



Transnational marriage and the formation of Ghettoes

Summary

1. International arranged marriages are a major factor in the formation of ghettoes in Britain. Even in the second generation, a high proportion of immigrants from certain countries enter arranged marriages with spouses from their country of origin. This sets back integration by a generation. The flow of spouses and fianc(e)s from the Indian Sub Continent (ISC) doubled between 1996 and 2001. Now nearly half of ethnic Indian and three quarters of ethnic Pakistani and Bangladeshi children aged 0-4 have a mother born in her country of origin. 30% of all children born in Bradford are born to foreign mothers; in Tower Hamlets the figure is 68%. And the Pakistani population of Manchester, Birmingham and Bradford increased by about 50% between 1991 and 2001.

2. It is now essential that immigration policy should discourage international arranged marriage which has become a means of immigration. The present regulations should be tightened and a "family connection test" should be introduced, similar to that in force in Denmark. Where a UK resident wishes to marry a spouse from the country in which he or she (or either parent) was born, entry clearance to Britain should not be granted until both parties have reached the age of 24. The test would not apply to citizens of the EU who have a treaty right of entry nor to citizens of countries whose primary official language is English and thus do not pose an integration problem.

Introduction

3. When primary immigration from the Indian sub continent came to an end in the early 1970s it was assumed that family re-union would tail off as the communities integrated.

4. That has not happened. In practice, the custom of arranged marriage had led to a continuous flow of spouses and fianc(e)s from the Indian sub continent which more than doubled between 1996 and 2001 when 22,000 spouses and fianc(e)s were granted entry clearance.[1] It should be noted that the normal custom in these societies is for the woman to join the husband's family but it seems that, where the wife has residence in Britain, that custom is often reversed.

5. In the context of total net foreign immigration, which exceeds 200,000 a year, this does not seem like a large number. However, as late as 2001, it was estimated that 60% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi marriages in Bradford were with a spouse from the country of origin.[2] This broad estimate is borne out by comparing the average number of people of sub continental origin aged 15,16 or 17 at the 2001 census with the numbers admitted to the UK, or granted an extension to stay in the UK, as a spouse or fianc(e) in 2003 :

	Average no. of people in each year of 15-17 age group in 2001 census	Grants of leave to enter /extensions of leave as a spouse or fianc(e) 2003 [3]	Approx. percentage marrying spouse from ISC
Pakistani - men	7831	3773 (women)	48%
Pakistani - women	7484	2982 (men)	40%
Bangladeshi - men	3273	1960 (women)	60%
Bangladeshi - women	3127	1235 (men)	40%
Indian - men	8984	3378 (women)	38%
Indian- women	8672	1317 (men)	15%

6. This has a very large impact on the numbers of babies being born to mothers who have immigrated from the Indian Sub-Continent (ISC) for two reasons: first, they will form a high proportion of all women from these ethnic communities (nearly 40% for Bangladeshis for instance) and, second, because mothers from the ISC have a high total fertility rate (2.3 Indian, 4.7 Pakistani and 3.9 Bangladeshi in 2001) .[4]

7. We have compared the numbers of children born to mothers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in the 5 years 1996 to 2000 inclusive with the numbers of children aged 0 to 4 described as being of ethnic Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origins in the 2001 census. This indicates that nearly half ethnic Indian children aged 0 to 4 have an Indian born mother and over three-quarters of ethnic Pakistani and Bangladeshi children aged 0 to 4 have a mother born in those countries. [5]

8. The impact of the high rate of marriages to spouses from the ISC and high birth rates was explained in the following extract from an Annex to Lord Ousely's report :[6]

"It has a major impact on population growth. About 1,000 Bradfordian Muslims marry each year. If most of those marriages were internal to this country, it would lead to 500 new households which would be likely to average 4 children per household. (This is based on experience from other immigrant groups where family size usually halves that of the first generation by the second generation.) With 60% of marriages involving a spouse from overseas, the number of households goes up to 800 and, with many of the spouses being first generation, family size is likely to be significantly larger. So whereas 500 internal marriages might be expected to produce 2,000 offspring, the 800 marriages are likely to produce 4,000 offspring. This leads to very rapid population growth. In the eighties the Council estimated that the Muslim population would reach 130,000 by 2030 and then level. Now the projection is for 130,000 by 2020 and rising. The number of separate households is predicted to rise from 16,000 now to 40,000 in 2020. This rate

of growth concentrated in particular areas puts severe demands on the public services. It has other ramifications. Many of the children arrive at school with little or no English. Many of those who come from overseas have little education and do not possess skills which are transferable to a Western economy. The high family size means overcrowding will be a persistent problem."

9. This Annex was not published at the time because it was regarded as too "sensitive". The decision not to publish reflects the instinct to cover up the reality of the situation which was prevalent at that time.

10. The impact can also be seen when we look at births to foreign-born mothers in areas which have a high percentage of their population of Bangladeshi or Pakistani descent. In Bradford, for instance, which has an ethnic minority population of 22% (of whom two-thirds are of Pakistani descent), the percentage of children born to foreign-born mothers is 30%. In Tower Hamlets which has an ethnic minority population of 49% (of whom just over two-thirds are of Bangladeshi origins), the percentage of children born to foreign born mothers is 68% .[7]

11. The high prevalence of arranged marriages with partners from the ISC therefore has a major impact on the ability of these communities, particularly the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities, to integrate into British society. The communities are being constantly refreshed by new immigrants, many of whom do not speak English, who will have little contact with other ethnic groups and whose children may well arrive at school unable to speak English. The rapid growth in households puts pressure on the housing supply in "ghetto" areas. There is also, of course, a substantial effect on the ethnic population. Between 1991 and 2001 the Pakistani population of Manchester, Birmingham and Bradford increased by between 46 and 53%.

