

CONFLICT RESOLUTION:
**A STUDY OF IDENTITY, SOCIAL/ECONOMIC
EXCLUSION, ISLAMOPHOBIA AND RACISM**

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Y. Fox-Howard
September 1997

Lampeter & Newham

DECLARATION

This work has not been previously accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed (candidate)

Date

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by endnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed (candidate)

Date

Signed

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan **after expiry of a bar on access approved by the University of Wales on the special recommendation of the Constituent/Associated Institution.**

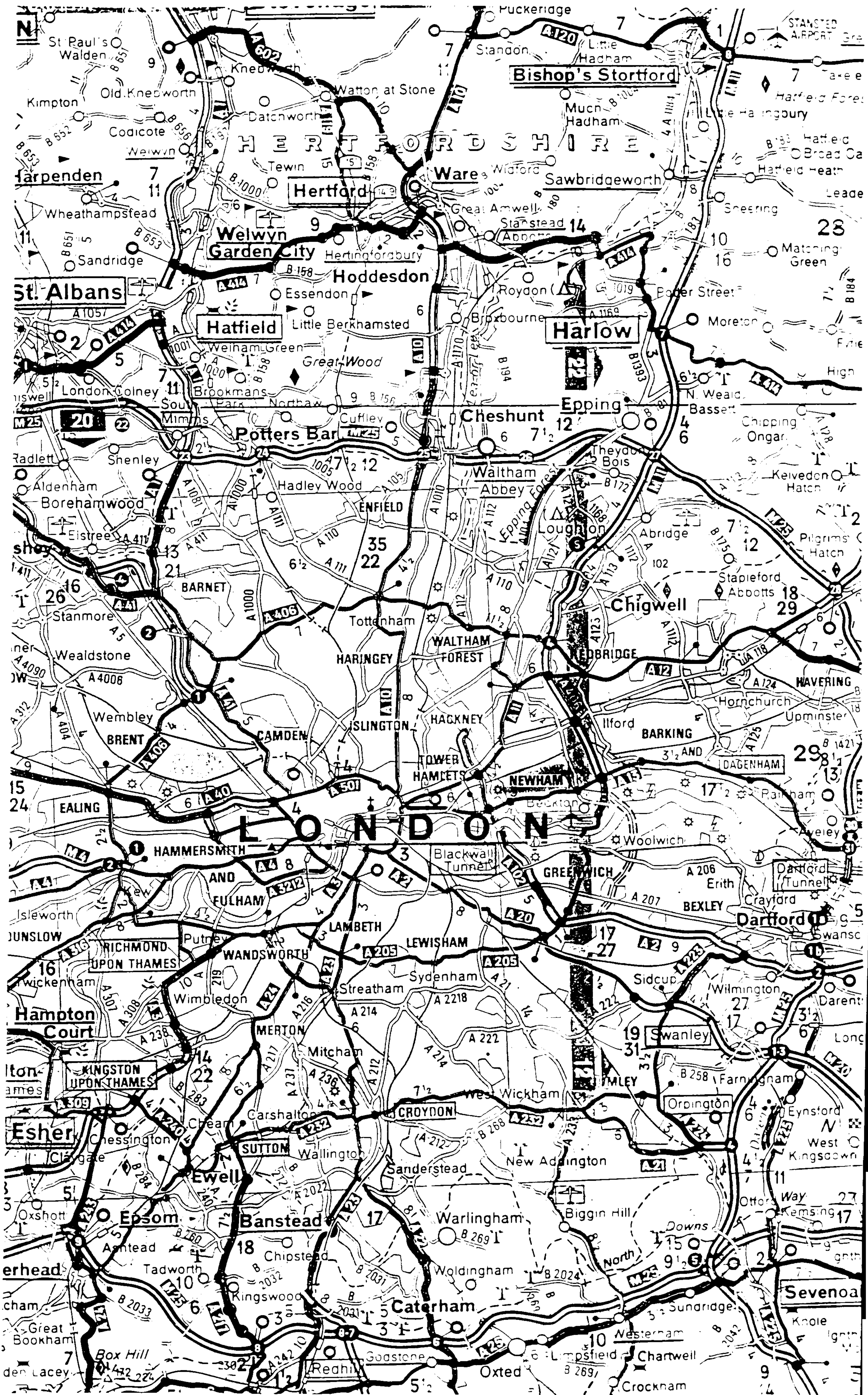
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Date

ABSTRACT

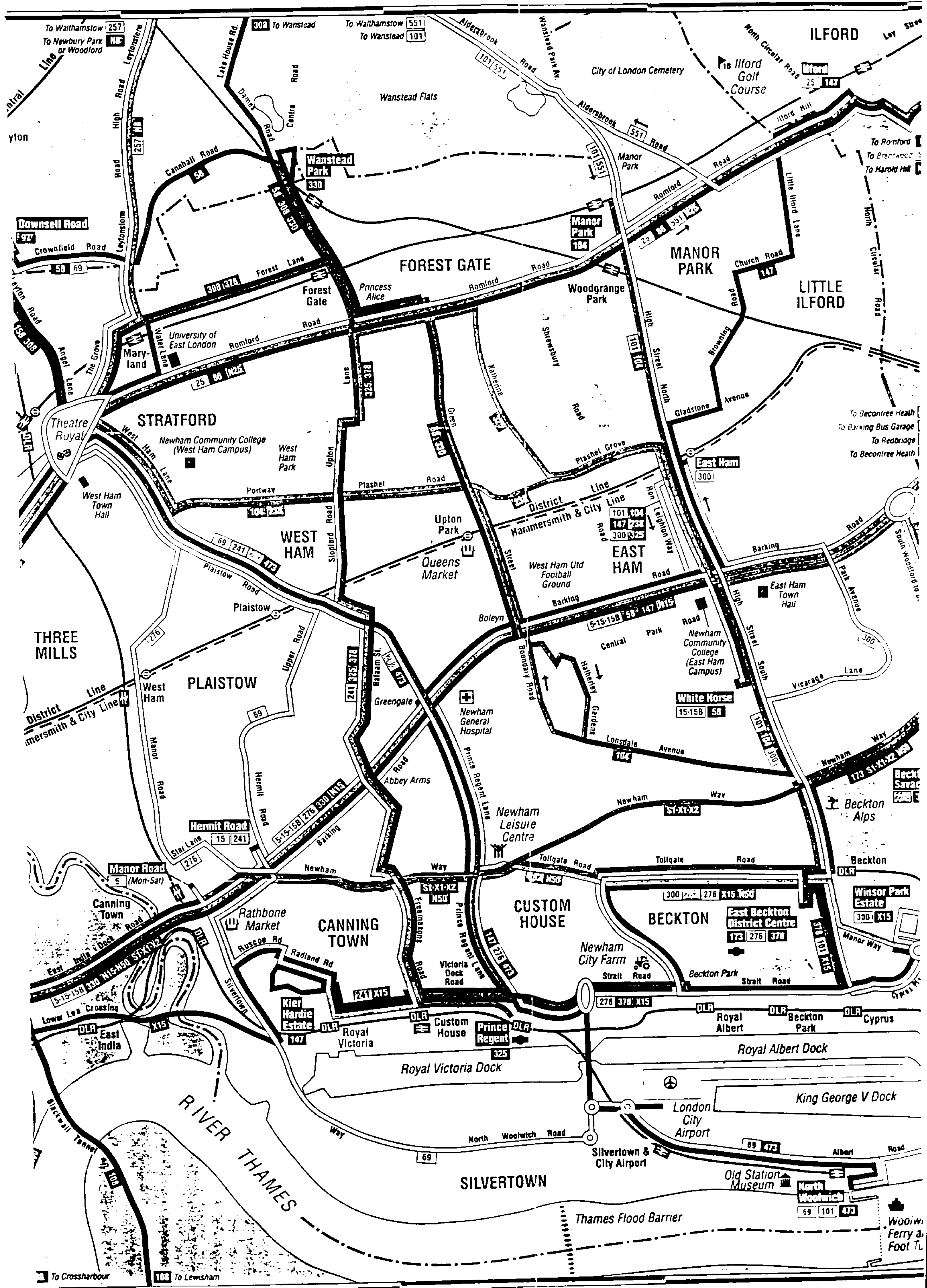
CONFLICT RESOLUTION: A STUDY OF IDENTITY, SOCIAL/ECONOMIC EXCLUSION, ISLAMOPHOBIA AND RACISM

This Ph.D. thesis seeks to develop the field of knowledge regarding Muslims, Conflict, and Conflict Resolution. It represents new scholarship within an under-researched field. Methodology utilises extensive fieldwork interviews undertaken within the London Borough of Newham, together with other primary and secondary sources of information. Aspects of informal and formal conflict resolution are addressed, with a focus on ‘cultural sensitivity’ and the concept of impartiality. Social/economic exclusion is examined within the context of urban regeneration, institutional racism and Islamophobia. Factors related to interpersonal communication and employer perceptions of Muslim ‘Black and Asian’ people as ‘culturally’ dissimilar are analysed - in connection with employment discrimination, and access to public service provision in Newham. The transmission and impact of public opinion is explored, in association with local media input, and the manifestations of racism in the neighbourhood. The perceptions of different parties towards the concept that “Islam is ‘oppressive’ towards women” is examined in detail. Aspects of group dynamics and interpersonal communication are discussed within the framework of ‘becoming local’, and the implications for refugee and/or underclass Muslim migrants. The thesis draws recommendations for the management of dysfunctional conflict in Newham, and suggestions are provided for policy action relevant to the reduction of Muslim social/economic exclusion, within the context of urban regeneration in Newham.



Greater London

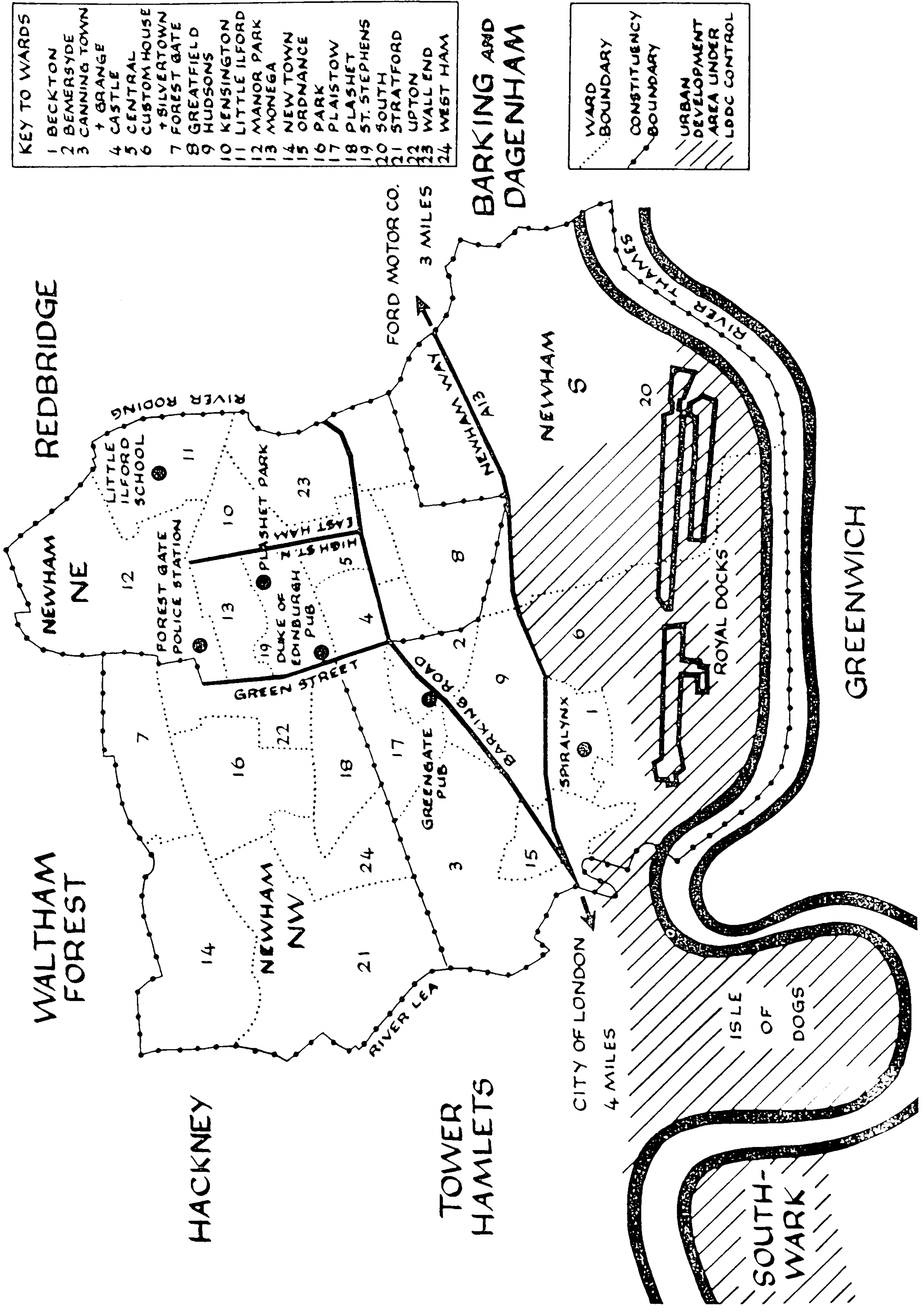
MAP TAKEN FROM: LONDON TRANSPORT GUIDE TO LOCAL SERVICES, N.D.



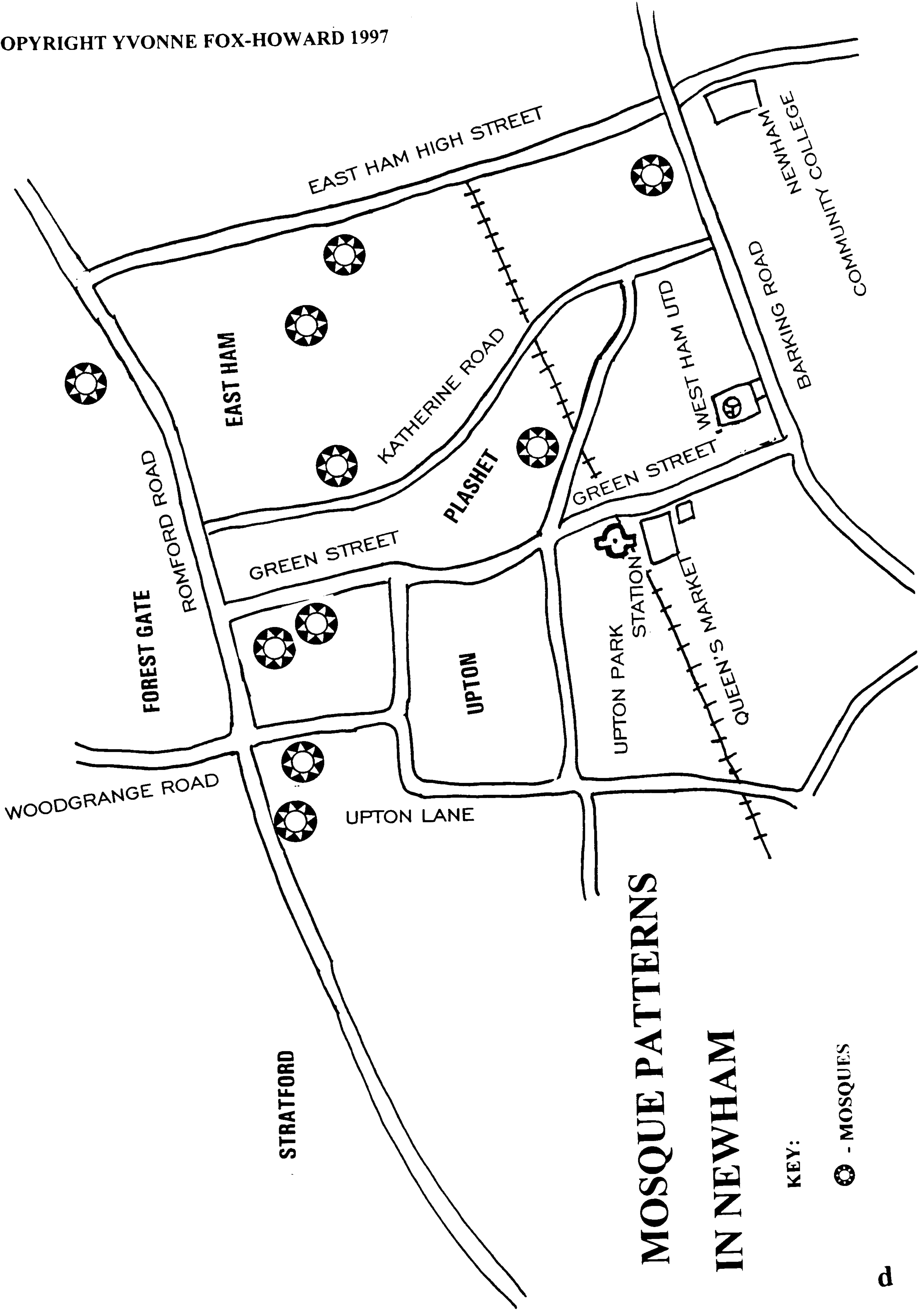
Newham: Outline of Research Neighbourhood

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MAP TAKEN FROM: NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT, NEWHAM: THE FORGING OF A BLACK COMMUNITY (NEWHAM: NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT/CAMPAIGN AGAINST RACISM AND FASCISM, 1991).



Newham: Wards



MOSQUE PATTERNS IN NEWHAM

KEY:
☉ - MOSQUES

1 INTRODUCTION

TRANSLATING EXPERIENCE: NAVIGATING ETHNO-CULTURAL BOUNDARIES WITHIN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

1.1. Preamble

This study represents an investigation into community relations, cultural adaptation, social environment, and intra-personal/inter-group conflict within Newham, an inner-city East London borough. The findings of this investigation are intended to provide educationalists, service providers, employers, community leaders and policy makers with an analysis of the complex issues concerning Muslims in contemporary Newham society.

There are numerous factors to consider, regarding issues associated with community development, culture and conflict, diversity, social and economic status, and gender - which place emphasis upon the Muslims of Newham and the complexity of community relations. With regard to this, the study does not claim to locate its validity in being representative of the lives of all Muslims in Newham; however, it does address some of the broad concerns relative to many 'local' Muslims raised within the broader Newham infrastructure. The views of Muslims in Newham are diverse. They are informed and influenced by a complex of factors relating to differences in social and economic backgrounds, religion and

kinship ties with countries of origination, experience of residence within Newham, and the experiences of others.

This prima facie investigation represents new scholarship on an otherwise unexplored area of research within the U.K. The London Borough of Newham is one of the most neglected areas of study in terms of communal relations, diversity, and conflict, yet the region contains the most diverse population within the U.K. Muslims within Newham have a long and established history, yet they are largely unrepresented within academic discourse; discussions tending to reflect Muslim concerns within the wider context of Muslims in Britain, or more specifically the East End of London - generally concentrates on the Bangladeshis within the adjacent London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Research considering Newham's Muslim has largely occurred within the context of events within specific sectors - for example in the south of the Borough. Events occurring in Newham are often reported within the local and national media, primarily within the political framework of a relationship to criminal activity, conflict, and racial harassment.

There are numerous factors to consider, regarding issues associated with community development, culture and conflict, diversity, social and economic status and gender - which place emphasis upon the Muslims of Newham and the complexity of community relations. With regard to this, the study does not claim to locate its validity in being representative of the lives of all Muslims in Newham; however, it does address some of the broad concerns relative to many

‘local’ Muslims raised within the broader Newham infrastructure. The views of Muslims in Newham are diverse. They are informed and influenced by a complex of factors relating to differences in social and economic backgrounds, religion and kinship ties with countries of origination, experience of residence within Newham, and the experiences of others.

This investigation focuses on conflict, and Conflict Resolution centred upon Newham’s Muslim population as a model. General trends may be established and evaluated, which may have similar applications in other contexts and environments within the UK. Research builds upon a professional background in Group Dynamics and Interpersonal Communications, centred around cultural diversity, community relations, and the management of dysfunctional conflict.

This thesis encompasses an exploration of the link between socio-economic and political aspects of ‘race and racism’, including the historical context of race relations and its implications for community developments, and the resolution of cross-cultural conflict within a Muslim context in Britain. Interactions between the white population of Newham and Muslims in the borough have been informed by historical factors relating to the British economic situation and colonisation. Historically, ‘Black and Asian’ people were classified according to real or imagined characteristics. Entire ‘population groups’ were classified into a hierarchical order which culminated in the delineation of boundaries between people within the social and political power structures of Britain and the former colonies/dominions. At a micro-neighbourhood level these factors are significant

amongst elements within the white population with regard to definitions of 'the local'. It would be simplistic to refer to Newham's local Muslims as 'migrants', however, this would ignore several significant factors which serve to differentiate them from other elements within the population. The researcher classifies the Muslims of Newham within three broad categories; all of whom share some common factors within their respective 'groups'. These factors are not necessarily related to ideas of 'belonging' in terms of 'ethnicity' and 'race', nor religious/cultural identities, but rather, the context surrounding levels of interaction within the social and economic environment:

1. *Local Muslims*
2. *Refugee and/or underclass Muslims*
3. *Muslim Economic Nomadic Migrants*

The researcher intends the term '*Local Muslims*' to refer to those resident within the region for a substantial period of time sufficient to demonstrate an understanding of interpersonal communication patterns, particular to aspects of Newham. Knowledge of these codes might ordinarily equip the local with an ability to comprehend aspects of the social environment. This might include perceptiveness in 'reading and interpreting situations' and the development of specific styles and patterns of interpersonal communication.

Local Muslims in Newham would ordinarily have greater access to forms of political power and social status within the broader Newham socio/economic

context than '*Refugee and/or Underclass Migrant Muslim*' newcomer populations.

The term 'underclass' is defined as:

"A term sometimes used for the poor who are also denied full participation or citizenship in their societies. It may refer to unemployed workers who do the least desirable jobs and are also denied the basic legal political and social rights of the rest of the labour force. ...

"... it may refer to particular groups whose poverty derives from their non-employment ; the long-term unemployed, single-parent families, the elderly. Such long-term poverty is felt to exclude them from the full life of an overall affluent community."¹

Additionally, this second group may introduce 'unfamiliar cultural practices' into the neighbourhoods. There may be striking cultural variations in terms of language and patterns of communication, which may be unfamiliar to, and/or rejected by 'local populations'. This group would not be classified as 'local' on the basis that they have received little - if any - of the socialising processes particular to Newham; processes that might ordinarily enable further participation and greater social and economic inclusion.

Among Newham's newcomer Muslims are *Economic Nomadic Migrants*.₂ This refers to those residents who arrived, following the advent of the Urban Regeneration programme within the region. This group of migrants, are, in the main, composed of skilled educated professionals. This group of migrants are powerful, in that they are able to access and utilise the existing infrastructure.² The professional classes of newcomer migrants may, like refugee migrants, lack knowledge, understanding, and the ability to demonstrate and exhibit local codes,

patterns and styles of inter-personal communication. These migrants might ordinarily reside amongst similars in terms of class, social and economic status - unlike many of the refugee or underclass migrants who tend to live in state-controlled council housing or impoverished sectors within neighbourhoods.³ Economic nomadic migrants might ordinarily be professional, skilled, and in lucrative employment. These migrants, are not usually subject to the constraints imposed upon refugee and/or underclass migrants. The second group - containing many Muslims - are primarily 'Black and Asian', and of 'underclass' and/or refugee status. They may have held professional status within countries of origination, but lack sufficient English-language fluency to be able to utilise their skills fully within Newham and the U.K. Income is a factor which to some extent, may determine elements of the experience of Muslims in the region. This may relate to housing and welfare conditions, access to opportunity, and matters connected with integration and/or assimilation. Economic migrants form part of the decision making bodies relating to the priorities and needs of the Muslims of Newham.

1.2. Thesis Structure

This investigation is underpinned by the following questions:

1. Is there a Common Identity which Muslims in Newham are a part of?
2. Could the position of 'the marginal' assist in resolving conflict?⁴
3. Do non-Muslim beliefs about Muslims inform community relationships?
4. Does racism impact on the experiences of Muslims in Newham?
5. How does racism and Islamophobia impact upon social/economic exclusion?
6. Does conflict management have a role to play, within the context of Muslim 'communities' in Newham?

These research questions relate to the following objectives:

1. To determine whether there are factors resulting in the development of a common collective Newham identity which includes Muslims, and if so, how this relates to the experiences of Muslims in Newham.
2. To explore the situation of Newham's Muslims in terms of socialisation and interaction, within what for some Muslims may be conflicting dual identities, potentially resulting in marginalisation.
3. To examine the impact of non-Muslim beliefs regarding Muslims, Islamophobia, and Racism on certain sectors of the Muslim/non-Muslim population.
4. To determine the impact of individual and institutional racism and Islamophobia on Muslims, in terms of social/economic exclusion and access to public-services.
5. To examine factors contributing to the development of 'specific' types of conflict in Newham, and approaches to conflict management.
6. To development a research paradigm appropriate to the conduct of this investigation.

Chapter One introduces the research methodology developed and adopted

by the researcher within the context of the thesis. The methodology is analysed in relation to its relevance within the London Borough of Newham.

Chapter Two introduces Newham, and provides an overview of the historical development of the borough, noting patterns of migration and settlement, the polarisation of communities, and the construction of specific identities within a neighbourhood context. The challenges of ‘ethnic’ diversity, and the implications for community relations and conflict, are examined within their relationship to historical analysis, racism, and Islamophobia. Aspects of informal and formal Conflict Resolution are addressed, with a focus on ‘cultural sensitivity’ and the concept of impartiality.

Chapter Three examines social/economic exclusion within the context of urban regeneration, institutional racism and Islamophobia. The local economy and the distribution of wealth is addressed regarding discrimination in employment, and perceptions of conflict as an inhibitor of change. Factors related to Interpersonal Communication and employer perceptions of Muslim ‘Black and Asian’ people as ‘culturally’ dissimilar are discussed - in connection with employment discrimination, and access to public service provision in Newham.

Chapter Four explores the relationship between community resources, poverty, racism, and Islamophobia in Newham. The transmission and impact of public opinion is discussed, in association with local media input, and the

manifestations of racism in the neighbourhood. Key factors include: housing shortages; fears of being 'overrun' by Muslims; a perceived 'growth' in Islam; *and* stereotypes associating Muslims with criminal activity, disease, and women's 'oppression'.

Chapter Five questions one of these stereotypes in detail: the perceptions of different parties towards the concept that "Islam is 'oppressive' towards women." Religions and cultural factors are discussed, in the context of a case study on domestic violence in the neighbourhood. The 'under-reporting' of domestic violence in Newham is examined in relation to a 'conspiracy of silence', noting concepts of shame, honour, and racism as contributory factors. The practice of informal conflict resolution provided by organisational assistance within this framework is explored. These issues are of key significance regarding aspects of inter-group conflict, and the support it provides to non-Muslim views regarding Muslims as the 'other' (upholding an 'inferior', 'foreign' and 'oppressive' belief system which seeks to dominate 'non-Muslims').

Chapter Six explores the concept of 'East' and 'West', in terms of a relationship to the development of a common identity, adaptation, patterns and manifestations of conflict within the family and kinship network. Specific examples relating to marriage, deception, juvenile delinquency, and religion are considered. The application of conflict resolution - in relation to the problems occurring within Muslim/Islamic contexts in Newham - is addressed. Aspects of group dynamics and interpersonal communication are discussed within the

framework of 'becoming local', and the implications for refugee and/or underclass Muslim migrants.

Chapter Seven draws together some of the key issues and findings incorporated within the thesis, and suggests future possible developments within the research field.

1.3. Terminology

The terminology and subsequent definitions used within this study support the process and method of inquiry *within the context of the researcher's meaning and usage*. This includes developed emphasis, where appropriate, based upon findings arising from within the research investigation. The researcher introduces specific terms, in order to avoid disruption within the text by constantly recurring thematic expressions. Terms found within the text may not be prescriptive or standardised in relation to any one particular academic discipline.

The term 'ethnic minority' is a contentious one, and the subject of academic discourse. It may bear little relation to the 'self perception' of Muslims in Newham. This term, however, is in constant usage within the borough's social and political discourse, and has acquired validity as a known and recognisable reference. There are difficulties associated with defining 'ethnic minority,' given that it means so many things to so many different bodies and individuals. Many organisations prefer not to apply such a reductive term within their literature and policy documentation. Any usage within this thesis is made with these thoughts in mind.

The terms 'Asian', 'Muslim', 'white', 'Black', and 'Black and Asian' are to be found within this thesis. Whilst it is not the purpose of this thesis to argue the semantics of these key terms, brief points are made for the purposes of clarity within the text:.

“Black is a political term used to denote those people who originate from Africa, the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent who may be disadvantaged because of their skin colour.”⁵

However, this term is not favoured among many people professing South Asian ancestry. The term ‘Black and Asian’ has acquired particular significance, and may possess a greater degree of acceptability than ‘Black’ as an inclusive category for ‘all’ people considered to exist within the framework of social/political/colour classification. The researcher undertakes to use the term ‘Black and Asian’ as a main category of reference within the context of this thesis.⁶

The researcher’s use of the term ‘racism’ as used within this thesis is intended to refer to a specific idea which equates ‘cultural’ differences with a supposed biological inferiority. In this regard biological factors are presumed to be consistent with intelligence and ability. Racism is distinguishable from prejudice, in that the latter contains a component of power, which is manifested within the social/economic/ and political framework. The term is also currently used in the broader contexts of discrimination relating to ‘white on white’, ‘black on black’ and ‘black on white’ discrimination. Use of the term in this broad context may have significant implications regarding ‘white on black’ discrimination.

1.4. Research Methodology

1.4.1. Introduction to Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This section focuses on the research methodology developed and deployed in support of the research programme and provides a detailed account of factors influencing the study. The development of an appropriate research methodology was informed by a review of specific research paradigms, and evolved during the course of this research. Methodology was adopted within the context of developments, occurring within the dynamic interactive processes of the task element in conjunction with aspects of theoretical guidance.

Existing research informed the mental framework from which to assess the potential pitfalls associated with the process of this type of sensitive research enquiry; however, no pre-existing model was found to be wholly appropriate for the conduct of this specific research programme within the London Borough of Newham. The focus of the research falls within a multi-disciplinary framework, incorporating discussion and analysis from within sociology, 'race and ethnic relations', anthropology, theology, psychology, socio-linguistical, and literary contexts. The research approach forms links between elements of existing theoretical knowledge and the dynamic interactive process of action research. This multi-disciplinary approach - demonstrated by the broad range of bibliographic sources - was not inhibited and confined to one specific theoretical body of knowledge.

Whilst many issues discussed in this thesis are debated elsewhere within and across specific disciplines, these discourses are not fully applicable in relation to the research aims of the thesis. In the absence of a specific theoretical framework that could appropriately accommodate the divergent aspects of the research focus, it became necessary to formulate a new framework. Reference to the bibliography demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of the theoretical framework, and suggests the inherent difficulties involved in completing a case study which of necessity encompasses such broad-based categories. Roland Barthes noted that:

"Interdisciplinary work, so much discussed these days, is not about confronting already constituted disciplines (none of which, in fact, is willing to let itself go). To do something interdisciplinary it's not enough to choose a 'subject' (a theme) and gather around it two or three sciences. Interdisciplinary consists in creating a new object that belongs to no one."⁷

In the context of this research, the 'new object' incorporates themes of conflict management, socialization, gender politics, identity and 'racism'. The theoretical framework is guided by 'race and ethnic relations' theory, with a specific emphasis on racism, ethnicity, and discrimination in the U.K. This focus formed a major component of the researcher's previous academic work, which explored racism, colonialism, the British economy, post-World War Two migration and 'racial discrimination' within an inter-disciplinary framework.⁸ The field of race and ethnic relations has particular significance within this study:

"Ethnicity and racial relations are almost universally seen as a prime motivating force behind social conflict and change. Often volatile and complex, racial interaction resonates through all aspects of contemporary society. Social issues which appear to have little connection to race often become entangled with ethnic friction to create far more complex

problems. Race is often used by individuals and political organisations to further their own objectives.”⁹

Although the theoretical framework is largely formed within the context of ‘race and ethnic relations’, the research content of the thesis goes beyond this boundary.¹⁰ This research does not constitute a sociological or anthropological study, although aspects of guidance are derived from within these structures, amongst others. This thesis could not be appropriately evaluated within the context of these disciplinary fields; for although aspects of the thesis’ issue content are widely debated within sociology and anthropology, there is considerable divergence in form and methodological approach. If this thesis were to be assessed purely within the context of the fields discussed above, there would be clear gaps of omission in terms of theoretical discussion, form, and methodology.

The researcher has entitled her methodology ‘*Interactive Dynamics in Process- and Task-Orientated Guided Action Research*’. This term takes account of the interplay between the various process- and task- orientated elements in the conduct of field research, with theoretical guidance drawn from an interdisciplinary framework.

1.4.2. Establishing Relationships within the Field of Enquiry: Community Access.

Establishing relationships within the field of enquiry primarily occurred within the natural course of the researcher's professional, and private role within Newham. The nature of the researcher's relationship to Newham is defined within a context of 'insiderness' and 'outsiderness': 'insiderness' refers to components of residency and access, whereas 'outsiderness' relates to the 'academic' elements of the researcher role. The researcher established levels of trust with many of Newham's residents, acquiring levels of 'insider' status. This status has resulted in assisted access to Newham's communities.¹¹

The researcher's involvement consisted of participation and the sharing of experiences occurring within the context of the development and life of the community. The benefits of immersion are recognised by researchers, whilst acknowledging the dynamics of interactive communication and the implications in relation to ethics, balance, emotionality, and partiality. Anderson and Okely make a case for a re-assessment of prevalent research methodology that routinely favours detachment from the interactive experience between researcher and respondent. They suggest that attachment can be usefully productive within the context of research methodology:

“According to conventional methodology, the best data are those that are produced through minimal human contact and minimal interrelationship. Researchers are admonished not to get too emotionally involved with subjects. Such a method assumes the passivity of respondents and forces them to adapt to the situation as defined by the interviewer. Moreover

researchers are told never to inform interviewees of their own beliefs and values.”¹²

The role of the researcher within this investigation was informed by a period of 24 years' residence within the area of Newham, specifically within the north and south Newham boundaries of the study. During this period, the researcher acquired substantial knowledge, skills and experience connected to the region and the 'peoples' of Newham. Close links were - over this period of time - established and maintained with Newham residents, professional workers and organisations. This has resulted in the development of a wide network of contacts within Newham, and an understanding of the complex factors concerning the dynamics of community relations within this sector of East London.

The profile of the researcher therefore highlights factors significant to the development and construct of an innovative research methodology appropriate to the conduct of this investigation. This model draws upon the researcher's personal, professional, and academic experience relative to a professional input within the culturally diverse inner-city region of Newham. The research background to this investigation was informed by this extensive period of residence within this inner-city environment.

As a Newham resident and 'participant observer' within the broader Newham infrastructure and localised neighbourhood infrastructures, the researcher was afforded considerable access to the Muslims of Newham. The researcher was - and continues to be - throughout the period of residence, a participant in the usage

of and provision of public services. This led to acceptance within numerous neighbourhood discussions, and access to privileged information potentially denied to an 'outsider'.

The researcher's professional employment, within the sphere of Adult Education and Community Development, was located within the public, private, and voluntary services. Professional duties contributed to community access - and the development of a 'localised' approach to the research investigation. This approach combined practical experience of local community research, community liaison and outreach, training and development with professional expertise in Mediation, and Conflict Resolution; specialising in dimensions of inter-personal and trans-cultural conflict, and the establishment of pro-active crisis prevention systems. Employment, prior to the commencement of this investigation, did not have as its focus academic inquiry, but rather, was grounded within the normative structure of 'earning a living'. In terms of research focus, and subjective approaches to academic inquiry, this factor has been significant.

As a Newham resident, and community relations professional, the researcher was already an 'insider' in terms of access to certain information regarding Muslims of Newham, 'the stories, the patterns and conflicts of communication, and community concerns. Throughout the period of the investigation, the researcher continued to benefit from community access, combining this with research writing, academic analysis, and documentation of data. The researcher has worked specifically with Muslims in Newham - in a variety of community-

based organisations. Maintenance of respondent confidentiality means that full details of this work cannot be placed within the public domain of this thesis. Identification of certain organisations could expose them to potential problems regarding funding allocation, ethical considerations, and public debate.

The researcher has delivered 'culture sensitive' training in 'essential skills development' and 'community interest topics' within the public service sector. Over time, this created a familiarity with the training needs of the culturally-diverse inner-city region of Newham. Training experience involved devising and delivering customised training and consultancy services at staffing, senior management, community, and service user levels. Participants have included civil service employees within public sector organisations; for example, the National Health service, council employees, teaching staff, and students in Adult Education. Within a professional capacity, the researcher has acted as an advisor and consultant on mediation, dispute resolution and creative approaches to problem solving, specialising in dimensions of cultural sensitive conflict transformation, and the establishment of pro-active crisis prevention systems.

The main activities relating to the researcher's professional background, within the context of this research, were focused within aspects of community development, conflict resolution, and adult education. A substantial part of this process incorporates the conduct of local research, community liaison, and the design and delivery of culture sensitive training interventions, including community interest training programmes. The researcher produced a broad range

of courses relating to vocational and community interest topics. These courses attracted Muslim participants from diverse social, economic and educational backgrounds (from unemployed youth refugees recently arrived in the U.K., to medical and legal professionals). Ages ranged from 17 years to 50 years of age.

1.4.3. East End: 'Insiders' and 'Outsiders'

Knowledge of sub-cultural East End values could be said to improve the life chances of an individual resident, and increase access to the benefits associated with 'group belonging'. For example, although Newham contains population groups from diverse ethno-cultural-religious backgrounds, there are in existence 'symbolic markers', which may serve to identify a person as 'local'. This view is reflected by many Newham residents, who believe that there are distinct patterns of verbal and non-verbal communication, which provide information regarding 'insider/outsider' identities. Acceptance as an 'insider' can provide access to privileged information, which may ordinarily be denied to the 'outsider.'

The researcher has within the context of residence benefitted from the gradual development of localised forms of communication. These patterns and styles of interpersonal communication include linguistic expression and body language. These acquired codes have become part of an automatic system of natural expression, exhibited within specific contexts and environments.

Within Newham there are many speech patterns associated with dialect,

accent, and idiomatic expressions, which may become familiar to those spending considerable time within the region. Stereotypical attitudes exist within Newham relating to usage of the English language; regarding speakers of 'standard English' as members of a powerful infrastructure. Standardised forms of English Language are often perceived as a threat to local cultures within Newham. These stereotypes relate to notions of power and authority, which may have been conveyed by mass media, and historical association.

Views were expressed by members of the 'white working class', and 'Black and Asian' Muslims, concerning 'outsider' bias.¹³ These views related to the conduct of research within the area by 'non-Newham people'. 'Non-local' researchers were said to be largely unaffected by the outcomes and implications of research. This was in terms of research findings and the implications upon local policy, institutional frameworks and services, utilized by resident populations. Criticisms related to the imposition of presumed value judgements, and misrepresentation, regarding Newham community residents.

"Many factors influence the investigator's choice of a research problem and the way in which he [sic] formulates it. His disciplinary background and his general theoretical orientation ... will affect his views of what variables are important, what kinds of data should be collected, what methods are most appropriate, and what concepts should be employed in his theoretical formulations. But in addition, it must be recognised that he conducts his research in a particular society and is influenced by his participation in that society ... he holds certain values and is unlikely to design a research project whose major purpose would be a better understanding of how to undermine those values ..."¹⁴

Popular perception incorporated a view that there is in existence a specific

'Newham East End' culture; and that this culture, and its forms of expression are often misunderstood by 'outsiders' to the region. The 'outside' researchers' experience of the dynamics of community relations at a 'grass roots' neighbourhood level within Newham may be minimal, leading to inaccurate assessments, presumed value judgements, and the imposition of policy which residents may regard as inappropriate. Certain organisations, for example the *Newham Conflict and Change Project*, in 1994, maintained a policy restricting voting rights to residents of the borough.

Notions of insider-outsider identity could relate to the researcher, regarding non-Muslim status:

"Insiders studying their own culture offer new angles of vision and depths of understanding. Their accounts are empowered and restricted in unique ways."¹⁵

For example, although Muslims researchers may possess a unique insight into Muslim affairs, some Muslim researchers may conduct research within the context of a specific Muslim 'school' of thought, which follows a particular interpretation of Islam. Bias and partiality may result in judgement in much the same way as a 'non-Muslim' conducting research with regard to Muslims, where questions may arise regarding religious affiliation, 'ethnocentrism', and/or Islamophobia and racism.

The researcher argues that shared characteristics between the Muslims of

Newham and the researcher (i.e. corporate Newham Community Culture and the experience of racism) has created an atmosphere of trust which transcends notions of Muslim unity and identity. Factors influencing the relationship between the researcher, the Muslims of Newham, and other local populations include shared experiences, knowledge, and customs arising from long standing interaction over the use of public services and consumerist activities.

This interaction, occurring over social, economic, and cultural boundaries has parallels with the point made by Tonkins regarding inter-border communication:

“The location of a border is affected by the relations of production and the internal relationships of people or peoples within a space or a ‘territory’, as well as by their external relationships with the peoples in the next territory or further way. It may also derive from the interests of groups or classes living far from it.”¹⁶

The researcher does not appear to have been identified as 'belonging' to the social-economic strata of the dominant power infrastructure, resulting in admittance to certain viewpoints:

" ... the indigenous researcher knows the geographical terrain, the linguistic codes, and the social rules."¹⁷

It has been established within Newham and the U.K. as a whole, that ‘Black and Asian’ tend to experience levels of discrimination within the dominant 'white' authority infrastructure'.¹⁸ Discrimination has been identified within many of the principal public services, and employment fields. Recognition of this

discrimination can engender distrust and a reluctance to co-operate with those perceived as powerful. Certain Muslims indicated to the researcher a level of distrust of 'middle-class white' authoritative figures who sought information - often referred to in the context of racism, particularly among male Muslim respondents. Power and authority was perceived to belong within a 'middle class white orientated infrastructure', often associated with distant professionals, public authority figures, institutional organisations, and academia. The term 'authoritative figures' can be interpreted as referring to: professional people who tend to use standardised forms of English Language; have attained considered status roles within the power structures of influence; and do not exhibit local cultural patterns of communication. The level of distrust, expressed by members of the 'white working class' and Muslims of colour, towards 'white authority figures' may not be as prevalent with regard to white working-class researchers, who might achieve greater community access.¹⁹

“We should not assume that white scholars are unable to generate research with people of colour as research subjects, but we must acknowledge and challenge white privilege and question how such privilege may shape research experiences. Developing analyses that are inclusive of race, class, and gender also requires that discussions of race, class, and gender be thoroughly integrated into debates about research process and the analysis of data. This requires an acknowledgement of the complex, multiple, and contradictory identities and realities that shape our collective experience. As whites learn to see the world through the experiences of others, a process that is itself antithetical to the views of privileged groups, we can begin to construct more complete and less distorted ways of seeing the complex relations of race, class, and gender.”²⁰

Linda Williamson Nelson raised the issue of class and ‘class-difference’

between the researcher and the fieldwork informant:

"It is obvious that it is not possible for me to share class membership with all of my informants. However, in the course of the fieldwork, I realised that the range of economic circumstances within which I have lived for my childhood to the present time makes it possible for me to identify with the experience of impoverishment, working class, and middle class women.²¹

1.4.4. Data Collection: Field Work Methods and Techniques of Investigation

The researcher's approach to the formulation of the research problem was informed by 'disciplinary background and theoretical orientation.' These considerations inform the conceptual development of theory, data selection and method of gathering, and significance of variables within the research. Matters connected to researcher objectivity and subjectivity, role and responsibilities, were a subject of focus within this research and within the field of investigative procedures. The conduct of research is not 'culture-free': the methods, practices, and cultural influences are impacted upon by a number of factors:

"A belief acts as a filter to sensory information and determines what a person pays attention to and includes in their model of the world, and thus also what they delete. All perceptions are accurate given the frame of reference, but incomplete because data is always deleted."²²

The researcher was not removed from the influence of Newham, of which she was a part, but rather, has embraced and utilised the privilege of 'Newham community access' denoted by familiarity with the borough:

"As found in other work on race and ethnic relations, the women in this study were savvy to the potentially exploitative character of academic research. Many told stories about past researchers who had come to study them but who had not, in their eyes, done a very good job. They talked at length about what was wrong with the researcher's approaches, personalities, and attitudes. They scoffed at the presumption of many researchers that they could come to this community and learn about women's lives from a distance."²³

The researcher resides within Newham, is subject to the influence of local politics, grass-roots opinion, and occurrences arising in relation to that community. The researcher's procedure and analysis is informed by that relationship.²⁴ The view that the researcher, as a resident, had a vested interest within the region, was considered by research informants to increase possibilities of a 'just interpretation' of community relations within the region:

"In the actual conduct of research the group dynamicist is bound to exert influences of one sort or another upon the groups he [sic] studies. Even in the field study, where he attempts to minimise this influence, the researcher establishes relationships that are bound to make a difference. For example, if he interviews or asks questions, he draws attention to certain phenomena ..."²⁵

Dennis discusses the advantages of participant observation, through which "first hand experience about the intimate facets of individual and group life" can be acquired. This is seen as particularly important in terms of analysing changes in institutional and organizational strategies, and in understanding "the dynamics of conflict and change in closed community settings". For Dennis, participant observation's advantage is that - when effectively conducted - it can be used to acquire "a greater awareness of complex and multiple network linkages among

individuals and groups in the community". Dennis notes that, participant observation, can be used to "understand the complex manner in which national values and ideas penetrate the local community ethos."²⁶

It is vital to understand the relationship between national and local values and ideas and the influence of these factors on the development and maintenance of conflict; the implications for conflict resolution within the neighbourhood; and the implications for urban regeneration, policy formulation, the allocation of community resources, and social and economic exclusion existing within the political processes of the institutional and organisational framework. Participant observation enables a level of community access, which according to Dennis, makes "[it] ... possible to understand the many dimensions of institutional and organizational power in community settings."²⁷ All these factors are significant when discussing the development of an appropriate research model to be used within Newham.

1.4.5. Data Collection: Resources

Academic resources are non-specific and limited with regard to the Muslims of Newham, resulting in a lack of research-based secondary source material. The researcher's secondary source information includes the accessing of local publications, for example: newspapers, posters, pamphlets, graffiti, London Borough of Newham publications, and other journals and documentation. This

information assisted in the formulation of concepts of enquiry regarding issues and community concerns, affecting community relations and Muslims in Newham.

1.4.6. Data Collection: Culture Sensitivity.

The gathering of data for this thesis utilised a multi-disciplinary, culture sensitive approach. It combined and incorporated established research principles, with a newly-formulated researcher-developed model, appropriate to the conduct of research within the inner-city urban region of Newham. The primary source of information regarding community relations and Muslims in Newham has been drawn from within the borough itself. This has necessitated the development of research techniques, appropriate to the specific elements of a broad based 'Newham sub-culture'. The nature of the research, the community politics of Newham, and the specific issues under investigation informed this process.

The fieldwork aspect of the research involved the techniques of participant observation, discussions, and informal interviews. The research has been conducted within the settings used by local people, for example, neighbourhood gatherings; market places; supermarket; on buses and in bus queues; community health centres; educational establishments; and social and welfare organisations. The unobstructed and unobtrusive observation of people within the 'natural environment' provided insight and access to Newham 'public opinion'.

A study-visit to Pakistan in 1995 informed the research, aiding in the

development of a culture sensitive approach to issues connected with data collection among Muslim women in Newham. One outcome of this visit was the ability to share elements of 'local knowledge' with Muslims in Newham. Familiarity with aspects of regions with Pakistan did at times enable a level of bonding to occur. This was represented within the comments expressed by Newham Muslims. For example: in relation to the researcher -"she knows", "she's been there, she's like us," were part of inclusive statements, demonstrating a level of 'insider' knowledge related to certain common understandings. Knowledge concerning cultural diversity and community sensitivities has played a significant role in the acquisition of information. The approach developed considered specific cultural values and customs, which have, to some extent transcended the socio-geo-political boundaries, and impact to some degree upon community relations and Muslims in the Newham context.

1.4.7. Data Collection: Ethical Considerations

The researcher acknowledges that her position as a non-Muslim investigating these issues can arouse suspicion concerning prejudice and stereotypes. Non-Muslims are often accused of seeking out the worst aspects of cultural practices regarding women and Islam. It is a fact that commentary concerning Muslims is often focused upon female oppression; the researcher attempts to counter this by obtaining the (varied) views of Muslims themselves. Many of the views reflected within this thesis are presented by Muslims *about* Muslims. Additionally, as a

'black' woman living in Newham amongst Muslim communities, accusations can be levelled that the researcher is placing information in the hands of those who would use selective information - out of context - for propaganda purposes..

Throughout the course of this investigation, the gathering of sensitive empirical data presented many such ethical considerations. Questions concerning the researcher's role and responsibility to the informants at times conflicted with the requirements of the investigation. For example, relationships developed with informants, during the process of establishing trust and confidence relevant to personal disclosure. The researcher employed skills of confidence building, through means of gesticulation and positive body language affirmation.²⁸ Information offered, at times, may have been the result of a developing closeness with the researcher on the basis of presumed shared beliefs, demonstrated by collective 'shared' knowledge, agreement, or opinion.²⁹

The researcher was concerned regarding the level of researcher/informant rapport developed. Rapport, necessary to create a safe environment for the eliciting of sensitive information, could create an artificial sense of security on the part of the informant. This, at times, may have resulted in the informant forgetting the nature of the relationship between the researcher and themselves. At times, a free flow of personal information was revealed within the context of this trust. The researcher, whilst not seeking to alter the nature of the interaction, judged it ethical - on occasion - to explore the purpose of the information provided. This meant asking the question of whether particular elements were for the

researcher's knowledge alone, or to be included within the public domain of the thesis.

This aspect of confidentiality and disclosure was particularly important with regard to - although not exclusively - Muslim female informants, in the specific areas of investigation concerning: women and family conflict, domestic violence, and moral transgression. Informants, by means of their contributions were offering information which could potentially result in their being identified - should significant people who bore some relationship to them access the thesis. Ethics regarding confidentiality, trust, personal security, and the reporting of sensitive information gathered from within these interviews were all significant factors within this investigation.³⁰ An outcome of this was the resulting collaboration between informant and researcher regarding 'the screening out' of certain identifying characteristics and 'other information'.³¹

This research includes commentary and case studies of women, who were familiar with the personal experience of domestic violence. The identities of the women and the workers involved in these cases are protected, due to a considered seriousness of personal risk attached to 'breaking the silence'. Satisfying conditions of concealment and protection of identity formed part of the agreement necessary to gain access to this information. Disclosure of sensitive information concerning Muslim women is condemned by some Muslims who may view public expression of a personal nature as inappropriate and harmful to the 'communities'. Muslim women who break the prescribed 'unwritten code' of

speaking out on issues relating to community morality may find themselves ostracised by those whose opinion is valued. One woman writer expressed her view regarding speaking out and anonymity:

“Although I am very keen to write for this book I wish to keep my identity protected and can only appear in print knowing that my family will never find out.”³²

Muslim women who divulged personal information did so in the firm knowledge that confidentiality would be respected and assured. There were instances in which women who had previously agreed to share personal experiences with the researcher, withdrew from contributing to this research. Although trust had been established with the women, they expressed the view that they had decided against voicing concerns within the public arena of this thesis. There were, however, Muslim women who had a story to tell and appreciated an opportunity to share that information.

The researcher decided that all respondent sources would be non-attributable; whilst acknowledging the implications of this decision. Non-attribution could raise questions regarding the authenticity of respondent viewpoints. The researcher has attempted where possible to corroborate certain respondent testimony by reliance on secondary sources, however, a thoroughness of this magnitude would result in a deviation from the study itself and technically constitute the development of a second thesis. This would effectively make the research project unviable.

Methods of research which require the use of 'eavesdropping' as an investigative research technique may require some justification, with regard to privacy and the infringement of rights. However, information otherwise unobtainable was gathered by this medium. For example, conversations between people at a market place, on buses, or awaiting public transport, revealed insights into attitudes towards Muslims. Within Newham, the issue of Muslims allied to notions of a 'cultural invasion' are topics of general conversation - fuelled by regular local media updates. These particular conversations took place within perceived homogenic, and non Muslim mixed-ethnic groups.

Groups of local Muslim youth have also been witnessed referring to non-local Muslims of similar or different ethnic background as "causing problems," "wanting to change things," "bringing unwarranted attention, or "not fitting in." Such conversations and dialogue between residents have been overheard, and noted when appropriate.

Interrupting conversations could be considered an infringement of privacy; however, it may, in certain circumstances, be considered to be part of a natural process of communication and interaction within elements of Newham community relations. As stated previously, there are specific cultural codes of communication which may enable the circumspect interruption of certain types of conversation, among particular people.

This technique was used in order to gain access to 'stranger's' discussions. In one example, the researcher overheard a conversation between three Muslim males in a local public-house. One stated that he 'was born a Muslim' to his companions. This comment was in relation to the group's discussion regarding male/female relationships, and focused on Muslim women and Pakistan. The researcher assessed the situation, taking into account matters concerning a 'localised' non-verbal communication and verbal intonation - and the fact that the conversation was of sufficient volume to be 'in the public domain'. The group's non-verbal communication was ascertained by the researcher to be 'un-threatening'. Interaction was established by 'appropriate' eye contact with the group, followed by her personal comment concerning the issue. The researcher brought herself into the conversation through reference to her time in Pakistan. The result was that an informative discussion developed between the researcher, her companion, and the group.

1.4.8. Data Collection: Interview Techniques and Methodology

A particular form of fieldwork interviewing was developed for use in Newham, which took account of particular factors associated with the area. Prior to the interview proper, the researcher introduced topics of general conversation to the interviewee. These topics included reference to commonly assumed local characteristics and knowledge, for example, recent events and occurrences.

Instructions were given to informants regarding the use of the researcher's micro-cassette recorder. Informants were encouraged to take control of the machine, and agreement was secured regarding its usage. Informants were to pause or stop the recording at any point, should they wish to express information that they did not wish to be recorded. This exercise of control was rarely utilised.

In order to reduce researcher influence, 'directive questioning' was avoided. This aspect of research corresponds to the in-depth research conducted by Amina Mama, among Asian, Caribbean, and African women and their experience of domestic violence:

"The respondents were all volunteers and were assured of complete confidentiality. Interviews were conducted in an empathic and supportive style, with priority attached to building a good rapport with each woman. ... Women were encouraged to articulate their own experience for themselves as much as possible and to indicate any areas they preferred not to discuss. In this free-flowing discussion leading questions were avoided. For example the researcher sought not to impose a working definition of domestic violence on the women. Instead, the women were allowed to self-define their relational experience as one of domestic violence".³³

'Open ended' questioning techniques, and a minimal prompting format was used by the researcher. This format involved responding to informant's natural pauses, either by silence, paraphrasing or summarising content. The researcher stated an initial question and allowed the informant to 'tell the story'. This method could have resulted in the informant 'going off track', at which point prompting questions would be used. Informants generally required minimal or no prompting.

