakistani men and women. During my fieldwork, there was an occasion when one of the members decided to organise a weekly Quran reading event but there was little enthusiasm for the plan and it turned out to be a flop after one or two meetings where Quran reading was for hardly thirty minutes and the rest of time spent chattering. However, there was one growing trend amongst the wives which has never been studied before: online networking. I was introduced to two online groups by some of the participants, one based on Food and the other on mums. It comprised of migrant Pakistani women in the UK, not exclusively in the UK though, who posted comments in the various discussion threads to help each other in daily activities. Once a month the groups also met face-to-face in a restaurant but the turn-out was usually low. It is fascinating to witness how the digital age has completely transformed the activities of Pakistani women who were primarily involved in neighbourhood "kommitti" groups a

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generation ago. These women, with constant access to the internet, shared problems with each other without the fear of being found out by their husbands. Sara, who encouraged me to join one of these groups, shared her experience:

> The group gives you an opportunity to learn and share. It gives you a sense of family without all the strings attached. A lot of women use it to promote their small enterprises like cake making at home. It does have some disadvantages as a lot of fighting and politics goes on too (laughs)

However, the main group activity for most women remains closely intertwined to their husband's network and only a few women had started this online trend. It needs to be studied further I believe to broaden the understanding of experiences of Pakistani women abroad. They are far from the images of forlorn women miles apart from their villages in a strange world.

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Chapter 8: Future Aspirations

How migrants perceive their stay in a foreign country in terms of length of time is an important factor for policy makers and academics. It differentiates exiles from immigrants and temporary workers from permanent ones, but, more importantly, for the purpose of my study, it impacts the migrant's idea of a "homeland" and the broader issue of identity. The most prominent piece of research amongst Pakistanis was done by Anwar (1979) in Bradford where he discussed the notion of the "myth of return". This essentially meant that Pakistanis operated on the idea of eventual return to their villages back home which rendered their stay in Britain primarily for the purpose of earning and saving. As a consequence, the first generation of Pakistani migrants invested heavily in Pakistan both financially and emotionally. This also accounted for their resistance to change and non-participation in the British society. However, recent research on the second and third generation of immigrants has confirmed a change in attitudes of Pakistanis who have dismissed the idea of return (Singh, 1994). Some have argued that attachment to forefather's homeland has been overshadowed by a heightened sense of religious identity which demands allegiance to the "Ummah" or a Muslim nation rather than a geographical nation (Shaw, 1994).

While this research expands the understanding of "homeland attachment" in young British Pakistanis, it fails to address the issues of skilled Pakistani migrants who live a highly mobile global existence. They perhaps come closer to the globe-trotting professionals who live a life constantly on the move. Some social scientists argue that travelling and movement are now fundamental ways of being and identities are formed on the move (Nathan, 2002). "Home" is not a place but a mobile concept embedded in relationships, experiences or possessions rather than a place (Bardhi and Arnould, 2006). Colic-Peikser (2010: 483) argues that for knowledge workers, professional identity and career-building may serve as substitutes for a fixed source of identity and give a sense of order to their global roaming.

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Thus, many academics view transnational professionals as cosmopolitans having multiple homes, living in a condition close to Bauman's (1991) "universal homelessness". While the impact of a hypermobile life on individuals is significant, there are some who argue that mobility does not necessarily imply detachment from a permanent home or nationhood. Nathan (2002) in his study of mobile professionals concluded that participants found no dichotomy between being mobile and being attached to places. In contrast to common belief, very mobile people remain connected to society and asserted that they had a home country (Nathan, 2002: 16).

In the context of this study, the participants possess an entirely dissimilar set of characteristics from the typical mobile professionals studied in the literature above. Pakistanis, in the past, have been subsumed under studies of East-West migration of low-skilled workers with the intention of medium to long term stay. However, my participants have travelled the globe due to their career and it is important to learn how this impacts their sense of who they are. The only evidence in the current literature is a study on mobile professionals which included respondents from non-English-speaking backgrounds (Colic-Peiskar, 2010). Interestingly, the author noted that these individuals were more likely to emphasize their professional work as the most important element of their self-identification as opposed to their national origins which were less "prestigious" and more "visible" in transnational contexts. There is no literature on the female spouses of these professionals except in the context of Western expatriates stationed in less developed countries. I will begin my analysis with how the men and women in this study viewed their future in Britain.