12. Employment prospects for immigrants from Bangladesh and Pakistan are very poor. New immigrants from Bangladesh and Pakistan have employment rates of 42.8% and 44% respectively (compared with 73% for the British born population). The percentage of new Bangladeshi and Pakistani immigrants earning less than 50% of median earnings are at 63.3% and 35.4% respectively compared to 21% for the British-born population.[8].

13. Previous Migrationwatch papers have shown that the high growth of the ethnic minority population in some parts of the conurbations of the West Midlands, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire is leading to a reduction in the white population in these areas.[9] This phenomenon has now been recognised in recent research presented to the Royal Geographical Society [10]. The report states that: "One of the major features of change in the past decade has been the greater mix by most ethnic groups with the host community.... But within major cities there are growing ethnic enclaves. The study looked at 16 UK major cities and found that London and Bradford were home to the most isolated ethnic communities. Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups are increasingly separated within polarised enclaves ..."

14. The Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality has recently spoken in stark terms about the risk of "sleepwalking" into racial segregation with Muslim and black ghettos dividing cities. He pointed out that the number of people of Pakistani heritage living in ghettos, which he defined as areas with more than two thirds of any one ethnicity, trebled between 1991 and 2001. However, he made no substantive reference to immigration, still less to internationally arranged marriages which are a very important aspect of the problem.

Rules on marriage

15. The current rules on marriage are essentially that both partners must be 18, one must be settled in the UK, they must have met and they must be able to provide themselves with accommodation and be able to maintain themselves without recourse to public funds.[11] The applicant must also show that each of the parties intends to live permanently with the other as his or her spouse and that the marriage is subsisting.

16. The Government has claimed that it intends to stop 'chain migration' but by this it means merely that it will delay those who have settled on a family reunion basis from sponsoring settlement of further family members for a period of 5 years.[12] They have also said that they will consider raising the age at which leave to enter the UK is granted to a spouse from 18 to 21, if this is necessary to combat forced marriages.

Policy Proposals

17. We consider that the potential problems resulting from the present isolation of ethnic communities are rendered even more difficult by the continued acceptance of arranged transcontinental marriage and a fundamental review is required of the immigration rules governing marriage to non-EU citizens.

18. Denmark and the Netherlands have already recognised the problems caused by chain migration through marriage and have taken effective steps to restrict migration by this route. In Denmark "the proportion of newly wed immigrants and descendants from non- Western countries who have married a person living abroad has declined significantly in connection with the tighter rules of the Aliens Act." (It fell from 62.7% in 2001 to 43.2% in 2003.)[13]

19 In September 2004 Migrationwatch set out proposed changes to the rules. Our proposals were:

- a) In order to qualify, both parties must have reached the age of 24 (now 21 - see below);
- b) It must be clear that the marriage is not forced;
- c) The marriage contract should explicitly permit divorce at the wife's instigation;
- d) The residence and support requirements should be substantially tightened and properly enforced;
- e) Residence should be granted initially for a maximum of 2 years. Permanent residence should not be granted until the couple have lived together in the country for at least 7 years;
- f) Those whose arranged marriages end in divorce should not be permitted to sponsor the immigration of further marriage partners.

20. We believe that tighter rules must now be introduced if the formation of ghettos is to be held in check. The general age for the admission of spouses should be 21 but the rules should specifically target transcontinental arranged marriages in order to bring an end to chain migration. Accordingly, we propose a new test for the admission to Britain of foreign spouses, fianc(e)s and partners. This "Family Connection Test" would apply if the UK resident (or either of his or her parents) was born in the same country as the intended spouse, fianc(e) or partner. In such cases an entry clearance certificate would be granted only when both parties had attained the age of 24.

21. This change would have a number of benefits for the communities concerned. It would virtually remove the incentive for forced marriages and would greatly reduce family pressure on young people to marry from overseas. In the longer term it would greatly improve the integration

of these communities and reduce the development of ghettos to the benefit of British society as a whole.

22. The test would not, of course, be applied to EU citizens who have the right to reside freely in the UK. Nor would it be applied where the foreign citizen is from a country where English is the sole official language of that country; people from such countries are highly unlikely to pose integration problems in the UK.

22 September, 2005

NOTES

- [1] Control of Immigration statistics UK 2002 table 2.2
- [2] Estimate in Lord Ouseley's report on the disturbances in Bradford, "Race Relations in Bradford" by GV Mahony (The Council's Principal Race Relations Officer 1984-1990)
- [3] Home Office Control of Immigration Statistics 2003 CM 6363. Extensions assumed to be in the same proportion of men and women as admissions.
- [4] ONS Birth Statistics: Series FM no. 32 -table 9.5
- [5] Source as 3. Table 9.1 and 2001 census for England and Wales table S101. This comparison gives percentages of 48%, 77% and 99% respectively for India, Pakistan and Bangladesh respectively. Reasons for these high percentages could include under - enumeration at the census and the likelihood that some mothers were born in the subcontinent and came to Britain as children. This needs further investigation.
- [6] Extract from Appendix 7 to Lord Ouseley's report on the disturbances in Bradford, "Race Relations in Bradford" by GV Mahony (The Council's Principal Race Relations Officer 1984 - 90).
- [7] ONS Birth Statistics: Series FM no. 32 -table 9.2
- [8] IPPR: Beyond Black and White.
- [9] www.migrationwatchuk.org Briefing paper no 9.13
- [10] Press release 'The growing ethnic enclaves in UK cities'.
- [11] Para 281 of the Immigration Rules (HC 395)
- [12] Five Year Strategy for Asylum and Immigration paragraph 39
- [13] Summary of Yearbook on Foreigners in Denmark 2004.