Verbal permission was requested, regarding the release of the information provided in the interviews into the public domain of this study. All interviewees were informed that the final document would become a public document, with the possibility of widespread circulation. The researcher discussed the implications of this with the informant, securing agreement before proceeding with the interview. Interviewees were informed that tapes and transcripts were to be kept in the researcher's possession after use, and would be stored securely. The informants were notified that they could stop the interview at any point, and information given could be withdrawn at a later date (through contacting the researcher). Interviewees could establish contact with the researcher via a telephone number available at a centre.

The researcher used the medium of the micro-cassette recorder, where permission was granted, resorting to minimal note-taking (forms of shorthand) in other circumstances. What is gained and lost in the stages between holding a conversation, interviewing, and note-taking can alter the representation significantly. It is acknowledged that note-taking during the interview can interfere with the discussion in progress, and both informant and researcher may be distracted:

"In human communication, there is an intricate interplay between language and other communicative modes. When we talk to one another, we are fully engaged in the communication of content, attitude, emotion, personality. Tone of voice, for example, is an important modulator of the literal content of what we say."³⁴

A lack of interest could be conveyed to the informant, should the interviewer's head be located between the page, the writing tool, and the informant. Additionally, incorrect and inappropriate responses - caused by inattention - to informant comments can serve to ostracise the speaker. However, the avoidance of note-taking during the interaction presents concerns regarding accurate reflections of memory. Memory alone cannot be relied upon to provide an accurate description of information reported. In order to reduce the possibility of incorrect representation following interview, the researcher checked with the informant for accuracy of representation. This process involved summarising and paraphrasing informant comments, requesting comments and any suggested alterations. The often dynamic interplay that occurred within the communication drew in a complex of interpersonal skills.

Interview tapes, transcripts and notes have been secured - and are not accessible to other researchers. All the main interviews were conducted in English. Within group activities and discussions, mutual translation of words and phrases occurred in several contexts, most usually when group peers provided assistance for those with limited English linguistic skills.

1.4.9. Data Collection: Field Work Case Studies - 'Ahmed' and 'Sara'

The fieldwork interviews within this thesis have been selected because they reflect many of the views expressed above by respondents and other sources in Newham. Two informants have been selected to provide specific insights into particular problems relevant to many Muslims in Newham, providing an overview of many of the issues touched upon in this thesis. Their inclusion informs the thesis and contributes to the debate concerning perspectives of Muslim youth in Newham, by offering viewpoints which may question, challenge, support or refute presumed assumptions. It is not suggested that these views are representative of Muslims in Newham, but they are views informed by the experience of living as part of 'Newham life.'

The information presented by these two interviewees was not subjected to interpretation, but rather, produced in their entirety. The need for unfiltered, uninterpreted raw data is adequately expressed by Charles Husband's introduction to the section of his work containing personal biographical material:

"This section has one function only: to indicate that the 'race relations' literature is dominated by secondary sources ... A great deal of available literature on ethnic relations has been filtered and interpreted before they are made available to the audience. The material in this section is not representative, it is not a sample. It is illustrative of raw data - which in literature are much rarer than analysis."³⁵

1.4.10. Data Collection: Neighbourhood Case Studies

It could be stated that there is an unwritten policy of frank expression and direct comment amongst many of Newham's residents. Cockney boldness, although modified according to time frames, media and migratory influences, remains intact among elements within the borough. This can result in the direct expression of statements, which in other contexts and environments might be considered 'unacceptable by polite society'. This 'boldness' disregards social etiquette and conventions of formality, and refers to certain specific points of view expressed to the researcher, by interviewees. Dismissive, stereotypical comments were at times made with disregard for the researcher sensitivities. This type of bold expression was noted by the following author:

“It is this aspect of cockney speech which usually shocks genteel observers. They are horrified to find even cockney children expressing blatant cynicism and on speaking terms with the crudest bodily functions.”³⁶

1.5. Research Methodology: Concluding Comment

The researcher deployed a methodology appropriate to the nature of the research, and the environment in which the investigation was conducted. There are many aspects of this research methodology that the researcher would not advocate for the uninitiated, for it requires judgement, is not without personal risk, and requires explicit knowledge concerning Newham sub-cultural codes and patterns of communication. Familiarity with the environment and confidence in approach is essential.

Endnotes:

1. Michael Mann (ed.) Macmillan Student Encyclopedia of Sociology. London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1983, 1987, p.406.
2. These economically viable 'internal' migrants tend towards a conventional standard form of communication - both within a verbal and kinetic context. Among the residents of Newham, there are those who tend to associate speakers of 'formal' or standard English with a business and/or professional context. This perception attributes the speaker with a standard of education, and access to forms of political and personal power, which may be presumed to be outside the reach of the 'underclass' in Newham. Formal English utilises a conventional, precise factual language, tending to adhere to a standardised framework. It offers a clarity within an information exchange, that may be lost within communication across diversity (discussed below).
3. Economic migrants may have little interface with underclass and/or refugee migrants. They do not require the inter-personal communication codes considered essential for the integration of refugee or underclass migrants.
4. In the context of this thesis, the term 'marginal' is used to refer to Muslim individuals or groups who cannot easily be fitted into any of the pre-existing categories defined in terms of a specific mono-cultural/ethnic/religious identity. 'Local Muslims', interacting at various levels within two or more potentially conflicting social identities, may have developed a unique insight into the problems and difficulties facing Muslims within contemporary society. This perspective might ordinarily include approaches to addressing those concerns, and may usefully be applied in the application of conflict management within the 'community'. The term 'marginal' was introduced by Robert Park in 1928 to describe:

“... the predicament of those ‘predestined to live in two cultures and two worlds’, who inevitably experienced a divided self, but, while the marginal man was ‘condemned by fate to live in two antagonistic cultures’, Park stressed that this position brought great benefits. The marginal man can ‘look with a certain degree of critical detachment’ on both cultures, and is thus a citizen of the world. Inevitably, Park argued, his horizons are wider, his intelligence keener, his viewpoint more rational, than those of people who live within one culture”

Park, Robert, 'Human migration and the marginal man', American

- Journal of Sociology, 33 (1928), pp.881. Cited in: Barbara Tizard and Ann Phoenix (Eds.), Black, White or Mixed Race?, Race and Racism in The Lives of Young People of Mixed Parentage. (London: Routledge, 1993), p.26.
5. Newham Alcohol Advisory Service, Annual Report Shifting Agendas in Alcohol Services: 1980-1995 (London: Newham Alcohol Advisory Service, Annual Report, 1995) p.7
 6. For a discussion on terminology and acceptability see Ian R.G. Spencer, British immigration policy since 1939: The making of multi-racial Britain. (London and New York, Routledge, 1997), p.xv
 7. Roland Barthes, 'Jeunes Chercheurs', Le Bruissement de la langue,(Paris: Le Seuil, 1984) pp.97-103 cited in James Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths," Chap. in Writing Culture, The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, (Berkeley & London: University of California Press 1986) p.1.
 8. The researcher undertook studies at the University of East London, within the School of Independent Studies.
 9. Ellis Cashmore, ed., Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations, (London: Routledge, 1984, 4ed, 1996), p. 414.
 10. For a discussion on Ethnicity and Race issues, see: Anthony Giddens, Sociology, (Oxford & Cambridge: Polity Press & Blackwell Publishers, 1989, 1992), pp. 242-273.
 11. For a discussion on the importance of information sharing, personal disclosure, and involvement within the community of research see Okely, in which she analyses how she disclosed personal information regarding her background to respondents. Similarly, Facio became involved within the life of the community which comprised her research environments - in Facio's experience, this extended to comforting a distraught woman within the interview. See: Judith Okely, The Traveller-Gypsies (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 4th reprint 1993), pp.38-48. Elisa Facio, "Ethnography as Personal Experience." Chap. in John H. Stansfield II and Rutledge M. Dennis (Eds.), Race and Ethnicity in Research Methods, (Newbury Park, London & New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993) pp.75-91.
 12. Margaret L.Anderson, "Studying Across Difference: Race, Class, and Gender in Qualitative Research" Chap. in Stansfield & Dennis, op.cit., pp.39-52.
 13. 'Outsiders' in this context, refers to those not resident within the borough for a period sufficient to learn and demonstrate familiarity with and access

to specific 'public' codes.

14. Dorwin Cartwright & Alvin Zander. Eds. Group Dynamics, Research and Theory, 3d ed. (London: Tavistock Publications, 1968) p.37.
15. Clifford James & Marcus, George E. (eds) Writing Culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography. A School of American Research Advanced Seminar (London: University California Press Ltd, 1986 p.9
16. Elizabeth Tonkin, "Borderline questions: people and space in West Africa", chap. in: Border Approaches: Anthropological Perspectives on Frontiers, eds. Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson, (U.S.A.: University Press of America, Inc., Maryland, 1994), p.15
17. Linda Williamson Nelson, "Hands in the Chit'lins: Notes on Native Anthropology Research among African American Women," chap in Gwendolyn Etter Lewis & Michelle Foster. (eds.) Unrelated Kin: Race and Gender in Women's Personal Narratives. (London & New York, Routledge) p.183.
18. Pete Alcock The Dynamics of Poverty -Understanding Poverty (London: Macmillan Press Ltd 1993) p.139
19. For a discussion on the impact of social class on research see: Diana Reay. "Insider Perspectives or Stealing the Words out of Women's Mouths: Interpretations in the Research process," Feminist Review, 53, Summer, 1996, pp. 57-73. Reay argues that social class impacts upon the interactions between the researcher and respondent, additionally affecting analysis of data. Reay describes herself as a educated working class woman, and notes that she identified with certain values expressed by the respondents.
20. Anderson, op.cit, pp.51-2
21. Nelson, op.cit., p.198.
22. Christina Hall, "Expanding Maps of the World," ITS (International Teaching Seminars) Journal, No. 9, 1996. p.7.
23. Anderson, op.cit, p. 48
24. The researcher's experience as an 'insider' can be compared to Birgitta Edelman, who had been a long-term resident and worker within in a community prior to undertaking her anthropological research. See: Birgitta Edelman, "Acting Cool and being Safe: the definition of skill in a Swedish railway yard," Chap. in Beyond Boundaries: Understanding, Translation and Anthropological Discourse, ed. Gisli Palsson (Oxford: Berg Publishers Ltd., 1993) pp.140-161.

25. Cartwright & Zander, op.cit, p.38
26. Rutledge M. Dennis, "Participant Observation" chap. in Stansfield and Dennis, op.cit., pp. 73-74.
27. Ibid.
28. An example of positive body language in this context, refers to matters such as - leaning forward towards speaker thereby demonstrating attentiveness, making appropriate 'noises' indicating listening.
29. For a discussion on aspects of interviewing, regarding the building of rapport, establishing trust, minimising differences, encouraging and acknowledging respondent reactions and probing sensitivity, see: Stephen Ackroyd and John Hughes, Data Collection in Context (London and New York: Longman Group Ltd, 1981, 2nd ed.1992) pp.108-9, pp. 127-160.
30. The recognition of the need to protect identities has been stressed by Okely, and Anderson. Okely changed names and disguised personal details of interviewees; Anderson approximated data in order to protect identities of respondents and their location. Okely, op.cit, p.42. Anderson, op.cit, p.52.
31. Information screened out would include statements which the informant had upon reflection decided to withdraw due to concerns regarding identification and security.
32. Celia Anwar, 'Standing on Divided Ground,' chap. in Pearlie McNeal, Bea Freeman & Jenny Newman (Eds.). Women Talk Sex: Autobiographical Writing on Sex, Sexuality and Sexual Identity, (London: Scarlett Press, 1982) p.172
33. Amina Mama, "Woman Abuse in London's Black Communities" chap. in Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain, Winston James and Clive Harris (Eds.) (London: Verso, 1993) p.99. This book has a misleading title, as its focus goes beyond the Caribbean Diaspora, incorporating research on 'Asian' people.
34. P. N. Johnson-Laird, "Introduction: What is communication?," chap. in Ways of Communicating, ed. D.H. Mellor. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). p.7.
35. Husband, Charles (Ed.), 'Race' in Britain - Continuity and Change. (London: Hutchinson, 1982, 1987, 2nd ed.)
36. Williams, Matthew, Cockney Past And Present: A Short History of the Dialect of London, (London: Routledge & Sons, 1938, repr. with additional preface, Routledge & Kogan Paul, 1972) p.150. On Mannerisms and Slang, see pp. 105-155. For further information on

dialect and implications of speech within the East End of London see:
Roger Barltrop and Jim Woveridge, The Muvver Tongue, (London:
Journeyman Press, 1980).

2 MANAGING CONFLICT WITHIN DIVERSITY

2.1. Introduction

The geographical land mass of the London Borough of Newham covers approximately 3,637 hectares of land within East London. The River Thames is located to the south of the borough, the River Lea to the West, and the River Roding to the East. The borough extends northwards, as far as Forest Gate and Manor Park, on the south edge of Epping Forest, and from Stratford and Canning Town in the west to Little Ilford, East Ham and Beckton in the East.¹ The borough is sub-divided into six postal districts: E6, E7, E12, E13, E15, and E16. which are located within 24 geographical areas or wards. Each ward is administered by two to three elected Councillors, with specific responsibilities for the ward.² In 1995 there were a total of sixty listed Councillors for the region.³

The history of the East End begins prior to the area's industrial development. In Victorian times the area was associated with work houses, hospitals, prisons and 'great dark warning churches which glower still, reminders of death and sin'.⁴ According to one popular folk tale, the Live and Let Live public house on Romford Road (Forest Gate), is a stark reminder of the events of times past, reputedly, a final resting place, where the condemned received a final drink prior

to execution. Perceptions of the East End of London - incorporating Newham - are related to historical development and patterns of migration. The East End of London has often been portrayed - in literature, historical writings, and the media - as an area beset with social problems, racial intolerance, and conflict:

"The East End...has the same evocative impact as a reference to the Gorbals in Glasgow or Harlem or the Bronx in New York. There is an instant recognition of a way of life, an attitude of mind... It is a formidable image: sharp, dark, tough, violent, even dangerous - a battle ground, a survival course."⁵

Popular perceptions frequently associate the region with notions of toughness, and dangerous, 'hard' East Enders; (including the Kray Brothers):

"Crime and East London have a legendary connection. In an area of continuous deprivation it was evident that such activities provided one means for survival. At climatic periods of economic recession and social discomfort the pressure gauge containing suppressed violence was ready to burst. By 1888 it had. In that year the East End was defined as an area plagued with all the sophisticated techniques to deprive illegally the more affluent of their surpluses. This could be expected in a place traditionally peopled by low-income groups, where unemployment and housing shortages were, apparently, insoluble problems."⁶

The East End is well documented in terms of depressing conditions, gaining notoriety as a difficult and forbidding environment, in which vice, crime, pestilence, urban decay, and extremes of poverty were rife. The area has a strong working class culture, with a history of trade unionism and Labour Party membership, retaining sub-cultures of survival and resistance towards 'outsiders.'⁷

Although memories of the past still linger in the stories passed on down to future generations, many tales will have burnt out with the birth of successive

generations and population shifts. The development of community history projects and the production of 'new writing' - often written by local residents - has provided new insights into previously 'hidden' or unexplored elements of life within Newham. The perceptions of local residents are currently in the process of being documented in the form of oral histories, biographical and autobiographical accounts. These accounts are finding a place in libraries and on bookshop shelves, adding their weight to the literature written by 'outsiders'. The focus of this material relates to personal experiences, local issues and concerns.

The plethora of recently written material relating to Newham includes promotional information. The London Borough of Newham is currently in the process of undergoing significant urban re-development. One aspect of this involves the promotion of the borough as an attraction for tourists. Within this framework, Newham's ethnic and cultural diversity is a key feature. Newham appeared in the department of Tourism's Guide book for the first time, with maps and guides, highlighting the borough's cultural, tourist and leisure facilities.⁸

2.2. 1. The Challenge of 'Ethnic' Diversity

Contemporary Newham is a bustling region within the East End of London. It contains a richly diverse population of over 217,000 inhabitants. Many of the earliest occupants of the region (and their descendants) relocated, leaving the area, prior to its reclassification and development as Newham. At the time of the region's development, the area came to be primarily occupied by 'new' migrant populations, whose descendants constitute a proportion of Newham's residents.⁹ Contemporary Newham contains the greatest number of 'ethnically' diverse populations within the U.K, followed by the London Borough of Brent. By this criterion, Newham could also be said to be the borough containing the greatest number of foreign language speakers in London. These speakers are fluent in South Asian and African languages and may be bi-lingual or multi-lingual: some 60% of school children are of Asian, Caribbean, and African origins. Teachers from within these 'groups' were said to represent 14% of Newham's teachers; head teachers 4%; and deputy heads 11%.¹⁰

The local populations of Newham are composed of people whose ancestry can be located within a national and international context; for example, the UK, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Indian sub-continent. Newham is a tapestry of diverse populations, linked together by 'real' or 'imagined' boundaries - stretching across social, cultural, geo-political, religious, and linguistic frameworks. Newham's wealth of experience in diversity springs from the multiplicity of its 'population groups'. Diverse cultures could be considered to provide the formula

for the development of a multi-dimensional and rich tapestry of varied influences - to be interweaved into the framework of societal structures.¹¹ Inner-city diversity may provide for the exchange and cross-assimilation of a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills and learning experience.¹² This resource relates to the potential for the development of understanding regarding aspects of different forms of cultural expression and its interpretation. This may range from new perspectives and insights into differing world views, the creation of new cross cultural insights, and the development of innovative approaches to localised problems; to an appreciation of cuisine, literature, and understanding of cross cultural modes of communication.

This potential for growth and development is evident within elements of Newham's populations and manifests itself within the multiple cross-cultural perspectives and relationships of its inhabitants. An example of the wealth of knowledge that Newham's diversity has fostered is shown in the increasing development of resources within the borough, which are aimed at representing the diversity of the population. This is demonstrated within the Borough's libraries: the Borough Council recognised the need to respond positively to Newham's diversity, and subsequently developed plans with regard to book purchasing and budgeting. In the 1990s, all of Newham's libraries now contain reading material printed in several languages. This literature spans fiction and non-fiction, and in 1997 was available in Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Punjabi, Tamil, and Urdu - with other languages being introduced.¹³ A further example of the diverse nature of Newham is indicated at local Citizens Advice Bureaux; for

example, Newham Docklands' Bureau offers advice in English, Sylheti, French, Hindi, Gujarati, Ibo, Spanish, Punjabi, Urdu, Spanish, Yoruba, and Bengali.¹⁴

Within many aspects of Newham life, people interact, particularly in the employment, public services, leisure, and educational environments. This interaction - across broad spectrums of diverse cultural backgrounds - increases opportunities to access knowledge concerning the diversity of cultures and sub-cultural developments. This has, in some situations, afforded opportunity to consider, question, and challenge viewpoints. Interaction across diversity may also require the development of understanding, commitment, and motivation. The development of friendship groups across social, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity may provide a role model for future younger populations of Newham and elsewhere. Newham has one of the youngest populations within the U.K.

An outcome of this interaction is the visible expression of 'friendship groups', particularly among teenage schoolchildren and young adults. Interaction within the broader Newham sub-culture has occurred through the necessity of shared local facilities and resources. An example of this is within the public service and resources provision, supplied within or nearby a localised neighbourhood. This provision might ordinarily include: local transport system, school environments, and health care centres. Interaction within the broader Newham society resulted in the observation of aspects of Newham's subcultural values. Interaction between people across social, religious and cultural boundaries may result in the breakdown of prejudices against particular population groups and an increase in

understanding and tolerance. Interactions between people can provide opportunities for the challenging of assumptions, stereotypes, and accepted belief that people have with regard to one-another.¹⁵ This may result in greater unity between people, and concerted efforts to work together for the betterment of the 'community'. Conversely, interaction between people may give rise to conflict situations, and provide for the reinforcement of stereotypes based around diversity. Where communicants have an increased number of 'unknown' and/or perceived negative factors among them, this may amplify negative components of communication.

Conflict may occur as a result of a natural process of greater integration into societal values, and the resultant exhibition of 'norms'. In other cases, conflict situations may relate to historical, cultural, and interpersonal communication factors. Culturally-determined experiences and knowledge inform and shape - to a certain extent - the nature of interpersonal communication patterns. These patterns are evident within Newham, and were brought into the environment, by Newham's diverse populations. These patterns of communication are reflected in approaches to new experiences and interactive styles of communication between residents. They impinge upon relationships and are instrumental in the development of community relations within the region.

2.2.2. Newham's population diversity was reflected in the 1991 Census:

Newham: Population Breakdown based on 1991 Census, by Ethnic Group

| | <u>Total</u> | <u>Males*</u> | <u>Females*</u> | <u>Born in UK</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Total persons: | 212,170 | 103,809 | 108,361 | 153,343 |
| White: | 122,403 | 58,791 | 63,612 | 113,863 |
| Black Caribbean: | 15,252 | 7,094 | 8,158 | 8,472 |
| Black African: | 11,861 | 6,267 | 5,594 | 3,803 |
| Black other: | 3,358 | 1,648 | 1,710 | 2,891 |
| Indian: | 27,656 | 13,821 | 13,835 | 11,341 |
| Pakistani: | 12,504 | 6,496 | 6,008 | 6,216 |
| Bangladeshi: | 8,152 | 4,084 | 4,068 | 2,926 |
| Chinese: | 1,712 | 856 | 856 | 463 |
| Asian: | 6,307 | 3,252 | 3,055 | 1,542 |
| Other: | 2,965 | 1,500 | 1,465 | 1,826 |
| Born in Ireland: | 4,531 | 2,342 | 2,189 | 883 |

*** All ages**

Source: 1991 Census County Report: Laid before Parliament pursuant to Section 4(1) Census Act 1920. Inner London, Part 1. Vol. 1 .Ethnic Group, Table 6. (London: HMSO, Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1993), p.108.

2.3. Cultural Sensitivity: Interventions in Conflict Management

The management of Conflict is one of the most important issues relating to Muslims in Newham. Mediation and approaches to transforming conflict may have a role to play within contemporary Muslim contexts in Newham. This role might involve direct intervention and/or the training of community leaders and practitioners of conflict resolution in culturally-sensitive conflict management skills.¹⁶

All dispute settlement systems possess characteristics which develop in accordance with the requirements and needs of a 'community' or organisation. There may be considerable variation in the styles practised, procedures adopted, desired outcomes, and practitioner profiles.¹⁷ All known societies have cause to interact with the members of their society, and it is inevitable that there will be disagreements and situations of conflict in varying degrees. It may be assumed then that wherever social interactions exist between people, disputes will occur, and may require some form of conflict management.

In the researcher's professional experience, within Britain the term 'conflict' is often associated with negative characteristics. It conjures up widespread images of chaos, disruption, distress, malfunction and is attributed as the cause of many social ills. The Oxford English Dictionary defines conflict as:

" To fight, contend, do battle ... To come into collision, to clash; to be incompatible."¹⁸

This definition may account for the development of perceptions of conflict as a negative state, and one which should be avoided. Anxiety relating to conflict as a negative and confrontational state may result in a reluctance to address concerns and a pattern of denial. This may lead to stress, resentment, and may fuel tension. The concept of 'conflict' can have different linguistic connotations. For example: the Chinese equivalent for 'conflict' is endowed with the qualities of challenge and change, and possesses positive attributes:

“The characters that make up the word ‘conflict’ in Chinese are danger and opportunity.”¹⁹

In constructing a model of conflict, a distinction can be made between conflict which is considered to be 'functional', and conflict perceived as 'dysfunctional'. There are specific properties attached to these definitions, which enable their classification. Functional conflict could be defined as having a constructive element leading to growth and development. Here, the dynamic interaction of conflict with the process elements alters the state to bring about what might be considered a 'positive outcome'. In this model, the mechanism of conflict could enable matters to be clarified, communication channels to be opened, and opportunities to be created.

The researcher regards dysfunctional conflict as conflict leading to malfunction, resulting in a failure to reach a desired - appropriate - outcome. Not all conflict leads to malfunction and is therefore not always negative. If conflict

is solely a mechanism which enables communication, and is neither positive or negative, its definition must depend on outcomes and desired outcomes. There is also the consideration, that the occurrence of dysfunctional conflict for some can in certain circumstances be functional for others. Conflict may be functional, in that it may be an actor in the promotion of change. How change is viewed may indeed be the determining factor for its definition as 'functional' or 'dysfunctional' conflict.

Dysfunctional conflict may lead to the breakdown of effective communication. Within Britain, dysfunctional conflict is estimated to have profound implications at many levels of society - for example, within community relations, family conflict, and institutional settings. Within industry, the effects of dysfunctional conflict have been assessed in terms of reduced productivity, income generation, and social and economic exclusion. On an individual level, dysfunctional conflict can be internalised. In some circumstances, this may lead to a need for therapy and counselling; 'fight flight', associated with confronting conflict or fleeing a conflict situation. Another response to dysfunctional conflict being internalised can be the breakdown of individuals, in leading to mental health problems and - in extreme cases - suicide.

Dysfunctional conflict relates to:

- ▶ human resource potential
- ▶ access to public services
- ▶ service delivery
- ▶ institutional discrimination
- ▶ employment discrimination
- ▶ community conflict.

Dysfunctional conflict is acknowledged to exist at all levels of society, and recognition is given to the need for effective conflict management strategies. The management of dysfunctional conflict across diversity is a recurrent theme within the professional, statutory, commercial, and voluntary sectors. This includes commercial enterprises, non-governmental organisations, religious organisations, interest groups, and state-run local authority sectors.

It is important here to make a distinction between 'informal' conflict resolution occurring as a natural response to situations arising, and the 'formal field of conflict resolution'. Many individuals and organisations within Newham practice informal conflict resolution. - for which they may have had little or no training. Many of these practitioners would not ordinarily describe themselves as 'conflict resolution practitioners.' However, they may utilise a set of skills, knowledge and experience found within the field of conflict resolution. The field of conflict resolution has, over the last decade, become increasingly established within the U.K. There is a set of practices, principles and procedures taught within a variety of contexts, from the teaching of academic theory through to practical direct training at 'grass roots' level.

Formal conflict resolution interventions may include: Litigation, Mediation, Conciliation, Arbitration, Negotiation, Advocacy, Counselling, and Crisis Intervention. There are specific properties attached to each of these terms, “commonly used to describe different kinds of conflict resolution structures.”²⁰ Interfaith Dialogue and Interfaith Mediation are also referred to within the context of conflict resolution systems.²¹ Collaboration between those involved in the resolution of conflict across diversity could potentially result in the creation of forums of debate.²² These forums, might collaboratively identify specific elements of concern within the community; formulating, appropriate responses to particular situations. Specific knowledge could be acquired concerning differences in values, customs, and practices pertinent to the exercising of divergent viewpoints. Effectively this may, in some circumstances, reduce the potential for conflict and increase the potential for the creation of understanding and development of greater tolerance.

One organisation within Newham that disputants turn to is *Newham Conflict and Change Project*. This project (founded in 1984, East Ham) was the first community scheme of its kind in the U.K. The project has received funding from the local authority, the church urban fund, and other organisations in sympathy with the aims. The Project maintains three broad services: Consultancy; Education, and Conciliation. The organisation provides conflict management services within the context of local community service provision: this includes training, and case work.²³

"NCCP [Newham Conflict and Change Project], your local independent community mediation project, runs courses in Anger Management, Consequential Thinking, Problem Solving, Communication Technique, Conflict Management and Negotiation Skills. These incorporate a range of activities and learning styles e.g. discussions, video sequences, physical movement, role play analysis, co-operation learning activities, art and drama. We offer tailor made workshops for professions and volunteers in the youth services, clubs, projects, residential homes, churches, community initiatives and those young people concerned with conflict management, mediation and violence intervention - to train and work with us."²⁴

Effective conflict avoidance and management strategies are essential requirements to the successful functioning of mutually rewarding and constructive relationships across diversity. However, there are profound implications for addressing conflict and interpersonal communication within specific contexts. The management of dysfunctional conflict involves the assimilation of specific skills, the acquisition of knowledge relative to the experience of Muslims within the cultural frames within which they exist. Many Muslims experience discrimination within the social/economic/political framework. The Muslims of Newham broadly share aspects of discrimination, paralleling the experience of 'black' populations, in the Borough and the U.K.

The development of understanding across diversity would need to consider elements of difference which impact upon the dynamics of interaction. An approach which does not recognise the interplay between these components may be of limited assistance in the applications of constructive dysfunctional conflict management within an intercultural setting:

"How do our diverse identities shape conflict in interpersonal, community and international settings? How does such diversity contribute to creativity and growth? Are there unique requirements for training or intervention when differences in gender, racial/ethnic backgrounds, class, age, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability or political ideology are central to conflict? What are our images for peace and constructive dialogue in a diverse world?"²⁵

The researcher has identified at least five types of conflict occurring within Newham:

- ▶ Tension concerning Muslims (internal domestic affairs)
- ▶ Tension between Muslim population groups
- ▶ Tension between Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh
- ▶ Tension between non-Muslims with Caribbean ancestry, and Muslims
- ▶ Tension between the 'white population group' and Muslims

It is significant to note here that many of these conflicts occur as a result of real or imagined informal classifications of identity. For example, between local and non-local populations. Factors relate to: socialization processes, the social and economic status of parties, patterns and styles of interpersonal communication, and group dynamics. Conflicts identified within these collective categories are not indicative of relationships between the majority of people resident within Newham. Through personal experience, and observation the researcher is aware of a high level of friendship and interaction between members of these groups. However, the purpose of this thesis was not to examine the 'positive' and 'constructive' aspects of interaction in Newham, but to explore and analyse the dysfunctional conflicts occurring within the borough.

The researcher's professional experience - of conducting training interventions focusing on aspects of communication and conflict - has revealed concerns which impact upon the practice of informal and formal conflict resolution. These concerns focus upon the concept of assumed impartiality, value free judgements, and culture-centric belief systems. The assumption of impartiality in the resolution of cross-cultural conflict discounts the dynamic complex of factors which may inhibit the process. Beer notes:

"Prejudices and biases can also come from past experiences with other people, from information, misinformation and attitudes we pick up from others, or they can reflect our own choices and tastes. They can be as extreme as racial bigotry, or as subtle as a barely-noticed preference for someone who smells of the same kind of pipe tobacco that your grandfather used to smoke."²⁶

Bias can influence behaviour and the outcomes of the resolution. For example, where a mediator value is consistent with the view of one of the parties, the mediator may encourage the other party to support the view. Beer notes that impartiality may be compromised by the personal experiences of the mediator.²⁷

In contrast to this view, mediation is described as 'not judgmental' by a director of the national *Mediation UK* organisation:

"Tony Billingham, director of Mediation UK, says: 'Local authorities see mediation as a successful and a relatively cost-effective means of resolving disputes.' ... The benefits of mediation are three-fold, according to its advocates. Costly court cases are avoided, the process is not judgmental so there is no blame, and the parties to a dispute arrive at a resolution themselves rather than having it imposed by someone else."²⁸

Conflict resolution practitioners, like other people within Newham, are subject to the cultural values, value judgements and belief systems inherent within the dominant infrastructure of society. Conflict resolution is not 'culture-free'. It is dependent upon the understanding and perceptions of those involved. Where these perceptions are informed by belief systems based upon historical power relations, beliefs and assumptions, impartiality may be compromised. Partiality informs actions and reactions, processes and outcomes and may ultimately influence circumstances and affect power balances.

Power imbalances are manifest within the formulation of attitudes, practices and procedures and may result in the failure to process the intervention in a fair and impartial manner, resulting in inaccurate evaluation and case assessment. Disregard of constructs surrounding the complex of cultural factors may result in power imbalance and unfair advantage to a party or parties in conflict. The conflict resolution practitioner plays a powerful role in the conduct and transmission of power and possesses a direct means by which to exert influence upon the procedure, transformational process, and outcomes. Power may be expressed in numerous forms, among which are approaches towards patterns and styles of interpersonal communication, including non-verbal communication.

"Every mediator struggles with feelings of bias. Mediators are people, which means that they are never completely neutral...

"In mediation, it is important to be aware that people can have different values about how to act in conflict and different interpretations of what certain behaviours mean. For example, in some cultures, eye contact is a sign of respect and honesty. When a person avoids looking directly at

another person, it may be taken as a sign of evasion or deception. ... Imagine the problems that can come up when people with these differences are trying-even in the best of faith-to resolve a dispute!"²⁹

In the researcher's experience, some Newham residents are of the opinion that cases involving 'overt' racism should be dealt with through mediation, whilst others directly opposed the use of mediation within this context. Particular expertise regarding the structures of white on 'black and Asian' racism is an essential pre-requisite to practitioner intervention, in addition to self-analysis, and personal evaluation. Practitioners may bring multiple experiences into new situations, and it is these experiences which inform the unconscious, and then transfer the learning into future situations. Good or bad past learning experiences may predispose reactions towards a particular situation and the party(ies) involved.

Institutional discrimination is acknowledged to exert influence within the main societal infrastructures, manifesting itself in terms of bias, partiality, and inappropriate outcomes. There are many attempts to reduce problems associated with this type of discrimination, including, for example, the matching of conflict resolution practitioners with 'parties' in conflict. This matching aims to represent the disputants in terms of perceived 'ethno-religious' background. Matching on the basis of perceived commonalities in terms of ethno-religious factors could result in a culturally sensitive approach to the Intervention; however, other factors impinge upon this process:

- ▶ differences in social economic background;
- ▶ interpretations and levels of religious belief;
- ▶ concepts of honour and shame;
- ▶ confidentiality and the sense of security;
- ▶ perceptions of identity.

In the case of matched Muslim practitioner with Muslim party, the practitioner may share a common belief in Islam, yet, be unable to conceptualise and comprehend, the 'parties' values, aspirations, and sensitivities. The practitioner may be unfamiliar with, and/or have little experience of interaction with Muslims from outside of the practitioners framework. A higher degree of satisfaction may result when practitioner and party are closely matched in all these areas; conversely close matching of shared values can result in judgemental reactions, relating to concepts of honour and shame. It is clear that cultural sensitivity is a complex issue that requires further investigation.

Implicit within the values of mediation is the notion of impartiality, value free judgement, and the concept of individuality. This pre-condition is one that is of considerable importance to the practice of mediation, and as such requires close scrutiny. Practitioners sometimes impress upon others the ability of mediation to act as a panacea for all problems of conflict, including 'racism', and cultural and religious conflicts. There are profound implications for addressing conflict within Muslim contexts, particularly with reference to 'cultural' sensitivities, the concept of 'impartiality', and historical factors.

2.4. 'Islamophobia' and Racism: The Development of Historical and Contemporary Bias

Within Newham, there is a history of individual and institutional discrimination against Black and Asian people. This is in part due to the development of notions of 'race', influenced by systems of 'race' classification developed and adopted during the eighteenth century. Historically, there have been many attempts to classify people according to various criteria. Attempts at classification have been numerous and have ranged across fields of Physical and Social Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology. Classification of peoples also occurs within society at a 'grass roots' level, and operates on the level of assumptions and beliefs regarding Muslims. These beliefs serve to inform 'group' members of acceptable and appropriate societal responses towards 'the Other.', often resulting in bias and partiality.

The term 'race' and notion of 'race' is widespread in its usage within Newham. It reaches deep into the social structures of society and is constantly referred within local, and academic discourse. Innumerable organisations within the field utilise the term. For example there are 'Race Relations Acts', a 'Commission for Racial Equality' and numerous organisations and institutes of learning utilising the term within the context of publications and publicity brochures. These representations may take the form of advertising specific training courses relating to, for example, 'race and culture.' Despite its popular usage, the term 'race' has little validity in terms of discreet biological categories, and might reasonably be challenged in terms of its widespread usage, and the

support it gives to xenophobia, Islamophobia, and racism.

Carolus Linnaeus's 'System Naturae' represents one influential strand of eighteenth century European thinking about the diversity of humankind. This classification system, developed by the Swedish botanist, identified 'primary races' on the basis of skin colour and geographical origin. Linnaeus's theories of racial typology proposed that there were separate and distinct types of human being, which he classified into collective groups on the basis of physical, behavioural and psychological traits. Linnaeus theorised that phenotypical traits were directly related to personality, mental ability and behaviour. This system - contained within System Naturae - laid the foundation for speculation on evolutionary theories of a racial hierarchy which contended that certain groups were innately inferior.³⁰

Linnaeus classified black Africans - including Muslims - as belonging to the 'Negro race', ascribing a set of characteristics in association with this classification. Indian sub-continent Muslims were classified within the term 'Asiatic'. Each 'race' was characterised by physical traits, psychological patterns, mental 'abilities', and cultural practices. Much of this information was translated down into the popular imagination, and indirectly informs certain contemporary assumptions and stereotypes regarding Muslims.³¹

'Race typologies' were utilised during the eighteenth century, at a time when European powers were involved in the establishment and maintenance of the

slave trade and colonialism.³² Seafarers travelled across continents, returning with tales of their encounters with diverse populations. Differences in physical characteristics and 'cultural' traits were noted by some and translated into negative stereotypes reflecting the lifestyles of diverse populations. Many of the representations of these travellers contained positive impressions of those encountered, although distortions subsequently crept in with the development of the slave trade and efforts of colonisation.

During the development of the slave trade, physical and 'cultural' traits were linked to assumptions concerning the supposed inferiority and superiority of peoples.³³ Negative assessments were made in connection with observed difference, using a 'culture centric' approach. This approach posited the view that a set of characteristics - perceived to be held by colonial powers - were evidence of the status of 'superiority'. This ethnocentric school of thought placed Europeans at the top of this hierarchial ladder, Africans at the base, and Asiatics above Africans. Colonial powers were judged to exhibit characteristics associated with 'superiority' and conversely, unfamiliar 'cultures' were often perceived as inferior - with mediocre cultural traditions and 'in need of colonisation'.³⁴ Certain of these views passed down into contemporary discourse at neighbourhood level, impacting upon community relations. Images, and stereotypes relating to 'Black and Asian' people have been filtered through literature and children's books.³⁵

The majority of Muslims in Newham are people of colour, ancestrally linked to the Indian sub-continent and Africa. Many Muslims within Newham may

experience discrimination linked to stereotypes associated with places of (ancestral) origin, in addition to discrimination based on non-Muslim perspectives regarding Muslims and their beliefs. It is within this context that 'Islamophobia' has relevance when discussing the experiences of Muslims in Newham.

Within Newham and Britain, the term 'race' became synonymous with the identification of people on the basis of skin colouration. Muslims do not constitute a separate and distinct 'race' in terms of discreet biological categories: for example, there are no distinct physical characteristics or common phenotypical traits which could be identified as distinct for a (hypothetical) 'Muslim race'. It is recognised that Muslims experience discrimination on the basis of religious belief and/or 'skin colouration. This resentment contributed to the nature of community relations within the region. This specifically relates to racism and discrimination against Muslims and others of colour, who are 'visible' in terms of skin colour as an identifiable characteristic.

The influence of 'pigmentation politics' on the status of Muslims in Newham is significant, has some basis within colonialism, and enacts forms of influence upon the development of community relations between Muslim and non-Muslims in contemporary Newham. Skin colouration has, within Newham, provided a basis for identifying people within various racial stereotypes. Negative assumptions made on the basis of skin colour may serve as barriers to successful assimilation and/or integration - which may have been considered desirable by

some Muslims. This may have been in part a response to the desire to benefit from acceptance by the dominant wider societal groups. Assimilation, and/or integration may present greater difficulty in relation to Muslim people in Newham.

Skin pigmentation is, in some circumstances, applied as an identifiable characteristic which serves to identify group members. Groups delineate boundaries relating to membership and may set themselves apart on the basis of specific characteristics. Skin pigmentation is a characteristic which is used to define and demark boundaries of identity and belonging. People perceive others according to 'culture centric' principles. Core beliefs and attitudes in relation to those perceived as being outside of the 'group' boundary, may effect the nature of the relationship existing between the group member and the perceived 'outsider'. Where core beliefs confer negative association, this may result in discriminatory practice, and the inability of the 'outsider' to acquire potential benefits associated with 'belonging' to the 'social order'. Acceptance and tolerance of those deemed 'outsiders' may be dependent upon the demonstration of the wider societal values, and perceived potential for fulfilling group requirements and needs. This can result in bias against those assumed to have traditions and a way of life 'inferior' to those of the 'group'. This becomes complex when the dominant 'group' has access to forums of social, economic, and political power, which may be denied to the perceived 'outsider'.

Assumptions which are part of belief patterns may be filtered into the

infrastructural processes and systems of socialisation. These systems form a significant factor in the conveyance of attitudes and beliefs regarding 'the Other'. These beliefs inform the development of community relations, and may translate into prejudice, bias, and partiality. This in turn may give rise to situations of dysfunctional conflict. These factors have relevance when discussing the experiences of Muslims in Newham, within the context of 'Islamophobia.'³⁶

The English colonial portrayal of Muslim 'people of colour' has historically been linked to notions of 'racial' and 'cultural' 'purity.' Any separation of the impact of colonialism, and the development of 'ethnocentric values' from the experience of Muslims of colour, would disregard the negative impact of racism upon the subsequent experiences of Muslims - and their reception and residence within Newham.³⁷ A history of contact between societies and 'groups', at all levels of interaction within societies, has informed and impacted upon the development of core beliefs. These factors have been seen - by some commentators - as influential in the development of attitudes towards Muslims.

2.5 Populating Newham: Patterns of Settlement

In 1886, the region of West Ham was incorporated as a municipal borough, finally becoming the London Borough of Newham in 1965. As a borough, and later as a county borough, it became the leading local authority for social services and education.³⁸ The London Borough of Newham was formed from the three parishes of East Ham, Little Ilford and West Ham. These areas were originally separated by farmland and fields, but the completion of the Barking Road in the nineteenth century was constructive in improving access through the parishes. During the seventeenth century, influential merchants began establishing industries close to the Port of London and the Barking Road. This road was instrumental in the development of trade, providing a link between the Port of Barking and the East India Docks. Agriculture and subsidiary cottage industries had remained the main economy until their gradual replacement by industrial developments occurring from the 1700's onwards. Britain's involvement in international trade and imperialism led to the Port of London gaining status as the financial centre within the U.K. Much of this trade was supported by a workforce located within the South of Newham. The docks and industrial development in the South of the borough became a major employer for migrants entering the region in search of employment.

The opening of the Royal Docks (1855) drew increasing trade, enabling larger vessels access which the smaller docks on the river Thames could not accommodate.³⁹ Many industries established themselves providing employment

in railway, ship building, and ironworks (established 1846). Other subsidiary industries included the Tate sugar refinery company, which later merged with the Lyle sugar company to become Tate & Lyle in 1921. Many industries were noxious, producing harmful chemicals. These types of industry were restricted from development within the western side of London, and Middlesex - from 1844 onwards by the introduction of the Metropolitan Buildings Act - and subsequently re-located to the south of the borough. These restrictions did not apply within the East End of London; subsequently encouraging the development of large scale industrial plants. The Thames route became lined with:

“factories rendering down animal carcasses for tallow, soap, and glue - chemical plants producing acids, pharmaceuticals, printing inks and a vast range of other products too poisonous to manufacture near the capital”.⁴⁰

Canning Town was, by the 1880s, a focal point of industry within the south - and migrants flowed into the region, to take advantage of employment opportunities within the developing industries. Although the docks were a major employer, employment of dockers was on a fluctuating casual basis. Work conditions within the often noxious and dangerous industries in the south of the borough were hazardous. The pressure of long working hours and difficult conditions resulted in a toll of accidents and fatalities on a daily basis.⁴¹ People aligned themselves with trade unions and political 'activities' in attempts to improve their working and living conditions, seeking representation in Parliament and on West Ham Council. Leading Labour Party figures such as James Keir Hardie and Will Thorne were involved in representing people's rights - Hardie

was elected in 1892 as the first Labour MP, and in 1906 the first Parliamentary Labour Party chair.⁴² Canning Town maintains a strong Labour voting tradition.

The major settlement of the borough's population occurred within a specific time frame. In 1801 the population of West Ham, was 6,485, rising to 12,738 in 1841. The population continued to grow, with a rapid increase during the period between 1871 - 1901 (204 thousand), resulting in a total population of 289,030 by 1911. The population peaked in 1921 at 300,860, and since then has been in decline. Of the resident population in 1961, 5,383 (3.4 per cent) were not born in Britain.⁴³

Industrial development in the south was directly linked to the internal migration of people and Newham's population growth. Newham's population increase is significant, as the local infrastructure was unable to cope with the large number of incoming people: between 1880 and the 1930s, the joint population of East Ham and West Ham increased from 3,000 to 600,000.⁴⁴ West Ham became Britain's sixth largest city by population during this period. Prior to this the area of Newham including the south of the borough, was sparsely populated until industrial development occurred on the low-lying marshes. The Canning Town settlement, occurred mainly after the 1840's. The majority of settlers were in the main, migrants from within the U.K and overseas. Black and Asian people formed part of this group, adding to the existing Black and Asian population within the region:

“There has been a large black and Asian community in south West Ham ever since the mid-Victorian period, a legacy of the docks in their role as ‘Gateway of Empire’ and their vast worldwide trade.”⁴⁵

‘Black and Asian’ people experienced particular difficulty and discrimination during the ‘Depression’, (1920s and 1930s).⁴⁶ The development of the *Coloured People’s Institute* was a response to this:

“...the Coloured People’s Institute was opened in the 1930's to serve the black seamen, many of whom lived with their families in Canning Town and Custom House”⁴⁷

African and South Asian Muslims have a long history of settlement within the South of the borough. They entered into mixed marriages with ‘white’ women and resided within specific streets (cluster neighbourhoods). In 1905 Canning Town contained the largest black population in London. Black and Asian seamen had settled in the streets around Victoria dock road prior to and during twentieth century industrialisation. Black and Asian people volunteered and fought in two World Wars. Caroline Adams details the struggles of Muslims within East London. She records their contributions to the war effort -often losing their lives - yet remaining largely invisible in terms of documenting their participation.⁴⁸

Certain residents within the South of the borough do not acknowledge the contribution of Black and Asian people, to the regions development, and the common struggle that many residents have experienced. Others recognise a common struggle and collectively work together in the effort to reduce conflict and develop understanding. Shared resistance to harsh social and economic

conditions has resulted in aspects of shared common identity. This shared common identity may have levels of inclusion and exclusion, related to perceptions of Black and Asian people as outsiders. They may be excluded, perceived as contributing to the problems of the area, rather than as a people, sharing a common unifying experience of difficult circumstances and struggle against poverty:

“Out of the hardship an enduring spirit emerged which has come to characterise the Westhammer, a gritty down-to-earth attitude with close bonds between neighbours and families based on mutual support through shared trials and a quick sense of humour”.⁴⁹

The experience of two World Wars further enhanced forms of unity within Canning Town :

“Between the wars the inhabitants of Canning Town felt a strong sense of common identity, often helping on-another, especially when times were hard”.⁵⁰

During the Second World War, substantial available housing stock and industry was devastated through bombing. The blitz began on the 7th September 1940 and continued for seventy-six consecutive nights. Housing stock was heavily depleted by the bombing of the region, and the borough's demolition of dilapidated Victorian slums. Pre-fabricated housing was used as a 'temporary measure' to house the many homeless residents. Housing problems are a key issue regarding the development and maintenance of conflict in the borough, causing significant tensions and instability, exacerbated with the arrival of migrants from overseas.

The researcher - as a former resident of Canning Town in the 1980s - has been witness to the sense of identity and common bonding between many residents within the neighbourhood. This sense of unity was assisted by the development of the Keir Hardie Estate, which provided a localised infrastructure, incorporating homes, schools, shops, and medical services. This neighbourhood infrastructure meant that many people found most of their requirements within the neighbourhood and saw no need to venture outside. Canning Town has a particular identity, and this aspect of identity has provided a focus for development of nationalist political movements. The closure of industries and subsequent rising unemployment, is reflected by poverty levels, increased criminal activity, support of racism and Conflict. The Silvertown is directly located within the vicinity of Canning Town and Custom House, and shares many similar characteristics:

“Life in Silvertown is still dominated by informal patronage. No-one here trusts the established authorities - police, council, L.D.D.C.. They prefer to do their business with local bosses and community leaders, the two or three crime families - and through Peter Chilvers [an influential local business man]”.⁵¹

“Silvertown is still a dumping ground, a place where bones are crushed and paints processed and oil tanks built on antiquated tar pits. The spent bodies of cattle are still boiled for soap at John Knight’s factory, which for generations chewed through tons of animal fat and hooves and churned out genteel bars of Knight’s Castille. The great northern outfall sewer runs through the territory to the North, and to the West, at Bow Creek, a surreal clot of pipes process Pura foodstuffs, while next door’s tanks run off sulphuric acid.”⁵²

Among early migrants, the establishment of 'pocket' communities of indigenous migrants occurred in Newham, and a form of unity was founded based

upon the need for support systems. These early migrants became what many consider *themselves* to be the 'local' populations of Newham. Despite their diversity, they developed - to some extent - a perceived communality of identity, based around perceptions of 'real' or 'imagined' communalities. Populations established themselves, developing and maintaining traditions, customs and practices, which they came to see as products of a 'local' collective identity. These 'ways' included forms of interpersonal communication, and are sometimes evident within the speech patterns of certain Newham residents. These patterns vary in relation to time frame and other factors. Patterns of communication were socialised into further generations of youth, as were attitudes and expected relationships to the environment and the people within the region.

This situation may parallel the experience of established and newcomer Muslims. The creation and development of a 'collective' identity has occurred - to some extent - between local Muslims and members of the non Muslim population. Aspects of collective identity can result in the common expression of specific community values and concerns over community resources. This may result in patterns of resentment. The inward migration and settlement patterns of newcomer populations of Muslim is perceived by certain Muslims, as a cause of tension within the borough, resulting in a negative impact upon earlier 'now established local populations'. During the 1980s and 1990s 'underclass' and/or refugee Muslims entered the borough in numbers noticeably sufficient to 'threaten', the perceived alliance between Muslims and members of the non-Muslim population. This may be viewed as threatening established Muslim

populations; decreasing the sense of social and economic security.

In contemporary Newham, there are reports of widespread institutional discrimination against Muslims seeking to obtain housing, amenities, and employment. Individual discrimination also impacts upon the lifestyles of Muslims in the borough and may manifest itself in the form of physical violence, and social and economic exclusion.

2.6.1. The Development of the Muslim Neighbourhood: Patterns of Settlement

The development of the Muslim neighbourhood may have in part been a response to the conditions prevailing at the time of their settlement within the borough. Muslims were discriminated against on an individual and institutional level on the basis of skin colouration, along with other 'black' populations. Racism perpetuated historical stereotypes, relegating Muslims to 'underclass' status. Muslims - as part of a black collective - were linked with a decline in the borough; viewed as outsiders and as a result were disadvantaged by social and economic exclusion. These characteristics played a role in the formulation of stereotypes which then underpinned notions of 'ethnocentric' superiority, discrimination and disadvantage in the socio/economic market. This in turn manifested itself in unequal opportunities, resulting in continued poverty, and the reproduction of stereotypes.⁵³

The early Muslim pioneers tended to reside within, depressed, poor quality environments; often in nearby proximity of 'poor whites'. For example within Canning Town. In 1905, this district contained the largest 'Black' population in London - among these residents were Muslims. Clustering of Muslims enabled systems of stability to develop, affording elements of security and a sense of unity within a common struggle. Muslims arising from distinctly differing backgrounds may have had little in common with one another, however, aspects of solidarity could be developed within this framework. The clustering of

Muslims within the neighbourhood was to enact forms of segregation between themselves and others within the non-Muslim population.⁵⁴ Poverty and discrimination impacted upon their lifestyles and living conditions. Colonial stereotypes of 'black' people as 'dirty' and 'inferior beings.' were reinforced by the visible conditions resulting from abject poverty. Difficult conditions and the need for a supportive structure added to the need to form neighbourhood clusters. The neighbourhood provided a level of independence from the broader community and may have enhanced distance between Muslims and other local populations. Local economies were able to develop within this framework, ensuring a system of survival.

Muslims have a long history of housing settlement in Newham and the East End of London. The East End of London has traditionally housed the poor and has provided a stabilising point of contact for migrants to the region. Muslims entered into an environment formed by a set of social, economic, cultural, and historical factors, which would play a specific role in determining their reception and subsequent stay. They settled within specific neighbourhoods, bringing with them differing social customs, traditions, values and experiences. These factors - allied to the pressures of entering an alien, and sometimes forbidding environment - contributed to the nature of the relationship between early pioneer migrants and later generations of newcomers.

Newham's attraction for migrants lay in the large number of unskilled jobs to be found in the borough and neighbouring areas - including manual work in

textiles industries, engineering work, and transport services - generally low-paid, low status positions:

“The immigrants who came to Britain from India, Pakistan and the Caribbean in the 50's and 60's came to sell their labour, accepting conditions and wages white workers did not.”⁵⁵

A substantial number of Newham's Muslim population arrived in the borough, at specific points in time during the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s. Pioneer single Muslim males came to Britain in search of work.⁵⁶ It was during the period of 1962-4 that many pioneers were joined by their families.⁵⁷ Many migrants to East London from East Pakistan (which became Bangladesh in 1971) settled within the neighbouring London Borough of Tower Hamlets - whilst Newham attracted a substantial Muslim presence from West Pakistan and East Africa. The demographic location of post-World War Two migrants in Newham was influenced by the desire to establish identifiable support systems and a localised infrastructure. One aspect of this support occurred through the development of housing patterns within neighbourhoods.

Pioneer Muslims to Newham were often illiterate, and were frequently dependent upon community leaders, or each other, to obtain information with regard to Islamic belief and its interpretation. They also frequently lacked English language skills, which resulted in difficulties accessing local information relevant to their situation within Newham. These skills were later acquired by some through the process of greater interaction within the wider societal framework.

Children's attendance at school resulted in language development and often specific roles as communicants, either for - or on behalf of - family members. The demands of state education required children's attendance outside the immediate neighbourhood cluster - resulting in degrees of interaction with a broad diversity of peoples from Newham - and ultimately a cross-culturisation of ideas and cultural understandings which introduced new ideas that challenged certain belief patterns and values.

The majority of Newham's pioneer Muslims were from poor rural environments.⁵⁸ This influenced their beliefs and general patterns of behaviour, in terms of reacting to their new inner-city environment. They left behind familiar infrastructures and ways of life in places of origin, and many were faced with difficulties concerning how to carry on existing belief systems and traditions without these infrastructures. Systems were developed in order to maintain continuity of ways of life, adapting in accordance with the constraints imposed by the wider infrastructural system(s). Many felt drawn towards religious and cultural practices, in order to survive in their 'new' environment. This included Muslims who had not been particularly 'religious' prior to arriving in Newham. Mosques provided one means for the transmission of Islamic cultural norms and values, which represent and transmit specific sub-national beliefs, practices and traditions. A belief system might incorporate cultural norms and values with regard to the roles of community members. Pioneer Muslims in Newham largely came from rural environments with clearly delineated boundaries regarding the roles of male and female community members within the homelands.