Future

There has always been a romantic fascination with the reasons behind movement of people out of the comfort of their homeland into unfamiliar territories to begin

a new life. However, it is equally important to study the course of movement pursued by migrants after their initial migration. For highly skilled migrants, this has become particularly critical as governments are trying to increase return migration to control brain drain. Research suggests that the majority of such skilled professionals have not returned to their home countries and studies indicate that developing countries continue to experience massive outflows of skilled labour (Harvey, 2011). While at a macro level the most obvious explanation would be a lack of job opportunities in the home country, the decision to stay put or migrate is a complicated one. For example, in a study of highly skilled British expatriate professionals working in Canada, Harvey (2011) found that the factors effecting the decision to return were completely different from the ones to migrate. Again, the intent of return migration was very low but the role of social factors was deemed important by respondents. It included quality of life (social morality, health care, and security) and family, especially, considerations about uprooting children became much important for people rather than job opportunity. This does not mean that professional opportunities were not important but they were not the sole determinant of the decision to migrate.

This study also presents a similar picture where respondents presented multi-faceted reasons in weighing their future options. However, invariably male participants approached the "future" question in terms of career options. They expressed concerns over prospects for climbing up the corporate ladder in the UK as discussed in detail in an earlier chapter. Another major issue raised by majority of the participants was the financial strain that the high cost of living in London presents. Despite their relatively high salaries, they complained about the lack of savings For example, Rizwan said:

> One of the negative things (about living in London) is that I cannot enjoy my life the way I would like to because this country is so expensive. You put your heart and soul into your work and you manage to earn money but then you cannot even enjoy it. I think what I am earning now is three folds

of average salary of a UK resident but still I struggle. That's the bad part, if you are earning this sort of money working Pakistan or in Bahrain you will be in the upper class category.

The health of the UK economy, going through a major depression at the time of the interviews, was also a factor considered by many in analysing their future options. The financial sector perhaps suffered the most during this time and all the participants felt the pinch. There was a lack of confidence in the job market with the fear of redundancies hanging over their shoulders. At the same time the UK government decided to clamp down on skilled migration as Prime Minister Gordon Brown in autumn 2008 promised "British workers for British jobs", and Borders and Immigration Minister Phil Woolas commented: "Migration only works if it benefits the British people, and we are determined to make sure that is what happens." (Migration News, April 2009).

These harsh words were followed by legislation that intended to send the message across to all potential migrants. It ended the access to full service benefits and social housing as well as a levy on non-citizens so that the UK services were not put under extra pressure by immigration (Cerna, 2010). This was seen very negatively by all respondents who felt that they were being forced to contribute disproportionately higher parts of their income without receiving any benefits. Abbas felt that immigrants like him were being exploited by the government:

> I mean the way I look at it as that this country has given me a lot in terms of experience but at the same time I have also done my bit. Why do I have to pay taxes equal to their nationals when I am not even eligible for any benefits? So it's like the government is saying "you have to *earn* your benefits until then we will keep charging you for five years". I mean it won't change my standard of life significantly if I got benefits but at least you don't feel exploited.

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Economic recession in general had made the respondents less inclined to stay in the UK. Although, the situation for accountants was not as gloomy as the banking industry, the general negativity did impact the participant's outlook of the UK. In comparison, the Middle East seemed like a more attractive location with its zero-tax policy and booming economy. Migration of Pakistanis to the Middle East is not a new phenomenon; in fact, it is one the most established chain of migration since 1980s. Middle East accounts for over 90 percent of all migrant workers from Pakistan since 1971 which is astounding. Interestingly, the vast majority of this labour is unskilled or semi-skilled concentrating in sectors such as transport and construction (PILDAT, 2008). However, the Middle East particularly Dubai has been trying to project an image of a global financial hub by attracting big corporations and introducing massive construction projects. This automatically creates a gap for highly skilled labour force. Furthermore, since 1996 the UAE Government has been deliberately following a policy of reducing the size of unskilled and semi-skilled migrant workers (Zachriah et al., 2003). This meant a crackdown on workers from India who did not possess proper documentation etc. As a result, thousands of unskilled and semi-skilled workers were deported to India and from July 1999, the UAE Government has imposed a total ban on visas for new unskilled migrant workers from India. The government has also made it expensive to hire unskilled labour force to encourage firms to invest in modern technology. It is evident that future of migration to the UAE will be highly in favour of professionals in specialized categories such as accountancy, engineering, research and development (Zachriah et al., 2003). Therefore, it is not surprising that respondents in this study were inclined towards the Middle- East. Usman explained this in detail:

