University of Huddersfield Repository

Ali, Nafhesa Rosy

Exploring Older South Asian Migrant (SAM) Women’s Experiences of Old Age and Ageing

Original Citation


This version is available at http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/26609/

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/
Exploring Older South Asian Migrant (SAM) Women’s Experiences of Old Age and Ageing

Nafhesa Rosy Ali

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Huddersfield

July 2015
Copyright

i. The author of this thesis (including any appendices and/or schedules to this thesis) owns any copyright in it (the ‘Copyright’) and s/he has given The University of Huddersfield the right to use such Copyright for any administrative, promotional, educational and/or teaching purposes.

ii. Copies of this thesis, either in full or in extracts, may be made only in accordance with the regulations of the University Library. Details of these regulations may be obtained from the Librarian. This page must form part of any such copies made.

iii. The ownership of any patents, designs, trademarks and any and all other intellectual property rights except for the Copyright (the ‘Intellectual Property Rights’) and any reproductions of copyright works, for example graphs and tables (‘Reproductions’), which may be described in this thesis, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property Rights and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property Rights and/or Reproductions.
DEDICATION

Thank you to Allah for placing this in my reach and guiding me through. The constant in my life. *Tawakal-tu-al-Allah*, my trust forever remains with Allah.

For Asif, Anisa, Hakeem and Maariya.

Mum and dad.

For bigmummy and bigdaddy.

And for my family. The multiple generations who have shaped my experiences; past, present and future.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Sharon Wray, Dr. Michelle Bartholomew and Dr Santokh Gill. Thank you for your kind words, guidance, encouragement and support. I am privileged to have had your expertise.

This research and thesis has been a labour of love and written for the women in my life. In the memory of my grandmother who I watched growing up as the maternal head of the household, her presence both silent and strong. For my nanni, who I knew through the memories passed down to me from my mother. My mother, who is always there; thank you for the stories, the teachings and for always showing strength. For my sister, Faizah (keep going), for my daughters, Anisa and Maariya.

Asif, I couldn’t have done this without you. Your patience and love has carried me through. Thank you for the constant motivation, inspiration and support. You have always been by my side. Anisa (my best friend), Hakeem (my son-shine) and Maariya (my baby), mummy has finished! Thank you for your laughter during the dark days and making me see the sun shine through your smiles. I am truly blessed to have shared this journey with you. Work hard for your dreams, and reach for the stars, everything is possible. For my parents, who taught me about education and kindled my passion for it. It has been the best gift. For, my brothers Tayab and Athur, sister Faizah, sister-in-laws Adéle and Samrah, and the ‘kids’. For my in-laws; ami, Abid, Benazeer, Abubakr, Angie, Usman and the little ones. Thank you for joining me on the journey.

I would like to thank the groups and group managers who gave me access to conduct the ethnography, and all of the women who took part in the study. I am privileged to hear some of the most intimate details of your life. I hope I have made your experiences visible and shared your knowledge to the best of my ability. Thank you to my fellow students for the listening ears, the laughs and moans, the ups and down. I thoroughly enjoyed my time as a PhD student. Thank you to the admin team, staff and colleagues, and the University of Huddersfield’s Transculturalism and Diversity Group.
Age-Stages, Positions and Family Roles   62
  - Family Structure, Household and the Role of the Daughter 64
  - The Short Period of Jawaani (Youth) 65
  - Motivations for Marriage: Puberty, Jawaani and the Ageing Body 66
  - Early Marriage Experiences: Kinship Marriage and the ‘Love’ Marriage 67
  - The Wife, Mother and Mother-in-Law 70
  - The Older SAM Woman 71

Conclusion 71

CHAPTER THREE

Theoretical Influences 74-95

Introduction 75
Theoretical Orientations of the Life Course 75
  - Culture, age and the Life Course: Situating Ethnography 78
Social Constructionism: The Theory of Social Realities 80
  - Socially Constructed Colonial Discourse 81
  - Relational Beings 82
Feminist Positions 85
  - Feminism 85
  - Black Feminism 86
  - Transnational Feminism 90
  - Feminist Social Gerontology 91

Theoretical Framework 93
Cultural Ethics 93
Conclusion 94

CHAPTER FOUR 96-142

The Research Process

Introduction 97
School Research Ethics Panel (SREP) 98
Ethnography: Overt Participant Observations and the Ethnographic Interview 100
  - Questioning the Divides: The Apni Kuri (Our Girl) 101
  - Advantages and Disadvantages of the Apni (Our) position 104
CHAPTER SIX 177-217

Gender, Age and the Life Course

Introduction 178
Hierarchies of Age and the Application of Izzat (Honour, Respect) 179
Childhood (Bachpan) 181
- The Daughter: Public and Private Spaces 183
- Purdah and Gendered Spaces 184
- Gender and Education 187
Marriage: A Marker of Age 189
- Early Marriage Experiences 190
- Disrupting Education 194
- Changing Roles: “I didn’t know anything about anything” 195
- Marrying for ‘Love’ 197
- Extended Family Structure 199
- The Mother’s Role 201
- The Mother-in-Law 202
- Migration Experiences 204
- (Re)Negotiating Life Course Positions 204
Later Life: “Yesterday’s Conversations” (“Kal dia Galla”) 209
- The Role of the Grandmother 210
- Later Life: Hopes and Regrets 211
- Later Life Positions: Religion 212
Conclusion 214

CHAPTER SEVEN 218-245

Conclusion
Addressing the Research Aim and Questions 219
- Research Aim 219
- Research Question One: Older SAM Women’s Life Course 220
- Research Question Two: An Exploration of Shared Cultural
LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES AND DIAGRAMS

Tables
Table 1: Theoretical framework 93
Table 2: Breakdown of age, ethnicity and place of birth: Life Course interview sample 121
Table 3: Structure, agency and older SAM women's life course positions 227-228

Figures
Figure 1: Four key elements of the life course paradigm 78
Figure 2: Age-stages identified for older SAM women in this study 221-223

Diagrams
Diagram 1: Group A - Room layout and space (sketch from the observation research diary) 114
Diagram 2: Group B - Room layout and space (sketch from the observation research diary) 125

Networks
Network 1: Thematic analysis network of older SAM women’s ageing experiences 138
Network 2: Thematic analysis network for older SAM women’s age-stages and matriarchal positions 139

Guides
Guide 1: Ethnographic research observation guide 112
Guide 2: Life course interview guide 127
ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explore how older (60-87 years) South Asian migrant (SAM) women anticipate and approach old age and ageing experiences across the life course. It draws attention to the ways in which older SAM women construct and (re)negotiate gendered roles across the intersections of gender, ethnicity and age in order to sustain quality of life. In addition to subjective experiences of the life course, this thesis examines how older SAM women (re)negotiate collective cultural identities in the place of migration and settlement.

A qualitative feminist constructionist approach, utilising a transnational life course perspective, has guided the theoretical underpinnings for this research. Moreover, a two-part method has been used, presenting a multi-sited ethnography and life course interviews. Data elicited from the study included ethnographic observations, an ethnographic interview, a reflexive research and observation diary and 16 in-depth life course interviews. The study analysed data using thematic analysis and elicited themes via a thematic analysis network.

In this research, key findings reveal that older SAM women’s experiences of age and ageing intersect with gender roles, responsibilities and obligations that are in turn influenced by positions of authority across the matriarchal hierarchy. Gendered roles, such as, the daughter, wife, becoming a daughter-in-law and mother, mother-in-law and older woman are influenced by cultural values and norms overlaid by patriarchal ideologies. Furthermore, thematic readings show that older SAM women construct, (re)negotiate and access cultural identities in the place of migration through culturally prescribed scripts themed around gender, family and a migrant identity in order to publically display and sustain loyalties to a past homeland, across the life course.

Methodological findings indicate that in order to produce ethical research it is important to recognise the spaces in which the researcher and participant negotiate boundaries, as the researcher’s identity does effect the research process. Recommendations from this research suggest that in order to gain a better understanding of older SAM women’s experiences of old age and ageing, a multi-dimensional theoretical approach to age is required. Moreover, this approach needs to take into account the fluid and overlapping constructs of transcultural, transnational and translocational positionalities which additionally embrace insider/outsider binaries.
DEFINITION OF TERMS

In order to familiarize the reader with the terminology used in this thesis, a number of key terms have been identified in this section.

Age - The definition of age refers to a general understanding of age and ageing that acknowledges the social, biophysical and psychological influences of age (Riley, 1988).

Older – In this research thesis the term older refers to women aged 60-87 years of age and suggests that:

    The experience of a generation, or the common experience of those born at a particular time, can form part of developing age-based social structures. (Vincent, 2004, p.7)

Older therefore identifies a generational cohort with potentially shared and common experiences.

South Asian – Pore (1989) states that the term South Asian is more appropriate than the Indian subcontinent because “it shifts the geographic frame of reference from one country (India) to a whole region made up of ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse peoples” (1998, p.22). Moreover, Senior and Bhopal (1994, p.328) explain the South Asian population is:

    […] culturally diverse with innumerable distinct ethnic groups, a complex caste system, at least eight major religions, and 15 official languages.

The term, South Asian, presents a more “complex and fluid” (Senior and Bhopal, 1994, p.330) critique of the South Asian ethnic group that recognises sameness, but also difference (Mackinnon, 2007).

Migrant – The term migrant refers to a:

    “[…] person who lives […] permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country”. (UNESCO, n.d [emphasis original])

The word migrant acknowledges South Asian women’s position as long-term migrants in the UK and, additionally, recognizes older SAM women to have experienced Bhugra and Jones’ (2001) suggestion of a three-stage migration process. First, involving pre-
migration, the decision to migrate and move. Second, the “process of migration itself” (2001, p.216) and third, post-migration dealing with “social and cultural frameworks of the new society and learning new roles” (ibid). The term migrant therefore asserts and refers to a migratory experience in which older South Asian women have experienced external migration from their place of last permanent residency (India, Pakistan or Kenya) to the UK.

**South Asian migrant (SAM)** – Women in this study are referred to throughout this thesis with the abbreviated term SAM, in order to highlight heritage and transnational ties or affiliations.

**Homeland** – Mishra (2007, p.2) describes the homeland to be a backdrop “against which all other lands appear foreign”. The term homeland therefore draws attention to older SAM women’s place of heritage, whether this is constructed as a result of women’s attachment to their place of birth, or ties and bonds to their parent’s place of birth.

**Place of migration and settlement (UK/West)** – The place of migration and settlement refers to as the United Kingdom (UK), and may also be referred to as Valeat (West) or pardes (foreign). Throughout the thesis the place of migration and settlement (UK), and homeland will be used synonymously to identify transnational binaries and attachments.

**Matriarchy** – The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology defines matriarchy as holding two definitions. It defines matriarchy first in the context of mothers who head the household and second, where mothers hold the main power positions (Marshall, 1998). In this research thesis matriarchy refers to a household that is dominated, ruled or governed by women.

**Patriarchy** – Patriarchy identifies male dominated “social systems based on authority” (Marshall, 1998, p.485). Patriarchy is often constructed as a system of social inequality, in which men dominate a group of women (Walby, 1990).

**Patriarchal and matriarchal structures** – Patriarchal and matriarchal structures in this thesis identify Brah’s (1987, p.39) suggestion that “gender divisions have been constructed and reproduced against the background of colonialism and imperialism”.

13
Family – It is important here to establish a definition of family, as the term is prevalent throughout this thesis. DasGupta and Lal (2007) suggest that family within the South Asian family context refers to “any group of people related by blood, or by legal ties such as marriage, adoption etc.” (2007, p.61).

Ideology – In this thesis ideology is defined as:

[…] the organization of material signifying practices that constitute subjectivities and produce the lived relations by which subjects are connected – whether in hemogenic or oppositional ways – to the dominant relations of production and distribution of power (and the consequent relations of exploitation) in a specific social formation at a given historical moment. (Ebert, 1988, p.23)

Culture – Culture refers to “the ways of explaining and understanding human behavior, belief systems, values, and ideologies, as well as particular culturally specific personality types” (Marshall, 1998, p. 137).

Quality of life – Quality of life is defined as, an:

[…] “individual’s perception of their position in life in context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person’s physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships and their relationship to salient features of their environment”. (The WHOQOL Group, 1998, p.570)

The World Health Organization (WHO) developed a measure of quality of life that from a range of international countries. It has, therefore, been recognized as best suited, reliable and valid for its use with older SAM women for the purposes of this research.
INTRODUCTION
Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide an introduction to the study. It is organised into three main sections. The first section draws attention to the context for this research and consists of three parts: The first addresses my motivations for conducting research with older South Asian Migrant (SAM) women; the second examines South Asian women’s post-Partition experiences through its historical, cultural and social significance and influence on the way in which South Asian women have been politicised; and the third contextualises the demographics of age and migration and its implications for older adults in the UK. The second section of this chapter puts forth the research aim and questions that have guided this research and, finally, the third section provides an outline of the structure for this thesis and research.

Context for Research

My motivations for this research were born out of hearing stories around women’s experiences in the *desh* (homeland) and *pardes* (foreign land; the UK). From a young age, I would be told of the joys of living within an extended family ‘back home’ and the courtyard structure of the house that allowed my mother the freedom to roam around freely inside, but also outside, providing the delights of an ‘open house’ in which family and friends could drop by and join in with domestic activities (see also Shaw, 2000). As I have grown older the stories I listened to were more about the challenges families faced with regard to the death and bereavement of family members ‘back home’ and regrets about not being able to return as often as they had hoped due to commitments in the UK (e.g. children, family). More recently, the death of many elders in the community and watching a first generation of South Asian women age, encouraged me to want to ‘give a voice’ to the women who had struggled with their own personal challenges of preserving traditions and values, whilst being conflicted by pressures and expectations from their host society to adapt and acculturate into the West.

My previous role, mediating support for South Asian women carers of individuals with Mental Health needs, highlighted the complexities in which women’s roles were often divided across expectations, responsibilities and obligations to families across transnational borders, in addition to their own hopes and aspirations for life in the UK. Furthermore, my earlier research with older South Asian, Pakistani and Indian migrants (see Ali, 2010) prompted impetus for this research. Older women were often ‘hidden’ and hard to reach as men, or even daughters, would silence the voice of older
women by telling me that their wives or mothers would not be interested in the research. These frustrations motivated me to explore and draw attention to older SAM (South Asian migrant) women’s life course experiences through their own discursive constructs, with the hope of challenging discourse around the isolated older South Asian woman and making her experiences of age visible within academic research and literature.

The South Asian Context

I must address here the reasoning behind the use of the term ‘South Asian’ and its implications in this research and thesis. The South Asian ethnic group encompasses a number of complex cultural, social and religious differences that are encompassed within historical, cultural and regional variations (Brah, 1994). Differences include Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Guajarati, Punjabi, Kenyan and Ugandan nationalities, amongst others, that vary in cultural tradition not only through regional locality but also as a consequence of religious and social class differences (ibid). As a result of the diversity within these subjective identities due to social, cultural, religious, regional and class variations, Poore (1989) advocates the term ‘South Asian’ as more appropriate than the Indian subcontinent because:

[...] it shifts the geographic frame of reference from one country (India) to a whole region made up of ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse peoples. (1989, p.22)

Moreover, as a result of the difficulties of representing the diversity within minority ethnic groups, Poore’s recommendation of representing “diverse peoples” (ibid) through the idiom ‘South Asian’ will be adopted for the context of this research study. Older South Asian migrant women in this thesis and study are further referred to throughout this thesis with the abbreviated term SAM (South Asian migrant) in order to highlight heritage and transnational ties or affiliations. Often, for migrant communities, the homeland is constructed as the backdrop “against which all other lands appear foreign” (Mishra, 2007, p.2). Therefore, in order to make the duality of life course experiences visible the term homeland and the place of migration and settlement (UK) are used synonymously to identify transnational binaries and attachments, identifying a:
“[...] person who lives [...] permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country”. (UNESCO, n.d [emphasis original])

However, in order to gain a better understanding of the contexts in which structures of age are created and idealised, the historical construction of the South Asian woman will also be given some attention.

The Historical Construction of the South Asian Woman: Partition Experiences

The creation of an independent Pakistan and India occurred in 1947. Yet, little is known about the experiences of women at the time of Partition (Didur, 2000; Bhardwaj, 2004; Bhalla, 2007; Frischmann, 2010) and the impact of early socialisations across the life course. Frischmann (2010, p.8) writes:

[...] in addition to seizing land, women’s bodies became another location when a soldier could secure a foothold against his enemy. The foundations of the new states of India and Pakistan were built on the bodies of its women.

Frischmann’s recognition of “the price borne by women” (2010, p.2) situates the South Asian woman’s body within paradigms of gender, izzat (honour) and shame, through the interconnectedness of women and national ideologies. At the time of, and during the period after Partition, the construction of women’s role and their legitimacy as the property of the patriarch were approved through state-sanctioned operations (Didur, 2000; Frischmann, 2010). An example of this was highlighted within India and Pakistan’s state political “Recovery Operation (1947-1955)” (Didur, 2000, p.53) that sought to retrieve and return, “abducted women” (ibid) back to their pre-Partition homes.

Frischmann (2010) suggests that approximately 100,000 women were abducted and only ten per cent were ever found. Within this ten per cent, the Recovery Operation sought to return Indian and Pakistani women on the other side of the border back to the ‘right’ side. However, women’s own choice of return was disregarded despite the implications of being disowned due to allegations around shaming the family, and/or losing their children, husbands and homes acquired in the places they were abducted (Didur, 2000; Frischmann, 2010). The consequences of dishonour during the state’s Recovery Operation overlooked the consequences of return that were potentially harsher than women remaining in their post-Partition residency (Didur, 2000; Frischmann, 2010). Moreover, consequences were dismissed as a result of the
perceived benefits of returning women to their original nations, echoing the relationship between gender ideals and government practices.

The complex costs of Partition and post-Partition experiences have, however, not accounted for the way in which post-Partition experiences have influenced older SAM women’s life course experiences as a result of early socialisations from this period in time. Older SAM women have been deeply embedded within historical, cultural and social ideologies of gender, gendered behaviours and consequence due to the construction of South Asian women in the contexts of others (social, political and personal). The historical significance of Partition to this research and thesis, therefore, positions itself in the way in which women’s roles from the homeland have continued to be intrinsically viewed as interlinked with izzat (honour, respect) and sharam (shame) through typifications of women as the “sustainers” (Bhardwaj, 2004, p.5) and “saviours of family honour” (Frischmann, 2010, p.13). Additionally, the implications for upholding izzat through preserving a woman’s sexualised body is significantly embedded within ideologies of avoiding sharam on the self but, more importantly, the larger family and social network (see Chapter Two).

The authority and ideologies of the nation state, therefore, draw attention to the implications of ideals and understandings to be continued across historical, social and cultural contexts, in addition to the ways in which SAM women’s gendered sociocultural knowledge has been constructed and observed. Notably, within the context of age, some of the women in this research were young girls or babies at the time of Partition and were potentially located within socialisations of post-Partition time, generation and place. As the historical context for gendered ideologies and early socialisations from, and during post-Partition experiences has been established it is now necessary to draw attention to the discursive and situational context of ideologies across the life course that surround South Asian women. Ideologies are however fluid and changeable, and in order to gain a better understanding of the life course, beliefs and practices from the homeland and the place of migration (West) must be examined through a comparative whole life context.

*Older SAM Women in the UK: Demographics of Age*

A significant number of SAM women migrated to the UK in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Ballard, 1982; 1990; 2002; ONS, 2011; West Yorkshire Statistics, 2012). South
Asian women during this time of migration were typically described as ‘followers’ (Herbert and Rodger, 2008) who migrated as a result of their husband’s earlier migration to the UK. The arrival of SAM women at the time recognised a particular age cohort to which women were referred to as at the ‘peak’ of their life course. Ballard (1982) describes this ‘peak’ as a:

[…:] disproportionately large number of women of child-bearing age, and a correspondingly small number of elderly people. (1982, p.1)

This proportion has currently shifted and the “women of child bearing age” (ibid) are now experiencing later life (ONS, 2011). Older SAM women have, therefore, experienced age and ageing in a society that was socially, culturally and ethnically different to their homeland, in which they inevitably faced sociocultural conflict and tensions as a result of societal expectations of women’s roles from the homeland, in the place of migration and settlement (see Pedraza, 1991). The emergent need then to consider the ageing experiences of older SAM women stems from the rising statistics for the number of older people in the UK. Moreover, a need for research to plan for growth and gain a better understanding of how older SAM women experience and anticipated age and ageing, along with their needs in later life, is imperative.

The relationship between gender, age and ethnicity is still largely neglected despite the links between ethnicity and age being significant to understandings of what it means to grow old in Western society (Wray, 2003). With over half the number of migrants in the UK being woman (Rienzo and Vargas-Silva, 2010) and 6 million women migrants in Europe, most of the literature on migration and ethnicity has failed to address the ways in which gender processes relate to race (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Research has further ignored the ways in which women from diverse ethnic social groups process gender differently, producing research that simply points to the cultural or ethnic difference between groups (Yuval Davis, 1992). These variations do not, however, account for the beliefs and customs attached to the ways in which ethnic groups encounter old age.

Research has sought to identify transnational experiences such as migration and cultural distance to impact on mental health and wellbeing (Bhugra and Jones, 2001; Ahmad, Riaz, Barata and Stewart, 2004; Bhugra, 2004). Furthermore, literature has identified and examined the experiences of SAM men (Alam and Husband, 2006),
second-generation South Asian women’s experiences of East/West conflicts (Mirza, 1997) and the impact of socioeconomic status, racism and health (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2002a; 2002b; Bécares, Nazroo and Stafford, 2009). These experiences, valid in understanding the multitude of experiences faced by the SAM community have, nevertheless, provided limited research into the structural aspects of people’s lives (Brannen and Nilsen, 2005), but more so, the ageing structures and processes for older SAM women (Wray, 2003, 2007a; Maynard, Afshar, Franks and Wray, 2008; Victor, Martin and Zubair, 2012). Furthermore, Europe is often represented as the ‘norm’ for plotting achievements around the world and concepts of migrants holding onto ideologies of tradition, culture and religion have become a tool to measure levels of modernisation against the so called developing world (Brah, 1994).

Figures from the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman Report (2011) document that there are now 1.7 million more people in the UK over the age of 65 than there were 25 years ago and by 2034, 23 per cent of the population is projected to be over 65 (Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, 2011). This increase in the older population, combined with figures from the Migration Observatory (2011) stating that in 2010, 52 per cent of the foreign born population were women and the most common country of last residence for long term immigrants in 2009 was India (ONS, 2011, p.13), suggests that research on gender within social gerontology needs to continue, but with a significant focus on transnationalism and lived life course experiences (see Zontini, 2015).

Additionally, recent investigations into the care of older people within the NHS by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, the ‘Care and Compassion? Report’ (2011) indicated that 18 per cent of complaints made to the Ombudsman with regard to care from the NHS were in relation to the care of older people. The report highlighted that NHS provision is failing to meet even the most basic standards of care for older people. The ‘Care and Compassion? Report’ called for initiatives to look beyond a patient’s healthcare needs by responding to the social and emotional needs of the individual (Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman, 2011, p.10). Weich et al. (2004) add that older Indian and Pakistani women have significantly higher rates of common mental health disorders than their White counterparts (2004, p.1543). Therefore, the distance between the basic rights of individuals and the reality of professional care for
older people suggests a significant shift is required in order to address how gender, ethnicity and age influence culturally relevant support and care in later life care.

Furthermore, Nazroo (2006) reminds us, older ethnic minorities in the UK are amalgamated with both the issues of inequality due to age and due to ethnic minority status, prompting a call for research to address and shed light on subjective experiences within ethnic minority populations. However, supported by the suggestion that varying ethnic lifestyles alter the way old age is encountered, perceived and acted out (Sokolovsky, 1985; Wray, 2003), understanding how older SAM women navigate and experience old age and ageing is crucial.
Research Aim and Questions

The main aim and purpose of this research and thesis is to critically explore how older SAM women have anticipated and approached old age and ageing experiences across the life course. This will be achieved through the following research questions:

1. To what extent do gender roles, responsibilities and obligations influence agency and authority across gendered hierarchies but, additionally, how do these structures affect movement across life course positions whilst sustaining quality of life?
2. How do older SAM women (re)negotiate shared cultural identities through cultural scripts in order to perform publically acceptable notions of identity and belonging?
3. To what extent do researcher/participant binaries affect the research process as a consequence of insider/outsider positions?

Three key themes are central to this research and thesis. The first theme considers the construction of gender, age and ethnicity and its relationship with sociocultural ideologies that shape older SAM women’s ageing experience. The second theme aims to explore the construction of collective identities and the third examines the interplay between the researcher and researched roles.

Thesis Chapters: An Outline

This section aims to give a brief overview of how the research thesis is presented. It is organised into seven chapters.

Chapter One examines the role of the South Asian diaspora and (re)negotiations of collective identities from the homeland in the UK. This chapter highlights the way in which diaspora is transferred across place in order to represent loyalties to the homeland, but also the way in which constructions of identity and belonging are reified through culturally prescribed social scripts. Chapter One additionally critiques concepts of transnationalism, transculturalism and translocational positionality and their applicability in research with older migrants.

Chapter Two considers the intersections of gender, age and ethnicity across older SAM women’s life course positions and roles. The chapter begins by critically
addressing constructs and understandings of age and draws attention to the way in which roles, responsibilities and obligations are constructed across a matriarchal hierarchy through the use of negotiations around agency and authority. Chapter Two also explores the way in which patriarchal ideologies are prescribed by both men and women within the family and social structure and their implications for quality of life.

Chapter Three addresses the theoretical influences for this research and emphasises my theoretical standpoint, in which I advocate a critical feminist constructionist position for the exploration of older SAM women’s experiences of old age and ageing. Additional theoretical influences in this chapter highlight a transnational life course approach, in order to address subjective and collective cultural constructions of age.

Chapter Four provides the rationale for a two-part method in which ethnographic research and in-depth life course interviews were conducted to gain insight into the subjective and collective ideologies attached to older SAM women’s experiences of age. This chapter considers the challenges during the research process, exploring the role of the gatekeeper and insider/outsider divides. The chapter concludes with detail of the thematic analysis and thematic networks utilised in this research and thesis to elicit themed readings from the data.

Chapter Five examines how older SAM women publically (re)negotiate collective cultural identities in the UK in order to demonstrate loyalty and to sustain ties to the homeland. This chapter is based on data from the ethnographic interview and thematic readings from a discursive setting.

Chapter Six provides an analysis of 16 in-depth life course interviews and thematic readings relating to how older SAM women have anticipated and approached age through movement of gendered roles, responsibilities and obligations. This chapter addresses the ways in which agency and authority are expressed across the matriarchal hierarchy through agentic roles.

Chapter Seven provides a concluding discussion to the research and outlines how the research aim and questions were answered from the empirical data and the theoretical evidence presented in this research. The conclusion concludes with research recommendations and opportunities for future research.
CHAPTER ONE
South Asian Diaspora, Cultural Memory and Homeland Identities:
A Co-Constructed Life Course
Introduction
This chapter is organised into three main sections. Firstly, the chapter begins by providing an overview of the experience of migration, a critical review of literature examining the South Asian diaspora and the construction of identity and belonging within a transnational framework. Some may argue that the South Asian diaspora structures gendered experiences into patriarchal structures. However, cultural constructions of patriarchal hierarchies disregard South Asian women’s own agency in negotiating subjective positions within culturally located spaces that include, but are not inclusive of, notions of family, gender and migrant identities. Secondly, the chapter critiques the concept of agency and highlights how different types of agency allow older SAM women to negotiate life course structures through moral and hierarchal agentic negotiations. The chapter concludes by proposing the complexity of cultural memory and notions of collective identity and belonging across the life course for older SAM women.

Transnationalism and the South Asian Diaspora
The South Asian diaspora, as a result of migration, creates notions around “multiple migrations” (Alexander, 1993, p.2) through the complex differences negotiated within the formations of origin, structural and contingent geographies (see Ramji, 2003). The varying intersections of culture, religion, class and region construct multiple belongings in which older SAM women negotiate and perform homeland identities. Homeland identities are, thus, transferred or continued in the place of migration as a result of diaspora. Diaspora, a term frequently used in relation to the displacement or forced dispersal of a group of people (see also Rangaswamy, 2005) is reconceptualised by Agnew (2005, p.4) who claims:

South Asian diaspora is characterized by its ability to recreate a culture in diverse locations, not by its orientation to roots or return to a homeland.

Agnew recognises that diaspora, through the recreation of cultures across locations is not necessarily constructed with notions of return. Moreover, Mishra (2007) proposes that the homeland is constructed as the backdrop “against which all other lands are foreign” (2007, p.2), drawing attention to the ways in which diasporic identities are (re)negotiated. For that reason it is often natural for migrants to transfer and recreate cultural orientations in their place of migration and settlement through the continuity of behaviours and norms that recreate transnational activities (Schunck, 2011).
The South Asian diaspora, therefore, represents a transnational identity in which the self and community are created and recreated across the homeland and place of migration. Diaspora transcends fixed national boundaries and is acknowledged by its “double consciousness” (Agnew, 2005, p.14), which puts forth notions of privileged knowledge that construct and place influence on subjective concepts of transnational identities and belongings through a combination of dual or multiple ideologies (Ramji, 2003). The duality of the consciousness (homeland or the UK) represents the fluidity of notions of belonging in which the multiple identities migrants may be committed to are recognised (e.g. regional, cultural, religious or economic structures within the homeland, in addition to structures within the place of settlement) (see Chapter Two). Furthermore, Ramji’s (2003) understanding of a combination rather than a clash of cultures is optimistic in its recognition of multiple structures and maintains that there are benefits for transnational migrants in utilizing more than one culture, in post-migration experiences.

Culture, here, must be critically reviewed in order to contextualise the purpose and term within this research and thesis. Culture is rooted in Latin origins and has many contextual meanings. However, it is the socially acquired culture, which is of interest in this thesis and research (see Berger, 2000: Abu-Lughod, 1991). Socially acquired culture suggests that behaviour, ideals and ideologies that are adopted from the people, environment, social and political contexts in which one lives. Moreover the term ‘culture’ within Punjabi and Urdu linguistic environments has, in turn, been adopted and integrated, but little is still understood about the way in which the term, but additionally the concept impacts on the ageing South Asian.

The concept of culture is, however, not without challenge across generations, understandings and interpretations. Shankar, Das and Atwal (2013) argue that many features of tradition/culture may not be resisted, as women raised in particular structures may not view them as oppressive. However, it should be understood that individuals not raised within cultural frameworks may not be able to view them as liberating and as spaces in which agency can be negotiated (Kandiyoti, 1988; 2000). The purpose of drawing attention to culture therefore recognises Abu-Lughod’s (1991, p.470) suggestion that:
[...] culture is the essential tool for making other. As a professional discourse that elaborates on the meaning of culture in order to account for, explain, and understand cultural difference, anthropology also helps construct, produce and maintain it.

The use of culture in this thesis, despite its potential to create ‘othering’, is a term that this thesis will inherently embrace due to the positioning of this research within dominant narratives of Western-Centric research. However, in addition to embracing the idiom of culture, this thesis will critically examine the different strands of South Asian culture and tradition that influence life course positions and experiences.

It is the combination of ideologies from both the homeland and UK that opens up locations in which culture can be (re)negotiated as a result of notions of belonging around diasporic religious, cultural and economic spaces. However, the fixation with a past homeland in which the diaspora is rooted and in which time, money and emotions have been invested (see Haas, 2005) can hinder acculturation through a constant comparison of past/present life course expectations. Multiple commitments may, therefore, potentially place a burden on maintaining identities within historical and political changes over the life course across two or more locations. Individuals could then hold added responsibilities and commitments from the place of migration, further impacting on the spaces they occupy. (Re)negotiating identities and belongings within multiple “social worlds” (Vertovec, 2001, p.573) may, in turn, induce stress factors (Bhugra and Jones, 2001; Ahmad et al., 2005) as a result of conflicts and contradictions between the “social worlds” (Vertovec, 2001, p.573) an individual is committed to. Alexander’s (1993) quote in Fault Lines: A Memoir highlights the internal conflict migrant women face:

That’s all I am, a woman cracked by multiple negotiations. (1993, p.2)

Alexander’s quote highlights the complexities of negotiating multiple identities as a result of transnational migration and the potential divides associated with this. DasGupta (1989, p.1) explains:

Our stories span different worlds: Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and the United States. Our lives are diverse and different, yet they are tied together with a common thread: the experiences we have shared as immigrants from South Asia and women of color [...].

DasGupta argues that despite the differences there is commonality through the shared experience of migration. Shared experiences construct and reify notions of privileged
cultural knowledge that, DasGupta posits, is created by an invisible bond “tied together with a common thread” (ibid). Agnew’s (2005, p.14) previous idea of a “double consciousness” supports DasGupta’s (1989) suggestion and articulates transnational and transcultural knowledge production to construct identities characterized within the diaspora of the homeland in the UK. Furthermore, privileged knowledge and ways of thinking construct a “cultural identity” (Hall, 1990, p.223), in which the “cultural identity” (ibid) identifies the individual self within a collective group or community. Fortier (1999, p.42) explains:

[…] practices of group identity are about manufacturing cultural and historical belongings which mark out terrains of commonality that delineate the politics and social dynamics of ‘fitting in’.

Fortier’s quote recognises the meanings behind motivations for collective belongings that define notions of “fitting in” (ibid) through cultural and historical understandings. Belonging and the attachment to place, therefore, construct and reaffirm ideals around a shared cultural identity through what is acceptable and what is not. Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1992a) critique the complexities of the term transnational and transnational migration:

We called this immigrant experience ‘transnationalism’ to emphasize the emergence of a social process in which migrants establish social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders. Immigrants are understood to be transmigrants when they drop and maintain multiple relations – familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political – that span borders. We came to understand that the multiplicity of migrants’ involvements in both the home and host societies is a central element of transnationalism. Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns within a field of social relations that links together their country of origin and their country or countries of settlement. (1992a, p.ix)

Schiller et al. (1995) suggest the term ‘transmigrant’ is not characterized by displacement or loss of roots, it is definitive of migrants being “firmly rooted in their new country but maintaining multiple linkages to their homeland” (1995, p.48). The term transmigrant distinguishes that individuals may be attached to multiple structures as a result of their experience of migration and, further, that individuals may carry transnational, cultural or religious affiliations from the homeland. Therefore, recognition of translocational positionings (Anthias, 2002) and the commitment to various social positions and locations allows for the consideration of how older SAM women negotiate and construct identity and belonging across the life course.
Belongings acknowledge shared structures and processes embedded within shared cultural/community groups. For older SAM women intersectional differences in belief and values systems do occur, however, there are also structures that cut across both Pakistani and Indian women’s understandings of behaviour and expectations (see Chapter Two). Older SAM women continue to reify cultural belonging through the repetition of social norms (Fortier, 1999), in which the construction of a homeland identity, and verifying beliefs and behaviours through verbalising social norms construct older SAM women into idealised categories of place, family and culture.

**Memory and Continuity**

Memories of specific experiences allow individuals to construct the South Asian diaspora and transmit traditional ideologies of culture, beliefs and values rooted in histories from the homeland across and into the place of migration and settlement. Memories are therefore utilised as tools to symbolise identities. Recalling past experiences in the present provides an understanding of individual heritage and attachment, in which particular beliefs and behaviours symbolise the value of the past. Furthermore, the constant past/present memory structure (Conway, 1997a) identifies a diasporic individual who is constructed and reconstructed across place and, additionally, across the life course, as a result of subjective experiences.

DasGupta (1989, p.5) suggests that “being loyal to the traditional ‘culture’ is an immigrant’s ticket to belonging” and represents “cultural purity” (ibid) by the extent to which culturally acceptable scripts are narrated and acknowledged. DasGupta’s argument is resonant of Goffman’s (1959; 1997) suggestion of individuals performing parts for the “benefit of other people” (1959, p.47) and begins to identify agency within public (e.g. social, community) and private (e.g. family, friends) sphere. Moreover, diasporic identities are maintained and renewed through memory (Agnew, 2005), establishing memory to be socially constructed and reconstructed based on the present (Halbwachs, 1992). Conway (1997b, p.2) likens memory to a library and suggests:

[…] individual memories are the volumes on the shelves and an index helps a user (a rememberer) locate sought-for volumes (memories). When a book (memory) is located then it can be taken down from its shelf and read (remembering).
Conway’s regard for memory in the context of a library highlights the way in which memory can be located in subjective and potentially collective “volumes” (1997b, p.2). The library metaphor considers the ways in which both subjective and collective identities may be accessed and negotiated through memory. Additionally, recollections of subjective experiences are shaped by a system of shared knowledge, constructed around cultural themes and norms, illustrating the different ways in which individuals belong to the same group (Halbwachs, 1992). Therefore, memory is articulated in the form of “cultural scripts” (Goddard, 2009, p.68) that refer to “cultural norms, values, and practices in terms which are clear, precise and accessible to cultural insiders and cultural outsiders alike” (ibid). However, Conway’s (1997b) library metaphor highlights the difficulties with memory and suggests volumes (memories) may get misplaced, damaged or “incorrectly indexed” (1997b, p.2), questioning and drawing attention to the reliability of both individual and collective memory and recall.

Memory, then, in recreating transnational identities, is contextually constructed and reaffirmed within the public or private domain through how identities are structured and performed but also through the “cultural scripts” (Goddard, 2009, p.68) they share. The notion of the social environment to determine the construction and retrieval of memory suggests memory is not only acquired in society but also that memories are recalled and localised as a result of the social environment individuals are in (Halbwachs, 1992). In addition to the environment, prompts used to elicit memory significantly determine which memories are shared and how they are constructed. Conway (1997a) explains that if appropriate cues are not present during the retrieval of memories, affective information cannot be constructed or accessed to establish an appropriate memory. For example, with regard to South Asian ideals, prompts around family, kinship ties and migration may serve to elicit the retrieval of patterns of knowledge around these structures and notions around shared cultural identities. Memory distinguishes relationships and significant others individuals are attached to and may include parents, partners, children, friends etc., allowing for the exploration of family, relationship structures and their alliance with hierarchal structures (Wilson, 1984). DasGupta and Lal (2007) argue that the family acts as a social institution recognising how memories of experiences, individual or collective, are influenced and by whom.
Chamberlain and Leydesdorff (2004) assert that families themselves may become the site of belonging and the use of emotional attachments within memory can be used to negotiate the extent to which the self is constructed in relation to others. Halbwachs (1992) adds that individuals recall significant memories when family, friends or other people help them recall memories of the past. It is therefore important to explore the facets of family life and the ways in which older SAM women’s memory of increased or decreased stages of agency and autonomy (Holland, Lachiocotte, Skinner and Cain, 2003) are constructed to highlight and negotiate subjective and collective identities and belongings across life course stages.

Hence, older SAM women’s agency is determined by a shared understanding of internalised roles (e.g. gendered roles and expectations) that are shared by others within the same cultural/gendered group. The identification of these roles validates women’s ideals of where they are positioned within the social framework and, further, the social structure to which they are attached. Identifying shared structures through cultural memory therefore acknowledges a commitment to the cultural group individuals have attachments to, which can be validated through the verbalisation of beliefs and values (Fortier, 1999). Moreover, the boundaries of these roles may be understood through collective understandings and recall, in which women can challenge or agree to the structures presented to them, referred to by Halbwachs (1992, p.35) as “the social frameworks of memory”. Memories allow migrants to locate both subjective and collective identities, which significantly reveal the intersections of gender and age to play a role in identity formation (Gardner, 2002). Collective memory, then, reveals itself in the context of how individuals communicate with each other through the practice of social ideals, highlighting the complex process of cultural production (Kansteiner, 2002).

Place and Migration
For older SAM women, place represents the continuation of homeland identities in the place of migration and settlement, from which the self in the collective group can be identified by the extent to which one affiliates with, or places distance to, the homeland (Holland et al., 2003). The significance of the way in which identities and belongings are constructed through memory are represented and directed by the subjective or collective behaviours and understandings of others. Permitting the exploration of how older SAM women negotiate migration and settlement alongside subjective aspirations
and cultural values in the place of migration and settlement. Holland et al. (2003, p.279) explain:

We can best understand [...] the selves constructed in and through the words and voices of others attending to the space of authoring.

Shared cultural beliefs can therefore be used to identify the ways in which identity and belonging are objectified to symbolise the purity of a cultural identity (DasGupta, 1989) and the extent to which one continues to conform to or deviate from traditionally constructed cultural social norms (see also Chapter Two). Moreover, the distance individuals or collective others allocate between themselves and the cultural identity they assign is negotiated through the self-definitions of ethnic identity (see Horowitz, 1975). Place thus continues to represent a homeland identity a significant number of years after first migration, as a result of the continuous recollection of homeland identities.

The significance of migration and its relationship to collective memory calls for greater consideration of the impact of events and place on memory and remembering. The sharing and validation of cultural memory in the place of migration and settlement constructs and initiates a visible homeland identity. For example, South Asian women living in the homeland will, in general, share similar beliefs, values and traditions, such as dress, mannerisms and concepts of differences within language, religion and culture. However, once individuals are removed from the homeland society and/or social group, homeland identities become recreated in isolation due to the removal of a collective social structure (Halbwachs, 1992).

**Cultural Memory and the Transmission of Homeland Identities**

The question then remains, how do older SAM women become active agents in transmitting homeland identities in the UK? Women are often perceived to be the main casualties in preserving traditional ideals of culture, as a result of sociocultural expectations of gendered roles (DasGupta, 1989). Yet the tradition South Asian women perform is often “an outdated version of the original” (DasGupta, 1989, p.5). Wray’s (2012) suggestion of “what, how and why, we remember” (2012, p.35, [emphasis original]), draws attention to the circumstances in which individuals remember but, additionally, the reasons and purpose behind the memory being recalled.
Cultural identities are created through a suggestion of “self-understandings” (Holland et al., 2003, p.8) that are constructed around a moral obligation to perform cultural practices from the homeland. For older SAM women, gendered identities rooted in cultural practices construct connections in which cultural identities seek to sustain ties with a past homeland. The self (older SAM woman) is therefore driven by a cultural logic in order to maintain and continue cultural identity in the place of migration and settlement (the UK). However, the extent to which one agrees or disagrees with cultural life scripts (Berntsen and Rubin, 2004) indicates a commitment to the shared or collective group, reifying notions of in-group status (Zebrowitz, Bronstad and Lee, 2007). Additionally, the degree to which individuals advocate cultural ties initiates discussion around the way in which older SAM women are submerged multiple identities (see Werbner, 2004). Çağar (n.d: cited in Vertovec, 2001, p.580) illustrates how:

People who embody transnationalism […] ‘weave their collective identities out of multiple affiliations and positionings and link their cross-cutting belongingness with complex attachments and multiple allegiances to issues, peoples, places, and traditions beyond the boundaries of their nation-states’.

Çağar’s quote highlights how transnationalism allows people to transfer homeland identities through multiple attachments to “people, place, and traditions” (ibid) outside the homeland. Older SAM women perform, maintain and articulate transnational and transcultural knowledge production, constructing identities and belongings characterised within the diaspora of the homeland and place of origin. Consequently, ways of thinking and the concept of privileged knowledge construct and create a “cultural identity” (Hall, 1990, p.223), in which identity recognises the individual self within a collective group or community. Within these cultural identities third space shared understandings around cultural knowledge become part of the rhetoric in which individuals belong to the shared cultural community (Bhabha, 1990) (also see Chapter Four). Moreover, identities located within culture, economic status, gender, nationality and religious beliefs are recognised as the structural features of a society and Holland et al. (2003, p.270) highlight:

Identity is one way of naming the dense interconnectedness between the intimate and public venues of social practice.

Holland et al.’s construction of identity recognises the way in which identities construct a bridge between the public and private, in which the “space of authoring” (2003,
p.272) establishes social discourses representative of subjective positions within the collective group. Choudhry (2001) argues that in the South Asian family structure collective identities are valued and individualism is identified as egotistical. Holland et al. claim this is done through improvising identities dependent on where and with whom individuals are located. “Positionality” (Holland et al., 2003, p.271) therefore represents “frames of meaning” (ibid) (e.g. thinking, speaking, cultural exchange) that are located within the context of the social situation but, additionally, are used to represent cultural activity by drawing attention to intersectional differences (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, culture) in which identity is created.

Structural identities, then, are not fixed but can change over the life course in order to accommodate historical, economic and political shifts, often confirming or conflicting with homeland socialisations in the place of migration and settlement. Migration, however, tends to be constructed in research with notions of acculturation and resettlement, arguing the difficulties and challenges for migrants in adopting the host culture and leaving behind the homeland traditions. The struggles faced by South Asian women and their experiences of settlement highlight stress inducing factors such as loss of family and social networks and support to play a part in post-migration experiences (Choudhry, 2001).

Traditional notions of migrants leaving behind a culture or homeland homogenise the migration experience. Moreover, acculturation neglects the multiple connections migrants continue to hold across borders and the circumstances and reasons why individuals continue to portray transnational public identities across the life course. For example, older SAM women may choose to continue to maintain family networks from the homeland whilst building new networks in the UK. Cultural and social identities are thus constructed as a form of historical negotiation (Werbner, 2004), in which the formation and performance of identities are constructed through exerting agency specific to particular practices. Older SAM women’s performance and practice of homeland identities, in which roles and traditions are indicative of their place of origin, are symbolic to the continued relationship with the homeland. Goffman (1959: cited in Calhoun et al., 2002, p.46-47) explains:

> When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to
possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matter are what they appear to be.

Goffman’s suggestion of playing a part is metaphorical in its identification of individuals performing homeland identities in the place of migration. Moreover, Vertovec (1999a) critiques the complex nature in which the South Asian religious diaspora is transferred and the circumstance in which knowledge is constructed. Vertovec argues that diaspora authorizes the transmission of religious and ethnic identities outside the subcontinent through the various forms of:

[...] ‘diaspora’ as social form, ‘diaspora’ as type of consciousness and ‘diaspora’ as mode of cultural production. (Vertovec, 1999a, p.2)

Additionally, Hall (1990, p.223) asserts:

[...] our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as ‘one people’, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history.

Hall’s reference to identity and the way in which individuals remember is indicative of how memory can be utilised to structure constructions of identity and belonging. Scheve and Ismer (2013) further suggest that socially constructed emotions structure shared cultural knowledge in which attachments are formed and reified through five types of interactions:

[...] (a) exposure to identical eliciting events; (b) regular interactions with other group members; (c) the sharing of common values and norms; (d) identification as group members and appraisals of group-relevant events; and (e) patterns of emotional behaviour seen as constitutive for group membership. (2013, p.3)

Scheve and Ismer highlight how members of a shared community use commonalities within the group to structure collective ideals, rather than placing importance on the physical proximity of its members. Therefore, the ways in which group members react to particular beliefs, values and norms are shared through notions of belonging to the same “emotion culture” (2013, p.3). For example, notions of purdah¹ (segregation) and sharam² (modesty) are idealised within constructs of izzat (honour, respect) through

---
¹ See Glossary.
² See Glossary.
subjective and cultural understandings of reputation within the public and private sphere (also see Chapter Two).

Identity and belonging are then not separate to the self and community but a means of making sense of who you are and where you fit into a society. Migrants as a result can settle into their place of migration and adapt their economic, social and aspirational life experiences to their surroundings; characterised by Mukherjee (1992, p.615) as “refashioning the self”. However, even though individuals settle into their chosen place of migration and settlement, the impact of separation from family and loved ones prompt migrants to continue to make comparisons and maintain networks with the homeland (see Suarez-Orozco and Hernández, 2012). Shankar et al. (2013) highlight the strength of sociocultural gendered expectations within women’s internalised beliefs, despite the passing of time:

Men are the providers and protectors of the family; […]; a girl is a transient family member as she moves to her husband family after marriage; […]; a woman who does not give birth to a son has no status and can be divorced; women must suffer in silence for the sake of the family; if a family breakdown occurs it is the mother who is to be blamed; girls must be socialized to sacrifice their autonomy and freedom for the husband and his family; […]; woman is the holder of the family honour or ‘izzat’; a girl is a moral responsibility; if she is not a virgin at the time of marriage it is shameful for her parents […]; parents must regulate the sexuality of their daughters because their actions represent the family’s honor; […]; women are men’s property (Indian Women’s Cultural Association, 2010; cited in Shankar et al., 2013, p.249).

There is evidence then of the ways in which South Asian women continue to hold onto strong beliefs around the family and social structure from which family, gendered norms, behavioural recommendations and expectations construct ideals around acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Shankar et al., 2013). Moreover, Shankar et al. (2013) suggest that South Asian women have been socialised and raised within patriarchal family environments for generations and therefore may not see the oppressive structures that they are embedded within. It is important then to take a “transnational lens” (Zontini, 2015, p.326) in order to explore and understand how older SAM women utilise homeland ideologies in order to mobilise a shared ethnic identity spanning multiple locations (homeland, and place of migration and settlement) but, additionally, the ways in which they negotiate sociocultural ideologies of behaviour and expectations. Brah (1996, p.18) points out the complex nature of defining culture and suggests:
In broad terms, culture may be viewed as the symbolic construction of the vast array of a social group’s life experiences. Culture is the embodiment, the chronicle of a group’s history. Since the group histories of different sections of society differ in important ways, their ‘cultures’ are correspondingly different […] Cultures are never static: they evolve through history. That is why the process of cultural reproduction is, in part, a process of cultural transformation. At any given time a group will inherit certain cultural institutions and traditions, but its acts of reiteration or repudiation, its everyday interactions and ritual practices will serve to select, modify and transform institutions.

Brah’s quote highlights that while cultures of different groups in society differ, it is also the case that all groups are subjected to certain common socio-political and economic forces that shape and construct aspects of shared culture. Life course experiences can therefore contextualise and make apparent shared and contested notions of culture, which are inevitably rooted in people’s histories (Brah, 1996).

**Identity and Agency**

The interconnectivity of multiple structures rooted in social and cultural positions can be identified through behaviours and actions produced within particular contexts, places or times. Identities and belongings may, however, be (re)directed as a consequence of particular influences that signify where individuals are located across the interstices of the collective, cultural and social. Agency is therefore an intrinsic part of the ways in which identities are constructed and improvised through social, cultural, political, economic and subjective influences playing a key role in self-renovation (Holland et al., 2003). Holland et al. (2003) refer to the different types of agency as the “positional aspect of identity formation” (2003, p.125), which overlaps and is interrelated to an individual’s position within the social group they are attached to. Holland et al. (2003, p.125) explain:

> These figurative and positional aspects of identity interrelate in myriad ways. Sometimes they are completely coincident; sometimes one dominates over the other.

The fluidity of multiple identities individuals may hold on to as a result of the different positions and locations they are attached to and the ways in which identities may overlap, recognises context specific identities. Therefore, actions are representative of social positions. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) add that agentic positions interact with forms of structure and may be projected as a means by which the past can be contextualised within the contingencies of the present. For example, early life course socialisations may be negotiated through agency in order to achieve or create
alternative life course positions in the future but this will be done through patriarchal negotiations (Kandiyoti, 1988; 2000). For older SAM women, traditional expectations of gender roles (see Talbani and Hasanali, 2000) may be negotiated through agentic orientations of the past, present and future, from which older SAM women are able to make rational choices for herself and the society to which she is attached (see Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Therefore, agentic roles and positions recognise the way in which identities may be used to (re)negotiate and initiate movement across social and gendered positions, reifying the relationship between structure and agency. Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p.1003) explain:

[…], actors alter or shift between their agentic orientations, dialogically reconstructing the internal composition of their chordial triad, they may increase or decrease their capacity for invention, choice, and transformative impact in relation to the situational contexts within which they act.

Emirbayer and Mische propose that the fluidity of agency within agentic roles allows for movement, which can be “increased or decreased” (ibid) during contextual (re)negotiations. Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p.1004) add that agentic orientations are contextual and the response of individuals is dependent on the situation they are placed in. Agency, therefore, plays a key role in (re)negotiations of identity and belonging in which changes to the agentic role, in addition to the type of discourse, create fluidity of and between roles. Abele (2003) contends that within gender roles there are two types of agentic roles that occur. First, within perceptions of gender as a social category or stereotype constructing external ideals around gender and second, through internal agency, which places focus on subjective views on one’s own gendered position (Abele, 2003). The ways in which individuals assess behaviours and roles and, further, conduct agentic behaviours significantly impact on family roles (ibid). Positions may therefore carry notions of identity and belonging but, additionally, stipulate meaning through agency, family and locations.