Continuity of religious and cultural identity was strongly connected with family networks in places of origin. Muslims clustered together in particular areas, and this formed the basis for the development of infrastructures which would serve their communities - including mosques and other 'Islamic services.'⁵⁹ Early pioneer Muslims sought to preserve themselves from linguistic and cultural isolation through living in clusters - initially shared housing for pioneer males, and later acquisition of property in close proximity to other pioneers from similar environments. Information and experiences of the new environment could be shared.⁶⁰ This meant that they were able to express and continue patterns of life and mutual support systems necessary for survival in their new environment. These initial clusters are represented in Newham through current housing patterns.⁶¹ This clustering formed the basis for the development of infrastructures which would serve local Muslim interests. Newcomer Muslims continue the existing patterns of settlement; entering neighbourhoods which have an established Muslim presence. In Newham, a Muslim neighbourhood community cluster frequently consists of a housing settlement, either directly connected in the form of streets, housing estates, or homes within nearby proximity of one another.

2.6.2. A Profile of Forest Gate: Local Muslim Economies within the Neighbourhood

Forest Gate is one example of a neighbourhood noted within the borough of Newham for its diverse population. Green Street, within the vicinity of Forest Gate gained - among many locals - the name, "Little India". This area of Newham is served by the Forest Gate British Rail station. Upton Park

Underground station serves Green Street, along with several bus routes, running from the T-junction of Barking Road to the T-junction of Romford Road, at the opposite end of Green Street. The area of East Ham faces to the north of the Barking Road, and Canning Town and Custom House to the south of Barking Road.⁶²

Green Street also has numerous speciality shops selling a vast range of goods appropriate to the communities they serve.⁶³ Whilst many goods are bought and sold by people of South Asian ancestry, a recent phenomenon is an increase in 'white' people shopping and buying goods there. There is also an increase in 'white' workers employed on the shop floor, serving customers in what used to be colloquially known (by *some* customers) as "'Paki' shops" - a term describing all South Asian managed and staffed shops.⁶⁴

Established Muslims have developed successful businesses including, import and export, travel agencies, legal practices, property letting, long-distance telephone services, textiles manufacture, clothing retail, and food supply. Levels of local economic expertise have been acquired. This, allied to internal knowledge and an extended framework of connections abroad, enables many successful enterprises to develop.⁶⁵

Among the residents of Forest Gate are local and non-local Muslims, many of whom are involved within the local economies. These local economies may exist in the form of kinship business developments, or within the broader context

of employment in local industry. Muslim women as a 'collective' group are ordinarily less active within the public domain than their male counterparts, who tend to seek income from employment within the public domain. Muslim women generated income, mainly through clothing manufacture, often based within the home environment. This industry thrives in contemporary Newham neighbourhoods. The sound emanating from industrial sewing machines within homes has been a cause for complaint to the local housing authority and conflict resolution services (discussed below).

Substantial numbers of Muslims tend to shop locally within the vicinity of the neighbourhood, and may not seek to take their custom further afield. The neighbourhood may, for many Muslim residents, facilitate most everyday requirements. It would seem that one function of a 'Muslim neighbourhood' is to maintain and provide an infrastructure of goods and services' provision within a localised geographical zone.⁶⁶ However, rumours concerning planned supermarket developments in Woodgrange Road may be considered by many to intrude into this zone. Supermarkets supplying goods normally sold by local businesses may effectively be competing and drawing away income from the local business economies. In this context, the expansion of specialised food products within larger stores could potentially threaten smaller Muslim business concerns, if the proximity of location is within the geographical neighbourhood zone. However, within the neighbourhood, goods sold are competitively priced, and of good quality.

“...fruit and vegetable prices in Green Street are cheap, and the speciality shops selling jewellery, clothes, and fabrics already attract customers from a wide area”.⁶⁷

Currently, Muslim retail businesses in Forest Gate receive a substantial proportion of their custom from within local neighbourhood population groups. This demand enables many local business, for example, food suppliers, to remain viable within the developing Urban Regeneration economy. Food retail sales are largely dependent upon the sale of specialized produce, normally unavailable in large commercial chain stores, and obtainable only within the smaller local family stores.

Many Muslim businesses are involved in the supply of specialised produce utilised by populations with Indian sub-continent, African, and/or Middle Eastern ancestral links. An example of this is evident among the borough's butchers and grocery stores, which cater for specific dietary requirements. Queen's Market in Green Street contains Muslim butchers - advertising *halal meat*.⁶⁸ When *halal* prices are higher, market forces and other factors may lead the Muslim customer to non-Muslim butchers - and *vice versa*.⁶⁹ Sainsburys in Stratford, and Somerfields in Forest Gate increasingly stock groceries of this type. This produce includes varieties of 'foreign' produce, used as a staple part of the dietary requirements of Newham's diverse populations. Goods include specialised Eastern breads, exotic spices, yams, speciality meats, and imported/processed fish.

The researcher has observed that the diversification of produce within the mainstream supermarkets has presented difficulties for many local businesses. Urban regeneration has led to an increase in council rates on shops. This has forced a number of smaller, long-established businesses (often family concerns run by local white families) to cease trading.. This effect has not remained solely within the parameters of the small businesses, but has also led to the loss of medium-sized concerns. The researcher has observed the dissolution of smaller business and their replacement by larger concerns, some of which are part of existing corporate chain companies. The researcher's discussions with locals, proprietors and customers revealed a popular opinion that small business concerns were losing custom - as a result of increased competition from powerful contenders. One example of this was presented to the researcher by a local white storekeeper. He stated that customer shifts had effectively driven him out of business. Council rate increases allied to reduced income from sales made his position no longer tenable.⁷⁰ This viewpoint was corroborated by neighbourhood discussion, and information sharing.

Customers had taken their shopping budgets to the larger stores, in order to obtain the produce required at lower cost. This particularly affected more small White run business proprietors, than Muslim concerns. This is in part due to the type of customer and the location of the business. White proprietors have experienced greater difficulty in maintaining certain types of business, unlike Muslim counterparts. This may be in part due to the neighbourhood, the customer, cultural approaches to shopping, and kinship relationships. A white

business proprietor may rely more on passing customers, who tend to alter shopping loyalties according to prices charged. An instrumental factor influencing the survival of certain types of Muslim business is the location of the premises. If premises are located in a district thoroughfare - densely populated by residents of 'Asian', 'African' and Middle Eastern heritage - customer demand is likely to remain high.

Many of Newham's Muslim residents reside within cluster neighbourhoods. These areas might ordinarily contain Muslims who are linked by similarities in ethno-cultural background, and kinship affinities. These links are maintained through a triangular structure - occurring at a formal level via marriage arrangements. These arrangements often involve a Newham-local U.K citizen with a Muslim Pakistani citizen, who ordinarily would seek to join their spouse in the neighbourhood. This system enables the continuity of elements of tradition and religious and cultural identity; it may also support a form of localised 'seclusion' for women, and assist in the maintenance of important links and networking connections within the family framework. These links are significant with regard to personal status, business interests and the avoidance of conflict in places of ancestral origin.⁷¹ Kinship ties, and clan loyalties have held particular significance for pioneering Muslims within countries of origination, and continue to do so, for many. Status and survival within 'homeland' environments was/is assisted by networking links, and allegiances developed and maintained through the system of marriage patterns.⁷²

2.7. The 'War', the Economy, and the Impact of Immigration Legislation

Muslims were drawn into Newham by the prospect of employment opportunities and economic prosperity. This was a familiar historical migration pattern.⁷³ Inland and overseas migrants were urged and encouraged by similar forces, often leaving behind the support and familiarity of previous environments. They often encountered resentment within the new communities.⁷⁴ Resentment of newcomers is a common pattern, with parallels in other environments and contexts.⁷⁵

The conclusion of the Second World War signified the advent of a period of rapid economic growth in Europe. Politicians in Britain recognised immigrants from colonies and former colonies in Africa, the Indian sub-continent, and the Caribbean as a valuable and cheap source of labour - with an important role in developing the post-war economy. In war time, British industry suffered from a shortage of labour; however, the developing export economy created demands for a workforce. As a result, the government introduced incentives and legislation to encourage immigration.

During this period, poor underclass white people in Newham struggled - many in abject poverty. Local population fears and resentment intensified during the post-World War Two period, when numbers of new settlers from the Commonwealth increased. Intolerance and hostility intensified, when these new settlers were seen as 'different': for example, through their appearance, or through

'alien' customs.⁷⁶ Ethnocentric history had provided traditional stereotypes, denoting visible migrants as inferior, with subordinate status. Muslims were differentiated from internal migrants on the basis of: (a) visibility in terms of skin pigmentation, (b) supposed - real or imagined - cultural attributes, and © social and linguistic differences.

The decrease in economic opportunities in Newham - linked to a declining infrastructure, substantially reduced industry, and near closure of the docklands area - came at a time when the numbers of migrants remained constant. International and local events affected the situation in Newham, including economic patterns relating to falling trade output, rising production costs, and increasing imports. Trade union strikes combined with demands for higher wages, and an increasing 'cheap labour' supply contributed to the nature of relationships between residents within neighbourhoods.

Acts of Parliament initially facilitated the flow of migrant labour into Britain - notably the 1948 Nationality Act.⁷⁷ However, political pressure from both the Labour and Conservative parties gradually reduced the rights of entry for Commonwealth citizens wishing to migrate to Britain. The progressively restrictive legislation included the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, which indicated the commencement of debates centred around migrant numbers - and a 'clamp down' on immigration.⁷⁸ The 'right of entry' to Britain for black migrants entering from new Commonwealth countries was qualified in the Act, and - although skin colour was not declared a criterion for entry - the exclusion

of Irish immigrants from the Act's constraints indicated (to some critics) that the Act had a discriminatory nature: the 1968 Nationality Act - which was instigated to reduce migrant numbers; the 1971 Nationality Act - which ended the primary immigration of heads of households from new Commonwealth countries, and placed colonial migrants on equal status with guest workers; the 1981 Nationality Act, which reduced subject rights of non-whites raised in the U.K.⁷⁹ Immigration controls introduced during the 1960s reduced the numbers of migrants from British Commonwealth nations - and a series of Acts, including the 1971 Immigration Act, meant that opportunities for migration diminished.

Legislation was also introduced to tackle the racism encountered by many migrants to Britain. This legislation included: the 1965 Race Relations Act, which sought to address racial discrimination in public places, that migrants did not have lower health and sanitation practices, and that migrants were not a burden on the welfare state. This Act was amended in 1968 to counter racial discrimination in the spheres of employment and housing.

Discrimination against 'black' people became one means for elements of the existing community to express frustration at decreasing economic opportunities. Racism manifested itself - during the 1960s and 1970s - in the form of public fear, discrimination, and violence. Nationalist movements sought to reinforce negative attitudes to 'black' people, encouraging colonial stereotypes, and distributing information to 'poor whites' via publicity material and speeches. In contemporary Newham, the presence of substantial numbers of visible newcomer

foreign migrants is still often resented, by Muslim and non-Muslim 'longer-standing' local residents. Those perceived as 'foreign', are associated - for example by appearance - with later migrants, and may suffer discrimination and resentment.

The Conservative Member of Parliament Enoch Powell was an influential politician in debates on immigration. His status gave credibility to a racist ideology, which linked concepts of cultural difference with notions of 'race'. Powell drew attention to migrant numbers, linking 'immigration' with a vision of impending conflict. His (Birmingham, April, 1968) address to the local party membership centred around his assertion, that unless immigration was curbed, 'rivers of blood' would flow.⁸⁰

The escalation of racism and white racist groups grew in the 1960s, alongside migrant demands for equality. Racists embarked upon more aggressive and threatening tactics, including violent confrontations and intimidation. Neo-fascist movements and 'nationalist' parties - such as the National Front - further sought to reinforce negative attitudes towards migrants (and their descendants) by encouraging colonial stereotypes, distributing propaganda, and targeting lower-income white families within areas of high immigration (such as Newham).

Whilst National Front supporters became involved in violent attacks against migrants and their descendants, the National Front also promoted their manifesto through political channels, providing candidates for Parliamentary and Local

Council elections, during the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1977 Greater London Council elections of 1977, the National Front won 119,000 votes (5.7% of the vote), although following a series of violent demonstrations this support dwindled in 1981 to 2.1% . The decline of the National Front was coupled with fragmentation of the organisation, and the foundation of the British National Party, which sought 'respectability' through political action, but was thwarted by the actions and statements of certain members. Internal divisions have included the development of the Combat 18 cell, prominent in violent racial attacks.⁸¹

As the millenium approaches, debates concerning conflict, Islamophobia and racism continue, both at a 'grass roots' neighbourhood level and within the political processes of local and national government. They are fuelled by a plethora of reports and re-occurring incidents of racial harassment and discrimination.

Endnotes:

1. John Archer and Ian Yarham, Nature Conservation in Newham. Ecology Handbook 17. (London: London Ecology Unit Publications, 1991) p.57.
2. See Appendix for Council Ward Map
3. London Borough of Newham, Annual Report 1995, (Newham: Strategic Policy and Equality, Chief Executive's Department, 1996), p.6.
4. Alan Palmer. The East End: Four Centuries of London Life. (London: John Murray Publishers Ltd., 1989), p.9. For information on the use of 'cockney', see: Peter Wright, Cockney Dialect and Slang. (London: Batsford, 1981), pp.94-113. Julian Franklyn, A Dictionary of Rhyming Slang (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975). The use of rhyming slang acted as an aid in survival patterns. Words took on different meanings when spoken within specific contexts
5. Venetia Murray (ed.), Echoes of the East End, (London: Viking, Penguin Group, 1989) p.11. The book contains a collection of recollections about life prior to the second world war in the East End.
6. W.J. Fishman. East End 1888 A Year in a London borough among the labouring poor. London: Duckworth, 1988 pp 177-178. This book provides an historical account of East End populations, and examines poverty, complex community relations, and immigration patterns.
7. Howard Block and Nick Harris, Canning Town, (Bath: Alan Sutton Limited, 1994), p.7.
8. Newham News, "Newham on the map" July 1996
9. The borough name 'Newham' is applied here, and throughout the thesis from now on, although it is recognised that at different times in history, the borough has possessed different names and border - as discussed briefly above.
10. Newham Recorder, 13 September 1995.
11. Inclusion within the policy and decision making processes of organisations may lead to levels of empowerment. However, this may be impracticable in certain circumstances .
12. Newham can be defined as having an 'inner city' environment, although geographically it can be described as an 'Greater'/'outer-London'

Borough.

13. According to a Library source, an 'Asian' multi-lingual female buyer controls the budget and buys for all language sections; needs are identified through links with the communities - and other sources. The researcher was informed that many elders tend to read books written in own languages, whereas Newham-raised youth with Indian sub-continent ancestral links tend to read English-language fact and fiction. The researcher was informed that elders often encourage youth, especially girls, to read books written in the elders' mother tongue; according to the researcher's fieldwork sources, girls take a couple of these books 'to show willing', but also take several *Mills and Boon* English-language romance books. 'I.B.N.' [pseud.], a Newham Library manager, interview with researcher, fieldwork notes, 27 September 1995.
14. Newham Recorder, 31 January 1996
15. The researcher ran courses for unemployed 16-24 year old Newham residents, where the boundaries between different ethnic and religious groupings were well-defined. Dialogue was initiated which broke down these barriers and created new friendships and understandings.
16. For a step by step introduction to conflict and conflict management, including mediation, see: John Crawley Constructive Conflict Management: Managing To Make A Difference (London: Nicholas Beasley, 1992). For training exercises on the management of conflict see - Mari Fitzduff, Community Conflict Skills: A Handbook For Groupwork, (Belfast: Mari Fitzduff, 1988). Although this book is written with a focus on conflict occurring within Northern Ireland, the material contained is valuable as a resource within many contexts.
17. Kevin Avrunch & Peter W. Black, 'Conflict resolution in intercultural settings: Problems and prospects', chap. in Dennis J.D. Sandole & Hugo van der Merwe (eds.), Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and application. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993) pp.131-145 Deborah M. Kolb et al. When Talk Works: Profiles of Mediators. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994)
18. William Little, H.W. Fowler and Jessie Coulson, & C.T. Onions (Ed.) The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles Vol. I A-Markworthy, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933, 3rd ed., 1944) pp.396-7.
19. Nic Fine and Fiona Macbeth, Playing with Fire: Training for the creative use of conflict. (Leicester: Youth Work Press, 1992). p.3.
20. Jennifer E. Beer (ed.), Peacemaking in Your Neighbourhood: Mediator's Handbook (Philadelphia: Friends Suburban Project of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Society of Friends (Quakers) 1982 1st ed. Friends

21. Interfaith Dialogue is one example of conflict resolution in Newham. However, as it is a broad and complex issue in its own right, it is not proposed to discuss it in depth within this thesis. However, many general aspects relating to conflict resolution theory have application within Interfaith Dialogue. Interfaith Dialogue attempts to provide forums for the discussion of central concerns deemed pertinent to the different faith and religious interests in Newham. Attempts at bringing together various religious groups have encountered difficulty in relation to this. This may be in part due to factors which will impact upon attempts to create forums for dialogue across diversity. These factors have profound implications for the management of dysfunctional conflict and relate to the dynamics of communication and conflict within Newham's population groups.
22. For example, the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education (Chair: Ninian Smart). World Religions in Education: Exploring Conflict And Reconciliation: Issues For Religious Education.(Chichester: Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education, 1997).
23. Newham Conflict and Change Project, Annual Report, 1994-1995. Newham: Newham Conflict and Change Project, 1995
24. 'Community Profile.' North West News 4, August 1997. London Borough of Newham Youth Services.
25. National Council of Peace and Conflict Resolution. 'Diversity, Justice and Peace Conference Program.' USA: George Mason University, 1992. p2.
26. Beer, op.cit., p.68
27. Ibid, p.69
28. 'It's good to talk.' Arman Alan Ali, London Housing News 63, November 1996.
29. Beer, op.cit, p.68
30. For a discussion on pseudo-scientific racism and the impact of Linnaeus' classification system, see: Peter Fryer, Staying power: the history of black people in Britain, (London: Pluto Press, 1984), p.165-190. Also see: Steve Jones, In the Blood: God, Genes, and Destiny. (London: HarperCollins, 1996), pp.168-206.
31. This is discussed in detail in: Edward Said, Orientalism. (London: Penguin Books, 1978), p.119

32. For a discussion on slavery, imagery, and the formulation of attitudes towards black people, see: Jan Nederveen Pieterse, White on Black Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
33. For a discussion on transatlantic slavery and Britain's role see: Seymour Drescher. Capitalism and Antislavery: British Mobilization in Comparative Perspective, (Basingstoke & London: Macmillan Press, 1986) pp.1-24. Also pp .xiii - xv.
34. For a further discussion on stereotypes relating to people of Indian sub-continent origin, see: Partha Mitter, "Cartoons of the Raj", History Today, 47(9), September 1997, pp.16-21.
35. For a discussion on stereotypes and images in children's books, many of which, have been widely read in the U.K., see: Council on Interracial Books for Children. Racist and Sexist Images in Children's Books. London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1975.
36. Runnymede Trust, Islamophobia, its features and dangers. A consultation paper. (London: Runnymede Trust, 1997).p.6. The 1997 Runnymede Trust Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia defined 'Islamophobia' as follows:
- "Presumably it was coined on an analogy with the word 'xenophobia'. This was formed in the nineteenth century from the Greek words *xenos*, meaning strange or foreign, and *phobia*, meaning dread or horror ... Xenophobia ... implies nowadays not primarily a dread of foreigners out there in foreign countries but of foreigners, or so-called foreigners, within one's own national boundaries ... In the case of the new coining 'islamophobia', both kinds of dread are implied: the object of fear is both out there, beyond national boundaries, and also here, all too close to home. Precisely because Islam is perceived to have this dual location it is all the more feared and disliked by many non-Muslims. Recurring metaphors refer to Muslim communities within Europe include fifth column, bridgehead, enclave, trojan horse and enemy within."
37. For an overview of 'racism' and its definitions, see: Michael Haralambos & Martin Holborn, Sociology: Themes and Perspectives, 4th ed. (London: Collins Educational, 1995), pp.688-719.
38. Ibid, John Marriot (contributor), p.5
39. Block and Harris, op.cit, p.7 & passim.
40. Stephen Pewsey, Stratford, West Ham & the Royal Docks. (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1996) pp 5-6

41. Block and Harris, op.cit., p.7
42. Pewsey, op.cit., p.49
43. Frank Sainsbury (Ed.) West Ham 1886 - 1986, A volume to commemorate the centenary of the Incorporation of West Ham as a municipal Borough in 1886 (London: London Borough of Newham, 1986), p.9
44. Ibid.
45. Pewsey, op.cit., p.84
46. ibid.
47. Block and Harris, op.cit., p.93
48. See: Caroline Adams (Ed.), Across Seven Seas and Thirteen Rivers: Life Stories of Pioneer Sylhetti Settlers in Britain (London: THAP Books, 1987). For a discussion on the history of the Black and Asian population in East London see: John Marriot, 'Industry and Work,' chap. in Newham History Workshop, A Marsh and a Gasworks: One Hundred Years of Life in West Ham. Edited by Newham History Workshop. Newham: Workers Educational Authority, Parents' Centre Publication, 1986, pp.5-16; Rozina Visram, Indians in Britain (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1987) pp.16-23 & passim.
49. Pewsey, op.cit., p.6
50. Block and Harris, p.7
51. Melanie McGrath, "In Grandfather's Footsteps", The Guardian Weekend, 20 September, 1997 p.41
52. Ibid. p.37
53. For a discussion on the early settlement of migrants from India, Pakistan and the Caribbean in the 1950s and 1960s, including: the establishment of small businesses; the catering of physical and spiritual needs; community development; immigration controls; racism; attacks on Bengalis in the East End; the creation of the Anti-Racism Committee for the Defence of Asians in East London, see Trevor Esward (ed.), The Arrivants: A Pictorial Essay on Blacks in Britain. (London: Race Today Publications, 1987).
54. For a discussion on clustering, residential segregation, and the preservation of a sense of identity through social networks. see Muhammad Anwar, Pakistanis in Britain: A Sociological Study. London: New Century Publishers, 1985. Incorporating The Myth of Return.

London: Heinemann, 1979.p.11

55. Ibid, p.27.
56. For the history and issues surrounding early Muslim immigration, see: Muhammad Anwar, The Myth of Return, (London: Commission for Racial Equality, 2nd. ed., 1978)
57. Verity Saifullah-Khan, "Pakistani Migrants in a British City: The world of the Mirpuri villager in Bradford and his village of origin," (Bradford: Ph.D. diss, University of Bradford, 1974)
58. Several studies demonstrate that social class is significant with regard to the formulation of beliefs, in the way the social world is organised and constructed - and these beliefs influence general patterns of behaviour.
59. Jorgen Nielsen, Islam in Western Europe, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992)
60. For examples of these shared experiences in an East London context, see: Caroline Adams, op.cit.
61. In a study of the London Borough of Newham, ten significant clusters were identified and analysed according to factors of ethnicity, population-age, housing quality, amenities and employment rates. This study did not identify clusters according to religious affiliation, but made specific linkages to 'South Asian', 'Bangladeshi', 'Pakistani', and other 'neighbourhoods'. See: Greg Smith, Geography, Ethnicity and Poverty: Newham in the 1991 Census, (London: Research Paper Number Nine, Department of Geography, Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1996), pp 11-22.
62. See Appendix for maps.
63. Pewsey, Stephen. op.cit. p.73. Green Street marks the boundary between East and West Ham. The street was known in Elizabethan times.
64. The term 'Paki' is a short form for 'Pakistani', and has been used as an expression of hostility or an insult towards people of South Asian origin. Racist attackers and fascist groups have used the term "'Paki'-bashing" to describe violence against individuals who fit a broad stereotype.
65. Somalian Muslims are the most recent Muslims in substantial numbers to migrate to Newham. The participation in neighbourhood infrastructures and public institutions, may result in the establishment of Somalian local economies.
66. Muhammad Anwar., 1985.op.cit.p129.

67. Cllr. Mian Aslam.Chair of Green Street Partnership. Newham Recorder, 'Partners in grime bust' 23 April, 1997.
68. There has been controversy during the 1990s regarding the supply of *halal* meat in Green Street. It was revealed that meat was bought from abattoirs, which did not slaughter according to specific 'Islamic' principles.
69. Researcher's personal observation, Forest Gate.
70. 'M.S.', interview with researcher, transcript of notes, Forest Gate, October 24, 1996
71. One respondent stated that the Newham family were cautious when they visited Pakistan, as a result of the Newham-based family rejecting a Pakistani citizen as a husband for a daughter. The prospective husband was a cousin of the father; resident within a rural village. Members of the Pakistani based family had threatened his life. 'A.F.', interview with researcher, notes from interview, Forest Gate, December 6, 1996
72. For a discussion relating to obligations, economic ties, and marriage patterns see Muhammad, Anwar.1985.op.cit. pp.87-95
73. For example, prior to the Industrial Revolution, England's economy was centred around agricultural and export trade interests. The Industrial Revolution mechanised industry, boosted the economy, and export trade developed, requiring labour from rural areas of Britain, and later foreign migrants.
74. This is a familiar migration pattern throughout England. In the 1990's indigenous people are migrating in search of work. The decline of industry, and the demise of industries such as coal mining, steel, the sugar refinery has led to migration of young, leaving behind older populations.
75. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there was resentment of German emigres in East Ham, Newham, that intensified during the First World War. See: John Widdowson, "Immigration", Chap. in A Marsh and a Gasworks: One Hundred Years of Life in West Ham. Edited by Newham History Workshop. (Newham: Workers Educational Authority, Parents' Centre Publication, 1986), pp. 20-21.
76. These people could be described as 'visible' migrants, in that their powers of assimilation with the majority white community were hindered by appearance factors. This marks a distinction between 'visible' migrants, and those whose appearance 'fitted in' with the majority (i.e. through skin colouration).
77. Nationality Act, (London: H.M.S.O., 1948)
78. Commonwealth Immigration Act, (London: H.M.S.O., 1962)

79. Nationality Act (London: H.M.S.O., 1968). Nationality Act (London: H.M.S.O. 1971), Nationality Act (London: H.M.S.O., 1981)
80. See Ian R.G. Spencer, op.cit., pp.140-143
81. These events are discussed in more detail, in: Anti-Nazi League, Fighting the Nazi Threat Today, (London: Anti-Nazi League, 1992), p.4 & passim; Peter Fryer, op.cit., pp.298-399; Ian R.G. Spencer, op.cit. p.xv; Greater London Council Ethnic Minorities Unit, A History of the Black Presence in London. (London: Greater London Council, 1986).

3 THE POLITICS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION: URBAN REGENERATION - A CITY'S CHALLENGE

3.1. Institutional Racism and Employment Discrimination

In contemporary society, 'racism' within the individual and institutional societal infrastructure is identified as a problem by many public, private, and statutory authorities. 'Racism' is to be found within the major institutions of British society. These institutions exert a profound impact and influence on society, forming part of the established infrastructure, essential to a society's development and progression.¹ Organisational infrastructures may assist in the sustenance and transmission of 'racism' from one generation to the next, by incorporation and expression within the major institutions of society. Racism is evident within established organisational practices, processes, procedures, and individual action. It manifests itself within normalisation of beliefs and patterns of discrimination affecting specific 'groups' of people.

Institutions developed organisational policy documents, identified areas of concern and established practices to assist in the elimination of discrimination based upon skin colouration and 'ideas of race'. Equal Opportunity statements appeared. However, during the past decade, information concerning institutional discriminatory practices has continued to surface, informing its audience of the widespread and insidious nature of 'racism' and 'racial' discrimination.

Gail Lewis defines racism in relation to:

"...the organisation of society on the basis of an ideal of inferiority, grounded in 'race' or colour (i.e. biological differences) and/or ethnic (i.e. cultural) differences, which then gives rise to a distribution of the labour force in certain ways"²

Sustainable growth is a pre-requisite to the successful development of Newham in social and economic terms. Economic viability, and the creation and distribution of wealth, is central to community relations and the management of conflict. The development of business and commercial interests in the borough might ordinarily be presumed to confer benefits upon all members of the population including newcomer underclass and/or refugee migrants. This thesis discusses how levels of exclusion may occur within access to employment and service provision:

"Research evidence suggests that discrimination, whether at an individual or an institutional level, remains more often than not the norm rather than the exception. An effective policy solution would therefore need to tackle the twin problems of material deprivation (which also, of course, affects poor whites) and discrimination at all levels against minorities."³

Further research regarding employment patterns and 'racial' discrimination among various sectors of the population could be undertaken. Objectives might include a comparative analysis within the broader framework of diverse communities within the U.K. Findings may reveal that European funding objectives are not met in terms of satisfactory levels of employment achievement

for specific groups. Were this to be found, analysis could be applied to specific factors inhibiting success:

"Institutionalized racism is prevalent in British society and ethnic minorities continue to be discriminated against mainly in the justice system, in job opportunities and in recruitment into the police and army.

"Action taken to combat discrimination, such as anti-racist legislation, has sometimes been manipulated to hinder rather than help blacks in their efforts to get jobs. In a report by the Runnymede Trust, the author points out that without positive action, permitted under the Race Relations Act 1976, members of minority ethnic groups may forever fail to join mainstream economic life and the consequences would be disastrous in terms of wasted talent, social injustice and alienation. Positive action consists of active encouragement of people from ethnic minorities to apply for jobs in sectors where they are significantly under represented. Furthermore, the Home Office has issued guidance to Chief Officers of police on dealing with racial incidents, the Department of the Environment has published good practice guidance for local housing authorities, and the Home Affairs Committee of the House of Commons produced reports in 1986 and 1989 on tackling racial incidents."⁴

There are in existence particular attitudes and stereotypes associated with certain population groups. The development and formulation of specific beliefs has an emphasis within colonialism and is maintained at a structural level within society. Manifestations of racism effectively reduces access to certain public provision, sustains poverty levels and forms of social and economic exclusion. The labour market is a determining factor in the distribution of wealth, and subsequent access to forms of social, economic and political power within societal infrastructures. The following viewpoints can be found within popular opinion at micro-neighbourhood level, including some employers:

"Richard Jenkins undertook a study of middle managers across a range of

public- and private-sector organisations. Through interviews, he identified eight stereotypes in what the managers said (the percentage indicates the number of times this comment came up in the interviews):

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 1. | West Indians are lazy, happy-go-lucky, or slow | 43% |
| 2. | Asians are hard workers | 34% |
| 3. | Asians are more ambitious and academic | 14% |
| 4. | West Indians are aggressive and excitable | 12% |
| 5. | West Indians mix better with whites | 13% |
| 6. | Asians are clannish and don't mix | 13% |
| 7. | West Indians have a chip on their shoulders | 11% |
| 8. | Asians are lazy, less willing | 11% |

“None of these stereotypes is about - to use the managers' favoured term - 'coloured people' as such. What emerges once again are two groups, and what is interesting is that there is only one stereotype, 'laziness', that applies to both (points 1 to 8), and even there, the votes cast suggest contrast rather than similarity.”⁵

This chapter explores the reclassification of Muslims at a neighbourhood level, and assumptions surrounding perceptions of the local as the 'other'. Local Muslims could experience difficulties regarding employment on the basis of assumed characteristics. The local Muslim could be perceived as foreign, and subject to the legal requirements of the Asylum and Immigration Act of 1996. Although this Act technically has no specific connection with local Muslims and employment, local Muslims may experience discrimination as a result of its existence. The Newham Provider Development News carried the following information:

“The Act does not apply to the employment of British and Commonwealth citizen's with the right of abode in the UK, citizens of any EEC country and members of their family.”⁶

Discrimination on the basis of phenotypical characteristics - for example, skin

colour, and presumed characteristics associated with 'race types' - is well documented within this thesis, and these factors impact significantly upon perceptions of 'who looks or sounds foreign':

“ ... Under the Race Relations Act 1976, it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin or nationality. If you refuse to consider anyone who looks or sounds foreign, this is likely to be unlawful discrimination and could leave your organisation open to prosecution.

“ ... The best way to ensure that you do not discriminate is to treat all applicants equally at each stage of the recruitment process. You can ask for the required documents at any stage. But if you ask one applicant, then all candidates must be asked to produce the same documentation as well.”⁷

Former Conservative Home Secretary, Michael Howard, attempted to allay the fears of those who were concerned with regard to how they would be perceived by employers:

"Lawful residents in Britain will not be affected and have nothing to fear, no matter what their ethnic background."⁸

These concerns appear to have been founded when the following locally-related story was highlighted in the national press:

"An attempt by an NHS hospital trust to introduce immigration status checks for some of its staff to uncover illegal workers before...has provoked angry protests. The case, involving the University College London Hospitals Trust, highlights the difficulties which will be faced by many employers when later this year it becomes a criminal offence to employ illegal immigrants. The protests were triggered by letters from the trust's deputy personnel manager, Caroline Brown, to 300 staff working in domestic and portering jobs, reminding them 'it is a serious offence to continue working without the required authorisation' and telling them to

make sure their work permits were up to date. 'If it is discovered through spot checks or other measures that you do not have an up-to-date permit/authorisation it will not be possible to continue your employment.'⁹

A branch official of the hospital workers' trade union, UNISON, David Rommer, said:

"The letters were sent only to our domestics and porters, the two groups with the largest number of black and Asian staff. It appears that the trust is targeting ethnic minority workers ... The trust said the action had been taken after it had received information that 'there were people working within our portering and domestic staff who were not entitled to be working within the United Kingdom.'¹⁰

There is no doubt that physical characteristics can result in employer classification, and unequal treatment. We must therefore attempt to deconstruct the system which upholds these values and argue for a re-appraisal of structural employment procedures, and a system of effective accountability. It is accountability at all levels of the process that requires attention. Systems and procedures are all in place, have been discussed in detail, and at length. Research is conducted, and reports analysed; however, significant change in practice is unlikely, without a system of penalisation for failure to meet targets and accountability to the populations for which funding is claimed. Regeneration projects within the U.K. draw into the frame urban strategists, who may command salaries consistent with high management salaried posts.. In this context, it is of paramount significance that these positions be consistent with the implications of management responsibility and public accountability.

Under current legislation, Muslims experiencing religious discrimination

have no legal protection under 'Race Relations Acts' , or recourse to the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). At the time of writing, cases of discrimination against Muslims can only be assessed according to criteria regarding 'race', and **not** religious discrimination. For example, the following case demonstrates the limited recourse to legislation that Muslims have, regarding 'religious discrimination':

"A (Rotherham) company owner who refused to employ Muslims because he regarded them as extremists was not guilty of racial discrimination, an industrial tribunal ruled yesterday. ... Mr Neil Panter, ...said he was not prepared to employ followers of Islam because of the death threats they had made against Salman Rushdie following publication of The Satanic Verses. He believed them to be 'extremists' and not the kind of people he would want to work for his firm.

"... the tribunal in Sheffield ruled there was no direct breach of the (Race Relations) Act and that Muslims were a religious sect and not an ethnic minority ... Mr John Altman, tribunal chairman, said, however, that the director had 'indirectly' discriminated in asking for only non-Muslim applicants. ... He said: to 'discriminate against Muslims ... is not to discriminate on racial grounds. The true nature of Islam is not within the Race Relations Act of 1976 although, for practical purposes, the person who discriminates against Muslims discriminates indirectly on the grounds of race.' The Commission (CRE) regarded the hearing as a test of current race relations laws and said that to discriminate against Asians."¹¹

This case highlights the difficulties for redress regarding discrimination against Muslims, who are multiply-discriminated against: for example, on the basis of skin-colour and because of religious discrimination. Protection against religious discrimination has become a key issue for Muslim platforms in Britain.¹² The issue has also been highlighted in the Muslim media.¹³

Another example cited as 'religious discrimination' against Muslims is illustrated in the case of Andrea Shamomi, an Austrian woman who 'embraced Islam' following a job interview, but prior to commencing employment as a receptionist. Shamomi resigned from her job, because she was refused permission to wear a longer skirt, in place of the shorter regulation version. Following her resignation, Shamomi applied for unemployment benefit. According to a report in the Muslim newspaper Q-News, the Department of Health and Social Security forced Shamomi to undergo:

" ... an excruciating interrogation about the circumstances surrounding her conversion. The tone of the questioning suggested disbelief that anyone should choose to change their faith to Islam. Among the questions ... was why she felt Christianity was wrong for her, how long she had been a Christian, when she had begun to have doubts, whether the person who had helped her to convert was an authority on Islam, and why she had chosen to accept Islam ...

"...a spokesman for the DSS...[said] local offices could ask whatever questions they deemed appropriate to determine entitlements. 'What this amounts to is a penalty for converting to Islam.'"¹⁴

Benefit was refused Ms Shamomi on the grounds that she had voluntarily made herself unemployed, by resigning on 'conscientious grounds' without 'just cause'. The questioning Ms Shamomi underwent suggesting "disbelief that anyone should choose to change their faith to Islam" is reflected in the many discussions which occur at informal neighbourhood and local level within Newham. In these informal discussions, many of which the researcher is a part, it has become apparent that conversion to Islam is viewed with disdain. This case demonstrates the extent of feeling surrounding the conversion of a white female

to Islam, and the resultant discrimination:

"There has been a disturbing rise in the number of Muslim women reporting incidents of religious harassment and discrimination in work."¹⁵

Female students trained in employment skills by the researcher reported incidents of discrimination regarding attire and discrimination. One student changed from wearing a shalwar kameez into a long skirt and blouse, as a result of her belief that this improved her employment chances. Another student noted that, in employment interviews, she received more favourable responses when wearing 'western' clothing.

3.2. Perceptions of Conflict as an Inhibitor of Change

Notions of 'race' 'religion' and conflict are contained within the everyday neighbourhood conversations that occur between the residents of Newham. These opinions are informed and influenced by historical events, and the reporting of contemporary events occurring within the Indian sub-continent, Africa, Newham and Britain. This informs the development of non-Muslim world views, in connection with the Muslims of Newham, and has resulted (in some cases) in the promotion of hostile attitudes towards Muslims and Islam. Employers are, like other members of society, subject to processes of socialisation, and subsequently, may be influenced by 'opinion shapers'.¹⁶

One example of the potential impact of perceptions of conflict within diversity is to be found within the labour market. Employers seeking to minimise the potential for conflict may avoid the employment of people from specific sectors of the community. Those perceived as sharing similar values, attitudes, customs and practices may be presumed as more suited to 'fit' within the existing workforce. Employers might avoid the development of a diverse workforce, as a means of 'side stepping' perceived potential conflicts within the workforce. These conflicts can be related to group dynamics and constructive work relationships among employees. The avoidance of conflict, could result in the recruitment section actively employing staff perceived as 'culturally similar'. Assumptions and stereotypes concerning cultural similarities and differences would feed into this equation. Skin colour could be another factor which

impinges upon this process, often being denoted as a symbolic marker indicating characteristics often perceived as 'foreign' or 'the Other'.

Effective communication is vital to rapid progression within industry, and this may not be possible when many factors impede that communication. ¹⁷This may occur in relation to delegation of task. An employer may find that more time and effort is involved in accomplishing a task when the worker has difficulty in fully comprehending the task. Given this situation, it is obvious that an employer would in the interests of company survival, attempt to reduce as many dysfunctional factors as possible. The employer may consider that taking on a diverse workforce is not cost effective. They may be unwilling to embrace the conflict sometimes inherent in the introduction of those perceived as foreign.

An example of how this could work is within Newham's industrial sector. In this example, it is demonstrated that inclusion may be considered to slow down the processes of good business progress, due to perceived inherent difficulties involved in employing a diverse workforce. The aim of generating employment opportunities for 'ethnic minorities' would appear to conflict with economic growth for small businesses. Inclusion could result in an organisation's diminished competitiveness, and in the case of a small organisation, possible closure. Employers may not desire inclusion, in response to concerns regarding reduction of competitiveness.

A demand of the existing system of competitive tendering requires that a

viable bid is entered. Bids will be judged by several benchmarks, including ability to complete within a given time scale, and costings appropriate to what the funder agrees. One viewpoint expressed by a member of the local population of Newham concerns exclusion from the growing economy. This person stated that tenderers bring in their own teams:

"The council contracts out its work, so in comes a contractor, submits the lowest bid, gets the contract, and brings in their own team. You can't blame them for having their own teams, they know what they're getting. I've been to the labour exchange and I haven't seen any of these new jobs yet. What I have seen though, is the influx of professional outsiders into the area'. They'll use their own teams and where it suits 'em, cheap labour. We can't compete. We can't afford to live on what they can get away with paying."¹⁸

Efforts are being made to enable local people and businesses to benefit from the opportunities created by developments within the regions of regeneration. A partnership has been established between Newham and Tower Hamlets councils, Canary Wharf, London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC), London East Training and Enterprise Council and the employment service:

"They will be referring thousands of people for construction jobs and training as well as hundreds of companies for tendering opportunities".¹⁹

Consideration of these issues, and working across diversity, is central to development and economic growth - and is directly related to the fostering of constructive work, community and neighbourhood relationships. Interpersonal communication and conflict across diversity affects all aspects of Newham life. This includes industry, business developments, local authority community

regeneration, and the resourcing and servicing of population needs. These factors in turn affect the productivity and output of a community or organisation, which is directly related to the economic situation. For example, business and commercial enterprise requires new and innovative ideas in order to retain competitiveness within business, industry, commerce, and world markets - on a regional, national and international scale. This has particular relevance in the multi-million pound programme of urban regeneration within Newham.

3.3. Urban Regeneration and the Local Economy

The London Borough of Newham has been identified by government agencies as an 'area of deprivation' requiring urban regeneration.²⁰ Newham is placed at the lower end of national statistical tables in terms of household income and expenditure. The area is beset with high crime rates, high unemployment, difficult housing conditions, low standards of education, and high concentrations of poverty. Some attempts to measure poverty apply household income, family income or expenditure as the basis for counting or calculating the extent of poverty.²¹ A significant proportion of people in Newham suffer 'hardship', and do not have all the essentials defined as basic to a reasonable standard of living.²²

Social poverty welfare concerns have made substantial linkages between impoverishment, deprivation, and physical and mental health. These factors impact upon the relationships between people within communities, especially in deprived inner-city areas - such as the London Borough of Newham. Within Newham, poverty is about more than a shortage of money; for many, it is about empowerment and participation in society. In this case, finance may be seen to be a major instrument of power, giving the power to choose where one might live, be educated and even to some extent, the nature of people one will come into contact with. Income can relate to social mobility, opportunity, expectations, aspirations, education, attitudes and differing values. It may dictate the boundaries of choice, in relation to the social, economic and political roles played

within the power structures of society.

Research data states that particular groups within society are more vulnerable to the risk of poverty:

“Britain is a racist society in that there is significant evidence that black and other minority ethnic communities experience discrimination and disadvantage on a disproportionate basis, which cannot be explained merely as a result of chance or misfortune.”²³

Access to economic status has also dictated the boundaries of choice for Muslim migrants to Newham - finance providing access to educational opportunity, information, and social networks. An example of this is literacy and English language skills, which enable greater access to information sources and advice required for survival.²⁴ Social and economic status can also be relevant in the shaping of attitudes and perception within Muslim communities such as Newham:²⁵

“The greater incidence of poverty amongst Ethnic minority communities is the result of these communities having different cultures and behaviour. Social divisions, thus becomes social characteristics, and social characteristics become causes.”²⁶

The concept of poverty may refer to the level of provision one has with regard to adequate affordable accommodation of suitable size, structure and quality, a sufficient amount of food, heating, clothing, and a reliable and appropriate income for other considered necessities. Poverty encompasses not just a shortage of finance; it is linked to empowerment and participation in society. In this case, finance may be seen to be a major instrument of power - enabling access to

opportunity, status, and environmental choices.

In 1905, 55% of Newham children died before reaching five years of age and life expectancy was considerably low.²⁷ In the 1990s these statistics have altered considerably, with the institution of improved health and welfare facilities. The borough's economic problems find a focus within the least able of the community, and results in pressure on health and welfare services. Newham has many single parent families; and is reported to have the second highest rate of HIV positive women in the country, and high rates of unwanted pregnancy and abortion.²⁸ Undoubtedly the lack of resources leading to this situation would act as a catalyst in competition for funding.

Newham's average crime rates are higher, and average health-standards are poorer than national averages - whilst demands upon social-welfare provision have increased:

"Last year's Annual Public Health Report showed that East Londoners suffer extreme health disadvantage compared with the rest of the country. Against this background East London's minority ethnic communities are often even further disadvantaged.

"This year's report shows that compared with the White UK population, most minority ethnic communities in East London:

- suffer higher levels of unemployment and overcrowding
- support large deprived refugee and homeless populations
- have significant communication problems - it is estimated that 60 per cent of the need for bilingual health advocates goes unmet.

- are disadvantaged in their access to some health services."

In East London:

" ... the homeless population is estimated to be in excess of 20,000 - in Newham two-thirds of homeless people are of African or Asian origin.

- a higher proportion of East Londoners live in local authority housing compared with Greater London.
- poor living conditions are common, including damp and overcrowding, especially in the Bangladeshi community."

In maternity care:

- "women who did not speak English as a first language experienced the lowest levels of continuity and choice."

In terms of mentally disturbed patients:

- "Black people were over-represented compared with the local population." [sic]²⁹

Changing patterns in the population mean that Newham's young generation (aged under 19) will increase by 20% by 2001, whilst elders in Newham (over 85) will have increased by 24% in the same year. This will impact on health service provision, and is likely to contribute to the development of community tensions, due to pressure on resources. The current statistical estimate of Newham population, suggesting 217,000 people, is an underestimate according to some local sources.³⁰ Sources state that 25% of this population is currently under 16; the average household and family sizes in Newham are higher than the rest of

London, and the U.K. as a whole.³¹ However, Newham is one of the poorest boroughs in the U.K.,³² requiring great improvement in health service provision,³³ child-care, and services for the elderly. The implications of national population trends is significant regarding the provision of localised services appropriate to the requirements of a diverse community. These trends indicate:

“Almost one child in 10 in Britain is black or Asian, according to a government study pointing to a steady rise in the ethnic minority population.

“Although people from ethnic minorities represent only 5.8 per cent of the population, the study shows they are typically young. This means that numbers of black and Asian people will grow irrespective of immigration trends. Compared with the white population, almost twice as many are under five.

“The study, which has profound implications for education planning, was published yesterday in *Population Trends*, the Office for National Statistics' journal. It uses data from the government Labour Force Survey and the 1991 Census, the first to include questions of race.

“For every 100 people of working age, there are an estimated 32 white children under 15 but 52 in minority groups as a whole.”³⁴

Factors related to unemployment, redundancy, and scarcity of well-paid employment may aggravate situations of tension and conflict. Local populations, concerned over what may be perceived as an erosion of rights and privileges that are taken for granted, may increasingly blame the 'other'. National and local media reporting provides regular updates on the borough's social and economic problems. Residents may experience insecurity and frustration resulting in the growth of intolerance. The economic situation impacts on personal status, privilege, choice, and planning for the future. As house prices plummeted in the 1990s, many Newham residents - having previously taken advantage of the

government's policy on offering the 'right to buy' for tenants of state controlled housing - found themselves in the negative equity trap.

Changes in Britain's place within the international economy is likely to impact upon developments occurring at a micro-level in the neighbourhood.³⁵ In attempts to remain viable, existing industry may increasingly be put under pressure to merge with other companies - consequently, creating further redundancies and increased poverty among local populations. Britain's export economy is consistently having to compete with countries offering similar work at a fraction of the cost of employing local people:

"British workers face a 'third world future' as jobs are exported to the cheap labour economies of Asia ... British Airways announced that it was creating up to 250 data processing jobs in Bombay. British union leaders are furious, warning that tens of thousands of white collar jobs could go ... The GMB general union said this was just the latest switch of personnel to India. A system for correcting tickets was switched to Delhi four years ago and the number of British jobs had declined from 100 to 17. Pay rates for on-screen administrative staff are between £14 and £26,000 in Britain compared with £2,000 for the same work in India.³⁶

Concerns regarding the pressure on the broader British economy are not removed from the debate at neighbourhood level. Residents identifying themselves within the broader collective context of a societal downfall may posit the blame securely among those perceived as 'foreign'. Anxiety regarding the quality of life and fears regarding the future can translate into scapegoating, prejudice, racism, and discrimination. Resentment may be expressed against those considered to contribute to these anxieties.

The development and regeneration of East London is the largest urban regeneration project in the United Kingdom:

"There can be few places in Britain poised for the developments that will transform Newham in the next few years - the Jubilee Line extension, the Channel Tunnel station at Stratford and regeneration of the Royal Docks with the building of new homes and a university."³⁷

Urban regeneration is central to economic growth within Newham, and is directly related to aspects of racism and conflict within the community; social exclusion; and public access to local services. This includes industry, business developments, local authority community regeneration, and the resourcing and servicing of population needs. These factors in turn affect the productivity and output of a community or organisation, which is directly related to the economic situation.

The Urban Regeneration of Newham is part funded by The Inner Area Programme (IAP) and the local Authority. Newham qualifies for this funding on the basis of its designation as an area facing social, economic, and environmental deprivation. Local Government objectives for the IAP include the development of employment opportunities for local residents, enabling local people to become more competitive within the job market. Additionally, the IAP is intended to strengthen the social fabric of the inner-city, encouraging self-help initiatives amongst the local population, and reducing the number of people in acute housing stress.

Community consultation is a vital aspect of Urban Regeneration. The local authority identified a lack of input - among specific sectors of the community - into the decision making processes relating to public services. This is with regard to the development, and implementation of services, appropriate to the needs of a diverse population. Action Plans were formulated in consultation with service users and other representatives. These documents detail the borough's plans which regard to implementation of action by its workforce. The implementation of these agreed recommendations are intended to respond to the identified needs of the population, thereby serving the diverse needs of Newham's populations.

Information regarding public consultation is produced, translated into a number of community languages, and made available within the borough. Information outlets included the Newham News, circulatory letters, and the council's free monthly news bulletin - distributed to all households within the borough. The local newspapers also carry London Borough of Newham 'updates'. Information intended to reach considerable proportions of the population, in an attempt to enable diverse groups, ethnic, religious, to participate in the decision making processes and ultimately the development of policy initiatives. Community development initiatives and projects have been developed by the borough council in consultation with the identified responses of the local populations. Consultation with Newham populations is considered to be vital to the success of developments.

The involvement of Newham's populations is intrinsic to the development

of appropriate community services, employment strategies, and health care provision. This insight, otherwise inaccessible, might ordinarily enable the growth of constructive approaches to specific problems affecting the diverse populations of the borough.

Economic exclusion may occur as a result of perceptions regarding dysfunctional conflict and racism within the employment sector. This factor may emerge as an obstacle to achievement, financial leverage, and consequently the reduction of poverty levels among the Muslims of Newham. Factors impinging upon this situation relate to the Management of dysfunctional conflict within the workplace. The fostering of constructive, work, community and neighbourhood relationships is central to Newham's Urban Regeneration programme. Effective training strategies in Conflict Management could provide for the development of a clear conceptual framework, and detailed guidelines, for the development of understanding and constructive working relationships.

Limited finance, lack of opportunity, and poor prospects of employment among Muslims in Newham, continues to generate and sustain a set of stereotypical perceptions positing Muslims as a 'drain' on the local economy. Newham's Urban Regeneration development might ordinarily include increased employment prospects for Muslims, thereby potentially impacting upon levels of social and economic inclusion within the borough's development.

Historically, employment in Newham has been a source of conflict within the

borough. Although many Muslims are in employment - as a collective group, which includes non-local Muslims available for work - Muslims are routinely discriminated against within employment, particularly when employed outside of the Muslim neighbourhood infrastructure. Social and economic exclusion may occur as a result of anxieties and beliefs concerning the employment of Muslims. These factors relate to institutional racism, Islamophobia, patterns of interpersonal communication, and the fears surrounding impact of conflict across diversity. The avoidance of conflict relates to urban regeneration, exclusion of minorities, and the deprivation of specific sectors of the community. Anxiety - real or imagined - connected with notions of conflict, colonial stereotypes, racism and Islamophobia, may sustain prevalent patterns of employment among Muslims.

Endnotes:

1. An example of this is the 'British' education system and the powerful role it plays in the transmission of the societies 'cultural' attributes to its members. Though educational establishments vary in terms of ethos and outlook, it could be assumed that one of the goals of educational institutions is the transmission of significant societal characteristics. In this context 'racial' discrimination might manifest itself in the criterion of policy, practice and procedure, resulting in the form of a barrier to achievement.
 2. Gail Lewis, "Black Women's Employment and the British Economy" chap. in Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain, Ed. Winston James and Clive Harris. (London: Verso, 1993). pp.73-4.
 3. "Methodological refinement, policy formulation, and the future research agenda: some brief reflections," chap in Ratcliffe, Peter. (Ed.) Ethnicity in the 1991 Census, Volume Three: Social geography and ethnicity in Britain: geographical spread, spatial concentration and internal migration. (London: HMSO:1996) p.303
 4. European Parliament, Report drawn up on behalf of the Committee of Inquiry into Racism and Xenophobia. Rapporteur: Glyn Ford. (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1991), 3.13.1.8.-9 p.72, referring to: Elisabeth Burney, 'Steps to Racial Equality: Positive Action in a Negative Climate.' (London: Runnymede Trust, 1988) n.d.
 5. Richard Jenkins, Racism and Recruitment. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986., n.d. Cited in Tariq Modood, "'Difference', Cultural Racism and Anti-Racism." Chap. in Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood (Eds.) Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-racism, (London & New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997) p.162
 6. "Asylum And Immigration Act 1996" Newham Provider Development News., July 1997, 1, p.2
 7. Ibid.
 8. "Head teachers, hospital administrators, housing and social security officials are to be trained and encouraged to identify suspected illegal immigrants and report them to the Home Office. ... Mr Howard said the Commission for Racial equality would be consulted to ensure that 'an objective set of criteria' could be used to identify suspected illegals."
- "Howard censured on migrants 'spy plan'", Alan Travis, Home Affairs Editor, The Guardian, July 19, 1995.

9. "Hospital in row on immigrant checks", Alan Travis, Home Affairs Editor, The Guardian, March 13, 1996.
10. Ibid.
11. Colin Wright, "Employer wins race case over Muslim ban", Daily Telegraph, 7 October, 1992.
12. For example, see: Elections 1997 and British Muslims, UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA), (London: UKACIA, 1997), 12pp.
13. In 1997, this was highlighted in a London case, involving Amna Mahmood, a Muslim teenage female who was dismissed from her employment at a Body Shop franchise, allegedly for wearing a hijab. She took her grievance to the CRE, and was successful in her application. This case has encouraged Muslim organisations pursuing a change in CRE legislation regarding 'religious discrimination.' "Body Shop in hijab sacking row", Q-News, 7 February 1997.
14. "No dole for conscientious objector", Q-News 2-8 August 1996
15. Ibid.
16. For an overview of the historical foundations of Western views of Islam, see: Norman Daniel, Islam and the West: The Making of an Image. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2 ed. 1997)
17. For a discussion on language and communication, used as a justification for segregation in the workplace see Muhammad Anwar (1985), op.cit. p.105.
18. 'L.A.' [pseud], interview with researcher, tape-recording, February 12, 1997, Newham.
19. "Targeting Jobs for local people" 'Community Newsletter', London Borough of Newham, September, 1997. p3.
20. This status, as a social and economically deprived borough, has drawn community developers into the region. Finance was provided within a U.K, and European context to assist in the development of the region. Committees were set up, action plans were developed, and the expertise of community developers was brought in from outside of the borough to assist with the process. The arrival of newcomers informed and shaped the process, developing a new business and commercial infrastructure.
21. Pete. Alcock. Understanding Poverty: London: Macmillan Press Ltd 1993.p.121.