> The GDP (in the UK) is not growing at the moment. This is not a country that produces any tangible output, like oil in the Middle East, so it really depends on its financial services. You know what recession has done the UK banks and on top on that they have deficits in NHS etc. The economic policy will only put more tax on salaried people like us to raise money. So

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> right now the Middle East is the main region where a lot of people would like to go and work. Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi are all tax free so from an individual perspective. If you move there with a British nationality you will be in the best position because Middle East is probably the only region in the world where your remuneration is determined according to your nationality and competence comes second.

The last point raised by Usman is extremely important as it was the main determinant of men's plan to migrate from the UK to the Middle-East *after* acquiring British nationality. While there is no study focusing particularly on the practice of nationality based remuneration in the Middle East, participants in Mahdavi's (2011) study on trafficking in Dubai allude to this phenomenon. She notes that in a country dominated by migrants, the country of origin or nationality is a proxy for race. For example, the lowest earning labourers were Black Africans from Nigeria, next came the "brown" Pakistani and Indians but the pay scale increased dramatically for those from USA and Britain. Apart from this piece of research, online expatriate forums are full of discussion on differential pay scales in the Middle Eastern countries for British nationals.

As discussed in an earlier chapter, the majority of the participants had worked in the Middle East prior to their move to the UK which meant that they had witnessed this culture of nationality based discrimination. While they all claimed they were disgusted by such practices at the time, they were very keen to use to it to their own advantage now. They did not hesitate to share their plan to use their British passport as a tool to gain advantage of the conditions in the Middle East. The passport was yet another tick box on their CV that could be "cashed in" if things got worse in their current job. Some were as blunt as claiming that the British passport was only a "piece of paper" and it did not change their sense of who they are. Asad explicitly shared his view on British nationality:

> British nationality is your economic independence or economic liberty. So

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it is an *economic* passport not a nationality passport.

This view was also expressed by others who believed that a British passport would aid their mobility across the world in terms of easing visa restrictions. This is an essential strategy in opening up a world of opportunities for these migrants. This point is crucial as it makes this group different from its European counterpart which does not have to go through this phase of "earning" mobility. Highly skilled Pakistanis do face fewer restrictions than migrants in other categories but to compete at a global scale they need to acquire mobility at par with the "freely floating" professional migrants. A five-year stay in Britain ensures this mobility and it is not surprising that all the participants wanted to "move on" after completion of this stage of their economic journey.

This seems like a mockery of the government's entire naturalisation programme. In the wake of home grown terrorism, the government has been diverting enormous amount of time and resources into restructuring the naturalisation process in order to increase social cohesion and integration. For example, since 2007 government has introduced a compulsory multiple- choice based "Life in the UK" test for all those seeking permanent settlement in Britain. In order to pass this test, applicants have to read a course book titled "Life in the United Kingdom: A journey to Citizenship" which includes all the necessary information ranging from Royal history to social benefits to ensure that applicants are familiar with the "British way of life" (OECD, 2011). There is a further chapter that encourages citizens to participate in the community life which fits well with the conservative government's idea of a "Big society" where members actively seek to resolve their own issues (OECD, 2011). However, from the case of professional migrants it is clear that the government efforts to imbue a sense of being "British" amongst immigrants is a very complicated matter and not only dependent upon the length of time in the host country.

Despite this, it cannot be ignored that most participants felt they could not deny

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feeling "British" at some level after their stay. As the vast proportion of their interaction with the British society is through their work experience, it is clear that the "British" values they admire and absorb are around fairness and professionalism in the work environment. Umer felt he had accumulated many British qualities over the years:

> I feel British in terms of some values. Values like democracy, equality and the acceptance of other's points of view. The professionalism at work and respect of others is great. There is no strict hierarchy and the partner sits on the same floor as an intern…… I would queue up very normally even outside UK and not bend the rules. I have become patient. I can also express my dislike without being blunt now (laughs).