People tell others who they are, but even more importantly, they tell themselves and then try to act it out as though they are who they say they are. These self-understandings, especially for the teller, are what we refer to as identities. (Holland et al., 2003, p.15)

Holland et al.’s description of identity draws attention to “self-understandings” (ibid) and recognises the relationship between self-perceptions and behaviours that shape the way in which notions of identity and belonging are constructed. Additionally, Van
der Veer (1995) proposes that cultural identities offer important insights for the understanding of international migration and settlement. The transmission of cultural acts, as a result, cut across transnational borders and boundaries and serve to highlight subjective notions of identity and belonging, across societies and contexts. Ahmad’s (1996) critique, in ‘The Trouble with Culture’, recognises the importance of not viewing culture as a rigid system that determines people’s behaviours but as:


Ahmad argues that the flexibility of culture implies that it may be reconstituted in various contexts, bringing to light the concept of transnational affiliations. The relationship of transnational connectedness and culture “enables individuals to sustain multiple identities and loyalties” (Ahmad, 1996, p.4) yet create new allegiances using a variety of settings (e.g. the homeland and place of settlement/migration). The range of experiences, consciousness and feelings about the values, beliefs and customs within a culture, consequently, determines the extent to which individuals feel as though they belong within the various contexts they are associated with (Brah, 1996).

Agency is therefore constituted within the lens of a “double consciousness” (Agnew, 2005, p.14) that is based on “culture-bound knowledge” (Burr, 1995, p.6). Through the use of narratives, the “double consciousness” (Agnew, 2005, p.14) plays an expressive role in the way in which individuals place meaning on experiences (Fivush, Merrill and Marin, 2014). Subjective meanings are accordingly mediated culturally and socially, and are a consequence of the internalisation of values attached to particular beliefs, values and behaviours that construct a structural framework validating sociocultural notions of accountability (Fivush et al., 2014). Fivush et al. (2014, p.274) refer to the construction of accountability as “scaffolds” erected during early socialisations, in which the continuation of moral agency across the life course is reflective of an early developmental history. For example, the performance of traditional behaviours and the production of cultural knowledge through customs relating to clothes, language, and attitudes to kinship (marriage) require some internalisation (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2002a) and as a result past behaviours may continue to place influence on the present (Agnew, 2005; Fivush et al., 2014).
There are, then, inevitably some shared aspects of cultural identity that construct individuals within a shared framework. However, Karlsen and Nazroo (2002a) suggest that identities are not necessarily “culturally marked by them” (2002a, p.15), highlighting the fluid nature of identity construction. So, how do older SAM women utilise agency whilst remaining within sociocultural constructs of identity and belonging? The difficulty with the term and concept of agency in social research is the vagueness with which agency is applied. Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p.963) state:

[…] the most recent attempts to theorize agency has neglected the most crucial aspects of the problem. In distinguishing (and showing the interplay) between the different dimensions of agency.

Emirbayer and Mische highlight a crucial point with regard to agency and the importance of emphasizing how different types of agency interact. Viewing agency and structure as polar sites may potentially construct essentialist interpretations in which the fluid nature of agency and structure becomes absent (see Fuchs, 2001). Women’s agency, whether this is in the domestic sphere or outside the home, through work and/or education, should therefore be addressed and recognised through the different modalities in which women operate structures of agency (Mahmood, 2005). Moreover, an overemphasis on social constraints in research has left little room for agency and, thus, its meaning and impetus (Holland et al., 2003). For example, for older SAM women the focus on South Asian patriarchal structures has removed the cultural and social contexts in which women do have agency and the ways in which it is directed and shaped within the domestic sphere (Kandiyoti, 2000). Emirbayer and Mische (1998, pp.963-964) explain:

[…] the structural contexts of action are themselves temporal as well as relational field–multiple, overlapping ways of ordering time toward which social actors can assume different simultaneous agentic orientations. Since social actors are embedded within many such temporalities at once, they can be said to be orientated toward the past, the future, and the present at any given moment, although they may be primarily orientated toward one or another of these within any one emergent situation. As actors move within and among these different unfolding contexts, they switch between (or ‘recompose’) their temporal orientations-as constructed within and by means of these contexts-and are thus capable of changing their relationships to structure.

The interconnectedness of different types of agency and the way in which agency highlights positions and goals in the life course (past, present or future) are identified in Emirbayer and Mische’s quote. Individuals are recognised to have the capability to
exert agency in which the consciousness allows them to “relate to themselves, to the external world, and to other persons” (Fuchs, 2001, p.26). The consciousness therefore constructs meanings as a result of the relationships individuals hold, creating actions as a result of the motivations behind structures of agency. Fuchs (2001) adds that people can make sense of this world by redefining and (re)negotiating meaning in order to define and redefine situations. However, these situations do have structural limits in which micro structures are more fluid and changeable than macro structures.

Moral agency is therefore an integral part of life course experiences, allowing the individual to express choice, responsibility and accountability for their own actions whilst simultaneously acknowledging the effect this may have on others (Fivush et al., 2014). Consequently, morality, underlies agency in which the individual takes responsibility for their actions. For example, behaviour is often very much intertwined with cultural traditions, religious interpretations and practices, and the accepting and internalizing of “what people told you” (WPP, 2010, p.8). Furthermore, the production of cultural memory through the characteristic of obligation to the homeland culture is evident in notions of women holding on to diasporic values in the place of migration. Obligation creates a “system of values and differentiations which structure the cultural supply of knowledge” (Assmann, 1995, p.131). Yet fear plays a significant role in the internalization of behaviours and punishment, guilt and consequences (e.g. on the family, social sphere, afterlife) clearly impact on sociocultural expectations of the gendered role (see Chapter Two). In addition to moral agency, reputation adds to motivations that determine behaviours and actions. Fuchs (2001) explains that reputation is not subjective but belongs to the social group or network one is attached to. Reputation then is not created, but given to individuals by others. Fuchs (2001, p.36) claims:

[…] personal attributions conceal the fact that persons do not ‘make’ reputations for themselves. They cannot really ‘control’ their reputations, since reputation depends on recognition and appreciation within a network. Reputation is not a personal quality, something that persons carry around with them. In most cases, a reputation makes a difference only in a fairly small speciality, circle, or network. When persons leave the network in which they ‘have’ a reputation, that reputation no longer makes much of a difference […].

Fuchs asserts that reputations are created as a result of the social structure individuals are attached to and, further, reputations cannot be controlled but are dependent on
recognition from others within the social network. South Asian understandings of reputation are constructed within interpretations of *izzat* (honour, respect). Notions of *izzat* must then be viewed as a form of collectivism based on the social reputation of the group (Cihangir, 2013). Therefore, the way reputation and honour are acknowledged and constructed highlights “communal codes” (Cihangir, 2013, p.2) that continue to sustain homeland identities in the place of migration and settlement.

Additionally, for older SAM women, a hierarchal agency regulates the ways in which reputations are constructed and belongings are created. Women’s understanding of being able to negotiate between genders through “rules of the game” and “patriarchal bargains” (Kandiyoti, 1988, p.274) constructs the way in which women are able to exert agency within the domestic sphere and hierarchal system (Kandiyoti, 1988; 2000), yet maintain ideals of *izzat* and preserve reputation. The construction of women’s roles as the “sustainers” of cultural tradition (Bhardwaj, 2004, p.5) and family honour through the passing on of language and customs from the homeland recognises a gendered obligation to a culture in which a “moral agency” (Fivush et al., 2014, p.271) seeks to preserve tradition and homeland expectations. Therefore, “moral agency” (ibid) becomes a significant part of recalling past experiences and represents behaviours as based upon notions of accountability, not only to the culture but, additionally, to gendered positions. For South Asian women, then, women’s agency is identified through the facets of family life.

Mukherjee (2007) considers that the household/family as a site for potential conflict in which men and women vie for space through negotiations of control and agency. For older SAM women, social frameworks and individual thought processes include traditional notions of family and place, in which the family/household is a visible structure in which gender roles are reified. Wilson (1984, p.30) adds:

> The male ego whose nurturing, preserving and boosting is considered of vital importance: a sense of hierarchy which is considered synonymous with the existence of the family; and finally closeness of relationships – the bonds which provide consolidation.

Wilson draws attention to the patriarchal needs and the location of the family and relationships, which form loyalty to structures within the family hierarchy. However, as a consequence of the complex structure of South Asian values and ideals, constructed within the context of others (family and wider community), individuals exerting
particular types of agency, such as choosing to move away from or challenge conventional norms, may be faced with consequences in which they may potentially be removed from these structures. Ideals of reputation therefore structure the constructions and boundaries of *izzat* (honour, respect). Furthermore, reputation plays a key role in subjective, family and community identities in which behaviours including expectations of dress, gendered relationships and education/career (e.g. becoming a doctor, teacher etc.) shape and impact on notions of *izzat* (Wilson, 1984). Reputation therefore plays a quintessential role in building awareness and establishing guilt and fear around particular actions and behaviours, which aim to inhibit deviant behaviours (e.g. love marriages, male/female relationships and Western influences of dress).

However, within the constraints of *izzat*, girls and women can utilise agency to negotiate gendered ideals whilst still fulfilling sociocultural expectations placed on them. Hill-Collins (1998) suggests the family is a system of gendered social organisation in which intersectional differences are not distinct but mutually construct one another. Furthermore, women have their own agendas of protest within these structures (DasGupta and Lal, 2007). Kandiyoti (1988, p. 274) explains:

> Women strategize within a set of concrete constraints which I identify as patriarchal bargains. Different forms of patriarchy present women with distinct ‘rules of the game’ and call for different strategies to maximize security and optimize life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression.

Kandiyoti’s explanation of women as organized within patriarchal structures and their use of “patriarchal bargains” (ibid) claims a positive value on women’s agency within these structures. DasGupta and Lal (2007, p.67) additionally support women’s bargaining power and suggest:

> [...] women strategize, persuade, negotiate and formulate their own means of dealing with oppressive situations; in certain contexts they may even wield considerable control.

It is therefore important to understand the structural and emotional relationships in which women’s autonomy and agency may be identified within the family structure and the extent to which women have authority in the decision making process through their relationships with others. DasGupta and Lal (2007) claim that women’s agency and autonomy includes spaces that encompass economic activities (purchasing food etc.), children (health and education decisions), the freedom to go to places (mobility), and
the freedom from threat (domestic violence/harm). Moreover, authority is further negotiated within the context of gender roles, which are in turn exerted across a gender hierarchy e.g. the mother-in-law over a daughter-in-law (see also Chapter Two).

Traditional notions of homeland belongings therefore include shared spaces and understandings that older SAM women occupy within the family and household, which include influences over kin and marriage decisions (Ballard, 1982). Cultural and religious expectations also create discursive constructs that allow women to transmit beliefs and practices from the homeland in the new place of migration. Notions of izzat, for example, play a key role in cultural, social and religious gender expectations that structure gender roles and behavioural expectations. There are, however, undeniably strong patriarchal influences within the traditional South Asian family structure (Shankar et al., 2013). Yet, the continued need for older SAM women to express themselves within the context of a cultural identity and notions of collective belonging highlights the strength of women’s agency in which their role is positioned to carry, transmit and maintain homeland relationships (DasGupta, 1989) but, additionally, negotiate spaces through “patriarchal bargains” (Kandiyoti, 1988, p.274).

**Conclusion**

Memory and the internalisation of cultural expectations are socially performed and maintained by motivations around maintaining cultural traditions and socialisations from the homeland. Cultural memory serves to challenge social and political change through the mobilisation of shared homeland identities. Moreover, notions around homeland identities and belongings serve to (re)create and sustain an internalised belief system and understandings representative of a nostalgic homeland in the place of migration and settlement. Notions of place and migration allow researchers to explore the sociocultural context in which migrants are located but, additionally, the ways in which gender, age and ethnicity play a role in shaping and narrating constructions of identity and belonging through agentic roles. Without understanding the structures and process of the South Asian diaspora and negotiations of agency it is difficult to analyse the extent to which experiences of migration, family and social networks and cultural and religious traditions impact on negotiations of identity and belonging across the life course in the place of migration and settlement. Homeland identities, therefore, allow individuals living in diasporic locations to be able to (re)negotiate their multiple and often overlapping cultural identities through others.
For transmigrants memories are fluid, unfixed and used to transfer and (re)negotiate diasporic, cultural and homeland identities and belongings in the place of migration. Memory offers important insights for the understanding of transnational migration and settlement. Life course experiences further contextualise and make apparent shared and contested notions of culture, which are inevitably rooted in people’s histories (Brah, 1996). Therefore, the transmission of cultural acts across transnational borders and boundaries serves to highlight subjective notions of identity and belonging, which are interchangeable and overlapping across roles, contexts and societies. Moreover, reputation and obligation play a key role in sustaining these identities and belongings across transnational borders but, additionally, across the life course.
CHAPTER TWO

Understanding Older SAM Women’s Life Course Experiences of Old Age and Ageing
Introduction

In order to begin to understand older SAM women’s experiences of old age and ageing we must first begin to understand the ways in which older SAM women construct and move through the ageing life course. This chapter therefore critically puts forth literature and understandings of how older SAM women have anticipated and approached old age and ageing experiences, using a life course approach. The chapter consists of three sections. It begins by first providing a critical review of ageing literature. The second section explores the continuation of South Asian ideals in the place of migration and settlement across the intersections of gender, ethnicity and age. The third section draws attention to the way in which older SAM women construct ageing experiences across gendered roles, the family and household as a consequence of roles, responsibilities and obligations across the life course.

Understanding Ageing and the Life Course

The complexity of defining old age and ageing results from the diverse nature of and ways in which individuals experience and interpret age. Ageing impacts not only on the ageing body but is further influenced and constructed by the society one ages within (Baltes and Carstensen, 1998). Biological ageing, also known as senescence, constructs the ageing process as biologically degenerative, in which the body is recognised to have a pre-planned disposition directed by a “biological timetable” (Jin, 2010, p.72). Furthermore, biological age extends across the life span and is represented through internal and external physiological features of the degenerative body. Ageing is therefore inevitable (Hamilton, 1966) and a natural process of the ageing life course.

However, ageing is not solely degenerative and chronological ageing determines numerical age in cumulative years. Moody and Sasser (2012, p.2) refer to chronological age as “age identification”, which is celebrated in the West and recognised in terms of reaching numerical milestones, not inclusive of but including 1st, 13th, 16th, 21st, 40th and 60th birthdays. Moody and Sasser (2012, p.2) describe milestones as acknowledging ideals around a shared “social clock”, which marks a right and wrong time for age-graded transitions (such as movement from a child to teenager, young adult, adulthood, mid and later life). Social and cultural norms therefore stipulate actions and behaviours within these social clocks, determining the timing of events (e.g. education, employment, marriage, parenthood,
grandparenthood). Timings thus put forth notions of a right and wrong time for movement within particular life stages across the life course.

Chronological ageing indicates an external social feature of age, which starts from birth and is influenced by social structures such as family, social, political, economic, cultural and religious norms. Age-stages are, however, not fixed but fluid and overlapping, in which subjective experiences account for variations in when individuals move through particular stages across the life course. Additionally, the “social clock” (Moody and Sasser, 2012, p.2) may conflict through multicultural positions from which expectations around the timings of events and experiences may vary, further challenging understandings and sociocultural interpretations of age (see Wray, 2003). Cultural and social expectations of age and ageing are diverse (ibid) and age-grades do not always follow traditional concepts of age across national borders. Consequently, there may be some ideals of age that follow understandings of age in the place of migration and settlement but sociocultural constructs and beliefs from the homeland, such as gendered roles, responsibilities and obligations, may compete. Cruikshank (2013, p.ix) explains:

   Sometimes chronological age holds significance and sometimes it does not. Accepting this fact is an important part of growing old.

Cruikshank highlights the implications of chronological age at particular times across the life course and initiates discussion around the value and significance chronological age holds for individuals across the life course but, additionally, for older SAM women with transnational identities. For example, in relation to older SAM women, the comprehension of how old one is, is complex. Not knowing your age in the West would be unheard of but asking an older SAM woman to state her age is often met with hesitation. Anthias (2002) asserts that questioning someone about their identity “often produces a blank stare, puzzled silence or a gib and formulaic response” (2002, p.492) and this is not because they do not know the answer but because the answer is so complex.

UNICEF (2010) documents that in South Asia 65% of births go unregistered. As a result, the implications of age due to the lack of records are two-fold: First, relating to potential risks of early experiences of marriage, motherhood and vulnerability around being treated like an adult (see Smith and Brownlees, 2011). The second implication
is with regard to concept of chronological age as a result of the cultural value placed on it, which then in turn constructs ideals and ideologies around the way in which age is anticipated and approached. Moreover, chronological values and linear constructs of age may not be as significant as the telling of events (see Sewell, 1996).

The ways in which age-grades and stages are interpreted are then wholly dependent on sociocultural constructions and the subjective value individuals attach to particular concepts of age (e.g. chronological, social, biological). Ageing expectations are, therefore, not fixed across subjective positions but social locations highlight how ideologies may vary based on transnational values (as discussed in Chapter One). Transnational ideals of age and ageing experiences construct acceptable and unacceptable expectations of age-grades and stages from the homeland within the place of migration, in addition to acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and obligations from them. For transnational migrants, then, social and cultural expectations represent ideologies from the places they are attached to.

**Understanding the Continuation of South Asian Ideologies across the Life Course**

Older SAM women experience age with a constant reference to nostalgic homeland ideals that have been (re)negotiated within the place of migration and settlement (UK). Vertovec (2001, p.447) refers to this as transnationalism and suggests:

> [...] ‘transnationalism’ broadly refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states.

Vertovec’s definition identifies the multiple affiliations transnational migrants have with people, places (nations) and organisational structures and adds that sites of transnationalism include:

> [...] transnationalism as a social morphology, as a type of consciousness, as a mode of cultural reproduction, as an avenue of capital, as a site of political engagement, and as a reconstruction of ‘place’ or locality. (Vertovec, 2001b, p.1)

The understanding that transnationalism exists on several levels recognises the way in which individuals perceive national identity as a consequence of ideologies, culture and social negotiations. Transnationalism, as a consciousness, identifies the diverse ways in which individuals may anticipate and approach constructs of age, post-migration. Moreover, Zontini (2015) advocates the way in which notions of the self and
belonging should be articulated and suggests this can only be achieved through a “transnational lens” (2015, p.326) that encompasses both the place of origin and the place of settlement. Zontini adds that key aspects of gender, time and the life course structure ideals of transnationalism and thus shape migrant ideologies and concepts around identity and belonging.

The study of transnationalism is more than understanding that transnationalism is just a brief encounter with the homeland through the occasional visit or the act of sending finances abroad, but is symbolic of an individual’s commitment to the place of origin (Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt, 1999). This may entail sustaining ties through the consciousness (ideals, beliefs and values) or as a consequence of behaviours linking the individual with the homeland (e.g. reciprocating finances, kinship relations). Transnationalism and its influences on age are therefore not solely constructed by the consciousness but additionally influenced by the surroundings migrants are positioned in. Torres (2001, p.33) reminds us:

The primary concern of cross-cultural gerontology is the study of how sociocultural settings define and shape the experience of ageing.

Torres’ suggestion highlights the significance of culture and suggests ageing needs to be considered in the context of the sociocultural surroundings where two cultures meet (homeland cultures and cultures from the settled place of migration). Torres’ (1999) proposal of transcultural ageing supports the belief that cultural contexts do influence our understandings of age and different cultures potentially adhere to or create conflicts and tensions in relation to these understandings. Therefore, both transcultural and transnational ageing interpretations play a role in structuring the meanings older SAM women attach to age. However, in the light of transcultural and transnational ageing structures, Anthias (2002, p.491) theorises:

Location and positionality (and translocational positionality) are more useful for investigating processes and outcomes of collective identification – that is the claims and attributions that individuals make about their position in the social order of things, their views of where and to what they belong (and what they do not belong) […] enables a complete abandonment of the residual elements of essentialization retained within the idea of fragmented and multiple identities […].

Anthias suggests that where individuals are located and positioned within transnational and transcultural frameworks is additionally or even “more useful” (ibid)
in identifying collective notions of identity and belonging. The importance, then, of understanding subjective and collective positions with regard to older SAM women should therefore consider how women are able to sustain a sense of collectively with others and the homeland post-migration and, further, how this impacts on age across the life course. Atchley (1989) maintains that individuals hold onto some element of their past that provides them with an ontological structure, highlighting how life course experiences and interpretations are anticipated and approached.

Continuity theory recognises that the meanings and interpretations individuals place on the way in which they age relates to sociocultural accounts of “normal aging” (Atchley, 1989, p.183). Atchley explains:

> The term *normal aging* refers to usual, commonly encountered patterns of human aging, because there is a sociocultural overlay that interacts with physical and mental aging, normal aging can be expected to differ from culture to culture. (1989, p.183)

Atchley suggests cultural meanings attached to ageing produce variations in how individuals interpret and approach ideals of “normal ageing” (ibid). However, continuity theory alone is not enough when exploring how older SAM women have aged in their place of migration, as potential life events and obligations across the intersections of gender, age and ethnicity have additionally influenced the way in which older SAM women have experienced and negotiated age. It is therefore the interconnectedness of particular life stages, roles and responsibilities that is of interest and the way in which they have placed influence on older SAM women’s experiences of age across the life course.

**Place, Attachment and Transnational Identity**

The importance of life course experiences is highlighted in Falicov’s (2005, p.399) quote:

> If home is where the heart is, and one’s heart is with one’s family, language, and country, what happens when your family, language, and culture occupy two different worlds?

Falicov’s metaphor of the “heart” (ibid) describes the construction of an emotional attachment from which the complex nature and circumstance around how migrants potentially age is a consequence of attachments from the homeland, in the place of settlement. For older SAM women, the identification of the experience of migration
establishes a context for research (Torres, 2001) and acknowledges the duality of ageing experiences across the places they have attachments to. Low (1992) adds that the symbolic relationship created to a place or land is a consequence of the cultural meanings, beliefs and practices that accompany that particular place. Falicov (2005) therefore puts forth that it is not just the place in which emotional attachments are constructed but migrants hold on to fundamental beliefs around family, language and culture that are additionally created within a cultural milieu (Low, 1992). Low (1992, p.166) explains:

A cultural definition of place attachment implies that for most people there is a transformation of the experience of a space or piece of land into a culturally meaningful and shared symbol, that is, place [...] Place attachment can apply to mythical places that a person never experiences, or it can apply to land ownership and citizenship that symbolically encode socio-political as well as experiential meanings. The most important aspect of the definition, therefore, is that there is a symbolic relationship between the individual/group and the place that may invoke culturally valued experiences, but may just as well derive meaning from other socio-political, historical, and cultural sources.

Low’s cultural definition of attachment to particular places highlights the difficulty in which attachments may also be formed with places described as “mythical” (ibid) as a result of places people have never experienced or the cultural meanings attached to cultural bonds. Anderson (1983, p.49, [emphasis original]) posits:

It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion [...] Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.

Anderson’s description of place attachment as “imagined” (ibid), or Low’s (1992, p.166) suggestion of “mythical”, constructs an image of unity through national belonging. Nationalism, or a shared community, therefore suggests attachments are more about the cultural significance of the affinity to a group of people and its representation of how they are connected. For older SAM women, the significance of an imagined community is especially present with twice-migrant families. For example, older SAM women born in Kenya self-defined themselves as Indian or Pakistani despite never having visited India or Pakistan (see Chapter Four). The representation of paternal heritage therefore becomes evident through the constructions of identity and belonging within an idealised homeland as a result of paternal kinship ties.
Moreover, homeland attachments constructed through heritage are reified by Low’s (1992) suggestion of place to signify and represent cultural and political notions around identity and belonging.

However, notions of age and identity are problematized by Falicov’s (2005) question “what happens when your family, language, and culture occupy two different worlds?” (2005, p.399). Research in the past has provided a wealth of information around the conflicts faced by second generation South Asian women living in the West (UK, Canada and USA) (DasGupta, 1989; Mirza, 1997; Wilson, 2000; Handa, 2003), and a considerable amount of research on gender and South Asian socialisations (Chant and McIlwaine, 1998; Khan, 1999; Talbani and Hasanali, 2000). However, little is still known about the way in which South Asian women, and particularly older SAM women, have moved through age-grades and stages that are meaningful to them.

The transnational belongings migrants hold on to and sustain in the place of migration and settlement (see Gardner, 2002) draws attention to debates surrounding international migration and ideologies of home for migrant populations who have aged in their place of migration. The term transnational represents and recognises ties across national borders (see Chapter One), the homeland and the place of migration and settlement but also, potentially, the place of birth if different from the homeland. Levitt and Glick-Schiller (2004, p.1002) refer to transnational identities as “ways of being and ways of belonging” in which migrants remain strongly influenced by ties to the homeland and networks across borders (see Chapter Five). The likelihood, therefore, for older migrants to completely assimilate and acculturate in the UK, despite the number of years of settlement, as a consequence of transnational and transcultural ageing experiences, is uncertain. Torres (2001, p.334) explains:

Immigrants are […] likely to redefine the understandings of successful ageing that they hold. […] if they migrate to a culture that holds an understanding that differs from that of their culture of origin. Understandings of successful ageing that are formed in the context of migration are therefore bound to be transcultural in nature.

Recognising how both cultures may potentially compete sheds light on how tensions of identity and belonging are created but, further, the impact they may have on how older SAM women potentially age. However, the distance between the homeland and
place of settlement, despite holding onto cultures from a past homeland, can lead to what Ahmad et al. (2005, p.114) refer to as “acculturative stress”.

In order to sustain quality of life and (re)create behaviours from the homeland Shaw (2000) highlights that structures such as settlement (region and layout of homes), biadari (kinship), gender and public faces (religious and political) are key factors in maintaining continuity across the homeland and place of migration and settlement. Shaw’s work, however, is in reference to the Pakistani community. It is therefore important to remember the multifaceted nature of the South Asian (Pakistani and Indian) population, which cannot be homogenised due to the heterogeneity of status, class and regional attachment (DasGupta, 1989). Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that there may be some similarities and differences within the re-creation of behaviours from the homeland for older SAM Indian and Pakistani women that may be “transcultural in nature” (Torres, 2001, p. 334).

Izzat (Honour, Respect)
The naïve assumption then of social and cultural expectations to play an isolated part across the intersections of gender and age is problematic. Ideologies attached to sociocultural recommendations create motivations around how roles and obligations to these positions are constructed. These ideals additionally create a “cultural defence” (Volpp, 1994, p.57), which supports and encourages sociocultural behaviours and expectations through the shielding of internalised cultural ideologies and beliefs. Ideals, such as izzat and the South Asian family structure (see Choudhry, 2001) provide incentives for the way in which gender hierarchies are assembled and encouraged. Moreover, notions of izzat create and reify transnational ideals (Waldinger, 2006) and the extent to which an individual, community and social group values the construct of izzat.

Before moving on then, the two parts of izzat will be critically examined: izzat as honour and izzat as respect. Izzat (respect, honour) is intrinsically linked to expectations around gendered behaviours and women play a central role in the construction of subjective and family izzat (honour) through behaviours of respect (Frischmann, 2010). The role of preserving and maintaining family izzat is structured around obligations for upholding the family’s social standing through actions acknowledging modest behaviours and respect. Izzat as honour constructs ideals around obligations
to the family and the wider social community the family is attached to, through motivations and beliefs around reputation, action and consequence. However, cultural constructs of honour are not limited to South Asian ideologies. Mosquera (2013, p.272) reveals:

In Estonia and Finland, honor is predominantly associated with power-related (social prestige, wealth) and achievement values. [...] In Russia and Italy, where honor is positively associated with tradition, conformity, and security values (e.g., humility, family, security, honouring parents and elders). Furthermore, honor in Russia also carries moral connotations through its association with benevolence (e.g., being honest, helpful).

There are, then, distinctive social recommendations for honour across cultures and the South Asian construct of izzat, similar to Russian notions of honour, seeks to place value on “tradition, conformity and security values” (ibid). izzat, is not momentary but moves across the girl/woman’s life course and is viewed through social recommendations for a lifestyle that extends across the life course. Furthermore, izzat is an important sociocultural construct that aims to provide structure through expectations, obligations and responsibilities within the boundaries of honour and respect.

Izzat as respect is intrinsically interlinked with the construction of izzat as honour. Respect validates notions of honour, which authenticates the female body as an essential element of respect and honour. The protection and preservation of the female body is a significant characteristic of the way in which izzat is constructed. Moreover, the sexualised nature of protecting and preserving the female body is socially contradicted within cultural values in its pursuit of preserving and concealing sexuality, sexual intimacy and sexual maturity, which are clearly achieved within a social sphere (family and community) (Werbner, 2007; Cihangir, 2013). Izzat therefore constructs the woman’s body through subjective behaviours of izzat but also as an important indicator of collective honour (Cihangir, 2013). The preservation and protection of sexuality and modesty however vary through cultural interpretations and their rewards (e.g. heightened honour, respect and increased reputation). The two-part construction of izzat, therefore, highlights the interconnectivity of both honourable behaviours and its incentive.

Nevertheless, young women, daughters, wives, sisters and nieces are characterised by their sexuality (Wilson, 2006) and sociocultural ideals around gender and izzat
encourage girls to internalise perceptions of women’s sexuality as dangerous; that it must be regulated and controlled. Moreover, Wilson’s (2006) suggestion of women’s sexuality as “patriarchal property” (2006, p.13) reifies typifications of the Asian woman, in which men in the family police gender roles. Yet, Shaw (2000, p.37) contends:

Why should they risk izzat (honour, respect) by exposing their wives and daughters to the influences of a society which does not value purdah and female modesty?

Shaw raises several points within this quote. The first relates to the nature of cultural interpretations by asking the question “why should they […]?” (ibid). Questions around risking honour and respect problematize negative constructs around the leaving behind of cultural ideals. The value attached to sexual purity is therefore an important attribute that underlies honour codes (Cihangir, 2013). Furthermore, both constructs of izzat and reputation are internalised ideals embedded within the complex sociocultural structure older SAM women are attached to, placing positive value on preserving and sustaining izzat. Wilson (2006, p.13) states:

This is honour, which is closely linked to prestige, reputation and male ego. This concept is regarded as symbolic of the survival, and propagation of the paternal line. In the northern belt of South Asia covering Pakistan, India and Bangladesh this is known as izzat, while almost identical concepts of reputation, prestige and ‘good name’ are current all over the sub-continent, as are notions of the loss of honour and reputation […].

Wilson highlights that the boundaries of honour necessitate reputation at the forefront of internalised socialisations, which shape and motivate acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. Behaviours and obligations are defined within these boundaries that mark notions of honouring the self but also the family and social position in which they stand, constructing ideals and understandings around reputation. Therefore, izzat as a dual construct of honour and respect maintains the application and meaning of one over the other. Moreover, sociocultural applications are reified through recommendations around gender hierarchies (matriarchal and patriarchal) and age structures (respecting the elder). Positions within these hierarchies are constructed with the intent of discouraging women from stepping out and crossing sociocultural boundaries and norms through dishonouring themselves and those they are attached to (Wilson, 2006).
**Purdah (Segregation) and Sharam (Shame, Modesty)**

The significance of crossing social norms and boundaries entails discourses around *sharam* (shame, modesty), which motivate the construction of *izzat*. Wilson (2006, p.12) suggests *sharam* refers to “shame, shyness and modesty”, which creates notions of femininity but also represents actions that may bring *sharam* upon the family, again stating women’s roles as being intrinsically linked with “family honour” (Frischmann, 2010, p.13). Veiling and *purdah* (segregation) are, therefore, symbolically loaded with connotations for sociocultural interpretations that shape behaviours and expectations across different stages of the life course. A woman who publically veils and negotiates *purdah* is seen to positively uphold and preserve honour and *sharam* through the external symbols of actions and behaviours (see Werbner, 2007), which is received with heightened respect across different stages of the life course. Moreover, discouraging gender mixing is an additional characteristic of *purdah* that aims to deter the socialising and sexual intimacy of non-marital men and women (Papanek, 1973; Khan, 1999; Shaw, 2000; Werbner, 2007) but, additionally, allows women freedom in their roles and spaces. Papanek (1973, pp.289-290) explains:

> *Purdah*, meaning curtain, is the word most commonly used for the system of excluding women and enforcing high standards of female modesty in much of South Asia [...] this system of sex segregation: ‘separate worlds’ and ‘symbolic shelter’, both of which are found in varying degrees in other social systems.

Papanek argues that *purdah* is an integral feature of South Asian gendered behaviours which limits the interaction between men and women outside of acceptable socially defined limits, locating women’s place in society but also across the life course (see Papanek, 1973). Papanek (1973, p.290) refers to segregation as constructions of “separate worlds” that encompass features of protection, which are negotiated within the value of “symbolic shelter” (ibid). Papanek (1973, p.289) highlights:

> Muslim seclusion begins at puberty, Hindu seclusion strictly speaking begins at marriage.

Papanek draws attention to the way in which puberty marks changing gender roles and movement across the life course as a consequence of increasing age and expectations around *purdah*. Moreover, *purdah* recognises acceptable and unacceptable spaces in the social domain, but additionally changing locations across life course positions. However, interpretations of *purdah* and seclusion are linked to religious recommendations and cultural expectations.
Religious Recommendations

Shankar et al. (2013) draw attention to historical Hindu scripts that bring to the fore social recommendations for religious impetus behind sociocultural behaviours:

The woman must obey her father in childhood, the husband in youth and sons in old age (Manusmrithi V, 147: cited in Shankar et al., 2013, p.256).

The scripture highlights clear recommendations for the woman’s role in which she is embedded within a patriarchal hierarchy through her gendered roles, but additionally across the life course. Religious scripts therefore serve to motivate religious reasoning for gender specific behaviours. Furthermore, Islamic texts ascribe differences between genders and social roles as a consequence of biological characteristics (see Baden, 1992). However, there are evidently religious recommendations around intergenerational structures, behaviours and age within Islam:

You Lord had commanded that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. If one of them or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them a word of disrespect, or scold them, but say a generous word to them. And act humbly to them in mercy, and say, 'my Lord, have mercy on them, since they cared for me when I was small'. (The Quran, 17:23-24, p. 264)

Likewise, Sikhism highlights a theology of difference, giving religious, symbolic and ritual sanctioning across gender hierarchies (Jakobsh, 2000). Singh (2008, p.122) explains:

Parents regard their sons as social security, financial insurance, and religious functionaries who will eventually perform their funeral rites. Sons are deemed essential for carrying on the family name, property, and land. When a son married, he brings his wife into the family home, and she takes care of her in-laws into their old age.

Singh (2004) draws attention to gender hierarchies within the family structure and the roles and responsibilities of the son and his wife. However, the difficulty of identifying all SAM women to age within interpretations of religious scripts is problematic, as the extent to which women practice religious beliefs varies. There are, then, unquestionably cultural readings within religious beliefs that are referred to as a “religio-cultural milieu” (Singh, 1993, p.2), suggesting religion is not detached from culture. Moreover, ageing must additionally be understood across the intersections of culture and religion, in which religion has historically played a part in the social recommendations of behaviour in South Asia (Singh, 1993) and cultural expectations and guidelines for ‘clear’ gender roles (Talbani and Hasanali, 2000).
Age-Stages, Positions and Family Roles

The diversity within and across ageing experiences and gendered roles for older SAM women is rooted within the experience of migration. A large number of South Asian Pakistani and Indian women migrated to the UK as young adults (Ballard, 1982) and many have spent two-thirds of their chronological life in the UK. The importance of understanding that older SAM women were young adults at the point of migration reflects on how older SAM women have aged away from the homeland, but also away from the family and household structure. For older SAM women, ageing has enveloped traditional expectations of age within cultural ideologies from the homeland, alongside constructs of age in the place of migration and settlement.

Moreover, family, relationships and household structures have become disturbed as a result of migration. Older SAM women moved away from the homeland but, additionally, social relationships and structures (e.g. family, friends and community) they were embedded within. Talbani and Hasanali (2000, p.615) emphasise:

Migration causes tensions between traditions that a group would like to retain and the host culture, resulting in individuals and families redefining and renegotiating their roles and identities within and outside the community.

Talbani and Hasanali highlight the relationship between migration, tradition and social positions prompted a revaluation of roles and identities outside the homeland. As a consequence of the experience of migration, gendered positions were disrupted through the loss of and breakdown of family and social hierarchies. Shaw (2000, p.93) explains:

The ideals governing relationships between family members, generally expressed by all, but sometimes challenged by younger generations, include a formal hierarchy within which each person has a clearly defined role, determined by age and sex, in relation to other family members. Women are formally subordinate to men but male and female worlds are largely separate and have their own hierarchal structures. Among men, authority lies with the eldest male and father.

Shaw’s quote recognises clear roles and hierarchies of authority determined by the intersections of gender and age. Shaw’s quote further highlights potential conflicts that may occur through the removal of these structures, which provide and construct positions of authority and standing within the family and social structure. Shaw (2000, p.94) clarifies:
Relationships between women are less formal than between men, but among women there is a hierarchy of age and status, older women have authority over younger women, a younger sister must treat an elder sister with deference; a new bride in a household must defer to the authority of her mother-in-law and, if her husband has elder brothers, to her husband’s elder brothers’ wives. Women sometimes say the personality of the mother-in-law is more important in marriage than what the husband is like, for she will influence her son’s attitude to his wife. A daughter-in-law must also defer to her husband, his elder brothers and her father-in-law. It is only with her husband’s younger brother that she has a freer relationship, because they have a more equal status.

Shaw informs us of a matriarchal structure that is underpinned by a hierarchal structure based on age and authority, which negotiates women’s roles within the household. Moreover, Shaw argues that gender roles are structured as a result of distinct roles and expectations, which shape the actions and behaviours of each individual, men and women within the family hierarchy. Shaw (2000) adds that the formality of relationships within set hierarchies are determined by gender, but are also significantly influenced by hierarchies of age that overlay matriarchal and patriarchal structures. The key point in Shaw’s argument with regard to relationships is, however, authority. At particular life stages (older women, elder sister, mother-in-law, and older sister-in-law) women are able to negotiate authority over other women that is visibly negotiated by age (see Chapter Six). Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe (2003) suggest social pathways influence movement across and within the life course that are structured and guided by configurations from historical and geographical contexts and the social institutions they are attached to.

Furthermore, authority can additionally be used to influence men. However, authority may also be sought from elders within the matriarchal hierarchy for support and advice. Authority is, therefore, not necessarily constructed with negative implications but locates a reference point in which hierarchal positions (e.g. mother, mother-in-law, older sister/sister-in-law, and aunt) are created to support others (daughter, daughter-in-law, younger sister, cousins etc.). Roles and positions are, then, not fixed and may overlap dependent on locations of age and authority. Family structures therefore recognise the ways in which gender and age are inherent parts of how roles, responsibilities and obligations are constructed (see Finch and Mason, 1990). Gendered socialisations are, then, not momentary but social recommendations prescribed for behaviours across the life course. Kandiyoti (2000, p.135) explains:
Households can be readily identified as important sites for the reproduction of gendered identities, but also because of the differencing policy consequences implicit in varying consumptions of the household. Kandiyoti suggests negotiations within the rules of the household essentially determine the way in which gendered identities can be negotiated and, further, the way in which agency within the household can be achieved. Consequently, by exploring the household, particular roles and positions within the matriarchal hierarchy can lead to a better understanding of the ways in which identities are negotiated.

**Family Structure, Household and the Role of the Daughter**

It has been argued then that the family plays an important role in the decision making process. Kerpelman and Schvaneveldt (1999) state that, historically, men are seen as the providers and women’s roles are centred on being a mother and wife. Chant and McIlwaine (1998) add that life course ideologies are validated from early socialisations and argue that South Asian sociocultural recommendations around gender construct clear guidelines about how male and female children should be raised. Childhood experiences within the parental home therefore suggest that early socialisations initiate the first-stage of the life course, from which ideals around roles, responsibilities, behaviours, values, beliefs and positions of authority are introduced.

Obligations to family stem from cultural notions of *izzat* (honour, respect). Finch and Mason (1990) suggest the relationship between a parent and child is founded upon a sense of obligation, in which children feel a sense of obligation to parents, but also to maintain family relationships. However, obligation also applies to the parent for the child, in which roles are constructed around notions of “the proper thing to do” (Finch and Mason, 1990, p.152). There are similarities across societies that recognise a ‘duty of care’ within these relationships (parent to child), however, cultural interpretations are diverse and the ‘duty of care’ and expectations within them vary.

Age-stages therefore identify sociocultural norms and how individuals are expected to move across life course roles as a result of increasing chronological age and particular responsibilities and obligations within them. However, the way in which older SAM women are socialised within these roles suggests that cultural ties and morality build the foundation in which familial control over younger generations is achieved. Chant and McIlwaine (1998, p.119) explain:
obedience to parents and other figures of authority during their childhood was regarded as an essential component of good behaviour.

Chant and McIlwaine draw attention to the relationship between obedience and “good behaviour” (ibid), highlighting that obedience is validated within this relationship. The role of the dutiful daughter is therefore achieved through the application of izzat, which shapes obedience as a consequence of behaviours and actions around respect and honour from an early age (see Talbani and Hasanali, 2000).

The Short Period of Jawaani (Youth)
As the girl ages and during the period of jawaani (youth), the ageing body reflects how the girl/woman is expected to move forward. Notions of tradition or cultural expectations of puberty and maintaining izzat (honour) are characterised by the sexualised nature of the gendered body (Wilson, 2006), in which the role of being a daughter, girl or woman is perceived to claim vulnerability through notions of merely being a woman (Mohanty, 2003). Keeping a girl pure and untouched for marriage through protecting izzat is thus used as the motivation behind preserving modesty during the stages of jawaani. Jawaani is further complicated through the blurring of age-stages in which, for older SAM women, the short period of jawaani is negotiated with increasing age, sexual maturity and vulnerability. Sociocultural recommendations therefore advocate where the girl/woman should be at particular stages in her life and, additionally, the way in which particular events should be experienced. South Asian sociocultural ideals, in turn, encourage parents to hold the responsibility for the protection of izzat until the girl/woman is married (Handa, 2003; Wilson, 2006). Whilst she is unmarried the girl continues to be viewed through the lens of childhood, despite numerical age stating otherwise, and remains under the family’s obligation and responsibility of care. Moreover, the act of transference, the move of a daughter into the marital home, removes notions of parental obligation and the ‘duty of care’ for the daughter, indicating changing responsibilities and roles.

Motivations for Marriage: Puberty, Jawaani and the Ageing Body
Concepts of obligation and responsibility are not fixed but context dependent and the practice of marriage clearly identifies meanings behind notions and ideals of when a girl should move through life course stages. Upholding cultural tradition (e.g. maintaining kinship ties, fulfilling family obligations) is encouraged through thought processes around marriage and movement through age-stages (Gangoli and
McCarry, 2009). For example, Gangoli and McCarry (2009) explain that within the South Asian community, constructs of gender, age, family and community are often reflected through normative practices of marriage. The practice and motivations for marriage are constructed through a pooling of resources, such as family support, in which the function of family and marriage constructs a social institution (Mukherjee, 2007). The prospect of marriage from a young age therefore plays a pivotal role in defining and identifying women’s transition between bachpan (childhood) and adulthood, which is marked for older SAM women by the short period of jawaani (youth).

Furthermore, marriage is motivated by elements of protection of izzat in which marriage is perceived to prevent temptations, deviations of purdah and conducting ‘bad’ behaviour. Marriage therefore recognises sociocultural understandings around a movement into a second stage of the life course, which is initiated by changing roles as a wife. Here, then, the historical construction of marriage and the role of marriage within the household must be addressed. Foucault (1986, p.72) explains:

As a private act, a matter for the family to decide, coming under its authority, under the rules it followed and recognised as its own, marriage […]. Of its two basic and vital acts, the first marked the transfer to the husband of the tutelage exercised to that moment by the father, and the second marked the actual handing over of the bride to her marriage partner. It is thus constituted ‘a private transaction, a piece of business concluded between the two heads of family, the one actual, the girl’s father, the other virtual, the husband-to-be.’

Foucault refers to the act of marriage as a “transaction” (ibid), and “as a matter for the family to decide” (ibid). Foucault’s (1986) quote highlights the way in which marriage marks changing roles and new expectations within the subjective and social sphere. Moreover, gendered timings play a significant role in the movement of life course experiences. For older SAM women, age-stages and life course positions are negotiated through experiences of changing roles as a wife and daughter-in-law, which signal the revaluation of the girl’s position and status within the home.

However, for older SAM women, motivating factors behind the act of marriage can be problematic and age, for a girl, is often negotiated by the physiological onset of puberty (UNICEF, 2013). Changing roles and expectations may start as young as 12 years old. Yet, due to lack of records at birth, age may additionally vary, resulting in early
expectations of adult behaviours (e.g. sexual maturity, motherhood) (see Smith and Brownlees, 2011). Gangoli and McCary (2009, p.420) put forth:

In the Indian subcontinent, there is much variation about the definition of child marriage, with India and Bangladesh fixing the marriage age for women at 18 and men at 21, though this is negated in Bangladesh by religious personal laws that allow marriage at puberty. In Pakistan, girls are permitted to marry at 16 and boys at 18.

Gangoli and McCary recognise that, in some regions in South Asia, puberty is used as a marker of age, negotiating this stage in the life course (marriage) to be overlaid by jawaani (youth) (see also Zaman, 2014). The construction of age therefore recognises the overlap of life course stages (marriage and youth) and, further, the way in which particular events/experiences (such as marriage) may affect the outcome of experiences that occur at a later time in the life course (e.g. early experience of motherhood etc.).

**Early Marriage Experiences: Kinship Marriage and the ‘Love’ Marriage**

For the context of this thesis and generational cohort, early marriage featuring in South Asian cultural practices needs to be identified. Experiences of early marriage, however, must not be generalized as a practice experienced by all older SAM women as it is not solely an implicit feature of the South Asian culture. UNICEF (2013) statistics highlight that over half of child marriages still occur in South Asia, however, child marriages additionally occur in Sub-Saharan Africa and other countries across the world (see UNICEF, 2013). Moreover, even in countries where child marriages are less frequent (such as Central and Eastern Europe), gender plays an implicit role in early marriage experiences, where rates for girls are significantly higher (ibid). Notably, child marriage practices in the UK only officially became illegal in 1929 when the House of Lords proposed to stop such marriages, as:

> It may be difficult to prove that, in Great Britain, the disparity between the legal age of marriage and the facts of national life impedes the progress of morality. But there is evidence that it does impair the influence of Great Britain in cooperating in the work of the League of Nations for the protection and welfare of children and young people, and does prejudice the nation’s effort to grapple with the social problems arising from the early age at which marriages are contracted in India. (Age of Marriage Bill, 1929, cc.259)

Despite early marriage practices occurring in the UK, morality and the problems of child marriage motivated the establishment of a legal minimum age of marriage, in
order to further tackle the problems in the UK but also in India. In relation to generation and sociocultural expectations, older SAM women in this research study did experience child marriage (see Chapter Six). However, more recent research highlights that there has been a substantial increase in the age of women’s marriages in South Asian countries (Pakistan, India and Bangladesh) (Gangoli and McCarry, 2009). Jongwilian and Thompson (2013) acknowledge the role of transnational marriage practices in motivations around eluding economic deprivation in the homeland. These motivations construct incentives around early marriage.

For example, in the homeland a farming community may conduct early marriage practices as a result of perceptions around financial ‘survival’ that surpass the necessity of education for a girl. Moreover, impetus for marriage may stem from motivations around affirming kinship ties, in which delaying marriage may fracture kinship relationships. However, class does influence expectations for marriage and, for a middle-class family from the city, a girl may experience marriage later as a result of further education (Moody and Sasser, 2012). Economic status therefore opens up spaces in which the experience of marriage is negotiated. Moreover, motivations for marriage include preferences for close kin or consanguineous marriages (Shaw, 2006).

Close kinship marriage practices have in the past been highly critiqued because of the biological risks involved (Darr and Modell, 1988; Ahmad, 1994; Sheridan et al., 2013), cultural incompatibility of partners and the denial of individual autonomy in the marriage decision (Shaw, 2006). Yet the continuation of kinship marriage is recognised by both Shaw (2006) and Hasan (2009) to be motivated by obligations to family and a responsibility to maintain connections between transnationally relocated kin. Wilson (1984) argues that kinship marriage is not as oppressive a system it is constructed as and describes it as more of a “semi-arranged” marriage practice (1984, p.106) in which partners with similar backgrounds are chosen. However, Shaw (2006) does draw attention to complications within kinship arrangements and potential problems with breakdowns in marriage from which the extended family is at risk of becoming fragmented as a result of the proximity of ties and relationships created. Shaw (2006) thus contends that, despite the risks, due to the complexity of motivations behind transnational marriage choices, cultural beliefs still favour kinship marriage.
There are, however, alternatives to close kin marriage that are recognised with the term “love marriages” (Shaw, 2006, p.217). South Asian cultural ideals clearly differentiate between the two. Love affairs and “love marriages” (Shaw, 2006, p.217) do occur and to view early and kinship marriages alone in the South Asian culture is not conducive to understanding how older SAM women experience age. Women visibly exert autonomy through the choice of a “love marriage” (ibid), which signifies women’s agency in the decision of a rishta (proposal). However, traditional perceptions of “love marriage” (ibid) construct ideals of marriage prior to developing ‘love’ as more favourable and advocate ideals around “love after marriage” (Shaw, 2006, p.217). However, practices of exerting agency, choosing who to marry and, further, finding love before marriage, disrupt traditional marriage practices in which the family decides who will be best suited (Shaw, 2000).

Exerting agency prior to any rishta therefore challenges assumptions of passivity. However, challenges may potentially be envisaged as a move away from traditional cultural practices and both men and women are made aware of the cultural consequences of a love marriage (Wilson, 1984). Consequences include the possibility of being cut off from the family altogether and/or implications of the breakdown of a family structure due to repercussions from the extended family or community (Shaw, 2000). Consequences inevitably claim significant penalties that impact on reputation and the revered family structure. Moreover, the implications of challenging customs and traditions through marriage may rearrange and challenge family dynamics through alterations within traditional ideals and practices of marriage. Therefore, the consequences of not fulfilling cultural obligations of appropriate behaviours can, in turn, impact on and disturb interpersonal relationships (Hsiao, Klimidis, Minas and Tan, 2006). Hsiao et al. (2006) argue that failure to fulfil family obligation impacts on quality of life in which it may contribute to diminished self-worth and an increased sense of guilt and shame, constructing cultural boundaries individuals are required to manoeuvre within.

*The Wife, Daughter-in-Law, Mother and Mother-in-Law*

Marriage, then, has implications for age-stages that may occur later as a result of the subjective decision making process of when to marry. Women’s agency can therefore be identified by the extent to which one negotiates and acts upon expectations of upholding traditional practices and family values, beliefs and ideals, which are upheld
or resisted. Marriage, and negotiations around gender roles encompassed within marriage (e.g. wife, daughter-in-law, mother and becoming a mother-in-law) significantly extend this period in the life course, which is overlaid with changing expectations across gender roles, obligations and responsibilities within the specific roles of being a wife, daughter and sister-in-law, becoming a mother and further becoming a mother-in-law. The experience of marriage and becoming a wife constructs roles, responsibilities and obligations as a wife to a husband, daughter-in-law to a mother-in-law but, additionally, in-laws (father-in-law, brother and sister-in-laws) and then as a mother to her child. These roles significantly extend this stage in the life course stage through additional roles that create micro stages within the macro stage of marriage, drawing attention to the complexities around marking fixed age-stages and grades. Shaw (2000, p.93) draws attention to the role and position of the mother-in-law, which is intrinsically interlinked with the daughter-in-law:

Women sometimes say the personality of the mother-in-law is more important in marriage than what the husband is like, for she will influence her son’s attitude to his wife.

Perceptions of the wife’s role within the marital home are organised in relation to the position and role of the mother-in-law, which in turn has implications for the husband and potentially others within the marital home. Shaw (2000, p.95) highlights:

A woman who begins her married life under her mother-in-law’s authority can gradually acquire a major role in managing the household, influencing the men around her and making decisions about her own children’s marriages.

The implications around maintaining and fulfilling responsibilities and obligations within the role of the wife constructs motivations around the way in which status and agency can be achieved within the household and other roles (within her role as a mother and other roles within the marital home) as a consequence of obedience to the mother-in-law.

The Older SAM Woman

Reaching the status of an older woman (*sianai* or *bazurak*3) through the removal of obligation and responsibilities to the children (Finch and Mason, 1990) is done so through the marriage of children, which locates older SAM women into the third stage of the life course. This stage in the life course centres on roles and beliefs around

---

3 *Sianai* (elder with wisdom); *Bazurak* (respected elder).
becoming an older women by moving into the role of the mother-in-law in which subjective beliefs around fulfilling a ‘duty’ to children are achieved. The implications for this stage in the life course are a result of reciprocity and achieving the status of the older woman. Maynard et al. (2008) argue that older women play a pivotal role in the moral economy of kin in which childcare and undertaking domestic chores increase the value placed on the older woman. The position of becoming an older woman is therefore created in line with the capital of izzat in which value is placed on the older woman’s role in the family, in addition to her subjective elder age identity (mother-in-law, religious elder, maintainer of cultural tradition/knowledge).