22. Griffiths, op. cit., 148 pp. and Newham Community Care Plan, op. cit., 110 pp.
23. Pete, Alcock. op.cit p.139.
24. The ability to read could be said to enable access to information, which can be used in the evaluation and formation of opinion. An illiterate person may be denied this access, and may of necessity be dependent upon secondary source information - which when relayed is filtered through the subjective, emotive interpretation of the interpreter placed upon it. Education might be considered to be a political act, in that a literate person and educated person might be presumed to have acquired knowledge appropriate to their perceived role within their 'group'. The researcher taught adult literacy and basic education skills in Newham. A proportion of tutees came from Newham's Muslim female population. Literacy skills were sought by tutees for activities, including: dealing with social welfare, especially filling in forms; monitoring the progress of children through reports and parental information; to improve access and communication with medical practitioners; to get around the borough on public transport; access to local information about borough and community developments; shopping - especially in reading food product labels to establish where a product was *halal*.
25. Studies on 'class' values often include a focus on the distinction between 'middle' and 'working' class values, particularly, with regard to notions of status and position, perceptions of individual/group power, and relationships with 'authority' figures. In this context, the 'working class' value system could be said to incorporate specific beliefs relating to the division of power: those that 'have' and the 'have nots'. The 'middle class' position is generally considered to contain a set of beliefs including perceptions of personal power, individual responsibility, and a degree of autonomy from which life circumstances can - to some extent - be shaped. Issues regarding personal and infra structural power are significant within the context of poverty, behaviour, and the 'will' to alter practices resulting in the creation, and development of poverty. For a discussion on the complexities of 'class', attitudes, and behaviour, See: John H. Goldthorpe et. al, The Affluent Worker: Political Attitudes and Behaviour. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968).
26. Alcock, op.cit, p.191.
27. Cairncross, Alex. The British Economy since 1945, (Oxford & Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994, 3d reprint) p.283.

The life expectancy in Britain altered dramatically between 1931 - 1986:

'Life expectancy at birth in Great Britain, which had been 58 for males in

1931 and had risen to 66 by 1950, improved to 72 in 1986. For females the corresponding figures were 63 in 1931, 71 in 1950 and 78 in 1986'.

28. Colin Grainger, Newham Recorder, 13 September 1995.
29. East London and The City Health Authority, Health in the East End: A Summary of the Annual Public Health Report 1995/96. (London: East London and The City Health Authority, 1996)
30. David Manion, Director of Service Development, discussing a Report presented to Newham Community Health Services NHS Trust. Newham Recorder, "Young Generation: Youth figures are set to soar," 10 April 1996.
31. Steve Griffiths & Newham Council Anti-Poverty and Welfare Rights Unit, Poverty on your Doorstep: London Borough of Newham Poverty Profile, (Newham: Chief Executive's Department, London Borough of Newham, 1994) pp. 1-12.
32. Department of Environment Local Conditions Index 1993, cited in London Borough of Newham, Newham Community Care Plan 1996-1999 (Newham: London Borough of Newham, 1996) p.16.
33. For a discussion of refugee statistics, and their utilisation of local services, see: Alice Bloch, Refugees and Migrants in Newham: Access to Services, (Newham: London Borough of Newham, Anti Poverty and Welfare Rights Unit, Chief Executive's Department, 1994), 86 pp.
34. David Brindle, "Higher birthrate swells Britain's black and Asian population", The Guardian, 25 June 1997. Population Trends 88, (London: Office for National Statistics, HMSO Stationery Office, 1997.)
35. 'In, say, 1951 Britains exports of manufactures were above the combined total for Germany, France and Japan they are now (in 1991) a mere one-sixth and below those of Italy'. Alex Cairncross, op.cit. p.17
36. "'Indian future' for British workers" Asian Times June 20, 1996.
37. Dr. Wendy Thompson, Newham Council's first woman Chief Executive, interviewed by Catherine Howard, "Women at the top." Newham Recorder 1 May 1996.

4 DEBATING INFLUENCE I: CULTURAL TRANSMISSION WITHIN RESIDENTIAL SPACE

4.1. Introduction

The relationship between racism, poverty, culture, religion, and community resources has a bearing on community relations and situations of conflict. The competition for resources - for example, housing, access to social and welfare facilities, employment, education and training opportunities - are part of this matrix. Newham's social problems have a strong emphasis within concerns over resources, migration, population diversity. This is particularly the case when that expansion is perceived in terms of Muslims as 'undesirables', draining local community resources..

There are a number of identified conflicts existing within Newham. These conflicts, referred to as dysfunctional conflicts, occur between and within the diverse population groups and are informed by a number of theoretical factors, which contribute to the development, sustenance and maintenance of conflict. These factors impact, to a greater or lesser extent, upon the nature of the relationships between Newham's inhabitants. This relationship is manifested within the dynamics of community relations, social environment, and conflict. These factors have profound significance in the development of the region in terms of local economy regeneration, and the generation and distribution of

wealth.

Historically, housing allocation and shortages, has been a significant factor in the development and maintenance of certain types of conflict within the metropolis of London's East End. Certain residential areas in Newham have specific characteristics associated with them by members of the local population. For example, in some wards, there are invisible boundaries in operation. These 'real' or 'imagined' boundaries impact upon the nature of relationships between the inhabitants - and serve to preserve identities, maintain belief systems, and ensure the continuity of cultural norms and values regarding stereotypes and the 'other'. These distinctive features are characterised by elements of collective viewpoints containing beliefs, and assumptions regarding residents of nearby neighbourhoods.

Skin colour is in some circumstances used as an identifiable characteristic which serves to identify group members. Groups delineate boundaries relating to membership and may set themselves apart on the basis of specific characteristics:

" ... all borders, by their very historical, political, and social constructions, serve as barriers of exclusion and protection, marking 'home' from the 'foreign'."¹

This may enable a clearer recognisable distinction of its own membership, and provide access to the 'benefits' conferred to a member belonging to the 'group'. Usage of the term 'border' within this context refers to 'a political or cultural

boundary that is marked in real space'.² 'Border' normally refers to geographical ranges, international areas demarcated by boundary lines, marked upon maps and charts. These, sometimes arbitrary lines drawn across regions and continents may discount the level of inter-border communication and interaction. People at a 'grass roots level' in Newham share an environment and its services, so there will be a level of interaction - particularly within specific service areas, such as those supplying health care and education facilities.

The researcher has consulted with residents within the Forest Gate area who describe Custom House, Canning Town, and the Beckton area - both in the south of the borough - as 'no go areas' for 'people of colour', although 'people of colour' (including many Muslims) are resident.³ A report "from two cross-sections of the community" on crime in the borough, included the following:⁴

"...satisfaction with policing has declined across all ethnic groups over the past decade. In particular, manual workers, people under 30, and non-white people are least satisfied with the quality of policing"

"Many resident adopted a territorial attitude. White residents feel safer in the areas in which they grew up, while black and Asian families feel less comfortable in predominantly white areas".

"The survey found that concern about crime derived from three sources:

- ▶ The media and local 'folk knowledge';
- ▶ The experiences of friends and relatives;
- ▶ Personal experience.

"The influence of the Recorder was clear said the report, with people mentioning elderly people at risk of mugging.

"... Fear of racial attacks varied by area. White residents saw some parts of the borough as safe and 'having a good community spirit'. Similar areas were seen as dangerous by black residents ... Some younger white

residents placed the issue of increasing crime in the context of a broader breakdown of stable communities caused by the influx of 'newcomers' into Newham. The newcomers could be from other parts of London, other parts of the country, or the world."⁵

The relationship between communities which claim a possessive relationship over space, space which is demarcated by borders of wards is illustrated by the view:

" They don't want us over there. I never go that way. I know Muslim families over there and they have to barricade themselves in. It's not on really, but what can you do. It's full of racists. Mostly criminals."⁶

In contrast, some 'white' residents, in the South of the Borough of Newham (i.e. Custom House, Beckton, Canning Town), are to be heard commenting on the likelihood of being mugged by 'people of colour' in Forest Gate.

Forest Gate, and its main thoroughfare areas of Green Street, Upton Lane, and Woodgrange Park Road, are viewed by some Newham's residents as a positive example of community relations for the future. For others, the district represents the destruction of 'local ways of life'. In this context, the local is identified by specific factors, among them skin pigmentation, and the demonstration of collective 'local' affiliative expressions. This group may utilise a racist terminology, associating skin colouration, and/or religious belief with outsider status and 'cultural invasion'. They may attempt to avoid interaction by deliberately not going to particular shops. Full avoidance may be difficult to manage, because of the necessity of shared space.

4.2. Conflict in the Neighbourhood

The researcher witnessed the occurrence of a specific type of conflict occurring between members of the 'local' white population and Muslims. Interpersonal and intergroup conflict may also occur between and among all 'collectively' identified groups of residents in Newham; however, the focus here is the that concerning elements within the white population and those perceived as the 'other'. Dissolute 'poor whites' express antagonistic viewpoints towards Muslims.⁷ These comments are, in the main, directed at 'Asian' people, and more specifically, Muslims. This is denoted by specific reference to the development of mosques, and/or Muslim matters. These comments, are often made by elderly 'white' people, regarding 'the state of the country' and 'what the country is coming to'. They may refer to 'the way it was'. Reference may be made to local newspaper reports, readers letters, and neighbourhood discussions. The advent of greater local and national media coverage, and local public opinion concerning the development of an increasing number of mosques within the immediate and surrounding neighbourhoods is a focus for attention among shoppers, and travellers.

One example of this is conflict arising during the everyday interaction occurring within public places; for example, within the popular shopping area of Queen's Market; or when travelling on London Transport buses along the Green Street route. Factors of time, location, nature of occupants, and an individual's state of mind may impacts upon these situations of conflict:

"In contrast white people often assume a white group attitude when it comes to their resentment of black people. At the bus stop, in the supermarket, in the pub, indeed in any public place, white people will make derogatory remarks about black people in the belief that other white people will agree with them. There is a kind of white collective consciousness which is fed by the numerous negative words and statements about black people which white people pick up in their everyday lives, which they carry in their heads which sometimes overtly and sometimes subtly informs their actions. The need to develop a white group strategy to deal with all of this will involve white people recognising that the personal is also political, that those individual acts of subtle racism, created unknowingly by many white people, contribute towards institutional racism. The two go together and both must be eradicated."⁸

Conflict may occur in any number of forms, including insulting behaviour, verbal abuse and physical abuse. Buses often fill with people, who sometimes crush and push past one-another to alight or disembark. The following is an example noted by the researcher:

The researcher observed, whilst travelling on the number 58 bus - from East Ham to Woodgrange Road - a conversation between two white passengers. The passengers alighted at different points along the route. All seats were taken on the bus. Almost all passengers were people of colour. One white woman alighted, and took a standing position along the aisle of the bus. As passengers disembarked along the route, the woman standing pushed and shoved past other passengers, to occupy an available seat next to another white woman. A conversation resulted between the two women. It became apparent that neither of the women were known to one-another, from the nature of their conversation. This conversation included an exchange of introductory personal information. This included statements, regarding place of residence, family history of residence within the area, and perceptions of Forest Gate. Both women exchanged information which appeared to support mutual beliefs and perceptions.

One of the women introduced matters relating to Forest Gate; the growth of 'filth' along Green Street, and Upton Lane; health problems and unemployment related to family members and changes in the region. The second woman responded to what she may have perceived as an open invitation to discussion concerning negative changes within the area. The

conversation developed; the women reflecting and reporting upon stories they stated they had been told by neighbours. The journey along this stretch of Green Street to Woodgrange Park Road is approximately one mile; however, the traffic congestion, noted as a problem factor within Green Street, resulted in a slow bus crawl along the route. This allowed for the development of one of many conversations overheard by the researcher.⁹

The observation of Muslims becoming residents of, previously predominantly 'white' neighbourhoods has fuelled tension among elements within the existing neighbourhoods. Residents have informed the researcher of a serious intention to relocate to Dagenham as a result of 'absorption'.¹⁰ One resident in Forest Gate expressed a deep anger with regard to Muslims, blaming them for problems in the area. He described Muslims as an "army of red ants consuming all in their wake...making the place like a foreign country" He stated that the expansion of Muslim neighbourhoods within the region had resulted in a depreciation in the value of his home.

"My flat's on the market, but I can't get what I should get for it. They (Muslims) won't pay the market value, because they know, no one else will live here. They've driven the price down, and if I want to move, I have to sell it at their price. Plenty of them (Muslims) come to view it, but they won't pay. I've had a couple of them (Muslims) offer cash purchase. I bet they've got some scam going. Probably drugs money... laundering... else, why else would it be cash. They'd go through a bank."¹¹

The researcher has observed that the expansion of Muslim clusters within the neighbourhood has occurred within Forest Gate. During the 1990s Muslim clusters expanded from Green Street, into Upton Lane, and across Woodgrange Road. The establishment of a Muslim infrastructure within neighbourhoods is perceived as a threat by certain local residents. These frameworks consisted of

local business developments, religious buildings; and cultural institutions. Gradually, mosques increasingly became part of a localised infrastructure, threading their way through the borough's neighbourhoods.

There are a number of households in which Religious worship is conducted. For some residents this creates problems regarding neighbour noise nuisance. The researcher personally dealt with a number of these complaints professionally. The Newham Conflict and Change Project dealt with parties involved in these matters, received complain of 'loud wailing sounds' and have at times referred these complaints to the Newham Conflict & Change Project. This project acts as a Mediation Service, assisting in the resolution of Conflict in the community.

Good neighbour relations are to some extent dependent upon an appreciation for differences in world view, lifestyle, culture, and customary practices. Problems can and do emerge when customary practice is perceived as an imposition upon the rights of others. Differences in lifestyle, culture, needs, attitudes, values and expectations will all add their dimensions to neighbour relations and where differences exist these may be compounded in times of economic difficulty. Economic status may impact upon personal satisfaction and conditions of choice. Certain of Newham's residents consider that their choices are increasingly limited, and that they are 'losing out' to Muslims, who, according to one respondent, receive preferential treatment, in the form of Positive discrimination. This view, reflected by the respondent has been expressed to the researcher and corroborated in several further discussions. This particular

discussion exposed views regarding 'poor whites' and 'non Muslim minorities' as the 'victim'.

One respondent concerned herself with the size of families in Newham, attributing her personal circumstances to her level of choice in the matter:

'They have loads of kids because they know the state keeps them. It's not fair, we'd like to have another one, but it'll probably be dependent on us for the rest of its life. 'There's gonna be no jobs for them. What they gonna do. The welfare state has gone to pot. There's no future. We're gonna have to pay for everything. There'll be no homes, no jobs, no welfare. What's left. It's not fair to bring a child into this'. We can't afford it. We'd have to move out of the area if we had a child, but we cant afford to leave. And I cant go to work. The pays so poor, because they (employers) know they can easily get someone else.'

Housing has featured as a key factor in contributing to community tension and neighbour disharmony. Residents who perceive themselves as local, may find themselves residing in close proximity to the 'other' whom they might elect to avoid. Housing allocation has a marked influence on neighbour relations. It is subject to the constraints of local government policy makers, who are themselves caught within the political constraints of central government legislative policy.

Historically, housing allocation and shortages, has been a significant factor in the development and maintenance of certain types of conflict within the metropolis of London's East End.¹² Conflict has occurred principally within the poorer neighbourhoods of the borough. These areas might ordinarily contain a high proportion of state controlled 'council housing' properties. Conflict has also

manifested itself within owner occupier neighbourhoods, or any combination of mixed state/owner occupier accommodation. Owner occupiers may experience negative equity, or property depreciation and be in a difficult position regarding re-location.

The allocation of housing may appear to take little or no account of the difficulties which may arise as a result of placing people who might appear to have different needs in close proximity to one another. It may be thought that an ideal solution might be to place people with commonalities as neighbours, yet this can also present problems. The time, resources and application necessary to effect such a procedure, whereby tenants are selected on perceived ethno-cultural-religious commonality basis, could by default essentially result in longer housing queues and more homelessness, leading to even greater stress on a locality and increased pressure on housing stock. Currently state controlled housing is allocated on the basis of a points system. As accommodation becomes available, a dwelling is offered to those possessing the greatest number of points. Local residents may become angry when; for example, refugees replace them in the housing queue. Points are awarded on the basis of need. Refugees with children may acquire instant points, resulting in being positioned above local residents who may have been on the waiting list for long periods of time. Newham has a greater refugee intake than any other London borough:

“Newham currently has on its books 224 families designated asylum seekers - almost four times the average of other boroughs.”¹³

Many of the refugees are single, and are therefore unentitled to be accommodated by the Council - which means that many live within state-subsidised housing and guest houses.

“The political refugee can also receive food vouchers and any council services under the children’s and National Assistance Acts. The council’s special Asylum team see about 80 new applicants a week, assess 8 families and 35 single people, and the numbers are unlikely to tail off.”¹⁴

There is also the question of segregation, which could arise from differentiation. Separating people on the grounds of difference could result in small pockets of community dwellers possessing shared characteristics, which foster identification with one another, to the exclusion of others. This could ultimately result in a widening gap between different groups in Newham, and the development of perceived/assumed differences would become more pronounced, culminating in even greater societal divisions and breakdown in communication between people. Differences in lifestyle, culture, needs, attitudes, values and expectations will all add their dimensions to neighbour relations, and where differences exist these may be compounded in times of economic recession.¹⁵

“Mediation is one option that housing advisers will try, especially in cases where the problems are caused by clashes in lifestyle or personal dislikes”.¹⁶

Conflict affecting tenants is a major concern for the local housing authority, and attempts are being made to manage neighbour disputes. One scheme under consideration is the introduction of a one year probationary term for new tenants.

Throughout this period tenants could be assessed regarding their suitability as tenants within the context of: a) anti-social behaviour b) neighbour nuisance c) rent arrears. Tenants proving to be 'unreasonable' within this period could be more easily evicted, as a result of breaching conditions of probationary tenancy.¹⁷

4.3.1. Neighbour Conflicts in Residential Space: Introduction

Interviews with individuals in Newham provide examples of the types of conflict that can arise between Muslim and non-Muslim neighbours within Newham. These case-studies document situations, attitudes and experiences of certain people in Newham. The names, locations and certain identifying characteristics have been altered for the security and confidentiality of respondents. The researcher has been involved with these cases in a professional capacity as a conflict resolution practitioner.

The resolution of neighbourhood conflict is a significant factor in the constructive development of community relations within the borough. As discussed previously, there are complex factors contributing to the development and maintenance of conflict within Neighbourhood Relations. These factors may - in certain circumstances - result in the resolution and/or transformation of conflict as an unattainable goal.¹⁸ It is not intended to discuss the practicalities and limitations of conflict resolution in the context of the following cases. Their inclusion is for descriptive purposes, providing insight into cases of similar and common occurrence.

4.3.2. Case Study 1: the Spencer and the Khan Families

Mr. Khan is a Newham-raised Muslim, whose parents migrated from Pakistan into Newham in the 1960's. Mr Khan has always been a resident of Newham, and was educated in the Borough. He speaks with a localised accent, using phrases and vernacular peculiar to the region. He is employed in the car industry, as a production-line worker. Mr. Khan has close connections with other family members in Britain. He lives with his wife and children, but does not wish to live within an extended family framework. However, he states that his wife [from Pakistan] has had difficulty settling in, and is feeling isolated - because her cultural expectations centred around extended family life.

Mr. Khan informed the researcher that life had become intolerable since the new neighbours (the Spencers) had moved in. He accused them of persecuting him and his family:

"The situation is intolerable. They abuse me at home and in the street whenever they see me. It's the children who are most trouble, one of them grabbed at my wife's covering, and when she turned on them, they just laughed.

"I've been and complained to their parents, but they said kids will be kids. I daren't report them to the police, because they might get really angry then. His wife is just as bad. We've heard her, running us down to the other neighbours. You know. The usual stuff about Pakistanis being dirty and the terrible cooking smells. My wife can't speak English very well.; it's very hard for her".

"The children call us insulting names such as 'dirty Paki' when they pass us by, and they shout insults at us as whenever they see us in the street, 'Paki bashing, In. In. In'.

"I've been spat upon, kicked, had dog muck and National Front garbage shoved through my letter box. My kids are frightened when they go to school. They all go to the same school, and my wife doesn't like to stay in on her own".

"They are racist and I'm sure it was them or their like who half kicked in our door whilst we were sleeping. You can't imagine that kind of terror unless you're right in it."¹⁹

Mr. Khan would like to see justice done, but fears taking the matter further. He is concerned that, if he complains, there might be a backlash, resulting in his family being subject to greater, more vicious harassment. Mr. Khan is unwilling to notify the statutory authorities for fear of repercussions, and so maintains silence in respect of the matter. He mentions a friend of his, who - he says - is the victim of a cruel vendetta against him. According to Mr. Khan, this was the result of making complaints.

"Ever since he complained to the Council and the police, about what his neighbours on the estate were doing, they started scrawling slogans all over his property and accusing him of 'ratting'".

"The latest incident was that his garage door was daubed with excrement and racist slogans, and his allotment plot and shed was turned over again. They leave a calling card. It's the same people doing it".²⁰

Mr. Khan said that he was very frightened for his family, and did not know what to do. They had no immediate family close by, and felt unsupported and trapped within their situation. They would like to move away from the area but had problems selling their property:

Mr. Spencer used abusive language when he spoke in connection with his neighbour, Mr. Khan. He said that Mr. Khan was a 'bloody nuisance', and had 'no right complaining':

"It's not even his country, anyway! He has that stupid Paki' music on all the time blasting us out. And we have to put up and shut up. If we complain about 'them', we're racist, and if we don't, we have to put up with it.

"They have visitors all hours, when other decent people are trying to sleep. Then they start 'bloody praying' in that mumbo jumbo language. Somebody should tell them they can't do that sort of thing here. I blame the government. They should change the bloody immigration laws, that's the answer, boot them out." ²¹

Mrs. Spencer was adamant that the blame for urinating in a communal lift in the flats was the responsibility of members of the Khan family - or their friends. Even if it wasn't the Khan's directly causing this problem, it was the Khan's "constant stream of visitors".

"Well, I can't use the lift in the flats on Sunday morning, can I, guess what they do, well, I'll tell you, they use the lift as a toilet. Smells like a dozen tom cats have been in there. I don't suppose they know any better, not coming from this country.

"In the war, my husband was stationed in India, and, I tell you, he had some stories to tell. They don't live like us you know. Then they come here an' think they can do what they like. They take our jobs. Work for low wages and prevent us from striking. If we strike, the companies just get in the cheap labour". ²²

Mr. and Mrs. Spencer are unemployed and don't see this situation coming to an end. They blame people like the Khans for their difficulties.

4.3.3. Case Study 2: the Siddiqui and the Jones Families

Mr. Jones began by declaring that he was not a racist, and that race has nothing to do with his reasons for complaining about his neighbours, the Siddiqui family. Mr. Siddiqui had made a counter claim suggesting that Mr. Jones' reason for complaint was due to racism. Mr. Jones narrated his story whilst constantly interjecting dismissive comments concerning the irrelevance of race:

"I work with coloured people and' I like watching that cricketer fella Imran Khan on telly. Then there's that bloke, Lenny Henry; he's one of my favourites and I don't go about making racist comments about him marrying one of us. So how can I be racist, then. Even, some of my friends are black. They don't carry on like him upstairs though, they're just like you and me".

"It's this Indian fella in the flat above me, you see, an' he's got no respect for white people. If you bump into him on the stairs, he doesn't give you the time a day. Downright rude he is, especially to my wife - he wont even look her in the eye, not that she would want him to anyway. But you can't talk to these people. They just don't understand,"

"It's like a regular festival up there. I don't think they've got any carpet on the floor because we can hear every sound. You should get the social services onto them. They don't look after their children properly. They are up through the night when youngsters should be in bed. How you can expect to get any peace with the children stomping up and down, and running back and forth across the floor. I've seen them hanging around outside the mosque, sometimes into the early hours. It's just not safe.

"What with people coming and going at all kinds of ungodly hour. Sometimes they have prayer meetings in there. Can you imagine it. I'm watching telly, then all of a sudden there's a dozen repetitive wailing voices. It's just not right. What I wouldn't give to have some decent neighbours. I don't mind what colour they are, as long as they're nice people.

"They play that wailing music and it drones on and on like there's no tomorrow. I daren't ask them to keep the noise down. You've got to be careful with these people, they can turn a bit nasty, if you upset 'em. You know what I mean?"²³

4.3.4. Case Study 3: Mr. Daniels and Mr. ad-Din

Mr. Daniels stated that his neighbour Mr. ad-Din, a Muslim, owned an industrial sewing machine and ran a clothing business from home. He explained that he had complained to the Newham Borough Council regarding the matter. Mr. Daniels stated that the letting policy of the Council strictly prohibited tenants from use of a property designated for living accommodation to be used as a business:

"It's the constant humming sounds. They drive me mad. I work during the day like normal people and I need to get my rest at night. They don't seem to live like that. Working all hours and through the night.

"They pretend to be religious but it's not very religious, is it, to not give a damn about disturbing your neighbour? I see him go off with the others [Muslim men] to the mosque, but I never see his missus outside.

"I've been next door to complain but it's always the wife who answers. She peeps out from behind the curtain sometimes at me, and when she does come to the door, she won't speak to me anyway. She just mumbles, 'husband, husband' and pushes the door in my face. The women are scared of their men, you know. She never seems to go out and I can hear her crying often.

"A van comes every Wednesday and collects the stuff [clothing]. I don't know what they do with it but I wish they did it somewhere else. If they can't live like us, I don't see why they want to be here."²⁴

Mr. Daniels said that he had exhausted all avenues in Newham Council by which to solve this problem, and was now prepared to take other measures beyond the scope of the law.

4.3.5. Case Study 4: the Hassan Family and the Moore Family

Not all neighbour conflicts are related to racism, although inferences regarding 'race' and 'cultural' factors are often introduced into the complaint:

Mr. and Mrs. Moore - who described themselves as 'elderly' - informed the researcher that they were both retired, and sought to have a 'quiet lifestyle.' They interpreted this as peaceful evenings at home, without the interference of noise connected with their neighbours - the Hassan family. The Moores owned their own home. The complaint concerned visits by neighbours' family and friends during the late evening and early morning hours.

Mr. and Mrs. Moore stated that they would like to change their location, but were caught within the negative equity trap. Underlying issues surfaced during the interview, which indicated a low level of tolerance for those considered to be 'foreigners'. Negative stereotypes were attributed to the Hassan family - for example, comments to do with 'curry' and 'cooking smells'.

Their neighbours, the Hassans, were a Newham-raised Muslim couple whose parents had migrated to Britain from Pakistan. They expressed the view that they did not have the intention of deliberately disturbing their neighbours, but the natural order of their lifestyle meant that there would be irregular comings and goings by their family member and friends, sometimes in the early hours of the morning. The life-styles of these two parties were in contrast to one another and a dispute had arisen.²⁵

Following intervention some reconciliation was effected, but the potential for further difficulties still existed. The dwellings were constructed with a low level of sound insulation and plasterboard had been used as an inexpensive room divider in parts of the home.

4.4.1. Debating Influences in the Neighbourhood

The following section is included as a result of the discussions these issues generated concerning Muslims in Newham. Many of the quotations listed appeared in the local press of Newham. Local media opinion is acknowledged to inform discussion at micro-level within the neighbourhood, and for some Newham residents is a focal point of discussion and reference. Islamophobic and xenophobic fears of those perceived as ‘foreign’ may, to a certain extent, be located within the informal structure of ‘neighbourliness’ and a ‘cup of tea and a chat’.²⁶ Controversial topics concerning Muslims may provide for the reinforcement and maintenance of ‘collective viewpoint. These discussions may result as a direct response to: media reporting, television programmes, radio commentary, or gossip. Many discussions contain secondary filtering, for example ‘hearsay’. They may occur within a residence or public space; for example: while waiting at a bus stop, or at a market place. Views reflect attitudes towards Muslims as ‘outsiders’. This discounts Muslim self-perception, many of whom may perceive themselves in relation to aspects of ‘collective local identity’.

Within this framework, media opinion and local viewpoint is often exchanged. Children are often present during these gatherings and may be recipients of impressions transmitted with regard to Muslims. These impressions can contain negative assertions with respect to notions of Islamic belief, Muslim practices, and inferior status. There is evidence to suggest that children’s perspectives in relation to themselves and their relationships with others, are

influenced by the viewpoints of significant people in their lives. For example, the researcher has overheard 'white' children under five years of age, within the south of the borough, shouting offensive words at Muslims, that may bear little relation to their understanding of the terms - such as "Saddam! Saddam!"²⁷

The perceived lifestyle of Muslim people in Newham is one focus for negative statements and images located within sections of the local media. This includes newspapers, where readers have sent in letters for publication; often presenting negative impressions of Muslims in Newham. These are generated and given credibility by a national media that has actively linked increasing crime, violence, unemployment, social decay and financial pressures directly to the presence of ethnic minorities in Newham.

Connections are made with reference to colonial stereotypes. Many Muslims reside in difficult housing conditions, and would be classified within a context of poverty. In this context, those perceived as foreigners - by locals - are often associated with the development of social problems within the borough. 'Foreigners' are perceived as 'dependent', and 'purveyors of ill health and disease; among them, HIV and AIDS, and tuberculosis.' The high incidence of HIV and AIDS amongst African Muslims, for example, has been a topic of conversations regarding 'refugees', whilst the association of tuberculosis with spitting has also been associated with various migrant and ethnic-minority groups in Newham. Neighbourhood discussion also focuses on Muslims and a perceived oppression

of women. This belief often predominates conversations, and would appear to be the single most significant factor stereotyping Muslims in the borough.

The local weekly newspaper, the Newham Recorder, runs regular features relating to health in the community: one study found that refugee groups did not wish to be associated with AIDS/HIV:

"...[and] were very sensitive to media coverage of their plight and circumstances. They felt that they were regarded as harbouring all types of diseases. This was particularly true of HIV/AIDS which is commonly associated with certain refugee groups' countries of origin." ²⁸

"A new programme of support for African communities in Newham is being established in the East London and the City Health Authority (ELCHA).

"The incidence of HIV and AIDS in families is higher in East London than in other parts of Britain, and some African communities are particularly affected.

"Numerous community organisations exist to meet the social needs of individuals or families who are either African or of African descent. Health Promotion Advisors in ELCHA hope to make connections with these groups to provide information and expertise in a range of health areas, including HIV and AIDS.

" ... Support is available on the development of health education materials such as leaflets, posters and videos. Training is provided for community members to enable them to take health messages into their communities." ²⁹

Provision of these services is seen by some Newham residents as an unnecessary burden on taxpayers; this criticism is (in some cases) linked to a belief that Muslims do not contribute to the nation's wealth in the form of payment of taxes, and therefore should not be eligible for state benefits. In this

context, those perceived as 'foreign' are considered to be 'sponging' off the state system:

“ ... ordinary working people's money, paying for people who haven't lifted a finger in this country ... They've never paid any taxes. ...I'm not in work all the time but when I am, I pay and they (the government) just give it away to them (Muslims) It's not as if they like it here. They hate the place and they hate us (non-Muslims). They blame us for everything that goes wrong in their lives, but they're happy to live off us. It's like working hard to fill your cupboard to feed your kids, then some body just walks in and eats it.”³⁰

The former Prime Minister John Major spoke out and condemned the use of National Charity Lottery money for an organisation assisting asylum seekers. This sparked commentary on the national independent Talk Radio station. Many neighbours are within the vicinity of the home environment throughout the course of the day, and radio may form part of their relationship to the outside world. The Asian Times carried the following editorial:

"The Charities Board sparked controversy last year by allocating £151,000 for AIDS advice to be provided to asylum-seekers and immigrant in London." ³¹

Controversial topics generate discussion at micro level, among the local populations within Newham, and at macro level regarding publications. These matters were featured on radio programmes as a focus for discussion, with callers invited to telephone the radio station and air their views. The following topic also became a point of focus:

"A man awarded the equivalent of 26 years of benefits back pay is set to lose it all after Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley demanded that the payment be halted ... the Asian claimant had won a ruling against officials who believed that he was not entitled to the cash ... He consequently won an appeal in 1994. The case, called 'unique' by the tribunal, ignored Social Security laws which forbid payments of more than 12 months ... Government lawyers are currently working to overturn the decision."³²

Matters connected to issues of poverty in Newham and the State welfare system arouse controversy, invoke discussion, and inform action and reaction to Muslims. There are those Newham's residents, who consider that greater amounts of public money should be invested in care services which affect the general populace; for example, tuberculosis. Muslims are frequently blamed as a collective 'group' for the increase and development of tuberculosis. The implications of this are profound and reveal discontent with the allocation of public funds, for those perceived as being instrumental in the development of illness in the borough. The 'demands' on the welfare state, particularly the National Health Service is frequently a topic for veiled racism, although not all those who are opposed to the use of public funds in this regard could be assessed as racist:

"After reading 'It's A Bleeding Liberty The Way the Government Treats Newham' (Recorder, March 27), I think it's a bleeding liberty the way Newham is prepared to spend ratepayers' money on new jobs in the borough like senior social work practitioner for HIV and AIDS (salary up to £24,414) and female genital mutilation project co-ordinator (£20,434). C. Smith, Baxter Road, Custom House."³³

"What a total waste of our money this is. Why not have an organisation against street rubbish, or pets fouling the pavements, or better still, an organisation against silly town hall chiefs wasting taxpayers money."³⁴

Resentment is often expressed within regarding to local policy initiatives and the investment of financial resources. The above investment aroused concerns over the distribution of Newham's health budget. Views were expressed within the context of local neighbourhood discussion, presenting the cause as unworthy of local public money. Problems were perceived as a direct result of 'sexual deviance' and the promiscuity and 'black' males. One respondent within a group discussion, stated that 'they bring it on themselves'. This discussion - held within the presence of the researcher - was framed within ideas relating to the 'foreign', black male sexuality, and historical stereotypes.

One discussant expressed a viewpoint - supported by others - concerning Muslims "getting away with things" that "ordinary people can't". Certain residents perceive Muslims as 'flouting convention', and 'mocking British laws.' This was illustrated in the following case, which became a topic of considerable local discussion in Newham, focusing upon the act of 'bestiality' as an indicator of the 'deviance' of Muslims. Although the man involved in this case was not an African Muslim, it appears that the fact of him being Muslim was significant to draw the case into the conversation:

"A horse was sexually assaulted by a father-of-four, the Old Bailey heard on Friday. The animal suffered 'physical trauma' during the midnight attack, which was witnessed by a woman gazing out across a field off Burgess Road, East Ham, with a pair of binoculars. She called police who caught Mohammed Pervez, 45, of Colvin Road, East Ham, bugging the horse. He tried to run away with his trousers round his ankles ...

"Mitigating, Mr Philip Misner said: 'He is not a deviant personality but was under enormous stress which manifested itself in this deviant act. He

understands as much as anyone the abhorrence with which that act is viewed. He behaved in a way quite extraordinary for him or any other man.

"Judge Collins placed him on probation for two years. The judge said: 'You committed an abhorrent and degrading act. I have regard to your plea of guilty and to the evident remorse you have shown since.'"³⁵

The researcher is aware of this article being copied and distributed within certain workplaces in Newham. Discussions focused upon Muslims - again expressed as a collective group - receiving special treatment in the law court. Members of the group generally agreed that the perpetrator of the act was treated leniently. One group member stated:

"Look at that [the article]! It's filth. I bet you if one of ours [those perceived and accepted as 'local white'] did it, they'd never get away with it."³⁶

During this conversation the researcher was an accepted member of the group in relation to the topic. The researcher knew many of the group members as neighbours, and it appeared that the group did not make allowances for the researcher presence.³⁷ The researcher would appear to have been included as 'one of ours.' One member of this group suggested that the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals should be involved, and mentioned recent cases of animal cruelty in which the perpetrator had 'always been fined, or sent to prison'. For example, recent cases of animal cruelty which have involved acts of causing an animal to starve, and cases of wilful neglect and abuse. Members of the group also expressed concerns about the increasing numbers of Muslims in Newham, linking the phenomena with social security fraud, and 'disease'.

The re-emergence of tuberculosis in the Borough has been directly associated by the media and the health service with the direct presence of refugees in Newham - rather than other factors such as housing quality and sanitation provision. This example from Newham Recorder had the headline "'Third World' diseases hit top spot.":

"Shocking figures published by public health officials have revealed Newham has the highest rate of tuberculosis and malaria in the country. Last year almost 300 Newham residents were infected by the two diseases, which are normally associated with the Third World. Though 1995 saw a fall of 17 per cent in notifications of TB there were still 148 cases reported in Newham while notifications of malaria rose by 35 percent to 143. In Tower Hamlets last year there were 94 notifications of TB, but malaria notifications remained at the 1994 figure of 17. In East London as a whole, TB rates are five to six times higher than the national average"³⁸

It can be questioned to what extent such headlines are 'harmful' to Muslim communities living in Newham. The association of the 'Third World' with TB has negative implications for people of 'Third World' ancestry living in Newham.

Anxiety concerning the rise in tuberculosis within the Borough has for some people resurrected memories:

"Tuberculosis kills over 10,000 times as many people each year as the ebola virus. And, unlike ebola, tuberculosis spreads through the air. Anyone can catch tuberculosis simply by inhaling a TB germ that has been coughed or sneezed into the air. These germs can stay suspended for hours. In a closed environment, they can remain alive for up to three years. There is nowhere to hide from tuberculosis. We are all at risk ... With continued neglect and inaction, death from TB may continue to rise and kill well over 100 million people in the next 50 years ..."³⁹

"Between 1986 and 1994, there has been a steady increase in TB cases in this country. People under 60 forget what a terrible cause of suffering TB was in Britain."⁴⁰

There was an associated controversy in 1996 regarding spitting in public, and the linkage between this and an increase of tuberculosis within the Borough.⁴¹ The direct association of TB with refugees and immigrants by the media has implications for Muslims and other people of colour (who may be assumed to fall into the category of 'refugee') - on the basis of 'phenotypical' characteristics. The practice of 'spitting' has been connected to 'visible' populations within the Borough (particularly refugees).

The association of refugees with disease is seen as further ammunition for preventing the entry of refugees to the Borough, and - to a wider extent - manifests itself in further, extreme expressions of racism:

"A new campaign to clampdown on TB has been launched by health experts in Newham. ... New figures for 1995 show there were more than 200 cases in Newham - up on 1994's 178 cases. Health chiefs also want to encourage the banning of spitting in public places. Newham's Director of Public Health, Dr. Bobbie Jacobson, said doctors believe urgent measures are needed to combat the disease. Among the first steps are more checks on immigrants and better records to combat TB. ... 'Newham and Tower Hamlets is home to a large number of refugee groups, who are poor and high risk. It is vital that proper screening is carried here. Improved contact tracing is already in place.'"⁴²

"Is it any wonder TB is on the increase, given the amount of spitting that now goes on, and the fear that this was once a fineable offence now abandoned, like many other health and environment issues on so-called cultural grounds by the authorities."⁴³

"Regarding your article Young Wife Dies of TB ... my son Stephen, died of the same type of TB in 1970 aged five ... I was asked by a group of parents at my local school to help with a campaign to stop spitting in the playground. With the help of my local councillor we had No Spitting signs put up in our school."⁴⁴

Following publication of the above letter, two further letters were published in the same newspaper, two weeks later:

"Congratulations to Silvie Dent...on her campaign to stop people spitting. I still have the photo she gave me of her little son Stephen, who died of TB. I will endeavour to help by photostatting the story and handing a copy to anyone I see spitting.

"Most people are sick of this spitting business. I work in East Ham Shopping Hall and people even spit in there! As a caring newspaper, please do all you can to warn people of the terrible consequences of spitting."⁴⁵

The link between tuberculosis, spitting, and refugees informs stereotypes and supports prevailing attitudes towards refugees -or those considered to resemble refugees in terms of physical traits. In some cases, issues such as TB are used to reinforce racism, and have a negative effect on community relations.

4.4.2.1. Islam, Muslims and Conflict in Newham

Religion is a key focus of conflict resolution and conflict in the borough. Controversy was sparked in Newham recently, regarding the establishment of religious buildings. Mosques and Islamic Centres may be viewed by certain local residents as an undesirable and intrusive imposition upon the residents of Newham. This is irrespective of the fact that many of Newham's residents are Muslim. For some residents, the building of mosques represents a 'cultural invasion', and destruction of a way of life. It would be incorrect to assert that the conflict surrounding this development is an issue solely between Muslim and non-Muslim, for there are Muslims who do not welcome the development of Mosques. Opinion regarding this issue is frequently expressed by extreme racist elements, and those others who might discriminate and exhibit prejudice towards Muslims, yet are not actively affiliated to any racist group. This refers to members of (a) the 'white underclass' (b) non-Muslim and Muslim 'local' people of colour, who may share elements of collective identity within a Newham concept, and disparate Muslim groups, often in competition for funding resources.

The following articles provide an indication of the depth of feeling, regarding these 'Islamic development' projects:

"More than 3,000 signatures have been collected against plans for an Islamic cultural centre and mosque in Tollgate Road, Beckton. The 'Voice of Beckton Residents' group fear traffic congestion, noise pollution and an 'intrusive design.' They said 94 per cent of the community would be excluded from using the development.

"The group said they appreciated the Muslim desire for a place of worship, but felt a residential area was unsuitable. Somewhere which is not so highly populated and has a higher representation of Muslims would surely be more appropriate."⁴⁶

Among the protestors to the development of the Beckton Mosque are members of the local community populations who represent the diversity of the borough. Some objectors have been labelled as 'racist', yet they may have little in common with the British National Party or Combat 18, which operate within the area. This labelling has been targeted at objectors who are non-Muslim people of colour, as well as 'white' people; this brings into question different possible definitions of the term 'racist.' Objectors include representatives of populations who are long-standing in the Borough - including second and third generation Newham Muslims - as well as recent migrants, including Bengali Muslims. Bengali Muslims protested at a meeting regarding the Beckton Mosque, stating that if they received the funding, they would build a mosque elsewhere.

Accusations of racism were demonstrated in a dispute regarding the development of a mosque in Manor Park:

"Protestors fighting a mosque's plans to put a community centre next to family homes were branded racist last week. The fuse to a smouldering row was lit by mosque official Mr. Khalid Kayani in a Town Hall speech at a public planning meeting. In appealing to the Environment & Planning Committee to sanction the scheme, he told members: 'The reason why they (the Plashet Action Group) are taking this attitude is that they are racist against us.'

"His remark enraged the group's delegation sitting close to him and their West Indian-born spokesman Bill Hamilton. Mr. Hamilton, co-founder of PAG, intends to seek legal redress for what he alleges was a slander,

he later Recorder. Mr. Kayani is secretary of the Anjuman-E-Islamia, of High Street North, Manor Park.

" ... The mosque's new plan revealed a smaller development than previously applied for, but it was still objected to by local residents. They complain that they already suffer from parking problems and noise, sometimes at 4.30 a.m. when worshippers are leaving the mosque, and the centre would add to their woes.

"Mr.. Hamilton, 56, also went on to attack the committee's acting chair, Cllr. Bashir-ul-Hafeez for allowing the slur to pass without comment. 'I was livid at the remark, speechless in fact. I could not believe the councillor did not pull him up over it. Never over the months this has been going on have we been accused of being racists.'

"Cllr. Hafeez later confirmed Mr. Kayani had called the PAG members racists. He also agreed he should have stepped in and stopped the spokesman for the Anjuman-E-Islamia. 'I did not because I thought it might inflame the situation. I did not want a slanging match,' he said.

"Bill Hamilton was extremely offended when the word 'racist' was levelled at him and fellow members of the Plashet Action Group. It was all the more offensive, he says, because 'I am a negro, married to a white English woman, and the charge was brought by a fellow black person.

"'Race was never an issue for us,' maintains the group's co-founder. 'We are from the local community. It includes an Asian. Some of the white members I have discovered were in the demonstrations against the fascist Oswald Mosley in the 1930s.'

" ... In the 36 years here I have never been a victim of racism. I accept others have, but as a black person I can say a lot of people use the word as a matter of convenience.'

"He said he was 'still livid and furious' over the remark.

"He added: 'We have genuine fears that this centre will cause further annoyance in our neighbourhood. We were just exercising our democratic right to be heard.'"⁴⁷

Local responses to this dispute were heated, as illustrated in the following correspondence in the Newham Recorder:

"I write regarding Newham Council's planning meeting on April 30 when a planning application for a community centre in Wordsworth Avenue, Manor Park was being heard.

"How dare Mr. Kayani accuse Plashet Action Group of racism! I wrote a personal letter opposing this proposed community centre on the grounds of planning issues only, ie, noise, pollution, traffic congestion etc. Objecting to something which I believe will have a detrimental effect on my health and lower my quality of life does not make me a racist. Mr. Kayani chose to make these scurrilous accusations at a public meeting, in the hearing of children (brought along by the contingent from the mosque). Consequently I have recently been taunted with cries of 'Racist! Racist!' from Muslim youths congregating in Wordsworth Avenue. What sort of example have they been set by this appalling display of bigotry? Perhaps even more disturbing than these actual imputations is the fact that there was no admonishment from the chair, and no councillor deemed it necessary to point out that Mr. Kayani's 'reminder' to council that he was a member of the Labour Party, was totally irrelevant to any planning application. Is this what democracy in Newham is all about."⁴⁸

The issue of mosque development has provided a focus for public debate, at media and neighbourhood levels. The researcher has been involved in discussions with local people regarding the Beckton Mosque. From these discussions, it was ascertained that there is a significant proportion of 'local Muslim and non-Muslim' opinion, which views the development of the Beckton Mosque as a threat to 'a way of life' - although there are differences expressed according to contextual factors. For example, some 'local white' community members view the development of mosques as a physical manifestation of cultural absorption, being 'swallowed up' by 'foreign' cultures. They consider the increasing number of mosques in the Borough as a symbolic indicator of the "take over" of Newham by migrants - and the destruction of what is perceived by some as the 'Newham way of life.'

This view has also been expressed by some Muslim and non-Muslim 'Black and Asian people', although it generally differs in the case of some 'white locals', the view ordinarily lacks an association with ideas of 'race'. Discussions between the researcher, Muslims, and non-Muslim 'people of colour', has revealed that there is wide-spread belief that the issue was creating tension between 'white people' and 'Muslims'. Local Muslim people were being pressed into taking sides in a dispute which, by its very nature, brought into the debate matters relating to culture and the 'right of belonging'. Some Muslims considered themselves to be part of the 'local community', possessing similar shared characteristics with regard to 'local community' concerns and values. They considered that the issue of the mosque had focused attention upon them, resulting in a re-identification as 'outsiders' within the 'local community', whereas previously, this had been less of a problem. An example of being re-identified is in the assumption of a person of colour being collectively labelled as 'foreigners' and the 'other':

"A police presence ensured a public debate on Beckton's controversial mosque proposals passed peacefully at St Mark's Church & Centre... More than 200 people attended the discussions and fact finding meeting prior to Newham Council's consideration of the proposals on July 31. The district's 1,000-strong Muslim community have submitted revised plans for a £1.3m mosque and centre of Tollgate Road ... Promoters insist the building - radically scaled down from that originally envisaged - would not attract large numbers of Muslims from outside Beckton. ... It was that belief that caused tension and lost tempers at a previous community debate earlier this year. The new plans show a building no larger than the neighbouring health centre and without the landmark 100ft minaret, mortuary and exhibition hall."⁴⁹

Issues surrounding the Beckton Mosque development were taken up and employed as a political object by the British National Party in Newham:

"WE SAY:- NO MOSQUE HERE!

"Newham Council have decided to allow the United Muslim Association a further 6 months in which to raise money to build a mosque behind the Health Centre in Tollgate Road. It is obvious following the recent meeting that local residents do not want the mosque. However, local people that cry rejection are called 'racist'. we [sic] say that if wanting to protect our own culture is racist then so be it. Our definition of 'racism' is that races and cultures are different and that people want to live with people like themselves. This is a universal human aspiration which is scarcely unreasonable.

"We have been told in the past that the mosque will be a good thing for local people and that the BNP are outsiders. Rubbish! Beckton BNP has found out that as the UMA have insufficient funds for the proposed construction, they will have to get money from abroad. This is therefore no longer a local issue. nor [sic] even a British one. We ask the Council again just who are the outsiders and is this mosque going to benefit local people?⁵⁰

The BNP have used the Beckton Mosque issue in an attempt to present themselves as cultural 'defenders' for 'local people's rights'. The mosque is not seen as a "British" institution - and there are implications that Muslims are the "outsiders." Beckton returned a significant BNP vote at local government elections.⁵¹

One local neighbourhood discussion focused upon the issue of 'criminality' and gang warfare in Newham. Views were expressed that 'Asians' had brought conflicts from their 'places of origination' onto the streets of Newham. It is not the researcher's intention to explore these conflicts within this thesis, however, attention will be given briefly to conflict, occurring within the neighbourhood. Views and impressions surrounding this type of conflict are often perceived as having a religious basis. In this context Islam is associated with contributing to

violence, and as an aggressor against non-Muslims. They connect developments overseas with local and national occurrences, perceiving an intention by Muslims to overthrow the 'British way of life'. In this context, all Muslims are perceived as political, militant, and sharing a common goal of upstaging existing frameworks of social and political power by exerting influence against the goals of the broader structures within Newham local society, and the U.K. society as a whole. The concept of unity over a shared belief in Islam may be seen as threatening to non-Muslims because of an assumed ability to mobilise within this perceived collective identity. This view discounts the diversity occurring among Muslims and the intra/inter group conflict occurring between elements within Muslim population groups. It ignores the fact of Muslim diversity, and makes no distinctions between Muslim values, interpretations and levels of Islamic belief; repudiating by inference, and the possibility of a localised Newham identity incorporating 'Islamic' and 'un-Islamic' ideals and values.

The Muslim 'communities' within the London Borough of Newham are composed of numerous sub-national groups. There are social, cultural, religious, and linguistic 'boundaries' between and within these groups, based around differences in Islamic belief, interpretations, and practices. These differences can result in conflict. The cultural 'boundaries' accounted in the past for the development of mosques organised on sub-national and ethnic lines. Within Newham, cultural boundaries exist between and within different Muslim population groups. Individuals may identify with different groups in specific contexts. For example, Muslim youth might attend a mosque for Friday prayers,

but also participate in youth sub-cultural groups that are not linked to Islam and may contradict 'Islamic values systems'. There is evidence that these boundaries are shifting within Newham.⁵² Whilst sharing approaches to specific core values, interpretations of Islamic sources by different Islamic interest groups can vary considerably on certain issues. This can lead to tension between diverse Muslim population

There are instances of street conflict involving disputes between Muslim and Muslim; Muslim and non Muslim. Some cases of conflict, can be linked to concerns relative to 'ancestral homeland cultures'. They may involve social-political-religious-ethnic ideologies and economic disparities, be based within a historical context., and be of long standing duration. This type of conflict may be continually fuelled by political-religious movements and events occurring in ancestral homelands. These events, although occurring overseas, do have ramifications locally in terms of non-Muslim perception. Incidences of conflict involving Muslims within the U.K. and overseas are given widespread press coverage within the national media, certain local media, and the informal media of neighbourhood discourse:

"Police believe religious fanatics may be responsible for an assault outside a mosque in Upton Lane, Forest Gate, last week.

"They were called after a man distributing leaflets, believed to be a Shi'ite Muslim, was attacked by four men, possibly with different religious beliefs.

"A spokeswoman for Forest Gate police said: 'It is possible that this dispute involves religion.

"We are aware of tensions that occur between some religions and we do what we can to monitor things."⁵³

Anger has been expressed within the local media and within the context of neighbourhood discussion regarding this matter. A specific situation of conflict between rival gangs occurred in relation to the boroughs Community College. This incident aroused considerable resentment among residents, especially when a local institution - the Newham Community College of Further Education (East Ham campus) - was perceived as being 'taken over' by 'Asian gangs.' Views were expressed that 'ordinary, hard-working taxpayers' were subsidising 'these people' to carry on gang activities.⁵⁴ Neighbours expressed views regarding 'their own' not being able to attend the college.

Gangs involving Muslims are evident within Newham. Members may or may not be involved in criminal activity, for example, that related to prostitution and drug trafficking. Conflict does occur between rival gangs. This was emphasised during 1995, when conflict and violence occurred. Those involved in the confrontation (included Somali, Nigerian, and 'Asian') people:

"A student was stabbed to death in a race attack sparked by a trivial row over a table tennis game, the Old Bailey heard ...

"Nigerian Ayotunde Obanubi, 20, died after the confrontation with Asian Muslims outside the front doors of Newham College of Further Education, the jury was told. Prosecutor David Waters, describing the events leading up to the murder on February 27 last year [1995], told how the killing was set 'against a background of increasing religious tension in the college'.

"He went on: 'Of the students that attend the college a large proportion are of Asian origin and there are also some of African origin, particularly

Nigerian. For some time prior to the event tensions of racial and religious orders were great between the parties.'

"Ayotunde, known as Tunde, died from a single wound to the heart after being attacked shortly after 1 p.m. outside the college in High Street South, East Ham, by one of a gang of up to 16 members. Mr. Waters said one witness had described them acting like a pack of hunting animals with knives being thrust at Tunde, who also produced a knife to keep them at bay but then lost it. One witness describes how a knife went into his chest almost up to the hilt.'

"Just days earlier he had been stabbed in the arm in the common room during a fight over whose turn it was to play on the table tennis table, said Mr. Waters. Four people deny murder and violent disorder.

"They are Saeed Nur, 27, of Manpreet Court, Morris Avenue, Manor Park, a Somali Muslim who is not a student at the college; Umran Qadir, 17, of Bartle Avenue, East Ham; Kazi Rahman, 18, of Fourth Avenue, Manor Park, and Yusuf Sofu, 20, of Cathall Road, Leytonstone.

"Mr. Waters alleged it was Nur who inflicted the fatal wound but that the other three were all party to the murder."⁵⁵

Nur was jailed for life in 1996:

"He was convicted of murder along with student Umran Qadir, 18. Qadir was ordered to be detained at Her Majesty's pleasure ... The jury were unable to reach a verdict on a third defendant, student Yusuf Sofu, 20 ...

"Prosecutor David Waters told of racial and religious tensions between Asian and African students which had increased as Muslim students observed Ramadan."⁵⁶

There are multiple considerations to take into account regarding this case, in the formulation of groups or gangs, some of which transcend ethnic and cultural differences. Alliances formed between people of different ethnic backgrounds, on the basis of shared characteristics of identification. Equally, there are those which differentiate membership on the basis of ethnic identity. Though there are cases of conflict and tension between some Somalian Muslims and 'Asian'

Muslims in the Borough, equally, there are allegiances based upon other factors. Although 'turf wars' exist, not all conflict of this nature is associated with distant lands. Gangs within Newham may be part of a broad subcultural pattern, based upon 'localised' aggression and 'assertion', rather than connected with foreign allegiances.

Reports of turf wars, occurring outside of Newham, impact upon community relations:

"Shahin Choudhury was stabbed to death by a gang of Bengali youths outside the Blind Beggar pub in Whitechapel, East London, on May 25. His heartbroken father Kuti Choudhury, believes his son fell victim to the rise in Bengali gang turf wars that have taken over the streets of East London. ... The father-of-six ... [now] believes that his community are too busy fighting amongst themselves, rather than tackling the real issues like racism.