The relationship between naturalisation status, interest in politics, and likelihood of discrimination is complex but there is certainly a link between these factors and level of dissatisfaction with the host country (OECD, 2011). In my study, "discontents" with the British society are mainly regarding certain cultural aspects of the western lifestyle which clashes with participants religious beliefs. The significance of drinking in workplace socialising has already been discussed in an earlier chapter. Even though this group does not display any significant involvement in religious activities, there is a particularly strong sentiment in terms of raising their children in accordance with Muslim beliefs. This is not at all surprising as it is a natural parental instinct to give their children the best possible upbringing in their opinion. Recently, the conflict faced by Muslim parents with young children in western society has become very public with issues over dress code, sex education and forced marriage. Parents with teenage girls find this particularly difficult and many consider returning to their home country to avoid such issues but this can prove even more traumatic for children. Muslims in the West may find this experience challenging as at some level they may blame themselves for bringing their families to these countries where their children have become emotionally unbalanced (Ahmed and Amer, 2013).

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The participants in this study seemed fully aware of these issues. Furthermore, male participants argued that their hectic and busy work life meant that there was very little they could do in educating their children about religion. The lack of a joint family structure also meant that unlike their own childhood, their children did not have access to education resources within the family. In their view this amplified the need for religious education but the secular nature of British education system failed to provide the alternative. Furthermore, there was a major concern over sex education in school at an early age. None of the parents considered sending their children to Muslim schools as the standard of education was not up to the mark. Abbas summed up some of these issues:

> They (kids) pick up different things from school. They (schools) have sexual education at a very early age and I don't want that. In my current job I am really busy and I know my boys are running around like headless chickens. I need to spend a lot of time in teaching them about their religion and culture but if you are not at home you can't do that. This is my main concern which is why I want to move out of UK for a certain period of time. Once they go into their O levels and A levels then they can come back and study in the UK but not the first ten years of schooling.

It is noteworthy that many male participants drew attention to the case of the second-generation British Pakistanis who in their opinion had "lost it" and either taken the extreme route to religious radicalism or taken to the dark world of drugs. This was a major push factor for people to migrate to a Muslims country. Imran represented his group when he shared these concerns:

> The first generation came in the seventies or eighties and then they have got kids now who are 20 or 30 years of age. I have seen the kinds of things they do. They are in extreme positions, either they are very religious or they are really bad. Obviously you don't want your kids to be like that.

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> These guys don't know our values as a Pakistani or as a Muslim. It is very difficult for me to digest this as a father.

One of the most striking differences between the two sexes was the women's ambivalence towards the notion of their children getting "corrupted" by western influence. There is also evidence in the literature on attitudes towards that shows a difference between mothers and fathers (Abbas and Ijaz, 2009: Shah and Iqbal, 2011) where men are more likely to advocate single-sex education as opposed to women who believe it should be available for *both* boys and girls. Women were against the idea of the female body as the bearer of cultural values of *izzat*. While most of the women in this study acknowledged the challenge of raising their children in a society with clashing cultural values, they emphasised the importance of home as an institution of learning. They believed they could instil a strong sense of morality in their children which would ensure that they know their limits. The home was more important than the society in general. Some women also thought that Pakistan was far from the pristine, uncorrupted morally upright society that many migrants picture. They recounted how their schools were completely westernised and modern hence not much different from the British schools. Some mothers with daughters were, contrary to common belief, more inclined to raise them in the UK as they believed it provided equality for girls. They wanted their daughters to have an education and a career without the discriminations experienced by women in Pakistan. This perspective was clearly absent in the men's interviews who were only concerned about their daughters "proper' training. Rabia detailed her response to these issues:

> I am not concerned because I have seen my cousins grow up abroad and they are very good moderate Muslims. I think even if she was in Pakistan, she could have turned" white-washed" there too because now it is a really advanced place. Religion is important and I do hope that she understands how important it is and she understands what her restrictions are. I think she will grow up with more confidence here (UK) and she will be able to

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understand how to get a career. She will be more responsible here, not as pampered as kids in Pakistan. Over here (UK), girls are more independent, stronger even though at times that's a negative point because then they may be very aloof from their parents when they grow up but then it varies from child to child, everybody has their own choices when they are individuals, right?