For example, sociocultural obligations construct ideals around reciprocity in later life and children are expected to care for the older adult within an extended family household. However, Choudhry (2001, p.376) contends that family members adopting what are potentially perceived as behaviours that are “alien” or different to traditional values, challenge later life roles and the ways in which later life is anticipated and approached. Additionally, perceptions of care are often gendered and an expectation for later life reciprocity has tended to be constructed around the daughter-in-law (Victor et al., 2012). However, as a result of social change, the choice of marriage and the move away from close kin marriages, reciprocity in later life is not always realised, thus fracturing anticipations of later life care. Choudhry (2001, p.377) suggests:

Although many elderly continue to live in the extended family, they find that the traditional reverence for parents has diminished. They experience a loss of power and authority within the family structure.

Choudhry highlights the way in which social change calls for the (re)negotiation of roles as a consequence of tradition and intergenerational ideals. To respect and honour parents is considered a moral obligation (Choudhry, 2001) and the breakdown of elderly care prompts questions around resolve in later life. Furthermore, the loss of reverence and authority within the family hierarchy constructs emotional tensions for older SAM women, in which ideals around passing on homeland traditions (language, culture and religion) disrupt expectations around the way in which old age was potentially anticipated. Therefore, filial piety and respect for the elderly within the South Asian family structure are central (Choudhry, 2001) and add to tensions around renegotiating understandings of later life and old age.
Conclusion

The difficulties with a relative absence of research exploring how older SAM women have aged problematizes the way in which older SAM women’s ageing structures can be critiqued. With limited research addressing life course structures for the ageing South Asian woman the only way to critically analyse older SAM women’s experiences of age is to draw upon a comparison of socialisations across particular stages across the life course. Life course experiences from early socializations construct age-stages, from which movement from childhood to youth, marriage and subsequently, gendered roles such as becoming a wife, daughter-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother and older woman, construct ideological beliefs around the ways in which age and ageing are negotiated.

Cultural and religious ideals define explicit gender roles that position and locate men and women within set patriarchal or matriarchal hierarchies. Furthermore, clearly defined gender roles locate where women should be positioned within and across the matriarchal hierarchy at particular stages across the life course. Gendered roles are, therefore, clearly structured within a smaller, micro structure (individual matriarchal and patriarchal hierarchies) within a larger, macro, egalitarian social framework. Moreover, patriarchal and matriarchal hierarchies are acknowledged as running parallel to one another through stipulated roles but also as working together to reify cultural and behavioural ideologies across life course stages.

Moreover, the value placed on the girl’s body during early life stages (childhood, youth and marriage) is determined through worth attached to it as a consequence of sexual purity and domestic skills. Value additionally constructs a gendered economy in which negotiations around kinship, family status or financial security are made. Nevertheless, success within gendered roles is determined by obligations to others within the gender and age hierarchy and, further, responsibilities around izzat (honour and shame), purdah (segregation) and sharam (shame). Obligations and responsibilities within these roles determine the ways in which later life experiences and roles are negotiated, with increased prospects of agency and authority as women move through and across the matriarchal hierarchy. Delayed timings around achieving particular gendered roles potentially decrease gendered value within experiences such as marriage, due to increased age and perceptions of successful ageing within sociocultural traditional ideals. For older SAM women, delayed timings additionally call
for a (re)evaluation of roles in later life if they have not been achieved (marrying off children, becoming a mother-in-law, grandmother). Therefore, roles, responsibilities and obligations to the family and household construct life course ideals and stages. However, life stages are not fixed but fluid and interchanging and roles and experiences may overlap at particular stages across the life course or become disrupted due to social change.
CHAPTER THREE
Theoretical Influences
Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to lay the foundations for the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings that have guided this research process. Crotty’s (1998) recognition of the relationship between epistemology and ontology, as one informs the other, recognises the interconnectedness of the way in which meaning is constructed and, further, socially produced. This chapter puts forth the philosophical underpinnings and theoretical foundations of this research as interrelated. Moreover, the theoretical influences established in this research and thesis draw upon a relational field of enquiry in which feminism and social constructionism are navigated within a transnational life course position that aims to provide a framework for “descriptive and explanatory research” (Merton, 1968: cited in Elder et al., 2003, p.3).

This chapter therefore draws attention to and constructs the theoretical influences of this research and thesis as positioned within an intersectional, constructionist foundation that aims to examine the relationship of age and transnational intersections within the global (homeland) and local (UK) contexts that they are constructed within and influenced by. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section positions this research within ‘Theoretical Orientations of the Life Course’ and the second locates the research within the standpoint of ‘Social Constructionism: The Theory of Social Realities’. The third section critically examines and applies Black feminist, transnational feminism and feminist social gerontology positions in this research. The final section concludes with an overall summary of the positions I have taken and lays out the theoretical framework (see Table 1) for this research and thesis.

Theoretical Orientations of the Life Course
The theoretical influences of the life course (Elder et al., 2003) aim to explore how older SAM women construct and negotiate age and ageing experiences across various periods of the life course and, further, how these contexts and positions place influence on old age and ageing through (re)negotiations in later life. Mills (1959: cited in Elder et al., 2003, p.4) suggests life course is a position intended to encompass:

[…] the study of biography, of history, and of the problems of their intersection within social structure.

Taking note of Mills’ suggestion of biography, history and intersections, a life course approach taken in this research and thesis examines themes encompassing older
SAM women’s sociocultural pathways of age and ageing across the life course. Theoretical insights aim to address the multiple intersections older SAM women are constructed within but, additionally, the ways in which they collaborate within and across these intersections (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013).

Cho et al. (2013) add that it is the collaboration of intersections rather than their unity that is of importance. This approach therefore draws attention to older SAM women’s intersections of gender, age and ethnicity (including culture, status and religion and, further, historical, social and regional contexts) and their collaborative influences on the way in which older SAM women have anticipated and approached old age. A life course approach consequently aims to encourage understandings of age that remain subjective yet highlight social, regional and historic contexts that shape, construct and influence shared understandings within their transnational frameworks (see also Chapter One).

Elder’s (1974; 1994) work on the life course has been seminal in ageing research, providing valuable theoretical insights into behavioural continuity and change from early socialisations into adulthood and later life. Life course theory was undoubtedly slow to develop and has only more recently established itself within social ageing research (see Elder et al., 2003). Initial criticisms with life course theory were with regard to where life course sits within ageing research when compared to explanations for life-stages and the life span (biological, age-grades and stages etc.). However, the emphasis on social trajectories and historical contexts of age related patterns questioned ideologies of the life course that focussed on continuity and change (Colby, 1998). The advantages of the life course approach have been highlighted in the dynamic ways in which it accounts for the numerous social structures that influence age, and the ways in which the trajectory of personal lives can be explored within the context of economic, political and cultural dynamics (Giele and Elder, 1998).

Furthermore, the nuances of various stages across the life course (Colby, 1998) are recognised by Dannefer and Kelley-Moore (2009, p.390) who explain the principles of the life course:

The first principles concern the nature of the (a) human individual and (b) the social dynamics within which human lives are embedded. The special significance of the dynamics of social interaction and structure are anchored in
the unique physiological and developmental characteristics of humans and also the asymmetrical dynamics of structure and agency.

Dannefer and Kelley-Moore suggest the foundations of the life course identify the individual and society as not separate influences but interrelated, arguing for the importance of structure and agency within these relations. This research and thesis therefore positions itself within Giele and Elder’s (1998) life course framework, which links the individual within their social structure and how this plays out across the life course (see Figure 1, p.78). Giele and Elder’s (1998) life course approach links four elements of the life course (human agency, location in time and place, linked lives and timing). These intersections are used to position older SAM women’s life course experiences through their experiences across the intersections of gender, age and ethnicity.

The four elements of Giele and Elder’s life course approach recognise the ways in which the life course is intrinsically linked and places influence on and across overlapping positions. “Location in time and place” (1998, p.11) locates older SAM women in this research within transnational positions across global and local contexts. The second element, “linked lives” (ibid), draws attention to social actions and relationships and the third, “human agency” (ibid.), situates (re)negotiations of agency across different life course positions. The fourth and final element, “timing of lives” (ibid.), considers sociocultural expectations of age stages, experiences and events.
Cruikshank (2013, p.ix) critically examines age and critiques:

Ageing […] is shaped by culture more than biology, more beliefs, customs, and traditions than by bodily changes. In other words, it is socially constructed.

Cruikshank argues that culture is at the forefront of determining ageing experiences and plays a key role in the way in which age is constructed and interpreted. Therefore, understanding the way in which cultural diversity presents itself in ageing experiences is essential in terms of understanding how older SAM women have aged and the meanings they attach to old age and ageing. Moreover, the social structures individuals are attached to are not necessarily chosen by the individual and can be situated by birth through the ethnic, cultural, religious and economic positioning of the parent or family unit the child is socialised within (Giddens, 2009). The complexities of ageing within these social structures construct expected roles, relationships and behaviours that are fluid and changeable across the ageing life course (Phillips,
Ajrouch and Hillcoat-Nallétamby, 2010). As a result, structuring the self and conceptualising where one fits into the world is an essential and intrinsic feature of who we are and where we are located with regard to our subjective positions in the social environment we are placed in. For older SAM women this is additionally influenced across transnational locations that produce transnational, global and local contexts and positions of authority and influence.

Goffman (1959) metaphorically refers to this as actors within their situation. The belief of individuals as ‘actors’ sheds light on how roles and positions are constructed and recognises that behaviours may be shaped by the belief and value systems individuals may be committed to as a consequence of sociocultural ideologies. As a result, the way in which individuals perform and hold on to values and beliefs constructs ideologies and interpretations of the way in which experiences are anticipated and approached. Within sociocultural ideals and ideologies these roles and behaviours provide others with information about “what to expect of them and what they might expect of him” (Goffman, 1959, p.1). The question then emerges how do older SAM women construct themselves within these social systems and furthermore, how are these structures and processes expressed through life course experiences that are disrupted by migration? (see Zontini, 2015).

Bernsten and Rubin (2004) put forth that the culturally structured timing of important events plays a key role in transitions and movement from one role or position to another, which take place in “distinct role contexts” (2004, p.440). Each role is viewed as having a prescriptive timetable, which is determined by social and cultural norms reifying when role changes are expected to take place (see Chapter Two). However, changing roles and responsibilities within these roles are subjective and take place according to individual experiences within their social contexts and surroundings.

The dual-method approach and the use of ethnography combined with life course interviews allows for the exploration of the way in which individual experiences are constructed and created in their social contexts and surroundings. Chambers (2000, p.856) suggests:

Much of the value of ethnography lies in [its] narrative - in the telling of a story that is based on cultural representations.
Chambers’ explanation highlights the value of ethnography in research, which recognises the ways in which individuals construct and shape meaning through their environment. Moreover, the significance of ethnography, for this research, is to acknowledge the practices and means by which older SAM women construct contextual meaning through acceptable and unacceptable modes of cultural identity. Eisner (1998, p.34) explains:

This means that the way in which we see and respond to a situation, and how we interpret what we see, will bear our own signature. This unique signature is not a liability but a way of providing individual insight into a situation.

The way in which individuals respond in particular situations further highlights and offers an insight into culturally constructed behaviours. Spradley (1979, p.461) suggests:

Every culture has many social occasions identified primarily by the talking that takes place; I refer to these as speech events […] Many of the cues to distinguish among these speech events remain outside our awareness, but we use them nonetheless. All speech events have cultural rules for beginning, ending, taking turns, asking questions, pausing, and even how close to stand to other people.

The significance, then, of Spradley’s suggestion of “speech events” (ibid) highlights the importance of speech and spoken interaction between individuals, within the collective and subjective setting. Ethnography provides a valuable insight into cultural behaviours, but additional tools such as the ethnographic interview during ethnographic research provides valuable insights in cultural exchange, prompting a deeper exploration of the meanings created by individuals through speech and language in their own environment. Combining ethnography with a life course approach therefore recognises that cultural behaviours and experiences of age are not solely biological but situated and determined by and within the dynamics of social relationships, contexts and ties individuals are placed within or attached to (Dannefer and Phillipson, 2010).

Social Constructionism: The Theory of Social Realities

Social constructionism, then, draws attention to the way in which we understand the world, our experiences and interpretations, which are created and constructed through culture, politics, history and discourse (Burr, 2003; Gergen and Gergen, 2003; Willig, 2009). Narratives highlight a “process of constructing a world” (McNamee, 2012, p.151) from which knowledge is created and shaped by and within the social and
economic structures of the time (Burr, 2003). Everyday understandings can therefore be described as a product of society in which discourse and the context of discourse are embedded within social structures (Van Dijk, 2008) but also in the ways in which it is transferred across generations (Wray and Ali, 2014).

Moreover, knowledge is created through “social realities” (Willig, 2009, p.7) identifying what we know to be real, created and shaped via social interactions, communication and the use of language (Berger and Bradac, 1982). Interactions and language can therefore create common understandings which become available to a society or social group. These understandings are then used to label and identify them and/or others through culturally shared scripts (Goddard and Weirzbicka, 2004) that acknowledge a shared identity (see Chapter One). For example, age, class, gender and ethnicity are often used to identify groups of individuals through classifications and categories, forming a socially constructed, shared knowledge base within particular societies (see also Simmonds, 1997).

However, even concepts of society in which shared cultural and historical values prevail form the foundations for the production of social knowledge that is informed by where you are in the world. The social system itself is thus identified as a construct (McKinney, 1969) through the identification of a system of patterned expectations in which categories (e.g. gender, class, age, ethnicity and sexuality) shape and influence expected roles and behaviours. Moreover, it has been argued that constructs are reaffirmed by actors (individuals) (see Goffman, 1959) over time through interactions, conformity and the “sanction of others” (McKinney, 1969, p.1) who construct and create social norms in order to perceive and structure the society they belong to (McKinney, 1969).

**Socially Constructed Colonial Discourse**

Bhabha (1983) identifies an example of socially constructed knowledge through the construction of colonial knowledge in which discourse constructs the “ideological construction of otherness” (1983, p.18). Bhabha suggests fixed constructions or stereotypes identify cultural, historical and racial differences, resulting in discourse that creates ‘otherness’ through “positions of power and resistance, domination and dependence” (1983, p.18). It is the identification of multiple power relations, constructed through knowledge, which then operates in its response to a historical
moment in time (Foucault, 1980). The significance of otherness here is not with regard to colonial power, per se, but the ways in which older SAM women have been constructed as the *other* as a consequence of their gendered and ethnic identity of *being a woman*, in addition to their ethnic/racial group.

Moreover, socially constructing groups of individuals, cultures and societies with assigned typifications leads to the “mummification of individual thinking” (Bhabha, 1983, p.28) in which discourse and narratives become a common and shared part of knowledge construction. Willig (2009, p.7) suggests that social constructionism draws “attention to the fact that the human experience including perception, is mediated historically, culturally and linguistically” identifying language to be created and used to exert control over others through fixed ideologies and stereotypes. These stereotypes create realisms outside of the socially constructed ‘norm’ by continually fixating past discourse on individuals in the present (Bhabha, 1983). Bhabha (1983) adds that discourse and discursive language can create homogenised, cognitive constructions through the continued use of language, which is visible through the reiteration of discursive language from actors within society. Moreover, Burr (1995, p.6) suggests:

> Our ways of understanding the world comes not from objective reality but from other people, both past and present.

Burr critiques that it is our encounters with others (family, friends, and networks) that continue to shape our understanding of the world we live in. Culture and society therefore provide a context in which classifications and categories, reproduced through interactions, create common knowledge and understandings (Burr, 2003; Gergen and Gergen, 2003; Willig, 2009).

**Relational Beings**

The significance of others and the way in which knowledge, understandings and meanings are created suggests it is our relation with others that constructs individuals as ‘relational beings’ (Gergen, 2009). Therefore, the way in which individuals assign and construct themselves within different identities needs to be discussed. Knowledge and language are interconnected and play a role in the way in which our relations to others are created (see Berger and Bradac, 1982). Berger and Bradac (1982) suggest communication has two key roles in interpersonal relations. Communication and language are constructed firstly within subjective motivations of the function of
language, which influence personal development and relations and, secondly serving
the goal of communicating with others to gain knowledge and understanding. Hill-
Collins (1998) adds that the interactions between the self, family and society are all
interrelated, recognising the relations in which language and development emerge.
Agha (2007, p.14) critiques language and explains:

These clarify diverse aspects of our social being. They allow us to negotiate our
dealings with others in particular encounters and hence over many encounters;
they allow us to establish identities recognized by others, to maintain these
identities over time or to depart from them; they permit the treatment of diverse
objects as valued goods or commodities through which describable social
identities and relationships are expressed.

Agha recognises the way in which identities are (re)negotiated through different social
relations and the use of agentic decisions within language that allow movement
through identities. This critique sits with Goffman’s (1959) suggestion of performing
and negotiating roles. Moreover, Willig (2009) proposes that, through constructing
narratives about experiences, people make connections between events and interpret
them through “constructing meaning in (and for) their lives” (Willig, 2009, p.133).
Individual constructions, whether they are constructed through language, experiences
or understandings, generate knowledge through their relations to others (biological,
social but, additionally, through the researcher/researched relationship).

Relations then highlight “ways of being” (Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004, p.1002) as a
consequence of relationships with others and the structures individuals assign
themselves to. However, Somers (1994) adds that in order to avoid categorical and
essentialist identifications of the self, identity should be constructed within the
dimensions of “time, space and relationality” (1994, p.606 [emphasis original]).
Somers further draws attention to Patricia Williams’ (n.d) quote:

While being black has been the powerful social attribution in my life, it is only
one number of governing narratives or presiding fictions by which I am
constantly reconfiguring myself in the world. Gender is another, along with
ecology, pacifism, my peculiar brand of colloquial English, and Roxbury,
Massachusetts. The complexity of role identification, the politics of sexuality,
the inflections of professionalized discourse – all describe and impose
boundary in my life […]. (cited in Somers, 1994, pp.605-606)

The fluid nature of identity and the self is evident in Williams’ quote, in which multiple
identities create fluidity but, additionally, boundaries that are being constantly
negotiated. Somers’ (1994) earlier suggestion that these boundaries should be understood within the context of “time, space and relationality” (1994, p.606) relates to Giele and Elder’s (1998) suggestion of the interconnectedness of the life course, which is influenced by an individual’s location in time and place, relations, agency and the timing of events.

Gergen’s (2009) discussion around the self and the community recognise that the society and the individual influence each other through their relational processes. Moreover, Gergen (2011) suggests that the family is intrinsically linked in the construction of the self, from which Husain (2006, p.3) comments that South Asian women face “struggles from Western society and our own struggles within communities, families, homes and within ourselves”. Somers (1994) additionally draws attention to these internal conflicts and maintains that literature has tended to focus on “social control” and “false consciousness” (1994, p.633) and, as a result, women’s own actions and agency have been overlooked. Somers further contends that non-Western populations are located in these positions and are expected to view their own relational and social beliefs and values as “backwards-looking”, “reactionary”, or as evidence of “social control” (ibid).

Western knowledge and understandings placed on non-Western populations are problematic as language and meanings are not always translated between people and within the context of the research being conducted, suggesting understandings may become lost in translation if cultural differences are not highlighted and acknowledged (Subedi, 2006). Subedi proposes that challenges around the loss of meaning may additionally occur as a result of assembling narratives into the dominant themes of Western ideologies within the research process. Having a shared language or cultural/heritage background for researchers, therefore, does influence rapport and relationships through the kinds of knowledge, understandings and information the researcher and participant may share (Subedi, 2006). Willig (2009, p.7) explains:

[…] the various ways of constructing social reality that are available in a culture, to explore the conditions of their use and to trace their implications for human experience and social practice.
Feminist Positions

Feminism

Feminism is still a contested area and even the term ‘woman’ has been criticised for generalising the category and experiences of women (Butler, 2002). Mohanty (1984, p.337) explains:

The assumption of women as an already constituted, coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location or contradiction, implies a notion of gender or sexual difference or even patriarchy (as male dominance – men as correspondingly coherent group) which can be applied universally and cross-culturally.

Mohanty highlights the essentialist construction of the term ‘women’ disregards experiences across various intersections but generalises experiences across cultures and social contexts. Moreover, Crenshaw (2010) adds homogenising women as a collective group implies superficial gestures around inclusion that neglect axes of difference within women’s own experiences. Butler (2002, pp.3-4 [emphasis original]) additionally suggests:

[...] politics and representations are controversial terms. On one hand, representation serves as the operative term within a political process that seeks to extend the visibility and legitimacy to women as political subjects; on the other hand, representation is the normative function of a language which is either said to reveal or distort what is assumed to be true to the category of women.

Butler points out that “politics and representation” (ibid) are not separate and, even though they are used to extend women’s visibility, they can serve to “distort” (ibid.) women’s experiences as a result of the language in which they are constructed. It is therefore important to recognise language with a critical feminist lens in order to achieve the goal of women’s visibility and representation. Walker (1972) inserts that it is important to understand our own purposes of understanding and (de)constructing characters that have potentially become distorted. This particularly applies to the way in which women are represented as a homogenised group within their collective categories (e.g. not exclusive to, but an example of, homogenisation within the constructions of Black women, South Asian women and White women).

Intersectionality, therefore, serves to acknowledge similarities and differences within women’s experiences through the various intersections of class, gender, age, ethnicity and sexuality (to name a few) (see Crenshaw, 2010). Yet feminism and anti-racism
have, in the past, continued to precede one another and further contradict their own goals through typifications and precedents of who the Asian/Black/White woman is (ibid). For example, the diversity of older SAM women’s experiences and the complex means by which they are embedded across social, subjective and political structures have drawn research to continually analyse and interpret women’s experiences within notions of domination, “white supremacy” (Hill-Collins, 1996, p.9), patriarchy (Patil, 2013) and “moral superiority” (Hill-Collins, 1996, p.9) as a result of “Black suffering” (ibid). In the past patriarchy has been used to frame gender oppression through its exploration of power positions within gender relations. Yet Patil (2013) contends that patriarchy is deeply embedded within transnational histories and intersectional differences. Patil further posits that concepts of patriarchy need to be critiqued and (re)conceptualised in order to understand the ways in which gender relations and identities are shaped across borders and contexts but, additionally, in order to examine and explore the way in which women’s experiences are perceived outside of patriarchal frameworks.

Black Feminism

Before I begin this section I must note that my own reference to ‘Black’ women is problematic as this research represents and acknowledges South Asian women’s experiences. ‘Black’, as does the term ‘women’ (discussed earlier), implies generalisations within women’s cultural, religious, social, historical, class and political differences. The term assumes a similarity of experience in which all ‘Black women’ are constructed to have shared experiences of culture, race and religion. The usage of the term in this thesis and context must therefore be made clear in order to address the benefits of the term.

‘Black’ assumes both a racial category and a political movement that has been the focus of Black feminism (see hooks, 1981; Crenshaw, 1989; Mirza, 1997; Hill-Collins, 2000). In this research and thesis, it is the latter that is of interest, from which Black feminism aims to provide visibility to women of colour (Hill-Collins, 2000). The term ‘Black’ is used with reference to the empowerment of ‘Black’ ethnic minority women, namely older SAM women, by giving older SAM women and their experiences visibility through a critical methodological standpoint. By locating women at the centre of their subjective experiences and deconstructing the homogeneity of particular groups (Bradbury, 2003), Black feminism provides a “space” (Mirza, 1997, p.4) in which
researchers are located within the research to remove hierarchical structures of ‘us’ (researchers) and ‘them’ (subjects) through a critical review of reflexive research positions.

The goal of Third Wave Black feminism aimed to identify the interrelations of social divisions (Yuval-Davis, 2006) by a means of deconstructing the “romanticizing of marginalised groups” (Herbert and Rodger, 2008, p.55). Black feminists sought to reconceptualise women’s experiences by providing a platform to share understandings and meanings through the telling of their own stories and this was additionally done through the visibility of South Asian women’s experiences (Wilson, 1984; 2006; DasGupta, 1989; Mirza, 1997; Handa, 2003). Adichie (2009, n.p) explains:

The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.

Adichie explains the problems around constructions of women and, further, cultural constructions of Black women that create the “single story” (ibid). The single story suggests that rather than gaining understandings of who the woman is, generalised categories of Black women’s experiences become misleading and create a whole story that is homogenised onto all Black women’s experiences (which further include all Black, Asian and ethnic minority women). Moreover, some elements of these generalisations may be true as similarities and differences in experiences do occur (see MacKinnon, 2007) and, therefore, women’s experiences and negotiations of agency should be explored though their own understandings.

For example, Walker (1972, p.405) suggests that Black (African-Caribbean) women have been constructed as “the mules of the world” and handed the responsibilities of others (e.g. family) through roles such as the “matriarch” and “superwoman” (ibid). These roles have been constructed within Western research against discourse taken around stereotypes in which the woman is seen to head the household as a result of the absence of the man, who is constructed as “lazy, feckless, unreliable, sexually irresponsible, and undeserving of their female counterparts” (Reynolds, 1997, p.97). The image constructs Black women with images of the ‘superwoman’ […] the ‘lynch pin’ of Black family life” (ibid). Yet stereotypes of the South Asian woman add to images of the ‘Black’ woman in which they are either homogenised within these
constructions or implicitly noted as contrasting through images of patriarchal oppression.

Language constructs the South Asian woman as a passive victim (Brah, 1987) with stereotypes as the “saviour of family honour” (Frischmann, 2010, p.13) as a consequence of sociocultural images and interpretations of izzat (honour, respect). Within these two contrasting images essentialist notions of the ‘Black’ women are challenged, arguing that there is a need to make ‘Black’ women’s experiences visible but, additionally, drawing attention to differences within groups of minority women. Under the authority of Black feminism, South Asian women’s experiences can be critically challenged or, further, challenge Western constructions of the “inferior other” (Reynolds, 1997, p.226) and maintainer of honour (Frischmann, 2010). Typifications within Western society may then conflict with or contradict understandings and stereotypes within the population group that is being researched.

In the milieu of the social structures women are embedded within, it is important to draw attention to the likelihood that women do experience life events with sameness and difference (MacKinnon, 2007). DasGupta (1989, pp.1-2) writes:

Our lives are diverse and different, yet they are tied together with a common thread: experiences we have shared as immigrants from South Asia and women of color […] The general populace still tends to perceive us in stereotypes: docile, subservient, passive, politically unaware, asexual, and bound by traditions […] Despite such convenient categorizing, the reality of our life experiences do not allow simple caricatures. Our lives go beyond the proverbial ‘good’ […] Passive and insulated womanhood is not our reality.

DasGupta’s critical analysis of the Asian woman’s “caricature” (ibid) challenges traditional discourses of women as passive victims (Brah, 1987) and highlights that gender ideologies are much more complex than the homogenised notion of women’s experiences as “docile, subservient, passive, politically unaware” (DasGupta, 1989, p.1). Baltes (1991, p.849) puts forth that identities are constructed within a “system of selves” which can (de)construct the multiple, transnational identities women may have been constructed and situated in across the life course. Baltes (1991, p.849) argues this is constituted by:

[…] possible selves across the life course which include expectations of who they are, who they were, who they would like to be, who else they could be, and who they do not want to be at all.
However, DasGupta (1989) adds that the experience of migration may add to the conflicts and tensions Asian women may face across both Western and non-Western ideologies and stereotypes, creating additional negotiations about “who they are” and “who they would like to be” (Baltes, 1991, p.849). Mirza (1997) explains that Black feminism provides the platform to explore these intersections:

In this ‘place called home’ named Black feminism, we as racialized, gendered subjects can collectively mark our presence in a world where Black women have for so long been denied the privilege to speak; to have a ‘valid’ identity of our own, a space to ‘name’ ourselves. Challenging our conscious negation from discourse – [...] - we as Black British women invoke our agencies; we speak of our differences, our uniqueness, our ‘otherness’. (1997, p.4)

Mirza proposes that Black feminism represents a “place” (ibid) in which researchers are able to utilise a critical methodological approach from which understandings of who the South Asian woman is may be (re)conceptualised through their subjective experiences and agencies within these experiences but, additionally, Black feminist researchers can draw attention to particular issues by marking their own identities within this platform. Black feminism therefore provides a view from within (Crenshaw, 2010), from which women with a shared gender, culture, ethnicity, heritage or background to those being researched can be recognised through recognition of shared understandings and meanings within those groups (e.g. cultural understandings of izzat).

This research and thesis, therefore, positions itself within a Black feminist standpoint and aims to raise the experiences of older SAM women who have been commonly constructed against a White norm within the place of migration and settlement (see also Springer, 2014). Moreover, being fully aware of my position of utilising a Black feminist lens, I acknowledge that, for the purposes of this research and thesis, Black feminism is best suited to draw attention to how older SAM women have anticipated and approached old age and ageing. Again, going back to Butler’s (2002, p.3, [emphasis original]) argument of “politics and representation”, it is the space Black feminism provides as a platform to do this that has been the motivation behind this standpoint. However, other strands of feminism also apply to this research, such as transnational feminism and feminist social gerontology, which add to the purpose and aim of this research and thesis. Transnational feminism and social feminist gerontology will therefore be critically discussed in the following section through their
applicability and relevance to understanding older SAM women’s experiences of old age and ageing.

Transnational Feminism

The developments of transnational feminism (Mendoza, 2002; Tohidi, 2005; Swarr and Nagar, 2010; Mohanty, 2013; Patil, 2013; Falcón and Nash, 2015) result from an increased interest in transnational and international cultures that are being locally mediated (Laurie, Dywer, Holloway and Smith, 2014). Transnational feminism claims a position in which women’s experiences can be explored in different contexts and, further, across national and global boundaries. Moreover, it seeks to display the overlapping and unique characteristics of transnational women by advocating for a positive and culturally relevant change in women’s outcomes (Singh, 2011). Transnational feminism therefore adds to earlier feminisms by challenging ideologies and misgivings around carrying and sustaining transnational identities. Transnational feminism, however, remains true to Black feminism in that it maintains a relationship to Crenshaw’s (1989) theory of intersectionality but adds global and colonial feminist critiques (see Singh, 2011). The goal of transnational feminism, then, is to construct diversity within unity (Tohidi, 2005) through the recognition of minorities within minority groups (Lateef, 1998).

The collaboration of intersectionality within a transnational framework allows for the exploration of the interconnectedness of multiple intersections, which are not limited to but include gender, race, ethnicity; culture and religion, age and sexuality, across transnational contexts. Yet the critique of transnational feminism remains with the way in which transnational feminism could add to potential othering through its own motivations of providing visibility to women across national borders (Mendoza, 2002). Transnational feminism therefore implies an additional typification through its own creation of Third World activism. However, the variegated nature of a transnational feminist approach draws attention to hierarchies of power across (inter)national contexts, through the intersections women are attached to and, further, the way in which transnational ideologies intersect across these spaces.

Exploring gendered roles and responsibilities stresses the importance of historical contexts, local customs and politics that determine status, opportunities and/or constraints that women may experience. Furthermore, transnational feminism creates
a space that mediates a framework for the exploration of power and positionality as socially constituted and historically and geographically located and differentiated (Laurie et al., 2014). It is therefore important to point out that “different dimensions of social life cannot be separated out into pure and discrete strands” (Brah and Phoenix, 2004, p.76) as they all place influence on our interpretations of the self but, further, how they interact with each other across the life course.

However, with regard to feminism and the continual developments within feminist positions, researchers who locate themselves within a feminist standpoint must be open to the different intersectional frameworks that may collaborate within their own feminist standpoint and motivations behind making women’s experiences visible, whether this is the context of Black feminism, transnational and/or feminist social gerontology. However, without typifying women into these categories first it is difficult to (de)construct and (re)conceptualise the way in which women are constructed and, further, to understand the ways in which they (re)negotiate agencies, identities and positions within these locations.

**Feminist Social Gerontology**

Added to constructions of race and transnationalism, attention needs to be drawn to age within feminist research. Calasanti and Slevin (2006) suggest that while feminists have considered the intersections of age within feminist research, they have failed to study age from older women themselves and suggest:

> [...] to theorize age relations - the system of inequality, based on age, that privileges the not-old at the expense of the old. (2006, p.1)

Much of the earlier feminist research on older South Asian women was through drawing attention to older SAM women’s experiences through second-hand accounts (see DasGupta, 1989; Handa, 2003). Older SAM women’s experiences through their own accounts are still very limited in research and literature, aside from typifications in which elder care and reciprocity are very much at the forefront of debates (Victor et al., 2012).

However, Calasanti and Slevin (2006) draw attention to the significant shift in feminist scholarship and its interest in old age, in which feminists are now trying to demonstrate “how and why age matters” (2006, p.1). Therefore, a feminist-sited social gerontology provides a space in which women’s experiences of age and ageing are made visible
through the meanings older women themselves attach to the processes of age (Cruikshank, 2013). Moreover, the absence of older women in feminist literature has added to “the oppression old people face, especially those marginalised at the intersections of multiple hierarchies” (Calasanti and Slevin, 2006, p.3). Ray and Fine (1999, p.172) posit that feminist gerontology acknowledges a “gerontology which questions, challenges, contests, and resists the status quo” and the absence of older women’s voices and experiences must be addressed through valid insights that are currently (un)available.

Therefore, the significance of a social-sited feminist gerontology position draws attention to later life and the way in which actions and beliefs may reflect personal decisions of the past but, additionally, cultural norms and expectations that were ascribed to particular periods across the life course (Utz and Nordmeyer, 2007). It locates a position in which social change has occurred politically, historically, culturally and geographically and the challenges older women face with (re)negotiating positions across the life course and life-stages but, additionally, within their own identities and life course positions to be explored. Consequently, the impetus of adopting a feminist-sited social gerontology approach, under the umbrella of a Black feminist standpoint, is motivated by making older SAM women’s lived life course experiences visible through the collaboration of social realities constructed within history, culture, politics and society.
### Theoretical Framework

**Table 1: Theoretical framework for the exploration of older SAM women’s experiences of old age and ageing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical orientations:</th>
<th>Theoretical influences:</th>
<th>Intersections:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life course constructions</td>
<td>Life course approach (Giele and Elder, 1998)</td>
<td>Gender roles, responsibilities and obligations within and across transnational families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family and social networks, social status, historical, political, regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black feminism</td>
<td>Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989: 2010; Cho et al. 2013)</td>
<td>Gender, age and ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
<td>Researcher/researched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational feminism</td>
<td>Transnationalism (Schiller, Bash and Blanc-Szanton, 1992)</td>
<td>Global (homeland) and local (place of migration/UK) contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transculturalism (Torres, 2001)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Translocational positionality (Anthias, 2002)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist social gerontology</td>
<td>Biographical reflections of ageing experiences (Cruikshank, 2013)</td>
<td>Experiences of age and ageing across the life course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cultural Ethics

After having discussed the theoretical influences and methodological standpoints taken in this research and thesis, I must additionally draw attention to cultural ethics (see Wines and Napier, 1992). Cultural ethics appears to be an area that is still overlooked in various strands of social research. However, culturally-sited ethics are highly relevant and applicable when conducting research with transnational communities. Even outside of these communities cultural ethics is an area that researchers should be aware of in any strand of cross-cultural research. Wines and Napier (1992, p.831) draw attention to cross-cultural ethics and suggests:

> […] there may be common threads of moral values across cultures or that applying values across cultures is possible.

In this research it is the former understanding of cross-cultural ethics of “moral values” (ibid) that is of interest. However, it must be pointed out that the latter, the application of culture across cultures, needs also to be addressed for the purposes of this research, as all researchers have some sort of cultural/moral value that they take into the research process.
Conclusion
The theoretical underpinnings of this research recognise a social construction feminist standpoint in which social realities explore the ways in culture, history, language, social relations and age have provided movement across lived life course experiences. The theoretical framework additionally accounts for the ways in which past life course experiences and future expectations are constructed and structured through the intersections of gender, age, ethnicity and the ways in which they interact and intersect across social, political, historical and relational hierarchies. Furthermore, disruptions such as a migration, in which individuals move away from their culture and society into another yet continue to carry and sustain transnational attachments in their place of migration across the life course, can be explored through feminist positions. Therefore, due to the multi-faceted and interconnected ways in which older SAM women have aged, social realities are viewed through the lens of a Black feminist standpoint which aptly constructs a theoretical framework and methodological position that allows older SAM women’s life course experiences to be made visible within the context of this research.

Furthermore, the impetus behind making older SAM women’s experiences visible, through understandings of age and cultural experiences within a Western framework, is motivated by eliciting cultural narratives through the participants’ own experiences of the life course which have guided understandings and meanings pertinent to the ways in which older SAM women themselves have approached and anticipated age. Therefore, the feminist standpoint held in this research utilises and draws attention to the multiple feminisms that are rightly applicable to older women’s experiences (transnational feminism and feminist social gerontology) and to the purposes of this research and thesis and which are rooted within a Black feminist position.

Therefore, the additional concepts of transnational feminism and feminist social gerontology are applied within the feminist framework. However, remaining under the umbrella of Black feminism, the theoretical framework of this research embraces Crenshaw’s (1989; 2010) theory of intersectionality. Additionally, Cho et al.’s (2013) three level intersectionality framework, collaborates applications of intersectionality (gender, age and ethnicity); the scope and content of intersectionality as a theoretical and methodological paradigm; and, finally, the rationale behind employing a
methodological lens, as motivation behind the rationale of the feminist standpoint held in this research and thesis (see Table 1, p.93).

Furthermore, the concept of interconnectedness runs throughout this research and thesis, which aims to address how structure, agency and context each place influence on and across life course positions and hierarchies. Additionally, within this methodological framework, cultural ethics need to be taken into consideration around behaviours from the participant to the researcher but also the researcher to the participant. This methodological standpoint does not intend to suggest that only insiders with a shared language and/or culture are more advantaged within the research process but is constructed to examine and draw attention to the ways in which Western research has potentially overlooked the participants’ own voices through meanings and understandings that may have been lost in translation. This is not to say women who are constructed as outsiders within the population group being researched cannot provide a voice to those who have been othered, as insider positions additionally hold these locations (see Chapter Four), but draws attention to the ways in which experiences can be elicited through different insights and interpretations (Abu-Lughod, 1991; Subedi, 2006).
CHAPTER FOUR
The Research Process
Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to put forth a two-part qualitative research method that combines ethnographic research and life course interviews. A two-part method aims to provide a deeper understanding of what was being shared in the interview process, from which the context and production of data from the ethnography has been used as a measure by which subjective understandings of older SAM women’s own experiences of transnational ageing are explored (see Becker and Geer, 1957). Becker and Geer (1957) argue that within ethnography expressions, behaviours and meanings can be examined through social interactions. Ethnographic research, with the combination of life course interviews, in which detailed conversations are directed by the participants’ own experiences allows for the exploration of meanings that may be otherwise overlooked. Becker and Geer add that interviews can be enhanced through data from participant observations by “checking description with fact” (1957, p.31) and thus argue that life course interviews have a “strong affinity with ethnography” (Goodley, 1996, p.333). Furthermore, qualitative life course interviews allow for an autobiographical method of reminiscence and memory research to be emphasised within the methodological approach (Maynard et al., 2008). Therefore, the combination of both life course interview methods and ethnography add to the “historical and subjective depth” (Goodley, 1996, p.333) of the data elicited during this research process.

The dual-method approach was particularly useful as I entered this research with the position of a researcher, but also as a woman of South Asian heritage. It has been argued that one of the responsibilities of feminist thinkers is to challenge the foundations on which intellectual and social guidelines have been constructed (Harding, 1986: Maynard, 1994). Therefore, raising the importance of understanding that “feminists do not all think the same way or even about the same kind of things” (Boulder, 1993: cited in Yamani, 1996, p.1), the dual-method approach sought to explore the ways in which this research process has been interpreted by myself as the researcher, as a South Asian woman and as “a person” (Reynolds, 1997, p.4), but also to shed light and explore the ways in which older SAM women have experienced structures of old age and ageing. Moreover, researching older SAM women who construct their subjective identities within a collective framework (see Chapter One), a dual-part method within this process was regarded as most suitable in order to gain
a greater understanding of how older SAM women use cultural memory from the past and present.

A series of 10 multi-sited observations were conducted, alternating between Group A on Thursdays and Group B on Wednesdays, over the course of a two-month period. In total approximately 18 older SAM women were observed during the ethnography, ten older SAM women from Group A and eight from Group B, and their interactions with five members of staff (two managers and three support workers/cooks). Nine older SAM women from the support group gave consent to take part in the life course interviews and seven were recruited through criterion-based sampling methods. In total, 16 in-depth life course interviews were conducted in addition to the ethnographic observations, observation research diary and reflexive research diary documents. The challenges and benefits of insider/outsider positions during the ethnography and interviews will be discussed in the sections, ‘Ethnography’ and ‘Life Course Interviews’. Parts of these sections are written with a reflexive “I” (ibid) in order to position myself in the research process following Bourdieu and Wacquant’s (1992) lead of challenging accepted modes of thinking presented in social research by putting forth the relationship of the field and habitus.

The chapter is, therefore, broken down into five sections. Section One draws attention to the ‘School Research Ethics Panel (SREP)’ and gaining consent to conduct the study. Section Two, ‘Ethnography: Overt Participant Observations’, examines the role of the gatekeeper in gaining access to older SAM women and identifies the ambiguity of power structures for researchers during ethnographic research. Section Three, entitled ‘Life Course Interviews’, highlights the challenges of conducting interviews with SAM women who are not visible within the public sphere with regard to social/support groups, Section Four highlights ‘Reflexivity: Researcher Identity’ during the research process and Section Five concludes with ‘Thematic Analysis’ and presents thematic readings of data elicited from the study and research.

**School Research Ethics Panel (SREP)**
An ethics application was prepared and submitted to the University of Huddersfield’s Human and Health Sciences School Research Ethics Panel (SREP) before gaining consent to conduct this research study and the commencement of the research process (see Appendix 1). The SREP proposal was informed by the British
Sociological Association (BSA, 2002), and British Psychological Society (BPS, 2009) guidelines. Ethical considerations for the ethnography and life course interviews included informed consent (see Appendix 2), a participant information sheet that contained confidentiality and anonymity guidelines (see Appendix 3) and a statement of support sheet and wellbeing support service contact details (see Appendices 4a and 4b).

Anonymity was maintained throughout the research study through the use of pseudonyms within the observation documents, research diary and during the research process and write-up. Additional issues of safeguarding, and ensuring risk to the participant was kept minimal were key issues of concern during the research process. The sharing of life course experiences, however, potentially placed participants in a vulnerable position due to the sharing of sensitive information in addition to recalling memories of the past. Disclosing sensitive information during the ethnography was a particular issue that had to be addressed in relation to a community identity, in which some experiences may be viewed or challenged by other women in the group as unacceptable. Therefore, cultural negotiations within my researcher role around safeguarding participants through cultural understandings and sensitivities were present during observations.

However, cultural sensitivities posed some limitations during the research process, in which my own perceptions of what was acceptable or unacceptable were occasionally challenged within the group setting, as the group space provided a ‘safe’ place for women to share their experiences (see section on Space: Group A and B). Cultural sensitivities, therefore, within the research process, do not always apply in particular contexts, such as the group space. Nevertheless, being aware of these boundaries provides an insight into how older SAM women construct an in-group identity in particular spaces. A statement of support was devised for participants if SAM women felt they needed or required additional support post-research. None of the women accessed this service after the research.

**Ethnography: Overt Participant Observations and the Ethnographic Interview**

Bronislaw Malinowski’s (1844-1942) seminal work in social and cultural anthropology significantly contributed to understandings of ethnography. Malinowski (1915: cited in Neuman, 2011, p.422) argued the:
best way to develop an in depth understanding of a community or culture was for the researcher to directly interact with [...] people, learning their customs, beliefs and social processes.

Malinowski’s recognition of working directly with those who are being researched to learn their “customs, beliefs and social processes” (ibid) highlights the importance of understanding those being researched, from their own interactions and behaviours. Willis (1977: cited in Skeggs, 1994, p.74) explains:

The role of ethnography is to show the cultural viewpoint of the oppressed, their ‘hidden’ knowledge and resistances.

Wills’s suggestion fits in with feminist critique, which aims to provide visibility to women through knowledge that potentially challenges dominant understandings. However, criticisms of Malinowski’s (1915) research highlighted the objectivity of documented data, which suggests ethnographic researchers are limited by their own interpretations. Yet, Skeggs (1995) contends that, as researchers, we are all located and positioned within situations that influence our interpretations and perceptions of the world. Skeggs further adds that locations include influences from our social history, geographical attachments, gender, race, social position and age, and explains:

Our social and cultural location may inform what we say and how we say it, and who gets to hear and respond. (1995, p.8)

Sociocultural locations, therefore, inevitably influence interpretations but by embracing limitations in ethnographies researchers are able to enter and explore the world of individuals who are being studied from different viewpoints (Yamani, 1996). Consequently, researchers taking an insider perspective, someone with a shared community group, are more likely to be aware of the social divisions between themselves and the populations they are representing (Ganga and Scott, 2006) due to their position within the community. Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) draw attention to the complexities of the researcher’s role in ethnographies and make distinctions between participant observations and non-participant observations; they propose that participant observations occur “when the researcher is playing an established participant role in the scene studied” (1994, p.248).

Therefore, my role as a “positioned subject” (Rosaldo, 1989: cited in Icano, 2009, p.41) during the participant observations allowed me to take on a “role in the scene being studied” (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994, p.248), and explore insider/outsider
divides. The “positioned subject” (Rosaldo, 1989: cited in Icano, 2009, p.41) role included participation in activities, discussions and exercise, which allowed me as a researcher to enter “the life world of the persons whose experiences are relevant” (Manen, 1990, p.69). Additionally, choosing the “positioned subject” (Rosaldo, 1989: cited in Icano, 2009, p.41) role allowed me to build trust and rapport with the participants and gain a better understanding of who they were and how SAM women interacted with each other in their own environment (BSA, 2002) (also see Chapter Five).

**Questioning the Divides: Apni Kuri (Our Girl)**

I must address here the cultural context of my own position as an insider and outsider within and during the research and whether this had any advantages or disadvantages on the research process. Bhabha’s (1990) concept of the third space recognises a space in which unspoken communication takes place and this was a significant factor of researching a shared community. Bhabha (1990) proposes individuals exist within multiple identities and the spaces in which they communicate operate to create and construct these identities. Moreover, Bhabha (1990) puts forth that communication is not only performed through spoken language or behaviours but is also a third space in which values, beliefs and principles are shared through silent understandings.

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p.127) explain:

> Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which is the product, it is like a ‘fish in water’: it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted.

The relationship between Bhabha’s understanding of the third space and Bourdieu and Wacquant’s suggestion of social realities highlights that individuals hold affinities with other people but more so with those they are attached to through their “habitus” (ibid). Bourdieu and Wacquant argue that the familiarity individual's feel within the set of knowledge they share is a consequence of the social realities that the social or cultural group has constructed. However, these realities are often taken for “granted” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) as a result of the familiarity shared knowledge produces within these spaces. Nevertheless, perceptions of being a researcher from within (Crenshaw, 2010) should not assume insiderness, in which there are benefits to access to a community, nor should they be undermined as separate to the research
process. Therefore, in order to gain an understanding of social realities that construct contexts, the relationship between the self, and subjective and collective social realities must be addressed (Simmonds, 1997). Butler (2002) argues that language is not detached from the self and, additionally, autobiography itself is not separate to interpretation and the positions of the self. Moreover, the reflexive “I” locates Fivush’s (2010, p.88) suggestion that “we are the stories we tell about ourselves” and therefore, unavoidably, we ourselves are actors in our settings (Goffman, 1959; 1997).

Moreover, recognising that there may be some understandings and contexts between myself as a South Asian woman and the older SAM women in this research, I have endeavoured not to take the interpretations and experiences of older SAM women for ‘granted’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). However, entering this research and being aware of my potential “halfie” identity (Subedi, 2006, p.573); “‘halfies” – people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage” (Abu-Lugod, 1991, p.137). I was, therefore, critically aware of my own positions within various contexts and spaces during the research process and potential benefits in access through shared language and community, but also potential challenges due to a shared community. I was also aware of the potential challenges and conflicts I may face as an insider researcher researching my ‘own’ community, such as confidentiality and knowing others from the community.

Within this section, then, I begin by acknowledging myself through the lens of older SAM women, as an “apni kuri”4 “our girl”, in order to contextualise my positionings within this research in relation to them, but also group managers who may also be from a shared background. Contractor (2012) proposes that the role of empowering other women is to narrate their stories but this cannot be devoid of the author’s own story. The silencing of the context and conditions in which the story is produced misrepresents the participant’s experience, as the researcher’s role invites the telling of the story, as they too are “active participants” in the research process (Riessman, 2011, p.315). Riessman (2010, p.316) further argues that the way in which experiences are shared should be understood in the context of “when, how, and to

---

4 This phrase has been used, as it was an expression older SAM women placed on me during the research.
whom it is described”, as the roles of the researcher and the researched are interconnected.

Older SAM women’s reference to the term *apni* unmistakably produced and constructed constructs of *ours/yours* within *insider/outsider* binaries. Within the South Asian community the term *apni*\(^5\) itself has both positive and negative meanings. Women or girls who are referred to as an *apni* are constructed as *insiders* through understandings of ‘*being one of ours*’ from a *shared community/heritage background*. However, when individuals of South Asian heritage are described as ‘*not an apni*’, the word may be critical and can imply more than just *outsiderness* by not performing traditional behaviours. However, its reference to a non-South Asian again varies and suggests an uncritical reference to someone who is not from the community. Therefore, within the third space (Bhabha, 1992), understandings around *insider/outsider* binaries can be problematic due to the meanings and implications of cultural terms (see Kusow, 2003). However, in the context of *insider* and *outsider* binaries and in relation to generation, birthplace as a British-born South Asian, heritage (religion and region) and personal experiences, there are then clearly positions in which I am located as an *outsider* highlighting the fluidity and multidimensional nature of the *apni* position.

Ballard (2002) argues that the diversity of the South Asian community is so complex that the overlapping and varied structure is challenging. Therefore, by recognising diversity within the South Asian community, Bhabha’s (1992) suggestion of the third space complicates simplistic dualisms of *insider/outsiderness* in which the variegated nature of the population creates multiple belongings within the constructs of *insider/outsider* positions but, additionally, cultural meanings that are attached to, within and across these locations.

*Insider/outsider* binaries in the South Asian population are so complex that it may even be bold to suggest that there are no clear *insider/outsider* divides. Moreover, language, heritage, region and/or religious status additionally create differences yet there remains sameness across various binaries (MacKinnon, 2007). As a South Asian woman of Pakistani Punjabi heritage these binaries are further complicated and were

\(^5\) *Apni* (feminine) - may also be used in the context of something that belongs to you. For example *apni marzi khardhi* I do as I please (Bhachu, 1988)
evident during the research process. Amongst all of the women in the study, during
the ethnography and life course interviews, there was some element of my identity
that older SAM women could relate to and further locations in the third space (Bhabha,
1992) we shared. With older SAM women of Indian heritage my outsiderness was
constructed immediately in domains that stated my outsiderness through ethnic group
and religion. However, once discussions continued, my grandfather's birthplace in
India blurred these divides, as did my heritage language and Pakistani Punjabi
background, in which the advantages of a shared heritage often prompted a
willingness to reveal life course experiences, through shared understandings.

**Advantages and Disadvantages of the Apni (Ours) Position**

Entering this research with the understanding of the apni (ours) position I was aware
that the advantages of being from a shared community would potentially allow me to
gain access to record the life course experiences older SAM women, who had not
been previously researched. However, there were challenges in accessing older SAM
women and despite being from the shared community, it was at times difficult to access
and ‘find’ older SAM women who wanted to share their life experiences with me. The
design of the study, therefore, prompted me to include ethnographic research, in which
I would be able to build trust with older SAM women, but also explore the ways in
which collective structures of old age and ageing were constructed, against subjective
life course experiences. Becker and Geer (1957) suggest within ethnographic
research, researchers are able to locate understandings behind why participants may
not want to take part in the research process and can further point out particular
instances in which people are unwilling to share. The ethnography was valuable in
highlighting potential spaces older SAM occupy and building trust in order for them to
share life course experiences with me. Even though there were some space in which
I was an insider, through heritage, language and local identity, there were other
spaces, which had to be broken due to generational differences. The ways in which
access to the groups for the ethnography will be discussed and building trust with the
participants.

**Community Group Access: Open and Closed Doors**

Moreover, power and who holds power at particular times during ethnographic
research are key areas of discussion. Spradley (1979) draws attention to dimensions
of power during the research process and suggests:
In order to discover the hidden principles of another way of life, the researcher must become a student. [...], and those like her in every society, become teachers. (1979, p.4)

The understanding of power and agency is an important feature of ethnographic research in which researchers learn from the ones who are being researched and must be open to the constant negotiations of shifting boundaries of power (see Sherif, 2001). O'Reilly (2009, p.133) draws attention to the role of the gatekeeper and suggests “a gatekeeper may be key in their approbation which enables access to the group”. O'Reilly’s explanation of the gatekeeper will be used in this section, which aims to discuss the role of the gatekeeper and how access to groups was granted or withheld during this part of the research process. For the purposes of this research gatekeepers were identified through a local Council website.