"Rival gangs have take over areas like Spitalfields, Shadwell, Stepney and Canon Street Road and have come to rule their 'turf' by terror. This has created 'no-go' areas where local residents are scared of going out by themselves after dark and in some cases even during the day."⁵⁷

Muslim youth may classify themselves as 'Muslim' when requested to 'self define' their identity; however, the researcher's informal discussions suggested that this was - in some cases - a response mechanism to a number of factors, not necessarily including 'religious belief'. Certain statements were made by Muslim respondents that did not correspond to belief in Islamic doctrine, but rather, indicated a group identification and unity grounded within a sense of cultural belonging, unified strength, and defensiveness.

Muslims in Newham describe their identity[ies] in relation to aspects of Newham sub-cultural values, alongside political ideologies relating to expressions of racism and discrimination within the region. Group self-identification of Muslims could parallel the situation concerning many people of colour and the term 'black'. There are people of colour who accept the umbrella term 'black' with regard to political assignation, although reject its validity in terms of assigning specific 'racial' or other characteristics to a given group.⁵⁸ Identification with the term 'black' can mean the pulling of the entire weight of political meaning, notions of unity and unified strength into a statement, argument, or debate, within the context of a communication. Muslims of colour in Newham may identify with a range of terms and definitions, and perceive their identities within numerous group frameworks; for example: 'Asian', 'Muslim', 'Black', 'Newham local', or any combination of these groups. Racism, perceived oppression, religious belief, group unity and identification may be some of the reasons that Muslims are gathering together under the label of 'religious revival'.

Hanif Kureishi, author of film screenplays including My Beautiful Launderette and the novel The Buddha of Suburbia (subsequently adapted for BBC Television) reflects changes in Muslim identity within his novel, The Black Album.⁵⁹ He suggests that problems faced by young Muslims are responsible for their attraction to what he describes as religious 'fundamentalism':

"I started going to the mosque in Whitechapel, hanging around with them. I wondered why normal blokes got to the point where they wanted to see an author killed [i.e. Salman Rushdie]. I tried to be fair. I really liked the

kids. I still see them. I felt sympathetic; they seemed lost, and fundamentalism gave them a sense of place, of belonging. So many were unemployed, and had friends involved in drugs; religion kept them out of trouble.

"I was careful not to do anything blasphemous - I wouldn't want to ... And it's quite different to Rushdie's book. He wrote a book about religion; mine's about what people might do in its name. I'm not interested in the spiritual, but in religion as ideology, as a system of authority, a kind of business. It's important we ask questions: what are they doing with their money, with young people?"⁶⁰

Kureishi's comment regarding acts that people might commit in the name of religion is responded to within the following discussion (in the context of Malaysia):

"I have been pondering about all the conflicts in the Muslim world - whether it's among ourselves or with others. ... I wondered what could be the reason when Islam is full of pure, positive teachings that can shape us into better human beings... I did research, read books on religion and those written by Muslim philosophers and reformers... and one of the conclusions that I reached was that the resurgence of Islam that we've experienced recently was largely on the surface. And I must also include myself in this criticism."⁶¹

The researcher has observed - within Forest Gate - the regular displaying of posters and notices regarding meetings, functions, and other Islamic events. This information, from a range of 'Islamic' groups, details local, national, and sometimes international events. A Newham Muslim protested about "fundamentalist" Muslim posters appearing in the borough:

"Fly-posting in the streets of Newham by fundamentalist Islamic militants has become a major concern in recent months ... Busy shopping areas such as Green Street are the main target areas. Bombardment with these

posters is particularly severe at weekends when they are everywhere and often obscure traffic signs.

“In their message, these groups advocate violence and social unrest by calling for the ‘annihilation’ of Jews and homosexuals. One group are well known for their intimidation and harassment, especially of non-Muslim students in universities and colleges.

“Another group describe themselves as ‘very fundamentalist’ and do not believe in reconciliation or integration. These organisations are associating Islam with terrorism by claiming to speak for the 1.5 million Muslims in Britain. Newham is a multi-racial area and religion is very sensitive issue among various ethnic groups ...

“It’s about time the council took strong action to crack down on these Islamic militants by stopping them from using the streets of Newham as a campaign base.

“If these organisations are allowed to spread their propaganda unchallenged then it is a matter of time before we see emergence of Nazi Muslim groups in East London with disastrous consequences.”⁶²

Another example was a poster advertising a meeting and video showing of the "million man march" in the U.S.A. Although there is controversy at micro-level regarding the 'Islamic' nature of the Farakhan movement, none-the-less within Forest Gate it would appear to appeal to and attract a number of Newham-raised Caribbean and African people, who may find its emphasis on 'race issues' and 'oppression' appropriate to their attitudes regarding racism and the position of 'people of colour' within Newham, and further afield. It can be observed that there are stands with various literature relating to this theme. The observation of these public platforms arouses concern among many non-Muslims in the borough:

"Islam is again spreading with the same speed and influence it enjoyed 1400 hundred years ago ... included are the emerging Muslim

communities in the west - in both Europe and America, where a resurgence of interest in Malcolm X and his teachings is starting to take hold among black youth ... the west is starting to view the religion with distinct trepidation. A recent poll showed that 80 per cent of the British population see Islam as the next enemy following the demise of the eastern bloc."

"The Sacred Rage: As a new world order emerges, the power of Islam, the fastest growing religion in the world, is on the rise. The international super powers are now sitting up and taking notice. But is Islam truly the face of extremism the west proclaims?"⁶³

Notions of religious revival are uppermost in the minds of elements within Newham's non-Muslim populations. There are those who consider the visible signs of mosque attendance; 'covered women', and the publicisation of local and national Muslim events, as a threat. Conversely, there are Muslims and non-Muslims who discount this phenomenon, as an indicator of religious revival. This viewpoint is reflected by 'Abid', who describes himself as a non-practising Muslim:

"Going to Mosque does not mean that you're [the person] religious. I'm a Muslim, I'm not religious though, I'm not practising and I don't believe in God. A lot of them go (attend Mosque) but once they get outside, they get up to all sorts of things that their families wouldn't approve of."⁶⁴

This view could be regarded as an expression from an 'apostate,' defined in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as:

"One who renounces a religious order without legal dispensation."⁶⁵

The Arabic word "*Kafir*" is frequently used by some Muslim groups to describe other Muslims, who in their eyes reject Islam. *Kafir* is defined as:

“Coverer. One who covers or hides truth, an infidel, non-believer, a disbeliever of Allah.”⁶⁶

Muhammad Anwar defines a Muslim according to the following principle:

“A person who believes in Islam is a Muslim”⁶⁷.

Abid suggested that many Muslims attend the mosque as a result of family expectations. He stressed the importance of maintaining family status and respect among significant peers and the family network. This, he believed, was allied to the continuance of the family tradition in attending the mosque. The reasons for mosque attendance may vary considerably. Among them are religious belief, and/or traditional expectation. Mosque attendance is a concern for Muslim community leaders in other parts of the country:

"A Bradford Council of Mosques spokesman admitted that less than half of the local Muslims are regular mosque attendees, while a substantial minority attend once a year at most."⁶⁸

Abid considers that people are 'Muslim' as a result of birth. However, he then differentiates between Muslims who he describes as "Muslim in name only" and "Practising Muslims". The term would appear to be increasingly used among some Newham raised youth. This may be part of an attempt to separate out cultural factors from accepted Islamic practice. Abid believes that many young Muslims automatically state 'Muslim' if questioned about their identity, but that this response does not necessarily imply religious belief. For some Muslims, the

term may have taken on a second meaning, and may be utilised within this context.⁶⁹

An example where 'innovation' and Islam has submerged is within pilgrimages to shrines.⁷⁰ There is a strong affinity for many Muslims in Newham with shrines in the Indian sub-continent, and concerns have been expressed when they have been attacked.⁷¹ For example, in 1995, the Muslim shrine at Charar Sharif in India was attacked by state-troops - and was described as a cause of concern for all Muslims:

"It wasn't just the shrine that was desecrated by the Indians ... A mosque and a madrassah were also gutted and therefore this is an issue which concerns the whole Muslim Ummah."⁷²

There were strong reactions to these events from Muslims in Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and the U.K. In Newham, graffiti was written on Hindu temple walls, and street fighting was witnessed by the researcher. Although 'shrine worship' is not necessarily encouraged within Islamic sources (and is condemned within the Qur'an), traditional practises based around 'saints' and shrines are maintained by many Muslims in Newham (although there are no 'shrines' in the borough).

Community relations are a deep and complex matter, involving a matrix of factors, all of which have a bearing on situations of conflict. The competition for housing, access to social and welfare facilities, health care, employment,

education and other resources form part of this matrix. For example, there is resentment that 'white' jobs are being taken by people of colour:

" ... We have every reason to be extremely worried about failing boys. A generation of unemployable white men, seeing the jobs they thought were theirs being taken by women and the children of immigrants, are recruiting potential for white supremacists and neo-fascists. It was all very well when you could point out to the pub bore ranting about the foreigners taking our jobs, that those posts in the hospitals and on the buses were the low-paid kind that he would not dream of applying for himself."⁷³

Arguments of this nature are used to fuel racial tension within the borough. The London Boroughs of Newham and adjacent Tower Hamlets have seen the growth of extremist right-wing neo-Nazi groups which are capitalising on the poor social/economic conditions, and acquiring political leverage, by increasing pockets of support, particularly among some 'white' working class inhabitants in the south of the Borough - Beckton, Custom House, and Canning Town. Canning Town, in particular, has a history of racism, connected to employment, migration, and poverty factors.

The region's economic deprivation has resulted in a successful bid for finance enabling development:

“A successful bid for £21.5 million of Government single Regeneration budget money will be used to match more than £76 million of public and private sector funds to dramatically enhance the quality of life in Canning Town between now and year 2003...”⁷⁴

The organisation TELCO was established as a watchdog committee, with the purpose of channelling the income into appropriate developments:

"A board including residents, voluntary sector workers, councillors and representatives from business, schools and colleges has been established to steer the multi-million pound scheme designed to revitalise the area and inject a sense of pride and purpose.⁷⁵

The community has identified the following areas within a consultation procedure:

"... Issues of education, employment, investment, housing, crime, health, culture and leisure will be addressed by the local people who are members of the Partnership Board."⁷⁶

Crime within the borough has resulted in the introduction of CCTV in many areas of the borough. Specific districts, targeted within the south have included Rathbone Market and Canning Town:⁷⁷

"Crime-busting closed circuit TV is to be installed in Newham schools, shopping centres and a housing estate in a bid to improve community safety. The Government has awarded Newham ... more money than it has given any other London council. The money will boost the £1.5 million already pledged by the Council, Stratford Development Partnership, the European Union, the Metropolitan Police, Land Securities and other organisations."⁷⁸

4.4.4.2. Manifestations of Racism

The following example is an account of conflict occurring on a housing estate in Newham:

Mr Dixon, a community worker involved with the tenants of a Newham housing estate, sought advice on the following issue: he related an account of violent 'racial tension' which had erupted on the estate.

The estate has experienced major problems with the existing relationship between 'racial groups'. Mr Dixon said that the estate has some notoriety concerning racism, and 'white on black' racist attacks. There is an active right wing National Front element in existence, and this increases problems. Mr Dixon said that many white tenants on the estate feel resentful towards the 'Asians' and that this was made worse by the general feeling that they could not speak out against 'them' without being accused of racial harassment.⁷⁹

'Ethnic minority' institutions and meeting places, including social clubs and religious buildings, have been attacked and vandalised. Individual personal safety is also threatened:

"Racial violence in the East End is mainly conducted by non-fascist thugs known locally as 'John-Bulls'."⁸⁰

"These incidents range from verbal abuse, threats, daubing and criminal damage through to arson, common assault, actual bodily harm, serious assault/attempted murder and murder.

In personal attacks skin colouration is viewed as a significant factor:

"Both the anti-racist groups and the police agree that it is not a religious question. Quite frankly, in most cases the thugs are too ignorant to know the difference between a Hindu, a Muslim, a Sikh or a non-white Christian - they just see someone who is of a different colour; that is enough!"⁸¹

There are numerous examples of such incidents, in the Borough of Newham:

"A house containing an Asian mother and her three children was set alight last week. The arson attack came at Newark Knok, Beckton. ... A mystery attacker poured accelerant through the letterbox before setting it alight. The family were alerted by the smell of fire when the carpet started to burn, and escaped. Det Con Mark Davey, of Plaistow CID, said 'We could have been dealing with something far more serious here.'"⁸²

Newham can also become a refuge for the victims of racism:

"A terrorised family have been forced from their home and into hiding by threats from neo-Nazis. The evil fascist, known as Combat 18, have forced the Sagoo family to endure eight years of harassment and abuse at their home in Romford, Essex. Their children have been verbally and physically assaulted, the mother spat upon and racially abused, and fire bombs, human excrement and dead animals have been pushed through their letterbox. A local support group, the Newham Monitoring Project, is now trying to find the family a safe place to live as they are too frightened to return to their home. 'This is one of the worst case of fascist attacks that we have come across,' said NMP worker, Gurpeet Mundy ... The NMP believe that Combat 18 is the paramilitary wing of the BNP. It has a news letter which gives step-by-step instructions on the assembly of bombs."⁸³

According to Home Office Statistics and the Newham Council's documentation, the number of racially-motivated crimes in Newham that are reported has escalated dramatically. There are inherent difficulties in police statistical information regarding 'racially motivated crimes.' However, the Metropolitan Police recorded incidents of racial harassment in Newham have risen from 249 in 1990 to 579 in 1995.⁸⁴ Newham has one of the highest recorded rate of racial attacks in the country.⁸⁵

The Police have attempted several schemes, in order to identify those responsible for racial harassment:

"Asian police officers posing as members of the public are being used to arrest perpetrators of street race hate. The thought-provoking decoy scheme is being implemented by officers at Plaistow police station in a high-profile attempt to stamp out racist behaviour on Newham's streets. After dark, Asian police officers will casually walk through known trouble-spots where police believe confrontations are possible. If a racial incident happens, a five-strong back-up team will pounce and make an immediate arrest.

"Controversial? Possibly, but police at Plaistow believe the scheme, known as Operation Afghan, is an innovative and effective way of combating prejudice and liberating the streets for all sections of the community.

"Sgt. Steve Brown, of Plaistow Sector Office, said, 'Racial harassment and abuse is a very difficult offence to detect because victims are often unwilling to come forward or give evidence in court. One of my responsibilities has to be to the victim - to ensure they have the right to walk safely on our street.

"'A lot of Asians are very afraid to come out after dark and that is not an acceptable situation.'"⁸⁶

Some residents of the borough complain that racism is seen as a 'one-sided' phenomena, mainly focused on 'white-on-black' attacks:

"I found the Recorder article 'Undercover police bid to stamp out race evil' [discussed above] (February 21) alarming and biased. It seemed to me to present racism as a one-sided phenomenon. Many white people, as well as those from other groups, are afraid to go out at night. Policing should be for the benefit of all, not just certain sections of the community. Far from improving relations, this initiative will, in my view, merely exacerbate them. So called anti-racist organisations and legislation do nothing to help create harmony."⁸⁷

Efforts by the police to encourage Muslim participation in reducing crime in Newham have met with a large number of obstacles - and the police claim that the 'Asian community' are 'unwilling' to assist them:

"Newham's ethnic communities are being encouraged to join the fight against crime by joining local Neighbourhood Watch groups. Police officers in charge of the Manor Park area say members of the area's large ethnic community appear reluctant to involve themselves in the scheme.

"Sgt. Mark Crake said: 'We are not quite sure what the problem is. In Manor Park the ethnic population is actually in the majority, but very few of them seem to want to get involved. Perhaps they see Neighbourhood Watch as a middle-class, middle-aged white scheme but that is not necessarily the case. We want to break down the barriers and are looking for more members of the Asian community to join.'

"Mr Crake said he and other members of his team, including Insp Tim Waterhouse, are taking strides to acquaint themselves with the customs and culture of the ethnic communities in the area.

"He said: 'I have visited a number of community leaders in the area and I am trying to get them involved because these groups do work. We are willing to be flexible. If they want to begin a group solely for the Asian community then we would be willing to do so. It is their community and we want to help them.'"⁸⁸

The perceived reluctance of 'Asian' involvement within the 'fight against crime' is viewed by certain elements within the population, as an indicator of 'not belonging'. Muslims may be viewed as disloyal to the Borough, with a disregard for contemporary concerns. There are of course, many Muslims involved at various levels in the fight against crime.

Among certain Muslim residents there exists a distrust of the police force, regarding the institution as racist and potentially out to harm them. This view was highlighted with the death of a Ibrahima Sey, a Gambian Muslim asylum seeker. Sey, of Forest Gate, died in police custody, following being sprayed with CS gas at Ilford Police Station.⁸⁹:

" [Sey] ... suffered from bouts of psychotic behaviour, an inquest was told on Monday ...

"[Mr Sey's wife said]'He told me that he was seeing devils and he removed some chains from his neck. All these were religious symbols'.

"The asylum-seeker regularly accused his wife of being unfaithful, and ranted and raved about religion ... As well as his unstable mental state, Mr Sey...had been deported from Scandinavia for violence and drug smuggling, the inquest was told."

A statement from Dr Stein Ikdahl (police surgeon Oslo) was read out in court:

"The doctor told police how Mr Sey stripped naked and read the Koran in his room, denounced the doctor as Satan, then apologised saying he had thought the end of the world was near and that the snow outside was talking to him."⁹⁰

The Ibrahima Sey case also received extensive coverage within the national media:

"An unlawful killing verdict was brought in the case of Ibrahima Sey, 29, who died soon after being sprayed in the face with CS despite being surrounded by police officers and having his hands chained behind his back... Dr Harold Price, the coroner, said there was an urgent need to examine the use of CS and the solvent with which it was mixed to make the spray. He said 'The use of CS spray should be reviewed by all police forces. The guidelines for its use in the first place and the verbal warning given should be explored ... The CPS will now consider whether any police officers should be prosecuted.'⁹¹

Following the death, there was local public outcry among many Muslims in the borough. A meeting was held by the Newham Monitoring Project. The researcher was present at this meeting, observing the attendance of Muslims from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds. Representatives from Mr Sey's family were also present.⁹² Mr Stephen Timms M.P. for Newham, commenting on the case in a local newspaper was reported as stating that Mr Sey was handcuffed prior to the spray being used and that it was:

"improbable that it was needed" inside the police station.⁹³

Police conduct and accountability in Britain is a subject prompting a visit by the *Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*:

“... It covers some 30 member states of the Council of Europe ... The committee is expected to meet with the Director of Public Prosecutions, Dame Barbara Mills, senior officers from the Metropolitan Police, and representatives of the Police Complaints Authority.”⁹⁴

The inquest - at Snarebrook Crown Court - into Ibrahima Sey's death, follows a decision not to prosecute the officers involved, on the basis of insufficient evidence. The hearing of the case coincides with the visit of the European watchdog committee. This committee protects the rights of, those held in police custody. This includes immigration detainees, and prisoners. The watchdog committee will meet with members of Inquest, the campaigning group. Inquest will focus on the disproportionate number of deaths of ethnic minorities in custody, and police accountability.

There are concerted efforts made to improve community relations between the police authority and local residents. Efforts focus upon the establishment of trust and local involvement in the fight against crime. Consultation is a major aspect of this procedure and avenues for public consultation have been established. Local organisations have been involved in delivering aspects of training relative to the management of conflict across diversity.⁹⁵

4.4.5. The Marriage of 'East' and 'West'

People at a 'grass roots level' in neighbourhoods of Newham may have cause to interact through the necessity of shared facilities, environment and service provision. Health care and educational services provides an accessible meeting ground, especially in regard to children's interaction. An example of this is within a school environment or health clinic which provides services to people within distinct cultural backgrounds.

There are different levels of what is considered 'acceptable contact'. For example, a seven year old Newham Muslim girl, having friendships with Newham non-Muslim boys in her age-group, may create no difficulty for her or the boys' parent(s) or guardian(s); however, different attitudes may be prevalent among parent(s) and guardian(s), should these friendships develop into closer ties during teenage years.

An example of this is illustrated by 'Jimmy', who states his view concerning friendships across delineated boundaries on the grounds of 'supposed or real' characteristics:

"When I take my kids to the park, they play with kids from all over the place. The boys like to play football, yeah, and they couldn't care less, who they play it with. My eldest boy, is always knocking about with coloured people, and it's up to him really. He can do what he likes, yeah, it's up to him."⁹⁶

Jimmy also addressed attitudes to male - female relationships between Newham 'people of colour' and Newham 'white' people:

'It'd be different, though, if my kids wanted to get serious, say about, a Muslim girl. It wouldn't work. They'd have a hard time of it over here. (Canning Town). Our community don't like that sort of thing. We keep ourselves to ourselves, you know what I mean?"⁹⁷

Jimmy made a clear distinction regarding matters concerning 'group norms'. In his view, barriers across 'racial' lines did not exist with regard to the young and play. However, there were rigid rules in respect of adult male-female relationships. Muslim attitudes towards the conduct of relationships between Muslim and non-Muslims vary within the context of Islamic and cultural identities. The researcher is aware of the existence of relationships between Muslim and non-Muslims. Many of these relationships are contained within a framework of deception.

The view that there are clear and distinct demarcation points concerning interactions between Muslims and 'white' people is highlighted by the following selection of comments, which are responses to questions concerning Newham-raised Muslim people in general. Respondents did not recognise the diversity of Muslim people in Newham, or that there were varied agendas and opinions within Newham's Muslim populations. During research, distinctions were explored between various cultural practices brought to, and continued within Newham. Respondents discounted the concept of 'Muslim diversity,' and generalised in their expressions regarding Muslim behaviour:

"They're [Muslims are] different to us and they treat their women lousy".⁹⁸

Issues connecting Muslims, and Islamic belief to notions of women's oppression, feature significantly in the expression of attitudes regarding Muslims as a collective group. Neighbourhood opinions reflect viewpoints considering Muslims as 'outsiders'. Beliefs presenting Muslim women as subservient and abused are reinforced by a complex infrastructural system of discussion, media opinion, and observation. Incidents reported in the local press inform attitudes at grass-roots neighbourhood level. A case relating to Muslims outside of Newham - in Saudi Arabia - also had an impact upon how Muslims were perceived within the Borough. This case involved two British nurses accused of murdering a colleague in Saudi Arabia. Broadcasting updates were regular features of discussion regarding Muslims and the 'oppression' of women - especially in regard to the 'validity' of Islamic law and the legal system in Saudi Arabia.⁹⁹

Reference was made to media programmes and other stories concerning Muslims and the 'oppression of women'. Local people - including people of colour, but none who stated a religious affiliation with Islam - began to introduce what they stated was their own knowledge of 'horror stories' regarding Muslim women neighbours. This neighbourhood discussion became linked with issues concerning white women converts to Islam. Those discussants associating Islam (as a religion) closely with 'unjust' practices occurring in its name were heard to

express views concerning the 'naivety' and 'stupidity' of the converts - often drawing upon national media stereotypes:

"To British women, whose glossy magazines recount tales of 'honour killings' and female circumcision, wrongly identified with Islam, it seems inexplicable that Islam could be a rational choice. Female converts, they say, are either brainwashed, stupid or traitors to their sex. Muslim women strongly reject such accusations. British converts are often strikingly well educated. Dozens of the older women seem to be perpetual students, and are anxious to distinguish between genuinely Islamic behaviour and cultural diktats. The oppression of women, they say, is a political issue not a religious condition ..."¹⁰⁰

The conversion to Islam of a Newham woman aroused particular controversy among certain residents of the borough. This case involved a 'white' woman who married an Algerian and converted to Islam. According to the article, the woman felt she had been 'used' in order for her husband to obtain a passport; she complained that the marriage had cost her a job and a significant amount of money, and she feared losing her 5 year old daughter. She also complained about a 'loss of freedom' resulting from her conversion to Islam in 1992.

"I fear they will take my daughter if I divorce him. I feel I am being used in an immigration scam. If I sign divorce papers it will clear the way for them to have a recognised marriage and for the other woman to become a British citizen.

" ... My life is ruined. Immigration officials must carry out more detailed checks and Newham women have to be made more aware of the pitfalls."¹⁰¹

The article stressed that the woman was fourteen years older than her husband. Since their separation, her husband had sent to Algeria for a 'new' twenty-five year old woman; according to the report, they had an 'Islamic' marriage ceremony.

after which the new wife was eligible for a British passport. The undertone of the article stressed the 'conspiracy' of the Algerian, in obtaining British citizenship for himself and his new wife. He had not divorced the English woman prior to his 'Islamic' marriage.

This Newham Recorder article regarding conversion to Islam aroused concern and anger among many local residents within Newham. Views condemning marriage between Muslim men and 'English' women were expressed to the researcher. Several women and men personally expressed the view to the researcher that 'English' [white] girls who married Muslim men were naive and unaware that they were being 'exploited'.

The death of a Muslim woman in Stratford, Newham, also became a topic of conversation within the local populations of Newham:

"A Muslim holy woman who beat a young bride to death in a 'bizarre and barbaric' exorcism was yesterday convicted of manslaughter. Mona Rai, a priestess in the Muslim community who lectured on the Koran in mosques, schools, and private homes, led the two-day beating of Farida Patel, aged 22, to drive evil spirits from her body.

"Julian Bevan QC, prosecuting told the jury: 'This case will introduce you to the ways and customs and beliefs of people whose world, no doubt to most of you, is entirely alien. ... He said that despite tearful pleas from the girl's father for prayers not violence, Rai hit Mrs Patel with a vacuum cleaner tube so hard it broke, beat her with a walking stick and jumped on her body breaking nine ribs. She ordered Mrs Patel's brother and sister and a family friend to hold her down and also encouraged them to take part in the beatings. her disciple and family friend Siraj Tutla... and Mrs Patel's brother Hafiz Patel...were also convicted of manslaughter. ... Mr Bevan said the Crown accepted the beatings were not motivated by malice and the intention was not to harm but to help rid Mrs Patel of evil spirits

or djinns. ... Rai was called in by the Patel family when Farida began behaving oddly last December. She had been upset because the immigration authorities had refused to allow her newly-wed husband into this country from India."¹⁰²

"A Muslim holy woman was jailed for seven years at the Old Bailey yesterday for beating a young bride to death in an exorcism."¹⁰³

When this story was publicised in Newham and the National press, opinion was expressed by Muslim and non-Muslim, condemning the actions of the perpetrators. The Muslims known to the researcher tended not to express opinion regarding this matter publicly, but did so in the privacy of close friendship groups, and 'insider groups'.¹⁰⁴ There was an obvious distinction in this regard when many non-Muslims discussed the topic.¹⁰⁵ The researcher overheard opinion expressed publicly, for example, whilst travelling on local public transport, or in the process of taking children to and from school, in the Green Street, and Stratford market places, and during visits to health centres.

Discussions among local (non-Muslims) that the researcher was party to tended to refer to Muslims as a collective whole, without distinction regarding cultural variants. For example, 'Muslims' were spoken of in some 'local white' circles, in relation to Islam as a 'primitive' and 'barbaric' religion. No distinction was made between acts carried out in the name of Islam, which many Muslims and non-Muslims would regard as 'un-Islamic'. No account appeared to be given to the diversity among Muslims and the fact that many Muslims condemned this action. At the time the researcher attempted to explore public perceptions surrounding perceived relationships between 'culture and Islam'. The researcher

introduced the fact that Muslims in Newham were diverse, in numerous aspects, and subsequently did not share uniform cultural characteristics - including cultural practices and customs. This point of view, expressed by the researcher did not alter the nature of the opinions. Comments continued, all reflecting the view that oppression of women was part of an 'Islamically sanctioned' code of practice.

Endnotes:

1. Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson, (Eds.) Border Approaches: Anthropological Perspectives on Frontiers, (Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., Maryland, 1994), p.3.
2. For a further discussion concerning borders see Elizabeth Tonkin, "Borderline questions: people and space in West Africa", chap. in Donnan and Wilson, op.cit., p.15-22
3. The BNP obtained 34% of the votes in Newham for council elections in 1994. See: Sanjay Sharma, John Hutnyk and Ashwani Sharma, Dis-Orienting Rhythms: The Politics of the New Asian Dance Music. (London, Zed Books, 1997), p.148.
4. The information reported in the Newham Recorder cited below was drawn from this Report. The Report itself states that local media is instrumental in the formulation of attitudes with regard to Newham public opinion. Perceptions on this issue are 'filtered' through widely available local media - for example, the Newham Recorder. The general public would not ordinarily access the full Report, although copies of reports would ordinarily be available. Andrew Sills, Sanmit Sawhney, Philly Desai. Issues Analysis: Report of Qualitative Research Programme. (Newham: inHouse Research, London Borough of Newham, 1997)
5. Colin Grainger, "Disaffected youth turn to vigilantes." Newham Recorder, 3 September 1997
6. 'Qadir', [pseud.], interview by researcher, tape recording, August 25 1995, Forest Gate.
7. These elements within the local 'white' population refer to those perceived as having Indian sub-continent ancestry, collectively, as 'Asians' or 'Indians'.
8. Rooney Martin, 'Anti Racism and Community Work', Unpublished paper, Sheffield: Federation of Community Work Training Groups. p.5.
9. Researcher's notes, Newham, October 1995.
10. An out-migration of local 'white' people has occurred in parallel with an in-migration into certain neighbourhoods of Forest Gate. Many out-migrants re-locate to Dagenham and Barking where property prices are cheaper than in Newham. These areas are the contain the cheapest properties in London followed by Newham. 'Homes and Property,' Evening Standard, 27 August, 1997.
11. 'R.C' Interview by researcher. Tape recording, August, 1996.

12. In April 1995 Newham Council had 25,635 available homes for renting. Housing stock is gradually decreasing as a result of people taking up the governments' 'Right To Buy' and the demolition of unsafe and/or unsuitable property. London Borough of Newham, Annual Housing Report 1995-1996, London: London Borough of Newham, 1996.
13. "'Barracks' Ideas on Refugee Influx", Pat Coughtrey, Newham Recorder, 23 April 1997.
14. Ibid.
15. For a detailed discussion on housing see: Smith, Susan, J. The Politics of 'Race' and Residence, (Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Basil Blackwell, 1989).
16. 'Help to get along with the neighbours," Newham Recorder, 30 September 1997?
17. Newham Recorder, 2 April, 1997.
18. See chapter two for a discussion on racism, bias, and discrimination; also chapter seven - impartiality and interventions related to conflict resolution interventions.
19. Q.I. (pseud.) Interview with researcher. Tape recording. June, 1996.
20. Ibid.
21. 'M.O.' (pseud.) Interview with researcher. Tape recording, June 1996
22. Ibid.
23. 'I.L.' (pseud.) Interview by researcher. Tape recording , July 1996.
- 24.. 'C.B.' (pseud.). Interview by researcher. Tape recording, April 1996.
25. 'B.N.' (pseud). Interview by researcher. Tape recording, March 1996.
26. A 'cup of tea and a chat' refers to a social gathering of two or more people. This gathering is informal and serves the purpose of information sharing, relaxation, and relationship maintenance.
27. Researcher's fieldwork notes, Canning Town, February 1994.
28. Henrietta Gammell, Alfred Ndahiro, Natasha Nicholas, Joy Windsor. 'Refugees (Political Asylum Seekers): Service Provision And Access To The NHS, A Study by the College of Health for Newham Health Authority and Newham Healthcare,' (Newham: College of Health, 1993). p.12

29. "African aid tackles HIV", Newham Recorder, 17 April 1996.
30. 'A.T.', interview with researcher, tape recording, Newham, April 1996.
31. Asian Times June 20, 1996.
32. Ibid.
33. "New posts are a right liberty," Newham Recorder, 10 April 1996
34. "Shortlist two too many," Letter, G. Reynolds, Newham Recorder, 10 September 1997
35. "Man in horse attack," Newham Recorder, 1 May 1996.
36. 'Colleen', [pseud.], transcript of discussion, May 1996.
37. The researcher is aware that her presence within some discussion groups, may alter the nature of comments made, in order to avoid 'obvious' offence. The researcher has been informed by neighbours and colleagues, who have themselves been present and involved within discussion of this nature - involving 'all white' local neighbours and acquaintances. Apparently, elements were introduced into the discussion which related to 'people of colour' in general in the borough, classifying 'people of colour' as part of a 'foreign invasion'.
38. "'Third World' diseases hit top spot." Newham Recorder, June 19, 1996
39. Chris Mihill, Medical Correspondent, The Guardian. 1995 re. WHO Report. Citing: Arata Kochi, Director of TB Programme, World Health Organisation.
40. Ibid. John Moore-Gillion, chairman of the British Lung Foundation.
41. 'The truth behind the scare stories', Newham Recorder, February 7, 1996.
42. 'New Clampdown on TB,' Newham Recorder, January 24, 1996.
43. E. Saunders, Green Street, Forest Gate. Letters' page. Newham Recorder, 24 January 1996.
44. "Stop The Lethal Rise of Spitting", Newham Recorder, February 14, 1996. opinion.
45. Unattributed letters, Newham Recorder, February 28, 1996.
46. "3,000 protest over plans for mosque." Newham Recorder, 1 May 1996.
47. "'Racist' slur at objectors," Pat Coughtrey, Newham Recorder, May 8, 1996.

48. Pat Sheekey, "Objection on Planning Grounds". Letter to Newham Recorder, 22 May 1996.
49. "Peaceful meeting over a mosque" Pat Coughtrey, Newham Recorder, July 10, 1996.
50. Beckton BNP News leaflet. Newham: British National Party, February 1996.
51. Beckton returned a 33% vote for the BNP in January 1995's by-election. See: Newham Monitoring Project, The Enemy in our Midst: Exposing Racism and Fascism in Newham, (Newham: Newham Monitoring Project, 1995) p.20.
52. For example, the researcher has observed during 1996 an increase in Somali Muslims entering a Forest Gate mosque, previously dominated by Indian sub-continent Muslims.
53. Newham Recorder, "Victim of Conflict in Faith," 20 March 1996.
54. Fieldwork notes
55. "Student killers like hunting animals" Newham Recorder, March 20, 1996.
56. "Religion theory in knife murder" Newham Recorder, May 22, 1996.
57. "STOP THE KILLINGS: Murder victim's father says gang violence is out of control" Eastern Eye, June 14, 1996.
58. The term 'Black' as a political assignation tends to categorise 'people of colour' as a 'group', sharing some common experience of factors, relative to discrimination on the basis of skin colouration.
59. Hanif Kureishi, The Buddha of Suburbia, (London: Faber & Faber, 1990).
_____. The Black Album, (London: Faber & Faber, 1995)
60. Hanif Kureishi interviewed by Maya Jaggi, "A buddy from suburbia." The Guardian, March 1, 1995.
61. 'Reaching for the soul', The Sun Magazine, Malaysia, June 14, 1995.
62. "Fundamental poster action," Dr. M. Aslam, letters' page, Newham Recorder, 11 September 1996.
63. 'Heenan Bhatti reports', The Weekly Journal, Malaysia, June 18, 1992.
64. 'Abid', interview with researcher. tape recording, Newham, 25 May 1996
65. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, I, op.cit., p.88

66. M.A. Qazi, A Concise Dictionary of Islamic Terms, (Delhi: Noor Publishing House, 1989), p.31.
67. Anwar, op.cit.p158, 1985.
68. Letter, Sally Millard & G.W. Barnfield, Leeds and Hallam Universities. The Guardian Weekend, July 22, 1995.
69. Aspects of Muslim teenage belief were surveyed and discussed by Leslie Francis, in his lecture 'What Modern Teenagers Believe', part of: 'Modern Believing', Annual Staff Colloquium of the Departments and Schools of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Wales, Gregynog, 7 June 1997
70. In 1995, the researcher observed several examples of popular religious expression at shrines in Pakistan - where people would come to pray for intervention from 'saints', for examples at Data Ganj Bakhsh's Mosque in Lahore. The researcher was invited to participate in these activities, consuming 'sacred food' with women in Wazir Khan's Mosque, also in Lahore.
71. For a discussion on shrines, see: S. W. Barton. The Bengali Muslims of Bradford: A Study of their observation of Islam with Specific Reference to the Function of the Mosque and the Work of the Imam. (Leeds: University of Leeds, Dept of Theology and Religious Studies Monograph Series, Community Religion Project, 1986) pp.40-46
72. Anonymous Official, cited in "Protest rallies in BD against shrine destruction.", Fahd Husain, The Nation, May 16, 1995. Pakistan.
73. Linda Grant, "Under pressure", The Guardian, March 11, 1996.
74. "Have your Say" Newham News, July 1996.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. "Security Aid put in Focus." Newham Recorder, 8 May 1996.
78. "Safety first with closed circuit tv"Newham News, July 1996.
79. Fieldwork notes. Unattributable.
80. Hossein Zahir, Newham Monitoring Project cited in "East Side Story", Sarah Joseph & Rabiha Hannan in Trends, Volume 5, Issue 6, Trends Publications Ltd, London, p.34
81. Ibid, p.5

- 82.. "Arson Attack On Family" Newham Recorder, July 10, 1996.
83. "Race attack force family out of home", Eastern Eye, issue 335, June 14, 1996.
84. See: Racial Harassment in Newham 1995: (London Borough of Newham: Strategic Policy and Equality Chief Executive's Department, 1996), Table 1, p. i.
85. Incidents of racially motivated crime have risen by 140% during the period 1990-1994. With the exception of East Ham South and Manor Park areas, the incidence has doubled or trebled. In 1994 there were 18 attacks classified as serious, compared to 2 in 1990. Common assaults in the same period rose from 64 to 191. This report stated that the BNP is targeting the area of Canning Town. Newham Recorder, 13 September 1995
86. "Undercover police bid to stamp out race evil." Newham Recorder, February 21, 1996.
87. "Harmony cops it", Newham Recorder, ('Public Opinion'), February 28, 1996.
88. "Asians urged to join Watch scheme." Newham Recorder, February 14, 1996.
89. Newham was selected for one of the first trials of the gas.
90. "CS spray case inquest told of former policeman's crime and illness" Newham Recorder, September 1997.?
91. Jason Bennetto, "Call for CS spray inquiry after death verdict". The Independent. 3 October 1997
92. Newham Youth and Community Centre
93. Newham Recorder, 10 April 1996.
94. Clare Dyer, 'Custody deaths provoke European inquiry, The Guardian, 8 September, 1997.
95. For a discussion on police training workshops see: Pauline Obee, 'Conflict, Change and the Police: Shared Experiences in the Borough of Newham.' Chap. in Community disorders and policing: conflict management in action. Ed. Tony F. Marshall; on behalf of The Forum for Initiatives in Reparation and Mediation (Mediation UK). (London: Whiting & Birch, 1992), pp.209-216.

96. 'Jimmy' [pseud] is a 'white' male in his early thirties, from Canning Town. Interview with researcher. Tape recording, March 2, 1996.
97. Ibid.
98. 'Joe,' [pseud.] interview by researcher, transcript of notes, November 1995, Forest Gate.
99. For an example of media coverage of this case, see: Kathy Evans, "Allah is merciful, but not the Saudis." The Observer, September 14, 1997. Akbar Ahmed, "Lashing, stoning, beheading and the amputation of limbs - why I believe Islamic justice is as good as, if not better than, English law." Daily Mail. 24 September 1997. Ahmed stated: " ... I know that many people in this country will regard these sentences and my reaction to them as confirmation of the commonly held view that Islam is a brutal, medieval religion which must be opposed at all costs."
100. "Secure in sisterhood" The Times, November 9, 1993.
101. "Agony of a Shirley Valentine," Newham Recorder, March 27, 1996.
102. "Priestess guilty of exorcism killing" The Guardian, November 26, 1994.
103. "Muslim 'charlatan' jailed for exorcism killing" The Guardian, December 21, 1994.
104. 'Insider groups,' in this context, refers to those accepted within the discussion group.
105. This refers to 'non-Muslims'. Identified by speakers' statements, who when discussing Muslims, refer to them as 'the other' - for example, "those Muslims ..."

5 DEBATING INFLUENCE II: RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL FACTORS & THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN

5.1. Introduction

Following discussions with non-Muslims in Newham regarding perceptions of Muslim women, the researcher approached Muslims regarding perceptions of Islam as a religion oppressive to women. The researcher found that there was some correlation between certain of the views expressed above. Several Muslims interviewed by the researcher in Newham were of the opinion that Islam was interpreted to the advantage of men and the disadvantage of women. They considered that interpretations of Islam were culturally filtered, and pervaded with traditional understandings which the interviewees believe to be flawed, particularly with regard to the rights of women. According to the interviewees, this interpretation of belief and living life according to 'good Islamic principles' is usually expressed by males within the family, and is often endorsed by female relatives (especially mother-in-laws). The localised 'Muslim infrastructures' frequently confer on female relatives the role of 'safeguarding family honour' and the monitoring of female behaviour.¹

Informants in Newham stated that Islamic sources - such as the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* - suggested that (in theory) the implementation of the '*Shari'ah*' is not oppressive to women and seeks to safeguard the rights of women. However, the

informants provided examples of oppression and traditional assertion occurring under the banner of 'Islamic' principles and practices. Interpretations of the *Shari'ah* (by Muslims) may contain culture-specific approaches, which may in certain circumstances result in the setting of dictates and the development and maintenance of peer pressure, in some cases legitimising oppression and subservience of women. Within Islamic sources, there are practical statements regarding the safeguarding of women's rights. These include principles relating to: inheritance, marriage and divorce, and rape and violence towards women and children.² However, several fieldwork interviewees in Newham related accounts where these principles were disregarded - as discussed later in this chapter.

The themes expressed by 'Muslim authorities' - in the U.K. and elsewhere - reflect ideals about Islam as a 'tolerant' and non-oppressive religion. These themes are reflected in the following quotes from Pakistan, which may have some influence within Newham:

"Islam is a religion of peace and freedom of conscience. ... It is a fact that the savagery practised by some obscurantists in the name of Islam is undermining Islam's image as a mercy for mankind and serving as a tool in the hands of its opponents to project it as something very negative and inhuman."³

The 'ideals' of Islam and the 'realities' of Islam's interpretation and related cultural practices is a topic of concern for Muslims:

"Whereas all religions of the world require their followers to serve humanity, the glory of Islam lies in translating the beautiful precepts into practice. In the Islamic teachings real emphasis is on deeds rather than ideas. Islam is pre-eminently a social creed. Society figures directly or

indirectly in all its enjoinders. No man can seek his own salvation by dissociating himself from society ...

“ ... Islam envisages a society in which its members treat each other with compassion. It is in the pursuit of this objective that Islam does not visualise religion as being merely a matter of personal conscience and, therefore, advocates equality of mankind. In a world infested with distinctions of caste, creed, colour, race and tribes, Islam stood firm for a democratic order.

“... according to Islam sons of Adam are all brethren and parts of the same body. If a part of the body ails, the whole of the body responds to it. Similarly, if a man is subjected to some trouble, the entire humanity should rise up to the occasion to relieve him of his sufferings. What is true of an individual is true of a nation. If a weak nation is oppressed by a stronger one, the other nations should combine to provide resistance against the aggressor. This is because the Messenger of God regarded the entire creation as the 'family of Allah' and urged that 'The dearest of the creation of Allah is he who is the best to his family.'”⁴

These examples demonstrate an Islamic ideal that Muslims should seek to reduce cases of oppression where they exist. Newham informants suggested that - in some cases - there is a reluctance to confront these issues, especially in relation to matters concerning women. This perceived reluctance could be construed as collusion in a conspiracy of oppression against women - described by one male Muslim interviewee from Newham as a “travesty against women”⁵

The rights of women have become a universal issue for Muslims in Britain.

One Muslim woman commented:

“This is a right I got 1,400 years ago. Issues such as property, children and inheritance have all been settled, and it's very finely tuned in the women's favour.’ She cites arrangements for divorce, maintenance and child custody, and an Islamic 'wages for housework' school. She adds that

in a sense men are just guests in their own homes. 'My husband has to ask my permission before another man can stay in the house. This is my kingdom, my domain.' ... Modern Muslims, (say many Muslims) are not necessarily destined to be housewives. There is a demand in the community for their own social workers, lecturers, journalists and doctors."⁶

This demonstrates that women's personal perceptions of Islam can vary considerably, and that women entering Islam can also contribute a fresh perspective - which may be influential to Muslim women raised in tradition-centred interpretations.

This can be compared with the views of Leicester convert: 'Nadia' (formerly Louise) converted to Islam (from Christianity) at the age of 16, changing her "name, dress and way of life."⁷ Nadia read about Islam and "took to the faith gradually so she could understand it better..."⁸ Nadia was attracted by an interpretation of Islam which attempts to realise itself, by stripping away many of the cultural impositions which for some Muslims are perceived as 'Islamic', yet for others, would be against the will of God:

"Islam is one of the fastest growing faiths in the world with many people becoming Muslims every day.... To this day my faith is very strong. I am a very happy person following the Islamic religion and way of life"⁹

Muslim women converts are often aware of their rights as women within Islam, and may follow a religious leader whom they considered is informed about these issues. Convert women may be well-educated, and actively engaged

in the spheres of employment and other elements of "public life". Many are articulate, and widely read on Islamic matters, and have made a conscious informed choice to convert to Islam. They would be in a position to challenge interpretations of Islam, based within cultural-traditional ideologies of oppression. The separation of 'tradition' from Islam has resulted in a number of non-practising Muslim women, re-affirming a faith in Islam. For example, the researcher has Muslim friends and colleagues in Newham who have "positively chosen" [made a personal and 'informed' decision] to "cover" [in this context, meaning re-affirming a commitment to Islam [becoming a 'practising' Muslim]]. The researcher was informed by these women that they were responding to an interpretation of Islam, which sought to provide women with their 'rights within Islam':

"The chauvinism in Islam happened because women were not educated - only men knew the laws. But now we know our rights given to us by Islam and we're not going to be satisfied with anything less."¹⁰

This may be a cause of conflict between certain Muslims, who advocate the reproduction of cultural practices that the informed educated Muslim may reject. The Muslim Women's Helpline - which deals with calls from across London - recognises the problems of family conflict that may occur for some Muslim women as a result of differing expectations, and cultural imposition. They argue that many instances of female oppression occur within certain families:

"We are inundated with calls from highly intelligent, devout young sisters who wish to pursue further studies in education but are in conflict with parents and their cultural views. Often these vulnerable girls run away when the pressure is too great to bear, particularly when parents think that

packing them off "back home" is going to solve the problem. They generally end up in vile refuges with all manner of dangers awaiting them. Then there are married women who are more or less imprisoned within four walls and rarely "let out". Women in this situation generally end up on tranquillisers, anti-depressants or Prozac, which in turn lead to major health problems. We could go on with instances of emotional cruelty, wife-beating and incest."¹¹

In Newham, non-Muslims may associate this oppression in relation to 'Islam'. Muslim leaders in Newham - linked with specific ethnic and 'traditional' Islamic interests - are frequently reluctant to publicly denounce 'unjust' traditional practices of other Muslim population groups. This may be because they are seeking to promote - at least to the 'outside world' - a 'sense of unity' or single *ummah* ('community') among Muslims. This response could indicate the perceived need amongst these 'leaders' for a collective approach towards burdening issues affecting Muslims within British society.

Although there may be no foundation within Islamic sources and *Shari'ah*, certain cultural practices are defended and legitimised on the basis of Islam:

"It is up to the Muslims to start to apply Islam in their own lives before they have any right to complain about the problems they are facing in this country. In many Asian Muslim families they still uphold the Hindu caste system, all loathsome forms of discrimination, entirely alien to Islam."¹²

The view that Muslim women are 'oppressed' is held by some non-Muslims in Newham (and some Muslims in connection with other Muslims). However, they may differ when isolating the cause of perceived 'oppression'. Where the non-

Muslim might associate Islam as being a cause of oppression, many Muslims would recognise that cultural-traditional factors are 'responsible', rather than Islam.

For example, in Newham, Islam has been associated with the practice of 'female genital mutilation'.¹³ "The practice is particularly prominent among the Somali community in Newham."¹⁴ In Newham, in 1997, over thirty Somali women became involved in a Steering Group with the aim of eradicating this practice. It has been identified that female genital mutilation can result in increased health risks and complications - both in the long and short-term:¹⁵

"As I was a midwife and my husband was a doctor, we spent most of our lives in Mogadishu fighting and protesting against female circumcision. Somalia is mostly a Muslim country, and female circumcision is carried out in order to help protect the women, well that's what those who do it say. I have seen myself many women come into the hospital who have been made ill by infections because of the circumcision. It is also difficult for them to have babies afterwards. It ruins their lives."¹⁶

The local authority in Newham introduced their twelve month programme, with the aim of eradicating the practice through educating Somali-origin men and women, and raising community awareness. Among certain Newham residents, the practice is perceived as 'Islamic', and therefore condoned by Muslims. This practice may be abhorred by Muslim and non-Muslim alike, yet distinctions are not always made between the types of traditions practised or rejected within a Somalian or Asian traditional context. The fact that Somalian Muslims, like other Muslims, profess the faith of Islam, results in connections being made between

Islam and the tradition. Where practices of this nature remain unchallenged as to the religious basis for their continuation, popular opinion might readily assume that the practice has its basis within Islam and an Islamic way of life.

5.2.1. Religious-Cultural Factors and Domestic Violence in the Neighbourhood: A Case Study

Factors such as religious practices, cultural interpretations of belief, and processes of transmitting knowledge can be linked to the situation of some women who remain in domestic violence situations. A woman with this viewpoint may be reluctant to challenge and/or extricate herself from the situation. Additionally, she may be unaware of the complexity of issues surrounding religious-cultural-traditional factors, and the resources enabling a utilization of social and economic power within the broader Newham infrastructure. Muslim women experiencing domestic violence who locate their belief within that of their husbands (and localised community interpretation of that belief) may be subject to the imposition of cultural-traditional factors upon that interpretation. Muslim women are well documented for their struggles and resistance within society. The researcher has encountered many Muslim women in Newham who have challenged, in varying degrees, the concept of a husband's dominance.¹⁷ The link between religion-cultural factors was demonstrated by the case of 'Khadija' [pseudonym], a Somali Muslim refugee taught by the researcher. Khadija stressed the interconnectedness of her marriage with her belief in Islam. She stated that women 'belong to their husbands' after marriage, and should do his bidding. Khadija finds the violence within her marriage intolerable, whilst at the same time acknowledges her husband's 'right' to exercise violence towards her. She believes that her situation is 'the will of God', and as such cannot be changed, and that she will be 'punished' by God should she leave her violent husband. Khadija's mother, who lives within her daughter's

family, supports the localised community attitude towards maintaining 'a conspiracy of silence' on such situations. The mother is disturbed by Khadija's situation, but feels that her daughter must accept the situation, and subjugating herself to her husband's will.¹⁸

In this case, as in others, there is an accepted belief in the husband's right to chastise his wife. Certain women are under the impression that God has decreed the husband's right to exercise physical punishment, as a means by which to regulate his wife's behaviour. The women remaining within these relationships may suffer from low self-esteem. They may attempt the archetypal role of 'perfect wife', and may believe that they are in part responsible for the marital conflict. Comments such as "he's under pressure" and "it's my fault" indicate self-blame and normalisation of a domestic-violence situation. Such ill-informed belief can be used as a device of control by abusive partners.

The violence involved in Khadija's case resulted in hospitalisation and severe emotional problems for the woman, and potentially her children. In this case, as in others, it could be considered that a lack of knowledge concerning Islamic texts and their interpretation contributed to Khadija's reasons for remaining within this relationship. Khadija, and others like her, may be almost entirely reliant upon interpretations of Islam as provided by those vested with 'authority'. This role on a domestic level within a family unit may ordinarily fall to dominant male household members, although the transmission of teachings may occur through female family members. Muslim women may be discouraged

by cultural and other factors from achieving specific types of knowledge and experience. Examples of this may include: levels of literacy, educational attainment, and relevant information regarding wider societal values. Education, levels of literacy, and knowledge concerning the wider society are significant factors relating to the experiences of some women within domestic violence situations.

Additionally, some women have been instilled with fears connected to participation in the wider 'western' society, represented in Newham. Women in the borough, such as Khadija, may have minimal skills to deal with authority, and inappropriate styles of communication and patterns of relating. Her entire framework of support may be enshrined as part of the community infrastructure. Departing from this situation means embarking upon a journey into vastly unknown territory. A woman may have little faith in her ability to cope with the experience of potentially isolating herself from the family and significant community infrastructure of which she is a part. Her contact and interaction within the broader context of Newham society may have been limited within the context of 'necessaries', for example: attending a health clinic, taking children to school, and visiting organisations for assistance with letter writing and state welfare systems. Within this context, certain Muslim women venture out in the company of other Muslim women. Members of the group may have differing levels of English literacy.

A Muslim woman's experience of Newham may have informed and

confirmed prevailing beliefs. Beliefs regarding the broader 'western' society may encapsulate fears concerning the moral decadence of the outside 'western' world and its dangers to the 'good Muslim woman'. In Khadija's case, her experience of Newham includes racial harassment and violence, and from her peers she has heard 'horror stories' of life in the borough outside the 'safety' of the family.¹⁹

Women in Newham with little or no English literacy skills may have limited access to information, and lack the knowledge of how to acquire it. This includes access to information regarding the 'rights' of women in Islam, which may be controlled by culturally specific determinants, such as designated authorities accorded with the 'right to determine and interpret. Khadija's self-confidence is strongly related to her role within the family and community, and has little or no value attachment to the wider society.

In Newham, on occasion, some Muslim women have to rely on support systems and 'safety nets' outside of the family structure: 'Fatima', a Newham resident, had an 'arranged marriage' in which her parents had chosen her husband from Pakistan. Following marriage, the husband became a resident of Newham. Fatima's husband was unaware of, and unsympathetic towards, the conflicting pressures upon Fatima. He expected to continue a way of life consistent with his region of origination, despite the fact that he was from a rural village background. There were also language difficulties, and he was unable to gain employment in Newham.

The expectations of Fatima conflicted with those of her husband, leading to frustration and tension early on in the marriage. Fatima became frustrated and increasingly angry with her husband. She was disturbed by his lack of prospects and his inability to support the family, maintaining a decent standard of living consistent with that of her upbringing. Fatima feels that the anger and resentment she experienced will be reflected in the views of other Muslim women.

“If the men are laying down the law about us not working, then they had better be in a position to provide for us. My husband couldn't get a job but I probably could. It's bound to lead to resentment. Some women don't mind staying at home and not going out to work, but it's on condition that the husband brings home the money.”²⁰

Fatima was rejected from her family, after leaving her violent husband. Fatima said that her marriage had been contracted against her wishes, and although she had consented, she stated that she did so under the duress of her family. Fatima contacted the Newham Social Services, who assisted her in finding a place within a women's refuge outside of the borough, along with her two children. She was later accommodated in state controlled council housing. Fatima stated that her family were ashamed of her, and that this shame extended to the family's status within the neighbourhood and ‘what the community would think’. She also stated that the welfare state provided the means for her survival outside of the family structure, as she was entitled to all state benefits, and was assisted by Social Services in making claims for their receipt.²¹ This support system is in contrast to the options within places of ancestral origin. Opting to live outside the control and support of family networks presents considerable difficulties in a system in

which survival is often dependent upon the family network.