Another important factor mentioned by some women was the interference of extended family members in the upbringing of children in a typical Pakistani joint family structure. The women preferred living abroad as it gave them more decision making power in the absence of grand-parents. Sara admitted that she did not want to live in a Pakistani style environment where family members considered it their right to interfere in your child's upbringing. While men thought this was reassuring, women found it intrusive:

Yeah I would prefer to raise a child outside of Pakistan. Over here you have that degree of control over your child to discipline him but in Pakistan there is family pressure. I don't think you have much control in one house with four families together. I would like to make decisions about how my child is raised and here (UK) there wouldn't be interference as much as in Pakistan.

The issue of interference by in-laws was a major concern for women. This has been discussed in an earlier chapter but in terms of future planning, women were very hesitant to give up their independent life style in the UK and this was a serious deterrent in their plans of moving back to Pakistan. This does not mean that the women were oblivious to the socio-political problems of Pakistan but at a personal level it did not impact their decision making to the same degree as men. For example, Afsheen admitted:

The biggest thing is that if I go to Pakistan I will have to live in a joint

family. I cannot live like that now. It's difficult because it's impossible to manage so many people, to keep everybody happy in the family. I find it very hard. If I was living like that (in a joint family) right from the start then I would have lived there (Pakistan) like a good daughter-in -law but not now. I am too used to my own independence. I can't think of living in Pakistan now!

However, it must be noted that women with professional degrees or those who wished to pursue a career had a slightly different view on living in a joint family structure. For them, it provided much needed support in taking care of their children which is absent in the UK. Hajra, a trained medical doctor, was strongly of the opinion that she wished to be close to her mother in order to continue her studies and work. She was clear that she did not find the idea of joint family attractive but she needed support and it fulfilled that need. Another participant, Maira, who was not currently working wanted to go back to Pakistan "eventually" after completing her studies.

I am going to have a degree and work here (UK) but then eventually I would love to be a fashion designer when I go back home because it's much easier there. I would like start my own business. There is a lot of competition here and you really have to give it your all. There is more opportunity in Pakistan and I mean there are people to help me out there but here it's just me. Business requires a lot of time and effort which is impossible for me to put in right now. So that's why I think I want to go back in ten years' time.

These women were still very inclined towards moving closer to their own parents for child care if required in future. This is in line with the women's role as 'kin-keepers' where women cement strong bonds between their own children and their maternal line by maintaining more regular contact with them and involving grandparents in raising children (Ross et al., 2005). Working women throughout

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the western world also heavily rely on grandparents for childcare due to increased cost of day care and it is no surprise that maternal grand-parents are more likely to provide support than paternal grandparents (Musatti, 2006). In my study, one of the women, who was the only child of her single mother had already arranged for her mother's visa to live with her permanently to take care of her three children as she was training to be a doctor. This is extremely unusual in a Pakistani society where traditionally the bride's parents avoid entering their daughter's house and demonstrates the degree of negotiating power some women have achieved in their marriage.

As mentioned earlier, the region of choice for all male migrants is the Middle-East, not Pakistan. The economic and cultural reasons have been discussed above but the reasons for rejecting Pakistan as a possibility is equally important. This group is peculiar in its relationship with Pakistan as there was a strong sense of "being Pakistani" expressed most prominently in response to questions around "homeland". The mention of homeland evoked emotional statements regarding Pakistan as a place "where the heart is", a place full of memories of growing up with family and a place where they still look forward to going. However, the frustration with the current socio-political situation in Pakistan also produced some strong negative sentiments. The vast majority of participants felt that Pakistan was not "livable" anymore with the constant sense of insecurity, massive corruption and an ever declining economy. Rizwan felt he had no choice but to leave the country in the current situation:

> I cannot stop corruption, I cannot eliminate poverty, I cannot stop terrorism. These things just get to me and I cannot stop them single handedly. But I refuse to be part of it too. I have no choice but to move out to the Middle East which has the right mixture of things.