Once discussions and confirmations around the suitability of support/community groups were established over the phone, an email letter of invitation (see Appendix 6) was sent out to potential gatekeepers in order to establish confirmed interest and written consent. After an interest in the research was expressed a response email letter (see Appendix 7) and group consent form (see Appendix 8) were sent to potential gatekeepers to confirm their role in the research process. Once support from the community group was established and confirmed, I liaised with the gatekeepers to gain access to the groups to conduct the ethnographic research.

During this research three gatekeepers, in their position and role as group managers, identified three potential groups that could be accessed for the purposes of this research. Gatekeeper One withheld access to the group by not sharing group information. This sharing of information occurred after Gatekeeper One discussed a “participatory research” role (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995, p.1667) involving control over the research process (Broadhead and Rist, 1976). I informed Gatekeeper One that I would acknowledge the group and the gatekeeper’s role in this research process within the completed research thesis. However, due to confidentiality and ethical guidelines, input into analysis and findings would not be possible. Gatekeeper One then denied access to the group as a result of discussions not meeting Gatekeeper One’s specified criteria. O'Reilly (2009, p.133) suggests “powerful people can close down access to a group in an instant if they choose to”, identifying a “location of power” (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995, p.1668). The “location of power” (ibid) therefore refers
to the negotiations of power during the research process between the gatekeeper and researcher.

Gatekeeper Two invited me to visit the chosen support group once my role as a researcher was established. However, access to the group was again denied, this time due to the perceived threat of my professional role on their research funding and current research (Wanat, 2008). Therefore, “conditions of entry” (Broadhead and Rist, 1976, p.325) significantly influenced access to groups during this research process, in which I was located as an outsider as a result of my research role.

Gatekeeper Three held a shared role with an additional group manager. Gatekeeper Three welcomed the research and invited me to visit the support group. On this visit to the community group with Gatekeeper Three I was introduced to the second support group manager who welcomed my research and granted formal access to conduct the ethnography through written consent. The “location of power” (ibid) whilst gaining access to a group therefore lay with the community group manager and not me as a researcher. It is therefore important to recognise that research is often influenced by participation from local people within the community outside of the academic structure and for research purposes. These boundaries need to be permeated through building rapport and relationships with those in the community. Additionally, support group managers have added “locations of power” (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995, p.1668) in which they must first consent on behalf of the research participants (older SAM women) (Wanat, 2008). Gatekeepers are positioned as individuals “well-placed to appreciate the potential reactions of clients” (BPS, 2009, p.13), from which the gatekeeper’s role identifies an implicit role in holding access to a community group but also having responsibilities to safeguard group members by granting access to suitable researchers/individuals.

The Community Group

The support group accessed for the purposes of this research was established in 2002 in West Yorkshire, by members of the community, to address the lack of activities available for older individuals in the local area. Led by the group’s committee members, with funding from the Council and a local businessman, the group aims to provide support to a number of older adults aged 50 years and over, from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. Group members of South Asian heritages include older
SAM women from Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Nepalese ethnic minority backgrounds.

Many of the group’s members attend from local areas and the group holds two support groups (Group A and Group B), in two neighbouring localities, on a weekly basis. This study therefore identifies a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995) conducted across Group A and Group B. Some group members attend both groups however Group A and Group B have a regular group membership. Both groups aim to provide older men and women with a place to socialise and take part in regular activities. Group A provides a social space, yoga, two-course lunch and Bingo and Group B offers a social space, occasional exercise and light refreshments such as tea, coffee and biscuits. Both groups take part in an annual joint event, which includes a day trip and annual three-course dinner event celebrating the group’s achievements across the past year.

Consent and Language

Once access to the group was granted I addressed members collectively in English informing them of my research process, which were to include overt observations in which I would participate in activities and discussions and document observations for my research study. Members were then handed an information sheet (see Appendix 3) detailing my role and position in the research and the purpose of the research study and informing participants that all data would remain anonymous. It additionally stated that individuals wishing not to take part or to withdraw during the observations could do so on request and their data would not be documented.

Group members were invited to sign consent forms (see Appendix 2) to take part in the study. I went through both the consent forms and information sheets individually to overcome the diverse range of language/information needs and prevent or limit limitations. Temple (2005) suggests the context and production of the interaction between the participant and researcher is important and the use of different languages needs to be addressed in research, as ignoring this poses questions around the credibility and, further, the ethics of the research.

The language structure in Groups A and B included a handful of women who were fluent in spoken and written English, several who could only speak English and others who would be described as having ‘broken’ English, which consisted of key words and phrases. A number of women were able to read Urdu or Punjabi and one group
member was fluent in a range of spoken and written languages, including Nepalese, Bengali, English, Urdu and Punjabi. Many of the women described themselves as ‘uneducated’ (not having had a school education) and preferred to speak to me in their heritage language of Punjabi. Two of the women were highly educated and had held prominent position within the community choose to converse with me in English. Shared language did identify an insider positioning in which multi-lingual data identified insiderness through shared national, cultural and linguistic milieus (Marschan-Piekkari and Reis, 2004; Subedi, 2006).

The diverse range and needs of language identify the complexities of gaining consent. Addressing the information sheets and consent forms with participants in their heritage language allowed for a better understanding of the purposes of the research study and both the researcher and participants’ roles in the ethnography. Additionally, consent, due to the nature of the ethnographic study and observation method, was “renegotiated over time” (BSA, 2002, p.3) as the BSA suggests consent is “not a once-and-for-all prior event, but a process” (ibid). As a result, once consent from members attending the group on the day of observation was established, consent was renegotiated to allow new members who attended the group late or new members over the course of observations to be included in the research study. This method also allowed members who decided not to be included in the study at a later time or date to be taken out of any data documented. However, this did not occur during any of the observations.

Community Research: Insider/outsider Binaries
The challenges of community research were highlighted by the need to build trust with the group. I write:

Observation research diary… I feel I need to attend the group a few more times to break barriers and develop a level of comfort for the women.

I originally envisaged three or four observational sessions due to my perceived insider position as a South Asian researcher but my outsider positioning as a researcher became apparent in the first few observations in which there were ‘barriers’ that I felt I needed to break with the participants. Becker and Geer (1957) suggest that by observing participants researchers are able to point out situations in which individuals are unable or unwilling to talk. Here, older SAM women initially indicated me as an
outsider due to not being a group member, which was unrelated to my shared ethnic
group and gender. As a result I did need to ‘break barriers’ and build familiarity with
participants during the early stages of the study. I noted over the course of three more
observation sessions:

Observation research diary… As I am participating in activities, I am becoming
‘one of them’.

Observation research diary… It has taken me three further observational
sessions to build enough trust that the women now welcome me happily to
share their stories with me.

Observation research diary… ‘You have to come as well; you’re part of the
group now’. I thought this was really nice and feel as though I am ‘part of the
group’.

Here my role as outsider was beginning to break down and an invitation to the group’s
annual lunch event confirmed my position with the group with acceptance. My own
self-reflexivity, identified in the above diary extracts, highlights the different stages of
power (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995) during the research process and also the impact
of these stages on my emotions. Women in the group visibly established positions of
power in their ability to welcome or reject me in which my feelings note the acceptance
to the group in which a “comfort level” and “feel as though I am ‘part of the group’”,
which impacted positively on my position in the research.

In order to address the research question ‘to what extent do researcher/participant
binaries affect the research process as a consequence of insider/outsider binaries?’
the relationship between myself as a South Asian woman and the older SAM women
in this research needed to be established. Abu-Lughod (1991, p.137) critiques the
position of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ and suggests:

The importance of these two groups lies not in any superior moral claim or
advantage they might have in doing anthropology, but in the special dilemmas
they face, dilemmas that reveal starkly the problems with cultural
anthropology’s assumption of a fundamental distinction between self and other.

The relationship between the self and the other therefore needs to be understood
within the context of this research. Abu-Lughod (1991, p.137) refers to cultural others
as “‘halfies” – people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration,
overseas education, or parentage”. Kusow (2003) evaluates insider/outsider roles and
suggests these roles are products of the place in which the fieldwork takes place rather
than the characteristics of the researcher and, therefore, should clearly be contextualised within the research being conducted. In order to provide a fuller picture of this research and older SAM women’s experiences I must address my interpretation of the way in which older SAM women constructed me. This was initially demonstrated by the way in which older SAM women constructed me within this research as an *apni kuri*6 (our girl). Therefore, the way in which experiences are shared should be understood in the context of when, how, and to whom it is described (Riessman, 2008) and older SAM women’s reference to the term *apni* unmistakably produced and constructed constructs of *ours/yours* within *insider/outsider* binaries.

However, older SAM women’s references to me as an *apni kuri* did make me question the extent to which I really was an *apni*. The critique here is that race will always construct me as an *apni* in the eyes of the South Asian community, locally or globally. However, the extent to which I perform *apnai* (our) behaviours7 is open to interpretation and thus, despite older SAM women recognising my racial *insiderness*, I was required to critically evaluate this position due to the Western-centric position and theoretical underpinnings of this research. To avoid falling into the category of essentialist writing I must note that I was located as an *outsider* by some of the women in this study within various contexts (e.g. age, generation, heritage, religion). However, the *outsider* positions my Pakistani heritage created for me challenged my Punjabi heritage. However, I must note that *outsiderness* was often only recognised after a racial *insider* identity had been established. Ballard (2002) argues that the diversity of the South Asian community is so complex that the overlapping and varied structure is challenging. Therefore, by recognising diversity within the South Asian community, Bhabha’s (1990) suggestion of the third space complicates simplistic dualisms of *insider/outsiderness* in which the variegated nature of the population creates multiple belongings within the constructs of *insider/outsider* positions but, additionally, cultural meanings that are attached to, within and across these locations.

*Insider/outsider* binaries in the South Asian population are so complex that it may even be bold to suggest that there are no clear *insider/outsider* divides. Moreover, language,

---

6 Defined as “our girl”. This was a term frequently used by older SAM women to refer to my position as a Desi (homeland) *insider* (also see Glossary of terms).

7 *Apnai* (our) behaviours are related to having ties or understandings of homeland traditions values, beliefs and behaviors, through birth or heritage.
heritage, region and/or religious status additionally create differences yet there remains sameness across various binaries (MacKinnon, 2007). As a South Asian British-born woman of Pakistani Punjabi heritage these binaries are further complicated and were evident during the research process. Amongst all of the women in the study there was some element of my identity that older SAM women could relate to and further locations in the third space (Bhabha, 1990) that we shared. However, with some older SAM women of Indian heritage my outsideness was constructed early on within domains that stated my outsideness through ethnic group and religion.

*Observation Research Diary*

Arthur and Nazroo (2003) argue that the importance of a well-designed topic guide will provide a flexible approach to the fieldwork and accurate documentation of the central feature of research. An observation research diary (see Appendix 9) was maintained during the study in order to document data throughout the ethnographic research process. Additionally, an observation guide (see Guide 1, p.112) was followed over the course of the observations to aid observation notes in which aspects of the group, members, self-reflection, discussions and relations of power were recorded. Both the ethnographic researcher observation guide (see Guide 1) and the interview guide (see Guide 2, p.127) have been adapted from Victor et al.’s (2012) interview guide. Moreover, the interview guide was used as a tool with which the agenda of age and ageing experiences could be explored but was not limited by semi-structured interviews (see Arthur and Nazroo, 2003). Therefore, as a result of the feminist stance taken in this research the guides served to allow both anticipated and unanticipated experiences to be explored, through the documenting of reflexive positions during the research (see Appendix 5).

**Guide 1: Ethnographic research observation guide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnographic Researcher Observation Guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atmosphere:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Weather: impact on attendance, notions of wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Group setting/space/layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff and membership notes: any others attending the group? Power relations within the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group members:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethnicity: culture and religion – any regional variations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gender</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a “positioned subject” (Rosaldo, 1989: cited in Icano, 2009, p.41) I was, however, always aware of potential influences and disruptions to the group and the natural environment. In order to keep these disruptions minimal, field notes and observations were recorded immediately after the observation sessions, to maintain accuracy and information but also to not lose sight of my role as a participant observer/researcher. Data recorded over the duration of the observation sessions noted behaviours, interactions within the group, comments/conversations, notes and reflexivity, in accordance with BPS (2009) and BSA (2002) anonymity and confidentiality guidelines. However, limitations of ethnographic research do acknowledge that social research does “intrude into the lives of those studied” (BSA, 2002, p.4) and there were times when this was unavoidable (e.g. gaining consent and when participants asked who I was).

Ethnicity and Space: Group A and B Observations

My initial observation of the groups was the group space. This section therefore addresses the significance of addressing space by highlighting the way in which older SAM women interacted with each other in collective settings. Moreover, it draws upon
ethnographic data, recognising ethnic preferences and co-constructed narratives that were made visible by older SAM women in the collective group space.

Both Groups A and B catered for a diverse membership, including those who were not of South Asian heritage. Group A was diverse in its ethnic and gender representation but predominantly had a South Asian intake of Indian women and a small number of women of Pakistani, Bengali Nepalese heritage. Group B was attended by mainly Pakistani women, a small portion of Indian women and one South Asian Pakistani man who lived locally. Women from Groups A and B would, on occasions, attend both groups or swap attendance due to convenience. I noted in my observation research diary the diversity of Group A:

Observation research diary… I am realising that the group is not as diverse as they display. There were eight members who were of South Asian origin, but are in fact Indian. The group caters for the Indian Asian minority ethnic group and British White. There are no Pakistani or African-Caribbean members.

Over the duration of my observations Pakistani members did join Group A, as members will attend both groups, and Nepalese and Bengali members were noted over the duration of the observation sessions. There is, however, a distinct Indian and Pakistani preference visible in both groups. The ethnicity preference was further noted at the annual lunch event at which all members came together.

Observation research diary… It was still obvious of the group divide and I am noticing now it is most likely an ethnic divide. Even though Group A has some Pakistani women in the group, at the meal they seated themselves with a table for Pakistani women and a table for Indian women, followed by a table with a Bengali and Nepalese lady who both wear Western clothes with White British men and women. Even a Pakistani lady who attends Group A seated herself at the ‘Pakistani’ table. I am not sure why this is as they will meet and greet each other during the social times and join in with the activities together, but they will part into their individual groups and seat themselves at their preferred tables.

This significant insight into the dynamics of the group’s behaviour, as a result of the participant observations, identified an underlying social preference from older SAM women for their ‘own’ community, highlighting and representing unspoken insider/outsider binaries (Sherif, 2001).

Additional observations in Groups A and B referred to the layout of the room (see Diagrams 1 and 2). Group A holds regular meetings in a village hall and provides a large social space and room for exercise. Compared to Group B (see Diagram 2),
Group A is larger with regard to space and membership. Both groups meet up for annual events at Group A but members are welcome to attend both groups.

**Diagram 1: Group A - Room layout and space (Sketch taken from the observation research diary)**

Group A’s layout (see **Diagram 1**) consisted of a semi-circle seating area at the front of the room, exercise space that consisted of a circle seating area at the back of the room and a space where lunch was served, in which the exercise space is swapped for a large, rectangular table with chairs. The layout of the room catered for an interactive space for group members for the duration of the group session and members were able to move about freely between activities.

If some members did not want to join in with the exercise activity (e.g. health reasons) the space still retained inclusivity, as members were able to talk across the exercise and social space during the exercise session. The kitchen consisted of an open kitchen window feature opposite the social space, in which tea, coffee and biscuits were served. The window space additionally encouraged conversation between staff and group members during tea and coffee, lunch and dessert requests and exchanges, minimising any power relations between staff and members.

Group B (see **Diagram 2**) was smaller and was held at a local care home. Group B organized their meetings in the care home living area. The atmosphere was still relaxed and the Group consisted of members who attended regularly. Seating was laid
out around the room and the space in the middle of the room was occasionally used for exercise. Again, group members interacted and talked to each other across various spaces (kitchen, seating areas). Group A served refreshments and a lunch was served in Group B.

**Diagram 2: Group B - Room layout and space (Sketch taken from the observation research diary)**

Group B’s exercise was either via a DVD or a group member running the activity. Group members predominantly used the social space for socialising over tea and coffee. Again, the open kitchen provided a space for staff and members to interact over tea and coffee. There were no significant power relations visible in either group between staff and members and the staff and members maintained the group space by helping each other during activities. The group managers did, however, take charge when external speakers attended the group meetings. During these times, the manager took the lead in organising the group and stimulating discussions.

**The Role of the Group: Wellbeing**

Another significant feature from the observational data highlighted the group’s role in offering wellbeing to older SAM women. Both Groups A and B provided more than a space for older SAM women to socialise, as the group was referred to by many as ‘family’. I noted a discussion with one of the group members in my observational research diary:

*Observation research diary… ‘I only have my son. That’s all I have. You lot are all mine. No one is a stranger and no one is ours (nahei koi pria, nahei koi*
Everyone feels like my own. I come here because my hearts not in it that’s why’. (Harpreet, age 60, Group A)

Members attended the groups primarily for social reasons but the groups also served to promote and/or sustain wellbeing. Harpreet’s extract highlights both the social benefits of belonging to a group and its role in wellbeing; as Harpreet says “you lot are all mine” and “I come here because my hearts not in it”.

It became apparent that older SAM women who attended the groups had various emotional and health needs (e.g. isolation, loneliness, conflict at home) which women shared with me during the observations. Some of the issues around health and wellbeing, noted in my observation diary, included concerns around surviving cancer; death of partners, children and other family members; caring for family members with disabilities or addictions; and living alone. Issues around loneliness and isolation were further rooted within these concerns. It was evident, then, that women who attended the group did experience loneliness due to a number of reasons including personal problems/conflicts; the death of partners; children leaving the home; or the absence of personal/social networks. One observation documented the role of the community group:

Observation research diary… One group member mentioned she lives alone […] she mentioned one of her son’s wives has issues with her and her husband passed away 19 years ago. She attends the group for social reasons and to ‘get out of the house’.

The group space therefore allows members to share life stories, past and present, gain advice and empathy and discuss a range of issues, such as everyday life and family, with other members of the group. The groups provide valuable interaction with others in which older SAM women have an opportunity to interact, socialise and talk to other members of the group from the local area with similar ethnic, economic and social backgrounds (see Bécares, Nazroo and Stafford, 2009) but also members from a range of backgrounds. This similarity of experience creates insider positions within the group as a result of group membership. Through group support from members and staff older SAM women construct notions of belonging and wellbeing through shared and individual interactions, discussions and the removal of social isolation through establishment of social networks.
Community Groups: Areas of Concern

A number of community groups in the local area lack funding and organisers struggle to maintain the cost of running the community support groups, which also applies to the groups in this research. Wuthnow (1994) examines the role of the support group and suggests that there is limited research around the understandings behind why individuals decide to join support groups and the members’ continued roles within the groups. Wuthnow explores the role of recovery and support groups however recognises the role the ‘group’ plays in substituting the role of the community, which has potentially encountered a “breakdown” (1994, p.xi) in society. The difficulties of the lack of understanding and the role the support group plays in older SAM women’s lives add to potential problems around isolation and maintaining wellbeing if funding for these groups is withdrawn.

The group in this research study faced real concerns with regard to the continuation of funding. Both managers and group members shared their concerns and the impact of outcomes such as the loss of jobs, volunteer roles (which include the members organising activities), support and social networks. It is evident from the ethnographic data collected in this study that the role of the group enables older SAM women to build strength and confidence and to continue social roles and skills by attending groups. Lack of facilities, however, may lead to isolation for older individuals and the removal of choice to attend facilities such as this.

Credibility

In order to maintain credibility observational notes were written with the goal of maintaining an accurate documentation of events that occurred during the ethnography, without generalising the experiences of older SAM women. Therefore, documented data relates to older SAM women in this study, which noted participant behaviours, interactions and discussions and critical researcher reflection in which my feelings and interpretations were documented throughout the research process.

Life Course Interviews

It is fair to suggest that older adults are likely to have a richer life experience, due to the increased number of experiences they have had over their life course. In order to gain a better understanding of the multitude of experiences older SAM women have experienced, the second part of this study utilised an in-depth, qualitative life course
interview method. Life histories allow the “personal experience [...] acquired by living through events of his or her life” (Sokolovsky, 1996, p.282) to be explored, thus providing a greater understanding of whole life course experiences and influences they might have in current life and old age. There is a close affinity between life course research and life history, life story, autobiography and oral history methods in which the participant shares life experiences with the researcher (also see Coles and Knowles, 2001). However, due to the context of this study, a life course approach was deemed to be the most appropriate method in which themes encompassing pre and post-migration experiences and life experiences spanning across multiple age-stages, including childhood, youth, adulthood and later life, could be explored.

Elder et al. (2003) suggest experiences are constructed by “interpersonal, structural and historical forces” (Elder et al., 2003, p.5) and, therefore, by collecting life histories we are able to understand how people make sense of their lives, by identifying how experiences over the life course “typify or deviate from cultural norms” (Goodley, 1996, p.333). Bruner (1986) adds, “narratives are an important means for discovering how we construct our lives” (Bruner, 1986: cited in Atkinson, 1998, p.123). Willig (2009, p.133) explains:

Telling a story about what has happened to us allows us to give coherence and meaning to what may otherwise feel like a confusing and disorganized sequence of events.

The life course method therefore aimed to collate life course experiences by exploring behaviours and expectations that are specific to older SAM women, through the intersections of gender, age and ethnicity but, additionally, across transnational borders. Moreover, as Willig suggests, life course aims to provide “meaning” (ibid) to a series of life course events.

Sample and Recruitment

I initially recruited participants for life course interviews through the ethnographic participant observation group by utilising purposive sampling methods (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003), also known as criterion based sampling (LeCompte and Prissele, 1994). Gender (women), age (60+ years of age) and ethnicity (South Asian) were identified as key components of the sampling methods for this study. Additionally, purposive sampling methods were applied to allow the specific criteria to be explored in greater detail.
After recruiting older SAM women from the observation groups, sampling older SAM women outside the support group structure proved to be problematic. Sociocultural expectations further complicated access to older SAM populations who are often blanketed and hidden within cultural and familial locations. For example, when I asked family members if their parent/grandparent would be interested in taking part in this research study, I was often denied access through the family member stating the older woman would not be interested, without the family member even relaying my request. Therefore, whilst identifying women who were not part of the visible social structure and did not attend social support groups, the recruitment process was challenged through establishing how to find and how to make contact with older SAM women within the chosen research area. The motivation, then, behind recruiting both visible and hidden older SAM women was to gain diversity within older SAM women’s experiences of age and ageing.

Browne (2005) suggests social networks can be advantageous in recruiting hidden participant groups and Erikson (1979) puts forth the notion of chain-referral sampling or snowball sampling methods, in which one person refers another and so on. Through my personal social network and position as an insider (with a shared ethnic group) I was able identify an older SAM woman from my social network to take part in the life course interview. She then became positioned as an “encultured informant” (Spradley, 1979: cited in O’Reilly, 2009, p.133), someone who was part of the South Asian ethnic group within my chosen area of research and in a position to share knowledge with regard to locating potential participants. The role of the “encultured informant” (ibid) aided the recruitment process through snowball sampling methods in which the informant was able to identify suitable participants in her network for the research study. The informant was then able to grant access to additional members as a result of her shared position as an older SAM woman. Once the informant exhausted her network of suitable participants the role was then taken on by another participant who repeated the process.

The advantages of snowball sampling allowed older SAM women who were not part of the observation groups and older SAM women who were ‘hidden’ by being out of reach within the community social structure to be accessed for the purposes of this research study. I am, however, aware of the potential limitations of using this method and the use of personal networks with regard to subjectivity. Heckathorn (2011) refers
to this method as a sample of convenience, in which participants are chosen and identified by others. However, Heckathorn also identifies the benefits of using snowball methods with participants who may be hard to reach or if the “group has networks that are difficult for outsiders to penetrate” (Heckathorn, 2011, p.355). Despite my insider position as a South Asian researcher, older SAM women were still hard to reach. Snowball sampling was, therefore, best suited and aided recruitment, particularly for those who were not active in the visible social structure (e.g. support groups).

A total of 16 life history interviews were conducted, 9 of which were recruited through purposive sampling methods from the ethnographic observation support group and 7 through criterion snowball sampling methods. The final number of life course interviews in this study consist of 16 older (60-87 years of age) SAM women. Ritchie et al. (2003) suggest qualitative samples are usually small due to the richness of data that is collected from the sample group, therefore supporting the credibility of the sample size. Sampling also finished at 16 research participants as data reached saturation and no significant new emerging themes emerged from the interview data (Guest et al., 2006) and thematic readings. However, alongside the ethnographic data elicited in this two-part method, a substantial amount of data were produced during this research process, which consisted of 16 in-depth life course interviews, 10 multi-sited ethnographic observations, an ethnographic group interview and reflexive research diary data.

**Ethnicity: Self-Defined Sample Group**

As discussed in the Runnymede’s Executive Summary (Lievesley, 2010), there has been a significant increase in the number of ethnic groups in Census reports, as a consequence of the response to the number of changing populations in the UK. In order to prevent assumptions around ethnic group categorisations, older SAM women in this study self-defined their ethnic categories. Older SAM women’s self-defin-itions recognised nationality, religion and heritage in ethnic identifications and included Indian Sikh, British Indian, Pakistani, Pakistani Muslim, British Muslim and Indian Nepalese. Women in this study also identified their places of birth as India, Pakistan, Kolkata and Kenya (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Breakdown of age, ethnicity and place of birth: Life course interview sample**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Self-ethnic identification</th>
<th>Place of birth</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Pakistani Muslim</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Pakistani Muslim</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>British Muslim</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Indian Sikh</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Sikh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Indian Sikh</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Sikh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Indian Nepalese</td>
<td>Kolkata</td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Indian Sikh</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Sikh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Indian Sikh</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Sikh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Pakistani Muslim</td>
<td>India (Amritsar or Lahore)</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Indian Sikh</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Sikh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Pakistani Muslim</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Pakistani Muslim</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ‘place of birth’, homeland and paternal birthplace identify influences that shape older SAM women’s self-defined identity in this research. For example, some women in this study referred to themselves as Indian despite never having visited their parents’ place of birth (see Table 2). Kulvinder mentions:

*We were in East Africa, my parents must have come over from India at first and then I have just stayed there in Africa. My birth certificate is from there as well. [...] I have been back to Africa a couple of times [...] I have never been to India (Kulvinder, 79 years old, Indian Sikh).*

The complex nature of simplistic understandings of ethnic, religious and national (political) identities is therefore problematic and should be considered within their national, political and heritage ties and belongings. Additionally, Neugarten (1974) suggests age-graded categorisations, including the category of ‘older’, can be broken down further into young-old and old-old generational life stages. In this research and thesis I have chosen not to separate women into these categories, as experiences are fluid and some women in the young-old cohort may have had similar experiences to women in the old-cohort and vice versa. Cultural constructions of age, therefore, may
vary and challenge these constructs. Consequently, I went into the study and data analysis with an awareness of potential similarities and differences of experience between and within ‘cohorts’ but used the combined category of ‘older’ to acknowledge a generation of older SAM women and to address the research aim and questions in this study (see Introduction).

Meri Zindagi (My Life): Language and Consenting to Have Your Life Story Heard

In order to gain informed consent with older SAM women the use of language was an important aspect during this part of the research process. To ensure participants understood what was required from them over the course of the research process consent was discussed in the languages of English, Urdu and Punjabi. Initially, I provided participants with a consent form (see Appendix 2) and information sheet (see Appendix 3) documented in English. A number of the participants were able to read English and therefore provided informed consent as a result of the forms.

However, in order to obtain fully informed consent during the interview I had to take into account how I would do this to best suit the participants in the study due to potential language/information barriers. As a result of some of the women in the study being unable to read and/or understand English, I worked through the consent and information sheets in the language best suited to the participant (Urdu, Punjabi or English). As a multi-lingual speaker I was able to explain the research documents and research process verbally with the most appropriate language for the particular participant within the South Asian research group. From this they were then able to give fully informed written consent to take part in the life course interviews.

When I had to explain the research and the statement of support to participants, stating the potential distress, which may be caused during the research process, eliciting life course experiences, participants often looked at me with confusion. The distressing aspects of life stories were not necessarily something older SAM women envisaged. However, during the research, participants did experience sentiments in the sharing of life stories and participants shared emotions of sobbing, crying, sadness (shared through prolonged silences) and happiness from having the opportunity to share their stories (Yeo et al., 2003). Other emotions also included guilt, regret and grief. This is not an exhaustive list but identifies the range of emotions that were presented by the
participants during the course of this research process and particularly within the interviews.

Participants were debriefed after the interview to ensure they understood the research they were taking part in, checking if there was any information they wanted to remove from the interview and safeguarding participant wellbeing due to potential distress or negative emotions as a result of the sharing of life course experiences. The variation in the length of interviews depended on a number of factors, including the information the participant chose to share and if participants became visibly tired from the research process. On occasions there was some information the participant felt uncomfortable with or unsure about sharing for research purposes and therefore this particular information was omitted from the research data.

_Cultural Ethics: Identifying Izzat (Respect) in the Research Process, Context for the Researcher and Researched_

The majority of life course interviews were conducted within the homes of older SAM women or in a private room at the community centre, depending on where and how recruitment took place. The location chosen was based on suitability for the research participant in order to provide a comfort level and privacy during the interview. However, during the interview the challenge of ‘others’ entering or sitting in the room within the home of the participant was an issue. Ethical considerations of confidentiality were discussed with the participants; however, participants often supported family members drifting in and out of the room. As a result of other people in the room I was aware that there might have been information/experiences that were not shared with me as a researcher during the life course interview. However, this draws attention to cultural and research ethics and issues such as _izzat_ (respect) and etiquette within the participant’s home.

During the research process I was aware of trying to maintain my image of being an _insider_ by observing cultural etiquette but then I also had to take heed of ethical procedures within the research. The intersections of age and respect are issues of concern, in which socially approved cultural behaviours in relation to South Asian cultural etiquettes are constructed around _izzat_ (respect) across an age hierarchy. On occasions I did request that other family members leave the room. Members of the participant’s family who were older than me in age either followed or questioned my
request for the interview to be conducted alone. The issues here were not about my own safety as a lone researcher and the family member's reaction (anger, annoyance etc.) but more around authenticating my own identity as an insider and trying to maintain this identity without offending the individuals I was researching (see Subedi, 2006). My own desire of not wanting to challenge cultural etiquette was complicated by having to maintain the research ethics that directed this research, in which the implications for the researcher's community identity had not necessarily been taken into account before the start of this research process. Lewis (2003) argues that it is important to be aware of the researcher's relationship with the participants, in which reciprocity, how the researcher's own characteristics impact on the research and any ethical issues that result from this, should be factors that are taken into account during the research process.

Therefore, when conducting research with older SAM women, issues of izzat were always at the forefront of my mind. As a South Asian researcher there is a shared understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour toward older SAM women. izzat, during this part of the study, encompassed generational issues of respect and resulted in behaviours on my part such as asking whether I should remove my shoes when entering the property, accepting refreshments offered within the participant's home and not prompting issues participants felt uncomfortable with or causing severe distress. With the latter issue there were areas that I did prompt, such as early marriages and Partition experiences. At first these questions were met with hesitation but, more often than not, women did share their experiences. There are, then, clearly limitations within my research as a result of izzat and occasions on which I did take on a silenced researcher role by not being able to pursue certain issues that may have been welcomed by an outsider researcher.

Constructions of izzat, however, allowed me to build a rapport with older SAM women through applications of izzat, which were reciprocated to me as a younger South Asian woman and being referred to as an apni kuri (our girl). This was often heightened if a shared homeland, my role as a mother or a shared language was established during the research process. The sharing of information is again another aspect of izzat in which family heritage/lineage, background and where you live are part of the foundation on which the relationship of izzat but also your community identity are constructed. As a result, during the start of the interview I was often first interviewed
by the participant in order to gain an understanding of who I was and any family/ethnic connections and, therefore, at times there was a need to disclose and share my community identity (Subedi, 2006).

**Performing the Apna (Our) Role**

I was aware of how I should greet and conduct myself with older SAM women in this study, which was shaped by my own third space (Bhabha, 1990) social and cultural understandings and beliefs with regard to how I should (re)present myself. Two key themes became apparent around issues of (re)presentation, in which *izzat* (respect) and (re)presentations of myself as an *apni kuri* were displayed. In addition to performing *izzat* (respectful behaviours) I was very much aware that understandings were rooted in values around the age hierarchy in which ideals of *izzat* are displayed (see also Chapter Two). These understandings, beliefs and values were unspoken between the participants and me but were very much present within the third space (Bhabha, 1990).

Therefore, during this research process, as a ‘younger’ researcher, my behaviour and aspects of respect were implicit. I performed *izzat* through my interactions with the participants, in which I acknowledged older SAM women with ‘hello auntie’ and continued to call them ‘auntie’ during my conversations (see Handa, 2003). The recognition of demonstrating respect was key in maintaining an authentic identity with the women in the study (Subedi, 2006) and further establishing trust. I was conscious during the research process that, as a South Asian woman, not addressing older SAM women with ‘auntie’ consequences could potentially outweigh the act of responding in this manner, in which trust or even my community identity would be challenged. I did, however, call some participants by their first name and this was very much dependent on the way in which they also presented themselves to me. Scheve and Ismer (2013) further suggest behaviours are legitimised by social appraisals and therefore shared cultural knowledge and boundaries influenced the ways in which I greeted the women in this study. Scheve and Ismer (2013, p.3) suggest such behaviours are a result of “group-based emotions”:

[... ] group-based emotions are elicited by events concerning one’s own identity as a member of a particular group. (Scheve and Ismer, 2013, pp.3-4)
It was evident then that my own emotions and desire to display an authentic community identity within my researcher role were clearly connected. The second issue I encountered around (re)presenting the self was a consequence of the multiple identities and belongings I was personally attached to (e.g. British, Pakistani, Punjabi, Muslim, daughter, daughter-in-law, mother and granddaughter). As a researcher I tried to present myself formally within my researcher role but, often, older SAM women themselves expressed an interest in who I was and where I was from (see Henry, 2003). The blurring of boundaries between the participants and my role as a researcher was indicated through my insider locations. There were, then, parts of my subjective identity that I needed to share with the participants at particular times in order to authenticate my shared cultural position with them (Subedi, 2006; Scheve and Ismer, 2013).

Conducting the Interview: Listening to the Older SAM Woman

Once the location of where the interview was going to take place and consent were established, life course interviews were conducted by guiding participants through the telling of their own life stories in their own words (Atkinson, 1998). Webb and Webb (1932) describes this process as “an interview with a purpose” (1932, p.130) Through guiding participants during the interview, with prompts from an interview guide (see Guide 2), themes of gender, age and social positions (Arber and Ginn, 1995) could be explored in depth. The guides were adapted from Victor et al.’s (2012) interview guide, which was constructed by Victor et al. in order to address life course experiences of older SAM women.

Guide 2: Life course interview guide (Adapted from Victor et al., 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview guide/prompts for life course topics:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-migration:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experiences in childhood/youth/ marriage/motherhood and later life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education/early life course experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family/social networks, cultures, traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migration:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Migrating to the UK and life experiences post-migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reasoning behind migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emotions/feelings/hopes/future plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social/family networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-migration:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ageing experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Settlement, family- births, deaths, marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Significant events (pre and post migration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity themes:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

124
Language

Interviews were conducted in the participant’s preferred language, which was often the participant’s heritage language. Interviews were recorded on a digital Dictaphone in the languages of English, Urdu and Punjabi and lasted between 30 minutes and two hours. For the majority of older SAM women their heritage language of Urdu or Punjabi was the preferred language they chose to share their experiences within (even if they were able to speak English). Entering the research process I was aware language might be an issue in this study due to the generational cohort of the sample group in which English language skills might be challenging. Language, in this research and thesis, therefore did not simply articulate a tool with which data was elicited. For both me as a researcher and the participants in the study, language was a way in which an “authentic identity” (Subedi, 2006, p.587) could be performed but, additionally, a way in which cultural information and meanings could be shared. Subedi (2006) argues that it is important to be aware of Western research with non-Western populations in order to conduct ethical research, because language and understandings do not necessarily transfer across knowledge bases within population groups.

However, with the lens of my researcher and translator identity during the process of this study, I was critically reflexive of my language in order for me not to place assumptions on what the older SAM woman was saying or fall into the premise of co-constructing narratives due to shared understandings and beliefs. Therefore I did, at times, have to ask participants to clarify what they had said for the purpose of this research. I aimed to translate language (see Glossary of terms) that would best represent and communicate what the participants in the study were sharing. However,
due to the nature of Urdu and Punjabi, direct translations were not always possible or grammatically correct in the English language. Some words and phrases hold several translations dependent on the context of what is being said, therefore, some heritage language remain in the thesis, with a direct or contextually appropriate translation.

However, limitations within language recognise Subedi’s (2006) suggestion of conducting ethical research and being aware that some meanings were inevitably ‘lost in translation’, as particular words and phrases drew out the poetic nature of the Urdu and Punjabi language. For example, one participant talked about her pain after the death of her mother and explained:

```
I consoled my heart not to cry, but it wouldn’t stop it kept crying, but nobody could see it because I wasn’t crying. I was just a statue that wasn’t crying, but my heart was crying tears of blood.
```

The translation of ‘tears of blood’ does not refer to the literal meaning of crying tears of blood but is associated with the feelings of immense pain, which is literally translated as ‘khoon dai ansoo, ‘blood of tears’. At times, then, some interpretations of what was being said needed to be elicited in order to construct and represent what the participants were sharing but, additionally, to make sense in English translation. However, the English language proved to be challenging in its translation of Western concepts for the older SAM women in the study. For example, the complexity of the word ‘mid-life’ does not literally exist within the Punjabi or Urdu language structure, yet this period in the life course is culturally perceived through events and experiences (see Chapter Two and Chapter Six). Therefore, concepts of age had to be approached through other means of understanding ageing experiences, which was beneficial through my position as a South Asian woman and my shared language and knowledge base around sociocultural understandings. Nevertheless, even these understandings were challenged through older SAM women’s subjective experiences of age, which further highlighted both my insider and outsiderness (Wray and Bartholomew, 2010).

Reflexivity: Researcher Identity

Being Questioned: The Power Play (Insider/Outsider, Researcher/Researched)
During this research I was aware that there might be interest in my community identity from the women in the study but acknowledging it was not at the forefront of my mind,
nor did I think it was appropriate during my role as a researcher. However, in hindsight, there may have been an unconscious awareness of the potential risks of identifying particular parts of my identity (see Subedi, 2006) and how it might impact on the research and the research process (Ganga and Scott, 2006). Here, I needed to determine how open I needed to be about my researcher identity (Subedi, 2006), which was further negotiated within Agnew’s (2005, p.14) suggestion of a “double consciousness”, in which my subjective identity was constantly being negotiated within two consciousness’s; an in-group local identity and out-group researcher identity. After critical reflection it was, however, never my intention to approach the research in this manner, as I entered this research and the research processes with my formal role as a researcher, in which I was in a privileged position to be hearing the experiences of older SAM women. I was, however, made aware of the challenges and benefits of my own identity and the multiple positions I was located in. These positions identified a) a generational identity, b) a community identity c) a researcher identity and d) a regional identity. The latter, however, was of more interest in the life course interviews rather than during the ethnography, but these multiple positions allowed me to connect and build trust with the participants.

During the research process it was becoming clear that there were evidently power structures at play and questioning the researcher (who is characteristically viewed as the questioner) or being questioned played a significant role in building trust with the participants. Moreover, there were aspects of my identity that were of interest to the women. For example, who I was and who my family were played a key role in the older women’s constructions and interpretations of my community and local identity in relation to where I was situated (generationally, culturally or religiously) in relation to them. Wolf (1996: cited in Henry, 2003, p. 230) puts forth:

[…] our power and control offers us the choice to construct and (re)shape ourselves to our subjects, playing on the different positionalities of the researcher and the researched. This is particularly the case when researchers are far enough from home that the researchers do not encounter many of their family members or friends, whereas our respondents are usually surrounded by kin and friends and cannot simply withdraw, hide or alter aspects of their identity.

Wolf suggests a researcher has a choice in (re)presenting certain parts of their identity when they are far from home, as the ones they are sharing their identities with may
not be able to question what is being shared. However, as I was researching a community very close to home, the challenges I faced were often difficult to “hide” (ibid) and determined trust with the participants. At times the simple acknowledgement of my family was enough to continue with the research. However, on one occasion during the ethnographic interview, a participant recognised who I was in the context of the community and acknowledged my family background during the interview. This response at first made me stumble and made me question why the participant wanted to share intimate details about my family and, further, why my researcher identity was being questioned.

*Shamim:* Why didn’t you learn to teach driving like your dad? He does it you could do it too [in reference to the researcher].
*Komal:* Your dad is a driving instructor?
*Researcher:* Yes, but I like listening to the stories.
*Komal:* That’s right, all children are different.
*Sandeep:* She likes stories.
*Shamim:* The stories of the past. There are no stories, there are no people, there isn’t anything.

Anthias (2002) suggests the stumble is not a result of not knowing or understanding the question but more to do with the complexity of the answer. Flam (2010) posits that power plays a significant role in the restructuring of the dynamics of the group and individuals can generate emotions to ‘silence the voice’ of the one who is in control, therefore reproducing positions of power through “collective humiliation” (Flam, 2010, p.187). Shamim’s questioning around my researcher role and why I did not follow my father’s career was shared by Shamim in order to restructure the dynamics of the interview in which I had presented myself as a formal researcher. Wolf’s (1996, p.11) suggestion that there may be parts of your identity you can no longer “hide” were clearly identified during this part of the research and it was Shamim who assumed the authority of bringing to light and questioning my community/family identity. Sherif (2001) further explains that shifting and ambiguous boundaries between people are a significant part of the research process.

Shamim’s final statement of “there are no stories” is resolute in its resolve to conclude the interview, through the withholding of knowledge as a result of the recognition of my family identity; reifying Henry’s (2003) suggestion that identity does impact on the research. Pawelczyk (2012, p.1) further adds that if there are “no stories” there is “no self” and Shamim’s declaration of no longer wanting to share by silencing her own
voice (see Flam, 2010) negotiates her need to claim power within the interview. The interview, however, did continue due to the other participants wanting to continue to share their narratives, again shifting the power play away from Shamim and back to the interview. Karim’s (2013, p.249) suggestion that in being a “‘native’ researcher” and studying your own community researchers are potentially faced with discrimination “from within” (Narayan, 1993, p.672) was clearly demonstrated during this part of the research. However, being part of the community also aided the interview process through support, through my recognition of being part of the community and an *apni kuri* (our girl). Other identities established by the participants included my position as a daughter-in-law. I note in my observation research diary:

*Observation research diary…* She (group member) recalled at the end of the interview who I was and felt the need to share this with the group saying whose daughter-in-law I was and how I was related to one of the group members (a relative of my mother-in-law), who attends the group, but wasn’t there today.

This recognition of who my mother-in-law was and my daughter-in-law role acknowledged unspoken social positions within my community identity. Henry (2003) critiques the researcher’s interpretations and perceptions of positions that may hinder the research as problematic, as they may not hinder the research but assist and aid the sharing and recall of past experiences. Therefore, my “owning” (Henry, 2003, p.232) up to this part of my identity did aid the research process through an understanding and sharing of gendered roles. The power play in reference to my family identity was presented as negotiations in which acknowledging *who I was* would essentially highlight an unspoken position of social appraisal within the collective setting of the social group through our reactions to each other (participant and researcher). Madsen and Van Naerssen (2003, p.63) explain:

[…] people are more than willing to layer on top of their traditional […] identity a common […] label.

Madsen and Van Naerssen refer to the layering of National and European identities, however, in this case Shamim, uncovering my ‘traditional’ community/family identity that was layered beneath my formal research role, played a significant part in the interview but, additionally, played a role in the movement of power during the research. There were, then, parts of my identity I did not share that were shared by the participants themselves, highlighting challenges within in-group community research. However, there were additional benefits to the recognition of my local identity in which
a rapport, trust and closeness to the group and women could be established. The need for the participants to recognise and establish the multiple layers of my identity played a key role in establishing Bhabha’s (1990) suggestion of the third space, which was present and additionally determined through the authenticity of my subjective identity. Sultana (2007, p.375) suggests:

[...] ethical research can only be produced through negotiated spaces and practices of reflexivity that are critical about issues of positionality and power relations at multiple scales.

Sultana suggests that ethical research can only be conducted by recognising the multi-dimensional nature of spaces and locations and therefore the reasoning and meanings behind them. Moreover, Henry (2003, p.232) suggests the “owning and naming” is in the best interests of both the researcher and participants’ research relationship. Charsley and Shaw (2006) claim that trust is about establishing whether someone is recognised as one of their own. Charsley and Shaw refer to the recognition of someone as their own through kinship marriage and ties. However, the (re)creation of communities in the adopted homeland is established on the basis of potential kinship ties and/or family recognition through community identities (see Shaw, 2000). I note in my observational research diary aspects around ‘protection’ and the insider position:

Observational research diary… It may also be a generational issue, in which they do not want to ‘hurt’ me or share sad things with me. And therefore are taking on the role of the older auntie, mother or grandmother, as I am an insider. It may then be difficult for someone so many years younger than them to elicit these narratives as they do not want to harm you and then in affect say it’s all not relevant now and times have changed.

This point in the researcher/researched relationship, is reminiscent of Handa’s (2003) auntie/uncle syndrome, in which Handa (2003) suggests there is an unconscious desire to construct anyone from the South Asian community as family due to notions of collectivity. Within the observations the auntie structure (Handa, 2003) is reified through the eyes of the participants, which may be a result of my initial recognition of them in this way. However, Henry (2003, p.229) argues the “field as a place of complex power structures” and, in this case, within a collective setting, the power play between participants and I, as a researcher, was clearly evident through constructs of izzat.

Ganga and Scott (2006) suggest insider positions allow the researcher to gain social proximity to the participants from which the researcher is able to recognise social
divisions within interactions. However, researchers must not fall into a false sense of security within the role of an insider due to a shared cultural/ethnic background in which the complexity of these positions can produce outsider positions, through the reluctance to be interviewed or researched by a member of the community. Moreover, insider/outside and researcher/researched binaries are constantly shifting and ambiguous (Sherif, 2001) and thus Ganga and Scott (2006, p.4) explain:

[...] that any binary insider-outsider division is misleading. There is a paradox to being an insider: whilst researchers are closer to those migrants they are studying, both themselves and their participants are much more aware of each other’s social position as a result. Being an insider brings the investigator closer to the reality that migrant communities are rarely united, and almost always divided by social fissures such as class, generation, age, and gender.

Ganga and Scott’s quote highlights the complexity of insider positions in which there is value in an insider’s cultural knowledge through understanding of social positions and meanings but, additionally, insiders’ awareness of cultural divides. Being aware of how I was culturally expected to behave with my participants was therefore shaped by my own sociocultural understandings (see Chapter Two). However, I was also aware of the repercussions of particular behaviours and was therefore limited in the way in which I could present myself within my local identity but also remain within the guidelines of a formal researcher position.

Benefits often compensated for limitations during these situations, through a shared understanding of certain issues. Becker and Geer (1957) identify problems of research include the extent to which “the interviewer really understands what is said to him” (1957, p.28). In this case, through a shared cultural understanding, I was often able to understand information shared by the participants in relation to the “context, definition and application of the life story” (Atkinson, 1998, p.1). Shared understandings included izzat within the home, family and social structure; ageing experiences (acceptable and unacceptable); social changes; experiences of ‘home’ (birthplace); and specific word definitions within the participant’s heritage language. Further, understandings around heritage and class were often unspoken but implied through understandings around class backgrounds in the homeland, e.g. farmers, middle class families. There were times when these shared understandings had to be identified for the purposes of the research; I would ask ‘can you explain that to me?’ which would be met with confusion
and I would be asked ‘do you know what I mean?’ thus potentially disrupting my own ‘authentic’ community identity during the research process.

The distribution of power during the interview process was clear, contextual and interchangeable, in which the participant could hold power and control of the interview during their own assessments of whether the interview would take place and what information they were willing to share with me during the research process (Jedlowski, 2001). If participants did establish any relational ties during the interview it would either induce the willingness to share stories or reluctance, depending on the strength or perception of the relation/network. Ethnic group differences (Indian/Pakistani) also prompted willingness to share stories through being an outsider (with no community ties) but also, on occasions, reluctance by not establishing the position of an apni kuri (our girl). These positions, however, are not fixed as ethnic differences can also prompt relations through local networks, a shared heritage and language and participants would use this as the basis on which they were willing to share their life experiences. However, establishing a level of mutual izzat at the beginning of the interview often determined the success or failure of being able to conduct research but also the strength or weakness of the research interview through the information shared.

Understanding the Role of Emotion during the Research Process

It is highly problematic and unrealistic to go into the research process without being aware that fieldworkers invest emotions into the research process (see Jewkes, 2011) and that, potentially, researchers’ emotions will be tested during the research process. The difficulty with emotion is the way in which emotions are defined and measured but, additionally, the subjective structure of emotion. Following the constructionist influences of this research, emotion is introduced here with Jewkes’s (2011, p.65) suggestions of cultural emotion:

[...] societies reveal an emotion culture of ideologies, norms, logics, vocabularies, and other symbolic elements that specify what individuals are to feel in particular types of situations and how they are to express emotions but that there is a biological and universal basis to emotions.

Jewkes highlights how structural and cultural contexts play a key role in directing emotion through ideologies, language and social norms and the connection of emotion to the “human body” (ibid). The view that societies hold on to their own cultural emotion
that shapes thought, behaviours and actions is important in understanding how emotions are constructed and motivated (Scheve and Ismer, 2013). Additionally, cultural emotions identify a third space (Bhabha, 1990) in which emotions are created through attachments to a group of people with whom there are shared understandings. My own perceptions of the research at first did not account for the ways in which emotion would present itself in my researcher role, as I did enter the research with understandings around the formality and position of my researcher role. However, as the research progressed it became clear that emotion and dealing with sensitive experiences would play a significant part in this research. My early reflexive research diary entry recognises emotion and states:

Reflexive research diary extract… I enter the interview impartial; however empathy develops during the interview. It is through the lens of experience in which I am shown a lived life, which has shaped and influenced a migrant woman living in the west.

During the research process I began to appreciate the depth of the participants’ life experiences, which began to shape my emotional journey during the research study. Gray (2008, p.935) argues that it is important to recognise the researcher’s emotion to the “object of research and the research process” as they are interconnected. A later reflexive research diary entry highlights the change from empathy to emotional exhaustion during the research:

Observation research diary… The interviews are tiring […] I think it is the realisation of what has been said. Both women today mentioned that if they were to pass away they are happy with their lives […] it is the emotional exhaustion, which is draining. They are women who I have been observing and are friendly with me […] they know my name and I call them ‘auntie’ and ask how they have been. They are sharing their health with me. The troubles they have had over the week etc. It is a reality that some are in the later stages of their life and once my observations end will I have any interaction with them? It is having to build a relationship with them not on false pretences, but which is through a real interest of their life experiences and their position in later life. It is difficult not to build an emotionality with the participants as this is an ethnographic piece of research with deepens through the life course interviews.

This extract evidently highlights the way in which the sharing of experiences, health and the researcher/researched relationship impacted on my emotions as a researcher. Moreover, the blurring of boundaries as an insider and calling the participants “auntie” through respect but also building familiarity with the participants through the research, adds to the bearing of emotion on the self during the research process. Jewkes (2011)
then questions why a researcher's experience is often noted as secondary to the research process, when one informs the other. However, the critique here lies in how impartial the researcher can remain to the research and data being elicited during the research process, with the ubiquitous presence of emotions. Emotional boundaries are, however, additionally ambiguous and the fluidity with which emotions, feelings and empathy are created is clearly open to criticism in research. Emotions could potentially be envisaged to ‘cloud one’s judgement’ and affect the credibility of the research. However, without addressing the way in which emotions play a role in research, the ethical practices of the research may be open to question (Sultana, 2007). Therefore, recognising how emotion can potentially be useful in data collection and research, through the comprehension of where the researcher is located throughout the research process and what dynamics are at play, is important.

**Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis was chosen for data analysis within this qualitative study as it has been described to have methodological and theoretical flexibility (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006, p.77) suggest thematic analysis is a “useful and flexible tool” that can provide an analytical approach in which the diversity of experience can be established through the emergent data led themes. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.82) explain:

> A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned responses or meaning within the data set.

The combination of both Attride-Stirling’s (2001) thematic network and Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis template allowed thematic readings to be drawn up into a visible, interconnected framework of relational themes (see **Network 1**). Themes were elicited through transcript and observational research diary readings, from which key themes around gender, family, roles, responsibilities, agency, migration and social change emerged.