Support systems are essential to survival within all societies. They exist in many forms and differ according to context. Within Britain, the state welfare system (theoretically) provides for all British subjects, irrespective of considerations concerning the transgression of moral codes of conduct:

"The social welfare system provides a range of services which come under three broad headings: the National Health Service, which provides a comprehensive range of medical services to the whole population whatever their means; personal social services, which provide help and advice to the old, the disabled and children in need of care; and the social security system which provides unemployment benefits and is designed to ensure a minimum basic standard of living."²²

This system enables the survival of a British subject who requires - and is eligible for - state welfare benefits, including health, income and social security. The latter is defined, in the British context, as:

"A term used to refer to a variety of systems of income support. In the U.K. it covers retirement pensions; sickness, injury and maternity benefits; invalidity benefits; unemployment benefits; supplementary benefits; child benefit and family income supplement."²³

In terms of Islam, an approach towards social security is reflected in the following statement by Khurshid Ahmed, an academic and politician, with experience

within British and Pakistan 'Islamic' contexts:

"The family, which is a divinely ordained first training institution for human beings, is the starting point of the Islamic social security system ...the family nurtures and develops its new generation and ... enables the new-born to acquire the values, culture, arts, skills and crafts of the society ...

"The Islamic concept of social security is not confined only to supporting the disabled, looking after the feeble or providing pension to aged persons. Here social security starts from the day a person is born."²⁴

In societies without a welfare state, many women may have to tolerate mental and physical abuse in a marital relationship - or the 'pressures' of an unwanted, arranged marriage within some extended families - in preference to a life without financial support. However, in Newham, the existence of some other support system options provides women with a limited 'safety net', when the marital relationship is irreconcilably broken. Some commentators believe that this makes it 'too easy' for women to leave a relationship, and destroys so-called 'family values': some see this as a symptom of a malaise in 'western society' and its values.

However, for some women there is an obvious demand for a support network outside of the family. This demand is demonstrated in Newham, through the resources available for women who have suffered domestic violence. One organisation, with specific experience of dealing with domestic violence inflicted against Muslim women, is Newham Asian Women's Project (NAWP), which defines 'domestic violence' as follows:

"Domestic violence can be: a woman beaten, threatened or abused by her husband or partner; a young woman beaten up by her parents; a lesbian woman battered or abused because of her sexuality; a mother being beaten by her sons or her families; a woman beaten or abused by her in-laws.

"Violence against a woman can take many forms: Mental abuse: controlling her by telling her constantly that she's incapable, inadequate, ugly, stupid; making her believe she is these things. Economic deprivation: denying her money to buy food and clothing. Isolation: denying a woman access to her friends or family, keeping her locked indoors. Physical abuse: beating, punching, choking or bruising a woman. Sexual abuse: physical interference of a sexual nature, e.g. indecent assault, rape." ²⁵

NAWP is one example of one of the many highly organised and efficient women's organisations, involved in the conflict of domestic violence situations. Matters of common concern to local women - including 'Asians' and 'Muslims' - have traversed the barriers of communication, and involved several interested groups and organisations in Newham. NAWP demonstrates how some women have crossed diverse social, cultural, and linguistic barriers - and found a unilateral commonality in resistance to the oppression of women and their children. NAWP's members have pushed issues concerning women onto the agenda, in recognition that essential matters of concern were not being fully addressed in Newham. This may have occurred because of the lack of women's participation in the political processes

NAWP is the result of a recognised need to provide a support system for 'Asian' women suffering from domestic violence. The in-depth knowledge of cultural and religious pressures facing 'Asian' women is not available through

other agencies in Newham. Through focusing on 'Asian' women, NAWP is able to offer specialised assistance, including the language skills required to negotiate the Social Services' systems. An example of the type of caseworkers NAWP seeks is represented in an advertisement for three Domestic Violence Support workers: the first post required a Sylheti-speaking Bangladeshi Family Aid Worker; a second post sought a creché worker familiar with child protection and abuse; a third post required a refugee caseworker with "an informed view on domestic violence."²⁶ These skills demonstrate the range of abilities and issues concerning NAWP, which are relevant to a wide client base within the communities they serve.

Many of the women who use NAWP services may have had difficulty in accessing the specialised information they require from other agencies. The women may lack the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to conduct themselves within the wider society of Newham. For example, they may lack the ability to read English - reducing their access to information, which can be used in the evaluation and formation of opinion. NAWP provides professional advice and assistance in such cases.

NAWP acknowledges the stigma and pressures which result in many Muslim women being unable to come forward and seek refuge. Social stigma and *izzat* ('honour') prevents many Muslim women from disclosing their personal experiences of domestic violence. This leads to a conspiracy of silence, where women who are experiencing abuse only seek refuge as the 'last resort' - often

after many years of hardship and difficulty:²⁷

"The shame and stigma of separation or divorce still has a powerful hold on Asian women's lives. Women fear that they will be condemned by the religion-wallahs or the self-appointed spokesmen of their community. They are persuaded to stay for the 'sake of their children', especially the girls, for 'who would marry them if she left her husband?' So they wait for their children to grow up, wait for their husband to change; submit to pressure from family and friends to reconcile with him, time and again. Notwithstanding the emergence of more Asian women's refuges and active voices from the Asian women's movement in Britain, the reality of living alone is neither appealing nor easy. Will they ever marry again, or find a caring relationship with a man who would accept their 'tainted' past? As one of our clients bluntly asks: how many women would readily marry a divorced woman with children, when they can go 'back home' and marry a pubescent virgin? The answer is: not many."²⁸

The reactions to NAWP and similar projects assisting Muslim women in conflict may lead to accusations of 'encouraging' the breakdown of the Muslim family structures.²⁹ Additionally, the NAWP' concept of service provision occurs within an "Asian" context. This may open the project up to criticism by those desiring a Muslim-orientated approach to the conflict. Some parties wish to establish a similar project under 'Islamic' auspices, but NAWP believe that this would increase the pressure upon women - because it would operate under 'guidance' from mosques and male-dominated committees, whose agenda is seen as frequently incompatible with sympathetic responses to domestic violence situations:

"It has been suggested that this Centre should be prioritised if a special provision is made for Muslim women within it. As a non-sectarian and secular organisation, the allocation of scarce local authority resources on this basis raises several concerns ...

"The allocation of Local Authority resources to a Muslim centre or any religious-based community provision does not match up with the commitments of Newham's own 1991 Race Review. This document clearly states that whilst it is an important facet of community life, religion should remain a private matter not to be funded by Council resources. In 1991 the Labour Council recognised that the allocation of resources according to religious needs heightens communal divisions within the Asian community. The Councillors of that time, many of whom still hold office, believed that common experiences within the Asian community should be encouraged whilst communal divisions should be discouraged."³⁰

The 'Asian' typology undoubtedly may mean that matters of concern to women experiencing domestic violence are addressed in more generalised terms within a specific 'Asian context. This approach may be free of specific 'traditional attitudes' associated with the experience of Muslim women - and utilise a 'common ground' approach which promotes unification, empowerment; incorporating broader systems of support. Specific matters relating to individuals seeking support would be addressed within the framework of a woman's own identified needs, which would be self-defined. The establishment of a specific 'Islamic' project governed largely by males (although staffed primarily by women), could result in an agenda-led approach which may be inappropriate to the requirements of some Muslim women. An example of this might be found within the viewing of circumstances from a particular 'Muslim' perspective - which holds that the family must remain intact at all costs. Muslim women may also turn to outsiders for assistance regarding exposure of confidential matters. They may jeopardise their situation within their family and significant community. There are circumstances in which this would be intolerable for some Muslim women, and could increase pressure on women to stay within difficult

circumstances:

"Our consultative and community work indicate that Asian women do not want separate centres based upon religious criteria. They acknowledge existing divisions within the Asian community and are looking for a Women's Centre that will unify Asian women in the borough rather than exacerbate communal tensions. Throughout the eight years that we have worked with women in Newham, women of all religious backgrounds have used our services. We have never been told by local women that they want separate provisions specific to their religious groupings."³¹

Interviewees suggest that existing ethnic-religious communal divisions between community members can be heightened, by the act of organisational 'separating out' on the basis of religion or ethnicity e.g. through creating an alternative 'Newham Muslim Women's Project'. This may be interpreted as a subtle form of 'control' over women, especially when religious-centred organisations have close links with family networks - thus not providing the 'independence' and 'objectivity' sought by many women seeking refuge. Within the London Borough of Brent, the local Health Authority has identified a need for 'Islamic Counselling', and in conjunction with a Muslim women's organisation - An-Nisa Society - has established a 30 week accredited Counselling and Psychotherapy part-time course at Brent Adult College. Underlying this project are the following factors, which have similarities with Newham:

“ ... the highest poverty and deprivation levels in the country, an under-resourced voluntary sector, the lack of Muslim friendly services - the result of the confusion and neglect caused by equating 'Asian' with Muslim needs, a large traumatised refugee population, racism, and the demonisation of Islam and Muslims ...

“... The demand for Islamic counselling is enormous but the widespread availability of such a service, free to the users, is virtually non-existent. As a result, depression and stress rapidly develop into serious mental ill health requiring hospitalisation and treatment. The community wants confidential Islamic counselling services yet counselling from an Islamic perspective has never been acknowledged as a viable model nor provided by mental health services. Consequently, insensitive intervention by mainstream mental health providers has often caused untold damage to Muslim individuals and families.”³²

It is impossible to generalise as to the ‘Islamic ethos’ on such a ‘Islamic Counselling’ course. Such a course may be sought within the London Borough of Newham. Consideration may be given to the different sorts of services and perspectives that would be provided by a mosque-organised ‘Islamic’ counselling course - as compared to an equivalent course organised by the London Borough of Newham.

Cases dealt with by NAWP are one indicator of the kinds of pressures faced in extreme circumstances by Muslim women in Newham, frequently associated with perceived ‘moral transgression’ and often initially ‘covered-up’ within a ‘conspiracy of silence’ by members of the family or community. The fact that women have approached NAWP is itself an expression of their desperation, as many have attempted to deal with their situation through alternative family networks, and other forms of reconciliation. NAWP may be the ‘last resort’ for many Muslim women in Newham, seeking relief from their difficult family situation. NAWP has identified the reasons why women cannot talk about, or conceal, their difficulties within the family. Often, the women are unaware of their rights - both within ‘Islam’, and as part of the legal framework of British

society. Dealing with removing themselves from family situations brings with it attendant guilt, shame, and dishonour. Many women require extensive counselling, both to get over the specific results of domestic violence, as well as how to deal with their life independently outside of the family network. They may feel more comfortable when this counselling is in a 'mother tongue', from a counsellor ideally who is aware of their culturally-specific circumstances, whilst not bound by a specific religious interpretation - and a 'set' of culturally-bound practices.³³

The following cases, dealt with by NAWP, illustrate both the agenda of NAWP and the extreme circumstances facing some Muslim women in Newham:

"Fazia, a young Bengali woman, was married in Bangladesh and came to Britain to join her husband. Once here, she was not allowed out of the home without being accompanied. She was treated like a servant and made to do all the cooking and housework. Her father-in-law started to make sexual advances towards her. When these were rejected he became violent towards her, accusing her of being immoral and a bad wife. Both the mother-in-law and Fazia's husband became verbally and physically abusive, culminating in the whole family attacking Fazia and locking her up. She managed to escape and was taken to the police, who sought refuge space for her."³⁴

The dependence of Muslim women like Fazia upon her husband extends to her status within Britain, and the requirements of the British Nationality Act.³⁵

The right to 'stay' of many Muslim women who enter the U.K. is covered by the Primary Clause Rule.³⁶ Dissolution of marriage, whatever the circumstances, may result in the suspension of the woman's 'right to stay'.³⁷ Many Muslim women resident in Newham entered Britain subject to similar immigration

conditions like Fazia's. A proportion of women are faced with the option of maintaining a silence over their experience of domestic violence, or the alternative of possible deportation:

"Marriage breakdown is another problem which can be compounded the immigration rules. JCWI [Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants] has noted a rise in cases in which young women, sometimes in violent relationships, are held hostage by immigration rules which require them either to remain in the relationship or to risk deportation and possible family disgrace. The risk of deportation is removed once a spouse has been given indefinite leave to remain in the UK; but many women do not know this and are led to believe that any attempt at divorce will lead to their removal, even if they have lived here for many years."³⁸

The dilemma of those Muslim women - caught between the dictates of legislation and a (potentially) violent domestic situation - can serve to entrap them within oppressive circumstances leading to depression or - in some cases - suicide.³⁹ There are Muslim women in Newham who - like non-Muslim women - experience forms of domestic violence and family conflict within the family unit. Family conflict is identified as a significant factor contributing to the disproportionately high rate of various forms of mental illness among Muslim women. The results of studies in ethnicity and mental health point to consequences of depression, self-harm, suicide, and dependence upon medication.⁴⁰

In a separate NAWP case, one Newham woman had suffered from domestic violence throughout a 30-year marriage, demonstrating that these issues transcend age-groups - by also affecting female Muslim 'elders' in the Borough:

"Her strict religious background prevented her from any thoughts of leaving her husband, as did the pressure from friends and family to 'make it work', even after her two children had grown up and left home. During one severe beating her husband threw her out. She came into our refuge feeling very afraid but also ashamed that she had left home. Once she saw that she was not alone, that there were other women in similar circumstances who did not judge her but helped and supported her, she began the process of rebuilding her life. Her children, happy that their mother had finally left home, were extremely supportive. She was eventually temporarily rehoused by the local authority, but has also been offered a self-contained flat in the Hamara Ghar project, where she will be living with other Asian elders and will not feel isolated." ⁴¹

After this long-period of being subjected to domestic violence, this woman had to go through the trauma of leaving the family environment - seen as 'security' despite the violence - and come to terms with a new life in the wider society of Newham. Despite difficulties, a number of women have made this transition, and have overcome community pressures and cultural obstacles to their independence and survival outside of family networks. No doubt many women would have preferred the familiarity and security of the (idealised) family unit - but in this case, the woman still had close contacts with her children, and the opportunity of developing a new 'family' within a secularised Asian community project.

Many of the women who go to NAWP are supported in their decision-making processes, especially in obtaining legal recourse to protect themselves and their children from violence or harassment. In some cases, the decision-making process has been influenced by consideration of the implications for their children's prospects, within the Muslim community and/or their neighbourhood:

"Razia came to NAWP to seek refuge for a few days while she sought an injunction against her husband. Razia had been married for 27 years and during the last 14 years she had been subjected to violence from her husband. Because of her beliefs and upbringing, Razia felt that she could not leave her husband as it would affect the marriage prospects of her four grown-up daughters. She decided to take out an injunction against her husband preventing him from harassing or beating her. Whilst the injunction was being sought, Razia stayed with NAWP; once it had been served on her husband she returned to the matrimonial home." ⁴²

In this case, the family 'remained together', whilst Razia had legal recourse to protection under English law. Therefore, she felt able to satisfy notions of 'family honour' for herself and her daughters. Leaving the family house would be a visible sign of disharmony, whilst the injunction - if not publicised - would remain a private matter that would not interfere with her daughters' marriage prospects.

Sharma Ahmad, Labour Councillor and former Mayor of Newham (1996), has been politically active in the borough since 1980. She finds that the issue of Muslim women with marital problems is a prevalent one:

"I was particularly interested in the plight of women, especially Muslim women who were, and still are, more deprived than anyone else, mainly because they cannot go out as freely as other women in the borough ..." ⁴³

Ahmad recognises that there are restrictions on freedom placed upon certain Muslim women in the borough. Forms of Purdah in the borough remain, and women experiencing problems may find difficulty in accessing forms of conflict resolution. The lack of English language skills may also impact upon women's ability to share their problems:

“Muslim women who cannot speak English come to seem me as someone who understands; they are more comfortable discussing their problems with another woman ...”⁴⁴

"I have female constituents who have knocked on my door at eleven or twelve at night, women with children asking for help and advice. I help out where I can. Only if the wife wants me to contact the husband and the rest of the family will I do so. If the husband is at fault, I remind them this is not India or Pakistan - women have equal rights."⁴⁵

In terms of issues concerning 'moral transgression', on occasion the 'appropriate' agencies are not consulted, because of fear that the honour of the family is at stake - as well as concerns regarding the reaction of the wider community. In some cases, crimes have been committed against Muslim females in Newham - but families have chosen not to prosecute for fear of implications to their 'honour'. One example presented to the researcher illustrates the pressures on a family closely integrated within a Muslim cluster:

'Zainab' was a twelve year old Muslim girl. She complained of 'pain and bleeding'. Investigation by her mother revealed that Zainab had sexual intercourse with a married man. Zainab was confused, and was fond of the man involved. The incident - in compliance with the mother's wishes - was kept confidential and not reported to the police. Concern was expressed that should the incident be reported to the police, it would become a public matter, and the identity of the family and girl would be divulged. A conspiracy of silence remained, securing the girl's future marriage prospects as an 'intact virgin female'. The girl's mother considered that the stigma of a 'fallen women' which would be attached to her daughter would cause greater harm than keeping silence. The family took up residence in another area.⁴⁶

Although the man was known to Zainab's family, they chose not to prosecute him for sex with a minor, and the police were not informed. The researcher has

learnt of several similar cases in the borough, where children have been sexually abused by adults - including family members. Yet the conspiracy of silence remains persistent, and the abused individuals have had difficulty protecting themselves. Often, they are only able to tell their story several years after the event - when they are outside of the family home. The hidden nature of this abuse prevents proper counselling and psychological treatment, recognised as necessary for the abused. It is recognised by psychologists and health-care professionals that the 'damage' may pass from generation-to-generation.

The following case study details the experience of one Muslim woman, who resorted to prostitution as an indirect result of 'child abuse'. The researcher was introduced by a professional colleague to 'Maryam': Maryam was born and raised in the Newham area of East London alongside her brothers and sisters; her parents were raised in Pakistan. No contact exists between Maryam and any of her family members. Maryam ran away from home, when at 15, she became pregnant by her uncle. She believes that her uncle began sexually abusing her from about the age of ten. Maryam had felt unable to tell her parents about her uncle and she kept what she describes as a painful shameful silence. Maryam believed that she would, either be disbelieved or blamed as the guilty party if she had disclosed what was taking place. In addition, she harboured guilty feelings about betraying her family:

"It would break their hearts [family] if they believed it and even then they would only deny it to themselves and other people... When I got pregnant, I didn't know where to turn. I felt guilty and ashamed, now look at me,

I've really got something to be ashamed about. Even if my mother believed me, they'd never accept it wasn't my fault. In our culture, everything's stacked against you if you're a girl."⁴⁷

Maryam said her family did not know of her whereabouts, nor the circumstances surrounding her decision to leave home. Maryam suffered a miscarriage, and is angry about what happened to her. Currently Maryam is working as a prostitute in East London. Maryam states that she could never go home, and believes that if her brothers, father, and uncle knew of her whereabouts, there would be some risk of personal danger. Maryam recognises the dangers involved in the work she does, but says that she has become accustomed to the lifestyle - despite contracting venereal diseases from her clients, and experiencing violence. Maryam considers that there are double standards in operation regarding some Muslim men, a proportion of whom are regular customers for her services.

"The ones that condemn us [prostitutes] publicly are often the ones spending a lot of time in our beds."⁴⁸

Maryam considers that although she was not the guilty party, her immediate family would not take her side. She believes that they would be unable to tolerate the shame of perceiving their daughter as a 'fallen woman,' without honour. In her view they would be unable to endure the embarrassment of presenting their daughter as a 'virtuous woman' for marriage.

There is considerable testimony to the experience of Muslim women within

domestic violence situations, and problems relating to under-reporting of experiences. Women may be threatened with 'dishonour', 'disgrace', and being sent to relatives overseas:

"Jameela is a twenty-one-year-old Pakistani woman who was married by arrangement in Pakistan to a biochemist with British nationality. Jameela was brought into Britain in 1985... Her problems began soon after they started married life in the family home, when her brother-in-law tried to rape her. Her husband was himself sexually violent and abusive to her, and did nothing about his brother. On the one hand, he regularly threatened to have her deported back to her family in Pakistan in disgrace, while on the other told her that if she tried to leave the room, in which he kept he locked for days (with no toilet), the police would catch her ... Her only relative in this country is a sister in a very similar predicament, who is married to a relative of Jameela's husband. They live several hours away and cannot see each other. Jameela was deeply depressed when we found and interviewed her at a women's refuge."⁴⁹

This view was also reflected in an informal neighbourhood discussion involving the researcher. Hindu, Muslim, and White neighbours (known to one another) were present. The discursive element occurred following a tenants and residents federation meeting, at which issues of community safety had been mentioned. The discussion was in one of the resident's homes, and focused on a case involving the rape of Sunita Vao - which was highlighted in a television interview (transcribed in the appendices). Although this case did not involve a Muslim woman, parallels were drawn by the Hindu and Muslim tenants, within the context of a collective group allegiance as 'Asians'. The collective 'we' and 'our' was used in reference to 'Asian communities', and the concept of shame, honour, blame, and a conspiracy of silence'. Conversation explored 'Asian community' attitudes to women and rape. One respondent stated:

“Things like that are just not spoken about in our community. It doesn't mean it's not happening. Women talk amongst themselves about it, but they're frowned upon if they take it outside (break the code of silence). There's a lot of rape in marriage, and sexual abuse in families, just like anywhere else, only it's not spoken about.' ... if a woman tells about what's happening to her, she won't do herself any good. She'll only get the blame and be punished twice. You get brothers, uncles, fathers, abusing them, and they just don't tell.”⁵⁰

Not all cases relating to domestic violence are dealt with by organisations professional within the field. One respondent reflected the view that domestic violence was an issue that consistently confronts workers initially consulted on other issues, and these workers frequently have to deal with the repercussions.

Domestic violence is not the sole issue which results in contact between the worker(s) and the women experiencing abuse from within the family. Information concerning the reported abuse of women within the families is often revealed as a 'secondary' problem, expressed by women within the context of 'other developments'. Knowledge related to the existence of domestic violence may be gained as a result of intervention concerning matters connected with: racial harassment; conflict resolution; dealing with social services; housing and welfare benefit problems; immigration and the legal system. Worker(s) within certain organisations may frequently act in advisory, advocacy, and/or emotionally supportive roles.

5.2.2. Case Study: Malika

This case was notified to the researcher as a direct result of professional involvement within neighbourhood conflict resolution. A translator, with knowledge of domestic-violence issues, was involved in translating the woman's experience to the researcher:

Malika is a Muslim women, born and raised within rural Pakistan. Malika's husband was professionally employed within the area of Newham, and was regarded with respect within the local religious community. Malika doubted that the Muslim community in Newham would believe her story, that she was beaten and humiliated by her husband in full view of her mother. These beatings took place as a matter of course, and occurred on a regular basis: the violence ranged from being slapped around the face, to punches and kicks in the stomach.

Knowledge of the circumstances of this case were brought to the attention of the researcher by a concerned neighbour, who was a friend of the family. (Initially, it was the mother who was first introduced to the researcher by a concerned neighbour.) The neighbour spoke both English and Urdu, and was able to offer initial translation. The case concerned the mother, her daughter, and the daughter's physical abuse by the husband. The mother had been offered alternative accommodation by her son, but was unwilling to leave her daughter to the aggression of her husband. The mother was concerned that if she left the household the situation might deteriorate even further. She believed that her presence within the household offered some form of protection to her daughter. The mother was tearful and emotionally upset as she related her story, that she was raped by her husband, and a pregnancy had resulted. The pregnancy had not altered the husband's treatment of his wife.

Accommodation was found for the woman and her daughter in a woman's refuge outside of the borough. After several weeks within this refuge, which did not cater specifically for the woman as a speaker of Urdu, the woman returned to her violent husband. The mother informed the researcher through translation, that the refuge was a hostile environment and the two women experienced racism from other white residents. The mother stated that although, she was extremely concerned about the welfare and security of her daughter, she would not be returning to the house of the husband. The mother had made the difficult decision of leaving her daughter alone within her domestic situation of conflict and

violence; finally opting to take up the offer of residence with one of her sons.⁵¹

This case involved a professional Muslim male with a long history of residence in Newham. The wife and the mother had spent a relatively short amount of time in Newham, and had not acquired literacy in the English language. Conflict may have been inherent in the potential extremities of cultural diversity between the couple. Couples who may have little if anything in common are sometimes coupled within marriage. Aggression in the form of emotional and/or physical abuse may arise as a result of resentment against an undesired spouse. The immediate neighbour, responding to the screams and expressions of physical violence occurring between the walls of their joint residences, could be said to have acted with an 'Islamic' responsibility. Confidentiality was a key issue in the disclosure of this case. The belief held by the female spouse regarding the negative value which she perceived would be placed upon what she had to say, prohibited her initially from seeking assistance. The assistance, eventually sought, was from a non-Muslim organisation.

5.2.3. Racial Harassment and Domestic Violence

Many cases of racism involve physical assault, attacks on property, and verbal abuse. Muslim women have had their head coverings pulled off their heads; alcohol poured over their bodies, and abusive graffiti written upon the household property. One informant reported that it was the women within the family who tended to report the incidence of racism, and deal directly with the racism support workers. For some of these women, they are often the only point of contact outside of the family unit. An account (outlined below), provided by an advisor involved in the provision of support to victims of racial harassment, illustrates the complexity of this advisor's situation. Issues surrounding family and individual trust are complex to address, and may have considerable implications regarding the role of the service-provider.

As information is gained regarding the racism and its impact, trust is established, and forms of supportive relationship are built between the women and the advisors. Women, in discussing the primary events relating to the racism to a advisor, 'break silence' revealing untold troubles and concerns, including the incidence of domestic violence. The advisor, may then find themselves involved in the interpersonal domestic family conflict. The advisor is then placed in the position (where requested) of supporting or assisting the woman, by advocacy action and information provision. The advisor can be placed in a difficult position regarding loyalties and trust. For example, the advisor is called in on one issue, and then is drawn into a myriad of other issues.

Additional advice concerning immigration status, welfare, housing, and social service provision may also be given; an advocacy role in dealing with official bodies may result; women may use the services of organisations to help with form filling and bureaucracy.⁵² Women within these domestic violence situations frequently share perceptions of family conflicts - and reasons for remaining within abusive relationships - with the advisors.

The advisor provided an example of a Somali Muslim woman. The woman's contact with the support-worker occurred as a result of her family's experience of racial harassment. According to the advisor, excreta had been pushed through her client's letter box, and her garage walls daubed with graffiti. The advisor had become aware of the woman's family conflict situation, indirectly, and was placed in the difficult circumstances of:

- (a) supporting the family as a collective unit experiencing racial harassment
- (b) secretly assisting the woman, by provision of information regarding her legal rights of abode within the country.

The woman had over time, established a relationship with the advisor; developed trust; and subsequently had requested this information. This particular woman had little access to public information, and rarely left the home.

Issues of domestic violence are a sensitive subject for many Muslim women, and the Muslim community as a whole in Newham. Where issues of confidentiality cannot be assured, Muslim women in difficult circumstances of

abusive relationships may be discouraged from 'breaking silence' and may continue in the maintenance of a 'conspiracy of silence'. The disclosure of sensitive information regarding concepts of honour, shame, and ultimately widespread significant public condemnation may prohibit all but a few from exposing these circumstances. Pride, shame and social stigma can act against the best interests of women falling outside of the ordinary situation, marginalising them when they face difficulties in this regard. Concerns surrounding condemnation and potential loss of respect and status can effectively reduce the likelihood of public admission. Women may be scorned, stigmatised, shunned, and accused of destroying the family honour and the concept of 'unity'. They may be blamed for contributing to negative 'outsider' perceptions, which views Muslims and Islam as oppressive to women.

A woman 'tarnished' in this way may find herself isolated, and alienated from her sense of community and the factors which she perceives as essential to her status. For many women, the threat of physical and emotionally ostracisation; proves to be an unbearable prospect. and silence may be viewed as a small price to pay for retaining her personhood and that which she values as her identity. There are, of course, many Muslim women who speak out publicly - sometimes at great risk to themselves, their families, and potentially the standing of their family within the significant communities.

5.3. Cultural Sensitivity in Service Provision: Interpersonal Communication, Misdiagnosis and the Refugee.

There are specific factors associated with some Muslim refugees, originating from particular regions within the African continent. These factors are not necessarily exclusive to African refugees, but may also be found within the experience of a proportion of Muslims with ancestral links within the Indian sub-continent. These factors include low-literacy levels in English, social-economic deprivation, and low levels of employment.

Within Newham, the most significant Muslim refugee population in terms of size originates from Somalia/Somaliland:

"Somalis form the largest group and estimates about the number of Somalis resident in the borough vary from 6,000 (representative from the Somali Welfare Association) to 8,000."⁵³

Muslim refugees from Somali and Somaliland have often escaped from hostile situations in their homelands, and now find themselves confronted with a new environment and a different set of problems. Many may have been traumatised by their experiences, but may be unaware of available support systems. The notion of counselling as a concept may be totally unfamiliar to many Somalis, who may resort to traditional ways of dealing with intra-personal conflict. Muslim refugee women are often isolated from the public domain; they may be 'visible' in daily life, but may have limited or no contact with longer-established

Newham population groups.

Women with little or no English language skills may be unlikely to attempt to report the incidence of domestic violence. Many women do not have adequate English language skills relating to the need to survive independently. Levels of literacy are significantly different between Somali male and female refugees. Some women can speak English in addition to the language of orientation, but are unable to read and write in either language.⁵⁴

For example, Somali women also suffered, because the anxiety and depression of the men was transmitted to them; women also had their own specific difficulties and issues. Somali women interviewed often felt isolated from their friends and family, and unable to pursue a lifestyle which would alleviate some of the pressure. Many depressed women have lost systems and opportunities for sharing and talking with their peers - and report higher levels of depression than their menfolk:

" ... for those who did feel depressed the main needs were for someone who spoke their language and for a professional counsellor." ⁵⁵

Many professionals may have limited experience of dealing with refugees and asylum seekers. The College of Health Report suggests that counselling and psychiatric service usage does not correspond to the "reported rate of depression," as expressed by members of the surveyed group. Refugees expressed a desire to

talk about "the way they were feeling."⁵⁶ Professional advisors are often inadequately prepared for dealing with the constraints imposed by communicating with refugee populations. Difficulties arise concerning cultural factors and styles of communication. Many professionals, in considering the issues, have limited availability of time to deal with patients, and matters are further complicated by the time requirement often involved in communicating with a refugee.

Some professionals are concerned regarding the transcultural implications of 'communicating the right message in a manner that is understood.' Words and their meanings may be interpreted differently within varied cultural contexts. Meanings and value judgements associated with language can be interpreted as offensive, in certain contexts. Many professional advisors in Newham reported to the researcher that often there is anxiety attached to cross-cultural working, especially when the 'service user' culture is from a cultural framework which has distinctive expectations, approaches, and communication patterns:

"Others ... emphasised the magnitude of cultural problems encountered while dealing with refugees/asylum seekers."⁵⁷

A medical practitioner, for example, may experience anxiety regarding the skills required in conveying information in ways which are culturally sensitive. Misinterpreted communication can result misunderstanding, potentially leading to resentment and conflict. The complexity of language and communication present difficulties for those involved with people from diverse backgrounds,

unfamiliar to the professionals. A professional advisor, involved in drug-counselling amongst ethnically diverse communities in Newham, believed that forms of understanding could be reached by 'outsiders' under certain circumstances:

"I think people could [understand the communities], if they've been brought up in an environment where they've got a very large population of whatever [culture] it may be, and they're working within that community, and they've mixed with that community, and they know the views and the implications of the religious and cultural aspects."⁵⁸

Issues that are sensitive may require extreme care and caution, in the avoidance of mis-communication and conflict avoidance. This can result in the professional attempting to avoid the situation, or treating a patient with medicine, in preference to the counselling support which might be offered to the wider community:

"It is acknowledged that members of ethnic communities who come into contact with mental health services are more likely to receive medication than 'talking therapies' such as psychotherapy or counselling."⁵⁹

One informant informed the researcher of one case, which involved a Muslim refugee who visited a Newham doctor's surgery for a routine medical. According to the informant, the refugee left the surgery, under the impression that the state of her health did not require her to take immediate action, other than to comply with the doctor's instruction to take prescribed medication. Apparently, the doctor had instructed the refugee to arrange an appointment to visit the local

hospital for further tests. Several weeks later, the refugee was said to have died, having failed to fully comprehend instructions. The doctor was subsequently accused by members of the refugee's family of improper practice, relating to the diagnosis, and its communication.⁶⁰

The researcher was personally involved in training local medical professionals and students - in teaching hospitals in London - in aspects of cross-cultural communication. It has been identified that medical professionals often have an incomplete knowledge of cultural differences within East London, including religious requirements and cultural understandings, which can impede treatment of their patients. It is accepted that there is inequality of access to health services in East London, and that members of some ethnic-minority populations are inhibited from seeking treatments - often at considerable risk to their health, as well as greater subsequent cost to the local health services:

"... This is coupled with possible misdiagnosis by professionals who may not understand all the factors involved. ... literature also notes the clash not only between the approach to counselling (hierarchical and formal or egalitarian and informal) but also between refugees' and practitioners' expectations of therapeutic outcome."⁶¹

Some illnesses also have specific social stigma for certain ethnic minority populations in Newham. For example, mental health problems are a significant problem within the Borough. However, Somali cultural perceptions regarding mental health stigmatises sufferers, and may prevent them from seeking assistance. Other Newham residents may originate from a society which regards

mental health disorders as 'supernatural punishments.'⁶² Mental health sufferers may avoid health professionals, in an attempt to avoid stigmatisation within their family, and/or ultimately rejection or loss of status within the community. There is also a general fear, amongst refugees, that their residential status in the U.K. could be unduly "prejudiced by their medical condition."⁶³

Health authorities within Newham have started to recognise the special requirements relating to social care services:

“We aim to encourage the local, specialist and ethnic minority voluntary sector to work in partnership with large providers, so as to ensure community needs are met and new opportunities are created.”⁶⁴

This is to counter criticism in some quarters that health provision in the Borough is inadequate and inappropriate for specific population group requirements.

This chapter examined issues surrounding religious-cultural practices and the oppression of women, within the context of popular opinion in Newham. Findings revealed that cases of oppression against Muslim females do exist, and may be validated by some Muslims using Islam as a justification - even though it is clear to other Muslims that Islamic sources do not advocate female oppression.

5.4. Newham Fieldwork Interview - Transcript 'Sara's Story: A Muslim Female Perspective on Domestic Violence in Newham.

5.4.1. Introduction

This transcript is from an interview with 'Sara', a 25 year old Muslim resident of Newham, who works in a professional capacity with cases of domestic violence. The emphasis in the interview focuses upon Muslim women in Newham, in relation to socialisation processes, cultural values and expectations, and 'actual' domestic violence cases. 'Sara' is represented by the letter 'S', and the researcher by 'YFH'.⁶⁵

5.4.2. Transcript: 'Sara'

S Obviously if your immigration status and you haven't got anything coming in and you've got problems with your children, racial harassment is pretty low down on that list of priorities - unless you are getting a brick through your window or something ...

A woman can claim for asylum and a child can claim in its own right ...

... the man can make application all in his name; chances can be made by breaking up applications: say a woman is being beaten up and she is suffering horrendously in the marriage. Her status on remaining in the country is dependent upon that marriage surviving: the minimum period is one year. What happens is say if a woman is being beaten up in that one year, if she leaves her husband, she will almost definitely be deported and have to leave the country, even if she is pregnant. After a year the husband has to write to the Home Office saying 'our marriage is fine, we're still together,' and if he doesn't do that, they'll investigate.

They don't care if you've been beaten up. There's a campaign against the One Year Rule at the moment, which we've been involved in as well. There's a lot of women I know who have tried to organise public meetings, but it didn't happen. A lot of women are trapped in that situation because they need that piece of paper to stay in the country - and basically that's blackmail. Some of the women can't access information, because they can't read, they don't realise that it's only a year - you don't have to stay in a situation five or six years, with the husband threatening to deport them or get them chucked out of the country or take the children away from them. And the shame of going back to Pakistan for example, it's a big disgrace that you bring on your family; you're a used woman, they don't want you anymore.

YFH Your chances of survival are greatly reduced?

S Unless you are very upper class or something, going back to a normal household, unless it's a unique household, she will be in a severe problem, she'd have a lot of problems getting married again; her value would be nothing, she would basically be a slave to her parents or whichever member of her family - her aunty for example - that might take her in -

YFH Because she is outside the norm.

S That is why women in situations, at least in this country they can opt out and divorce and separate; they can go into a refuge that can help them rebuild their lives, they can go to college and learn English, there are all these mechanisms they can use, they can be more independent, which a lot of women ... but going back home that is not an option.

YFH A lot of times we here things about the so called decadent 'west' and women 'decadence' by accessing education, yet you're suggesting that access to education gives women the opportunity to challenge and to question.

S I think that's exactly why they don't want to give it to them. The families of some of my friends, they say that they don't want their daughter to go to university; we've got a volunteer who is working for us at the moment, she is very bright, but her mother doesn't want her to go to university or college because she is going to start getting her own ideas; they know she's not going to have an arranged marriage at eighteen if she has got a place at university, what is she going to do? And I think even when I was going to university it was the same thing; my aunty was saying 'don't send her, it'll be a big mistake, you're going to lose her, she is going to become westernised, she's not going to listen to you anymore.'

I had friends who it happened to at school who were bright girls as well and they weren't allowed to go. The parents had talks with the teacher, but they still weren't allowed to go. They're all married now, and have children, and that's all my friends that I know. And here in this borough, especially in the Bangladeshi community, ... because there's such a high population of Asian people it's very closed, and it's very difficult to break out of that. And that's how it controls people and families, especially women's lives. So even now it's happening, girls being denied education because parents being fearful of what education can do to them.

YFH They are getting some access to education [and access to the wider society] ...

S You find that girls don't get much support when they are in school. Parents are sending them to school because they know they have to go to school, and that's it. They don't really care how well they are doing, they don't ask how well they are doing in their exams, they don't encourage them to sit and revise and learn like they will their sons. Their sons will have unbearable pressure to do well and their daughters who are able to go to sixth form level have to pull out, and that's where you get the battles. Come sixteen a lot of girls don't want to leave - a lot of them are doing a lot better than their brothers and they want to carry on. A lot of situations, they have girls leaving home, running away from home, you find at that kind of ages in Newham... from the kind of outreach that we have done, I think that the battles about that issue of education are very common ... everyone is talking about that, it is a really big issue.

Part of it is parents think that if they go to college, they are going to get involved with boys, they hear all these stories about girls running off with boys, about girls having boyfriends, they are really worried about that ... back home [names city in U.K.] I know that a lot of girls run away about

that time [sixteen] ...

I think that in Pakistan, middle-class families allow their daughters to study, but other girls [in the UK] they might really want to study, but their families won't finance their study ... one of our volunteers at the moment, she wants to come here - she wants to volunteer and help her get a job, and then go to college, but her mother wants her to stay at home and learn to cook; she comes in here, and then she goes home in the evening, and her mum is not talking to her. She says "if you go to college, I'm not going to speak to you," or "if you to college you've got to become a doctor - but you are not allowed to study away from home," all of those issues are really big issues.

Closed communities like Newham - or where either there is a large Asian population or a small closed Asian population, there is a big problem. Whereas if you have Asian families who are growing up in Norwich, for example, it is not a problem because everyone there has pretty much taken on all the local western kind of values - everybody wants to study and they do that.

YFH. Point ? less worthy a cause - backburner

S I think that women are made to feel guilty, say if for example, you're struggling to make ends meet, a case I'm dealing with at the moment. She's not a refugee but her husband is, she's suffered domestic violence for ten years and her three elder children ... two daughters and a son, also beat her up now. She's Sikh and she's married to a man who had come over, basically, to get a British passport. They had three children in quick succession and he left after he got his stay - and then she married a Bangladeshi man who'd come over in the same kind of way. He didn't have a British passport, he was trying to apply for political asylum ten years ago.

... She'd converted. They lived in [names foreign country], and she'd accepted Islam, she lost all her own family. They've come back from [foreign country] and now her husband has lost, because he's been out of the country for a certain period, he's lost his status, and all that immigration situation starts again. ...

She eventually got him to move out but now he's moved back in again, because otherwise he won't get his stay. Her situation is that he's beating her up, her three children - even though they go to this ... [Islamic school], and are taught to wear hijab and everything. They come home and they call her 'a whore' because she was with this other man [who was their father ...

YFH Even though they go to this ... [Islamic school]?

S ... she said that ... [a foreign government] ... gave them money to go to the [School], because they are converts, and it's meant to be good for you to do that. What she is saying is that - she is in a peculiar situation where she had no value for herself, she couldn't believe that this man was taking her on with three children from another man, so she didn't care if he was beating her up initially because at least he was OK towards her children. She's got three children from her first husband, and two from this husband.

She says that the children must have learnt from her that kind of "Oh God, he took us on, he is so great, so what if he beats mummy up," and he would call her a "whore" because she had been with somebody else, and he said "you're not really my wife, you're just a whore to me because someone else had you."

She had no value in that sense, she was getting beaten up for years and years, and now she tries to get him out of the house but has to let him back in. She wants to get him his stay in this country, because otherwise her children will never speak to her again, she'll lose her children if she doesn't ... she feels that if in some way she is to blame for him being deported, they will blame her for that.

YFH So they have got a strong attachment to him, even though he is not their father and he is beating her up ...

S ... she said that because they have been very isolated, they have always been very lonely, and clung to him; because he has got a family and they want to be a part of that. He has never been cruel to them. He doesn't love them but he has tolerates them. He plays them off against one another. Because he has always called her a whore and a used woman, they are saying "yeah, you were with another man and he left you." They won't understand that she was left ...

YFH ... How do they reconcile this, going to ... [the Islamic school] ... and being taught values towards their mother?

S She [the mother] kept saying that her daughter is wearing hijab, and say "alhamdulillah" this and she's a wonderful child at school, and I say to her "Why aren't they learning about these issues and women's stuff."

She went to the Open Day at school, and she said that the teacher said that the girls were not socialising, they weren't really engaging at school, so they were worried about it and they wanted to know whether there were any problems at home. I've got somebody who is seeing her [the mother] now, and she is going to go to a Women's Support Group. She still believes that she is a Muslim, but she doesn't have any support, she

doesn't know what to do.

YFH There's quite a few Muslim organisations for Muslim women in Newham.

S But again there is a Somali Women's Organisation, and they are at very strong mosques. The one that she is going to, is run by ... [a Muslim convert]. She is a Domestic Violence worker.

All the women that knew she was getting beaten up, they thought it was OK. His sisters knew, his mother knew, that she was getting beaten up. Her own mother was very impressed, that we should look after her. But again they thought it was OK, because she had no value to them. They had the same value system as him, that she was a used woman, that she had no value: she was lucky that she had got a man, and that's what they would say to her.

YFH So she wouldn't get any encouragement to get out?

S Absolutely not! His sister was saying to him that he should leave her. "What are you doing with her? She's not good enough for you?"

YFH Do women ever manage to leave these situations, and how do they deal with the society out there?

S ... where would they go? There is no support system if they leave. That woman, the one who killed her husband who used to beat her up. So when she got out of prison, she'd lost her children, there was no support system for her.

The woman who had a Thai kickboxer husband, her mother is a single mother - so she's got nowhere to go, nowhere to live ... the thing is, they never believe that a man will take them on, because in the Asian community there's a stigma -it is very rare for a man to take on a woman, knowing that she has slept with another man, or worst even has children by another man. So they are in situations, where they think that forever more they will be living in some horrible flat, or not having enough money, never having a man to support you; children losing their father, losing their family. So what are you going to do? ...

Our women are not going to support you, because if they people in the community associate you with a woman, this so-called 'black sheep woman,' if they associate you with that woman it affects your status. They say "Oh, look at her, she's hanging around that woman." If you are a woman who is by herself, who left her husband by her own choice, you'll be seen as a loose woman. Any man coming to your house, they'll think they're having an affair with him. So any woman that's associated with you is tainted by that association, so people don't want to know you. They

think you're going to bring bad luck to them.

YFH Do you think women help keep the situation as it is?

S Definitely ... Everything that means status and acceptance to them will be gone [if a woman leaves] ... the women at the [Domestic Violence] Refuge, they say: some women say we are glad we have left; but then they get really afraid about leaving the Refuge.

Because in the Refuge, there's like a community, they have friends, but when you're living by yourself in a house it's more difficult, often the only person they have contact with will be the outreach worker from the refuge, they get very dependent on them. ...

A woman I know lives in the South of the borough and she's got seven children, she's left the refuge and is living by herself. She's feeling really lonely and she's thinking maybe she should try to get back home with the family and that maybe she can sort it all out. No-one will come to visit her, the family won't be allowed to see her.

YFH Do community leaders address these issues?

S I don't think so, I think that's because no leaders of the community want to stand up and say domestic violence is a problem in our community, because it's so shameful, people feel embarrassed about it. There's that thing about, "you don't want to talk your own community down". They say it doesn't happen like a lot of community leaders.

YFH Why?

S Women have more options now. In Newham they do have places where they can go and there is a difference. The younger generation will not tolerate that ... In terms of growing up, if young people, women, are born in this country, and have grown up in this country, have been educated in this country, and have gone to the schools etc, you'll find that they may, at least, be aware of the options, aware of what domestic violence means and issues there, they may have concepts about it and understanding of it. At least they'll be able to challenge the issue and take it on board. But if you have a woman, she may be eighteen, but say she's someone who's come over from Pakistan and got married. She's had a completely different process of socialisation, that woman is going to be much more likely, I'd imagine, to tolerate that ...

That's why I think socialisation is so important. It's like two parallel socialisations for an Asian woman; the one where you're outside in the world, where you're in school, you know, all those kinds of places and secondly there's the one where you're at home, and you'll find that you

may go to school, I don't know, but from my experience Asian people tend to hang around with each other, but I don't know how well they mix or socialise - and you come home, and automatically it's out of the school uniform, and into the Asian clothes. And you're right: it is watching television, or helping mum in the kitchen, and aunties coming around and chatting about whatever is going on.

Because that is a very strong socialisation process, and that is what - in some ways - makes the kind of experience of a lot of Asian women quite unique. Because I've friends in the black community who are not going home to that rigorous socialisation, I've got friends who are African-Caribbean, and they go home, and they go out again: they can pretty much do as they want. They don't go home and read the Qur'an for an hour, which is the normal routine for Muslim people, and then after the Qur'an you're serving dinner and washing up, and your watching T.V. - and that is basically your [a woman's] life.

So those two things are competing a lot - and for a lot of women, if they don't have the support especially of their mothers, I think their mothers are really crucial, if they don't support of their mothers or other women in their family: they also take that on board, and if you have a mother who is quite quiet and not challenging - and is not being supportive to you - even if in a quiet way because sometimes it is difficult for mothers to support their daughters, because by wider family and by husbands they are seen as destroying their daughters or putting their daughters on the wrong track ...

My mother, in my own experience, was very supportive of us behind closed doors, in a very quiet way: she wouldn't publicly argue our case for us, but privately she would say "do it, and I'll sort it out." I think that a lot of women are unfortunate in that they lack the women around them that do that.

... I think that when you are a middle-aged Asian women, to get access to those kinds of things, apart from watching television and those kinds of things, and a lot of them don't speak English anyway or they think television has got too much sex, and they think it's awful anyway ... how are you going to access that?

One of the ways is through your children, but if you don't give your children space to bring those ideas into the home, they're [the ideas] are not going to come into the home. If you make your children feel that those ideas are wrong or bad, or they are going to be punished or told off for coming in [with them], talking about any of those issues, then those mothers they do live in their safe worlds, they do have a sense that there are things going on around with them, and I think a lot of them just want to keep their heads buried in the sand.

By dealing with your children, you know what your children want and what they are thinking about - it's too much, they're never really going to help them, or give them solutions. They are so confined to their base, and I think a lot of children don't have that to take anywhere, which is why you find very close friendship networks among Asian women, because that's where the women talk about their issues.

Even when older women get together, they talk about sex and men: they will talk about their men, and say "he did this, "but no-one will say "leave him" or "report him to the police," they'll just try and give each other a bit of support and control the issue, and they're not really encouraged to spill your guts about it. Women know that they are not going to be able to give you the help that you need, or really the advice that they know they should give you; they wouldn't do it to themselves, they're not going to destroy their families - it's so complicated and it's like a secret little world ...

... Take the child abuse issue, it's only in the past five or six years, that people in Britain have begun to talk about child abuse issue. Child Line and all those things have happened, which make it a very public issue. The Asian view has been denial, that it doesn't really happen in our community, but of course it does, it happens in all communities.

But I think that because people have seen it on television, when it first came on television our father thought it was just too much to bear ... slowly we began to discuss it, people are talking about it in our house. Someone we knew who had run away from home, she told us that her brother had abused her, then it became an issue in the community, we began to talk about it. But I am sure it is still one of those issues even when people know it is happening, you don't do anything about it.

We've got a case of ours, whose son was abused by a Mullah or the Priest, and he was sleeping in the same room as her son, and basically he was abusing them. Because her husband was away in Pakistan, he basically forced himself into the house, he was a family friend; he [the Mullah] is now in prison for six years ... he said "maybe I should stay with you," and basically she thought (1) he's a priest [sic], (2) he's a man, (3) he's a family friend. She said she didn't feel comfortable with him in the house, but she just couldn't say 'no'. He [the Mullah] said O.K., and he was sleeping in the room with her children.

So, one night, she has a walking stick this woman, she said she had a funny feeling something was wrong and walked back to the room where the children were sleeping, and she hears a really strange noise; but she doesn't go in, because obviously she knows what was going on in that room, she was thinking he's a man, what if he turns around and rapes me and I lose my honour; what if I knock on the door, and something goes wrong ...

YFH Even though she knows something is happening with the children.

S She didn't say that she knew they were being sexually abused, but she knew something was going on. And the next night she thought she heard the same thing, and she went out and dropped her stick, so that he would hear and know she was outside. Eventually she came here, and one of the case-workers took him to court. But that family, you'd imagine that they got all the sympathy, three children had been abused by this man ...

I knew she [mother] knew what I was talking about, but it was just denial that it does happen in our community - this is what he is telling us, this is what it is, child abuse, this is what it means. She [mother] said OK she wants to go to court with it, and she won. But her two children, only six and seven, at the time said that he hadn't done anything to them.

The doctor's report suggested that wasn't true, but it was only when it went to Court that it actually went on taped evidence, that they [the children] didn't want us to say anything because they knew mummy would be too embarrassed to go out. It would bring shame on her. They used the word embarrassed. So they had already begun to realise the way in which their community operates and they are very young.

Afterwards, it's her family that's been ostracised, and his (the Mullah's) son has been threatening her and says he's going to kill her and everything, and she has had no support from anyone, and they've stopped visiting her home because they think she's done something wrong.

She got her people from Pakistan to speak to her, saying what you're doing is wrong; he didn't do these things; he came around to her house and said it's not true, his wife had been around and said that, and what the police were saying is that he must have abused a lot of other children because he was in a position of power, and he'd been working with children for thirty years. He's about sixty-four. His son was twenty-six, and we had him up on charges of threatening to kill.

YFH How did you get to hear about this?

S Because she's a racial harassment case, and then she became a welfare case, so she comes in and can't read English, and she comes in with all her papers for us to fill in. And we knew her children. She came and told us the story ... over time the trust built. But even her friends in the street won't talk to her. Her friend is my racial harassment case, she told me she doesn't speak to her anymore. So I told her she is really missing you, and she said "I can't do that." ...

YFH I'm wondering about the complexity of the ethics surrounding this. You've come into my family to deal with racial harassment and so on ...

S When there's racial harassment, it's the men who usually leave it to the women to report it and the women, sometimes the man might go in to the council but the actual case, I'll deal with a woman ... Half of our cases come through word of mouth, and often it's women who know us because women use the Centre a lot, and many don't speak English, they tell their friends or families, so we get cases from all different places ...

If it's policing it tends to be men, if it's racial harassment, even if there's a man in the house, you know, a lot of them don't live with their husbands, but they just come in and beat them up and harass them. That's quite common scenario in Newham, or if a man is around, especially when he sees me go into the house, as a young woman or something, maybe as Asian men, they don't feel comfortable dealing with me... but I tend to deal with the women.

... I was really shocked the number of people that were living separately [couples]. It seemed like every household was a separated household, and there was those households where the men were being unfaithful and having loads of affairs.

... I was quite shocked that all these married men were having affairs, I'm quite naive obviously. And the third thing that they'll come to is usually the man is either, not living in the home but he has the key, still the master of the home. 2) he's got other women and 3) he's abusive to them, usually two or three of those things happen together at the same time. In terms of the domestic violence they'll eventually trust you because for a lot of women, I'm the only outside person that they have any direct dealing with. They don't really go to the council, OK, they know their Doctor maybe, that's it.

But in the whole time I've been here, there's only two women that - I've been directly involved with, and I do a lot of women's cases - that have actually left their husbands. Most women don't want to, all they want to do is, they want you to know and they want to know the options... so I'll say to them "you can do this" or "I'll contact these people for you" or "I can take you to this meeting". I'm quite fortunate because most men, because they know I'm dealing with racial harassment, will allow the women to leave the house with me, because they think they're coming to the office with me or we're going to the meeting.

YFH Do these women not normally leave the home environment?

S They may have close friends who live nearby. You get to meet all their friends because they'll be around all afternoon. They tell you about their friend and invite her round to meet you, because you're like the new person from outside, so you do get to meet a lot of women that way. We sit and have tea and talk, and sometimes you turn up and their friends are

there, and you know they've come to ask you something, and they'll be saying "should I contact a lawyer or what are my rights if I decide to leave will I lose my house. They ask you questions and all you can do is really tell them.

The only time that we had a woman leave - she was pregnant and he'd really beaten her up. She'd come straight from him beating her up to the office. Adul was the one that actually opened the door to her. He was so devastated, he was about to go round there and beat him up... He was married to somebody else. She (Pakistani) was sixteen. He picked her up from outside school. She was up North and he had some family up North. He was her first boyfriend. She fell in love and he promised her the world. He brought her to London. He never married her but she used to pretend that they were married.

YFH Was this to do with a racial harassment case?

S Yeah, their racial harassment was really bad. They were getting attacked by the BNP Folkestone Road where a lot of the BNP live. She was once locked in a phone box. Three or four of them surrounded the phone box and tried to bash it. She was on the phone to us to get down there. They were trying to pull her out of the phone box... and her husband he was not dealing with the racial harassment, he had a son by his other wife and he was living with them and he was getting beaten up by the racists and he still wasn't helping. She was helping her stepson and she was trying to sort herself out. She had a baby and she was pregnant and then he went off to Pakistan for three months leaving her in that situation.

That's when she got in contact with us, because before that he'd told us he was going to sort it out, but he never did ... but she never told us that he used to beat her, she told us that he was a wonderful man; anyway, she came into the building and all her face was bruised, her shirt was ripped; and because of the horrificness (sic) of her injuries, we had to get her into a refuge. There was no way she could go home, and she wanted to go. Within a few days, she had breached the confidentiality policy by standing here and giving the number, and he turns up. After that, we kept in contact with her, and he started to come to see us about the policing problem.

YFH Did he know you knew?