These voices strongly resonate with those described by Yusuf (2012) in his analysis of the results of three major national surveys on Pakistani youth. He

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concludes that Pakistani youth is deeply patriotic at heart but realizes that any chance of upward economic mobility lies in emigrating. They desire social and political change in Pakistan and have no faith in the current leadership but at the same time they do not want to be part of the process of that change. The overwhelming majority of Pakistani youth is opposed to extremist forces and is united in their belief that it needs to be stopped. These views are very similar to the ones expressed by participants in this study and demonstrate the push factors for migration out of Pakistan. The "right mixture" they desire is a blend of western style standard of living in an Islamic culture, economic opportunity, justice, rule of law along with security from terrorism. They believe the Islamic countries of the Middle East have achieved this prosperity without giving up its religious roots. The fact that the Middle-East is geographically very close to Pakistan is yet another favorable consideration for all the participants who felt they could visit family more often. The social aspect of finding more Pakistanis also attracted some participants who shared examples of their friends who had moved and enjoyed a better social life in places like Dubai. This was also due to the fact that working hours and work related stress was perceived to be less by many men so they could devote greater time to family.

It must be mentioned here that not all men were tempted by the lure of the Middle East. Asad wanted to settle in the UK permanently, despite sharing some of the apprehensions about raising his daughter in Britain, mainly due to his past work experience in other countries:

> No I really like UK. I have visited the US couple of times and didn't like it. The whole attitude of people there; working hours, work culture, ethics are poor. The whole culture is about money, you have a huge pressure to perform. I think UK is much better than that. It's different, in the UK it's still humane, in US it's extreme. I have worked in Tokyo, short stint, beautiful city but again work ethics were pretty rubbish. Well, not ethics but work practices are pretty rubbish. Now I am in financial institutions so

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> I can't go and live in Africa. It has to be a place where there is a financial market so New York, UK or Tokyo and I prefer UK.

The future of "trailing wives" or "accompanying spouses" is inevitably tied to their husbands but this does not imply that their aspirations cannot be different. All of the female participants in this study were fully aware of the fact that they did not entirely control their destiny and it was dependent of their husband's career but they had very strong opinions about their preferences. Regarding the move to the Middle-East, again women approached the issue from a completely different vantage point. For them, one of the foremost attractions of the place was proximity to "home" which basically implied parents. The lax visa policies in the Middle East in comparison to the UK also meant that family could visit more frequently. Second, the relatively greater availability of domestic help meant that they could afford a more luxurious life style akin to their standard of living in Pakistan. The fact that it was an Islamic country was also welcomed as it out their minds on ease in terms of providing their children with an "appropriate" environment. However, there were many apprehensions about the lack of freedom for women particularly in countries like Saudi Arabia. The restrictions on movement and lack of recreation were seen in negative light by most women. Thus, in some ways Middle East seemed worse than Pakistan in terms of women's rights as Afsheen explained:

> I don't like the Middle East that much personally, you know because of women's rights issue. In a way it is worse compared to Pakistan. You can't have the same degree of independence that you can enjoy here (UK). I can just get on the tube, travel alone, go where ever I want and nobody will even look at me. There (Middle East) it will be a nightmare! What will I do? I know you can have a lot of savings and enjoy life but I don't know…..

These apprehensions are not surprising as the Arab world has appalling records on

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women's rights where women in Kuwait received the same political rights as men, which enabled them to vote and run for office only as late as 2005. Governments of Kuwait and UAE do not have a gender-cased discriminatory clause in the constitution while Saudi Arabia has absolutely no clause on non-discrimination of any kind (Kelly, 2009). Therefore, women still suffer from restrictions on travel, attire, and marital choice. However, the situation is slowly improving with better representation of women in the labor force than was the case five years ago. In Kuwait, for example, the proportion of adult women with jobs has increased from 46 percent in 2003 to 51 percent in 2007 and similarly, the proportion of working women has grown by 4 percent in Oman (to 25 percent) and by 3 percent in the UAE (to 41 percent) over the same period (Kelly, 2009). Therefore, some of the women in the study were not entirely negative and thought they could do have a career in certain countries which were more liberal than the rest as Komal claimed:

> I think it's going to work just fine because girls are working in the Middle East now especially in places like Dubai and Bahrain. As I told you I am planning to go into teaching and teaching is an acceptable profession for women everywhere so I guess it is going to be alright. You have advantages like it's closer to Pakistan so your parents can come and go in Middle-East.