Thematic readings of transcribed interviews, ethnographic data, and observational and reflexive research diaries were analysed individually. Emerging themes were then cross-referenced to see if there were any overlapping or interconnected themes that emerged. This method of analysis permitted individual and “cross-case” analysis
between participants (Bischoff et al., 2011, p.20). Themes around family, expectations and relationships were key themes that overlapped across all data sets.

Readings of gender, ethnicity (religious and cultural) and age were analysed in order to critically examine data but also the ways in which older SAM women constructed experiences of age and ageing through their own sociocultural interpretations of life course experiences (see Network 1). The identification of themes in this manner allowed for the exploration of older SAM women’s own interpretations of the ways in which they had experienced and anticipated old age and ageing through their own meanings and understandings. Therefore, some age-stages, concepts and terms remain in the heritage language used by the women in the study and may only be applicable to this sample group, due to regional and dialectal variations in language.

Network 1: Thematic analysis network of older SAM women’s age-stages, gender roles and expectations

Network 1 lays the foundations of the sociocultural ageing expectations and structure in which older SAM women in this study have aged. However, these stages are not fixed but fluid and overlapping through women’s own agency within these roles (see Chapter Six), in which izzat (respect, honour) is an internalised feature that guides early experiences and socialisations (see Chapter Six). However, the network has served as a framework to guide themes around the way in which older SAM women have experienced and anticipated age and ageing through gendered roles and expectations.
The second thematic network that was elicited from the data suggests there is an internalised hierarchy of relationships that connect and overlap across gender and age (see **Network 2**, p.140). The interconnectedness and complexity of these structures are discussed and highlighted in **Chapter Five and Chapter Six**. Women evidently identified hierarchies of authority to apply across relationships of age, in which the elder, whether the relationship in the hierarchy is higher (e.g. uncle, aunt) or lower age and positioning (e.g. nephew or niece) are the determinants of increased *izzat*. For example, a younger uncle/aunt will be seen with increased *izzat* due to hierarchical positioning and an older nephew or niece will be acknowledged with increased *izzat* due to age. Additionally, boundaries of age were noted to cross gender divides (e.g. uncle/aunt, nephew/niece, grandmother/grandfather) (see **Chapter Five** and **Chapter Six**) and there is a significant identification of maternal and paternal relationships and positions of authority in addition to the language use of male and feminine relationships.

**Network 2: Thematic analysis network for older SAM women’s age-stages and matriarchal positions**

The third set of thematic analysis readings highlighted the co-construction of cultural scripts in which older SAM women (re)negotiate and publically perform notions of cultural identities and belongings through shared understandings of a) gendered social...
norms, b) family including kinship ties and the extended family structure and c) the construction of a migrant identity (see Chapter Five).

Conclusion
This chapter highlights the use of a two-part method utilising ethnographic research and in-depth qualitative life course interviews as best suited for the purposes of this research and thesis. The combination of a two-part method delivers valuable insights into the collective and individual behaviours, experiences and actions of older SAM women and draws attention to challenges within the research process faced by researchers researching ‘hidden’ community groups. The different locations of power and agency within ethnography and qualitative interviewing additionally allow researchers to gain important observations around social structures, hierarchies and interactions of those being observed and researched in their natural environment but also through learning from those they are researching (Spradley, 1979).

The gatekeeper’s role during the recruitment process highlights the changeable nature of power, in which both the researcher and gatekeeper hold positions of power at particular times during the research process. Additionally, the gatekeeper’s authority on granting or denying access to a group plays a significant role in being able to access community groups who are already perceived to be hidden and constructed as minorities within a minority group, through their multiple oppressions of being a woman, from an ethnic minority and in a later life position. The study therefore problematizes the extent to which the researcher’s knowledge of who is appropriate and where to find them is an essential part of the research process.

Moreover, it is important to be aware of cultural ethics during the research process. In this research cultural ethics presented itself within two particular aspects of the research; first, others (group/family members) in the room and second, notions of izzat (respect). The first, having others in the room, was additionally applicable during the ethnography as a result of the group spaces and the nature of the ethnographic research. Within the ethnography my own ideas and understandings around acceptable and unacceptable experiences were challenged as entering the research with a “halfie” researcher identity (Subedi, 2006, p.573) led me to believe that some of the experiences women shared within the group setting might be challenged by others. However, these ideas were challenged as the group space provided older SAM
women with a ‘safe’ place in which they could discuss and share experiences that might have been deemed culturally unacceptable within the community sphere. Therefore, confidentiality within the group space was an important part of the ethnographic research process.

Older women during the interviews did not mind having others (family members) in the room. Cultural ethics therefore played a few roles in these situations in which a) my own desires of upholding izzat limited my role in not wanting to disrupt the researcher/researched relationship by telling the other person to leave, b) my community identity was questioned when the other person was asked to leave and c) traditional South Asian ideals were reified within collective and extended family spaces, in which older SAM women are constructed around notions of passing on knowledge and thus the sharing of life stories with others was constructed positively. Researchers must therefore be aware of cultural behaviours before entering the research to avoid challenges and potential loss of participants through disrespect. Therefore, culturally relevant frameworks that address culturally specific expectations and sensitivities need to be applied during the research process. Additionally, language can be used as a tool to permeate cultural and knowledge based barriers through building rapport but also by devising linguistically appropriate tools for research (e.g. observational and interview guides).

Wellbeing was an implicit theme that emerged from the support group observations, in which women utilised the group to construct positive notions of belonging and a space in which they could share concerns. Areas of concern around issues of wellbeing and quality of life were identified around issues of physical health and wellbeing; surviving and dealing with cancer; death of partners, family and children; caring for family members with disabilities and/or addictions; and living alone. Concerns around loneliness and isolation were embedded within a number of older women’s concerns, which were centred on loneliness and isolation. These concerns included personal problems/conflicts; death of partners; children leaving home; and the absence of family and social networks. However, older SAM women did share their concerns about the lack of funding for groups like this and the impact it would have on maintaining wellbeing through the breakdown of its support network.
Through critical reflexivity it has been recognised that researchers themselves are located within multiple positions and, within cross-cultural community research, positions are added to and created within additional local and global identities. Therefore, the researcher is not solely positioned as the questioner within research and must be open to being questioned in order for the participants to develop an understanding and rapport within active communication, language and behaviours but, additionally, within the third space of unspoken understandings, beliefs and values. There are, however, limitations with third space understandings and the researcher must not fall into essentialist interpretations of what third space understandings represent. Nevertheless, there are dominant themes that are present within these spaces which must be recognised in order to produce ethical research.

Additionally, community insiders conducting research within their communities must be aware of the role of emotion within research in order to achieve ethical research and prevent unwanted bias, by acknowledging the researcher’s emotions at particular stages during the research process. The research process is therefore negotiated across the fluid interplay of power structures, emotions and biographical identities, for both the researcher and researched, in which both the researcher and researched have the power to negotiate what is shared and how. The researcher and participant both take active roles in the research process, which contributes to the movement of power and who holds power during particular times during the research process.
CHAPTER FIVE
A Co-Constructed Life Course:
Collective Memory and Cultural Identity
Introduction

If we go looking for ethnicity with an ethnic lens, chances are, we are going to find it. If we go looking for ethnicity equipped with a more variegated toolkit we may also find it, and we may readily discover other things going on as well. The latter strategy affords us a more balanced and less contaminated appreciation of ethnicity in the world. (Fox and Jones, 2013, p.394)

This chapter aims to critically explore the value and construction of cultural identity by drawing attention to the different ways in which ethnicity is constructed by older SAM women within a discursive context, and the customs older SAM women themselves acknowledge or contest through shared understandings. Fox and Jones (2013) suggest that looking at ethnicity from different viewpoints allows for a deeper appreciation of ethnicity and the meanings attached to the ways in which ethnicity is constructed. Gupta (1997) further adds that questions of identity should be explored through what older SAM women assign and understand as social and cultural tradition. Therefore, this approach to identity, in order to understand older SAM women’s own collective and subjective constructions of identity and belonging has been taken in this chapter.

The ethnographic interview for this chapter’s analysis occurred on request from the participants during the ethnographic observation, in which older SAM women requested a joint discussion immediately after I entered the Group and commenced the ethnographic element of this research. The ethnographic interview was informed by questions from the interview guide (see Guide 2), but also guided by the observation guide (see Guide 1, p.113). This proved to be valuable in identifying the way in which older women’s subjective identities are co-constructed or contested within a collective setting. The discussions further recognised that older SAM women’s power relationships during the ethnographic interview were negotiated and claimed within sociocultural expectations of respect and authority due to hierarchal positions of age, constructing space within the research as a social environment that can be negotiated (Laurie et al., 1999).

This chapter, therefore, applies Spradley’s (1979, p. 465, [emphasis original]) suggestion of the three most important ethnographic elements for thematic contextual analysis that “are its explicit purpose, ethnographic explanations, and ethnographic questions”. Explicit purpose in this chapter identifies the context of where and how the ethnographic interview took place. Furthermore, by understanding the explicit purpose
of the ethnography, it was crucial that the environment in which the ethnography was taking place was disrupted as little as possible. Therefore, the participants’ request for the joint discussion allowed me as an ethnographer and older SAM women to continue as they would in their cultural environment, but also allow me to explore the cultural knowledge of those who are being researched (Spradley, 1979). Secondly, ethnographic explanations in this chapter draw attention to my position in the ethnographic interview, in which Spradley’s suggestion of “Native language explanations” (p.465), and describing older SAM women’s culture within its own terms has been encouraged during the ethnographic interview by requesting the participants “speak in the same way they would talk to others in their cultural scene” (p.465, [emphasis original]. Finally, ethnographic questions highlight how life course interview questions (see Guide 2, p.128) initiated and directed the informal discussion during the ethnographic interview in order to explore cultural information and knowledge through older SAM women’s own emerging themes and meanings. The three parts of ethnography are applied throughout the chapter analysis.

Five older SAM women participated in the ethnographic interview. All of the older women except Sadia self-defined themselves as Pakistani Muslim: Shamim, 75 years old, Pakistani Muslim; Begum, 74 years old, Pakistani Muslim; Nazia, 65 years old, Pakistani Muslim; Naheed, 62 years old, Pakistani Muslim and Sadia, 60 years old, British Muslim. The sample group and analysis in this interview is representative of Group B membership (see Chapter Four) and the discursive context in which the ethnographic interview took place.

**Family and the Household Structure**

One of the most valuable and helpful aspects of the group discussion during the ethnographic interview was the way in which social and cultural contexts in which older SAM women (re)negotiate subjective identities revealed ideologies of homeland belongings through shared sociocultural scripts (see Goddard, 2009) and common third space understandings of cultural information, particularly gendered actions and behaviours (Bhabha, 1990). A significant emerging theme from the ethnographic interview identified the family and living arrangements to be a central feature of discussion. Throughout the discussion older SAM women articulated a constant comparison of family and living arrangements in the homeland, compared to
expectations, ‘here’, in the UK. Older SAM women, particularly Shamim, Begum and Nazia emphasised how social change and past expectations of the extended family had altered from the homeland in comparison to current expectations. Within this context, however, there was also a strong emphasis on gender structures and authority within the extended family structure through negotiations of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours:

**Shamim (75 years old):** From the village, our lifestyle was very nice. It was nice. We all lived together. Chacha 8, thia 9, we all lived together.

**Begum (74 years old):** Everyone lives separate.

**Shamim:** We all lived together.

**Begum:** No, I’m talking about here. Now even there everyone lives separate. Everything has changed now.

**Nazia (65 years old):** Everything has changed now.

**Shamim:** Everyone says we should live separately now.

**Begum:** There were thia 10, chahai 11 on one hatta (farm). It was so big and there would be one room there, and another room here. Everyone was together. No paanja 12, patija 13 used to fight, not any chacha, thia.

**Nazia:** They would listen.

**Begum:** They would listen with fear. They would say thia will hit you, or chacha or mama 14 will tell you off. Now they say what is a mama, chacha to me?

**Shamim:** My husband’s thia’s son 15. One day, we were collecting the corn. Me and my pupo 16, we got it and put it in our mouths. He said today you’ve eaten it and I’ve seen you, next time you do it I’ll cut your throat 17.

**Begum:** That’s right.

**Shamim:** Those days have gone. We still go out now and get scared about putting something in our mouths. Yet, now we don’t listen to our parents. Our blood relatives. Even our chachai.

Within the discussion, women’s reflections of the extended family are articulated through clear past/present comparisons as well as evaluations of the homeland, “village” life and life “here”. Moreover, older SAM women’s acquisition and use of binary categories construct notions of the “good” and “bad” stereotype (Laurie, 1999, p.77), in which Shamim’s construction of a “nice” life in the homeland is shared as a

---

8 Younger paternal uncle – father’s brother
9 Older paternal uncle – father’s brother
10 Plural
11 Plural
12 Nephew (sister’s son) – sister’s daughter (niece) would be referred to as the feminine version of paanja which is paanji (niece)
13 Nephew (brother’s son) – Brother’s daughter (niece) would be referred to as the feminine version of patija which is patiji (niece)
14 Maternal uncle – mother’s brother
15 With reference to an older cousin - Older paternal uncle’s son
16 Paternal aunt – Father’s sister
17 Punjabi saying/ phrase “gurden vad daini”.
positive ‘good’ memory. DasGupta (1989, p.5) suggests “being loyal to the traditional ‘culture’ is an immigrant’s ticket to belonging” and, therefore, the construction of ‘positive’, ‘good’ memories allows individuals to achieve loyalty. The positive emotion attached to the memory of the homeland thus positions Shamim’s relationship with the homeland, additionally, representing and stating a visible past homeland identity within the group setting. Laurie (1999) adds that identities cut across particular experiences and significantly affect the way in which certain identities are performed. Nelson and Fivush (2004) further suggest that positive or negative emotions attached to a particular experience highlight the way in which understandings and meanings around expectations are constructed.

However, the emotions provoked within Begum’s understandings of the extended family from prompt her to challenge Shamim’s experience by suggesting “everyone lives separate”. For older SAM women, then, the ways in which women articulate, construct and (re)negotiate authentic homeland identities become visible through the emotions assigned to significant memories. It is the emotion behind the ideology that is significant rather than the actual experience and that creates the memory and constructs the experience. Shamim then reiterates the positive value of the extended family living structure after being challenged by Begum with ‘we all lived together’ (re)negotiating positive, traditional ideals and lifestyles back to the attention of the collective group in an effort to remain ‘loyal’ (DasGupta, 1989) to the traditional expectations and sociocultural expectations. Begum’s renegotiation, then, of her own understanding of the “‘good’/‘bad’” binary (Laurie, 1999, p.77) justifies her contention with “I’m talking about here”, again visibly renegotiating loyalties within the group (locally) and cultural identity (globally) within the “speech event” (Spradley, 1979, p. 461).

As the extract and quotes suggest, the significance of Begum’s challenge visibly illustrates (re)negotiations of subjective identities within the collective group but, additionally, the influence of the discursive setting. Begum’s statement about her meaning of “talking about here” reconstructs her identity with notions of belonging through claiming loyalty to the homeland (DasGupta, 1989) by recognising differences “here” in the UK. However, Nazia’s additional agreement with “everything has changed now” questions the construction of homeland ideals, prompting Shamim’s recognition of social change and the ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1983) with the reality of
“everyone says we should live separately”. Shared understandings of the household thus recognise Vertovec's (1999a) suggestion of the South Asian diaspora taking on a social form, in which the diaspora is negotiated across transnational contexts but done so within a localised community setting. For example, the recognition of extended living arrangements and the meanings placed on them construct notions of belonging within the local group through shared understandings and collective constructions of a “double consciousness” (Agnew, 2005, p.14). The “double consciousness” (ibid) is a key feature of third space (Bhabha, 1990) understandings and meanings in which the acknowledgment or challenge of sociocultural homeland ideals constructs measures for loyalty to the homeland or the place of belonging but, additionally, measures for the way in which identity is constructed and negotiated.

The collective space also draws attention to the articulation of family memories to be constructed around ‘fear’, in which women acknowledge fear to be constructed through its application of consequence: “we still go out now and get scared about putting something in our mouth”, a fear that remains across the life course. Expectations and experiences therefore acknowledge clear negotiations of gendered authority from older men within the family structure (see Shaw, 2000), but also gender roles, positions and behaviours. Yet, fear and consequence are recalled with positive negotiations and constructions of longing for order, in which memories of these experiences are recalled with “those days are gone”.

**Gender Roles and Kinship Authorities**

Another key focus of the discussion was the collective acknowledgement of appropriate gender roles. Dwyer (1999, p.140) terms this as “‘appropriate’ femininities” recognised through constructions of “‘appropriate’ behaviours” (ibid). Women’s behaviours and understandings of women’s roles were visibly negotiated within the discussion across a gender hierarchy that negotiates age and authority over “‘appropriate’ behaviours” (ibid.).

*Nafhesa:* Were you scared of your brothers?  
*Shamim:* No, all the brothers were the same. Just scared of our chacha.  
*Begum:* There was more from chachai and thia, than the brothers, it wasn’t as much with them.  
*Shamim:* And, yet, my cousins (chacha’s sons) were scared of my dad!  
*Nafhesa:* Was your dad the eldest?
Shamim: Yes, my dad was the oldest out of them all. And they were scared of him and we were scared of our chacha.

Begum: Even then the mothers would say “your chacha is coming, your thia is coming” to scare us […]

The discussion illustrates that women made a number of references to the men in the family (uncles and nephews) who influence authority across an age hierarchy. Women therefore articulated and situated Dwyer’s suggestion of “‘appropriate’ femininities” (ibid) within the extended household through clear boundaries, spaces and roles that are acceptable for women (see Kandiyoti, 1988; 2000). However, boundaries and authority are also identified with its application to male members of the family too, such as brothers, who were also located with appropriate behaviours and positions within the family hierarchy. Yet, again, positions of authority are, however, strongly related to “fear”\(^\text{18}\), which is mentioned by both Begum and Shamim, reifying the relationship of emotion to past memories.

Older SAM women also spoke about gender roles and authority as idealised structures constructed to sustain family unity and prevent conflict. Begum’s earlier quote in which she reminisces: “Everyone was together. No paanja, patija used to fight, not any chacha, thia”. Women’s roles, in this extract are clearly negotiated within the authority of male relatives and, significantly, paternal family members, in which age constructs an authoritarian role regardless of the hierarchical relationship (e.g. father’s brother, uncle, cousin, and nephew). For example, an older uncle, thia, or elder cousin is referred to with increased izzat, respect, as a consequence of authority and their ability to exert influence over appropriate gender roles. In the extract Shamim shares how her cousin\(^\text{19}\) encouraged gendered behaviours but also social expectations by exerting authority through the fear of consequence imposed on both Shamim and her aunt. The role of men within the extended family structure (e.g. uncles, cousins) therefore highlights gendered paradigms in which men, in the discussion, are seen to regulate older SAM women’s early life course behaviours. Hirsh and Smith (2002, p.6) suggest:

[… ] gender, along with race and class, marks identities in specific ways and provides a means by which cultural memory is located within a specific context.

---

\(^{18}\) Fear – translated as ‘daar’ literally means fear, but is contextual. So it can be taken to literally mean fear “minno daar lagda” “I am sacred” or “mai daar di si” “I was scared”.

\(^{19}\) Thia’s son.
Older SAM women’s recollections of social expectations are marked with consequence; however, these structures of consequence are constructed within a positive milieu shaping and influencing appropriate gender and age identities (Pessar and Mahler, 2003). Shamim reifies the positive construction by adding: “now we don’t listen to our parents. Our blood relatives. Even our chachai”, recognising changing ideologies as a result of social change. Emotions attached to the extended family represent what the family structure signifies, through older members of the family reinforcing moral behaviours. Acknowledgment of these structures within the collective group further reifies in-group belonging and a “double consciousness” (Agnew, 2005, p.14) but additionally makes visible meanings attached to the third space (Bhabha, 1990).

Memories of the life course distinguish life course positions through an awareness of the self but also in relation to others with whom women share past and current experiences (Fivush and Nelson, 2004). The understandings around the extended family structure and behaviours and expectations within it locate a space in which women, within a collective setting, can identify and negotiate cultural identity through the shared understandings of structures. Shamim says:

*We weren’t as scared from our dad. He wouldn’t even get angry at us. He loved us. It was just natural we were scared of them.*

Shamim shares her loving relationship with her father and the way in which his authority was revered. Within the father/daughter relationship positive emotion is reinforced with fear: “it was just natural we were scared of them”, recognising respect within the age hierarchy and her father’s life course position. Fear is therefore constructed within appropriate role expectations and positive emotions, relating love with obedience and respect. Older SAM women’s constructs of the life course and understandings around sociocultural and shared expectations challenge traditional notions of patriarchal authority as negative and construct the male authoritarian figure as positive and valuable. Older SAM women in the discussion further shared understandings of the differences between the paternal and maternal household:

*Shamim: Our mamai20, used to live in the other acre, two or three further down. They say that the love and lifestyle within the maternal home is different. Our*
nannie\textsuperscript{21} and daddi\textsuperscript{22} had one lifestyle (mohal). My daddi and nanna\textsuperscript{23} both were brother and sister.

In the quote Shamim describes her lifestyle within the maternal home with compassion and “love”. The maternal home, within the discussion, is constructed with affection and extends outside of the parents’ home into the mother’s family home (“mamai”\textsuperscript{24}). The emotion of affection is related to a less authoritarian lifestyle that recognises hierarchal differences within the maternal and paternal family household. However, the extract draws attention to the complex boundaries of the maternal and paternal families, in which kinship ties rooted across generations (grandparents and parents) blur the relationships between paternal and maternal family bonds through the sharing of “one lifestyle”; recognising Shaw’s (2000) reference to families choosing and preferring kinship marriages due to similarities of lifestyles within the household. The women’s discussion continues to stress appropriate roles within the home and kinship authority:

\textbf{Shamim:} We would look first and then in our house, we had a really big house with a gate and there was a small one too to pass through. If a holy man (Fikr) would come outside, if he was there for two or three minutes our chacha would pull the world apart, what is he doing here? He would say, give him charity, khair, goodwill and then tell him to go. Why is he here? And why are you standing like that?

\textbf{Begum:} Yes.

\textbf{Shamim:} They would do that, our chacha.

\textbf{Nazia:} They had that for some, even in the door, if something was lying there you couldn’t get it.

\textbf{Shamim:} We had huge gates at our door. And it would be to see if someone is coming or not. And my chacha would say why is he standing here? Hurry up and tell him to go.

\textbf{Nazia:} Yes, well give them what they want quickly and then go.

\textbf{Shamim:} it used to be like that […]

\textbf{Nafhesa:} Were you scared of you maternal or paternal uncles more?

\textbf{Shamim:} We were scared from my chacha the most. If we were sat there and would see that chacha-ji\textsuperscript{25} was coming then we would get our deputtai\textsuperscript{26} and quickly put them on and sit down.

\textbf{Nafhesa:} So why was that?

\textbf{Shamim:} Just we did.

\textbf{Nazia:} The elders wouldn’t leave it like that, now its common place. But in Pakistan if there is a naked (nangi)\textsuperscript{27} daughter or sister sat there. Now even there they’re not bothered about it. It used to be in those days.

\textsuperscript{21}Maternal grandmother.
\textsuperscript{22}Paternal grandmother.
\textsuperscript{23}Maternal grandfather.
\textsuperscript{24}Maternal uncles – mother’s brothers. This will also be in the context of their families.
\textsuperscript{25}Ji-attachment makes this formal/polite version of the relationship stating respect.
\textsuperscript{26}Traditional scarf.
\textsuperscript{27}Used here in reference to covering the head.
Shamim: If a chacha was coming you would put you deputta on your head (talking over)
Nazia: If someone’s coming you would get your scarf on your head.
Nafhesa: Were you scared of you mum, chachi\textsuperscript{28}, mami\textsuperscript{29}? 
Begum: Of course.
Shamim: Our chacha was the one. No not them. We were friends with our chichi.
Nazia: [laughs] Auntie says she was friends with her auntie.
Shamim: Yes, well if we wanted to ask our chachi anything we could. If we wanted her to rub oil on our head because I wanted to speak (laughs) we would do things like that. We would know that if any of us would speak loudly or tell a tale (shikait), it would reach our chacha.

A key theme in the discussion highlights that the women’s motivations behind “‘appropriate’ femininities” (Dwyer, 1999, p.140) were related to behaviours that they “just [...] did”, recognising internalised behaviours that are visibly negotiated within the domestic sphere but, additionally, within the public spaces within the domestic home (see Shaw, 2000). The domestic space is, however, constructed as a space in which femininities could be challenged and even ‘moral’ individuals such as a “Fikr\textsuperscript{30} threatened vulnerabilities with regard to cultural understandings of honour and respect (izzat), in which clear identities and space are created within the inside (domestic home) and outside (external space).

There are additional spaces that position authority, which Nazia recognises as the “elders” who were able to encourage expectations and behaviours. Women therefore constructed the position of men and authority within idealised expectations and understandings of “‘appropriate’ gender roles” (Dwyer, 1999, p.140), contesting discourse around the suggestion that patriarchal experiences recalled in the present “continually reproduce women in a subordinate position” (Ebert, 1988, p.19). Nazia deliberates “even they’re not bothered”, recognising changing patriarchal structures but also discontinuity within the hierarchy that encouraged ‘appropriate’ behaviours. Moreover, the exertion of social expectations articulate the positive value and acceptance of patriarchal systems, which are negotiated with “‘appropriate’ femininities” (Dwyer, 1999, p.140) at particular times.

\textsuperscript{28} Younger paternal uncle’s wife.
\textsuperscript{29} Maternal uncle’s wife.
\textsuperscript{30} Holy man.
Shamim: If we were sat there and would see that chacha-ji was coming then we would get our deputta\(^{31}\) and quickly put them on and sit down.

The quote highlights how the action of displaying “‘appropriate’ femininities” (Dwyer, 1999, p.140) in the collective space is symbolic in its gesture of displaying respectful behaviours through obedience and fulfilling gendered expectations. The physical display of the deputta, however, is not just through the meanings of women’s dress but the concept of purdah, which is translated as segregation (see Chapter Two). Purdah plays a key role in acceptable and non-acceptable gendered behaviours through the physical act of not mixing with the opposite gender but also through retaining modesty. Shaw (2000, p.163) suggests that the observance of purdah, literally translated as “curtain”, is a system of segregation that maintains respectable gendered behaviour. Therefore, women who observe purdah through modest behaviours as well as dress are symbolised as respectable and chaste and heighten family and social izzat (honour, respect).

However, the articulation of these behaviours additionally highlights the spaces in which the deputta is metaphorical in its symbolism to the curtain and allows men to negotiate themselves in the spaces women occupy. Moreover, Kandiyoti’s (1988, p.274) suggestion of women strategizing within a set of “patriarchal bargains” is evident through the act of modesty and gesture of the scarf reifying “‘appropriate’ femininities” (Dwyer, 1999, p.140) but, additionally, highlights that it allows men to enter women’s domains. Both Nazia and Shamim share their active agency in performing purdah and putting on the deputta when male relatives entered the room. Nazia further admits that these behaviours are not exclusive to family members but “if anyone’s coming”\(^{32}\). There are, therefore, implications of women acting out obedience through feminine behaviours to accommodate men and their arrival within these spaces. Khan (1999) clarifies that inside the home the scarf is used more as a symbolic gesture of respect and modesty in front of the elder or male relative, but outside the home, gendered expectations are shaped around a fuller covering of the body. The symbolic nature of covering the head is again identified by Mahmood’s (2005, p.158 [emphasis original]) suggestion of “critical markers of piety”. Mahmood argues:

---

\(^{31}\) Traditional scarf (plural).

\(^{32}\) Reference to any male, family or non-family member.
While wearing the veil serves at first as a means to tutor oneself in the attribute of shyness, it is also simultaneously integral to the practice of shyness: one cannot simply discard the veil once modest deportment has been acquired, because the veil itself is what defines that deportment. (2005, p.158)

Mahmood highlights the relationship between meaning and practice and, further, the way in which the “veil” (ibid) itself is the cultural interpretation of modesty. Women’s shared discussions around the deputta, therefore, recognise and co-construct understandings of the third space (Bhabha, 1990) in which expectation and actions of the scarf are symbolised through the meanings behind the gesture of feminine behaviours.

**Matriarchy and its Relationship with Patriarchy**

Nazia’s shared belief around the disapproval of the “nangi daughter or sister” for not performing expectations of putting on the deputta over the head highlights how gendered behaviours and expectations are articulated by older women through their own expectations of gender (see also Zubair et al., 2012). Gendered behaviours are therefore recognised by the actions and performances of feminine behaviours across generations that construct third space understandings (Bhabha, 1990) and meanings behind the extent to which one has internalised cultural understandings of modesty and shyness. Nazia’s construction of implying ‘nakedness’ by not wearing the scarf is strong in its disapproval for not displaying idealised notions of femininity through its construction of nakedness and shameful behaviours. The strength of the emotion attached to the scarf is further recognised in Nazia’s reference to past expectations in Pakistan and the negative feeling around changing structures and hierarchies, saying “even they’re not bothered about it”. In the collective space and discussion it is evident, then, that women continue to exert traditional ideas around sociocultural gendered expectations from the homeland (Pakistan and India) within the UK (Shaw, 2000) that create and sustain past homeland ideologies. The construction of homeland ideals (re)create and form notions of identity and belonging through values and beliefs around tradition with romanticised images of gendered behaviours (Hedetoff and Hjort, 2002), even by those who are being gendered. Agnew’s (2005) suggestion of the diaspora constructed through the (re)creation of cultures rather than a notion of return is visible through older SAM women’s understandings of cultural scripts around acceptable behaviours.
Social change across generations and family expectations further construct scripts around shared understandings and the emotions attached to past experiences, in which women shared past and present understandings:

**Begum:** Even the mothers would say ‘your chacha is coming, your thia is coming’ to scare us. Now the mothers, if the chacha shouts they say ‘why have you shouted at our son/daughter?’ or ‘you told my son off?’ ‘You told my daughter off’.

**Nazia:** Yes

**Naheed:** Yes, listen to this.

**Begum:** Well that’s how it is even with their own brothers.

**Shamim:** Oh, how I wish those days would come back.

**Begum:** That’s it.

**Shamim:** If those times come back.

**Begum:** Yes.

In the discussion, Begum highlights how “even the mothers” would express expectations of authority and the behaviours attached to them. Therefore, the value and meaning of hierarchal positions articulated by older SAM women in the collective space is shared to be reinforced by both men and women in the hierarchy. Expectations of gendered roles are additionally reified by older SAM women who retell their own experiences of social change through a lack of appreciation around hierarchal positions and state in current contexts:

**Now the mothers, if the chacha shouts they say why have you shouted at our son/daughter? Or you told my son off? You told my daughter off.**

Jones, Jackson and Rhys-Jones (2014, p.2) suggest that the importance of an “emotion or feeling is the biographically specific meaning ascribed to that change”. Ebert (1988) explains that this creates an acceptable social system and practice based on a past period of time. The understanding of actions and consequences from family members recognises that early life course experiences are constructed through older members of the family asserting control through disciplinary styles (Magai, Distel and Liker, 1995), acknowledging subjective behaviours within a collective framework. However, Vespa (2009, p.381) proposes that “shifts in gender ideologies may take years to manifest”. Older SAM women in this discussion shared experiences that are still evidently reproducing sociocultural gender ideologies by suggesting there is an acceptable distribution of authority across male kinship relations, who are recalled as having an adequate source of control over female behaviour. The value thus added to
patriarchal structures for older SAM women is complex and highlights how women themselves negotiate and (re)create patriarchal ideals and appropriate gender roles (Dwyer, 1999).

The reproduction of past and present experiences in the collective group recognises how older SAM women view their current life (Kenny, 1999). Past and present comparisons (see Halbwachs, 1992) create an obligation not only to cultural behaviours and expectations but also to the collective obligation to the idealised memory of an acceptable cultural identity across here, the UK, and there, the homeland. Shamim reflects on her own past/present position by sharing "I wish those days would come back". Assmann (1995) states that reflections are a result of cultural memory are reflexive and can be “self-reflexive” (1995, p.132) in as far as they draw “[...] on itself to explain, distinguish, reinterpret, criticize, censure, control, surpass and receive hypoleptically” (ibid). Cultural memory is therefore employed by individuals to reflect the “self-image of the group through a preoccupation with its own social system” (ibid). Older SAM women’s cultural memory within this discussion and in the collective group setting recognises a shared sense of belonging that is negotiated through the acknowledgement of visible hierarchical structures created around authority that is exerted by both male and female members of the family. Shamim shares:

*Naheesa*: Were you scared of your mum or chachi?
*Nazia*: Of course.
*Shamim*: Our chacha was the one. Not them. We were friends with our chachi.
*Nazia*: [Laughs] Auntie says she was friends with her auntie.
*Shamim*: If we wanted to tell our chachi anything we could. If we wanted her to rub oil on our head (…). We would do things like that. We would know that if any of us would speak loudly or tell a tale (shikait) it would reach our chacha.
*Nazia*: That’s right.

Nazia and Shamim talk about women’s roles within the family hierarchy and their different experiences of authority within the home. When I asked whether the women were scared of their mum or aunt in order to cover information about gendered domains, Nazia instantly states “of course”. However, Shamim challenges this understanding by asserting she was “friends” with her auntie and not scared of “them”, contesting Nazia’s understanding of authority. Both Nazia and Shamim put forth their own experiences of personal relationships, however, subjective memories can challenge cultural understandings through individual experiences. The discursive
exchange in which collective memories take place therefore allows individuals to challenge or agree to particular systems within the cultural system. Assmann (1995, p.131) suggests:

“[...] the relation to a normative self-image of the group engenders a clear system of values and differentiations in importance which structure the cultural supply of knowledge.”

The collective group additionally recognises a setting for the sharing and understanding of cultural values and beliefs. However, the group space and discursive context recognise Benhabib’s (2006) suggestion that “contest within cultures and among cultures occurs” (2006, p.384, [emphasis original]) as this is to allow individuals within the group to “‘make sense’ [...] ‘enable’ their members to go on in a meaningful way” (ibid). Within the collective setting expectations, beliefs and values, therefore, can serve to construct cultural understandings but can additionally challenge or contest what is understood to be appropriate or not through the women’s own expectations and experiences. An example of this is Shamim’s relationship with her aunt which disrupts normative understandings of the age hierarchy with friendship, but is then visibly reconstructed through the production an acceptable relationship in which the aunts’ is identified as being able to influence consequence and accountability from the men within the family; reproducing the “normative self-image of the group” (Assmann, 1995, p.131) through hierarchies of power. However, what is shared and to whom also recognises a “‘web of narratives’” (Benhabib, 2006, p.384) in which memories, experiences, understandings and meanings are co-constructed, acknowledged or contested within the context and influence of others, and thus Spradley’s (1979, p.461) suggestion of the “speech event” is valuable in recognised the construction and reconstruction of cultural identities.

Kinship Ties and Family Obligations
Within the collective group discussion there is evidence of an obligation to an overarching cultural identity and shared sense of belonging expressed by older SAM women. Obligations are presented as “socially constructed benchmarks of positioning oneself” (Kenny, 1999, p.422) through understandings of expectations within the family hierarchy and the particular roles attached to them. The extent to which women challenge these understanding or adhere to them is questionable but cultural ideologies mark belongings to the homeland, within the UK, through local transnational
ties (Fox and Jones, 2013) but additionally through subjective belonging within the family unit:

Sadia: They married in the family so the lifestyle would stay the same. If they had been different…

Shamim: My chachi married her pupos, the other chachi married into my mamo’s family

Begum: That’s right, that’s how it used to be.

Shamim: Inside, inside. Even now my brother has married into the chacha’s family and my sister has married into her masi’s33 family and my chacha’s daughter has married into their pupo’s, masi’s. It’s just like that, the way we marry. Very rarely do we marry out. Just now.

Sadia: Never gone out of the family.

Shamim: Just now, because there aren’t any proposals within.

Begum: There aren’t, that’s right.

Nazia: The ones that are, even they move outside.

Begum: Yes.

Sadia: They don’t either.

Shamim: They don’t do them.

Begum: That’s what we’ve said. Even the masi’s and pupos that there say ‘what my son/daughter is like this. You’re like that’.

Shamim: No, they still do. My sister did and arrangement it in my younger brother’s family they did the engagement.

Sadia: All families are a little different.

Begum: There is a little. They do.

Shamim: The parents have left this world. And we have brothers and sisters and if we do an arrangement (rishtha) then we’ll keep meeting. If we don’t then we won’t and then that will be the end of meetings…

Sadia: And the ones who are older, from before they think of the things like that. The young ones don’t think like that.

Begum: They don’t think that. That’s what I mean, they think that’s my brother and we’ll keep seeing each other…

Shamim: Actually, it’s the ones that are here that don’t agree.

[ Talking over each other]

Sadia: But it shouldn’t be like that, that this is my dad’s relative or it’s my mum’s relative. That they are our relatives and that’s where you should marry. That we would like it there, and that’s where they get married.

Shamim: no the talk is not about that. Like my sister asked for the marriage in her brother’s family for the youngest. They didn’t do it. They were saying that they couldn’t do the youngest marriage until they do the oldest. They married the older one out and then they got the girls married. I phoned her and said look the older boys are now married and now get the younger one married […].

The shared understanding within the discussion of marrying kin, within the collective setting, “so the lifestyle would stay the same”, echoes Shaw’s (2000) explanation of preferring kinship through the familiarity of lifestyle and family behaviours before

33 Older maternal aunt (mother’s sister).
marriage. Shamim articulates that the practice of kinship marriage extends across generations and family relationships, which she negotiates as “inside, inside”. The recognition of “inside” recognises an in-group identity as smaller than the wider ethnic group, in which family belonging constructs an additional boundary within which individuals can be included or othered. Again, there are challenges within the discussion around kinship marriage that highlight that not everyone maintains the practice of kinship marriage, “even the ones that are, even they move outside”. Changes recognise how culture and cultural ideologies are not fixed but fluid and contextual and further the ways in which subjective understandings are shared and practised.

Older SAM women in the group setting, through the sharing of experiences, draw attention to both time and place in which there is recognition around the way in which understandings and values have changed. Sadia suggests, “it is the ones who are older who think like this”, stating generational values and preferences around kinship marriage. Shamim adds “it’s the ones that are here that don’t agree”, highlighting generational difference to those who are “here” in the UK, against “the ones who are older”. This, however, may include those who are older and in the UK and not just necessarily an older generation in the homeland. The discussion further draws attention to “it used to be that way”, highlighting past understandings of kinship marriage, which are demarcated as good or preferable through the continuation of bonds and maintaining kinship ties.

The discussion around kinship ties adds to idealised cultural constructions of the family structure, which is negotiated by older SAM women with the sentiment attached to the memory of kinship practices. Shamim shares “the parents have left this world […] then we’ll keep meeting […] if we don’t they won’t”. This statement constructs an emotional attachment to the practice of kinship marriages but additionally creates and constructs understandings of the self to others in which parental obligation and responsibility reinforce the motivations behind continuing traditional practices (see Finch and Mason, 1990). Shamim further adds:

[…] my sister asked for the marriage in her brother’s family for the youngest. They didn’t do it. They were saying that they couldn’t do the youngest marriage until they do the oldest.
Hasan (2009) recognises that notions of obligation in continuing parental practices is a means of maintaining obligations to the extended family but expectations within families and age hierarchies can challenge these understandings. Moreover, motivations behind kinship ties aim to regulate and maintain the family structure (Benhabib, 2002) that identifies ideas of citizenship and homeland politics (Vertovec, 2001):

_Shamim_: I said then you won’t lose you comings and goings. I’m too far, there or not. We are the same [...] who knows when you’ll be able to go and how. The ones who are close at least meet them.

_Naheed_: Yes, the ones that are here make dua\(^{34}\) that they are happy.

_Begum_: That’s right the brothers and sisters. Well they’re just going to learn for themselves.

_Shamim_: May Allah bless her, she listened to me. She did the engagement.

_Begum_: Well, may Allah do good.

_Shamim_: Now both brothers and sisters can go to each other’s houses. There is a relationship there. If the rishta\(^{35}\) didn’t happen then when would they go to the village?

_Begum_: That’s right. Marry the son where the daughter is married and that’s where they will go.

_Shamim_: It’s for their happiness and they can go. It’s really nice. I said thank you for listening to me.

_Begum_: Yes.

_Naheed_: They listened?

_Nazia_: If it happens.

_Begum_: That’s right.

Shamim states her role in negotiating kinship marriage, which suggests an authentic identity within the group setting through her recognition of sustaining understanding and knowledge of kinship marriage. Even though knowledge of kinship marriage is associated by Shamim with a positive construct of not losing the “comings and goings”, Werbner (2004, p.896) suggests these motivations are a result of “pressures from back home”. However, Shamim challenges this notion, in which pressures from the UK are recognised to promote kinship ties, and she finishes with “I thanked them for listening to me”, highlighting gratefulness to the recognition of her loyal identity. Kinship marriages are, therefore, constructed with approval through the recognition that they sustain family ties and, further, are constructed with admiration, which is negotiated within a religious context of blessings and esteem. However, religion is

\(^{34}\) Muslim prayer.

\(^{35}\) Relationship/proposal.
interpreted in this quote with cultural ideologies and expectations. Benhabib (2006) suggests culture is created through its binaries because, as individuals, we are always evaluating the “‘good’, and ‘bad’, ‘holy’ and ‘profane’, ‘pure’ and ‘impure’” (2006, p.384). Shamim’s statements of being “too far” and “who knows when you’ll be able to go” retells an emotional attachment in which the guilt of the distance from the homeland constructs an additional binary of obligation and responsibility.

Bauböck (2002, p.134) suggests “multiple citizenship” behaviours and ideologies are “the most visible illustration of overlapping membership in political communities”. Shamim’s added suggestion “then we’ll keep meeting” within the group setting reifies beliefs and ideals around transnational bonds and recognises how women hope to maintain ties and contact with family members through the act of kinship ties and marriage. Notions around maintaining ties and family relationships across the homeland and in the UK ensures the reproduction of culture and identity across transnational locations but also future generations in which diaspora continues to be constructed and reconstructed as an internalised part of cultural identity and living structures (Werbner, 2004). However, within the collective group, the challenges of maintaining romanticized notions of loyalty around “if it happens” suggest an awareness of changing social and cultural expectations.

Despite older SAM women’s notions of belonging, constructed around shared preference for kinship ties, the awareness of social change across generations prompts questions around identity and belonging within micro cultural scripts. There are clearly disagreements between older SAM women within the discussion around the extended family, living arrangements and kinship marriages. Fox and Jones (2013) argue that fixed notions of ethnicity remove subjective experiences and homogenise communities as having shared and similar beliefs. Older SAM women’s acknowledgment within the collective group of difference in experiences and expressed ideologies highlights subjective beliefs around cultural norms that are susceptible to change. Holland et al. (2003) add that improvisation is a significant means of renovating identities and explain:

Agency lies in the improvisations that people create in response to particular situations, mediated by these senses and sensitivities. They opportunistically use whatever is at hand to affect their position in the cultural game in the experience of which they have formed these sets of dispositions. (2003, p.279)
Older SAM women, in the discussion, take on the role of having agency to recreate past beliefs through their current position in the UK, in which they promote the continuation of traditions from the homeland, which are idealised and romanticized as ‘good’ moral behaviours. Hall (1990) suggests experience can only “be healed when these forgotten connections are once more put into place” (1990, p.225), providing motivation for migrants to continue cultural values and beliefs in the place of migration. Women, then, within the collective group setting clearly construct cultural capital within the negotiation of values and belief systems in which a heightened South Asian identity is constructed through maintaining traditional practices. DasGupta (1989, p.5) refers to actions and performance of cultural traditions as measures of “cultural purity” that are motivated by maintaining traditional practices.

The Construction of the South Asian Migrant (SAM) Woman

(Re)Negotiating the Homeland: Fear and Consequence

There were, however, some aspects of migration that women were initially reluctant to share:

*Nafhesa:* Can you tell me what it was like for you when you came?

*Shamim:* No I can’t tell you anymore, don’t ask me anymore. Don’t ask me.

As Spradley (1979) suggest ethnographic questions allow an ethnographer to find out what it means, and in this case it is the meaning of migration which is being explored through Shamim’s reluctance to talk about the experience of migration, which is reminiscent of Ahmed’s (2002) poem:

You ask me about that country whose details now escape me,
I don’t remember its geography, nothing of its history,
And should I visit it in memory,
It would be as a past lover,
After years, for a night, no longer restless with passion, with no fear of regret,
I have reached that age when one visits the heart merely as a courtesy. (cited in Agnew, 2005, p.16)

Current later life positions pose the question, why is migration still a question older SAM women are asked about? Time, memory and experience emphasise the complexity of identity and belonging, which is challenged when older SAM women are presented with the question of migration experiences, echoing Ahmed’s appreciation
of trying to recall a “country whose details now escape me” (ibid), that exists but is difficult to recall.

Shamim expresses a reluctance to voice her early migration experiences but, additionally, positions her reluctance to being questioned about the experience with “don’t ask me anymore”. Memories evidently enable Shamim to make a connection between the past and present but, also, due to the emotion attached to remembering life altering events (see Wray, 2012). Shamim’s rejection of early migration experiences, within the context of the research, and the collective group setting recognises emotions attached to migration as a significant experience through the emotions attached to the construction of a migrant identity. Lim (n.d), cited in Agnew (2005, p.13) writes:

The historical fact of foreign birth, once it is in your hands, can be used for all kinds of purposes [...] this knowledge of your origin allows you to deny me entry into your society on your terms, brands me as exotic, freezes me into geographical memory.

As Shamim articulates the desire and request of not wanting to share her migration experience is resonant of Lim’s suggestion of potential othering through the recognition of migration and how the information may be interpreted. As the questions around migration continued, Shamim began to share early migration and settlement experiences through cues such as shared experiences which were visibly present as Spradley’s (1979, p.461) “speech event”:

**Sadia:** My husband would get up in the morning at 8am and go to work and come back in the evening at 5pm. I would say to my mum the house is new, the people are new everything is new. You didn't know anything when you first came and couldn't go anywhere. How difficult was that. It was too much. It was really hard. Husband wasn't bothered, he was at work and he would just come and go. So how could your heart be at peace? Tell me that? You're heart just couldn't be at peace.

**Shamim:** When we first came the meter, electricity man came and he was knocking on the door saying “hello, hello” and opened the door [laughs] whether there was someone in or not and I saw someone come in. They used to scare you a lot then as well. That they might do something. What if he comes in? They would scare you [...] not to open the door and to have a look. That they might hurt you, like that. He was saying “hello” and I quickly closed the door [laughs]

**Begum:** You would be scared.

**Sadia:** And you couldn't phone in those days.

**Shamim:** They didn't have phones then.

**Sadia:** [...] at first, the first two years, I'm telling my story. I found it really difficult when we first came. You didn't know anyone.
**Begum:** You didn’t know anyone.
**Shamim:** And it would take months for a letter to reach there.
**Sadia:** They would promise to get right back. It would take four hours for them to come and go. We would get dinner ready and phone them and get it ready and it would be like let’s go now let’s go. There wouldn’t even be time to have a bath.

Shamim’s sharing was clearly prompted within this “speech event” (ibid) as a result of cues and prompts initiated by Sadia. Remembering in this extract is therefore seen to be prompted by the sharing of familiar experiences in which Sadia’s sharing of post-migration difficulties are constructed as an act of coming to terms with traumatic events (Kenny, 1999), but also operates to cement and construct a shared migrant identity within the context of a social group setting. Zerbuval (1996) suggests the family is the first point in which “mnemonic memories” are constructed as a consequence of “mnemonic communities” (1996, p.286). The collective group (re)creates the ‘family’ and constructs the safe environment of a mnemonic community in which remembering can occur. Therefore, notions of belonging within mnemonic communities represent a shared historical experience that draws out meaningful cultural codes (Hall, 1990). The women’s discussion around early migration reflects similar experiences around the challenges and unfamiliarity of a new place, positions within a family identity (daughter/mother, wife/husband) and emotions attached to the difficulties of “refashioning the self” (Mukherjee, 1992, p.11) in a the new place of migration.

Sadia highlights the lack of support during early migration due to being removed from the extended family network. Sadia attaches emotion to her negotiation around how she dealt with early migration and recognises there was little support from her husband and thus she shared her difficulties with her mother who was living in the place of origin. This negotiation of finding or “fashioning” (Mukherjee, 1992, p.11) transnational support contests suggestions of South Asian women playing down or not sharing their difficulties (also see Gill, 2004; Day, 2009) as difficulties were shared but through transnational channels. Two points are, then, raised within Sadia’s experience. Firstly, it challenges typifications of South Asian women’s lack of agency in sharing their concerns/difficulties and secondly, it highlights a migrational context in which support was sought across borders. The recognition of SAM women and older SAM women’s cross-border support has resulted in an oversight in which women are typified within

---

36 With reference to her (Sadia’s) husband.
the context of isolation, due to the lack of visibility of these support networks in their place of migration and settlement, which may present but negotiated differently to networks in their local identity. Here, then, transnational identities are established in order to negotiate and (re)create support in the place of migration (see also Schiller et al., 1992a).

Shamim further articulates her anxieties: “they used to scare you a lot then as well. That they might do something”. The reference to “they” constructs Shamim within a family identity in which “they”, the family, constructs understandings of insiders and outsiders. “They” is also used by Shamim to refer to outsiders: “they might do something”. Insider/outsider understandings are therefore representative of Bhabha’s (1990) third space, in which women share understandings of appropriate spaces and build upon insider/outsider identities. It is important to recognise that these spaces may be shared by women from this generational cohort, from a range of backgrounds and ethnic groups, however, for South Asian women, understandings of what was an appropriate space were recreated and strengthened by a strong belief of consequence from outsiders but, additionally, sociocultural constructs of izzat (honour and respect). Shaw (2000, p.37) argues:

Why should they risk izzat (honour, respect) by exposing their wives and daughters to the influences of a society which does not value purdah and female modesty?

Therefore, the (re)negotiations of women’s position in the place of migration and settlement were being (re)fashioned by the women themselves through finding and creating support systems but also through influences from family members who created the fear of others within the new place of migration. Day (2001) asserts that fear of public spaces negatively impacts on women’s lives and men construct masculine identities by building upon perceptions of women as fearful. Wilson (2006, p.13) further suggests that “this is honour, which is closely linked to prestige, reputation and male ego”, highlighting and recognising the complex dynamics around and within subjective, familial and sociocultural negotiations of women’s ‘place’ in the new place of migration.

37 ‘They’ is a formal version of ‘him/her/family’ – signifies politeness and respect. Older women did not refer to their husbands or families by their names, but used the formal version of “they” or the relationship – mama, chacha, thia (see Glossary of terms).
The understanding of past experiences and the construction of others in a past period of time within the discussion seeks to serve a purpose of facilitating homeland identities and (re)creating sociocultural understandings and expectations in the UK. Begum states “you would be scared” but also adds “you didn’t know anyone”, drawing attention to anxieties at the point of early migration. Anxieties intensified due to women being removed from extended and large family and social networks, which Sadia shares: “I’m telling my story. I found it really difficult when we first came”, evidently affecting notions of wellbeing. Family is a key theme identified within this discursive setting, in which women negotiate their identities, sociocultural understandings and life course positions around and within the family. Ahmad et al. (2005) recognised, for South Asian women after early immigration, “stress inducing factors” (2005, p.113) included losing social support, “mechanistic lifestyle” (ibid) and food and climate change.

Furthermore, Ahmad et al. (2004) reminds us that women who share a higher agreement with patriarchal social norms are less likely to recognise and voice difficulties. Sadia does share within the group about her concerns with her mother; however, some women did experience rigid gender roles, marriage obligations, expectations of not voicing concerns and limited support and knowledge (see Ahmad, Driver, McNally and Stewart, 2009). The perceptions of roles, responsibilities and expectations, combined with the experience of migration and the unfamiliarity of a new place, heighten challenges post-migration within this generational cohort. However, distress is clearly identified during early migration experiences through the recalling of early settlement and acculturation experiences and refashioning and renegotiating the self within transnational understandings and positions. Therefore, Ramji’s (2003) suggestion of a combination rather than a clash of cultures is visibly achieved through (re)negotiations across the initial ‘clash’ of cultures and understandings post-migration, in which cultures did ‘clash’ and evidently produced stress inducing factors through the loss of networks and lack of familiarity with everything that was “new”.
Constructing the Apna\textsuperscript{38} (Ours): Identity and Race

Older SAM women in the collective group shared differences of \textit{them} and \textit{us} during early migration experiences and recalled the construction of the “\textit{apna}” which served to state recognition to someone who was “\textit{ours}” and had a shared ethnic, cultural or racial identity. Zebrowitz, Bronstad and Lee (2007) suggest that the familiarity of racial feature contributes to in-group favouritism but also constructs cultural stereotyping and assumptions about shared or different understandings. These understandings of the “\textit{apna}” move across the life course but are positioned through the removal of earlier stress and anxieties of being alone:

\textbf{Nazia:} That’s right those times were different.
\textbf{Shamim:} In those days there were very few families. Very little. You couldn’t even go out properly.
\textbf{Nazia:} You didn’t even know who was who. If they were apnai.\textsuperscript{39}
\textbf{Shamim:} There were a few shops and that was it.
\textbf{Nazia:} Now, thank God, its common place.
\textbf{Shamim:} There were small, small families then.
\textbf{Sadia:} In those days just seeing that people were apnai we would get happy. That we’ve seen one of ours. You couldn’t even see any of our shops there was nothing. It was just to see someone from our country and they used to say that the women were so scared that they wouldn’t even go out. If someone could speak our language or knowing someone. Look at this, you live in a joint family and you come into a strange country, you don’t know their language or anyone. Where can you go? What is there? How difficult will that be? And I’m just telling my side of when I came. I used to cry so much. I didn’t know anyone.
\textbf{Nazia:} We just came. Where have we come?