S No, and it was really difficult because I was dealing with this case, and he was arrested supposedly, he said it was false, and he wanted us to say to the police that it was an illegal arrest. He was pulling her down the street and he was saying "I would never do that to her."

YFH He wanted you to back him.

S Yeah. It was really awkward. We have a policy on race policing, but some people we know, they are regulars, they are always getting in trouble, you can back out of it. It was really bad, don't do it again, that sort of thing. But I didn't even want to do that. He used to come in a lot, the husband ... and he's saying she'd going around telling people that I'm doing this, and she's just bonkers. But we'd seen what he'd done to her ...

There was this one case, about this woman, she was in all the papers ... she was married to this guy, she was living with her in-laws and her husband's sister in East Ham, her picture was on the front page of the Newham Recorder ... she was basically like a slave in the house, her mother-in-law and husband were beating her up all the time. She wasn't allowed out of the house, she didn't have the phone number to her house, people never saw her. You know, when a new bride comes into the house, a big fuss is made over her, high visibility: people will go to visit the house ... she was very quiet, didn't say anything, people thought it was a bit strange; through the neighbours, he [a caseworker] heard that she was screaming, and getting beaten up.

The neighbours didn't want to get involved or help. They knew she wasn't allowed out of the house, and when they [the family] went out they used to lock her in. She didn't even know her address or anything, one day she jumped and escaped. One day she [a neighbour] went around to see her, and try to find out what was going on; she didn't get to see her, that she was always falling down. And that girl eventually left with the help of another girl [another neighbour] helped her, and that girl [the helper] got into a lot of trouble from her parents and accused of being a troublemaker. Her picture was on the front of the Newham Recorder with all the beatings she had taken. And they actually filed a case against her husband, and sister- and mother in law, and they got prison sentences ...

The girl has been completely ostracised, she's only seventeen or eighteen, even though she was on the front page of the paper and everyone knew what happened to her ... relatives talk about her as if she is dead ... this happened last year. This was the case that put the issues on the agenda. Here you had a young girl beaten up, the community kept it quiet, people in the community knew something was wrong in that household, and they all went to prison for it. A lot of women said it was horrible what happened to her, so it may have had an impact, but the people around her were different.

Endnotes:

1. Nira Yuval Davis discusses the importance of females as cultural transmitters, and the control exercised within a 'multicultural society.' See: Nira Yuval Davis, Ethnicity, Gender Relations and Multiculturalism. pp. 193-208. Chap. in Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood, Debating Cultural Hybridity.
2. These subjects were explored by Leila Ahmed, in a lecture at the School for Oriental and African Studies, London, in June 1994. See: Leila Ahmed, Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992).
3. "Shabqadar outrage" citing Nur-ud-Din Muneer, Dawn, Karachi, Pakistan, April 24, 1995.
4. "Access on service to humanity." S.M. Moin Qureshi, Dawn, April 21, 1995.
5. 'I.N.', [pseud.], interview with researcher, May 1996, transcript of notes, Newham.
6. Secure in Sisterhood. The Times, November 9, 1993.
7. "Change of faith", Leicester Mercury, March 8, 1994.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Mrs. Rashid, Deputy Speaker of the 'Muslim Parliament', quoted in: "Lifting the veil from Islamic Britain" The Independent, January 7, 1992
11. Muslim Women's Helpline, Wembley. Q-News, 20-26 September, 1996, no 234; responding to an article on "Downtrodden Muslim women 'Daughters of Islam'" by Sumayyah Hassan, Q - News 6-12 September, 1996.
12. Anonymous letter, "Some faith in the future" Letters to the Editor, The Guardian, September 20, 1995.
13. For a discussion on female genital mutilation, see" Nawal El-Saadawi, The Hidden Face of Eve (London: Zed Press, 1980.) Asthma El Dareer, Women, Why do you Weep? Circumcision and its Consequences (London: Zed Press, 1982). Olayinka Koso-Thomas, The Circumcision of Women: A Strategy for Eradication (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1987).

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14. "Bid to End 'Mutilation'." Newham Recorder, 25 September 1997.
 15. Female genital mutilation and related health issues were central themes of the United Nations' Conference on Women, held in Hairou, Beijing, China, September 1995.
 16. Newham Women, op.cit, p.17
 17. For information relative to the struggles of Asian women in Britain: exploring the resistance and struggles of Asian women "at their workplaces, their communities, and households, see, Pratibha Parmar, "Gender, race and class: Asian women in resistance". Chap. in The Empire Strikes Back: Race and racism in 70's Britain (London: Hutchinson, 1982,1988.)pp.236-275.
 - 18.. 'Khadija' [pseud.], interview by researcher, October, 1995.
 - 19.. Ibid.
 20. 'Fatima' [pseud.], interview with researcher, tape recording, Newham, March 1995.
 21. Ibid.
 22. Guy Arnold, The Structure of Society: Britain Since 1945: Choice, Conflict, and Change, (U.K.: Blandford, 1989)p.235. See: chap.11, pp. 235-249.
 23. Mann, op.cit., p.366.
 24. Khurshid Ahmed, "Social Commitment in Islam", Dawn, April 28, 1995.
 25. Newham Asian Women's Project, Annual Report 1993/94, London, Newham Asian Women's Project, 1994, p.3.
 26. Newham Recorder, 10 April 1996.
 27. For a discussion on 'stigma', see: Erving Goffman, Stigma: Notes of the Management of Spoiled Identity, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1963; London: Pelican Books, 1968), 174pp.
 28. Newham Asian Women's Project (1994), op.cit., p.4.
 29. 'Raziya', pseud., interview by researcher, transcript of notes, Newham Asian Women's Project, May 1996.
 30. Newham Asian Women's Project, Annual Report 1995, London, Newham Asian Women's Project, 1995, p.27.

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31. Ibid.
 32. An-Nisa Society, 'Islamic Counselling' leaflet, London: An-Nisa Society, 1997.
 33. Reference re. empathic counselling.
 34. Newham Asian Women's Project (1994), op.cit., p.25
 35. For details of the "registration by virtue of marriage", see: British Nationality Act 1981, Section 8, in: Halsbury's Statutes of England and Wales, 4th ed., Vol. 31, (London: Butterworths, 1992), pp.137-8.
 36. See: 'Sara' Transcript
 37. For a discussion on divorce see: Lucy Carroll, 'Muslim Women and 'Islamic Divorce' in England, Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 17:1, April 1997, pp.97-115.
 38. Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, Annual report 1990-91 (London: Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, 1991)
 39. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown discusses the implications of changes in immigration laws for Asian women. She states that legislation provided an escape route from the pressure of existing within 'arranged marriage.' 'Bride and Prejudice', The Guardian, 3 June 1997.
 40. See: Veena Soni Raleigh, "Suicide Patterns and Trends in People of Indian Subcontinent and Caribbean Origin in England and Wales," Ethnicity and Health, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 55-63.
 41. Newham Asian Women's Project (1994), op.cit., p.5
 42. Ibid, p.8.
 43. Shama Ahmad, in Chadha & Bryer (op.cit.), p.60-61.
 44. Ibid.
 45. Ibid.
 46. 'Zainab', case study, 1996, as reported to the researcher. Non-attributable.
 47. 'Maryam,' (pseud.), interview with researcher. Tape recorded, February 1996.
 48. Ibid.
 49. Amina Mama, "Black Women and the Police: A Place Where the Law is

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- Not Upheld," chap. in Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain, Winston James and Clive Harris. (Eds.) (London: Verso, 1993).pp.145-6. Mama also provides a detailed discussion on the under-reporting of domestic violence to the Police; police reactions; case studies of women's experience of domestic violence (see Case 3: Madina, a Bangladeshi women raised in Tower Hamlets, pp.115-6; and Case 4: Shireen, a "British-born daughter of a Pakistani Muslim family", pp.116-7), and the reluctance of neighbours to intervene and/or report incidents of domestic violence within London neighbourhoods. Amina Mama, "Woman Abuse in London's Black Communities" chap. James and Harris, (Eds.) op.cit. pp. 97-134.
50. T.K. [pseud] Interview by researcher, Tape recorded. Non-attributable.
 51. Fieldwork notes, non-attributable.
 52. Support workers' linguistic skills within these agencies represent the diversity of Newham.
 53. Alice Bloch, "Refugees in Newham," chap. in Rising in the East: The Regeneration of East London. Eds. Tim Butler and Michael Rustin. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1996), pp.156, citing: London Borough of Newham, Refugee Families (Newham: Race Equality Section, Social Services, London Borough of Newham, 1993).
 54. Newham's adult education facilities offer numerous courses and classes in English language acquisition - at all levels. For example, Newham Community College provides 'outreach' classes within the Borough, at easily-accessible sites. The researcher has participated as a tutor on these courses, including language classes for Muslim refugee women - for example, from Somalia, Somaliland, Sudan, Ethiopia, Egypt, Algeria, and Eritrea.
 55. Gammell et al, op. cit., p.56.
 56. Ibid., p.130
 57. Ibid, p.128
 58. 'Jib' (street name for caseworker), Newham Drugs Advice Project Youth Awareness Programme, Newham, February 7, 1996
 59. Gammell et al, op. cit., p.130
 60. Fieldwork notes, not attributable.
 61. Gammell et al, op.cit., pp.3-4.

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62. "Canadian Task Force on Mental Health Issues Affecting immigrants and Refugees." Review of the literature of Migrant Mental Health, 1986, cited in Gammell, op. cit., p.3.
 63. L. Clinton-Davis & Y. Fassil, "Health and social problems of Refugees." Social Science Medicine, Vol. 35, No. 4, cited in Gammell et al p.4.
 64. Newham Social Services, The Provider Development News, Issue 1, July 1997.
 65. 'Sara', [pseud.]. Interview with researcher. Tape recording. Non-attributable, 1996.

6 CONFLICT, CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

6.1. A Common Identity: Group Dynamics and Inter-personal Communication

Many non-Muslim Newham residents are of the opinion that Muslims avoid interaction with non-Muslims, rejecting 'local Newham values'. This perception appears to reinforce stereotypes held by non-Muslims with regard to Muslims.

These stereotypes suggest that Muslims are exploitative of the region's resources and benefits. Local media informs this situation, providing regular updates upon topical issues concerning community relations, social environment, and conflict.

Muslims may also share elements of this viewpoint, focusing upon newcomers, who are perceived as 'not local' but 'foreign'.

'Local Muslims', like other 'local populations', may share - to some extent - communal vested interests in the community. These interests may be expressed through shared concerns regarding 'local community' issues. For example, concerns have been expressed by 'Muslims' in relation to 'foreign visible migrants' and 'refugees', mainly from the Indian sub-continent and the African continent, many of whom are Muslims. Members of the 'local Muslim' population(s) may perceive 'migrants' and 'refugees' as a 'drain on the social and economic resources of the Borough', connecting this with 'moral decline', 'deteriorating health standards', and 'abuse of state benefits'. 'Local Muslims' may regard themselves,

not solely as Muslim, but as 'Newham Muslims.'

Local' views in Newham include elements of collective opinion concerning numerous issues, including the Beckton Mosque issue. Throughout the development of this issue, consultation has taken place with 'local Muslims', including friends, acquaintances, colleagues, and other Muslim and non-Muslim parties, many of whom object to the Mosque for a variety of reasons. Many of these Muslims consider themselves to have a settled way of life, consistent with the other local populations within the borough, and may perceive themselves as having more in common with Newham than the culture of the pioneers.

During the 1990s in Newham, an increasing number of refugees have been a source of tension for some local people, including Muslims. Resentment has come from various quarters, including established local Muslims: those who perceive themselves as successful within Newham may feel threatened by the presence of Muslim refugee and/or underclass migrants. This, for some Muslims, undermines what they perceive as an 'uneasy' alliance between themselves and other local populations - by placing undue attention upon Muslims of colour. Some established Muslims have voiced concerns regarding the negative impact of an estimated 15,000 refugees emanating from over 20 different countries currently resident in Newham.¹ Intolerance of 'non-locals' - particularly those perceived as 'dependent' upon state welfare benefits - may be expressed by broad sectors within population groups.

The following interview describes a form of conflict that can occur between 'local' and 'non local' populations. This transcript comprises part of an interview with 'Sara', a Muslim resident of Newham, who works within a community advisory capacity. ['Sara' is represented by the letter 'S', and the researcher by 'YFH']:

Transcript:

YFH Do you think some long-time local [Muslim] populations who have taken on these values [of Newham identity] resent the newcomers?

S Definitely. They are raising the visibility of black people in this country. Refugees bear a lot of the brunt of that; especially because the so-called established black community, their raised visibility ...

Established black communities have the same prejudices. They think the refugees are dirty, and they think the refugees are scrounging off the state. When the Newham Refugee Centre opened, a lot of people were saying 'why have they got that Centre? They are running off with money, they're corrupt. All of the same prejudices that the white people have.

YFH Is that across the board, of black and Asian communities?

S Yes. [There was] a big youth conference with lots of kids from all the schools in Newham. [There was] a session on refugees. And in that session, all of them were saying the same thing. The black children and also the white children ... Caribbean and Asian kids, they were saying things like "they're really dirty", "they're disgusting, we can't stand them, and they're all muggers and into crime and all that." ...

No one really explained to them what a refugee was. When we asked what they learnt about refugees, they said they read it in the paper or saw it on the television. That was the only two places where they were picking up information. And in the schools, they haven't talked about it. Little Ilford School, which a huge refugee population of children, and never was it talked about in assembly. There was a refugee boy in the school, and he said when he got there he naturally gone towards the black children; he thought they'd accept him and be friends with him, but they were horrible. They didn't want to talk to him, "we don't want to know you," ... he was Somalian, at Little Ilford School.

YFH Did they all group together?

S Yeah, and what happened was that there are big Somalian gangs now. He said he was so hurt, he couldn't believe that. And in fact the white children were more friendly towards him. So in that session he told me what he experienced - they came around and said "Oh God, we didn't know that was what refugee meant."

YFH Some people say that there are Somali gangs and that these Somali gangs, they are looking for trouble.

S And a lot of people think that all the mugging around Forest Gate and the Romford Road area, people are saying that all these Somali gangs [are responsible] and they are getting picked up by the police. But I think that in a way they are getting picked upon and bullied and have no choice. When black people moved into this area, there were black gangs and Asian gangs and Bengali gangs, they were picked on ...²

Local Muslims may consider that they have a greater 'visibility', due to the highlighted attention focused upon the newcomers' 'Muslim' identity. This anxiety may be amplified further, when, newcomer Muslims become 'more public' in an attempt to establish religious and cultural activities and platforms. Among the Muslims of Newham there are those who express concern regarding the introduction of newcomer cultural lifestyle patterns into the 'local Newham neighbourhoods. Muslim newcomers to Newham have introduced practices which are regarded by many 'locals' to be undesirable. For example, the practise of female genital mutilation and the chewing of *qat* among Somalian Muslims.³ Although these practices could be considered to have no connection to the lifestyles of 'Asian' Muslims in the borough, they are flagged as a Muslim practice within neighbourhood discussion. By inference this could be viewed as an Islamic practice; rendering 'all' Muslims as upholding this tradition. Although 'local Muslims', along with other 'local populations', may frown upon certain newcomer

cultural practices, it is 'local Muslims' who have expressed anxiety to the researcher regarding 'unwarranted attention'. This attention relates to the fact that Muslims are a feature of local discussion within elements of the non-Muslim 'local community'.

Established Muslims, in particular, who consider that they have reached a level of achievement within the existing social environment may feel threatened by their 'visibility', highlighted within the view that perceives Muslims as a 'collective'. Among established Muslims are people with business concerns and social relationships. Certain of these Muslims have a vested interest in remaining within the 'Newham community cultural' framework. They may be reluctant to align themselves with 'Muslim and Islamic issues', in an attempt to avoid the label of a 'Muslim Fundamentalist'. At one level of public opinion, within Newham, this label appears to be applied to all Muslims, irrespective of viewpoint.

Locals may be concerned that community relations could be damaged by the erosion of a 'local Newham community identity' which has incorporated diverse populations over time. Many 'Newham community' residents have learned to co-exist alongside others, who may have at one time been perceived of as 'foreign'. There are Muslims and non-Muslims within Newham who have expressed views regarding personal 'changes in perception'. This refers to previously held beliefs regarding the 'other'. In this case, familiarisation led to increased acceptance and tolerance of perceived differences, and friendship. Local Muslims may set themselves apart from refugee Muslims and those who exhibit distinctly differing

cultural patterns of communication. Distinctive cultural elements found within, and between 'population groups', may be resented and rejected by the 'local populations' of Newham [including 'local Muslims'; who may have developed a cross polarisation of perspective, incorporating the world views formed by levels of interaction, personal experience, and the experience of others.

Cultural practices adhered to by some Muslims can be considered to draw attention to 'local Muslims', resulting in reclassification on a local neighbourhood level by 'local white people' in particular. This classification views Muslims as a unified collective group, identifying the diverse cultural practices of Muslims as Islamic practice. This viewpoint articulates an assumption that Muslims are an homogenous 'group', sharing similar viewpoints without distinction. This viewpoint discounts the diversity occurring between and amongst Muslims, the varied interpretations of belief, and the influences of the localised broader societal framework upon the experiences of Muslims in Newham. It disregards the impact of the social environment and socialisation process upon the formation of Muslim identity, excluding Muslim self-perception. The self-perception of Muslims may - to a certain extent - have a relationship within a 'local collective identity'. Within this 'local' identity, Muslims may have developed a range of perspectives regarding their position within contemporary Newham society.

Elements within the non-Muslim population reject Muslims as 'foreigners'. Non-Muslims may reject Muslims as the 'other' and discount all positive references relating to Muslims, electing to classifying 'all' Muslims within a

'negatively' viewed collective Muslim/Islamic identity. Although social and economic problems connected with the borough's resources are a concern for many 'local' Newham residents, elements within the non-Muslim population consider 'all' Muslims as being part of a conspiracy with a purpose of creating problems for the 'local' populations of Newham. It would appear that Muslims, no matter how established, are not considered local by these elements of the population.

Non-local Muslims may have spent insufficient time within the region to learn and develop a familiarity with customary forms of interpersonal communication. This factor may be instrumental in the integration of newcomers within the borough, and may impact upon the levels of discrimination, employment opportunity, and the ability to compete within the wider 'local' infrastructural processes.

There are implications associated with the integration of 'refugee' Muslims into the existing Muslim infrastructural framework. As newcomer Muslim refugees attempt to integrate into Newham, they encounter: (i) established Indian sub-continent Muslim interests; (ii) the Newham 'collective identity'; and/or (iii) sub-cultural and religious groupings. Newcomer refugee Muslim arrivals to Newham may experience 'culture shock', and are faced with learning to live within a region beset with existing social-economic problems. The attendance of Muslim refugees at institutes and centres of learning could signify one way in which attempts are being made to adapt to the situation. Newcomer 'Asian'

Muslims may find the process of integration less disruptive, as they might ordinarily benefit from entering an existing structure comprised of community members, either known to them or in some way associated with the family or community 'back home'. This facilitates a level of orientation into the 'Newham way of life' and can provide a 'safety net' from which newcomers can acclimatise themselves.

Localisation imparts a knowledge of experience, reduces 'culture shock', and might ordinarily enable the recipient to benefit from the system of practices and codes operational within the borough. For example, it has been observed that services provided by local agencies and organisations sometimes differ according to whether an individual 'customer' displays accepted local characteristics of communication and body-language: a Newham local customer may at times receive forms of preferential treatment to a refugee outsider.

This is significant regarding the Muslims of Newham, particularly in reference to Muslim non-locals, whose speech patterns and might ordinarily betray geographical origins consistent with popular perceptions of that belonging to 'overseas outsiders'. Accents and certain modes of pronunciation were, among some residents, clearly identifiable with experience consistent with a life overseas, and not 'local' but 'foreign'. This was identified as one cause of discrimination against members of African and Indian sub-continent Muslim populations in Newham. According to respondents, the discrimination took place within the context of the social environment, and public service delivery.

Muslims who speak in distinct South Asian, or African dialects, and/or regional accents from countries of origin may encounter greater resistance when seeking support and assistance. This view, though widely reported to the researcher, was expressed within the comments of certain Muslims present in the U.K. for periods of between 3-5 years. Discussions revealed that a number of refugee and/or underclass migrants, experienced a “shyness” when asking for assistance from customer servicing industries; for example, banks, post offices, and certain shopping outlets. Reference was also made to benefits agencies and local district housing offices. It was claimed by interviewees that staff were - in their experience - often rude and unhelpful, taking ‘advantage’ of customers’ lack of English.

This reaction can reduce confidence in ‘new communities’, whose members may often be refugees escaping oppression and traumatic circumstances. Resentment against ‘newcomers’ is often expressed by ‘locals’ who are socialised to local custom and practice. This may take the form of attributing ‘rejected’ cultural patterns of behaviour and interpersonal communication to the newcomers, for example: newcomer refugee Somali and Nigerian Muslims are said to ‘shout’ at people, and exhibit impatience when waiting to be served. It is important to note that these local departments are often staffed by Muslim and non-Muslim local representatives. These locals are often ‘of colour’ and may have African, Indian subcontinent, and/or Caribbean links.

Changes in behaviour can be observed among some Muslims after what may

be considered a 'short time' in the country (i.e. a year). This could be part of the process of acclimatising to the ways of Newham, and may also be an attempt to integrate. One example is that demonstrated by certain Yemeni and Somali-origin women refugees in Newham, personally known to the researcher within a professional capacity, who have altered their opinions regarding mixing of the sexes. These women initially were uncomfortable in the presence of men, and declared an unwillingness to engage with men in conversation. The researcher has noted that over time, of their own volition, several have foregone this form of exclusion and now engage freely (and alone) with males, within a classroom context.⁴

The researcher taught refugee and/or underclass migrant newcomers aspects of Newham custom and practice in terms of interpersonal skills and local social etiquette. These requests may form part of a desire to maximise benefits within the borough. The researcher taught community orientation and aspects of English language skills to newcomers - including 'vernacular English'. Within this context, teaching components included the context and meaning of certain expressions within Newham's colloquial English, the subtleties and nuances evident within patterns of interpersonal communication, and how this related to the avoidance of conflict within the borough. The researcher's experience of teaching within this context enabled a personal insight into the demands of the community - and first-hand experience of the problems many newcomers have in adjusting to life in the borough.

English classes are now widely offered and established across Newham. These classes are offered within religious organisations, and local institutes of learning, for example, colleges of further education. Churches have sought to encourage newcomers into their threshold, through provision of free English-language learning classes held on their premises. Mosques in Newham do not appear to advertise parallel services of this nature - despite the increasing demand from newcomer Muslims entering the borough. As Pioneer Somalian Muslims are becoming more established within sectors of the borough, and are - over time - gradually developing their own infrastructures - we may see the development of 'Somalian' mosques based along ethnic lines, similar to current 'Pakistani' ethnic mosques (representing the ethnic diversity of Pakistan). Presently, there has been an increase of Somalians in 'Pakistani' mosques - and adoption by some male and female Somalians of 'Pakistani' traditional garments; for example, the *shalwar khomeez*, and head-coverings based on Pakistani styles. This may signify a level of tolerance, adaptation, and integration.⁵ The increasing number of Somalian Muslims attending 'Pakistani' mosques could signify levels of integration, and greater tolerance of the different cultural traditions and practices, or - as one interviewee stated - "they're being encouraged to swell numbers."⁶

The high incidence of African refugee and/or underclass migrant newcomer male unemployment in Newham can - amongst other factors - be linked to limited English language communication skills and styles and patterns of interpersonal communication. Many refugees may be considered as 'highly educated' in their homelands, but their qualifications may not be recognised in the U.K. Where

those qualifications can be recognised via a system of comparison, there may still exist the difficulty surrounding styles and patterns of communication.

In this context communication is a significant factor in the employment of refugees within the borough. High unemployment in Newham, and a lack of infrastructures catering for refugee African males (for example, Somalians) has implications for male status and the conduct of 'public' life. This change in lifestyle requires significant psychological adjustment. Racism, and attendant discrimination, also contributes to poor employment prospects, and ultimately limited access to systems of influence and power. Refugees in the borough face economic insecurity. They may increasingly be faced with the pressure of acquiring material benefits, considered as status elements within the broader local culture(s), whilst maintaining important facets from the culture of origination.

Unemployment may result in refugee menfolk spending a disproportionate amount of time in the domestic home, compared with that, when living in their homeland. The refugee family may have a smaller amount of living space in Newham, than that which they may have been accustomed to. The family may find themselves residing in difficult and cramped conditions. The researcher has dealt with a number of cases involving refugee family conflict and housing problems. This has involved representation in the form of advocacy, to organisations offering assistance. The role of the researcher within this context was to gain an understanding of the problem. This often took the form of

interpreter involvement and/or researcher developed systems of interpersonal communication. The researcher would act as initial intermediary between certain organisations; for example the Newham Refugee centre. Telephone lines are staffed by English speakers, who may or may not speak the language of the refugee seeking assistance. The difficult housing conditions that many Muslim refugees live in, assists in the perpetuation of stereotypes among the Muslim and non-Muslim local population. Social and economic exclusion occurring as a result of marginalisation can result in refugee and/or underclass migrant populations swelling the existing black underclass populations of Newham.

6.2.1: A Common Identity: Interpersonal Communication

The expression and transmission of the spoken word as a form of communication, is endowed with, associations, nuances, and subtleties, which may then be translated according to the 'culture'- centric principles of the audience. When a communicants' verbal communication is supported by the use of body language, further complexities may develop. Body language, additionally, informs the relationship between the communicant and the audience. Body language may aid in the clarification of meaning and the resulting interpretation of the expression. Equally, body language interpretations may also assist in the development of confusion.

Ordinarily communication codes are learnt through the processes of interaction within the area. An example of this is within the formative processes of socialisation. This process serves to induct localised factors into community members. These processes are normally derived from participating within formal and informal structures. Muslims in Newham broadly share with other residents informal trade, education, health, leisure, social and welfare systems. These systems form part of a parallel socialisation process, which has informed lifestyle patterns and the sharing of symbolic codes of reference. The researcher notes that a shared knowledge, and demonstration of certain 'local symbolic codes and forms of expression', can influence the 'bonding' processes and formulation of a collective 'local' identity, between community residents.

Muslims may have become local over a sustained period of time - subject to the developmental processes of enculturation. From within this process, the symbolic markers used by certain Newham residents, to denote 'insider' status can be learned. This may provide levels of access within the borough in terms of: information, knowledge, public service provision, and employment. Within this framework, the non-local may have insufficient appropriate 'interpersonal communication skills to gain access to certain relationships, and provision. This can result in forms of social and economic exclusion. Non local Muslims often experience variations in status within the framework of 'employment opportunity'; for example, newcomer refugee and/or underclass Muslims are likely to experience greater disadvantage in terms of attaining employment.

Styles and patterns of Interpersonal Communication may result in the creation of rapport with others; conversely, they may lead to miscommunication, misunderstanding, and the potential development of conflict situations. Conflict may develop as a result of linguistic, dialectic and kinetic variations in communication patterns. Differences in styles and patterns of communication, which are outside the learned framework of the audience can result in miscommunication: incorrect transmission of detail, and interpretation of meaning in relation to context. A communication is emitted, and interpreted, by the audience. This decoding and interpreting mechanism may be informed by numerous factors, including the communicants background, personal experience. and the experience of others.

It is not the intention here to produce a survey of academic sources regarding speech patterns and forms of body language.⁷ This is not based on academic study of speech patterns and communication, rather on personal, professional experience and observations - obtained whilst working in a professional capacity within the London Borough of Newham.

"Almost everything we do depends on conversation. It's how we plan and organise our lives. It's how we build friendships and get close to people. It's how we get to understand how other people feel - and sometimes discover important things about ourselves. It's how we influence people and allow them to influence us. It's how we sort out problems, co-operate with each other and create new opportunities."⁸

The development of language in Newham has incorporated expressions from within the populations of its people. Language continues the process of formulation and reformulation within Newham, patterns varying within cultural and subcultural parameters. The language often used within the context of ordinary everyday conversations may be rich in idiomatic expression, dialect, accent, and/or colloquial English. Idiomatic expression may be misunderstood by refugees and/or underclass migrant Muslims who have spent insufficient time within the region. Words grouped together in particular patterns may confuse refugee and/or underclass Muslims who are non-local. These words, whose meaning cannot be predicted from the constituent words, might - to differing extents - be recognised, by the local, yet may remain, unclear to the outsider. This linguistic usage is grammatical and natural to native speakers. These customary phrases/sayings may act as markers to signify 'insiderness' and levels of belonging, acceptance, and access.

Informal speech patterns could be stated to be the main language styles spoken at 'grass roots' neighbourhood level within Newham. Language may vary within this informal framework, and may exhibit differences dependent upon the nature of the relationship between communicants. For example, a conversation between friends might use 'a developed vocabulary' relating to subjective forms of experience and common knowledge, formed within the context of that 'inside' relationship. 'Insiders' refers to, one or more persons with whom a shared understanding of aspects of developed communication exists. An informal style might be part of a conversation among 'insiders', whereas, a formal approach; for example BBC English, is less personalised; has less 'street cred' status, yet may have much the same meaning as the informal style. Standardised forms of English may be more complex to interpret; often lacking a developed emphasis in terms of nuances, and subtleties. These components form part of a coding system, which offers, a level of interpretation, and security for the interpreter.

Local Muslims might ordinarily be familiar with and speak 'local vernacular'. They may be mono/bi/or multi lingual and fluent in the language of a particular everyday Newham conversational style. Conversations involving forms of English language amalgamated with the phraseology and terminology of two or more specific languages can be overheard. These communication patterns may utilise words, phrases, and others characteristics of speech, deploying emphasis and 'stress' upon aspects of language in specific patterns. These distinct forms of language are peculiar to Newham and vary considerably within the Borough's wards, according to complex factors. These include social

class, occupational group, subcultural identification groupings, and familial languages. An example of this are the variations exhibited by pupils from a particular Newham school, or speakers born and raised within a specific time frame. The language of communication may be distinguished by the style of its 'developed' vocabulary, grammar usage, and forms of pronunciation. The acquisition of patterns and styles of communication, and the demonstration of certain Newham community collective core values, and aspirations, has - for many Muslims - resulted in greater access to forms of social and economic power within the localised infrastructure.

6.2.2. A Common Identity: Socialisation

The involvement of Muslim children within the broader infrastructure of mainstream education resulted in levels of interaction with non-Muslims, the acquisition of specific local codes of communication, and the development of particular values. These values may - at times - conflict with those within significant familial networks.

The transition of cultural adjustment occurring in relation to interaction within the education system, resulted in increased levels of social and economic achievement:

"Ten years ago Pakistani children were classed as underachievers, yet recent measurements suggest that they are now doing better than the national average, the result of ambition and Islamic respect for education and learning. The state school system is central to this ambition, and the

hard work of heads of families, often in corner shops, enable sons (and increasingly daughters) to go through higher education to enter the professions. Unfortunately state education is also seen as subversive of religion and traditional values."⁹

Survival and success within an environment is, in part, dependent upon the learning and acquisition of codes, customs and practices applicable to that environment. Local Muslims have acquired many of the skills, knowledge, and experiences, along with values and perceptions essential to their survival within Newham. Success, and in some cases survival, will depend largely on the ability to acquire (and be seen to observe the values) and norms of the wider cultures and subcultures. Within Newham there are a number of established subcultural norms and values, which operate within the broader society. Muslims in Newham are exposed to these values, and may be expected to demonstrate an acceptance and appreciation of these values as evidence of group 'belonging.' This may be demonstrated by compliance and acknowledgement of 'important collective' attitudes expressed by those they consider their peer-group(s). Groups may exert a powerful influence upon behaviour:

"Groups mobilise powerful forces that produce effects of utmost importance to individuals. ... A person's position in a group, moreover, may affect the way others behave towards him(sic) and such personal qualities as his level of aspiration and self esteem. Group membership may be a prized possession or an oppressive burden".¹⁰

The researcher observed that Muslim teenagers' peer group identities in Newham are often based around factors such as fashion, opposite-sex relationships, and/or other 'local' interests. These factors can have profound implications, including the bullying and harassment of Muslims regarded as 'too

proper' or 'righteous.' This rejection shows they are not a member of the group, which makes distinctions through reward and punishment.¹¹ One result of this rejection can be bullying, which is prevalent in Newham schools:

"One child in seven is being bullied in Newham primary schools, say doctors. Victims suffer physical and mental problems, including bed-wetting, headaches, stomach-ache and disturbed sleep, according to a report by the Institute of Child Health published in the British Medical Journal ... Dr Stuart Logan and his team studied data compiled in 1993 from detailed interviews conducted by district nurses visiting 2,962 nine-year-olds in Newham schools. More than 450 admitted to being bullied.

"Cllr. Lane said he was not surprised by the findings and referred to a 1986 report by the National Foundation for Educational Research. It found that a quarter and a third of Newham pupils were bullied. Most bullying then was in primary schools, said Cllr. Lane, though more serious incidents leading to 'gang warfare and possible suspension cases' occurred in secondary schools ...

"Bullying was strongly identified in the '86 report and yet a major problem was that head teachers were refusing to acknowledge it existed. When they eventually did it declined. ... The initial level took us all by surprise. Some of it was just routine, but some was serious - protection rackets ..."¹²

Peer mediation is a form of conflict resolution used within Newham:

"The programmes involve not only students, but also teachers, lunchtime supervisors and parents. We are hoping that this concerted approach will have more impact."¹³

There are implications to seeking out support:

"The bullied child is usually frantic to avoid naming or exposing the tormentor(s) for fear of further reprisals, or of sanctions from his (sic) peer group for breaking the schoolboy code of honour by 'grassing'".¹⁴

Many Muslim teenagers are part of youth sub-cultures within Newham. These sub-cultural groups may express their identity through the use of specific patterns of verbal and non-verbal communication. The use of sub-cultural patterns of communication may be part of a system of 'public' language codes, which utilises specific coded speech patterns and is understood by group members. Patterns of communication may include particular modes of body language movement, for example walking with a gait, or 'swagger'.¹⁵ Clothing, accessories and the manner in which they are worn, may also be used as a form of communication and statement of identity. These symbolic forms of expression can be used to represent aspects of sub-cultural youth identity and 'insider' status.

Local custom, and the notion of 'insider/outsider' can have significant implications within many of Newham's schools. A teenager might be victimised and bullied should they be perceived as an 'outsider', whereas, on the other hand, may benefit be accorded positive status for the exhibition of characteristics seen as 'customary' and 'belonging'.

Language and patterns of speech are a significant indicator of identity within Newham. Sub-cultural restricted codes of language - as referred to by Basil Bernstein - are in evidence in Newham, resulting in forms of unity based upon shared understandings and the expression of values.¹⁶ Youth may take their influences from a combination of sources, and create specific, coded styles of speech. These codes relate to a common knowledge, owned by those within the

group, which serve to exclude others. Newham Muslims are familiar with and speak 'local vernacular', and adopt 'local' custom within the context of everyday interaction. Local 'Muslims' and their descendants may speak the languages of their ancestral origins, differences in expectations and 'ways of life' may have evolved as a result of 'life within Newham.' For example, some teenagers in Newham, may have difficulty in relating to cultural practices of ancestral lands of origin.

Identifying with and aspiring to the status symbols, generally recognised as ideals of success and material advantage, is an additional subcultural reference point within Newham. Within Newham, local raised Muslims are part of a broader infrastructure - through schooling - which generally ensures a level of participation within the wider community value system and the acquisition of codes of behaviour, potentially viewed - by long-established populations - as characteristics identifying the individual as 'belonging'. For example, Newham schoolchildren have had instilled into them the levels of knowledge and skills required to survive within Newham. These include inter-personal communication skills - such as appropriate use of body language and non-verbal communication cues.

6.3.1. A Common Identity: Conflict, Continuity and Change in the Neighbourhood

The Sheffield boxer Naseem Hamed is a popular role model among Muslim male youth in Newham. Naseem expresses a view found among many Muslim youth, asserting his identity as a person of 'British' and 'Other' extraction (in his case, 'Yemeni'/'Arabian') as a positive experience:

Des Lynam Do you really see yourself as a Sheffield lad? ... you obviously pay homage to your heritage - to your background?

Naseem Hamed Oh most definitely - my parents are from Yemen, Arabia, and at the end of the day I've got Arab blood in me. But I'm proud to be Arab and I'm proud to be British, y'know. I'm proud to be both - but I got two bites at the apple!¹⁷

*

Newham is traditionally a working class area, with elements of culture 'represented' in the popular televised B.B.C. T.V. 'soap' programme EastEnders. The programme intends to portray aspects of localised life within the 'East End'. The East End of London has for certain residents, a particular identity. This identity, in terms of diversity, local issues and concerns, is viewed by some 'locals' as unrepresentative, and partly responsible for providing an inaccurate impression of the area to 'outsiders'.

"I have ambitions, but don't see anyone in EastEnders [that] does ...'

"None of the TV teenagers finish school, or get qualifications. At least one character should represent those of us who work hard"¹⁸

The results of a researcher led training project produced responses detailing ethno-cultural matters. The researcher explored how representative EastEnders was, in the opinion of a group of Muslim students.¹⁹ The group consisted of ten Newham-raised Muslim students: eight females and one male had been born and raised in Newham; a second male had arrived in Newham from Pakistan at the age of five. All were between the ages of 16-24, and of Indian sub-continent ancestral origin. The exercise consisted of the students discussing EastEnders, in relation to representation of Newham life, and Newham's diversity.²⁰

The students were separated into two groups of five. They were instructed to imagine that they were new EastEnder scriptwriters/directors, and given the hypothetical situation of developing a scenario appropriate to the representation of Newham. Two short unscripted pieces were produced and enacted, and later students were questioned concerning their selection of topics, roles of actors, and relationship to the issues involved. The researcher observed the students, but had no input during the process of the development and production. Both groups discussed the issues respectively, making brief notes for later presentation and discussion. Groups explored the issues, made decisions upon the focus of their presentations. They agreed upon the subject matter, allocating roles of players according to particular interests. The first script concerned police harassment with a Muslim male being stopped by the policemen. The group representative stated that the location was Green Street; following which the scenario was acted out. The young man portrayed himself walking along the street. Into this context entered a second young man who acted as the policeman. The interaction which

ensued between the two parties involved 'stop and search' with the first young man turning out his pockets. The second script dealt with 'arranged marriage'; it consisted of one female playing the role of the mother of a daughter, who was in the process of preparing for an arranged marriage. The mother discovered her daughter had a boyfriend and met him secretly. She slapped her daughter and chased away the boy.

The non-scripted, ad libbed verbal expression of language used by the players appeared to be understood by all. Subtle nuances were present within the acting and indicated a commonality of understanding with regard to the issues and the groups experience of residence within Newham. The scenarios portrayed individual attitudes of group players. The playlets were performed incorporating localised language patterns and styles of interpersonal communication: for example, one girl played the role of a Pakistani mother, speaking a particular form of Punjabi-accented English, illustrated by a dramatic use of body-language and gesture. The body language included a level of 'head wagging' and particular movements demonstrating her perception of how she envisaged a 'Pakistani' mother might be in the circumstance of the role. Both the scenarios demonstrated an awareness of specific local issues directly related to Muslims in Newham. These issues, amongst others, are matters of concern within contemporary Newham. Issues surrounding community relations with the constabulary are a concern for many young Muslim males, and matters connected with marriage would appear to be a focus for many Muslim females, either reaching or of 'marriageable age'.

The participants reflected changing attitudes towards their own identity and roles within Newham. Changing attitudes, and concepts of Muslim identity in Newham, are also reflected in a local and national context within the U.K. Cross-culturation of ideas, ideals, and values has occurred as a result of levels of interaction within public space. Interaction within mainstream local infrastructure has exposed generations of Muslims to a broad range of influences and choices. Like all people in Britain, Muslims are faced with the question of identifying and placing themselves within the broader community infrastructure(s), and are subject to the subcultural influences and the need to adapt to the common 'norms' (represented in media, and social contexts).²¹

The concept of 'Eastern/Western' Asian-ness' also has a voice - albeit limited - within the national media. This was demonstrated in a 1996 BBC Radio 4 programme, Goodness Gracious Me! This programme, billed as 'Asian comedy', has as its central theme aspects of culture within 'Asian communities'. The programme indirectly represents - through humour - viewpoints concerning elements of considered 'Asian' culture and tradition. For example, the inter-relationship between notions associated with 'Asian' values, expectations, beliefs, and customs. The programme theme identifies many of the issues and current concerns expressed by generations of Muslim youth in the U.K. and in Newham. These issues could be said to reflect levels of identification and integration within the U.K. home society. The programme won the 1996 Sony Award for the best radio comedy. The show is the result of a collaborative effort by Muslim and

non-Muslims:

“It reflects our experience of being British and Asian, and satirises Asian stereotypes...”²²

The programme deals with serious subjects in a light hearted and humorous way, whilst not trivialising the comments. Particular sketches can be located within, for example, 'Asian' Muslim cultures, whilst others clearly relate to Hindu, and other 'Asian' cultural traditions and practices. Cultural stereotyping and assumptions of 'Asian' women are explored within the context of 'Asian' men and also 'White' U.K. society.

The Radio 4 programme focused upon aspects and themes associated with current issues within the 'Asian' community, including: relationships and marital matters; women and roles; women and violence; *and* religion and fundamentalism. References to religion were made: religious people were satirised as taking ‘too many days [i.e. religious festivals] off’; religious leaders were represented as buffoons, who were taking “the fun out of fundamentalism’. This encapsulates popular discussion among local populations at micro-community level.

One sketch considered the inter-relationship between women, subservience, cultural expectation, and violence. In it an 'Asian' (Indian) woman was summoned to her doctor’s surgery. The dialogue between the doctor and the woman involved the exploration of matters, which the doctor considered a problem in relation to

the woman and aspects of her identity:

The doctor called the woman into the surgery unexpectedly. The woman walked in to the surgery, sat down, and asked, what was the matter. The doctor hit the woman and she complained to him, asking why he had hit her. The doctor said that she was suffering from “ISS”. The woman questioned the doctor about what that meant. The doctor explained that, it was to do with ‘Indian Identity Syndrome.’ The doctor then conducted tests to discover how ‘Indian’ the woman was - in the process - teaching her how to speak an Indian language.

The woman shifted her identity in two minutes of the sketch, resulting in an inability to speak English. The doctor asked the woman to show her tonsils by “saying *Aaah*” - and she then sang the sound like a singer in a Bollywood film. The doctor then slapped the woman - for the second time - and the woman did not complain. The doctor concluded with a comment suggesting the woman was better and the problem had been eradicated. He expressed the view, “now you're truly an Indian woman.”²³

The programme suggests that certain aspects of ‘Asian’ culture are entering into the mainstream - for programmes not necessarily directed *towards* an ‘Asian’ audience. It may be that this representation of ‘Asian’ archetypes would not meet with the approval of traditionally-oriented families, authorities, and communities.

6.3.2. Fashion, Image, and Identity

Approaches to dress codes in Newham can also reflect the cultural crossing of boundaries, for example in the clothing worn by Muslim youth. It varies in colour and style - and may borrow fashions and patterns from the many different cultural expressions to be found within the borough. This has particular significance with regard to Muslim females and concerns regarding morality, honour and shame. Muslim males in Newham are not ordinarily subject to the

same constraints applicable to Muslim females, regards dress codes and respectability. The crossover that has occurred in clothing styles reflects the merging of tradition with local, national and international youth culture. This interchange is not limited to clothing styles, but is also expressed in ideas, ideals, and idiosyncrasies regarding certain values and attitudes within the Borough. These traditional items are fully expressed as 'fashion', and local shops extensively advertise them within national 'Asian' media (i.e. Eastern Eye).

For the Muslim female in Newham who wants to be considered fashionable, yet appropriately dressed, there can be many choices - from variations in so-called 'Western' 'dress' styles, to fashion ideas crossing the borders from 'ancestral homelands'. Muslim females in Forest Gate benefit from a broad range of clothing options, which vary in style, without transcending the cultural and/or 'Islamic' ideals of covering parts of the body.²⁴

“Islam is specific about modesty in men and women. A dress which looks best when ‘skin tight’ and is intended to indicate the contours of the torso, violates this injunction.”²⁵

Many Muslim females wear long dresses, or long skirts with baggy tops - which may be considered as acceptable forms of 'modest attire:

"Many shops will be inundated with loose-fitting jumpers and cardigans...and long-flowing skirts and dresses. Adhering to the Islamic dress-code does not just mean donning tent-like costumes - as many men would like Muslim women to believe. Some people (men) may assume that a Muslim woman looking good means that she is indecent. Fact: a Muslim woman can look both modest and good at the same time."²⁶

Muslim women can be commonly found wearing traditional forms of head-covering, combined with jeans and long shirts. Generations of Muslim youth have created their own styles from the wealth of influence about them. Others may avail themselves of the considerable fashions presented in modern *shalwar kameez*. However, in Forest Gate a substantial number of Muslim females can be observed wearing the 'westernised' garments of the broader British society. These conventional styles do not include *shalwar kameez*. Muslim females may opt to wear specific types of clothing within particular contexts.

Girls communicate fashion ideas between themselves in the context of everyday conversation. The researcher has witnessed groups of teenage schoolchildren exchanging ideas and commentary on fashion. They obtain ideas on fashion from popular teen magazines produced in Britain, as well as publications oriented towards the 'Asian' population - produced in Britain and abroad. These include magazines about Hindi music and popular culture, often associated with the 'Bollywood' film industry. These publications help to inform their fashion outlook. In addition, 'Asian' satellite and cable television channels such as *Zee TV* inform popular culture and dress codes.

Within Forest Gate, a wide range of material of all shades, textures and qualities is readily available to those making garments at home - often based on designs in the magazines. Newham-raised Muslim women often sew and make their own clothes, or have them made by someone in their families. Many

'traditional' garments - such as the *dupatta* - are adapted to reflect local fashions. There are generations of British-born and/or raised Muslim girls, for whom use of the *dupatta* would appear to have transcended its original purpose, and passed into the cultural framework of a fashion garment. As an accessory, the *dupatta* may be worn in various styles, including high on the neck with the two end pieces draped down the back of the woman. Alternatively, the *dupatta* may be worn with the front piece laying across the body, loosely covering one side of the breast region.

The researcher observed one of her Muslim students in Green Street. She wore a *hijab* head scarf, a thigh-length mini skirt, covering her legs with thick, dark tights. Her female companion wore a long skirt, but had her head uncovered. Headscarves are worn on the head in different ways - some completely or mostly covering the hair; whilst others may pin the scarf lightly onto the back of the hair, draping the scarf around the back of the shoulders. In Green Street head scarves are available in numerous shades, textures, and materials. They range from transparent and lightweight, through to opaque and heavyweight material. Among elder refugee and/or underclass newcomer Muslim women, there are many that tend to opt for darker colours in the type of clothing worn. The lighter *hijab* is more often worn by the younger generation of newcomer Muslim women. Among the styles visible are black *burqa*, purple *chador* and *hijab* of many other shades.²⁷

The researcher has observed a number of 'second hand' (used clothing)

shops stocking *shalwar khameez* and the *sari*.²⁸ These outfits are purchased by Muslim and Hindu women, in prices ranging from £3 upwards - depending on the garments assessed value in terms of colour, material and quality. These stores are charity shops (e.g. Sue Ryder shop formerly on Upton Lane (1996), and Help the Aged shop in Woodgrange Road). These outlets recognised the 'gap' in the market and responded to the demand.

6.3.3. Common Values: Marriage in the Neighbourhood

The balancing role and cultural adaption is also demonstrated, to some extent, by the statements of 'Eastern' and 'Western' values contained within the personal marriage advertisements carried by 'Asian' and 'Muslim' newspapers (circulated throughout the U.K.). In the researcher's fieldwork experience, many of the views contained within these advertisements reflect commonly-held opinions regarding marriage. Advertisements frequently state a desire to contract a marriage with a spouse from a similar background, in terms of East/West values. These advertisements reflect the views of some professional Muslim people of marriageable age (and their families), and demonstrate some common understandings and a level of integration within the wider (non-Muslim) society, including an awareness of the specific codings of personal advertisements e.g. 'N.S.' - non-smoker; 'N.D.' - non-drinker; 'G.S.O.H.' - good sense of humour. There is an emphasis within these advertisements on the requirements of a 'good balance' of 'Eastern and Western values.'²⁹ The following examples represent the expectations of Muslim advertisers, seeking to contract a marriage or develop a relationship, and reflect the requirements of some British-born and/or raised Muslims residing in Newham. Certain 'key requirements' have been highlighted in bold type by the researcher, in the following advertisements taken from a single issue of Eastern Eye [with the exception of (14) and (15)]:

- (1) "Genuine attractive Pakistani Syed Muslim female. 25, seeks genuine attractive Syed Muslim male. Gentlemen must be at least 5'9" tall, aged up to 30, must be **independent and open minded with good Islamic**

knowledge."

- (2) "Attractive Arabian Yemeni male, 26, witty and loving, **Islamic minded, regardless of race\education**, seeking a pretty Sunni Muslim female (18-30) that is pleasing to my eyes and heart for the intention of marriage, **not the traditional classical old ball and chain routine."**
- (3) "Sunni Muslim **parents seek** female for their British born son which is 26, 5ft 9in tall and is highly qualified professional based London. Girl should be up to 26 years of age, **educated and appreciative of east/west cultures** with caring attitude and attractive personality."
- (4) "**Sister** seeks partner for brother. Sunni Muslim Punjabi Arian, 29 yrs, looks much younger. **Innocently divorced** a long time ago (no kids), slim. Attractive, caring, honest, **lively and outgoing personality, respects family east/west values... Open minded family."**
- (5) "**Assalomakum**. Sunni Muslim **Arian** parents seek suitable matches for our son 25, 6ft and daughter 23, 5ft 6' tall. Both are **fair complexion**, very attractive, friendly personality. Both are well educated and **respect eastern and western values."**
- (6) "**Glasgow Punjabi Sunni Muslim Family** seek a suitable partner for their 28 year old **graduate daughter**. You will be aged between 28-45 years old, preferably a graduate but not necessarily. However you must be serious about marriage. **Gentlemen from any zaat but no visitors or asylum seekers."**
- (7) "**Sunni Muslim parents** seek match for their handsome son 26 who is running his own successful company. He is caring, honest, **respects East/West culture and Islam**. We are looking for the girl to be 20-25, attractive and have **similar qualities as our son."**
- (8) "**Bengali (Sylhet) Muslim female, 22, working graduate** from respectable background seeks **professional educated match. Must be Bengali Muslim** between 23-30 Yrs of age. Only interested in marriage. **No family involvement in the initial stage."**
- (9) "British Asian Muslim businessman. young looking 36. Fair/handsome, handsome athletic, 5'8". Respectable family background. Educated, secure & established . **n/s, n/d**. Seeks an attractive Asian female for **friendship, romance, cinema, eating out and may be more. Divorcees considered without children**. A god (sic) **balance of east/west values."**
- (10) "Young Muslim male very attractive, fair complexion, professional graduate, **GSOH, independent, British born**, warm personality, varied interests.

Seeking **girl between 18-25, academic and professional status important.**"

(11) "Muslim Asian male from South West London, **age 32, 5'11" married with unable wife. Asian female required for long term relationship. Age 22-45 with children most welcome.**"

(12) "Kind, caring, romantic Muslim male, divorced (no kids), 30s, 6ft tall, handsome, professional, non-smoker/drinker, varied interests including travel, cinema, music. Seeking attractive, fair, honest, sincere, loving Muslim female, single/divorced, 27-32 yrs ideally, over 5'4" tall, with **balanced eastern/western values.**"³⁰

(13) "Presentable, **educated, modern Asian Muslim (non-practising)** young 45 (so I am told, divorced, 5'6" own flat, car, good jobs. **Seeks that exclusive modern Asian female with the right mix of good humour, independence, durability and femininity.** 30 plus years, **any religion**, can cook (I can't) divorcees (No children) welcome. Photo appreciated. **Friendship/Marriage.**"³¹

These 'values' are also reflected within the Asian Times' matrimonial page:

(14) "**Very attractive Muslim female**, young 29, 5'5", slim, enjoys travelling, reading, interesting and intelligent conversation. Seeks tall, slim, **attractive, open-minded, sensitive, caring, modest Muslim male**, 26-36, **race unimportant.**"

(15) "Female, very attractive, **semi Muslim**, 30 years old, graduate from a **respectable family**, out going, confident and intelligent. I am seeking a single person, preferably Muslim, must be confident, **out going and not very religious**, no divorcees or people with children, with view to marriage."³²

Due to space limitations within the context of this thesis, it is not feasible to analyse each advertisement in detail within this study. However, the first six advertisements have been analysed with regard to key points affecting Muslims in Newham: Advertisement (1) demonstrated the female advertiser's desire for an "independent and open minded" partner, with "good Islamic knowledge." She

is arranging her own marriage. Advertisement (2) reflects the male advertiser's intention to keep within certain 'Islamic' parameters, being "Islamic minded". He demonstrates a recognition of issues surrounding subservience, and clearly rejects this notion as part of his marital requirements - "not the traditional classical old ball and chain routine".

Advertisement (3) demonstrates that the Muslim parents are following the convention of arranging their son's situation. "Sunni Muslim parents seek female for their British born son". They show an awareness and appreciation of values surrounding cultural matters in relation to their expectations. They make the point that their son is 'British born ', and in their desire for a female match, specify, a woman who is "educated and appreciative of East/West cultures".

Advertisement (4) conforms to a convention of 'arranged marriage'. Here the sister "seeks partner for brother". She describes the requirements sought in a female partner, and notes values considered important. These values include "an outgoing personality" with respect for "family" and "East/West values". Advertisement (5) involves the parents in the arrangement of matches for their son and daughter. The parents specify "Arian" and "fair complexion" in the advert, demonstrating a level of importance attached to these factors. They also describe their children as "well educated" and with "respect [for] eastern and western values".

Advertisement (6) states that a Muslim family seek a marriage partner for

their daughter. They specify that she is a graduate, making the point that a graduate male would be desirable. The family welcome "gentlemen from any zaat" indicating a value system which incorporates notions of caste, and the impact of cultural influences upon Islamic thought. The final point "no visitors or asylum seekers" may suggest that the advertiser did not wish to be 'taken advantage of' in return for British residency/passport rights.

The relevance of these advertisements, in the context of Muslims in Newham, is that they reflect significant values, that the researcher has encountered within a field work and professional capacity in Newham. The advertisements are a representative sample, and similar examples can be located in these publications every week. Advertisements are placed by parents, siblings, and those seeking to arrange their own relationships/marriages. In attempting to bring about a marital relationship, consideration is generally given to factors considered important in 'making the marriage' work. Within many of these advertisements, there is a clear recognition that culture plays an important part within the desired relationship. A recognition of 'Eastern' and 'Western' values and a need to balance these is emphasised. There is a tendency for advertisers to specify partnerships with 'educated', 'professional', and (potentially) 'outgoing' people.

This demonstrates that many Muslims desiring marriage, or arranging marriages for relatives, have a particular outlook on the nature of that marriage. Many professional Muslim women in Newham would fit within these

specifications, yet, there are a number of Muslim parents and families who reject the idea of their daughters being 'outgoing.' This can result in attempts to curb a young girl's education, and discouragement from aspiring to achieve when - for some - this is viewed as being a traditionally male preserve. Conflict can arise between couples and within families, when there are differing values, cultural expectations - especially related to the roles of women in Newham.