Overall, it seems like most Pakistani professionals in the UK consider their stay in the UK temporary. This decision is not only based on economic or professional opportunities but some deeply personal concerns about raising their children in an Islamic environment. A critical difference between their plan and that of earlier migrants to the UK is that they wish to relocate to the Middle East, not Pakistan, after gaining British citizenship. A place close to "home" yet far from its insecure, violent and depressing environment.

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Chapter 9: Conclusion

This study has sought to broaden the scope of current migration studies literature, which is either dominated by the east-west migration of low-skilled migrants, on one hand, or is occupied with the globe-trotting life style of predominantly western highly skilled migrants across financial capitals of the world, on the other. This study, then, fills a major gap in the field by shifting the focus towards a group of middle-class, urban, professional Pakistanis who have been neglected in existing studies. They are a distinctive group as their education and social status makes them outliers within the British Pakistani community, while their race and religion hinders complete integration with their occupational group. This study set out to understand the fundamental differences between this particular strand of migration and the already established Pakistani migration pattern to the UK in terms of social profile, sending regions, migration channels, work experience and family life. It also aimed to contrast this group with their dominant occupational group of white professional males. Based on in-depth interviews and participant observation amongst families over a period of time, the major part of the study is dedicated to understanding the everyday lived experiences and struggles of the men and women involved who remain very firmly rooted in their culture and religion while negotiating a secular work and social environment.

This study is also distinctive not only due to its focus on Pakistani professional migration but it also sheds light on the lives of women who accompany these professional men to the UK. Pakistani female migrants have historically been studied in the context of marriage migration, consanguinity, their role in maintaining transnational social ties and, most recently, in terms of the educational and work outcomes of second or third generation migrants. In contrast to the rural background of most Pakistani women in Britain, the wives in this study present a very different picture as they originate from urban, educated, middle-class Pakistani households with high levels of English language knowledge. Still, the life experiences of these women are far removed from those

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described in research on white, western expatriate wives accompanying their husbands on high profile jobs in less developed countries.

The thesis is divided into seven separate chapters starting from the participants' experience of growing up, acquiring professional qualification and early work experience in Pakistan to the process of migration and settlement in the UK. It establishes that the core differences which mark this particular group of migrants out from its co-ethnics in the UK are: a) urban origin in the largest cities of Pakistan; b) high levels of education including professional qualifications; c) high caste, middle-class social status; d) individual/lead migration as opposed to chain migration pattern; e) housing preference not dependent upon spatial concentration of co-ethnics. It is argued that in terms of their social profile, these migrants closely mirror the Pakistani diaspora in the USA, which mainly comprises of professionals, unlike the domination of unskilled labourers in the UK migration stream. Pakistani highly-skilled migrants also bear some resemblance to Favell's (2008) "eurostars" in terms of age and middle-class status, but a very significant difference (barring ethnicity, religion etc.) with these European migrants is that of marital status. The predominant mode of existence for young Pakistani men was married life with children, in contrast to the single life style of European migrants of similar background and age.

The study focused in detail on the work life of male participants after migration to Britain, as this was the most recurring theme in the interviews with men. Employed by one of largest auditing firms in the world, one of the "Big Four", these men acknowledged their privileged position and associated benefits such as tremendous learning opportunities, open and ethical work culture and professionalism in the firm. However, their main concern was the firm's appraisal system which placed a disproportionately large emphasis on social/selling skills as opposed to technical expertise, which has been historically associated with the profession. This change in culture is reflective of an increasing trend towards commercialism and client-service in the accounting industry, rather than a more

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public service orientation. For the participants, at a practical level it implied building and maintaining extensive social networks across the firm by actively taking part in the formal and informal work related social events. All men in this study found this particular task extremely taxing due to the centrality of the pub and alcohol at all such events. They believed that their path to acquiring social networks was truly hampered by their religious beliefs which prevented them from drinking, family commitments that put pressure on their free time, and a general communication gap with co-workers due to cultural differences. The negative consequences on their career have been described in the study in terms of a "glass ceiling" effect where there is no overt racism, but nonetheless members of certain ethnic minority groups are systemically excluded from the highest ranks in the firm.