The construction of the “\textit{apna}” (ours) enabled the women to increase quality of life through a positive shared identity. Women negotiated the construction of a local community identity in which “\textit{apnai}” are constructed within the contexts of both racial and cultural insiders. There is a clear recognition within the group of the differences before and now, due to the “\textit{small families}”, and Nazia says, “\textit{You didn’t even know who was who. If they were apnai}”, distinguishing the difficulties of recognising cultural differences as a result of the “\textit{small families}”. However, current life course positions show the women held positive emotions around the ease of living within the community “\textit{There were a few shops and that was it}” and “\textit{now, thank God, its common place}”. The latter reference is with regard to the shops and appropriate foods, which Ahmad

\textsuperscript{38} Someone with a shared ethnic/cultural/racial group; a community insider defined; definition is context dependent.

\textsuperscript{39} Shared ethnicity and race (plural).
et al. (2005) recognise as one of the causes of stress inducing factors. Sadia further explains that “just seeing that people were apnai we would get happy. That we’ve seen one of ours”. Zebrowitz et al.’s (2007) suggestion that the familiarity of race contributes to in-group favouritism recognises that racial similarities construct insiderness and belonging during early migration experiences. Later migration memories are therefore constructed by older SAM women with positive emotion, in which to “see someone from our country” breeds familiarity in a “strange country”.

Othering is not solely an external feature of the women’s migrant identity in which women experienced othering, but also identified othering as an internal feature of identity that serves to construct and establish in-group identity and belonging. The meanings behind in-group identities highlight a racial/cultural identity and additionally recognise a hierarchal identity in which the change from a “joint family” structure to being isolated is highlighted by Sadia who says “I used to cry so much”. Older SAM women locating themselves with a migrant position in the collective group setting reinforces cultural identities with claims of belonging to a shared past homeland that makes the transnational experience and identity visible (Fox and Jones, 2013). However, the migrant position, by seeing others from “our country”, retells of a new migrant position in the UK through longings attached to a past homeland and recreating attachments through seeking in-group others. Halbwachs (1992, p.47) puts forth:

We preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated. But precisely because these memories are repetitions, because they are successively engaged in different systems of notions, at different periods in our lives, they have lost the form and appearance they once had [...] their antiquity cannot be established by their form or appearance but only by the fact that they still show the effaced vestiges of old characters.

Collective identity is thus reclaimed and recreated in order to maintain ‘old characters’ and past life course positions that construct belonging and further stability in current life positions. Older SAM women continued to talk about the early experience of migration and their roles within the home:

Nafhesa: So what did you do when you saw other Pakistanis and Indians?
Shamim: We never went looking for them. We never went out of the house […] the children went to school and then you made friends. That’s what happened.
**Nazia:** They started coming more.

**Sadia:** When I first came my house was opposite a junior school and there used to be English classes there and I used to go there. I had a young son then. We would take our books and go and read there. My time passed like that. These baji’s 40 time was different, they came before me.

**Shamim:** I went out. I came out and I didn’t know who lives where and even now.

**Sadia:** In those days when these baji’s came they didn’t have school classes then, they weren’t educated or anything then. I came later. So this is right at the beginning. So when the school was opposite your house, when it was the husband’s dinnertime you would come home and get the dinner ready and then after that you would go back again. I thought I would be able to speak some and it would be a bit of a change.

**Shamim:** We used to play Ludo. There was my pupo, everyone would go to work and the children would go to school and we would sit and play Ludo all day.

**Nafhesa:** All day?

**Nazia:** Not all day.

**Shamim:** We would sit and play Ludo.

**Sadia:** No, it would be an hour or two, it goes like that.

**Nafhesa:** We’re you scared of going out?

**Sadia:** Yes, lots.

**Nazia:** You see it’s a foreign country.

**Shamim:** You don’t know the language, we don’t know what they are like, what the lifestyle (mohal) was like.

There are several complex themes identified in the discussion that relate to time, age, life course positions (e.g. being a wife, mother or niece), in-group and out-group locations and gender roles within a male or female-headed household. The discussion focuses on a period of time after migration in which identities and understandings of cultural ideologies are (re)negotiated within life course positions.

The overall theme therefore highlights how women negotiate life course positions outside and inside the home. Both Shamim and Sadia talk about going “out”. Shamim negotiates the outside space as something unfamiliar with “we never went out”, yet Shamim and Sadia relate ‘going out’ with motherhood and the space of the school. The school is constructed within the binary of an acceptable space within the boundaries of acceptable and ‘good’ behaviour (see Laurie, 1999). Both Sadia and Shamim additionally share their contrasting household structures; Sadia’s is very much a male-headed household, in which she constructs her life course position.
around the role of her husband. Ebert’s (1988) suggestion that women’s roles are constructed to complement men is, however, contended by Shamim’s household in which her aunt and their ‘playfulness’ in the household recognised a more female orientated domain. Gendered identities and roles are distinguished by Vertovec’s (2001, p.573) suggestion that “people conceive themselves and are characterised by others”, recognising the different ways in which individuals (re)negotiate various identities within the context of others.

In-group and out-group relations are also recognised within the discussion and are identified within the cultural context of izzat (respect) (see Chapter Two). Sadia recognises an age hierarchy that is used to negotiate respect but, additionally, difference. First, Sadia’s reference to Shamim as “baji” (sister) actions a visible display of respect as a result of Shamim being older in age. This act is reminiscent of Handa’s (2003) suggestion of the auntie/uncle syndrome, in which there is a need to refer to someone from the same cultural group as a member of family and thus display and perform their cultural identity. Sadia’s reference to Shamim recognises the closeness of age, with the reference of sister, but nevertheless constructs difference through a generational position. The term “baji” (sister) produces in-group and out-group constructions and “these bajis” who are again positioned within a generational identity through “these bajis’s time was different”.

MacKinnon’s (2007) recognition of similarities and differences is clearly negotiated within this discussion. The shared experience of the “foreign country” is constructed through romanticised visions of difference due to age, time and status. Sadia takes on the authority to share “they weren’t educated or anything then”, stipulating third space (Bhabha, 1990) meanings behind status. Caste was not mentioned in the discussions but shared third space understandings recognise sociocultural meanings attached to age, education and status, in which the lack of education is often related to lower status, living in the village or earlier experiences of marriage (see Chapter Two). This prompt by Sadia also assumes adhering to acceptable behaviours, which is challenged by Shamim who states she had the freedom to play “all day”. The understandings of women’s roles and expectations of having the freedom to ‘play all day’ contest Sadia’s experiences; she clearly negotiated herself within the discussion with a younger age identity and negotiated her difference with “they weren’t educated”.
Sadia’s experience constructs idealised, sociocultural understandings of conforming to her life course position as a mother and wife, structured around her husband and children. The differences within experience therefore highlight that even within a generational and status context there are subjectivities that contest general understandings of experiences across life course positions. Furthermore, there are clear negotiations within the group of male and female headed households (Laurie, 1999), in which the male patriarchal household displays conservative gender role expectations and the female a more relaxed setting. Within this context, then, do display and share negotiations and understandings around a gendered identity.

Then and Now: Past/Present Discourse
Throughout the group interview older SAM women’s recollections of past experiences highlighted negotiations within the present:

Begum: But in those days the mohal was good.
Shamim: You would be scared.
Begum: There was no fear. Even if you were alone you could go out and walk until midnight and after, it was in the day you were scared.
Shamim: You would be scared yourself.
Begum: Now it’s really scary.
Nazia: Now there are burglaries.
Begum: You can’t even leave your door open people will come in.
Naheed: It’s apnai who get the gorai41 to do the burglaries. Apnai. The ones who are born and raised here.
Shamim: The thing is that there isn’t any work anymore, so what are they to do? If they don’t steal, what else will they do? There is little work.
Naheed: Sometimes they annoy you on purpose.
Begum: A lot.
Naheed: The ones whose homes it has happened to, then that’s how isn’t it.

Older SAM women discussed idealised versions of a past period of time. Begum states, “There was no fear. Even if you were alone you could go out”, “those days the mohal was good” in comparison to “Now it’s really scary”. The past/present discourse, in the group discussion, highlights the way in which difficulties during early migration are recalled within images of a safe environment, despite the unfamiliarity of their new home. The key theme in the past/present discourse highlighted fear as a key theme across the group interview. In early migration experiences fear is structured through

41 Literally translated as white. This is a racial construction used in reference to the host society (British White population). This construction is used with its literal translation to identify others and should be understood in the context in which it is used.
the unfamiliarity of the “foreign country”. In later life and current experiences women construct fear around social change and the behaviours of apnai (our own). There is, then, an evident shift across the life course in which early experiences create anxieties associated with out-group others and, in later and current life course positions, fear is associated with in-group members. Fear is further co-constructed and validated within the discussion by women’s own personal anxieties, which are shared and co-constructed with other group members within the conversation.

There is also recognition of older SAM women’s understandings of a fractured community (Box, Hale and Andrews, 1988) that recognises “apnai” as committing or motivating the crimes. There is, therefore, a clear in-group/out-group construct of the apnai who are committing the crime as different to the women who are narrating these experiences, as “the ones who are born and raised here”. The fracture or break in collective identity is made visible and shared by older SAM women by actively identifying a shared group but differentiating the group by generation and birthplace. This recognition highlights older women’s expectations and understandings of acceptable behaviours through generational and homeland identities but, additionally, acceptable behaviours within the culture, which is acknowledged with change across time and place. This position in the life course therefore acknowledges that older SAM women are aware of changes within their geographical location and are thus not so far removed from social issues as perceived within typifications of the older SAM woman.

The women in the group continue to share stories of burglaries within their own community, reinforcing constructions of fear and behaviour but also empathy with shared communities:

*Begum*: There is a house, it’s our neighbour’s pupo’s daughter. Came to her house two months ago. Five of them at twelve at night.
*Nazia*: What can you do?
*Begum*: They were breaking the door and she was phoning Pakistan I think and she said to her daughter “your dad’s come home early from work” and she said “I don’t know mum, open the door”. She said I’m on the phone, have a look who it is. She just peeped through the window and said “mum don’t open the door, there’s five of them stood there”.
*Nazia*: **Lai**

---

42 Punjabi phrase – look at that or see that; or to say ‘well, look at that’.
**Begum:** They started making noise [...] and the younger boys came, from the other side they broke the lock. From this side three or four of them were pushing and from the other side they pushed. What can you do?

**Begum:** [...] eventually they pushed it and got inside [...] they got whatever they could lay their hands on [...]  
**Naheed:** Do we know them?  
**Sadia:** Near the lights.  
**Naheed:** Oh, we know them.  
**Nazia:** They weren’t our people were they? (Reference to the burglars) Were they apnai?

Women in this discussion share their awareness of current issues through the knowledge of local crimes in the area. Moreover, there is a shared empathy if the victims are known to the women and particularly if they are “apnai”. Familiarity then visibly breeds emotion and heightens the experiences that are shared within the collective group as more significant and relevant to the women who are sharing the stories. Shamim further adds:

*The thing is that there isn’t any work anymore, so what are they to do? If they don’t steal, what else will they do?*

Shamim’s compassion restates in-group favouritism (Zebrowitz et al., 2007) and collective identity by blaming behaviours onto the wider economic system in her statement “There is little work”. There is, therefore, again recognition of community issues, this time expressing understandings on a national scale. The issues raised recognise older SAM women’s understandings of the changes within the local community but additionally they share their concerns on a national level, recognising a national local identity, with concerns that are made visible through current later life positions.

**Conclusion**

During the ethnography women themselves requested the ethnographic interview to take place in which Spradley’s (1979) suggestion that every culture can be identified by the type of talking that takes place was identified. This was significant in the way in which women themselves encouraged the group discussion to take place with myself as a researcher. Significantly, women in the ethnographic interview co-constructed an overall shared group memory, which negotiated and voiced a collective life course experience from early childhood experiences through migration to current later life. There was additionally a constant past/present comparison across the group discussion, in which women negotiated and compared past/present identities.
throughout, through similarities and differences between and within experiences. The family and the context of women's lives shaped around others within the family, social structure and hierarchy, significantly featured in this analysis as a macro theme, which was unchallenged by the women in the study. However, sociocultural understandings are not fixed and subjective experiences were often contested within micro scripts around the extended family structure, positions of authority, gender roles influenced by male and female headed households and kinship ties and marriages. Older SAM women, in this discursive setting, negotiated subjective identities within the collective group by articulating and challenging earlier life course positions themed around the family and household and shared understandings of fear and consequence.

There were significant themes and shared understandings expressed around the hierarchal family structure and relationships that highlighted a dominant context of a conservative, patriarchal age hierarchy in which life course experiences are negotiated. However, even within the patriarchal hierarchy older SAM women identified that there are complex and varying types of authority that are negotiated within the context of maternal and paternal family members. Women, therefore, visibly (re)negotiate and co-construct several identities within the group setting, which seek to negotiate and sustain quality of life within these contexts. Additionally, the collective group recognised the ways in which women themselves value past experiences and structures of authority, which are recreated in the UK through the binaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours through women's own internalised opinions. The group setting and interaction further allows idealised and romanticised beliefs around culture to be challenged or acknowledged but, additionally, serves to sway and influence individuals back to collective understandings, recreating authoritarian ideologies and social norms within their local community. As a result, the multiplicity of contextualised ethnic identities (Nazroo, 1998) identified during analysis include negotiations around; family, transnational, homeland, insider/outsider-in-group/out-group, racial/cultural, structural, gendered, generational and age, local, national and past/present identities.

Moreover, later life memory within the collective setting was visibly recalled with emotion through shared experiences. Fear featured as a strong emotion that continued across the discussion and was recalled with reinforcers such as consequence or positive sociocultural structures such as izzat (honour and respect).
Fear and consequence was, therefore, a significant theme and binary constructed by older SAM women in the group within transnational divides of obligation and responsibility that reinforced fear and consequence across the life course but also across borders. Fear, therefore, is not an isolated emotion but was used by women to negotiate and recreate quality of life through refashioning (Mukherjee, 1992) and recreating the self in the ‘foreign country’.

Furthermore, women’s shared experiences of the life course within the collective group setting draw attention to the way in which older SAM women’s early migration difficulties, due to being removed from the family structure and the unfamiliarity of the “new place”, significantly impacted on quality of life during this period in the life course. Women did visibly negotiate and identify a ‘loyal’ homeland identity in which shared understandings around maintaining transnational kinship ties through marriage and the preference of an extended family structure highlighted how older SAM women try to maintain an authentic past identity by continuing to perform and justify particular behaviours. Women’s desire to perform an authentic or loyal cultural identity is visibly marked within the binaries of the ‘good’ and ‘bad’, ‘holy’ and ‘profane’ and ‘pure’ and ‘impure’ (Benhabib, 2006) but, additionally, the women’s own cultural responsibility and obligations to perform and demonstrate cultural loyalty.

However, collective experiences recognise how women negotiated post-migration experiences in a three stage structure through a) renegotiating the self in the new place of migration during early migration, b) establishing and (re)creating a local cultural community post-migration and c) (re)negotiating the self and community into a local/national context in current later life. The experience of migration therefore recognises transnational (Zontini, 2015) and transcultural (Torres, 2001) motivations for identifying identity within a “double consciousness” (Agnew, 2005, p.14). Within the collective group discussion, “double consciousness” (ibid) construct and prompt both subjective and community memories through shared understandings in the third space (Bhabha, 1990) that are made visible through past and present memories.

Later life positions within a collective group environment, therefore, provides a reflective stance in which past experiences can be negotiated within the context of the present, to challenge or accept particular understandings around past experiences. At times, some experiences were challenged or reinterpreted by the women in the
context of memories recalled from the past and present. However, this again recognises subjective experiences from older SAM women to identify a specific generational age cohort. Memory is, then, identified as being a socially constructed process that contextualises the multiple locations within ethnic identities, and the ways in which these identities are negotiated and recreated across sociocultural understandings and life course positions.
CHAPTER SIX
Older SAM Women: Gender, Age and the Life Course
Introduction

Mine; from the beginning from childhood (bachpan) I will start from there then for the rest of the life what is left. The marriage story is here and my parents’ story is there (Mandeep, 76, Indian Sikh).

Using a life course approach as a critical framework within which older SAM women’s lives can be interpreted, this chapter aims to examine how older SAM women have anticipated and approached old age and ageing experiences across the life course in the UK, utilising thematic readings from 16 life course interviews (see Chapter Four). Furthermore, drawing on Levitt and Glick-Schiller’s (2007, p.595, [emphasis original]) understandings of “ways of being”, this chapter explores the way in which older SAM women have constructed ‘different “voices” (Buitelaar, 2006, p.272) as a result of changing life course positions and gender roles. Buitelaar (2006) suggests that the complex formation of identity is constructed through different voices of the self, which speak from changing “I-positions” (2006, p.259) as a result of the varying degrees of intersections specific to the group the individual belongs to. The authoring of individual experiences will therefore recognise different positions and roles women are located in across the life course, as Mandeep points out, from “childhood (bachpan)” to “the rest of the life”.

This chapter, therefore, explores the life course experiences of older SAM women, focusing on themes of childhood, marriage, migration experiences and later life, drawing attention to sociocultural constructions and understandings of age across gender roles, gendered positions, across the homeland and place of migration and settlement. This chapter aims to move beyond traditional concepts of South Asian patriarchal structures by bringing to light older SAM women’s shared understandings of a complex male and female, hierarchical family and social structure that shapes and guides roles, responsibilities and obligations across the life course (Finch and Mason, 1993). The extracts presented in this chapter focus on past and present experiences, within the local and global positions older SAM women inhabit as a result of older SAM women’s transnational ideals and understandings of identity and belonging (see Zontini, 2015). It will therefore present material within a reflexive position in which older SAM women recall their past experiences of the life course and old age, across the homeland and place of migration and settlement.
This chapter, therefore, aims to address the research questions; to what extent do gender roles, responsibilities and obligations influence quality of life across gendered hierarchies but, additionally, how do gendered roles, responsibilities and obligations affect movement across life course positions? The chapter has three additional overlying themes that locate older SAM women within sociocultural roles across the life course. The first recognises shared ideologies around appropriate behaviours, morality and respect and the second recognises how gendered positions and changing roles impact on positive and negative perceptions of quality of life structured within and across social relationships, the environment and personal values and beliefs. The third theme recognises a strong intergenerational structure, which is created similar to a micro community in which older SAM women have negotiated and experienced age and ageing.

Hierarchies of Age and the Application of Izzat (Honour, Respect)
Older SAM women expressed a shared understanding around sociocultural expectations that construct hierarchal structures aimed to regulate social norms within the context of obligations in the homeland. Cultural expectations from the women recognised that family and social structures are established on a “formal hierarchy” (Shaw, 2000, p.93) determined by roles, gender and age. Aisha explains the foundations of the hierarchal structure:

To respect the elder with izzat and be kind to the younger one and we lived like that in the village (Aisha, 60, Pakistani Muslim).

Aisha, like many of the women in the interviews, stated that cultural expectations of relationships within early socialisations from the homeland are structured and regulated within an ageing hierarchy. Behavioural expectations within these structures clearly stipulate ageing locations of the “elder” and “younger” in which, with increased age, kindness in early life is replaced with an izzat of both honour and respect. Within this generational cohort (60-87 years old) there may be shared understandings of respect across borders, however, third space (Bhabha, 1990) identifications of purdah (segregation) and izzat differentiate sociocultural gendered norms that are motivated and internalised through sociocultural contexts. Mandeep also highlighted a hierarchical family structure based on age within early socialisations from the homeland:
It was that you respected the elders, whether it was your parents, your grandparents, or your mother and father, older brothers and sisters. The younger ones had to listen to them, do what they said [...] and never was it just in our home it was everyone’s in the area. (Mandeep)

Both Aisha and Mandeep identify the strength of intergenerational family relationships that were not isolated behaviours within the family home but, additionally, structured the social environment older SAM women were attached to and embedded within. Age positions therefore replace gender structures in which hierarchical structures denote an ageing authority over gender, “whether it was your parents […] mother and father, older brothers and sisters”. Hierarchies of age influenced behaviours both inside and outside of the family. Rita, again, similar to Aisha and Mandeep shares her experiences of being the “eldest” but also having to show respect to elders outside of the family structure:

Well, I was the eldest, and because I was the first to go to English school they celebrated, the teachers were from England and they had a mother who used to live in the flat upstairs. She would sit in the veranda, and each morning we would have to say “good morning granny” to her, you know, that sort of thing. (Rita, 77, Indian Nepalese)

Rita highlights her own position of being the “eldest” bore privileges but even within this position Rita had an obligation to action respect to her elders. Rita’s quote further puts forth the recognition of a third space understanding (Bhabha, 1990) around these issues between Rita and myself as a researcher, in which she says “you know, that sort of thing”, identifying internalised sociocultural understandings around obligations within the context of respect across the homeland, but also carrying these understandings across into the place of migration and settlement. Nargis further explains motivations behind respect and the elder hierarchy:

Then if the parents stopped you, you couldn’t stop them. (Nargis, 87, Pakistani Muslim)

The comprehension of respect for others is also highlighted by Nargis through the awareness of elder positions, in which if they “stopped you, you couldn’t stop them”. Nargis points out the understanding of authority that elder positions create and, therefore, third space (Bhabha, 1990) meanings behind behaviours of respect to elders. Shared understandings of age structures and hierarchical relationships in the homeland were articulated by women, in which there was a clear expression of internalised structures that shaped women’s behaviours and actions through
implications for quality of life, by adhering to or contesting appropriate behaviours. South Asian sociocultural understandings, however, create an additional dimension in which perceptions are constructed around the self but also in relation to others. This dual dimension of obligation, to the self and others, determines social understandings around behaviours and expectations within the particular society, community group or family that women are attached to in the homeland but are evidently negotiated within the spaces of subjective positions and respect (izzat) as expected behaviours. Older SAM women recognised strong hierarchal structures from the homeland at the time of early socialisations, and a past period of time, to include themes around izzat (honour, respect), gender roles and hierarchal positions and purdah (gender segregation). Izzat is therefore constructed by older SAM women as a form of cultural capital that negotiates behaviour. By adhering to social norms within the “elder”, “younger” structure capital is gained through the ‘good’ and ‘obliging’ child who becomes revered within the hierarchal structure/s, deeming implications for quality of life across life course positions.

**Childhood (Bachpan)**

Women recognised sociocultural understandings, during childhood, as stipulating clear gender roles, spaces and guidelines for men and women that were shaped within the generational context of the time women were ageing within in the homeland, through understandings of purdah (segregation). It must be noted here that purdah is often referred to as a Muslim term and construct (see Chapter Two), however, both Sikh and Muslim women addressed purdah and ideals of segregation. Rita, an Indian Nepalese participant, highlighted slightly different experiences and expectations that challenged the majority of the sample group (14 women out of 16). Challenges were more class related, in which the majority of the sample stated that they had farming backgrounds; Rita identified herself as being “middle-class” and Nazia stated her father was a “business man”. However, both Rita and Nazia shared sociocultural ideologies and life course experiences from the homeland that highlighted and recognised similar expectations of sociocultural obligations and responsibilities within age and gender structures that extended across class boundaries.
For older SAM women, then, gendered roles and identities are constructed from a young age, purely due to the nature that a woman is born a *girl* and women acknowledge gendered roles through Shepard’s (2008, p.1) suggestion:

> It is the sounds we hear as children which shape us.

Childhood experiences shaped women’s experiences within a sociocultural or “religio-cultural milieu” (Singh, 1993, p.2) that differentiates similarities within gendered experiences across geographic, political, economic and generational contexts. Added to third space (Bhabha, 1990) sociocultural beliefs and values around roles, responsibilities and obligations, we are then shaped by those around us (Shepard, 2008). Riffat suggests:

> *Childhood, whatever it is, it’s always a nice time.* (Riffat, 70, Pakistani)

The virtue of childhood appreciates a positive outlook, “*whatever it is*”. Yet, childhood is a significant period in the life course in which early childhood socialisations construct and create understandings and expectations around the ways in which roles should be performed. In this study there was a positive construction of childhood and women largely expressed themes around happy childhood experiences and a good quality of life:

> *My mum used to be at home, and dad, my father worked as a landowner. And together with the people he would get the work done. It was near us. I used to go. With my father, when I was little about 10 or 11 years. He would take me with him to help him a little, if something needed cutting […]* (Riffat)

> *We went to school, we lived in the village. My father was a farmer. We lived in the pindh*43 *but our life was like the city, like the town. It was like our lifestyle, sitting, standing (rena, bena, utna) was like the city, because my mum was really nice. The food they made was nice because we lived with “itafaq” peace. (Aisha)*

> *We all lived together and my three brothers were studying and then there was my oldest brother and he worked on the farm. Until we could understand, we looked at life through them (Mandeep).*

> *It was a very middle class background and we had servants and a little car and mother didn’t work […] but both parents were very kind people, very generous people. That’s what I loved about them […] I think I was lucky because you know at Christmas time my father would bring… brothers didn’t get anything, but I would get a doll or something. (Rita)*

---

43 Punjabi word for village.
Women significantly highlighted early childhood experiences in the context of their family relationships and social standing. These relationships additionally recognised early childhood experiences within a relaxed family household in which girls had the freedom to move between gendered spaces and boundaries. Older SAM women in this study therefore recognised a period in the life course in which childhood experiences were different and in which expectations, responsibilities and obligations to perform gender roles were less significant. However, there are features that mark changing gendered expectations and positions across childhood, due to increasing age. Older women recognised childhood as the first stage in the life course, in which life course positions structured women/girls within the understandings of who is who within the family and social hierarchy but, additionally, marked formal or informal behaviours between family members and internalisations around appropriate behaviours within particular relationships.

*The Daughter: Public and Private Spaces*

Chant and McIlwaine (1998) explain that socialisations from a young age construct gendered identities around how girls should behave within the private sphere of the home and obedience to parents, which signifies good behaviour. Shaw (2006) adds that cultural mechanisms construct gender differences through early socialisations and upbringing, which are significantly informed by notions of purdah⁴⁴ (segregation), specifically, gender segregation. Ideologies of ‘sacrifice’ and obligation are, however, not stated here as a sign of gender inferiority but as a set of rules and customs in which obligation authenticates and negotiates the gendered role of being a woman/girl (Karmi, 1996). Validation of gendered roles internalises acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours in which values and beliefs are reified through the relationships and social roles girls are attached to, in addition to the perceived consequences of not adhering to these roles. Satnam shares:

*Look at the beginning the girl is at the parent’s house. Look how much she has done then. How much sacrifice. There is that. You have to go here and there. Back in the day it used to be like that* (Satnam, 72, Indian Sikh).

⁴⁴ See also Chapter Two.
Satnam’s quote recognises how gendered expectations of the girl are significantly associated with “sacrifice”. However, the obligation of “sacrifice” is constructed alongside the gendered role of the “girl”, constituting and constructing two distinct elements of the girl’s identity, her gender and her obligation to kin. However, from an early age, sociocultural ideologies construct the daughter’s role in the parental home as temporary, as are the obligations attached to it. Women highlighted early understandings of a ‘temporary status’ within the parental home as a daughter, which was strengthened and reinforced by family. Satnam explains:

[…] they used to say the sooner the girls get married and go to their own house the better. It was the thinking of the older people. (Satnam)

Aisha also describes how understandings around the temporary position within the family home are shaped by early expectations and understandings of gendered behaviours:

You are going to go to a stranger’s home. A stranger’s home is going to your in-laws. Then we would think what does that mean? A stranger’s home girls go to. So you should learn everything because when you go to another home get married even if you don’t do it, if you can’t do it there, it can be done. That’s why you’re taught because when you need to do it then you can do it. Then you don’t have any difficulty. (Aisha)

Aisha explains how perceptions of domestic skills indicate domestic capital in which skills can be utilised to benefit women, as “then you don’t have any difficulty”. It additionally suggests negotiations around Kandiyoti’s (1988; 2000) suggestion of “patriarchal bargains” (1988, p.274), in which women are able to negotiate their position and roles within the home. Cultural practices and behaviours therefore create a prescribed system of social norms and appropriate spaces for men and women. Shankar et al. (2013) posit that these guidelines become internalised features of behaviours through social recommendations and expectations. Perceptions of adhering to or contesting cultural and value systems thus influence the way in which internalised understandings affect the way in which quality of life is affected, through subjective understandings around performing “appropriate’ femininities” (Dwyer, 1999, p.140).

*Purdah* and Gendered Spaces
Teachings and structuring ideologies around *purdah* (segregation) and *sharam* (modesty, shyness) were shared understandings expressed by women in the study.
Aisha shares her experiences of purdah (segregation), which aimed to sustain and create izzat through behaviours and expectations exerted within the parental home:

*Our dad never let us go out because we did purdah (segregation). Muslim girls weren't allowed out. We had workers, men working on the farm and my daddy, my brother and we kept workers, men so that's why. We had fruit trees mango farms and men worked there. If at any time we wanted to go then just for one day to see the farm then my dad would say to the workers you need to go to the other hectare the girls are coming.* (Aisha)

Aisha recognises clear gendered spaces with “our dad never let us go out”. However, Aisha additionally states that if girls wanted to ‘go out’ appropriate spaces would be created outside the home through the clearing of male spaces. Aisha further recognises her father’s authority in the external space outside the home, in which the “farm” is constructed as a male domain. Moreover, Aisha acknowledges that these spaces were not entirely forbidden but open to negotiations, in which purdah allowed girls to enter male spaces through negotiating acceptable spaces and boundaries. However, women were allowed to ‘go out’ and experiences of taking food to the farm were common:

*What we did was outside, making food and drink, doing the housework, kitchen work, cooking and then we would take it outside to the farmers. However many were working outside, we would take food for everyone, two times. In the morning at 8am, and then at 1pm dinnertime.* (Mandeep)

Mandeep’s reference to “what we did outside” refers to the courtyard space within the home, which was created as a domestic space for women (see Shaw, 2000). Pulsipher (2013) suggests that the structure of the house, in which a house-yard setting is created, provides a system of shelter from which women were able to move freely around the outside space whilst maintaining gendered expectations. The domestic space was, therefore, not solely restricted to an inside space but extended across into the courtyard, which was constructed as the women’s space within the home. The construction of gendered spaces and boundaries around acceptable gender roles and mixing suggest:

[…] patriarchal bargains exert a powerful influence in the shaping of women’s gendered subjectivity and determine the nature of gender ideology in different contexts. (Kandiyoti, 1988, p.274)
Mandeep shares her experiences of gendered spaces and contexts in the way in which “patriarchal bargains” (ibid) and gendered spaces could be additionally negotiated and disrupted by older women:

It was for women, girls mainly that the boys are watching from the rooftops and they are mocking so you wouldn’t be able to go, very rare. You couldn’t go alone, go with someone older even if it was an older woman, aunt, or your sister-in-law, sister even then or go with your older brother. (Mandeep)

Mandeep states that the relationship between gender and age adds to negotiations of gendered spaces, in which older women are able to disrupt gendered boundaries. Mandeep explains understandings around the protection of honour:

It was like if anyone said something here or there to you then that would be an insult to us. So we would keep covered with our scarves, wouldn’t take it off our heads [...] we weren’t allowed to. We couldn’t even put kajol\(^{45}\) on. Couldn’t do anything (Mandeep).

Wilson (2006) argues that the image of a ‘good’ woman’s behaviour conforms to patriarchal rules and the ‘bad’ woman shows herself as “sexually loose” (2006, p.11) or available through deviating from patriarchal constructs. Shaw (2000, p.163) further suggests that “respectable female behaviour is linked with the observance of purdah”. Purdah, therefore, is constructed through dress but also through the extent to which displaying femininity, such as wearing makeup, was disapproved of, implying suggestions around regulating and guarding femininities (Khan, 1999; Shaw 2000) through the control of particular feminine behaviours.

Religious socialisations further create a religious identity and heightened social standing. Religious izzat (respect) de-sexualises the girl/woman through religious knowledge and dress but also allows the gendered female to again disrupt gendered spaces. Nazia describes:

Just you weren’t allowed to go, the lifestyle was like that, you know. You would go with purdah. If you were going to go out, you know. If you got married and you went out then you would go with your purdah, burkah (religious dress). (Nazia)

Nazia recognises gender limits but also identifies autonomy within the limits and shares “you would go with your purdah, burkah”. Women suggested that the

\(^{45}\) Also referred to as surma is a traditional South Asian eye makeup made up of a substance similar to charcoal. It is also referred to in other parts of the world as khol.
desexualisation of the feminine body through modest garments allowed women to negotiate and disrupt gendered spaces. Nargis highlights her internalisations of purdah:

> What is the meaning of why? We did segregation. I only took the burka off now [...] I used to wear it here, and Pakistan. (Nargis)

Nargis emphasises that expectations of dress were part of ‘life’ which constructed feminine identities, as “We did segregation”. Purdah is additionally identified as a behaviour that continued after migration, therefore symbolising the interconnectedness of purdah and homeland identities and behaviours. However, Nargis further recognises that “I only took off the burka now”, highlighting a changed identity and the decreased significance of the “burka” in later life.

**Gender and Education**

Nazia and Abida draw attention to the lack of education facilities in the area but, additionally, how gender expectations prevented the pursuit of education:

> We were at home then, they didn't have any schools when we were born [...] there was a school a long way away and they used to go there to school [in reference to her brothers] [...] I had a paternal uncle who would get angry he didn’t like the girls going out, they would say to stay at home. Do work at home, there was a sewing machine at home and sometimes we would do that. Do housework. Read namaaz (prayer). (Nazia)

> Then in our village we didn’t have a school, nor did I go to school, nor did I learn to read. If you have a year in school, you will go, but I didn’t and didn’t learn anything. (Abida, 74, Pakistani)

The importance of recognising that older SAM women may not have attended school, firstly through the lack of facilities and then through expectations of gender roles that repressed motivations for the pursuit of education outside of the home, is significant in recognising that older SAM women potentially did not have any understanding or knowledge around basic education such as reading and writing. Therefore, implications and motivations for learning language post-migration suggest women’s difficulties and challenges through a lack of basic education and unfamiliarity with institutions, as Abida suggests, “if you have a year in school you will go”. Mandeep further explains why there was a lack of agency in women contesting education:

> Nafhesa: Did you ever ask why you can’t go to school?
> Mandeep: We never asked anything like that. We couldn’t ask things like that in those times [...] even if they listened to you or not. And it was never just there
in our home, it was everyone’s in the area. People doing what they wanted was very rare. We didn’t even have it like that, like here you go to town for a stroll, we never did that, we had everything. Our grandmother would bring us things that she would give us to wear, we would wear it. Whatever was made at home to eat we would eat it and getting things from outside, there weren’t things like that then. What else were we to do?

Women highlight education in the context of the past period of time and how the elders’ decision would not be questioned. Moreover, there were also issues around respect in which women would not even think of questioning particular aspects, such as education, clothes and food. The significance of not questioning decisions is overlaid with awareness of internalised consequence of deviating from acceptable and unacceptable behaviours of respect (izzat). Mandeep highlights that the lifestyle and understandings extended across “everyone’s in the area” and therefore, behaviours and expectations stemmed across the home, but additionally the local and social spheres women are attached to. There were, however, ways in which women supported each other, as Mandeep states: “our grandmother would bring us things”.

Support was therefore negotiated within women’s spaces by providing for each other (buying clothes), and domestic education through the passing on of skills:

No we were the older sisters, the sister older than me she would come with me and the others would go to school, they were younger [in reference to her brothers] […] parents didn’t send me […] I read the Quran […] I learned how to make the dough, cook the chapattis, how to cook a curry. My mum taught me that […] if someone was making something we would learn from them too. (Yasmin, 70, Pakistani)

There is, then, a clear distinction that women were educated, however this education was domesticity and women learned intricate life skills such as cooking, sewing and religious education from their mothers and other women. Women highlighted that domestic skills for girls were deemed as more valuable and could be used across life course roles, which was recognised by Aisha:

[…] you should learn everything because when you go to another home get married […] then you don’t have any difficulty. (Aisha)

Talbani and Hasanali (2000) argue that gender segregation and limiting girls’ social activities reifies gender roles. However, women stated that they were very much active within their own social domains and gendered spaces. Rita, however, shares a different experience of education that recognised social class positions:
I was the eldest, and because I was the first to go to and English school they celebrated [...] I went to a private school which was English based and the children from there would go to church, or some went to the mosque or the temple and my parents always allowed me to go and just experience other people’s religion and way of life. So that was the basics, which I’m very humble about, very grateful I got such an upbringing. Because it was a very cosmopolitan city. (Rita)

Rita highlights her parents’ position, they “allowed” her to go to school, but additionally recognises privilege, in which she shares being humbled by her experiences and “very grateful I got such an upbringing”. Due to the majority of older SAM women’s experiences of minimum education in early life course experiences, this study recognised women’s hopes of pursuing education through their own children. Aisha says:

I wanted to study and become a doctor. That was my biggest ambition ‘meri sabto bari kwaish’. Then I told my mum and she said ‘when you go to England educate your children and I want to do your marriage now.” (Aisha)

Women shared themes around sacrifice, in which they sacrificed their own hopes and dreams in order to fulfil obligations and responsibilities as the dutiful daughter. Modood (2004) suggests migrant parents prompt their children to internalize high educational ambitions, which contrasts to experiences from the homeland around domestic chores and religious education. Satnam sums up her experience of childhood within the context of education, and the recognition of changing positions in the life course as a result of marriage:

The rest is that we used to go to school and then from school, we went to big school and we have studied a little and then after that I got married when I was 15. (Satnam)

Marriage: A Marker of Age

So now I will tell you the story of my marriage. The story of my childhood has gone. (Mandeep)

Marriage undoubtedly constructs a different “story” for women. Marriage restructured life course positions, roles, responsibilities and expectations from the parental home into the marital home. Almedia (2005) argues that marriage, for South Asian women, is a significant event, which was highlighted by all of the women in this study. Notably, all of the women interviewed had experienced marriage. Women were either married at the time of the study or had been married and were now widowed. Marriage was therefore recognised as a common life course experience for the women in this
research, highlighting a generational ideal for marriage. This is not to say that all older SAM women married but recognises migration patterns with regard to regional context, generation (Ballard, 1982; 1994) and the recruitment sample in this study. Moreover, women’s experiences of marriage identified a significant transition from childhood to marriage, thus introducing marriage as the start of a second age-grade, marked by three dominant themes. Marriage themes included early experiences of marriage; marriage as a result of kinship obligations; and the ‘love’ marriage (Wilson, 1984; Shaw, 2000). Within the context of the experience of marriage, the age of marriage and relationships authorising/surrounding the marriage decision indicated a significant life event and transitional point that shaped the beginnings of adulthood.

**Early Marriage Experiences**

The 1891 Indian Age of Consent Act provoked immense debate around expectations of child-marriage (Heimsath, 1962). Cultural expectations in India at the time identified prevalent rates of early marriage practices. Despite understanding the risks around child marriage, including early widowhood, risks to the child through pregnancy and early expectations of adult behaviours, early marriage practices in South Asia did and do still continue (UNICEF, 2010). The age of marriage for a girl was raised to a minimum age of 12; consummating marriage earlier than this would be illegal but this was further raised by the Sarda Act 1891-1929 to the age of 14 (Heimsath, 1962). However, many women who were interviewed had still experienced early marriage. Some were unable to recall their age at the time of marriage and others identified the age of marriage to have been as young as 12. Additionally, the significance of the experience of marriage was recognised through the emotion attached to the women’s initial reluctance to talk about marriage. Nargis questions:

*No, marriage. The marriage was nothing, leave that. Why do you want to talk about the marriage?* (Nargis)

The impact of the strength of emotion attached to the experience of marriage highlighted a difficult memory through the reluctance to recall the marriage experience but also through the construction of the insignificance of this part in the life course. As Nargis says, “*the marriage was nothing, leave that*”. Further implications for early marriage experiences concern the age of marriage but also the age of husbands. A number of women, like Nargis, identified a considerable age gap, which has
implications for earlier experiences of widowhood and the expectations of adult behaviours:

*I was 12 or 13, he was 20.*  (Nargis)

Added to age differences there was also a theme of not seeing the husband before marriage:

*No I didn’t see him! That’s the story I’m telling you, that it shouldn’t even be that much.*  (Mandeep)

The complications of age and not seeing the husband before marriage highlights complex intergenerational negotiations around marriage decisions and ties that were used as capital to negotiate benefits to the wider family. Abida shares:

*I don’t know about when I got married. I was small and my brother got married in India, Pakistan at my pupo’s house. Then my pupo said do my rishta at the same time to my dad and then they’d do the nikkah. My dad said that I am small, he didn’t want to do it, and she said “no I want to do it now”. So they got the nikkah done and then when I was due to go over I went. The nikkah had been done a long while before, since I was young, I don’t know about it.*  (Abida)

Abida does not recall the age of her marriage, which she refers to as “small”, but draws attention to the conflict the young age of marriage caused between her father and aunt. Abida emphasises how her aunt exerted agency in the marriage decision in order to maintain kinship ties. Women did voice experiences that highlighted patriarchal authorities could be and were challenged by the authority of the matriarch, as a consequence of hierarchies of age over gender. However, despite the early age of marriage negotiations being actively pursued by the women in the family, men did have some decision making influences as Abida highlights: “*when I was due to go over I went. The nikkah had been done a long while before*”.

Family was a key theme that featured significantly in marriage negotiations. Nargis echoed dominant narratives of family, in which her brother played a role in the marriage decision, this time recognising patriarchal positions of authority and Nargis’ absence in the decision to marry:

---

46 Dad’s sister (paternal aunt).
47 *Rishta* is contextually defined and can mean *proposal* or a *relationship*. In this case *rishta* refers to the relationship between two people.
48 *Nikkah* is the Muslim marriage ceremony.
I was young. I was sleeping and they did the marriage ceremony (nikkah) […] it was my brother’s word. My brother. It was his word and they did the marriage ceremony […] I was about 12 years old […] Then we got the burdens. (Nargis)

Gangoli and McCarry (2009) suggest that discourse supporting early marriage may include the rights of parents and communities to construct early marriage as normative through notions of preserving cultural identity. Nargis was evidently, then, an absent agent in the decision and act of marriage, in which marriage was decided and consented to by Nargis’ brother. Nargis further highlights that her experience of marriage was met by “then we got the burdens”, in which new and changing expectations from childhood to marriage constructed changing social roles and expectations, marking altering life course positions structured within adult expectations and responsibilities. Satnam also married at an early age and, like Nargis, also expressed passive agency through an acceptance of her role and the family’s position in arranging the marriage:

I got married when I was 15 […] it was an arranged marriage. My parents did it. I got married […] and then we just did housework there […] we had the kids and then you couldn’t go out and work. Women didn’t go out and work then. And then after that we decided to come here, that’s it. (Satnam)

Early marriage here is identified with a clear construct of expected roles that are negotiated within the trust of the families’ decision for an “arranged marriage”. Mandeep further shares her experiences of an arranged marriage:

No I didn’t see him! That’s the story that I’m telling you that it shouldn’t even be that much what the kids are doing now is ok when they do it themselves, it’s their choice. You shouldn’t push them. Then they said that you don’t have to pay us anything we don’t want anything. So they did it. Then someone like me found out a little bit my sister-in-law told me and I didn’t even say anything to my sister-in-law. In my heart I was saying oh no what is it going to be like there? I don’t even have anyone there. I don’t know what they are going to be like, how they are going to treat me. You have that don’t you. I would just keep thinking like that. (Mandeep)

Earlier life course positions in childhood were structured within obligations to uphold izzat, which does not change in the life stage of marriage but is added to by the responsibilities within the new life course positions within the marital home. Women did express agency in some experiences of marriage and Aisha recognises how she was presented with complete agency in the marriage decision but, in order to maintain autonomy, she actually had little agency:
I was in Pakistan, we were five brothers and four sisters and I was the youngest. I used to study at school. To my mum, my nannie (maternal grandmother) said "your sister is ill in England, because she came to Pakistan and her son passed away, she brought him when he was nine months old and in her grief (sadma) she became really ill. She has sent her son to be married off and the girl will look after her". Then my mum asked me do want you to get married in England in you kalah\(^{49}\) house so will you be able to look after her? (Aisha)

Aisha’s experience highlights that the complex intergenerational age hierarchy in agency and authority is actively exchanged. The maternal grandmother and the mother’s position within the family hierarchy recognises that with increased age there is an ability to actively exert agency (Channa and Channa, 2013) over others within the hierarchy, which is unquestioned due to internalisations of izzat. Ballard (2004) additionally suggests that marriage is used as a resource to regulate domestic affairs, which is evident in Aisha’s experience. For Aisha to maintain appropriate roles and sustain quality of life within the family hierarchy, her active agency in the decision of marriage is (re)negotiated within a passive agency in which she has no real choice. Agentic roles are, therefore, clearly not fixed but interchangeable, in order to sustain and negotiate of quality of life. Shaw (2006, p.214) argues that marriages:

\[\ldots\] represent not blind adherence to tradition, but a negotiated response to the social, cultural and emotional risks entailed in marriage.

Aisha’s awareness of the responsibility in the decision of a rishta (proposal) echoes Shaw’s (2006) suggestion of autonomy and being aware of life course positions and the impact of decisions on these locations. Marriage is therefore constructed as a strategic exchange, in order to reduce stress on the wider family and improve quality of life. However, quality of life is additionally recognised, not just for the women who shared their experiences but in the way in which women’s actions and behaviours impact on the lives of others within their family/social sphere. In Aisha’s experience it is the aunt’s quality of life in the UK that is negotiated as the motivation for marriage, highlighting the complexity of transnational relationships that affect lives across borders. Marriage, therefore, recognises themes around sociocultural reasoning, such as easing stress on family members in the West who are removed from the family structure ‘back home’ (Shaw, 2006). Moreover, traditional notions of pressure from the homeland prompting kinship marriage decisions are idealised through family

---

\(^{49}\) Maternal aunt (mother’s sister).
obligations and support but additionally recognised through passing on these structures and (re)creating support structures transnationally.

Disrupting Education

Gangoli and McCarry (2009) explain that early marriage often results in the inability to continue with education, resulting in loss of confidence and long-term effects on women’s choices and lifestyle. Women recalled the event of marriage with its disruption on their education, highlighting the age of marriage but, additionally, the abrupt change in the life course as a result of marriage. Satnam and Nargis highlight:

*I knew a little not too much, because I was studying and my marriage happened. Then my mother-in-law would say “get her married and we’ll teach her”. So I could do a little here and there. It was alright. That’s it. We had a good large family.* (Satnam)

*Then you had to go. They sent me, I was studying then and they said “we will educate her ourselves”. They never let me go out to anyone’s house.* (Nargis)

*[...] So I started thinking about it that I wanted to study and become a doctor. That was my biggest ambition, (meri sabto bari kwaish). Then I told my mum and she said “when you go to England educate your children and I want to do your marriage now”. We couldn’t say anything, because we respect our mother and father. That’s why, whatever parents decide then you have to accept that.* (Aisha)

Satnam, Nargis and Aisha recall the experience of marriage and the promises of the roles they could continue in the marital home. This was a common theme shared by many of the women, in which education interrupted marriage and perceptions of what it would be like in the marital home were often not realised. For a number of women the theme of marriage disrupting or stopping education was a significant one, in which women shared their internalised understandings that marriage for a woman was more important than or took priority over education and, therefore, they were passive agents in the decision to marry. Shankar et al. (2013) suggest that this is an internalised form of authority, in which expectations oppose experiences.

Women further expressed (re)negotiations of future education with hopes for their children to be educated, idealising aspirations through their children, as Aisha shares: “*she said “when you go to England educate your children”*. Marriage negotiations, therefore, indicate prospects of increased agency in the future, with a new gender role as a mother and prospects of active agency and authority over children but, additionally, recognise negotiations of removing agency from others in order to fulfil
their own desires, again manifesting itself as internalised oppression (Shankar et al., 2013) across intergenerational structures. The dynamics of the internalised hierarchy of izzat (respect) diminishes the ability to exert agency in certain contexts through perceptions of the traditional role of the elder and motivations of performing ‘good’, ‘obliging’ behaviours.

Changing Roles: “I didn’t know anything about anything”

Changing roles after marriage expect behaviours and responsibilities that conform to adulthood within the roles of a wife, daughter-in-law and mother. However, Charger et al. (2010, p.2) argue that the risks of early marriage include “social, economic and health disadvantages” and, therefore, women expressed implications for quality of life during the early period of marriage through an absence of agency, lack of knowledge around expectations of the relationship as a wife but also limited life course experiences. Noor highlights memories around marriage, early widowhood and the impact this had as a young widow and single mother:

*What can I tell you about Pakistan? That is a sad story. Their dad passed away and I had three children the two boys and the girl. She was three and the son was one and the eldest was seven when he died and left us. He went to give the bull some water it was new in the village and first he opened it and started to give it to the boy and I said he is a child don’t give it to him [...] the boy he won’t be able to look after it. God put those words in my mouth and then he grabbed it and gave the house one to the boy and took it to drink water where the water hole is and they fill it for the animals [...] then it got stuck again saying let go of my rope, let go of my rope. If he had he would have survived, but he just hit him once and they say that there were pieces of wood there and they put the water into clay pots, they were bringing them and he’d been hit and was lying there broke his neck and the boy was just behind him and was stood there crying, what was he supposed to do he was a child and then he would speak a little, they were talking to him. Saying son pick me up and they came running and spilt their water, got the bed and when he got home that’s it he didn’t speak. Eyes were red. If he’d just let go of the rope he could have survived but he didn’t it was written, it was written like that’s it from that [...] I had never seen anyone die before. I kept putting water in his mouth and calling him and I kept on giving him heat the coal fire was on I kept wrapping it up he didn’t have any idea that whether I am warm or not he had finished, his body was asleep. And then before he would give a little noise. He would say Noor what are you doing and I would say I’m just warming the fire, he would say you’re going to be working all your life just sit down. He would say that. He would just speak a little and say you’re going to work all your life just sit down next to me on my pillow, all your life you’re going to work sit down. I would sit down again and do the fire and then like that he just went quiet. I started putting some water in and the brother came smoking his pipe and I’m giving him water. It went here and there. Never had I seen anyone die before and I was young, 18 when I had my eldest*
I got married when I was 15. I didn’t know anything about anything. (Noor, age 78, Pakistani)

Noor describes her young age of marriage, becoming a mother and experiencing the death of her husband whilst she still “didn’t know anything about anything”. There was a shared understanding by the women with regard to the lack of experience and the difficulties of dealing with ‘adult’ expectations. However, Noor faced additional challenges in which she became a widow at a young age and had to deal with dissipating support from her in-laws, due to conflict over land (see Agarwal, 2003).

Then after he died, then the land they got from us, took ours and didn’t give us any crop not even the seven for outside took those over too. Took the house ones too, for us we didn’t get any of it. They were happy that he had died. They took hold of everything from us, even the machine for the crop took that out too, took the tractor and all the parts too whatever they could grab hold of they took that [...] they took it all. If I had longer I would tell you all of the story [...] and the crop that we had planted, the corn he had planted, when he had died the one that was growing, took that too took everything. Everything that was planted. And he didn’t even give us the permission for the skin of anything. They took one piece of corn, and he came and said to me they would take the boys to go and sit and eat the corn, and he said to me there was a stick lying there and he grabbed it and hit the boy in the back with it. He was just small. I said that there has been a telling that you are taking the boys and eating the corn and your uncle is saying that you’re taking boys and eating the corn. He said mum I only took one and I brought it home that the little sister is small and she can have some. She was three years old he said she will eat some corn and that man came and beat me on my head with shoes. He hit me on the heads with shoes [crying] they took everything from me. Took my land, my crop never gave me anything [...] they took everything from my home too. (Noor)

Noor’s disruption to her married life, as a result of the death of her husband and the responsibility for her young children, was added to by behaviours from her in-laws, in which disputes around land and inheritance caused the removal of self-sufficiency and income (Agarwal, 2003). Women in this study had highlighted a notion of ‘trust’ that was passed on through the daughter’s marriage from the paternal home into the marital home that negotiated responsibilities to the girl/woman from the in-laws. However, Noor highlights the absence of support from her in-laws, in which the death of her husband disrupted responsibilities from the marital family home, impacting on quality of life for Noor as a young widow and mother but also for her children. Life course positions were highly subjective but significantly structured around the decisions and behaviours of others within the family social structure.
Marrying for ‘Love’

Rita however shares a different experience of marriage, in which she expresses agency and choice of a ‘love marriage’ (Wilson, 1984; Shaw 2000):

I met my husband through one of my best friends in the area and he had just graduated from medical college and was looking for a girlfriend […] and that was the beginning […] family knew a bit and then eventually he went to see my father, but meanwhile someone had told my father that this young man smokes and drinks and so that put him off. Father was a drinker, but he didn’t want his daughter to marry a drinker. But it continued. So we had been going out for two years, or so and he said I’m going to England […] he said “you will have to marry me, otherwise your father will slap you one and send you packing”. So I said, ‘no, I don’t think so’. But he said ‘no I can’t take a risk, my career is at stake’. So in a way it was moral blackmail and I was so much in love, I said ‘yes’. (Rita)

Rita shares her experience of ‘love marriage’ (ibid), which suggests independent agency, but highlights the way in which the men in her life (father and fiancé) held authoritarian roles in the decision making process. Rita expresses her agency for her ‘love marriage’ (Wilson, 1984; Shaw, 2000), nevertheless acknowledges that despite being an active agent against her father’s disapproval, she was in fact a passive agent through her fiancé’s pursuit in the marriage. Rita says “it was moral blackmail and I was so much in love, I said ‘yes’”. Rita expresses her agency in her decision to marry, however agency is negotiated within the context of the men in her life, her father and husband, highlighting internalised understandings around the authority of men. Like many women’s marriage experiences, the interconnectedness of different types of agentic roles is evidently utilised by women in order to negotiate life course positions but also to sustain quality of life. Rita further shares how her decision impacted on her health:

Then one afternoon we eloped. […] because father has a sleep, a siesta, and my best friend, his friends and another relative went to the registry office, got married, went back to my friend’s house and had a nice meal and came back home. I went and told my mother, because soon after that, 10-15 days after that he left to come her to London. I was sad, very sad. So it started showing in my health. I was feverish and so on. So eventually I told my mother, mother was such a gentle soul anyway. She looked like my older sister, you know. […] I said ‘don’t tell anyone’, so she said you better see the doctor…and after 18 months he wrote. My husband wrote to my father, please don’t be harsh on your daughter, she is my wife and my responsibility and I’ll take care of her. So he sulked for days (reference to father). He didn’t talk to me and then he eventually relented and the he said ‘you could have told me and given me a chance for a reception at least’. (Rita)
Rita’s experience recognises the positive implications of a ‘love marriage’ (Wilson, 1984; Shaw 2000) in choosing whom to marry, however this choice still impacted on quality of life due to the reaction of others. Waiting for her husband and keeping the secret of marriage impacted on Rita’s health, in which fear of consequence for her actions was verbalised through “I said ‘don’t tell anyone’”. Rita sought support and advice from her mother, acknowledging a maternal support structure to maintain wellbeing, but life course positions continued to be negotiated within the hierarchies of men, as Rita shares: “My husband wrote to my father, please don’t be harsh on your daughter, she is my wife and my responsibility and I’ll take care of her”. Rita, as did many other women, highlighted a difference between the men and women in her life, in which Shaw (2000) argues that the ideals of relationships are governed by hierarchal structures (see Chapter Two).

Male and female hierarchies in Rita’s quote recognise that women were able to provide support and guidance within hierarchal relationships, yet, men still negotiated women’s life course positions through consequences: “So he sulked for days (reference to father). He didn’t talk to me”. In Rita’s extract there is also a clear understanding of izzat, in which honour within the context of others outside the family home is recognised. Rita highlights that her father’s suggestion “you could have told me and given me a chance for a reception at least” recognises social standing and expectations from others and, therefore, subjective behaviours and experiences are significantly constructed within the context of others (e.g. family and social networks).

Extended Family Structure
Noor in turn highlights her father’s role, authority and responsibility of care within marriage negotiations:

[…] then he wrote a letter saying uncle if you say then I will send for them and not leave them there. They won’t let her settle there. Then he called for us here. My dad said “have a look and think about it they are your children that if you call for them and if you can look after them then that is a good thing, but I am going to look after them as she is my daughter and they are my grandchildren”. (Noor)

Noor shares her experience of her position as a single mother after widowhood still being negotiated within the context of male members of the family, constructing a support structure in which responsibilities towards Noor were negotiated between her father and potential rishta (proposal/relationship). Punam too acknowledges the family
structure and the way in which responsibilities were renegotiated through other older members of the family in their duty of care, in the absence of parents:

*I didn’t have a mum and dad when I was small. Then my brothers and sister-in-laws, relatives decided to get me married and that’s how it was arranged.* (Punam, 60 years old, India Sikh)

Punam highlights the active role in the family’s decision for Punam’s marriage, in which the family has responsibility of siblings in the absence of parents, in which her “brothers and sister-in-laws” negotiated marriage to ensure movement within the family structure through changing roles (e.g. marriage). Women, therefore, expressed their roles within the marital house as more complex than the understanding of simply the relationship between a husband and wife but consisting of an extended family and an intergenerational structure of relationships, in which women had to renegotiate their new roles as a wife, daughter-in-law and sister-in-law. Nargis highlights the marital home:

*There were my brother-in-laws, older, younger. All lived there, there were my sister-in-laws, they all lived there. We taught how to read namaaz in the mosque. Taught how to pray. We were thought of very well. Everyone was good, may Allah grant them a place in heaven, in the house things are said, they thought of us very well and everyone thought good of me too. At night we would sleep at the rooftop and we would move the fans like this take them out again and again [...] the manjai they were so heavy, we would take the mattress off in the morning and at night put them back on for everyone to sleep. Make the roti, do all the work [...] I did it all myself [...] my mother-in-law got me started, she said, ‘girl you look after them, I can’t do it’.* (Nargis)

Getting married means women have to negotiate a new position as a ‘wife’ and additionally, their place within the household. Heimsath’s (1962) suggestion of being socialised in the home of the in-laws is expressed in Nargis’ quote in which she adopted the lifestyle of her marital home through a religious identity but also took on the role of the mother. Nargis shares, “she said ‘girl you look after them, I can’t do it’”.

Cihangir (2012, p.12) posits that “religion, culture, parents and other close relatives” affect honour and, therefore, fulfilling obligations and responsibilities within particular roles heightens prospects of agency and authority in future life course positions. Aisha shares:

---

50 Traditional bed with a wooden bed frame and a knotted rope top which people lie on without a mattress.
I don’t know 17 maybe [...] then I got married and came to England and had a son. I had a son and then my mum had died after. A year later my mum died. Then I said that its now … for eight years I didn’t go back to Pakistan because I was angry […] we all lived together in one house. We were happy. There weren’t any problems. My husband was really nice too he looked after me a lot was kind. Loving mum (mother-in-law) she was kind and loving too dad (father-in-law), loving brothers and sisters (reference to in-laws). We lived together. Mum used to be ill. We helped her, loved each other a lot. Life was going ok. The only thing was that my mum (meri ami) had died. (Aisha)

Marriage highlights renegotiations of where the woman is located after marriage, which indicates duties and obligations within the marital home first and then the parental home. Women, therefore, at a young age, did experience (re)negotiations and expectations around responsibilities, which resulted in trying to sustain quality of life within their new homes by adhering to appropriate life course positions and performing the role of the ‘good’ wife and daughter-in-law. Agency is thus recognised in the form of the diligent agent in which women depict themselves as committed and dedicated to their new roles. However, there were evidently challenges around transnational marriages and the impact on the self, in which both active and passive agency were expressed when women were unable to control some situations. Aisha shares, “[…] my mum died […] for eight years I didn’t go back to Pakistan because I was angry”. The fluid nature of agency thus highlights the way in which women negotiated agency in order to sustain quality of life within their life course position at the time of particular experiences.

The Mother’s Role

Women constructed expectations and the availability of continued family support after marriage with positive implications for quality of life, in which women remain supported across life course positions within the family structure. Noor shares her experiences of early marriage and dealing with experiences such as motherhood through family support:

I got married when I was 15 […] I had my son at 18 and wouldn’t even give him milk. I would say to my parents I can’t give him milk it tickles me take him away from me and my father would tell me off to give him milk and I would say take him away I don’t want to. (Noor)

Many women were young girls at the time of becoming mothers. Noor recalls her naïve approach to motherhood and expectations around observing her new role as a mother were underlined with consequences from her father. Moreover, Noor states the role
her paternal family played in teaching women appropriate behaviours even after marriage, which negotiated understandings around izzat (honor) if roles were not adhered to. The reasoning for gender support therefore realises Didur’s (2000) suggestion that it is based on logic of achieving the goals of “moral pedagogy” (2000, p.54). Noor shares:

*My mum would get some wool and swirl that around in it and squeeze it into the boy’s mouth that’s how she would feed him. Feed him like that. Then in the evening my mum would beg me what will your father say. I said he slapped me and she said ‘he hit you because you are not feeding him his milk, that’s why. All your lives he has never hit you’. He loved us that much, there were only two of us. And in anger he hit me. Child give him some milk. I said I am not going to give him milk in front of people. Inside in the month of June it was so hot I was hiding him under the covers and feeding him. I was feeding him and when he cried I would give him a cloth in his mouth. My mum said ‘oh my, you’re going to suffocate him’ [...] it was like that you didn’t know how to look after them. Everyone lived together, but you didn’t know how to look after a child.*

(Noor)

Older kin or other females, particularly mothers, highlight active agency in the lives of their daughters in educating newly married girls through the passing on of life skills and the support they provided in childcare responsibilities. The mother’s support is constructed to encourage behaviours but consequences from the father are clearly negotiated in order to authenticate appropriate behaviours in the context of preserving parental honour by not being shamed through inappropriate behaviours. Sociocultural expectations of women becoming mothers (Erel, 2011) increase women’s position in the gender hierarchy, allowing mothers to become more autonomous within the domestic sphere through the decision making process with regard to their mothering role but, additionally, knowledge, in which they are able to pass on mothering skills to their own children.

However, Rita shares her experiences of her mother’s role in the parental home, in which her position within the gender hierarchy was clearly evident but she was a passive agent in utilising her own mothering role:

* [...] mother didn’t work. She didn’t even bring us up because when she got married from Nepal she came with her nanny who brought her up, who wasn’t married and she brought all the children up. My mother used to say, ‘I’m too delicate to do rough, hard work’ [...] mother was beautiful.* (Rita)
Class privileges deemed that Rita’s mother’s role was replaced with the “nanny” who “brought the children up”. Rita’s mother and social standing create a gender role in which Rita’s mother is constructed with a “delicate” embodiment of the woman, in which her femininity overrides her duty and role as a mother. This expectation of the role of the mother was significantly different to women who shared socialisations, lifestyles and household on the ‘farm’, which related to the majority of women in this study.

The Mother-in-Law

The role of the mother-in-law provides a space in which the mother-in-law can exert active agency within the limits of their own domain, the marital household. Nargis highlights her mother-in-law’s role after her transition into the role of a wife:

She was really good. Prayed her namaaz (prayer) five times a day [...] she didn’t do any work I would do it for her. I would lay her prayer mat for her, give her the water container [...] She would do her wudhu (ablution) and read her namaaz. Five times a day. She would do no work, but would sit there all day and I would do it for her. (Nargis)

Hierarchical gender structures are identified in Nargis’ narrative, in which her mother-in-law exerts a position of authority that realises Ballard’s (2004, p.3) suggestion that the mother-in-law is able to exercise authority over the “newly married daughter-in-law”. Nargis, however, states an additional level of authority in which religion creates a level of izzat (respect) for the elder, from which moral accountability constructs passive agency for the daughter-in-law, who must oblige in her role. Nargis, however, expresses positive experiences of her mother-in-law despite sharing “she didn’t do any work I would do it for her”, in which there is positive recognition around Nargis’ new role in the marital home. Nargis thus expresses internalised obligations and responsibilities to fulfil her role as a daughter-in-law through constructs of izzat, but additionally value around fulfilling her role as a ‘dutiful’ daughter-in-law. Aisha shares her experiences of her mother-in-law:

I had a son here with me and my mother-in-law was ill, she’d gone into depression and then I had the girls my sister-in-laws, and there was one brother-in-law. (Aisha)

Both Nargis and Aisha highlight active agency in their roles as a diligent daughter-in-law, in which their roles held significant responsibilities and defined positions within the marital home. Aisha, shares how her mother-in-law “was ill” and therefore her
mother-in-law's role was potentially passive, in which Aisha held added responsibilities to her brother and sister-in-laws, which she expresses with “I had the girls”. The role of the daughter-in-law is therefore interlinked with roles and responsibilities passed on from the mother-in-law, in which a daughter-in-law’s life course position renegotiates her with added responsibilities and obligations to and within the marital home. A number of women shared similar experiences in which their roles under the authority of the mother-in-law were renegotiated to either replace the mother-in-law’s domestic duties within the home or structured around domestic obligations to the mother and father-in-law.

Safiya recalls how she never shared her troubles with family in the homeland and her mother-in-law was very much there but passive in her relationship with Safiya:

*In my letters I would just write that it’s really nice here would write lies and things. That my family is really nice and they are really good, that they look after me. My brother did but my sister-in-law and mother-in-law never did that much for me [...] whatever was in my heart, what problem I had, I kept it to myself, never shared it [...] when I would go to get things they would pull their lip out and go and get something themselves and start to eat it. I would be sat there and my friend would be sat there and they didn’t even say, ‘hello’ or would you like something to eat [...] my friend said, ‘how can you live like that?’ I am going to write a letter to Pakistan [...] I said, ‘don’t tell them anything’, there is no need to upset them, whatever is in my fate (kismet) I and getting, and my husband is ok. (Safiya, 72, Pakistani Muslim)*

Safiya highlights how she wrote about a ‘good’ life in the UK, in which she internalised the behaviours she faced from her mother-in-law and sister-in-law and did not share her experiences as she did not want to upset her family back home. Moreover, Safiya shares the way in which maintaining her role as a ‘good’ wife and daughter/daughter-in-law, sustained quality of life with “there is no need to upset them” and potentially herself during her difficult experiences away from the homeland.

*Migration Experiences*

The prospects of migrating to the UK were often idealised with positive experiences and were sometimes aspirations passed down through generations. Nazia shares:

*My dad thought a lot about coming to England. Every year he would say he wanted to go. He really tried to come. At first he saved some money with some friends. He said if he got the visa then he will go, but then he was just there and he wasn’t able to come. (Nazia)*
The experience of marriage was often followed closely by migration but migration, for older SAM women, was not narrated with the construction of dreams of migration but highlighted difficulties and challenges around changing life course positions within the hierarchical and social structure (Ballard, 2004). Safiya says:

*I don’t know if it was a big or little thing. There was no favour in it.* [Laughs].

(Safiya, 72, Pakistani Muslim)

Safiya expresses the challenges of migration, with “there was no favour in it”. The challenges women faced after migration recognised macro and micro renegotiations of life course positions, roles and responsibilities post-migration in which the duality of life course experiences within the context of a childhood spent “there”, within the parental home, and married life “here” in the UK were constantly being evaluated. The concept of *here and there* therefore does not represent a migrant ideology but it creates a relationship between the memory of a place and the ordering of life course experiences (Ahmed, 1999).

(Re)Negotiating Life Course Positions

*Pardes*\(^{51}\) (the foreign land) is sweet, like a meti (sweet) jail. It’s like that […] and like that pardes (foreign) is always pardes (foreign) and desh (homeland) is always the desh (home). (Aisha, 60 years old, Pakistani Muslim)

Aisha’s quote draws attention the duality of ageing experiences with the combination of both the positive and negative metaphor of a “meti (sweet) jail”. Older SAM women faced age and ageing experiences across transnational borders and Ballard explains (1994, p.5):

Desh Pardes has a double meaning, for it can equally well be translated both as “home from home” and as “at home abroad”.

For individuals with South Asian heritage or those who are familiar with the Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati or Bangla language, the terms *Desh* and *Pardes* are significant through their reference to the divides associated with the homeland and the West. Aisha’s reference to the terms highlights the *sweetness* of the affinities in which binaries of *(Par)des* create multiple belongings and ties across the homeland (*Desh*) and the UK (*Pardes*). The terms *Desh* and *Pardes* position critically explore and place

---

\(^{51}\) *Pardes* is used as the most appropriate spelling in this thesis, which varies to Ballard’s (1994) ‘Pardesh’. *Pardes* has been identified as most suited to the participants in the study and their regional dialect of the word *pardes* (foreign).
meaning on how and why older SAM women continue to (re)negotiate homeland identities and ideologies in the Pardes.

Women’s expression of sustaining transnational positions across the family’s social structure implied perceptions of increased quality of life in their new place of settlement. However, as a consequence of strengthening kinship and family ties within the experience of marriage, women were often removed from the structures families wished to strengthen. The breakdown of family and social networks significantly impacted on older SAM women’s quality of life at the time of migration but also continued to impact across the life course to current later life. Punam explains:

*When your family is with you then you have everything. When you family is not with you then you don’t have anything. Then you just get on with it bit by bit. You can’t get any love anywhere. Like the love from your brothers and sisters. Slowly, slowly then you just let it go. That’s all there is everything is ok.* (Punam)

The challenges of re-establishing networks post-migration were dependent on subjective experiences and opportunities around (re)creating new networks in the UK. Punam shares that her difficulties were a consequence of not have family support in the UK, in which you “slowly, slowly then you just let go”. Mandeep also expresses the difficulties of early migration:

*Alone, so then I would sit down comfortably, pull the chair out and keep crying and keep writing a letter. What else was there then, phones you would just write letters and you wouldn’t write that I’m not settled here or I don’t like it here. The gorai\(^{52}\) people were really good. There was an Asian shop nearby and they knew my in-laws from a good while back and they would occasionally come otherwise no. There weren’t even that many of our people. It was really different from now there was a great deal of difference.* (Mandeep)

Mandeep highlights developing a routine within her loneliness and, even though networks were available, Mandeep still felt loneliness during early migration due to feelings around not settling in. Naima also shares her post-migration experiences:

*I didn’t even know it would be like that […] when I came here I really missed them because I had come from a family there and I had to live alone here […] my neighbors were really good. They were Indians so my heart set with them. I’d go and do the housework then go and sit with them. There was a mum, two daughter-in-laws and two daughters. The older lady was really, really good. With the girls she would become a girl and with the women she would become*

---

\(^{52}\) Literally translates as white, is used in reference to English or British White ethnic groups.
A woman. There were a lot of happy times. They were nice days. (Naima, 61, Pakistani Muslim)

Naima highlights how migration changed her position within the family structure by completely removing her from it. However, Naima was able to recreate similar gender structures from the homeland, in which her neighbours lived in an extended family that she was able to become a part of. Naima states the strength of this attachment with “my heart set with them”. Ahmed (1999, p.329) argues:

This reconfiguration does not take place through the heroic act of an individual (migrant), but through the forming of communities that create multiple identifications through the collective acts of remembering […].

Naima’s experience reaffirms Ahmed’s suggestion for forming “communities” (ibid) and Naima’s ability to recreate family structures with a social intergenerational structure of “a mum, two daughter-in-laws and two daughters” significantly improved her quality of life by being able to develop gendered relationships through shared experiences.

Nevertheless, life course positions and gender roles were additionally (re)negotiated post-migration due to the situation women faced. Hafza shared her experience of having an ill husband and the responsibility of caring for her husband and her children but, additionally, negotiating the responsibilities that fell onto her son:

We had said to him study […] he had only been to school here for a year and a half and he would say I want to work, I want to work, dad is poorly, I want to work. And then he kept saying that […] he didn’t go to learn we kept on telling him, but he just said that he wanted to work, dad is ill and I wasn’t to work, the burden of work at the age of 15 […] the poor thing he started to work in a factory and then he learned about cars. There was a man from Lahore and he would fix the cars, and he would go to work in the factory and then go there and stay until 9pm. Then he wouldn’t come home or ear, nor did the man that you have come from work, your mum will be waiting for you, go and eat. Once I was waiting until 9pm. I was getting so angry. There was a stick and I picked it up and put my coat on and I walked to where he worked. It was night and I had a stick in my hand. The girls were laughing at me why have you picked up the stick? I said it’s dark and if I bump into someone I will just knock them out [laughs] they still laugh about it that mum picked up a stick. I had to do it for my safety. When I went he had his overalls on and the man said boy take your overalls off your mum is coming and I heard it too. I said brother take your overalls off too, I said from a distance, take yours off and tell my son to take his off too. I went there and said didn’t you feel the slightest empathy that my son first works in the factory and at home there is arguing saying that the man won’t give him a penny and will make him work. (Hafza, 80, Pakistani Muslim)
Hafza highlights her son’s sense of obligation to the family due to his father’s health, which additionally (re)negotiated her son’s position in the family hierarchy through obligations to kin and responsibilities of care at a young age. However, Hafza shares her own (re)negotiations in which she exerts her own position as the head of the household through challenging her son’s objection to education and confronting her son’s boss with a “stick”. The extract highlights women’s ability to exert agency and authority within their own home. Moreover, the complexity of frustrations for members of the shared community, “man from Lahore” added to frustration and renegotiations of attachments to those whom women viewed as ‘apnai’ (ours). Hafza states her question, “don’t you feel the slightest empathy”. Hafza’s behaviours recognise how women were not necessarily passive agents in early migration experiences, in which subjective positions caused women to challenge their positions but also the role of others.

Furthermore, women clarified negotiations of attachments to the homeland and the UK, through negotiations of identity and belonging:

**Bushra** (60 years, British Muslim): *Pardes (West) is always pardes and desh (homeland) is always the desh (home)*\(^{53}\). That’s why for my children they are British they are from here their homeland is right here, in England. And that’s why I kept the children here on this side so my children are not on two sides and they won’t suffer. They are on one side and that’s why I thought and did what I thought was best.

**Nafhesa**: What is pardes?

**Bushra**: Pardes is, this is your pardes. England is your desh (homeland). My desh is Pakistan. Where you are born and raised that becomes your country. You were born and raised in Valeat (England-west) this is your country. I was born and raised in Pakistan that is my country. I am from here, I am British, I have lived here for forty years and I have love for it. Wherever you stay you will have love for it.

Bushra clearly identifies strong emotional transnational ties to both the homeland and place of migration and echoes Falicov’s (2005, p.399) suggestion:

Because lives and relations are linked across borders, transnationalism offers an attractive, and at times deceiving imagined possibility of living two hearts rather than one divided heart.

Falicov’s suggestion of “two hearts” (ibid) metaphorically describes the emotional attachment migrants place on both nations. Bushra refers to this as “sides” and

---

\(^{53}\) Translation dependent on context.
narrates her choice of bringing up her children on “one side”, acknowledging the challenges of divided commitments. Despite Bushra never fully locating herself within one nation her ideology rings true to Zontini’s (2015) suggestion of transnationalism as a consciousness and this is evident in Bushra’s belief of home, despite the number of years she has been settled in her place of migration. Moreover, Waldinger’s (2006) identification of the various ways in which migrants maintain here-there loyalties is identified, in which the cross border attachments may also be considered via the emotional attachment one places on subjective values and personal ties to the homeland rather than on family commitments.

It could, then, be argued that Bushra is just as committed to the homeland and maintaining cultural identity through emotional attachments to the homeland despite positioning and locating her children with firm ties to their homeland, Bushra’s place of migration and settlement. Falicov (2005, p.402) suggests:

> Family relationships and ethnic identity are not separate experiences, but they interact with and influence each other in adaptive or reactive ways […].

attachments to the country and culture in the children of immigrants are, at least in part, the outcome of either unconscious or purposeful induction of the parents’ part.

Satnam explains:

> We had never thought we would come to England. But it was meant to be and we came. You know whatever the foreign land is like, you have to do that […]. It’s where we live, that’s where it becomes. (Satnam)

**Later Life: Yesterday’s Conversations (Kal dia Galla)**

The emotional attachment to past memories and current positions in later life significantly featured in women’s recollections of life course experiences:

> […] sometimes if I’m sat down then my memories will take me there, if you think about it. The mind goes there. What life was like, how we lived. (Riffat)

Women expressed the way in which experiences and positions in the UK were constructed around past life course experiences, particularly the mothering role, which extended across a significant period of their life course and into later life. Satnam explains:

> I have lived through my children and the time has passed, that’s it. I have raised the kids, they have grown up, they are all married, there is one left, he doesn’t agree. Yet that’s his choice. He is 40 now. He is the eldest. They should know
themselves what to do and not, as long as they are happy, that’s all I’m going to say afterwards. I’ve done my duty. I am happy. I can rest now whenever the end comes it’s alright. That’s it I come and pass my time, go and visit the Gurdwara on a Sunday, you can’t go all the time, but because of health. (Satnam)

The passing of time, through children and fulfilling obligations of raising the children and the children’s marriage, recognises a third stage in the life course, in which women shared the beginnings of this stage in the life course with understandings around “I’ve done my duty”. Obligation and “duty” shape perceptions of positive or negative quality of life, as Satnam expresses: “I have lived through my children” and “I have done my duty”, in which fulfilled obligations in later life allow women to move into new and changing identities.

[…] it’s a good thing that they get a good relationship for marriage within the parent’s lifetime that is a good thing. Then the children’s life is set. (Riffat)

Satnam adds:

I have done my duty. I am happy. I can rest now whenever the end comes it’s alright. (Satnam)

However, Hafza shares her discussions with her daughter:

She is not married […] she is forty years old […] that girl is so busy, I said to her that your whole life will pass you by like that […]. (Hafza)

The lifelong construction of “duty” through fulfilling expectations, roles and responsibilities constructs the way in which later life is viewed and, further, the way in which the quality of later life is perceived. Older SAM women in this study shared the understandings that fulfilling gender roles and completing responsibilities within these roles by fulfilling obligations to kin improved quality of life in later life. However, still having a responsibility towards children who were unmarried, even children who were fully grown adults, women felt they still had responsibilities to fill within their role as a mother. Yet, others were content with their current later life position and Mandeep shares:

Yes, I am alright now. Now life has gone what is there now? It has passed really well. Whatever has gone has been nice. (Mandeep)

The Role of the Grandmother

The role of the grandmother featured significantly in the women’s current later life experiences, which highlighted their values of being a grandmother but also changes
from earlier experiences of the grandmother’s role. Mandeep shared the role of the grandmother and her authority within the household:

Our grandmother would bring us things to wear, we would wear it (Mandeep).

Desai’s (2010, p.690) suggestion that women are regarded as “custodians of family status and caste purity” is highlighted in Mandeep’s quote of her grandmother. However, emerging themes recognised the way in older women did not question the grandmother’s role, yet their own role as a grandmother had changed within understandings of roles and authority. Riffat highlights her role as a grandmother and the differences between her grandchildren:

My son’s daughter when she comes she can’t settle. They prefer there. She won’t sleep. She cries all night. We teach the grandchildren who live with you so many things, stories, kalimah\textsuperscript{54}. I teach them to read and they read with me. When her mum comes, then she starts to cry, then she will start her excuses [nakrai]. With me just now I tell her she is fine, she listens to me. (Riffat)

Choudhry (2001) suggests South Asian elders face insecurities as a result of the way in which members of their families adopt what they see as “alien” (2001, p.376) or differing from traditional values and expectations. Satnam highlights how women renegotiate their ‘grandmother’ roles outside of the family:

I started to teach in the evenings. They had a need. If someone could teach Punjabi. So I went there and then. I got it. I got the chance […] the children would come speak in English. I would say you should speak in Punjabi. You can speak in English at home, at school, but when you’re here speak in Punjabi. It was hard for them, but then the children started to learn and it was ok. (Satnam)

Satnam highlights her role as a teacher of Punjabi with value, in which she says she had the “chance” to share her skill. Satnam highlights the role of the older SAM women not as passive but active, recognising Finch and Mason’s (1993) argument that individuals may hold responsibilities to people outside the family unit. Within these active agentic positions women further construct themselves as the revered agent and as respected due to their knowledge and skills. However, women sometimes challenge the ideals of passing on tradition, in which women recognised social change and the value they placed on religious and cultural teachings in earlier life course stages:

\textsuperscript{54} Muslim prayer.
**Nafhesa:** and what about your children, did you teach them your religion, your culture?

**Satnam:** Not that much. When they were little we used to teach them in the temple, but when they got older then the children get busy and they aren’t that religious, they are not that much. I am a lot more.

Satnam recognises that the value of religion is more meaningful now than it was in earlier life course experience and this was a theme shared by many older women who stated and highlighted the move towards a more religious or spiritual identity in later life rather than a culturally motivated life course:

*We didn’t want to do anything here. Nothing. There was no particular thought about that. Life has moved on that’s it.* (Satnam)

**Later Life: Hopes and Regrets**

Later life provides a time for reflection, in which earlier life goals can be (re)assessed but, additionally, current life goals highlighted that serve a different purpose, such as recreating old attachments and bonds:

*I have been back to Africa a couple of time because my son was there, but I can’t go anymore […] my health has to answer for that […] I have never been to India, that has been left in my heart. I have been so religious but that has been left in my heart. It was ok when I had the children, then there wasn’t a need. My father was there and he finished there (died) and I never got out. It is there, but I can’t travel by myself now. If a child from home walks with me then. They do say that they will take me […] if it is in my kismet (fate) then I will go, otherwise it doesn’t matter.* (Satnam)

Satnam shares her dreams of visiting India, in which attachments are constructed to a place through memories of parents and parental heritage. *Kismet* (fate) here is used to negotiate understandings around possibilities of not achieving this dream, in which internalised understandings around fate build resilience around achieving this goal and reduces regret if it is not achieved. However, there are additional worries around how older SAM women’s life course positions have turned out:

*My story, I have had a little bit of peace and my daughter-in-law was like this that she didn’t like living with me. I’m the one that did everything. She worked. When we would be home on the weekend and even then I didn’t say anything. Sometimes their granddad would say you tidy and let her do the dinner on the weekend. Then she was ok in the middle when she got married. Then my younger daughter her mother-in-law is not right too. Even from there I have been upset. It has changed a little now. Then my son separated from me. She said she wants to live separately, and then after saying lots as they do. I stayed upset for a while. In reality this is what my life is like. I would have liked for us all to live together. Because I lived with my mother and father-in-law […] I never*
did anything without the say of my mother-in-law [...] I don't know. I don't know what happened to the daughter-in-law. When she said to separate I said that to me I don't like this, but you should tell your parents what it is... But it has changed hasn't it, because they are born in England [...] (Mandeep)

Later life positions as a mother-in-law and earlier life course expectations of their potential roles are acknowledged through social change and the awareness of the different expectations across generations and relationships. Mandeep actively negotiates the role of the dismissed agent, in which her life course position and expectations as a mother-in-law have been set aside due to active dismissal from the daughter-in-law. However, Mandeep constructs herself as an independent agent in that she renegotiates her new position through changes and accepts “In reality this is what my life is like. I would have liked for us all to live together”.

Later Life Positions: Religion

Aisha highlights renegotiations of later life positions:

But Muslims don’t have any country, any homeland, they don’t have anywhere to stay Muslims. Wherever they stay that is their country, for Muslims, that’s what is taught. Muslim kids, Muslim people. Wherever you stay that is your country. Wherever you die, to bury you there that is your place. Muslim’s don’t have any country. It is just that you build love [...] wherever the children are born and live they prefer those places. Because their childhood has passed there. Because of that. For that reason the childhood is that I was small there, I opened my eyes there I walked, I crawled, I went to school I have friends there, wherever they pass they fall in love with it. But Muslims don’t have any country, they don’t have anything. Where ever the Muslim goes, lives that is theirs. That’s it. They don’t have any country. Wherever the Muslim goes that becomes the Muslim’s home. Allah has taught us that. (Aisha)

The construction of home within a lens of religion identifies how notions of religion can construct home anywhere. However, Aisha, as many women did in this study, recalled memories of the homeland through childhood experiences and attachments from a past period of time. Gupta (1997) suggests that the experience of migration creates a conflict of migration, not only between the culture of the homeland and the host society but also as an internal cultural conflict and argues:

The border war rages not only between cultures but within cultures. (Gupta, 1997, p.588)

Aisha’s experience recognises that, within national divides of the homeland and place of migration, there are also (re)negotiations within religious and cultural identities. Aisha therefore constructs religion as her stable identity, in that a religious identity is
stable and unchanging across migratory borders. A number of older women shared experiences through religious naats (religious songs) describing the current life course positions:

*The heart’s voice if there is no heart. This world we are going to leave. Going to leave the land empty. What can I tell you? Your delicate body, the one that has laid on flowers, one day it will lay on a pillow of stones. Bring me the luggage for my departure, bring me the luggage for my departure now, bring me the luggage, bring me my faith for the house in which I will lie, in the new house in which where there will be peace.* (Nargis)

Both Muslim and Sikh women in this study recognised later life positions within the context of religion, which signified a move away from cultural expectations and marked them with discourse around preparation for the end of life. Nargis used naats to highlight her later life position and summed up the move from cultural understandings to a religious outlook in which she states “*Your delicate body, the one that has laid on flowers, one day it will lay on a pillow of stones*”. This harsh reality of the life course and gendered expectations of the feminine body recognise later life positions and the end of life. Satnam explains:

*When you leave the world, there is some sort of recollection waiting for you. You will take some other rebirth, because your own body is left behind, but your soul it will fly to some place or another. If you have done good deeds then it will be somewhere good, if you have done poor deeds then it will be somewhere poor. You will reap its rewards no matter what. But some don’t believe. My son he is a doctor and he doesn’t believe. He says there is nothing after death. But there is because religion tells you there is. If a person has done good works then you will get its rewards ahead. That’s if you are in this world and don’t do bad things.* (Satnam)

Women shared current later life course positions in which they were content with what they had achieved and were clearly positioned in current later life or negotiated their positions in preparation for the end of life:

*My life is here now. We are here. They are yesterday’s thoughts. That’s it.* (Satnam)

**Conclusion**

Women highlighted hierarchical structures of age in which the ‘elder’, ‘younger’ position negotiates behavioural obligations around respect (izzat). Furthermore, women stipulated that these structures were not limited to the family home but extended across into the social sphere, through internalised understandings around
behaviours and respect. Negotiations of showing and fulfilling obligations around respect construct the ‘good’, ‘obliging’ girl/woman who is revered in the family/social hierarchical structure and adhering to or contesting these ideologies had implications for positive or negative quality of life through the performance of ‘respectful’ or ‘disrespectful’ behaviours. Additionally, quality of life was negotiated through internalised understandings around not questioning the elder, as this implied disrespect through questioning the elder position.

Older SAM women’s identities, in this research, were constructed at the intersections of gender, age and ethnicity and often structured life course experiences with dialogues of structural intersections. Life course experiences were told in the multiple voices (Buitelaar, 2006) that older SAM women held in the context of the different gendered positions they were located within across the ageing life course, which included the daughter, wife, daughter-in-law, mother, mother-in-law and older woman, which included the role of the grandmother. Within gendered roles and stages women expressed various expectations and behaviours that are motivated at particular stages by cultural loyalty and family and social obligations.

Three particular life course stages were identified by older SAM women, in which the stages of childhood and puberty, marriage and later life recognised specific roles, responsibilities, obligations and expectations. Childhood was recognised as a stage in the life course in which women were socialised with appropriate feminine behaviours including gendered spaces and purdah. Childhood was recalled as a positive memory, in which expectations and obligations to kin highlighted an elder maternal and paternal hierarchy. However, this stage in the life course was negotiated with changing expectations through the beginnings of puberty. During childhood women presented claims to agency that highlighted the multiple, and overlapping ways in which agency was presented (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). For example, women’s negotiations in childhood through expressing agency was recognised in the ways in which girls/women are happy with the family’s decision around gendered roles, education and marriage. Moreover, women also highlighted claims to a more active role in displaying agency, in which girls actively challenged the decision of the parents, which is either acknowledged or contested, or take control over their own lives through the choice of a ‘love marriage’ (Wilson, 1984; Shaw, 2000). Women also expressed an absent agency, in which women were not present during decisions for marriage or the
discontinuing of education. It is therefore important to recognise as Emirbayer and Mische (1998) suggest, agency is not fixed, but fluid and overlapping, and the various dimensions of agency shared by older SAM women was articulated as overlapping and interrelated, in which women were able to assume different agentic positions across the life course.

The second stage in the life course was clearly negotiated by women’s experiences of marriage and the transition from the parental home into the marital home. Older SAM women in this study recalled early experiences of marriage, which occurred from as young as 12 years old. This stage in the life course was renegotiated with expectations and obligations within gender roles but was added to by responsibilities within particular roles, such as being a wife, daughter-in-law and sister-in-law. Therefore, marriage highlighted a period in the life course in which women renegotiated their new positions in the context of kin within the marital home. This stage in the life course lasted significantly longer than childhood as early marriage experiences commenced the start of the second stage in the life course, which women suggested lasted until they felt as though they had fulfilled their “duty” by fulfilling the responsibility of seeing their children married.

However, the complexity of this stage in the life course is that it is blurred through the timing of this stage in the life course in relation to puberty and/or class structures in which some women, such as Rita were educated to a later age, thus delaying marriage and the second stage in the life course. Marriage again highlighted women’s presentation of agency within gendered roles in which the additional context of diligent agency came into play. Women here constructed themselves as hardworking and upholding roles as the ‘good’ wife, daughter and daughter-in-law. The use of agency for older SAM women, again, recognises the interconnectedness of roles in which agency may be negotiated across experiences in order to sustain quality of life (see also Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).

The third stage in the life course for older SAM women in this study is negotiated with a later life identity in which older SAM women were able to renegotiate their earlier sociocultural gendered identities with a religious identity. This stage is marked by negotiations of fulfilling obligations to kin (e.g. children), and the removal of responsibilities to others, which allows for a renegotiation of earlier life course
experiences and the preparation for the end of life. Life stages are not fixed but fluid and interconnected with responsibilities to kin. Moreover, older SAM women constructed life course stages in relation to events, experiences and fulfilling particular obligations to kin. Later life positions recognise older SAM women’s presentation of three additional agentic positions, in which women articulate and present negotiations around revered agency, claiming respect within the social and family hierarchy; independent agency, in which there is a presentation or sharing of the subjective renegotiation of the older SAM woman’s own later life position and, finally, dismissed agency, in which the context of social change highlights a renegotiated position within the family hierarchy. The significance of different types of agentic orientations recognises how women utilise agency across experiences within the life course and how agency penetrates the structures older SAM women in this study are embedded within.

For example, women recognised social change and expectations across generations in which they were either revered by family or expectations of their role and position as an 'elder' were dismissed. Therefore, women renegotiated positions in order to sustain quality of life if earlier life course expectations of later life were or had been challenged. Additionally, most of the women highlighted this stage as a stage in the life course in which women were able to move away from earlier life course roles, responsibilities and expectations and move towards more of a subjective self, in which they were able to prepare for current later life positions and the end of life. There were then clear negotiations around agency and the way in which older SAM women utilised different agentic roles in order to negotiate life course positions but, additionally, sustain quality of life across life stages.

Life course position and stages presented by older SAM women recognise the intersections of structure, agency and authority, in which negotiations around claims to agency across the life course are articulated through ideals of quality of life within particular roles and relationships. Structure, agency and authority, therefore, intersect roles, responsibilities and obligations to the self and others which are visibly not distinct, but evidently interconnected and contextually dependent.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion
Addressing the Research Aim and Questions
This thesis and research study aimed to critically explore how older SAM women have anticipated and approached old age and ageing experiences across the life course through the following research questions:

1. To what extent do gender roles, responsibilities and obligations influence agency and authority across gendered hierarchies but, additionally, how do these structures affect movement across life course positions whilst sustaining quality of life?

2. How do older SAM women (re)negotiate shared cultural identities through cultural scripts in order to perform publically acceptable notions of identity and belonging?

4. To what extent do researcher/participant binaries affect the research process as a consequence of insider/outsider positions?

In order to adequately address how the research aim and questions have been achieved this section is broken down into four sub-sections - the research aim and three research questions.

Research Aim
To critically explore how older SAM women have anticipated and approached old age and ageing experiences across the life course.

Empirical research and thematic analysis readings highlighted older SAM women’s experiences to be significantly shaped around sociocultural expectations, responsibilities and obligations of gendered roles. Moreover, gendered roles are intrinsically linked within life course positions and stages that are structured around distinct ‘elder’, ‘younger’ hierarchical structures, which negotiate expectations and behaviours of izzat (respect, honour) across the life course. Quality of life and the way in which older SAM women in this study negotiate and approach ageing experiences are evidently constructed around the performance of the ‘good’, ‘obliging’ girl/woman. Behaviours evidently extend across subjective identities into family and social izzat (honor) but, additionally, the way in which women are viewed across and within the life course stages of childhood and puberty, marriage and later life (see Chapter Six). Older SAM women in the study expressed experiences within the context of family
and ‘others’. However, women evidently (re)evaluate later life and old age in the context of the subjective self in order to achieve quality of life in the context of their later life position that is deemed as ‘respectable’.

The ideological construction of izzat, through the claim of segregation (purdah) and modest behaviours, produces emotions of shame and guilt through consequences that shape gendered behaviours and ideologies (see Lindisfarne, 1998). These socialisations and understandings are carried across the life course in which women continue to express gendered expectations of others within the family and social hierarchy. Women’s experiences are thus recognised within the narrative of patriarchy, in which a gendered ability to exert domestic skills, gendered norms and purity reify quality of life (see Oakley, 1975; Shaw, 2000). Domestic skills and piety position women as more “marketable as brides” (Almedia, 2005, p.386) because gendered values are seen to increase individual but also family status and, therefore, construct notions of cultural capital through gendered behaviours. Moreover, cultural ideals of izzat create additional responsibilities to the community or cultural group that women are situated within.

Notions of belonging are therefore constructed through izzat, which serves as a cultural, behavioural ideology used to construct reprimands for ‘deviancy’, thus acting to regulate behaviour. Older SAM women demonstrate successful ageing through rewards constructed within the context of izzat in which heightened implications of respect and honour are achieved through conformity. Consequently, culturally constructed communities in the place of migration are created to serve as a support system in order to maintain quality of life but also to sustain loyalties to the homeland and (re)create homeland structures.

Research Question One: Older SAM Women’s Life Course Experiences

To what extent do gender roles, responsibilities and obligations influence agency and authority across gendered hierarchies but, additionally, how do these structures affect movement across life course positions whilst sustaining quality of life?

Older SAM women in this study identified three distinct life course stages (see Figure 2): childhood and puberty, marriage and later life, which are marked with changing gender roles and positions within the family hierarchy. It has to be noted here that women did not express life course stages or experiences with linear constructs of age
but evidently marked them with events or experiences. Significantly, all of the women in this study had experienced marriage and had children. Therefore, movement across and into different life course stages is not fixed but very much dependent on family expectations and negotiations around when a woman/girl should move across and into particular life course positions. For example, life course stages were indicated by the women with roles from a daughter to wife, wife to mother and daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, becoming a mother-in-law and, further, achieving the status of an older woman. During the second stage of the life course of marriage, gendered positions and roles are intrinsically interlinked and overlapping and multiple obligations, expectations and responsibilities construct this stage as significantly longer than childhood and puberty and later life. The latter stage of achieving the status of an ‘older woman’ in later life is influenced by members of the family, in which women are either revered or dismissed within their sociocultural role as a bazurak (wise person). However, later life is additionally negotiated by subjective agency, in which women are able to decide when they want to move away from sociocultural expectations around their life course position and re-establish identity within the context of a subjective later life position. A number of women choose to do this through a religious later-life identity, in which the move away from earlier life goals is in preparation for the ‘end of life’ and afterlife.

Figure 2: Age-stages identified for older SAM women in this study

| 1st stage CHILDHOOD and PUBERTY – This first stage creates expectations, responsibilities and obligations from the family to the daughter, but also from the daughter to her family. This stage is therefore constructed as a subjective ageing stage in which the family and parents hold obligations and responsibilities to the daughter through ‘appropriate’ socialisations, but the daughter is additionally regarded with her obligations to others through her subjective behaviours and attitudes to maternal and paternal kinship relations. The first stage aims to establish an appropriate distribution of izzat (respect) across the family/social hierarchy the girl is attached to. The second part of the first stage entails puberty, which is identified by jawaani (youth). Puberty is marked with increasing age, sexual maturity (even if they are not sexually active) and vulnerability. The girl’s biological stage of puberty is socially perceived by others (family and community). Here, the girl/woman is held with subjective behavioural expectations and obligations to conform to appropriate gender roles in order to maintain family and community izzat (honour, respect). During the age of puberty notions of sacrifice begin to emerge in which the girl must sacrifice |
particular aspects such as education and gender mixing in order to maintain *izzat* and prevent deviant behaviours.

**2nd stage MARRIAGE** – The second stage in the life course is marked by changing roles and becoming a wife, which constructs roles, responsibilities and obligations as a wife to the husband, daughter-in-law to the mother-in-law, sister-in-law to the husband’s siblings, and as a mother to her child. However, there are again two parts within the second stage in the life course, in which there is a repositioning of matriarchal authority through later locations of a mother and mother-in-law. Within the woman’s role as a mother the woman begins to form agency in her role and authority over her children. The mother-in-law’s role gains added agency and authority in which she is able to reposition herself through her mother-in-law role over her sons and daughter-in-law. Here constructs of obligation begin to shift through expectations of an increased *izzat* from others and marks the peak of a woman’s ability to exert authority over others. There are, however, implications of quality of life when expectations do not meet the reality of lived gender roles. The stage of marriage is therefore significantly longer; the South Asian woman may navigate through this second stage for a significant number of years as a result of the varying gender roles after marriage but, additionally, through earlier experiences of marriage and dependent on the children’s decision to marry. At this point the second and third stage of becoming an older women may overlap, recognising the fluidity of life course stages, expectations and disruptions within life course expectations.

**3rd Stage OLDER WOMAN** – This stage in the life course is constructed around the (re)negotiation of roles, responsibilities and obligations. Here there are three types of elder negotiations which occur and include: the *religious elder*, *cultural elder* and being an *elder* (older person). This stage in the life course sees the fading of responsibilities and obligations to others in previous roles, dependent on how the older woman chooses to construct herself in later life. There is evidence of an obligation to the self in which subjective decisions around the self move towards religion, away from previous sociocultural roles and expectations, identified to aid negotiations around quality of life in preparation for an end/afterlife. This stage of the ‘older woman’ is significantly linked to understandings of fulfilling ‘duty’; women express that this is achieved when their children marry. The complications around moving into later life sit with ideologies around women’s subjective beliefs of children and their children’s marriage. Some women are able to move into this stage in the life course even if their children do not marry, however, internalized ideologies continue to negotiate internalized understandings around the benefits of fulfilling their duty to their children. Quality of life is therefore significantly negotiated around these ideals in later life.
Older SAM women do, however, acknowledge clear guidelines regarding gender expectations, which commence through early childhood experiences and continue after childhood and puberty across into the marital home and expectations of the self and others in later life. Furthermore, socialisations during this early period of childhood identify how gender plays a crucial marker of age. Women in this study tended to be married at early signs of *jawaani* (youth), hence identifying motivations behind controlling and preserving sexuality through family behaviours (see Almedia, 2005). Women therefore recognise and share socialisations such as domesticity, modesty and gendered spaces that are constructed as tools used to exert autonomy in future roles and provide agency in the marital home through ‘good’ behaviours and purity value. Moreover, domesticity and modesty construct cultural capital in which skills provide status to the girl in marriage negotiations through value placed on gender appropriate skills. However, girls with few or no domestic skills may be valued through ‘good’ behaviours, which additionally build capital through social standing. Family expectations of *izzat* therefore do influence behavioural expectations, in which the individual girl/woman, is constantly aware of her behaviour within the context of others. Moreover, perceptions of achieving gender roles with *izzat* (honour and respect) by adhering to sociocultural scripts suggest positive implications for quality of life. Deviating from these scripts may cause negative consequences, for example in relation to reputation, for both the family and the social network women inhabit (see Chapter Six). Nevertheless, the experience of migration disrupts the matriarchal support system, removing older SAM women from the matriarchal support system and structure.

The research findings therefore suggest that ageing experiences and expectations of age occur through gendered roles, responsibilities and obligations in which women present agency within their personal domains in order to negotiate quality of life (see Chapter Two and Chapter Six). Moreover, the empirical findings presented in Chapter Six posit that older SAM women’s experiences of old age and ageing intersect within the context of structure, agency and authority, in which gender roles, responsibilities and obligations are constructed and shaped across a matriarchal hierarchy overlaid by sociocultural, patriarchal norms. This is a contribution to knowledge to the extent to which the contexts of roles, responsibilities, obligations,
agency and authority clearly mark negotiations of actions and behaviours but, additionally, the way in which agentic positions are used to negotiate quality of life through upholding and presenting ‘good’, ‘obliging’ behaviours. The research reveals that the interconnectedness of agentic positions (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998), in which more than one type of agency may be employed within particular experiences and life course positions, allows quality of life to be negotiated across different life course positions and kinship relationships (see Table 3). Additionally the research shows that kinship relationships are recognisable through hierarchical positions of authority, male and female, but also maternal and paternal family relationships in which sociocultural expectations of izzat vary. Within hierarchical positions of authority women are able to negotiate and shape younger women’s behaviours with patriarchal expectations, which are reified by patriarchal consequence. Therefore, the research confirms that presentations of agentic position, highlight the ways in which agency penetrates structure in which older SAM women are able to negotiate quality of life across the life course and within relationships by observing behavioural expectations within the contexts, positions and structures they are embedded within.

For example, women in this study articulated the presentation of three types of agentic positions during childhood. The first of these positions highlight older SAM women with contented agency. Women here expressed being comfortable with and agreeing to the family’s decisions around the construction of her role, education and marriage. These positions and types of agency are, however, not fixed, but are interrelated with other forms of agency and some women in this study also expressed active agency, in which decisions over education and marriage were challenged. For example, older SAM women actively expressed their disagreements with decisions or took control over their lives. However, kin did overlook challenges within decisions of marriage during childhood and women often adhered to the decisions that were made with regard to marriage and education. A daughter’s role, therefore, may require a loss of her own desires in order to fulfil obligations to the wider social and family status (Wilson, 2006). This was clearly expressed by older SAM women’s experiences of education, which was restricted or even stopped due to expectations of gender. Women additionally expressed times of passive agency during early childhood experiences, in which women shared that they were unable to express agency in the decision making process due to expectations and responsibilities to kin but,
additionally, that sometimes they were not even present when decision were made. This was particularly the case in early marriage experiences. Even within the context of the ‘love marriage’ (Wilson, 1984; Shaw 2000) Rita expressed active agency with her father, however, Rita’s fiancé reconstructed Rita’s agency as passive through “moral blackmail” and influenced Rita’s decision to marry. Therefore, agency is presented between and within relationships within particular life course positions in order to penetrate structures and experiences they are embedded within.

Women’s negotiations of the second stage in the life course are identified with the added structure of responsibilities that are added to earlier life expectations and obligations to kin and social networks. The movement into the second stage of the life course, marriage, highlights times of active agency through negotiations within new roles and the ways in which they reconstruct behaviours in order to sustain quality of life within their new role and position. This was particularly articulated through the concept of the diligent agent, in which women depict themselves as being hardworking and/or willing to learn their new gendered roles as a wife, daughter-in-law/sister-in-law and mother through kin (husbands, mother-in-law, sister-in-law and mothers). Life course roles and positions are, however, not distinct but the women shared that after marriage the roles of becoming a wife intersect with additional positions within the marital home and family relationships. Within this stage there is evidence of an extended family structure but also a matriarchal pedagogy in which women learn and teach other women within this hierarchy. There are, then, clear negotiations around moral obligations to kin within the hierarchy of age, for both the ‘younger’ and the ‘elder’.