The perception of a blocked route to success within the firm was very strong and was resolved in different ways by the participants. The majority opted for an exit strategy such as a move to the fast growing Middle Eastern economies after acquiring British nationality. This last point is crucial because the participants were aware of the nationality-based differential pay scales in the Middle East and wanted to reap the benefits of their time in the UK. In addition, geographical proximity of the Middle East to Pakistan and tax free income were also considered favourable aspects. However, to most men the lure of working within an Islamic cultural context was greatest. Since returning back to Pakistan was not even considered an option due to the intense security crisis in the country, the Middle East was seen as the best alternative for providing their children with an environment to grow up in. In their minds, countries like Dubai and Qatar were 'utopian' places where the east and west blend perfectly and harmoniously to create an environment where men like them can reconcile their religious beliefs with their career aims. However, it must be mentioned here that women in the study had a very different approach towards the future as they did not wholeheartedly approve the men's plan to move to the Middle East due to the restrictive environment in these countries. They were also of the opinion that it

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was not necessarily important to relocate to an Islamic country in order to provide children with religious education as it could be accomplished at home.

This thesis is significant in drawing attention to Pakistani accompanying spouses who possess very different characteristics from the bulk of migrant women covered by both research on Pakistani migration and that of European expatriate wives. Women in this study hail from educated, middle-class, urban backgrounds whose experience of marriage is also in sharp contrast to Pakistani women portrayed in the media. They represent a new generation of women in urban Pakistan, where the phenomenon of a "love marriage" is slowly gaining acceptance and replacing the traditional arranged marriage. All women confessed that they had final say in choosing a partner and some had a relationship prior to marriage. These women also show very different motivations to migrate. Far from the image of forlorn women in a foreign land, participants in this study viewed migration as an opportunity to assert their independence vis-à-vis in-laws and traditional Pakistani societal constraints. As opposed to the strictly hierarchical joint family system in Pakistan, these women found the nuclear family pattern in the UK extremely liberating as it implied freedom from in-laws, privacy, decision making powers in raising their children and pursuing a career. All women cherished these liberties and unlike the European expatriate/trailing wives who have been shown to experience downward mobility, felt highly satisfied by their decision to migrate. It must be mentioned here that a couple of working women had reservations about the benefits of living away from family. They pointed out that the Pakistani family structure, while imposing in many ways, undoubtedly provides a social safety net.

The most prominent aspect of the women's life in the UK was their social life which was primarily driven by their husband's Pakistani colleagues and their families. There was very limited interaction with other ethnic groups due to the religious and cultural differences. Social life revolved around hosting parties and

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entertaining with a very discreet but crucial purpose of advancement of men's career. Women, although feeling in control of the social life, are nevertheless acting to fulfil their husband's career goals in the firm. From the guest lists and menus, to the topics of conversation, all are carefully crafted with the intent of making a good impression upon work colleagues. The most obvious indication of this was the completely inconspicuous, unspoken of, hierarchy within the group derived from the men's rank in the firm.

This research is first of its kind in steering the spotlight away from the historically rooted low skilled migration from rural Pakistan to the UK and therefore broadening the scope of current migration research. Due to the multifaceted nature of the research, it makes an original contribution to a number of fields related to; a) highly skilled migration; b) Pakistani migration/diaspora; c) the accounting profession and d); trailing wives/accompanying spouses. In each of these particular fields, however, there are significant opportunities for further research. For example, I have identified some of the differences between this research group and British Pakistanis but it would be equally interesting to compare this group of professionals with migrants from other ethnicities (e.g. Indian) from a similar background. This could also include Indian professionals from a different faith such as Hindus or Sikhs in order to find out how they cope with the British pub culture and other cultural differences at work. Another variable which has research potential is the sectoral division of work, For example, we know that the NHS employs a lot of migrant Pakistani doctors and it would be interesting to see whether the public sector puts the same pressures upon employees as the private financial sector. Yet another area of exploration, which I am personally inclined to pursue, is a longitudinal study of the participants in this research. Due to my interaction with the research group, I have already witnessed a wave of migration of the now British Pakistani accountants to the gulf regions of UAE and Qatar as mentioned in this thesis. Therefore, it will be extremely interesting to follow these men and women in their journey towards their 'utopian' world and find out whether they have achieved what they were hoping

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for, or what new strains emerge.

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