Moreover, older SAM women in this study expressed that they are able to achieve a subjective age identity in later life through their position at the head of the family hierarchy, which is negotiated through fulfilling early life responsibilities. Later life is therefore clearly marked by fulfilling obligations to kin, particularly through the marriages of their own children from which women highlight notions around fulfilling their “duty”. However, research suggests that women with older, unmarried children may be reluctant to move into ‘later life’ through the continuation of responsibilities to kin. Yet some of the women evidently expressed an awareness of social, cultural and generational change and were therefore able to renegotiate and achieve later life positions within the context of social change.
Agentic positions and orientations in later life include agency in which women are revered within the family and social hierarchy. Additionally, older SAM women expressed a claim to a second type of agency in this stage of the life course, in which the older SAM woman is able to (re)negotiate her own identity in later life from which she actively moves away from a sociocultural gendered identity to a religious identity, highlighting changes in structure through agency. The third agentic position expressed was the role of the dismissed agent, who acknowledged social change and their renegotiated position within the family hierarchy. Often, in this latter case of the dismissed agent, older SAM women may additionally take on the role of the independent agent and choose to reconstruct themselves away from the family hierarchy and/or through the construction of a religious identity that negotiates subjective positions. Within all of the agentic roles, positions are not distinct but may overlap or multiple types of agency may be employed to sustain quality of life. Older SAM women therefore often expressed agentic positions within the contexts moving through experiences, but also as a result of social change across the life course. For example, in later life, in order to display independent agency, women negotiated agency within decision making processes, whereas the dismissed agent may be negotiated with through (re)negotiations of current later life and how women decide to negotiate quality of life through accepting or contesting life course positions and contexts.

There are then complex negotiations around structure, agency and life course positions are noted in Table 3, in which further research is required. However, notably, agency and life course positions are not fixed and are employed by women across different life course stages and positions in order to negotiate quality of life. In this study, women negotiated specific types of agentic roles within and across gendered positions in order to sustain or negotiate quality of life within gendered roles but, additionally, relationships. Older SAM women in this research defined agency by the extent to which one negotiates and acts upon expectations of upholding traditional practices and family values, beliefs and ideals that are acknowledged or resisted. Therefore, there are also implications here for the cultural construct and definition of agency. Moreover, SAM women negotiated more than one agentic position across the life course in which time highlights how quality of life within particular roles, but also
with individual relationships attached to life course positions (e.g. father, husband/fiancé, mother/aunts) are contextually dependent (see Table 3).

Table 3: Structure, agency and older SAM women’s life course positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life course Stages</th>
<th>Life course positions</th>
<th>Agentic orientations</th>
<th>Types of agency women utilised to negotiate quality of life</th>
<th>Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childhood and puberty</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Contented agent</td>
<td>Women expressed satisfactions with the family’s decision around gendered role, education and marriage.</td>
<td>Expectations and obligations to kin and social hierarchies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>Absent agent</td>
<td>No agency in the decision making process, sometimes not even present in the event/experience (e.g. act of marriage).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Niece</td>
<td>Active agent</td>
<td>Actively take control and express agency within their own decisions, or expressing feelings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>Active agent</td>
<td>Express agency within the capacity to adapt to change (e.g. roles, environment and relationships).</td>
<td>Responsibilities, expectations and obligations to kin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daughter-in-law</td>
<td>Diligent agent</td>
<td>Depict agency through their willingness to learn or constructions of being hardworking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sister-in-law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later life</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
<td>Revered agent</td>
<td>Respected within the family and/or social hierarchy. Sociocultural ideologies around the role</td>
<td>Hierarchical positions in later life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother-in-law</td>
<td>Independent/subjective agent</td>
<td>(Re)Negotiate subjective identity in later life by actively moving away from a cultural identity towards a religious identity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Older woman</td>
<td>Dismissed agent</td>
<td>Acknowledge social change within the context of the family structure and renegotiate their position/role within the family hierarchy. This is often a result of ideological beliefs around</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question Two: An Exploration of Shared Cultural Scripts

*How do older SAM women (re)negotiate shared cultural identities through cultural scripts in order to perform publically acceptable notions of identity and belonging?*

The second research question aimed to examine the (re)negotiation of collectively constructed cultural identities and their use in performing publically acceptable and ‘loyal’ identities in the adopted homeland, the UK. This section is based on empirical readings from the ethnographic interview and highlights a discursive setting in which older SAM women’s discussions negotiated and voiced a co-constructed narrative of the life course, in which experiences from childhood, migration and current later life were shared. Moreover, women expressed memories within the discursive ethnographic setting through past/present comparisons that evidently negotiated and compared past/present identities but, additionally, similarities and differences between and within experiences (see MacKinnon, 2007). A significant emerging theme recognises the ways in which the older SAM women emphasized the ways in which they construct, (re)negotiate and access cultural identities through culturally prescribed social scripts. Themes include gender, family and a migrant identity which seeks to demonstrate loyalties to a past homeland and traditional cultural identities (see Chapter Five).

The findings in Chapter Five show that cultural scripts (Goddard and Weirzbicka, 2004; Goddard, 2009) influence the (re)negotiation of cultural identities in the place of migration. They additionally recognise how older SAM women publically construct gendered and cultural identities through a system of shared ideologies structured around gendered social norms, family (kinship ties and the extended family structure) and the construction of a migrant identity. The research findings reveal that the family and the context of women’s lives constructed and influenced by others within the family hierarchy feature as a macro theme across older SAM women’s life course experiences. Moreover, this was a theme that remained unchallenged by the women in this study. However, micro themes around the extended family structure, positions
of authority, gendered roles influenced by male and female headed households and kinship ties and marriage recognise variations within experiences that are used to challenge or contest current ideologies of cultural expectations. Furthermore, the research shows that fear and consequence is an additional theme that features significantly in the older SAM women’s ideological narratives and constructions of ‘good’ homeland behaviours.

The construction and (re)negotiation of identities accessed through sociocultural characteristics are retrieved by older SAM women through memory and remembering in order to relate loyalty to a homeland and generational identity within a collective setting. However, the research findings additionally show that cultural scripts are challenged by older SAM women who construct themselves as active agents in the (re)negotiation of loyalties to the homeland. Yet even these challenges are underpinned by a general consensus on the enactment of gender, family and migrant identities. Shared characteristics are, therefore, constructed to demonstrate loyal cultural identities that are publically created and (re)claimed through memory and remembering (Halbwachs, 1992).

Prescriptions for Gender

The women in this study expressed hegemonic gender ideologies that prioritise the observance of purdah and ideologies around behaving in a ‘modest’ manner. The research highlighted that this type of behaviour is constructed through associations of respectability and chastity that, in turn, heighten izzat within the family and social structure (Shaw, 2000). Women thus construct gendered recommendations through internalised patriarchal ideologies in which the role of the father, uncle, older brother and nephew are recalled through nostalgic remembered stories about the way in which gendered behaviours are prescribed. However, the research findings show that cultural scripts around gendered behaviours are additionally prioritised by older women, aunts, mothers and grandmothers through “critical markers of piety” (Mahmood, 2005, p.158 [emphasis original]), such as the deputta (scarf), showing shyness (sharam) and upholding gender segregation, in which matriarchal practices additionally lay down patriarchal recommendations of ‘acceptable’, ‘good’ behaviours.

Findings further indicate how older SAM women positively construct preferences for the clear division of gendered behaviours, in which memories of non-conformity to
traditional gendered behaviours are recalled with disappointment. Identity and belonging are therefore constructed through idealised notions of conformity with sociocultural gender recommendations that continue into later life as older SAM women’s recommendations for younger generations. There is, however, an awareness of social change and women in this study compared the dispersal of gendered behaviours with “children born here”, marking different identities, homeland belongings and generations.

Family: Belonging and Kinship Ties
Themes of family significantly feature in older SAM women’s idealised construction of identity, in which the positive construction of kinship ties and marriage supports Benhabib’s (2002) suggestion that kinship ties are constructed to regulate the family structure. Older SAM women voiced ideals of marriage and the continuation of kinship ties in the place of migration. However, within the discursive setting of the ethnographic discussion, ideals of marriage and kinship were challenged by women in this study. Nevertheless, cultural constructions of marrying kin are constructed as preferable, even by the women who challenge these constructions, in which maintaining traditions from the homeland represents ‘loyal’ homeland identities but also the continuation of ‘elder’ practices and maintaining obligations to family in the homeland (Low, 1992), and local community (see also Chapter Five).

Family: The Extended Family Structure
In addition to themes highlighting cultural scripts around kinship ties and marriage, the research confirms that older SAM women held a preference for the extended family structure which was shared within the discursive setting. Older SAM women expressed ideals around social expectations from kin in which an idealised image of living within an extended family structure was positively recognised. Women’s understanding around the extended family structure is not constructed around the premise of financial security but rather a pooling of resources in which family support creates and constructs the function of the family as a social institution (Mukherjee, 2007) and in which social and emotional support can be accessed. However, women did acknowledge social and generational changes in the extended family structure and put forth their sentiments around the problems associated with this with regard to quality of life. For example, sociocultural expectations and the breakdown in reciprocal care in later life were highlighted by changing sociocultural expectations around
kinship marriages and expectations from the relations (e.g. son/daughter-in-law) which called for older women’s (re)negotiations of ageing expectations in later life. Again, women here voiced themselves as active agents through their adaptation to social change by (re)negotiating identities, expectations and positions in later life but, additionally, they overlaid social change with negative overtones (see Chapter Five).

The Construction of a Migrant Identity

Some older SAM women did initially reject talking about their experiences of migration, for example Shamim replied “don’t ask me anymore”. The research shows that recalling early migration experiences for older SAM women in this study was at times difficult which were expressed with negative emotions around initial migration in which early settlement and acculturation experiences were constructed around difficulties, fear and loneliness. Ahmad et al.’s (2005) suggestion of stress inducing factors, such as the loss of networks and adjustment to a “mechanistic life” (2005, p.118), adds to negative feelings in which women had to (re)negotiate subjective positions in the new place of migration. However, the research significantly reveals that older SAM women highlight positive constructions around seeing “strangers from one’s own racial group” (Zebrowitz et al., 2007, p.306). This enabled the women to create ethnic in-group identities that were formed on the basis of a shared homeland and cultural beliefs.

The research then evidently presents research implications for the way in which older SAM women in this study are embedded within a migrant identity through the experiences of migration from the homeland to the UK. However, women themselves negotiate understandings and meanings around the apna (ours) and gorai (white). It is therefore evident that the older SAM women’s co-constructed identity is constructed with Agnew’s (2005, p.14) suggestion of a “double consciousness” that creates shared cultural understandings and meanings of the apna (ours). Moreover, negotiations around the apna are used by women to highlight members of the local community but, additionally, family members. Women, therefore, actively negotiate their own constructions of the ‘other’, which seeks to (re)affirm cultural loyalties through the (re)negotiation of identities and belonging in the UK to counteract feelings of isolation and loneliness during early migration experiences.

Moreover, the research findings show that older SAM women’s shared understandings around the “apna” post-migration allowed them to construct local communities in the
UK in which a local community identity (re)creates quality of life through attachment to others and notions of belonging through shared understanding and experiences. However, within their current life course positions older SAM women recognised changes in the construct of the *apna* which was challenged through loyalties of “*apnai nowadays*” committing crimes. Therefore, women in this study constructed local identities in which they were aware of social change and were able to express local concerns through behaviours inside and outside of their community group, recognising older SAM women’s position within society. Therefore, collective experiences recognises the interconnectedness of quality of life and identity in which women negotiate identity and belonging, post-migration, in three stages; a) renegotiating the self in the new place of migration during early migration, b) establishing and (re)creating a local cultural community post-migration and c) (re)negotiating the self and the community into a local/national context in current later life.

Practices in which older SAM women negotiate the South Asian diaspora in a discursive setting within the third space (Bhabha, 1990) as a result of the “*social, conscious and cultural*” (Vertovec, 1999a, p.2 [emphasis original]) are evident in this research. Older SAM women’s use of diasporic knowledge in the conceptualisation and interpretation of gender and ethnic identities is clearly demonstrated through shared understandings of the *social* (family and social), *conscious* (memory and nostalgia) and *cultural* (ideals, expectations, beliefs and obligations).

**Research Question Three: Insider/Outsider Divides**

To what extent do researcher/participant binaries affect the research process as a consequence of *insider/outsider* positions?

As discussed in Chapter Four, this research shows how ethical research is produced through negotiated spaces and practices of reflexivity, which need to be critical about issues of positionality. It is therefore important to recognise here that this is a contribution to knowledge in the sense that the researcher’s position and identity does affect the research process. Additionally, the researcher’s interpretation of what was presented to the participants during the research process and, further, what the participants revealed about the researcher’s identity during the research process, also influence power relations and structures throughout the research. Therefore the importance of conducting ethical research by being aware of the researcher’s own
positionality in the research process is to draw attention to issues around negotiated spaces in which the researcher does not always hold the position of power during the research process. The formality of the research process is therefore complex and at times the researcher must take a position in which the formal boundaries of the researcher/researched relationship must be (re)negotiated in order to allow the sharing of intimate life course experiences from those being researched.

During this research process women in the study questioned where I was from and who my family were and during these times, my formal role as a researcher crossed boundaries and my informal identity played a key role in how I (re)presented myself. However, the research show that there were four key elements of my identity, as discussed in Chapter Four, that were of interest to the participants in this research study, including a) generational identity, b) community identity, c) researcher identity and d) regional identity. Nevertheless, these parts of my identity did vary in interest during particular stages of the research process, including variations of interest during the ethnography and the life course interviews. Contractor’s (2012) suggestion that, in order to empower women through the narration of their own experiences, research cannot be devoid of the author’s own story significantly features in the way in which this research has been conducted and interpreted, placing value on the interconnectedness of the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Additionally, in order to maintain cultural ethics within research it is important that researchers are honest with the participants about their identities (Subedi, 2006).

Moreover, Boulder's (1993, cited in Yamani, 1996, p.1) argument that “researcher’s do not all think the same way or even about the same kind of things” was evident in the way in which emotion played a significant role during this research process. Emotion manifested itself, for me as a researcher, during this research process through the fluidity of insider/outsider divides and the sharing of both positive and negative life course experiences by the women in this study. Researching older women’s life course experiences highlights how emotions such as empathy, regret, sadness and contentment may present themselves during the research process, as a result of participants sharing intimate experiences. The findings of this research question therefore confirm that the research process is very much a fluid interplay of power structures, in which both the researcher and researched have the power to
negotiate which narratives and experiences are shared and which of them can be significantly addressed through a reflexive research position and how.

**Strengths and Limitations**

*Language*

Some of the challenges and benefits posed in this research are related to the multi-lingual nature of the study. At first I did not even consider the impact or influence of being multi-lingual as these language skills for me are second nature. However, I was aware that I might have to use English, Punjabi and Urdu during the research process due to the generational cohort. Language, and the meanings behind my use of language in particular situations, whether this was English, Punjabi or Urdu, created my common and shared identity with the participants and significantly identified my ‘loyalty’ to a cultural identity. By keeping a reflexive research diary I was able to recognise the way in which shared languages legitimised my local identity. However, connected to this, women were eager to acknowledge parts of my “halfie” (Subedi, 2006, p.587) British South Asian identity, which was open to questions during the research process.

Subedi (2006) argues that in order to achieve ethical research and fully understand how knowledge is constructed, language needs to be critiqued. The ability to understand and speak multiple languages can shape the research and rapport with participants during the research process. Moreover, some Western concepts of age are difficult to depict, which Subedi critiques and suggests that Western knowledge continues to be placed on communities and individuals who may not align with Western language constructions. Nevertheless, due to the complex nature of language and the relationship language created through a rapport between myself as a researcher and the participants through shared heritage (Subedi, 2006). Limitations, however, additionally recognise that language only represents the sample population of older SAM Indian and Pakistani women in this study and, therefore, due to regional and dialectal variations, words and phrases may only be applied to this sample group. Therefore, some questions remain inconclusive, such as mid-life and uses and understandings of chronological age. I would therefore suggest and recommend that further research into co-constructions of age is required.
The strengths of the research highlight the ways in which I have been able to explore cultural aspects of age in depth, such as kinship marriages and early marriages in the context of generation and preserving gender. Some of these issues might not have been shared with an outside researcher due to potential repercussions of acceptable and unacceptable social norms. However, Wray and Bartholomew (2010) suggest there may be elements that are not shared with researchers due to their insider position. This was recognised by one of the women in the study who acknowledged my community identity and because of which she did not want to continue to share her experiences. However, after the other women in the ethnographic interview continued to share experiences, this woman continued with the discussion, recognising the breakdown of barriers and establishment of trust within the collective group.

Izzat (Respect): Transcultural Consciousness

Moreover, in this research and thesis izzat (honour and respect) has been identified as an internalised feature of cultural ideals and behaviours that determines particular actions within the South Asian Pakistani and Indian community in this research (see Chapter Two). Bhopal (2010) suggests that gender, identity and experience can create a shared empathy between the researcher and the researched, in which trust and rapport can encourage participants to open up and discuss personal experiences. Izzat is, therefore, an intrinsic feature of the methodological stance for this research, in which my motivation behind gaining rapport and developing a research relationship with the participants’ language and behaviours of izzat was used to demonstrate cultural ethics within this research (see Chapter Four). Cultural ethics are therefore not separate to the research process but interconnected through the researcher’s own expectations of displaying an authentic identity to the participants (Subedi, 2006) but, additionally, women’s expectations of me as a South Asian woman (Handa, 2003). I acknowledge that, as a result of cultural ethics, there are limitations to the research, in which particular behaviours such as izzat may have prompted me not to ask particular questions or share particular parts of my own identity. However, the benefits of being aware of culture within the research process allowed the older SAM women to feel comfortable with me as a researcher but, additionally, provided data that is

---

55 Someone who does not have a shared ethnic group.
constructed with older SAM women’s own understandings and meanings of age, which may not have been shared otherwise (see **Chapter Four**).

It is clearly evident throughout this research that it has been conducted with a transnational consciousness (see **Chapter One** and **Chapter Four**). I was critically aware of my position and relationship (as a researcher, community identity, shared heritage, religion) with the women in the study, which motivated my own actions and behaviours within this research (language, cultural etiquettes – izzat (respect)). Therefore, rather than distancing myself from the research and viewing the study as a clinical procedure (which I did at first), I was clearly conducting research with a cultural lens, which is both problematic but also beneficial. The limitation with this lens is the relationship the researcher then builds with emotion (for the participant but, additionally, the way in which emotion affects the researcher post-research). Some relationships between the participants (even though on occasions I was not aware of it) were actually relationships that were quite close within the community I am attached to. Other relationships became constructed through being an ‘apni kuri’ (our girl). These boundaries are very fine and I did have to remain aware at all times that I was a researcher in this research.

This research confirms that a culturally relevant ethical framework that addresses culturally specific boundaries and how researchers should approach them in order to maintain their researcher role, yet, sustain their position within their community through adhering to cultural etiquettes such as izzat (respect) needs to be developed. The benefit of maintaining cultural ethics is to sustain understandings that are elicited from the participants and data so as not to fall into the trap of data (knowledge, information, understandings and meanings) being lost in translation. The problem with this method would be trying not to allow the researcher lens to be blurred by cultural knowledge, relationships and emotions and, therefore, ethical guidelines would address and construct boundaries within which ethical research with non-Western populations can be conducted.

Additionally, there were challenges of having to identify myself as a cultural *other*, which meant I could potentially have been ‘under attack’ (see Abu-Lughod, 1991) through interpretations of and within this research, suggesting that my experiences are not as valid against the White Western norm. Therefore, limitations put forth
questions around why researchers with a shared ethnic group need to address their *otherness* whilst try to make *others* visible. Reconstructing and then deconstructing our participants but then also ourselves highlights intrinsic connections between the researcher/researched relationship but also ideals of the West, in which sociocultural understandings are constructed as ‘foreign’ and different. The colonial thinking is, then, still not so far removed. This research has had to construct older SAM women through their understandings and experiences of age against similarities to and differences from Western constructions of age. The ageing structures have remained invisible in Western research and we are faced with a generation who have aged yet have a limited number of support structures that address and recognise sociocultural specific age, cultural and religious needs but, additionally, shared experiences between and within genders.

Older SAM women’s ageing experiences should be recognised in their own right and there should not be a fear of highlighting these structures due to the fear of a critique of patriarchy, gender, culture and religion as they, as in any society, construct a value and belief system.

*Hidden Women*

The initial challenge of identifying older SAM women who are ‘hidden’ (who did not access or attend social groups) was an initial area of concern, as I did not want my research to be wholly centred on older women who are visible and active agents in the social sphere. As this research utilised a two-part method in which ethnographic research allowed me to access women who are active in the social domain, but also allowed personal networks to elicited snowball sampling methods in order to access older SAM women who are identified as ‘hidden’ and remain within the domestic home. I have been able to access a diverse sample group with a range of experiences, which includes those who are ‘active’ and ‘hidden’ within the social domain. However, I am aware that limitations within my sampling methods recognise a specific cohort of SAM women who are of Punjabi Pakistani and Indian heritage. I would therefore recommend that future research should compare ageing experiences of older SAM women from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, such as Mirpuri, Gujarati and Bangladeshi. Moreover, recommendations for future research could potentially draw upon a larger national study that is inclusive of ageing experiences through its awareness of regional similarities and differences across the homeland and the UK.
Limitations

The life course interview sample was relatively small, with 16 in-depth interviews. However, combined with the ethnographic research, strengths of this research highlight that a large quantity of data was elicited from the research process. The challenge I faced as a result of the quantity of data during this research process was handling the large amount of data. However, the research aim and questions guided this process. Moreover, the strengths of life course research support the depth and richness of data from which I have been able to examine how older SAM women experience and anticipate old age and ageing. Future research, should, however, consider other aspects of age and ageing, which can potentially build on this research, such as focussing on subjective age-stages and gender roles (such as the role of the daughter, marriage experiences, motherhood and later life) and, further, how these stages impact on current later life.

Whilst I acknowledge that my findings cannot be generalised to all older women, I contend that the experiences that have emerged through analysis can be useful in further studies with older SAM women, in comparisons of similarities and differences of experiences of old age and ageing. Moreover, the study’s inherent strengths, limitations and quality should be viewed against the methodological aims and goal, to draw attention and light to the experiences of older SAM women who have aged in their place of migration, the UK. Therefore, a strength of this research is that it draws upon reflections and understandings of cross-cultural ageing that have not previously been addressed.

Research Implications

Contribution to Knowledge

1. This research and thesis has produced new, insightful, empirical data relating to older SAM women’s life course experiences, recognising that age and ageing experiences are marked by significant events and experiences rather than a linear construct of age.

2. This research contributes to knowledge in its recognition that older SAM women’s ageing experiences are constructed and negotiated through gendered
roles (daughter, wife, daughter-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, older woman and grandmother) and obligations, expectations and responsibilities that are attached to these roles. It challenges linear constructs of Western age suggesting gendered roles and age are intrinsically interconnected with experiences such as marriage, becoming a wife, mother and mother-in-law (see Figure 2) that in turn negotiate changeable positions of authority and agency across the life course.

3. The research findings reveal that older SAM women’s life stories in this research were significantly shaped by a gendered script, which is underpinned by sociocultural, patriarchal ideologies and practices around how boys and girls should behave. There are clear and distinct sociocultural norms about gender, which serve as guidelines determining acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. Sociocultural recommendations for gendered behaviours include norms relating to purdah, gendered spaces, education and maintaining izzat. Within these contexts this research has identified different forms of patriarchal relations, within both male and female structures, and the ways in which women acknowledge or resist culturally located ideologies.

4. This research confirms that older SAM women’s negotiations of age and ageing experiences occur across three macro life course stages; childhood and puberty, marriage and later life (see Figure 2). This is a contribution to knowledge in the sense that older SAM women’s life course stages are marked by gendered roles signifying life course positions and roles, responsibilities, expectations and obligations within them (see Table 3). Significantly, for women in this study, the life course stage of childhood and puberty is considerably shorter, as some women moved into the life course stage of marriage from as young as 12 years old. Furthermore, the stage of marriage is notably longer and moves across several life course positions, such as the wife, daughter, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, mother and mother-in-law. Here, positions of authority begin to be renegotiated through constructs of heightened izzat as a mother and mother-in-law and then an older woman (see Figure 2). Transition into later life is marked for women in this study by the removal of ‘duty’ through fulfilling obligations to kin. It must be noted that life course stages are not fixed, but fluid and interchangeable, in which life course positions and expectations may overlap across different stages of the life course.
The empirical data draws attention to social gerontological knowledge around gendered expectations in which women’s experiences of age and ageing in this study represent gendered negotiations of responsibility, obligation and reputation, which are useful concepts with potential transferability to exploring older migrant women’s cross-cultural experiences of age and ageing.

There are significant recommendations from the empirical findings in this study which highlight a complex, hierarchical structure of relationships that shapes and influences ageing experiences for older SAM women. Women in this study highlighted two significant elements of the hierarchical structure. First, there are expectations of izzat (respect) which acknowledge the hierarchical position and importance of age within the family and social structure which significantly influence behaviours and expectations from and to elders across matriarchal and patriarchal kinship relationships. Secondly, the matriarchal hierarchy highlights the ways in which it is structured to allow women to negotiate agency and authority across gendered roles and within the domestic domain. Moreover, elders within the matriarchal hierarchy are able to support women within their changing roles through pedagogic agency.

The thesis adds to knowledge and understandings around the concept of izzat (honour, respect). Empirical data recognises the significance of izzat and its relationship to age and ageing experiences within both positive and negative constructs of respect and honour. izzat is therefore recognised through its constructs of honour and shame, but additionally respect embedded within expectations, roles, responsibilities and obligations.

This research additionally recognises that there are consequences for not performing izzat, respectful behaviours and actions across the ageing hierarchy. For example, izzat (respect) recognises who is positioned where within the kinship and social hierarchy with regard to age and appropriate behaviours as a result of this. Yet izzat is negotiated through constructs of consequence in which not performing respectful behaviours has implications to the subjective self, family and social positioning (honour).

This thesis further adds to knowledge around the complex ways, contexts and environments in which internalised patriarchal oppression has been negotiated across the life course. There are important implications here for quality of life in later life, from which “internalized oppressions” (Mullay, 2009: cited in Shankar...
et al., 2013, p.359) are not necessarily recognised, due to gender socialisations and early life course expectations that are reified with fear and consequence. Aspects of internalised oppression in this study manifested themselves in the form of particular behaviours such as early marriage experiences, kinship marriage obligations, lack of education and some extreme forms of purdah that are (re)negotiated as forms of tradition, culture and religion (see Shankar et al., 2013). Additionally, older SAM women continue to perform and reiterate particular behaviours across generations as ‘good’, ‘acceptable’ behaviours that are ‘loyal’ to homeland identities and therefore continue internalised oppressions onto others through the binaries of ‘good’/’bad’ behaviours. Furthermore, this thesis recognises that internalised patriarchal oppression extends across both the patriarchal and matriarchal hierarchies and women themselves continue to promote patriarchal notions across the life course across intergenerational structures. However, there are “patriarchal bargains” (Kandiyoti, 1988, p.274) associated within oppressions in which women are able to negotiate gendered spaces and exert agency within their gendered domain.

10. This research significantly adds to the way in which agentic roles and quality of life are negotiated across the life course. Empirical data highlights how women in this study utilised and negotiated various agentic roles in order to sustain and navigate quality of life across life course positions. Moreover, empirical research highlights the complex nature of agency and how it is exerted across ageing stages and roles.

11. This thesis additionally contributes to knowledge and understandings around patriarchal ideologies on the woman’s role in the domestic sphere which is often reified by other women within the matriarchal hierarchy. The findings therefore suggest that patriarchal ideologies are not solely negotiated by men but can also be employed by women to reinforce gendered behaviours and “‘appropriate’ femininities” (Dwyer, 1999, p.140) on others across the gender and age hierarchy. Women in this research and thesis highlighted a multifaceted family and social structure of authoritarian relationships in which patriarchal ideologies are expressed by both men and women.

12. Research implications significantly draw attention to early marriage experiences for older SAM women and the way in which these experiences
have impacted on and influenced older SAM women’s constructions of the life course and current later life. The research highlights that older SAM women in this study did experience early marriage practices, which were followed by earlier experiences of motherhood, additional expectations of adult behaviours and gender roles (daughter-in-law etc.) and becoming a widow earlier. This is a contribution to the extent that a better understanding of the impact of early marriage experiences and the impact on quality of life in later needs to be explored further.

13. Co-constructed ideals and ideologies around gendered expectations for older SAM women in this study recognise a ‘first’ generation of older SAM women who have aged in the UK. Additionally, recognition of ideals and ideologies of age allows distinctions to be drawn across generational experiences of age in order to address a) the continuation of ageing ideals and b) the ways in which they have been renegotiated across generations as a consequence of changing identities and belongings.

14. The findings suggest co-constructed memories influence how communities are able to challenge, contest or acknowledge homeland identities through the sharing of cultural scripts but, additionally, the ways in which older SAM women are able to (re)create traditions through the value placed on reiterating cultural scripts in later life within a past/present context.

15. This research adds to the growing body of literature on older South Asian women and constructs of family (Victor et al., 2012; Wray, 2012; Wray and Ali, 2014). Both co-constructed cultural scripts and life course interviews recognised family as a significant theme in which age and ageing experiences are negotiated, influenced and constructed. The concept of family was unchallenged by the older SAM women in this study, in which value was placed on family structures and hierarchies, both maternal and paternal but, additionally, patriarchal and matriarchal hierarchies. Therefore, family features as a macro theme in older SAM women’s experiences of age. However, micro themes such as the extended family structure, kinship ties and marriage, the household and the experience of migration are experiences that are challenged through subjective positions and values of remaining loyal to particular practices.
16. The ethnographic interview contributes to knowledge by highlighting how women in this study negotiated quality of life, post-migration, in three stages; a) renegotiating the self in the new place of migration, during early migration; b) establishing and (re)creating a local cultural community post-migration; and c) (re)negotiating the self and the community into a local/national context in current later life.

17. Even though wellbeing was not a significant part of this research process it is evident that women who do access social groups maintain wellbeing through the sharing of issues and concerns within the space of the social group (see Chapter Four).

18. This research further highlights a feminist research methodology to be best suited for research with older SAM women, in which a non-hierarchal, reflexive, interactive approach (King, 1993) is highlighted. Moreover, feminist research needs to be inclusive of all women’s experiences in the context of research that includes both the researcher and the participant and the impact the research has on both (Henry, 2003).

*Research Recommendations*

The varied approaches and theories utilised in understanding the ageing experiences of older migrants can be problematic through the diversity within transnational theories and terminologies. Therefore, transnationalism (Portes et al., 1999; Vertovec, 1999; Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004; Zontini 2015), Transculturalism (Torres, 2001) and translocational positionality (Anthias, 2002) need to be recognised as not separate strands that affect the ageing experiences of migrants in the place of migration and settlement but as interconnected through the intersectional locations individuals are embedded within.

Moreover, Anthias’ (2002) suggestion of translocational positionality seems best suited to draw attention to the multiple locations and positions older migrants may be attached to, in addition to and within transnational and transcultural locations. Moreover, this should additionally be applied to theoretical approaches and methods, including feminist standpoints and dual methods, which best suit the area of research. This research therefore posits that through an interconnected approach, the way in which older migrants construct and shape meanings around the way they anticipate and approach old age and ageing can be fully understood.
Reflections on the Research Process

This research sought to offer understandings of old age and ageing experiences for older SAM women. With the paucity of research addressing the life course experiences of older SAM women and understandings of how older SAM women age and move through ageing stages, this research has endeavoured to account for the ways in which older SAM women make sense of their own experiences of how they have aged, across the homeland and the place of migration. The key argument in this research is that, for migrant populations, the experience of old age and ageing must not be addressed through separate influences of pre- and post-migration experiences, as life course experiences are intrinsically linked by expectations, roles, responsibilities and obligations that are carried across the life course.

I did enter this research process with the intention of (de)constructing typified notions of the Asian woman and her experiences of age. However, the research and findings have led to the data documented in this thesis, which recognises that there are facets of the life course and experiences that do fit typified notions of the Asian woman, in which she holds claims to the domestic sphere as characteristically embedded within notions of the family. However, older SAM women are significantly influenced by expectations and obligation from the family and community but women are able to negotiate agentic roles in order to sustain and negotiate quality of life across life stages and life course positions. Further, reflections on this research highlight how some ageing experiences of older SAM women cross cultural contexts in which generation and gender hold similar ideals in the homeland and in the West. For example, the clear division of gender roles and responsibilities such as a wife and mother are shared across cultural and Western constructions of gender. Therefore, as discussed in Chapter Two, some experiences are shared across national boundaries. However, women’s experiences must not be generalised, as intersectional differences such as culture, ethnicity, religion and class do create distinctions in women’s life course experiences through negotiations of identities and cultural motivations across the life course.
Future Research

Hopes for future research within the context of older SAM women would aim to examine life course stages of childhood and puberty, marriage and later life in depth, in order to examine and contextualise the way in which particular life course stages impact on old age and later life. Within this context early experiences of marriage and their impact in current later life and quality of life is an insightful area of research that may be explored. Additionally, there is scope to examine sociocultural expectations of age and social change across intergenerational relationships in the UK and the homeland. There is potential here for a comparative international ageing study that compares how older South Asian women anticipate and approach old age and ageing in the UK against the way in which older South Asian women negotiate age in the homeland. Moreover, there is scope for the development and exploration of social theory and research methods with ageing transnational migrant communities.
Glossary of South Asian Terms

The terms use in this research and thesis are sample group specific and therefore there may be some regional variations across the South Asians and definitions used in this research and thesis.

Ami: Mother.

Apna: Ours; someone with a shared ethnic, cultural or religious background (singular). Apnai (plural).

Apni kuri: Our girl; may be used in reference to a community or family insider.

Bazurak: Older person (male or female); signifies wisdom and age.

Biadari: Kinship.

Chacha: Father’s younger brother (uncle).

Chachi: Father’s younger brother’s wife (auntie).

Dada: Father’s father (grandfather).

Daddi: Father’s mother (grandmother).

Deputta: Traditional scarf; worn with a traditional trouser suit (salwaar kameez); traditionally worn over the head or around the neck.

Desh: Homeland.

Dua: Muslim prayer; to pray.

Fikr: Religious person/holy man.

Gora/Gorai: White; White British ethnic group.

Gurdwara: Sikh temple; place of worship.

Izzat: Honour and/or respect. May be used as a dual construct or individual terms of honour or respect.

Jawaani: Youth.

Ji: Attachment of ‘ji’ on a relationship is a formal/polite version of the saying deems respect.

Kajol: Also referred to as surma; is a traditional South Asian eye makeup made up of a substance similar to charcoal. It is also referred to in other parts of the world as kohl.

Kala: Mother’s sister (maternal aunt).

Kalimah: Muslim prayer; significant part of the Muslim belief.

Khair: Good will or to mean well wishes; also can be used as a question, are you ok (khair); context dependent translation.
**Kismet:** Fate.

**Mama:** Mother’s brother (uncle).

**Mami:** Mother’s brother’s wife (auntie).

**Manjaa:** (Singular) Traditional bed with a wooden bed frame and a knotted rope top which people lie on without a mattress.

**Manjai:** (Plural) Traditional beds (see Manjaa).

**Masi:** Older maternal aunt (mother’s sister).

**Meeti:** Sweet.

**Mohal:** Lifestyle.

**Naats:** Religious songs; Islamic songs.

**Namaaz:** Muslim prayer; perform this five times a day.

**Nangi:** Naked.

**Nanni:** Mother’s mother (nan).

**Nana:** Mother’s father.

**Nikkah:** Muslim marriage ceremony.

**Paanja:** Sister’s son (nephew).

**Pardes:** Foreign land, the West.

**Patiya:** Brother’s son (nephew).

**Pupo:** Father’s sister (paternal aunt).

**Purdah:** Literally meaning ‘curtain’ (see Khan, 1999; Shaw, 2000); used to refer to gender segregation or the covering of the body through culturally or religiously appropriate dress or veiling.

**Rishta:** Proposal for marriage e.g. “they are coming for a rishta (proposal)” can also mean relationship e.g. our rishta (relationship) is… (Translation is context dependent).

**Sharam:** Shame; modesty; shyness.

**Shikait:** Telling on someone; to tell a tale (lie/fib).

**Sianai:** Wise person; someone coming of age with wisdom.

**Thia:** Father’s older brother (uncle).

**Valeat:** West; may refer to the UK, USA or Canada.

**Valeati:** Westerner; used to refer to someone living in the West (UK, USA or Canada).

**Wudhu:** Ablution: Muslim ritual washing/cleansing oneself before prayer (namaaz).
REFERENCES

A


Age of Marriage Bill (1929) HL Deb, Vole 74, and cc258-63 [online] Available at: http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1929/apr/30/age-of-marriage-bill-hl#s5lv0074p0_19290430_hol_108 [Accessed 15 October 2014]


**B**


C


---

E


254


M


N


O


P


S


T


The Quran. Jeddah: Saheeh International


U


Y


Z


APPENDICES
# Appendix 1: School Research Ethics Panel (SREP)

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD**  
School of Human and Health Sciences – School Research Ethics Panel

## OUTLINE OF PROPOSAL

Please complete and return via email to:

Kirsty Thomson SREP Administrator: hhs_srep@hud.ac.uk

Name of applicant: Nafhesa Ali

Title of study: Migration, Ageing and Wellbeing in the South Asian Community: A life course

Department: CRISS: Human and Health Sciences  
Date sent: 28.6.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Please provide sufficient detail for SREP to assess strategies used to address ethical issues in the research proposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher(s) details</td>
<td>Nafhesa Ali U0869909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor details</td>
<td>Sharon Wray, Michelle Bartholomew, Santokh Gill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim / objectives</td>
<td>To collect life course interviews from older South Asian Punjabi women to investigate the relationship between major life experience and wellbeing in later life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief overview of research methodology</td>
<td>Life course research, qualitative interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Study Start & End Date | Start Date: 01.10.11  
End Date: 01.10.14 |
<p>| Permissions for study | From Supervision team and SREP |
| Access to participants | To identify myself as a ‘gatekeeper’ through my own ethnic origin. To use existing networks and contacts to gain access to older South Asian Punjabi women. |
| Confidentiality | I will aim to safeguard confidentiality by adhering to researcher obligations under the Data Protection Acts (BSA, 2004) and gain informed consent from the participant with regards to confidentiality and future use of the data at the start of the study. |
| Anonymity | Pseudonyms will be given to the interviewees so they cannot be identified in the research and participants will be aware of their right to refuse the recording of the interview upon request. |
| Psychological support for participants | Participants will be given the contact details for Women’s Centre and their counselling service, if participants require psychological support at a later date. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher safety / support</th>
<th>See Risk Analysis and Management Form.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(attach complete University Risk Analysis and Management form)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify any potential conflicts of interest</td>
<td>Possibilities of knowing the family due to my position as a 'gatekeeper'. Reassurance of confidentiality and anonymity will address this issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please supply copies of all relevant supporting documentation electronically. If this is not available electronically, please provide explanation and supply hard copy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information sheet</td>
<td>See attached information sheet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent form</td>
<td>See attached consent form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview guide</td>
<td>Migration and lived life experiences. Particular attention will be drawn upon traumatic life experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination of results</td>
<td>Thematic analysis: identification of themes from interview transcripts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where application is to be made to NHS Research Ethics Committee / External Agencies</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All documentation has been read by supervisor (where applicable)</td>
<td>Please confirm. This proposal will not be considered unless the supervisor has submitted a report confirming that (s)he has read all documents and supports their submission to SREP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All documentation must be submitted to the SREP administrator. All proposals will be reviewed by two members of SREP.

If you have any queries relating to the completion of this form or any other queries relating to SREP’s consideration of this proposal, please contact the SREP administrator (Kirsty Thomson) in the first instance – hhs_srep@hud.ac.uk
Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Migration, Ageing and Wellbeing in the South Asian Community: A Life Course

It is important that you read, understand and sign the consent form. Your contribution to this research is voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate. During the research, if you wish, you will be able to have access to your data.

Declaration:

- I have understood the information sheet and received a copy. ☐
- I understand I am entering the study voluntarily. ☐
- I understand that I may withdraw my data if I no longer wish to be part of the study. ☐
- I have given a pseudonym to maintain anonymity. ☐
- I understand the statement of support and have received a copy. ☐
- All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. ☐

I understand excerpts from the participant observation and interview data may be used in publications

Participant Name: _______________________ Signature: ____________________

Researcher Name: _______________________ Signature: ____________________

Date agreed: ____________________________

(One to be retained by the participant and one copy to be retained by the researcher)
Appendix 3: Information Sheet

Migration, Ageing and Wellbeing in the South Asian Community:

A Life Course

Information Sheet

Please make sure you understand the purpose and process of this research study. You are free to ask questions at any point of the research outline and at any point of the research study.

Introduction:

My name is Nafhesa Ali and I am a PhD research student interested in the life experiences of older South Asian women in the UK. This study intends to research the relationship between life experience and wellbeing over the life course. You are invited to take part in the study as you are aged between 60-80 years and are of South Asian heritage.

Benefits:

Research looking at the life experiences of South Asian women is still largely neglected and under-researched. This is an opportunity for you to share your lived life experiences and possibly contribute to the development of wellbeing services catered for South Asian women.

Consent:

Taking part in this study is voluntary and consent will be agreed upon before any data is collected. Consent will be requested with members of the group present before conducting the observations. For any new members consent will be requested verbally. Signed consent will be requested before conducting the life course interviews. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time during the research process.

Process:

The research will consist of two parts, and will include participant-observations and life course interview. You do not have to take part in the observations and/or the interview, and may choose to take part in one or neither. Throughout the research process your own words will be used and I will not edit any part, except to safeguard your identity. Pseudonyms will adopted to adhere to confidentiality guidelines and protect identity.

Observations:

Participant observations will be conducted, with myself as researcher observing and taking part in group activities. I will aim not to intrude on your activities with my presence and will take field of observations of your behaviour and activities after the group session. Information shared by members of the group during observations should not be shared outside the group, and will remain confidential.

(Page 1 of 2)
Life Course Interviews:

Interviews exploring your life experiences will be taken in your preferred language of English, Urdu or Punjabi and will take between one to two hours. During the interview you will be asked some general background information questions and asked questions in relation to your life experiences, pre- and post- migration. You may disclose to the researcher any life experiences you deem appropriate to the study. These conversations will be confidential and your identity will remain anonymous in any future research publications and/or presentations. I will however adhere to safeguarding guidelines, and will break confidentiality if you tell me information that causes me to have concerns about your safety or the safety of others.

Data collection:

Data collected in the form of observations and interviews will be handled in a secure manner and kept on a password-protected computer. Data will be deleted after five years. No person other than the researcher will have access to the recording of the interview. After interview, data will be transcribed and analysed by the researcher. A transcribed copy of the interview or interview CD will be available to you on request. Transcribed data will be used for research purposes only and will be used to inform the basis of my PhD research thesis. Parts of the study may be used in future publications such as journals, books and/or conferences. Anonymity will be respected and you will be identified with your chosen pseudonym in this research. This is for purposes of safeguarding your identity and personal information.

Thank you for your time.

For further information or any questions please contact Nafhesa Ali, your researcher on the details below.

Researcher contact information:

Researcher:  Nafhesa Ali, University of Huddersfield

Telephone:  (01484 ) 471624 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

Email:  u0869909@hud.ac.uk

(One to be retained by the participant and one copy to be retained by the researcher)
Appendix 4a: Statement of Support

Statement of Support (participant)

There are no known risks with regards to this study. However, reminiscence and life experiences can be distressing. If this does occur throughout any part of this research study and in particular the interview, your wellbeing is priority and you have the right to withdraw from the participant observation sessions or stop the interview at any time.

If distress does occur:

- The research will be paused and a break will be agreed in which we will resume after a short period of time, or a later date.
- You may request withdrawal from the study if you feel unable to continue. Any data collected will not be used until consent has been re-established.
- You may request withdrawal from the study at any time and do not have to give an explanation with regards to your withdrawal.
- I will be available for support after the interview and the interview will end with a debriefing session. This will allow you to discuss your feelings during the interview. We can also take this time to discuss any emotional or psychological discomfort you may have been experienced during the interview. The debriefing session will take place immediately after the interview.
- If you feel too upset or distressed as a result of this research, I can provide you with information with regards to a local support service or assist you in accessing support from this service.
- If you do not wish to take part in the interview and only consent to observations, this will not affect your position within the research.
- If you consent to interview only, this too will not affect your position within the research.
- Your participation in this research will NOT affect the services you receive from your community group and information shared to me will not be disclosed to any members inside or outside of the group.

If you wish to speak to me about the study my university contact details are below.

Contact details:

Researcher: Nafhesa Ali  University of Huddersfield
Telephone:  (01484) 471624  (9am - 5pm)
Email:  u0869909@hud.ac.uk

(One to be retained by the participant and one copy to be retained by the researcher)

Appendix 4b: Support Centre Information
A Women’s Centre leaflet will be attached to the statement of support for research participants with the following information and contact details:

Women’s Centre

15 Lord Street
Huddersfield
HD1 1QB

South Kirklees

North Kirklees (Tracy or Louise)

Women’s Centre Halifax

www.womencentre.org.uk

Space for women run by women

A service of Women’s Centre

Charity no 1118366    Company no 6084795
Appendix 5: Reflexive Research Diary Extract

Being an overt researcher has its benefits. They know I am there from the university. And as I am participating in the activities, I am becoming ‘one of them’. Towards the end of the group I felt a level of comfort developing and they asked if I would be returning. I said yes, as it is important to develop a repertoire and comfort level for me to discuss their experiences. Again another lady in her late 50s was happy to speak to me and went through her life, I could see the level of emotion building as she spoke about her being a carer for her young disabled son (12) and her husband’s illness, she later explained he had liver problems due to his drinking. She also spoke about the disconnection with India; she had no ties with it. Her father’s recent death 1 year ago was evident in her emotion. I spoke to two older ladies 60+ one who did not want to be recorded but agreed to sharing her life (or wanted to) and did so immediately without me really asking. She talks about her dislike for India and her husband and ‘others’ sending money back home. She talks at length about her husband refusing to buy their own home in post migration and sending all the money home. Her dad migrated in 1957, so she is educated in the UK. She talks about her refusal to marry her sons in India and again a disconnection to the country. She talks about the difficulties in marriage because of this and her leaving England and going to India for a short period. Her husband eventually followed and they reconciled. She is still with her husband and she talks about him only stopping sending money home now, in later life, but points out her discontent at the lateness of this decision. Another lady 60+ describes her double migration. She migrated from India to Kenya, Nairobi with a work permit and worked there as a nurse. She then married and came to England where she became a housewife and looked after her children. I asked her why she didn’t pursue this in England but she said she had children and that was the way it happened.
Appendix 6: Email Letter of Invitation for Gatekeepers

Email letter of invitation for potential ‘gatekeepers’

Dear xxxxx (enter name)

My name is Nafhesa Ali and I am a PhD research student at the University of Huddersfield. I am conducting research exploring older South Asian women and their life experiences across the life course. I am seeking older South Asian women; Pakistani, Indian, Bangladesh, Gujarati or Mirpuri between 60-80 years of age for recruitment and would like your help in locating groups who cater for this age and ethnic group.

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between life experience and wellbeing in later life. The research will aim involve a two-part method in which participant-observation and life course interviews will be conducted. I hope to make contact with community groups who would support the study and allow me to make observations within their support groups. I also seek members of their group who can potentially be chosen for individual interviews during the life course interview, which will be conducted at the centre or in their home.

Data will be used to inform my PhD thesis and parts of the study may be used for publications in literature or conferences. It is hoped that the study findings will help develop wellbeing services in the future for ethnic minority elders living in the UK and contribute to social gerontology research.

Participation in this study is voluntary and the women in the study can choose withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity guidelines will apply to the study and the identity of the women will remain anonymous to safeguard identity through pseudonyms. Pseudonyms will be used throughout the research and individuals will not be identifiable in any part of the study. I will be available during the research for questions and/or further information.

If you feel you can support with the recruitment of older South Asian women, please contact me on:

Email: U0869909@hud.ac.uk

Telephone: Office (01484) 471604 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information. Thank you for your time.

Best wishes,

Nafhesa Ali

Human and Health Research

University of Huddersfield
Appendix 7: Letter of Response

Letter of response to ‘gatekeepers’

Address
Date

Dear xxxxx (enter name)

Re: recruitment of participants for the Migration, Ageing and Wellbeing: a life course study

Following our recent [call/letter/email] I am writing to thank you for your help to contact support groups who cater for South Asian women elders. I appreciate your support in this matter and feel this research will potentially contribute to the wellbeing of older South Asian women in the future.

The study is supported by the University of Huddersfield, and individual and community group participation is voluntary. All data will be treated in confidence and follow ethical approval from the University of Huddersfield’s School Research Ethics Panel (SREP).

Please find attached/included:

1. A copy of the letter of invitation, which should be forwarded on to potential community groups/organizations.

2. A study information sheet, with details of the research for interested groups.

3. An ‘interested in participating’ consent form for the organisations to complete and return to me directly, via post or email (stamped addressed envelopes are included).

If you have any questions or would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below.

Yours sincerely,

Nafhesa Ali

Human and Health Research
University of Huddersfield

Contact Information:

Telephone: Office (01484) 471624 (Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm)

Email: U0869909@hud.ac.uk
Appendix 8: Group Manager Consent Form

Community Group Consent Form

Migration Ageing and the Wellbeing of the South Asian Community: A Life course

Community group name: ________________________________________________

Contact name: _________________________________________________________

Service description: ____________________________________________________

Contact Details:

Address: _______________________________________________________________

Telephone/email: _________________________________________________________

Contact day before observations? Y / N

Would you like a results summary at the end of the research? Y / N

Postal address: __________________________________________________________

Please tick:

- I agree to the researcher’s use of the above information for the purposes of this research study. ☐

- I agree to the researcher’s attendance to observe members of the group in support of this research study. ☐

Name: _______________________ Role: __________________ Signature: ________________

Researcher: ______________________ Signature: _____________________________

Date: __________________________

(One to be retained by the group and one copy to be retained by the researcher)
Appendix 9: Observation Research Diary Extract

*Dynamics of the group.*

The Indian ladies were happy to share their stories, but were a little wary and towards the end when they found out I am Pakistani. There are a couple of members I did not get the opportunity to talk to and hope to next week. One of the eldest ladies is a retired social worker, I did not get to speak to her but I hope to. She looks like an interesting character. She spoke English, to the South Asian ladies too, but also spoke in their heritage language on the odd occasion when suggesting things or assisting confusion of language. I would perceive her as the ‘head’ of the group. She is able to interact fluidly between cultural groups/ethnic groups and may possibly be the harmony between the two ethnicities. She wore western clothes, as did one other who is a friend of hers (and ex-nurse) the others wore traditional *salwaar kameez* and one wore a sari (I think she may Bengali or Gujarati- I am thinking the former due to the area). There is no significant divides or points within the group at this moment. I feel they are all on equal standing. They are not perceived or treated as ‘elderly’ and this is a space for them to socialise, as they would like to. It looks like a group shaped on the needs/ wants of the members of the group. They laugh and talk, and welcome people like myself to the group.
## Appendix 10: Ethnographic Research Observation Guide

### Ethnographic Researcher Observation Guide

#### Atmosphere:
- Weather: impact on attendance, notions of wellbeing
- Group setting/space/layout
- Activities
- Staff and membership notes: any others attending the group? Power relations within the group

#### Group members:
- Ethnicity: culture and religion – any regional variations
- Age
- Gender
- Dress
- Group attendance: regular or occasional attendance

#### Interactions with each other:
- Discussions
- Sharing of experiences: health and wellbeing experiences, family, general life experiences; past, present and future
- Cultural memories: group discussions, memories of the past, present, hopes for the future, challenges, conflicts
- How they share the social space they are in: participation with activities/talks
- Any gender, ethnicity and age dynamics between members

#### Interactions with me (researcher):
- How members react to me as an individual and researcher
- Discussions: how they included/not included me
- Discussing topics including: health and wellbeing, ethnicity, family, life course experiences – willingness/reluctance to share
- My positioning as an insider/outsider: reflexivity, comfort level during the observations
- Any differences/similarities identified: gender, age and ethnicity

#### Power dynamics:
- Staff and members: gender, ethnicity and age structures, power relations
- Within the group members
- Researcher/researched

#### Researcher reflexivity:
- Feelings
  - Positive
  - Negative
- Any additional notes
### Appendix 11: Life Course Interview Guide (Adapted from Victor et al., 2012)

**Interview guide/prompts for life course topics:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-migration:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Experiences in childhood/youth/marriage/motherhood and later life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education/early life course experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family/social networks, cultures, traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migration:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Migrating to the UK and life experiences post-migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reasoning behind migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emotions/feelings/hopes/future plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social/family networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-migration:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ageing experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Settlement, family- births, deaths, marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Significant events (pre and post migration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity themes:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Belonging, homeland (<em>desh</em>) and <em>parde</em> (foreign land) what it means to you? (In reference to the participant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and wellbeing:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Physical health and psychological - possible influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education, work etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion and faith:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How has this influenced life in the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empowering and disempowering events and/or experiences:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Forms of racism, discrimination,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Socioeconomic status within the UK and place of birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Any fears, negative emotions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prompts:** What was like for you (participant)…? How did you feel with regards to (theme)…etc. Prompts will be used to fill pauses, but will allow participants to lead the interview so they are able to share their life course narratives.