The issues faced by Muslims in Newham may be complex for some families to address, especially in terms of regulating the behaviour of young Muslim women. There may be Muslim families who view the values represented in these advertisements as inappropriate, and destructive to Muslim family structures; they believe these advertisements are one indicator of wider society influences - include education and the employment environment. Others consider many of these factors enhance the prospects of contentment and a successful marriage. The advertisements in Eastern Eye and Asian Times can be contrasted with those contained in the Muslim newspaper, Q-News. Q-News personal advertisements tend to place an emphasis on 'Islamic' matters:

“British 29 year old, 5'6", caring, professional with well balanced Western and Islamic values. Seeks sincere Muslimah up to 35 years of similar background for marriage, Insha-Allah (Asian Punjabi preferred).”

“Practising convert brother, nearly 19, own home. Very mature and understanding. Seeking Hijabi Muslimah, preferably older, for contented Islamic Marriage. Must be caring, kind, pleasant and understanding. Divorcees/Widows welcome. Age up to 30.”³³

It is noted that females ("*muslimahs*") as advertisers are assumed to locate

themselves within a particular belief framework, in which unmarried females are under the guardianship of their father, brother, or other guardian. This stipulation is reserved specifically for females:

"Notice to all readers: Q-New assumes that any contacts made as a result of these columns will be conducted according to the Shariah, and accepts no responsibility for behaviour out of these tenets ... Q-News insists that all Muslimahs sending in their details should include the address of either father, brother, or guardian."³⁴

The differing styles of the advertisements contained in Asian Times, Eastern Eye, and Q-News reflect - to a certain extent - the changing aspirations of Muslim women and men in Britain - and by implication Newham. For example, there are in Newham many women within the growing Muslim professional 'classes'.

In some cases, these changes are not always embraced by families, clusters or communities - and can give rise to the development of conflict. These (potential) conflicts over gender-roles have been discussed by Ruby Malik, "a first generation British Pakistani living in London"; Malik is a TV producer, working on a film-project with the anthropologist Akbar Ahmed. She discussed the reactions towards 'Muslim career women' - and their expectations - and suggests precedents within early Muslim history:

"On the more personal side, Ruby describes the tribulation of being a single Pakistani woman with a successful career. Like most women from traditional backgrounds, there is considerable pressure on her to give up her demanding career and get married. 'A few people have even come up to me and told me that ever since I've become so career oriented, I am no longer 'wife material'. These people forget the example set by our own Prophet's first wife, Hazrat Khadija (PBUH). She was forty years old and

a successful businesswoman when she proposed to the Prophet (PBUH). She retained her identity whilst bearing his children, helping him both emotionally and financially in his quest of spreading Islam. She in the 7th century epitomised the true emancipation that Islam awards to women. Why should any Muslim woman today be afraid of her identity and career with such an inspiring example in front of her?'

"Although eventually Ruby would like to get married and settle in Pakistan, she says 'A man will have to accept me for what I am - I will, of course, give priority to my husband and family, but I will not compromise on my individual rights and freedom as a woman to actively use my mind constructively. I'm looking for a middle ground where I can take the plunge enthusiastically rather than fearfully.'"³⁵

Ruby Malik is one example of a professional Muslim woman, who has analysed her role as a Muslim woman in the U.K. Some Muslim men are also reassessing their own roles and expectations within male:female relationships:

"I'm all for women's rights, but while they go about changing the world, they never stop to think about the poor Asian man's situation. These days it's almost impossible to know whether to act like a Typical Asian Man or the New Asian Man.

"If I open the door for her, will she call me a real gentleman, or will she accuse me of being sexist?

"If I pay restaurant bill, will she thank me, or will she accuse me of undermining her economic independence?

"On the first night of our arranged marriage, should I make the first move - or will she?

"These are just a few examples of the crisis facing Asian men in today's world. Our parents brought us up to be male chauvinist pigs.

"We never had to make the roti or sweep the floor, we were never allowed to show our feelings and our main purpose in life was to reproduce and protect the family's *izzat*.

"As a result, during our teenage years, most of us believed that unless we acted like Bollywood heroes (i.e. wear white trousers and treat women like dirt) we would never get girlfriends, let alone find someone to

marry."³⁶

This journalist, Thufayel Ahmed, demonstrates an awareness of the changing roles for many Muslim men in the U.K., and the conflicts of identity and gender-roles. Similar views to those of Thufayel were expressed in confidence to the researcher. These Muslim men were in the age range of 18-35 years - in Newham.

Interviewees reported that there are many instances of Muslims meeting their prospective marital partners by means other than family introductions. A proportion of Muslim parents do not divulge the method of meeting to others, and lay claim to being the instigators of the meeting. Admission by parents regarding a daughter's instigation of 'making her own arrangements' could be construed by some community members as a moral deficiency, reflecting upon the young woman and her family. Within elements of the community it could be perceived that the daughter was acting 'outside of parental control', and 'leading a dishonourable life.' The pressure to conform to cultural patterns of 'finding a husband for a daughter' exerts a powerful influence upon some Muslim families and can result in difficulties associated with finding a suitable marriage partner.

Agencies specialising in finding marriage partners are well-subscribed, and various newspapers carry adverts specifying characteristics required in a potential marriage-partner for daughters. There are numerous dimensions to the issues connected to 'arranged marriages', which are important when discussing aspects of 'moral transgression'.

Extended family systems may put pressure on a woman in terms of choosing her husband, as well as being a way to impress specific values and customs upon women. In Newham, some Muslim couples opt out of this system - preferring the independence of living as a 'nuclear family'. They may maintain contact with their extended family, but in terms of decision making, their parents and elders have less direct influence and authority over themselves and their own children. 'Riffat', who - like her husband - was born and raised in Newham, had to confront this issue:

"My husband and I left my mother-in-law's house three years ago. My husband and I had an argument, and she (the mother-in-law) took his side as usual. You know, they always stick up for their sons and blame their daughters-in-law. We (the couple) made up, and he stuck by me, and we left the house and went to live on our own. Things are better now - there's a lot less pressure, and we can sort out our problems without interference.

"My mum and dad were coming to collect me, but he (the husband) begged me to stay - and promised to mend his ways ... Sometimes I still think I'd be better off single. I could get money from the state. There's plenty of women nowadays who work and live on their own with their children - and they don't have to run about after men as if they are gods."³⁷

During fieldwork, one common concern of interviewees pinpointed their personal fears surrounding the possibility of 'arranged marriages'. Although some female interviewees accepted the idea of an 'arranged marriage' to someone from a similar educational and social background in Britain, the majority wanted to avoid 'an arranged marriage' to a non 'western' Muslim 'outsider'. This 'outsider' may be linked to the family through the kinship network, and in a number of cases are marriages to first-cousins or uncles.

The views of a Muslim woman in the north of England illustrates the attitudes and expectations of a proportion of young Muslim women educated in Newham. Noting the conflicting duality of her position regarding marriage and what to her are important factors of choice, Celia Anwar is able to negotiate with her parents regarding the choice of her potential marriage partner and is able to express her preferences:

"...I would truly not want to marry someone they [parents] didn't approve of, while arguing for the sort of man who comes nearest to what I feel I want. The further I get towards a career and greater independence the more I realise that I seek a husband who has experience of higher education, the prospect of a good job, a likable personality, and if he's good-looking to boot, so much the better."³⁸

"I'm twenty-one as I write this, and nearly all my friends have married and settled down; some have even moved beyond marriage to divorce. I alone seem to be rebelling against the idea of an arranged marriage."³⁹

"I feel that I stand on divided ground when I look at my own life and the future I would reach for. I would describe myself as a westernised Asian woman, and when and if I have children of my own I would not expect that I'd arrange marriages for them, nor would I be upset or overly concerned if they decide to marry a white person."⁴⁰

Due to constraints of space within this thesis, the researcher can only refer to three cases of such marriages that she has encountered in Newham:

- (1) **'Amina'**: 21 year old, educated in Pakistan and Newham, and has been resident in Newham for ten years. She went to Pakistan for an arranged marriage with her uncle (on her father's side), who was born, raised and educated in Faisalabad. Amina returned to the U.K., but her husband remains in Pakistan. He has applied for a U.K. visa, and is awaiting a decision. Amina understands the entry requirements can take several months (or perhaps a couple of years) to process.

Amina explained that she did not desire to have children immediately, and that she wished to pursue study and have a career. She stated that her

experience of 'babysitting her older sisters children had made her aware that she could not cope. In order to avoid pregnancy Amina, with the support and encouragement of her older sister, visited a women's health clinic and was prescribed the contraceptive pill. She started taking the 'pill' but did not inform her husband of this decision, and hid the contraceptives in a 'secret zip pocket, hidden' within *shalwar khameez*.

Amina says that, although she was anxious of marrying 'one of them' as she put it (meaning a man raised overseas), she felt reasonably confident of the future - because she possesses a knowledge of the codes and customs of Newham. She is of the opinion that her husband will rely upon her knowledge in order to integrate and survive, in a similar way to the situation of her sister. Additionally, the fact that the husband was her fathers' younger brother, provided her with a sense of security regarding a set of controls which would be imposed upon him by other family members. Amina stated that she may inform her husband that she is taking the contraceptive pill, once she 'gets to know him and his reactions better'.⁴¹

- (2) **'Salama'**: 26, educated in Pakistan and Newham. Salama is Amina's sister. She married her cousin, from Pakistan, in 1987. It took three years for the husband to acquire a visa.

The arrival of a male child has taken pressure from Salama. The husband brought a series of what she describes as 'rules and regulations' from Pakistan - which he wished to implement in his new environment. According to Salama, her husband had particular perspectives about women and *purdah*, and was 'shocked' to see Muslim women out, unescorted. He feels that women should walk on the other side of the road, when they see groups of men. Salama was not sympathetic to changing her lifestyle, and continued her free movement in Newham. This caused arguments and conflict initially.

Since his arrival, the husband has adjusted his 'customary behaviour', to that acceptable to the Newham-based family. He has learnt to communicate and share with his wife, and use her skills and knowledge of the environment in order for him to survive. Salama has stated that, despite coming from different cultural backgrounds, they are 'getting on fine.' They have co-operated over family matters, and even gave up smoking together. Salama believes that, although she has 'transformed' her husband, that he still have 'some way to go' before he has fully adjusted to her sense of freedom.⁴² Salama reported that she was able to discuss private matters concerning her husband, with her sister. The husband was excluded from these discussions due to a lack of English language skill. Salama stated that her husband and his 'foreign ways' were the butt of jokes between the sisters.

- (3) **Mohamed:** known as 'Mo', is 27 years of age - and was born and raised in Newham. Mo married a Pakistani, who had certain expectations of what her husband's role should be. She did not expect to have to go outside of the house, for example for shopping and clothes-buying. She expected her husband to perform these duties, but this was not part of his cultural framework in Newham. Mohamed was concerned with his masculine status and image amongst his peers. This situation could not be resolved.

Mo could not take the clash of cultures any more. Although they have not divorced, the couple are estranged. Mo is currently having a relationship with a former girlfriend - a non-Muslim girl from the borough, described as his 'first love'. His wife continues to reside in Newham, and communicates by telephone to relatives in Pakistan on a weekly basis. The extended family network is placing pressure on Mo to return to his wife - something he has no intention of doing.⁴³

In all of the above cases, cultural factors featured significantly. Difficulties with 'arranged marriages' can affect males as much as females, in some cases. Conflicts that arise are in certain circumstances overcome, whereas in other instances, the differences are so pronounced that bridges of communication between parties cannot be successfully built. The relationship between these couples is informed, to some degree, by the wider kinship network. However, this network does not necessarily dictate the outcomes of the disputes - and kinship pressures may take second place to other factors (e.g. Amina taking the 'pill', Salama refusing to be dictated to by her husband, Mo returning to his former girlfriend).

Through fieldwork experience, the researcher has known of a number of Muslim girls (many aged 15-16 years) who became 'runaways' from parental homes, in order to avoid restrictions and possible 'arranged marriages.' The

researcher is aware of Muslim teenage girls who sought refuge at the homes of their Muslim and non-Muslim friends. These friends are rarely located within the vicinity of the family home, and are generally unknown to the girl's family. According to one source, the Newham Education Department has noted a significant number of girls of this age have been unofficially withdrawn from full-time education - and have 'disappeared.'⁴⁴ The issue of enforced arranged marriages is a concern nationally and expressed, both within the mainstream and the Muslim media.⁴⁵

Muslim women have also been attacked and by family members, for transgressing supposed moral and cultural boundaries:

"An hysterical teenage runaway was kidnapped at knifepoint by her crazed father and an uncle who wanted her to have an arranged marriage. Samina Nabi was dragged kicking and screaming into a waiting car by her 42 year-old dad Sajjad and his brother Zia Ullah, just minutes before she was due to take her driving test. The Old Bailey in London heard how the kidnap attempt was foiled by a sharp-eyed passer-by who jotted down the car's registration and tipped off the police. The dispute erupted last August when Samina left after telling her family she was moving in with her non-Muslim lover. The court heard that her cunning father lured her back to the family home by pretending he was having heart problems. However, Samina fled again and had no contact with her family until the abduction attempt. The pair snatched Samina off a street in East Ham, [Newham] East London, last November after another bitter family row over her 'unsuitable' boyfriend. When her driving instructor tried to rescue Samina, a third man leapt out of the car and threatened her with a knife.

"Prosecutor Ryddian Willis told the court:

"Samina was walking across the road when she saw a fat and large Asian man and heard her father shouting behind her. He grabbed her round the neck and pulled her over to the car.'

"Her uncle Zia Ullah then also joined in and began pulling her.

"Samina screamed and struggled violently but was overpowered and bundled into the getaway car,' said Willis.

"Despite changing cars, the gang were nabbed by police as they pulled up outside the Nabi home in East Ham. Nabi and Ullah both admitted one charge of kidnapping but escaped prison terms after Samina pleaded with Judge Geoffrey Grigson not to harm her father and uncle. Both were given two-year suspended sentences and ordered to pay £100 costs."⁴⁶

According to this article, Samina, a Newham Muslim girl, informed her family that she had a 'non-Muslim lover' and that she was going to move in with him. A dispute arose following this announcement, and Samina left home. The article describes the girl's father and uncle as "crazed" and associated this with the fact that they "wanted her to have an arranged marriage". The father is described as "cunning", resorting to deception in order to lure "her back to the family home", by "pretending he was having heart problems." This could suggest that the father played upon the girl's emotions. Samina's father and uncle are said to have "kidnapped her at knifepoint", snatching her off a "street in East Ham." East Ham is a busy shopping area surrounded by equally busy streets. The area is a public thoroughfare, generally bustling with shoppers.

The fact that Samina was "dragged kicking and screaming into a waiting car" and that she "screamed and struggled violently" before being "overpowered and bundled into the getaway car," illustrates her resistance and unwillingness to comply with their wishes regarding an arranged marriage. Samina's father and uncle admitted to the charge of kidnapping "but escaped prison terms after Samina pleaded" with the Judge, requesting him "not to harm her father and

uncle". This could suggest that Samina 'cared' for her father and uncle, and understood the reasons behind their actions. It may be that Samina did not blame them.

Parallels can be drawn between Muslim women like Samina, described as a 'teenage runaway', and similar girls in Newham who find themselves 'opting out' from the 'cultural-traditional expectations' of their families. This 'opting out' may result, in some cases, in girls having to leave the parental home - even though they may not have a place to live outside of the immediate family environment. There are circumstances in which homelessness may occur as a result of conflict between traditional-cultural values and expectations. Any references to homelessness among Muslim youth within Newham and other U.K. cities is largely under-reported:

"Hidden from the public gaze because most homeless Asian youngsters find a friend's floor to crash on rather than sleep on city streets, homelessness among this group may be rising at a faster rate than for other young people."⁴⁷

The reasons behind this were noted by a Housing Association official in Huddersfield:

"What you are dealing with here are communities with rural origins ... They pride themselves on being very close and tight knit. When you talk about homelessness in these communities it is a bit like saying that the traditional family unit cannot cope. But the truth is that these communities are coming under more and more pressure. We are now into the third generation of youngsters in England. parents are finding they can no longer send these kids back to Pakistan for a while if they start causing

trouble."⁴⁸

Another Housing Association worker noted:

"There are some - mostly the older ones - in the community who just don't want to know ... Families look after each other, and if you fall outside of that you are shunned. I know of young women who became homeless because they were fleeing violence, but instead of being helped, they were rejected for bringing shame of the community. Then they have nowhere to go."⁴⁹

Within the context of an analysis of 'arranged marriage' within U.K. Muslim contexts, Rahila Alam makes a distinction between cultural and/or religious ideas and values,:

"In an Asian family, everything is centred on religion, culture and the family itself. Respect and the reputation of the family are very important to all Asians and they generally tend to go to any extremes to keep them even if many sacrifices have to be made. One of the main examples here is that of arranged marriages. In my religion, Islam, an arranged marriage is not compulsory. However, many people are forced into them as these ideas were adopted many years ago and the tradition is still pursued. Even though this custom is now deteriorating slowly with many youngsters rebelling against it, it still holds an important place and is a controlling force in Asian society."⁵⁰

However, some 'arranged marriages' are seen as 'successful':

"Arranged marriages depend on the parents, whether or not the parents understand you and your feelings, and the type of person you're looking for. Arranged marriages are more successful than other marriages."⁵¹

The researcher taught a group of 16-24 year old women in Newham on issues connected with ethnic and religious stereotypes. During the discussion, a non-Muslim 'white' woman remarked to the group (which included several

Muslims) that the arranged marriage system was 'inferior'. One response from a Muslim girl was that the parents often choose because they feel they are looking after their daughter's best interests, having a wider appreciation of the requirements of marriage and its implications. They establish the criteria for their daughter, and may give the daughter an option to refuse a potential husband.⁵²

During the discussion, several Muslim girls viewed arranged marriages as 'positive', although they stressed that "girls shouldn't be pressurised into accepting someone they don't want."⁵³ Many Muslim parents in Newham encourage a daughter's input into the choice of a spouse, recognising that this may improve the chances of a successful marriage.

6.4.1. Conspiracy of Silence: 'Deception' in the Neighbourhood

Within Newham, a complex system of deception has evolved. This system contains a set of practical responses and solutions to issues arising as a result of conflicts associated with culture and identity. For example, there are Muslims in Newham who are questioning and challenging cultural interpretations of Islam. Certain interpretations of Islamic understanding have been rejected, because they are seen to lack an understanding of the dual socialisation processes that inform their identities. Some Muslims have developed intricate systems designed to allow them to find a contentment within their reality. For some, this contentment is gained by levels of 'deception'. 'Deception' is viewed by some Muslims as a justifiable practice which protects them from jeopardising their status within the family and community. 'Deception' may for them provide an 'escape route' enabling cultural boundaries to be crossed without the undesirable consequence of family disapproval - which has, in some cases, resulted in ostracisation and homelessness. They have developed their own structures of survival - outside of the traditional networks - and are confident in their emotional and economic survival.

This pattern of behaviour represents different practices and 'compromises' within the public and private domain. At home, a Muslim youth conform to parental opinion, and be seen to uphold the cultural and religious value system of the family and the significant other; however, within the school and social environment, the same youth may be subject to the patterns and influences of

teenage sub-culture, which can exert a powerful influence - and in many cases results in a pressure to conform. Conforming to peer pressure (exerted by Muslim youth and other peers) within the school environment may aid survival, and decrease the prospect of being bullied in school. The acquisition and demonstration of peer sub-cultural values, codes and customs may conflict with the demands of family life, and can be in direct contravention of rules.

Muslims, who develop and assert their own definitions of identity within the family - including codes of behaviour considered 'inappropriate' by families - may, in certain circumstances, experience pressure to conform. They may be subject to constraints and pressures imposed within the general course of daily life, and may choose dishonesty within the private domain, whilst engaging in activities outside of the home environment which could incur family disapproval. These activities might be considered 'named' within the concept of 'youth cultures' and their outward expressions of 'individuality and freedom.' for example, with regard to Muslim females:

- walking about alone/unguarded
- having a sexual relationship
- keeping unchaperoned company with non-family members
- wearing what is considered 'immodest' clothing (i.e. a short-skirt, figure hugging top, and/or tight jeans)
- unrestricted expressions of individuality.

There are of course Muslim women and families in Newham who consider elements of these practices as 'normal' and 'acceptable' (to varying degrees). In some cases, parents are unable or unwilling to 'control' their offspring - and may have little influence upon their behaviour.

One college student, 'Asma', reported to the researcher that her mother had not spoken to her for a month, because she went to a friend's house after college without telling her parents, instead of returning straight home.⁵⁴ The researcher was informed by a group of female college students - in the age-range of mid-teens to late twenties - that they were largely restricted to domestic roles. For example: cleaning, cooking, and helping to take care of family members. They are frequently discouraged from activities outside of the family sphere: a number of females were escorted to and from class on a regular basis.⁵⁵ Within teaching experience, the researcher noted that some Muslim females contributed little to discussions about societal issues. When questioned about this, they stated that they preferred talking about television soaps.

Observations and fieldwork have revealed that Muslim teenage girls in Newham have developed an intricate and complex web of deceptive tactics, aimed at avoiding suspicion; for example in regard to 'appropriate clothing' outside of the home. The researcher discovered that some Muslim girls may wear two distinct types of clothing: one that represents their family's ideal of modesty, and another that represents their sense of identity with their peers. In order to facilitate this, the Muslim girls arrange for their 'western dress' to be hidden at

sympathetic friends' houses (either Muslim or non-Muslim). The girls depart from the domestic home wearing 'modest' dress, and travel to their friends' houses. Once there, they change into 'western' dress, and continue with their intended activities. Prior to returning home, they visit their friends' houses again - and change back into 'modest' dress:

"Me and my friends keep other clothes [not considered 'decent' by families] at a friend's house. She doesn't mind. Without her, we'd be a bit stuck really."⁵⁶

A Muslim group of teenage interviewees identified causes for this 'deception' as lack of parental understanding, and family pressure. Anxiety was expressed relating to the implications of this practice being discovered by parents. The interviewees considered that their behaviour was deceitful, but was justified within the circumstances. This opinion expressed by young Muslim women in Newham can be compared with that of a Muslim woman from the north of England:

"... I do care very much about my family. I know I respect their views and would like them to respect mine. ... I want them to understand me within the context of my viewpoint and my choices. I could never imagine myself doing anything that could cause my family shame, but I cannot fit into a mould that is not of my making. It is not the Asian community that worries be but the bond between my family and myself."⁵⁷

Some Muslim parents in Newham have been described as 'tolerant' and 'understanding' by their daughters. 'Halima', a fifteen year old Muslim girl stated:

"My parents are great. They're quite tolerant really. They let me go out and meet my friends. I have to be in by a certain time though. I know a lot of Asian parents would think that my parents don't care about me, but it's not like that. They're the ones that will have to change with the times...

"My friends, well, some of their parents are real easy going and others, well, their parents give them a difficult time... It's no good trying to restrict girls because they just find ways to outwit them [parents], and it just makes them into liars. It's better to be told the truth. The parents who are most strict are the ones whose daughters are ending up in trouble. ...

"I go to clubs with my friends. I've been to *Krystal's*, and the *Hippodrome* in the West End. I look older than I am, and when I put my make-up on right, it's easy to get in to clubs. ...

"Maybe I tell little lies to my parents, about some things, but I don't do anything really bad. If I had a big problem I'd be able to talk to my mum about it...

"A few years ago we moved to a street that was well mixed. We wouldn't want to live among all Muslims because it would put pressure on us [the family] and the way we want to live our lives... A friend of mine was insulted by Muslim boys regularly. They called her a 'slut' and things like that; just because her parents allowed her to wear 'western' fashions. It was none of their business really, but they made it their business. Their family was shunned ... They moved house and live near me now. The Muslims where I live keep themselves to themselves and mind their own business."⁵⁸

Some girls spoke of their brothers increasingly putting pressure upon them, by making them answerable to the girls' whereabouts. The increase in male mosque attendance in the district was thought to play a role in this:

"The boys go to the mosque. They are encouraged to guard and watch over their sisters. They interpret this as restricting our freedom. There's a lot of double standards really. Boys put pressure on Asian girls [Muslim and non-Muslim] to have relationships with them, but they watch out and make sure their sisters' don't [have relationships] ...

"I'm in the same class with boys. We're not separated [girls and boys] so if we wanted to get up to something, it would be easy. They can't watch us every minute. They [the parents] just don't trust us and they're scared of us disgracing the family'.⁵⁹

Deception may also extend to the conduct of relationships with the opposite sex. These relationships may involve Muslim teenage and young adult women. In Newham, a number of teenage girls utilise public meeting places such as libraries and block of flats, or non-Muslim friends' houses, as appropriate meeting places. Youth can also be observed meeting on the streets, often in mixed-sex groups, which may consist of several courting couples. Muslim opposite-sex relationships prior to marriage are generally frowned upon by Muslim families, although they are in evidence in Newham.

A parallel can be drawn with the experience of 'Celia Anwar', which highlights the situation regarding the 'conspiracy of silence' and elaborate efforts to conceal events:

"I have had a white boyfriend, but it was quite difficult to work out ways to be together. ... With him I felt I was simply being myself and that was good, but the struggle around telling lies at home and finding ways that we could spend time together wore me out. ... I knew that if I wanted to see him I'd have to lie to my family. I couldn't ask an Asian friend to cover for me because the chances of my family finding out were much higher, so my excuses invariable involved a white friend, perhaps by telling my parents that I was babysitting or something like that. ... I had to be so careful and scheming that it got to be quite a strain."⁶⁰

Deception among youth may be construed as a form of juvenile delinquency among some members of the Muslim population; others may perceive these actions differently. Peer influences exert significant influence among juveniles within the education infrastructure. They relate to the formation and development of attitudes, values, and aspirations:

"Peer groups, in short, support young people's initial steps out of family life, give them their first introduction to other ways of treating the social world. At the beginning this may simply be a matter of comparison (which leads children to argue with their parents -' But Karen's mother lets her go to discos...') but as peer group activities become the centre of young people's social life, so they become the chief reference point for young people's behaviour."⁶¹

6.4.2. 'Moral Transgression'

Integration in the broader framework of Newham's society also includes participation in activities which may be interpreted as 'moral transgression' and/or juvenile delinquency. The increased involvement of Muslims within the mainstream infrastructure, may mean greater involvement within mainstream sub-cultures, particularly for the youth within Newham. Within the U.K. and Newham, teenage subcultural activity may involve experimentation with narcotics, and other dimensions of youth activity. In this context, Muslim youth in Newham may reflect the broader British population in terms of youth sub-cultural development. This includes involvement in criminal activity and narcotic experimentation. Although there are unique sets of issues associated with Newham, there are also parallels within the broader British context.

Related research conducted on 'social control and deviance' of 'Asian' youth in Edinburgh - primarily of Pakistani ancestry - concluded that youngsters who indulged in criminal activity were less likely to be bonded to their own community and its values':

"Boys who deviated had weak social bonds to the family, the Mosque and the school. They also believed less in the religious teachings. Boys who broke the norms of their own community were more likely to break legal norms as well".⁶²

Other British inner-city Muslim communities are also facing similar pressures and conflicts, including Newham. The trend has been analysed as a

'positive' development, in terms of community integration with the wider society:

"If Asians are getting into good jobs and professions, then we are also going to have a group that will be involved in criminal activity... In many ways it's just the Asian community becoming like the rest of the country"⁶³.

"In 1991, 19 per cent of whites were 0-15, compared with 22 per cent of black Caribbeans, 29 per cent of Indians and 43 and 47 per cent respectively of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Inevitably, we are facing a likely upsurge in criminal involvement among these groups...Once this reaches the public agenda, there is an obvious danger that we shall witness a new moral panic."⁶⁴

Newham's geographical location and transportation infrastructure - airport, and the docks - means that the borough is a place of entry for a significant proportion of illegal substances:

"Seventy five percent of the nation's drug trade originates in London - and a third in East London."⁶⁵

Narcotic related activities in Newham include the manufacture of illicit substances.⁶⁶ Drug abuse is prevalent at all levels and ages of society - even at school:

"Police have had reports, as yet unconfirmed, that schoolchildren around Forest Gate and Upton Lane are being pushed drugs."⁶⁷

Although Muslims in Newham may develop elaborate and successful systems of 'deception', and safeguards designed to guard against being exposed,

they may be in a precarious position when dealing with drug-related problems. Muslim clients made up a proportion of the clients for Newham Drugs Advice Project: Youth Awareness Programme (NDAP:YAP), which in 1996 was developing a Black and Asian Communities Development Service. A representative of NDAP revealed to the researcher that there were particular difficulties regarding 'Asian' females. The representative's opinion was that females requiring help were reluctant to seek out assistance from NDAP (or other agencies):

“... And then there's the issue of confidentiality. You can't really disclose, it's all about protecting the client and stuff like that, which is all well and good but ... who are you working with, who are you trying to target? Of course, I understand the issue of working with the client, and client confidentiality, but it's also about making sure your [the counsellor's] views and your attitude don't come into the session.”⁶⁸

They would be unlikely to inform their families of an addiction to narcotics, as a result of attitudes associated with family honour and shame. The stigma attached to those females who are perceived as contravening accepted female 'behavioural standards' can inhibit them from accessing support mechanisms, both within the family, and within the wider Muslim and non-Muslim communities:

"I don't think they [Muslim women] would [approach families] no, because there's a very high expectation of young Asian, Muslim women in terms of the way families or the culture or the religion look at life. Women do have a very, very, important role to play if not the most important in terms of the family so it's not only about the individual, it's about the family, it's about honour. ... I think some of this pride does get in the way too much ..."

"[People from countries including] India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh came

here and had children. Now their children have been integrated into society here, into the way of life here as well ... they're experiencing conflict, culture conflict ..."⁶⁹

Whilst the researcher recognises the inherent difficulties of statistics, NDAP does provide a breakdown of its client base. Of a total of 520 clients in the 1994/95 financial year, a breakdown based on ethnicity provides the following figures (overleaf):

Newham Drugs Advice Project: Youth Awareness Programme Breakdown of Clients on Ethnic Basis 1994/95 Financial Year:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| African: | 24 |
| Asian/African | 1 |
| Asian/Indian | 1 |
| Asian/Pakistani | 23 |
| Asian/Bangladeshi | 5 |
| Asian/Chinese | 0 |
| Asian/Other | 19 |
| Caribbean/West Indian | 31 |
| U.K. | 322 |
| Irish | 8 |
| Other European | 13 |
| Other | 12 |
| Unknown | 61 |

Source: Newham Drugs Advice Project: Youth Awareness Programme, Annual Report 1994/95, (Newham: NDAP,1995) p.10.

YAP's confidentiality policy protects the individual, and the institute or organisation approached or requiring its services: this may include schools, youth clubs, and children's homes. YAP recognises the importance of discretion, and the need to preserve reputations of institutions and/or individuals. Among YAP's services is counselling for 8-18 year olds; YAP trains young adults to run drugs-awareness workshops. Its workers see young people within the contexts of school, college, street, and 'nightlife' (i.e. raves). It is the first project of its kind in the U.K.⁷⁰

Addiction to narcotics may present difficulties in relation to the acquisition of sufficient income required to obtain essential substances. Muslims may resort to Prostitution as a means to finance the habit. Prostitution represents - to many Muslims - an extreme manifestation of 'moral transgression', where many of the precepts commonly associated with 'Islamic' teachings on personal relationships are discarded. The prostitutes in Newham include a proportion of Muslim women, some of whom have become engaged in prostitution as an indirect response to family pressure, conflicting role expectations, domestic violence, and narcotic abuse.

Newham's local newspapers have drawn attention to prostitution within the area of Green Street and Katherine Road.⁷¹ Some residents associate this increase with Newham's Urban Regeneration Programme. This has led to the growth of industry and peripheral developments, drawing alongside an increase in professional workers and personal wealth. It has been reported to the researcher

that prostitutes have vacated more 'traditional' areas such as Kings Cross (outside of the Borough) where competition is fierce, and concerted resistance by residents has driven prostitutes away.⁷² The prostitutes find many clients among local business men and visitors to the area. To some clients, 'Asian' girls represent an image of the subservient Asian woman.⁷³ Police have started to 'crackdown' on the growing numbers of prostitutes in Newham:

"Officers at Forest Gate are concerned that an area of the patch, centred around Katherine Road, has suddenly become a magnet for prostitution. Conscious that sex-for-sale usually attracts more crime they have launched a blitz on the area ...

"Supt. Roger Davey said: 'Prostitution creates social strains on a community and can also attract crime in the form of drug dealing, street robbery and other criminal activities. There are already signs of this happening and, in order to prevent further deterioration, a firm policing policy has been implemented. It will continue until the area returns to normal.'

"Police confirmed that there is evidence that brothels have already been established. Most of the activity takes place late at night, but the problem is already visual enough to cause offence to residence in the area.

"A spokesman for Monega Residents' Association said: 'We've noticed frequent activity at certain properties. Some of our members have been accosted on the street and that's something we can do without.'

"Association secretary Jim Coe was approached by a woman touting for business on Sunday. Mr Coe told the Recorder: 'She asked if I wanted to do some business and I felt a bit disgusted about it. They're also operating around Shrewsbury Road and Colston Road,' he added."⁷⁴

Prostitution in Newham has now become a political issue:

"Residents in the Katherine Road area of Forest Gate are threatening to take the law into their own hands unless the prostitutes who are operating there are driven out.

"M.P. backs move to stop prostitution: Newham North West MP Tony

Banks has supported police moves to prevent street prostitution in the Forest Gate area. Claimed Mr Banks: 'It is vital police nip this in the bud. Once such activities become established they can be very difficult to eradicate.'

"The M.P. said street prostitution always meant trouble for people in the local area. He added: 'Women residents are pestered by men. Men residents are accosted by prostitutes. Kerb crawlers will block the streets. I hope police will also target the clients as well as the women and pimps. nothing can be more effective than taking the car numbers of kerb crawlers and then writing to them or even visiting them in their homes. You don't normally see them again.'"⁷⁵

Prostitution concerns the Muslim communities in Newham, and a number of prostitutes have been identified as 'Muslim'. Their services are advertised in newsagents' windows, with names associated with Muslim females, written on cards (with contact telephone numbers):

"**AISHA** - local, fresh young Asian woman, long hair, best massage anytime. Telephone -----."⁷⁶

It has also been reported to the researcher that pimps and clients have been 'kerb-crawling' 'Asian' girls - including Muslims - outside a Newham school's gates. Some of the men were identified as 'Muslim' by local observers.⁷⁷

Many local people - including Muslims - are expressing anger towards the increasing prostitution on Newham's streets. Ali Khan, a 22 year old Forest Gate resident, expressed his opinion regarding this issue in the Newham Recorder:

"I've seen young girls, mostly Asian, in Green Street and it's obvious they're prostitutes. Once I was driving down there quite late at night and

saw a girl being hit by a man. Maybe I should have stopped, but I was too frightened. I just had the feeling she was a prostitute and he was a pimp."⁷⁸

During fieldwork in Pakistan, the researcher discussed issues surrounding prostitution in Newham with Khalid Alavi. He has been an academic in the U.K. and Pakistan: he also had a role as community leader within the inner-city Muslim communities in Birmingham. It could be said that Newham and Birmingham have certain shared concerns, relating to Islam and morality. Alavi has been confronted with Muslim concerns associated with prostitution and Muslims. Alavi's guidance has been sought, on questions regarding the approaches towards rehabilitation or forgiveness for female Muslim prostitutes:

"My personal opinion and experience is that elders are not good for that issue, particularly because they do not understand the importance and the gravity.

"I have dealt with some of these incidents in Birmingham, and I was involved in at least a dozen cases in which it was difficult for me really as a leader of the community even to talk to the parents. And the reason was that somehow the girl was hard-pressed or was being exploited on certain issues. They wanted to marry her to someone she didn't want; she ran away and she was picked up by some of the West Indian gangs involved in drugs and prostitution - and that she realised that it is no good, and therefore she came to me, and she said 'I ask God's Forgiveness for that' and there is very clear verses in the Qur'an that if somebody comes to God and wants forgiveness, God is all forgiving - 'but my parents are not that forgiving.'

"'Where should I go? I told my parents I want to live a clean life and my boyfriend is accepting me as a wife, but my parents are still after me.' It's the harassment she was talking of, and it is difficult for me. Weeks and weeks I spent to talk to them, to convince them that she is coming back - alright, you don't have to accept her into your own family, but let her live her own life.

"But her parents say, 'When I find her, I will kill her'.It was really too much. And that's why the Muslim community - one of the problems of the

Muslim community - is that the community is lagging behind of all the communities, that they did not develop the mechanism or institution for the rehabilitation of their own problems.

"Every community has them, but the problem is that the Muslim community does not have that concept - the Sikhs have, the other communities have, but the Muslim community, some of them have very badly beaten. They could establish a sheltered home on their own without any aid from the local council whereas the facilities could be provided to girls, to boys, who are coming out of broken families and more and more problems of this type happen in the Muslim community.

"I know of only one or two sheltered homes run by the Hindus, and by God the girls which went there they were in a worst situation when they came out. The British scene has not been studied from that perspective, that the Indu-Asian community, there are Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs..."⁷⁹

Alavi's analysis and personal experience demonstrates that - although there are verses relating to 'forgiveness' in the Qur'an - these were ignored by parents, seeking to uphold their cultural values and respect within the community. According to Alavi, Islam has been superseded by cultural values which do not have an Islamic basis. Alavi noted the absence of protected Muslim facilities for 'fallen women', but that other 'Asian' communities had developed some systems (albeit limited) of shelter. Alavi accepts that some Muslim girls will runaway from oppressive social situations, but that they become vulnerable to other pressures 'out on the streets.' These factors are similar within Newham's inner-city settings, although the levels of prostitution are not so greatly developed in Newham.

Concerns regarding prostitution have been high on the agendas of other inner-city Muslim communities, notably in Bradford. During 1996, calls for the

legalisation of prostitution by a Chief Constable in West Yorkshire were seen to threaten relations between Muslim communities and the police:

"In the last 18 months, Muslims in the district of Manningham...purged what was renowned as one of the country's most popular open-air brothels. Years of police indifference forced local residents to take the law into their own hands and intimidate prostitutes away, often with the use of violence. Today, Manningham is relatively free of prostitutes and punters."...

"In cities like Bradford and Birmingham, there is also the very real fear of Muslim women being harassed by kerb-crawlers and of daughters being lured into the trade."⁸⁰

A Bradford Council of Mosques spokesperson, Liaquat Hussain, expressed concerns:

"In times of economic hardship especially, it would serve as an invitation to lots of young girls to enter the trade."⁸¹

In this brief overview, it can be seen that the issue of prostitution raises a number of ethical and moral concerns for Muslims in inner-city environments, including Newham. There are also links between prostitution, substance abuse, and criminal activity in the Borough. These factors impinge upon a broad range of social issues and impact upon public perception.

6.4.3. Family values: East and West

Within Newham's Muslim communities, concern has been voiced regarding the growing national divorce rate. A link is made between what is viewed as a decline in 'family values' and 'moral decline,' and the reluctance of British-born Muslim females to accept cultural standards of female:male roles. Some fieldwork sources consider that the incidence of Muslim divorce will inevitably increase as more Muslim women enter the workforce.⁸²

Problems related to juvenile delinquency are often posited within the notion of women's increased participation within the public environment of the workplace. The contemporary employment situation in Newham - like the United Kingdom as a whole - is increasingly geared towards employment of women.⁸³ The historical pattern has been for women to work within the lower wage sector. In the 1990s, the number of women entering employment is expanding nationally and locally, whilst at the same time, employment opportunities for men are decreasing -particularly in the unskilled or industrial sector. The decline of industrialisation left many Muslim men in Newham unemployed, whilst the females in the family may be afforded greater employment opportunities.

There are significant implications to these changing economic patterns, including the re-assessment of gender roles, particularly in relation to Muslim male-female/family relationships. The researcher's fieldwork among young Muslim women seeking employment suggests that this situation is one source of

potential conflict within the family. However, alternative views have also been expressed, suggesting that there are many families in which daughters and wives are actively encouraged to pursue employment opportunities and further education leading to professional and vocational qualifications.⁸⁴ Changing attitudes are not necessarily reflected in places of ancestral origin:

"Social and cultural obstacles to female education can be overcome only after husbands and fathers have begun to shed their prejudices. As male literacy in Pakistan is still low, prejudice against female education, particularly in the rural area, has not disappeared."⁸⁵

Views regarding Muslim women in the workforce are also demonstrated by the attitudes of teenage students in a Newham school. One student, a 14 year old Muslim, informed the researcher that he had participated in a mixed sex classroom discussion at his school, focusing upon 'the changing nature of employment in Newham.' One aspect of the discussion considered women in the workforce. According to the student, the Muslim and other 'Asian' males were largely against the practice of 'Asian' (including Muslim) women's involvement in the public domain of the workforce. Reasons given by the males, were said to revolve around issues of trust. It was reported to the researcher that one Muslim male teenager made the comment:

"No!. You don't know what they'll get up to. You can't trust your wife!"⁸⁶

In contrast to this view, there are many males who actively seek constructive

employment roles for female family members. The issue of Muslim women in the public domain is one in which there is conflict between different Muslim perspectives in Newham. Some 'traditionalists' believe that Muslim women should remain within the domestic sphere of the household. The impact of increasing availability of work for women is posing a dilemma for some 'traditionalist' Muslim households in Newham. Within these households, the role of providing for the economic needs of the family has largely been the responsibility of Muslim men. Families are being confronted with decisions relating to the 'appropriateness' of women in the 'public' sphere, and the implications of wider community participation, as a result. There are cases where the choices are between an improved economic situation, and what may be regarded as a challenge to moral and cultural values.

'Haleh', a Muslim in her late teens, expressed resentment towards what she considered were "old men's ideas of a woman's place."⁸⁷ Haleh wanted to be employed, having acquired useful office skills and qualifications at school:

"My father doesn't want me to work. A few of my (female) friends' parents let them, but my father just won't hear of it. He says that I'll be getting married soon, and that there's not point in building up my ideas. It's not fair, and anyway what if I get married and my husband loses his job? It's happened to quite a few people I know. I wouldn't like it if my husband didn't want me to work. I don't know if I would accept it. If he doesn't want me to work then he had better be a good provider!"⁸⁸

This reflects Muhammad Anwar's observations of Muslims in Rochdale during the 1970s and 1980s, when he noted that:

“ ... the majority of Muslims do not allow their wives and daughters to work or have contact with the outside world ... Those who are educated and ‘Westernized’ are more liberal in this sense as are upper-class women in Pakistan”.⁸⁹

Local Muslims educated in Newham have been exposed to knowledge which can conflict with information handed down from 'traditionalists', who may advocate the reproduction of 'lifestyles' relating to places and communities of ancestral origin. 'Local' Muslims have - in some cases - re-formulated their beliefs and cultural patterns in a different sense, from those 'traditionalists' whose relationship contacts and familial links with places of origination act as justification for continuity of established traditions. One possible result of this divergence manifests itself within inter-generational conflict. A concept of 'westernisation' is often used as a focus for blame in this conflict, frequently ignoring other contributory factors. Many local Muslims are questioning and challenging generally 'accepted' traditional practices, which may have been presented to them as 'Islamic' values. This challenge is one cause of conflict within Muslim families and communities in Newham:

As generations of local Muslims approach the twenty-first century, many are restructuring and reassembling components of their way of life in accordance with their environment. This can result in a disregard or discarding - in some cases - of traditional practices and interpretations of religious belief. In their place come reconstructed new identities, based upon lifestyle interpretations relative to their situation in Britain today. Some young, 'practising', educated Muslims seek to return to 'original' Islamic sources - including the *Qur'an*, *Sunnah*, *Hadith*, and

Fiqh - to seek new or alternative interpretations, which are seen as 'appropriate' and/or 'valid' today:

"A major change has come about with the change from the immigrant or village generation the 'here-born and here-educated' generation. The former saw Islam as a whole, providing for all aspects of life, although that 'whole' encapsulated a complex of different village and regional traditions, so that in reality there were a variety of wholes mixing and confronting alien cultures in western cities. The older 'village' generation doesn't know how to handle it but the young increasingly do, having the capacity to analyse out what is culturally relevant and Islamically essential. In this they are stripping the religious core of its traditional cultural packaging and working towards a new cultural package for a North-West European context.

"Parents and traditional Muslim leaders are worried as it is happening outside their control. Paradoxically, it does not mean that they are breaking away from the community, as increasing interest in Arabic courses and in Islam demonstrates. Rather, the community is being restructured ..."⁹⁰

There are Muslims in Newham, who ignore religious sources altogether and define themselves as non-practising Muslims; separating the term Muslim from the framework of Islamic doctrine.

Levels of integration are demonstrated by many factors: success, education, employment, friendship-group participation, living outside of 'clusters', and property purchase are all seen as demonstrating 'integration'. 'Integration' also includes participation in activities which can be interpreted as 'moral transgression' (by Muslims and/or non-Muslims).

"The Sylhet, Mirpur, and Punjab regions of Bangladesh, Pakistan and India respectively provide the backbone of the Asian community in Britain. Many of the second and almost certainly most of the third generation of British Asians whose origins can be traced back to the above named regions, recognise Britain as their home - even with all its

faults regarding racism, crime, failure to be fully accepted by indigenous population, unemployment etc. But the first generation of Asians, who came here in search of employment but ended up settling down here still regard India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka as 'home'. ... I cannot but help point out that maybe it is time the British Asian community began asking itself 'where is my home?'"⁹¹

As Muslims become more integrated within the wider society, those learning the necessary 'survival skills' have the potential to achieve more.

"Ten years ago Pakistani children were classed as underachievers, yet recent measurements suggest that they are now doing better than the national average, the result of ambition and Islamic respect for education and learning. The state school system is central to this ambition, and the hard work of heads of families, often in corner shops, enable sons (and increasingly daughters) to go through higher education to enter the professions. Unfortunately state education is also seen as subversive of religion and traditional values."⁹²

Muslims educated in Newham have gained knowledge which can conflict with information handed down from those pioneer elders, who advocated the reproduction of 'lifestyles' relating to places and communities of origin. Muslims raised in Newham may have, through this conscious or unconscious action of filtration, enabled a particular world view which respects the family in addition to the broader societal values, to which many have been socialized. They may interpret Islamic codes in a different sense from those elders whose relationship contacts and familial links with places of origination act as justification for continuity of established traditions, and accepted norms.

Local Muslims like other locals in Newham, undergo a process of

socialisation which seeks to integrate them into the society's cultural values and norms. Societies transmit cultural factors to each successive generation in order to maintain survival. It does this by instilling essential cultural attributes into society members; utilising societal infrastructures, for example education. The process of socialisation normally structures the child's personality towards the relative societal norms and values, thereby resulting in the development, maintenance and survival of the culture. In the early stages of socialisation significant role models might include immediate family, guardians, and /or extended family. Later on, education, mass media, religion, peer groups may exert considerable influence. The contra-flow of dual socialisation processes can result in conflict within the family, and/or the 'peer' group. The resolution of conflict requires a unique perspective, which takes account of the multiple cultural impactors influencing the situation. Although elders have the role of conflict resolution practitioners, substantial numbers of youth turn elsewhere for resolution.

The conflict between the traditional values of 'East' and 'West' is reflected in the work of Attia Hosain, a Muslim woman born in 1913, and raised and educated in India. In 1947, Attia migrated to England, obtaining employment as a journalist and broadcaster. She has presented her own BBC Eastern Service women's programme, and has lectured on 'East-West' identity and conflict. Attia's short stories reflect the knowledge she has gained from her experience of the 'East' and the 'West'. Her work has been published in India, United States and Britain. Her education blended:

" ... an English liberal education with that of a traditional Muslim household where she was taught Persian, Urdu and Arabic. She was the first woman to graduate from among the feudal, 'Taluqdari' families into which she was born."⁹³

Anita Desai summarises the relationship between tradition, culture, and the dichotomy of East and West in her introduction to Attia Hosain's novel, Phoenix Fled. This novel is one of many produced by 'Asian' people, reflecting the contradictions between 'East' and 'West':

"If there is a break in that tradition, then - "What will happen?" ... The downfall of the family, of society, of religion, of the motherland, India herself. So ... a marriage need to be approved not only by the parents but an astrologer as well ... and so life is lived according its rules, rules prescribed by time, centuries of time. Of course time moves in other directions as well - TV and radio sets invade homes, the sari is given up for jeans, the old astrologer laughed at and the priest avoided, the past scorned. But it remains. Like the colour of one's skin, and eyes, it remains."⁹⁴

Desai considers how Attia's novels address the levels of pressure upon Muslim families to maintain a sense of traditional values:

"...the one unforgivable sin was to rock this hierarchy, its stability. How no-one could offend religion or the family or society by going against it and only those who lived according to its rules could survive."⁹⁵

In her analysis, the concept of 'westernisation' as a focus of blame for all the difficulties facing Muslims, in particular relationships between parents from one tradition and children located within another:

"In this story ... "Westernisation" is seen as destructive of the old, traditional culture. The latter may be full of cruelties and injustices, but it is a pattern of life known and understood, therefore more acceptable and more fitting than an alien culture that has been neither fully understood nor assimilated."⁹⁶

Desai and Attia's viewpoints are worthy of reflection, within the contemporary urban context of Newham, where we find further examples of the conflict between 'traditional' society values and 'westernisation'.

The researcher interviewed a Muslim professional woman, with experience of living in Pakistan and the U.K. 'Sultana' reflects concern within Muslim families, regarding a perceived 'moral decline' influenced by 'westernisation.' Sultana blames working women for a neglect of the family - whilst Muslim society in Britain was, in her view, suffering from conflict of values. This conflict between 'traditional' society values and the demands of life within the wider U.K. context is illustrated by the comments of Sultana - a professional Muslim woman who has experience of living in both contexts. (in Pakistan and the U.K). Sultana was of the view that "whatever a person has in life is God given", and conversely, " if a person is unfortunate enough to be born poor and destitute, it is also God"s Will, and ought to be accepted." Sultana believed that 'Western' juvenile delinquency was a symptom of the "lack of parental authority", and the youths' disenchantment with their upbringing. Sultana said that the 'it is the children who will suffer', and 'the woman should stay at home'.⁹⁷

The question was raised of how, in Newham, many Muslim women acquire

employment in an attempt to improve the family's financial situation. Sultana condemned this practice:

"Women who go out to work - and leave their children for someone else to look after - are irresponsible and neglect their children."⁹⁸

The point was made by the researcher that within Newham, some Muslim couples consider that two combined salaries provide a better standard of living for the family - and that their children will suffer if they cannot provide quality housing and education. In this context, 'good parenting' might be considered to be having the financial resources to provide a suitable standard of living. The researcher explained that in Newham there are a substantial number of Muslim families living in poverty - and a recent trend has been that women have greater opportunities than men to acquire employment. However, Sultana re-iterated her view that people should accept their situation in life - and not attempt to change it to what she considered to be the "detriment of the children". Sultana addressed many of the prevalent concerns that Muslim families in Newham have expressed, with regard to their children. As a professional woman, Sultana had temporarily given up her career to raise her children 'Islamically'. However, she was in a financially secure position, where she had the 'luxury' to make a choice. Many women in Newham are faced with 'underclass status' on low-income, or working and improving the family income above the 'survival line'.⁹⁹

6.4.4. Conflict Resolution and 'Moral Transgression'

The penalties in force, with regard to perceived 'moral transgression' among Muslims range from attempts at rehabilitation to rejection and ostracisation from the household, extended family and/or significant community. In some Muslim contexts in Newham, *izzat* ('honour') and *sharam* ('shame') can discourage families from reconciling with a stigmatised family member, particularly in the case of a female.¹⁰⁰ This would ensure a vested interest in restricting the personal freedom of females, and condemnation of any custom or practice perceived as threatening or leading to deviancy and disgrace. The Muslim woman who is perceived as contravening family/community 'values' may be confronted with considerable difficulties if she is discovered in her actions.

A family member, rejected from within the extended family network, may have no recourse to an alternative means of survival. Within some societies, basic survival requirements such as food, shelter, and protection are conveyed as a privilege of membership of that kinship network. Within Islamic sources of authority, the basis of the provision of social welfare is to be found within the unit of the family. This system utilises a supportive network, which takes account of the basic needs of its members.

Family disapproval can be linked to the social and economic standing of the Muslim family in Newham, in relation to the significant Muslim community of which they may perceive themselves a part. Families that are widely respected

within the Muslim community and have been accorded 'community standing' may be more susceptible to the attentions of others in the community. This may result in the family focusing upon the impression it gives to community members, and conferring - particularly upon the female family members - expected standards of behaviour. These standards might normally include upholding the family 'honour' within the local community and the significant extended community(ies).

The woman - and in some cases their family - may be shunned and stigmatised, resulting in a withdrawal from community social activities and certain infrastructural support systems. This would, in many cases, ensure that the family had a vested interest in carefully controlling the actions and lifestyles of women.

The responses of family and/or kinship network to the discovery of female 'deception' vary considerably, depending upon a number of complex factors - informed by culture, religion, geographical, social, and economic circumstances. Within Newham, the researcher has observed reactions including: the withdrawal of students from further education courses; the removal of girls from Newham and their being sent elsewhere, i.e. to Pakistan, and/or married to (for example) Pakistani men; 'house arrest'; and/or domestic violence within the family.¹⁰¹ These actions were taken by families in respect of females who had either been discovered 'deceiving', were suspected of participating in 'deception', or were informed upon by others. In the view of both male and female respondents there appeared to be an overwhelming opinion that penalties and sanctions imposed upon male transgressors, tended to be more lenient. The importance attached to the level of the (considered) transgression can be reflected by the severity of the

penalties imposed. This can be in relation to the (perceived) threat it poses to the family concerned. Penalties may be imposed for family members, especially girls, who attempt to change or challenge accepted 'traditions.'

As discussed earlier, generations of Muslims have developed aspects of a Newham collective common identity. This has resulted in the development of trans-cultural friendship groups, participation in youth sub-cultural activity, and the expression of localised cultural behaviour patterns. Certain youth reject elements of tradition; adopting new marriage patterns which may result in the severance of kinship links. Traditional marriage patterns are considered by many Muslims to be an intrinsic aspect of the 'Muslim' community.

Prior to the creation of the welfare state in Britain in 1948, many married women tolerated mental and physical abuse, in preference to life without the financial support of their husbands. The existence of support systems offers an opportunity for women, in this position, to change their situation - in the knowledge of the welfare 'safety net'. Some Muslims consider that women's increased involvement within the public domain, correlates to an increasing divorce rate.

During fieldwork, the researcher has found correlation between issues of gender-role - and intra-personal/inter-personal conflict: the differing expectations of gender roles can lead to conflict and - in extreme cases - violent responses to what may be viewed as 'moral transgression'.¹⁰²

Newham raised Muslim generations may interpret Islamic codes in accordance with their understanding of the issues, relative to the situation. Elders may make a more traditional response, based upon the customs and practices of their particular socialisation process. These sanctions and penalties can - in some cases - be considered severe by Muslims raised within a Newham context.

6.5. Newham Fieldwork Interview - Transcript. 'Ahmed's View: A Muslim Male Perspective on Muslims and Conflict in Newham.

6.5.1. Introduction

This is a transcript of an interview with 'Ahmed', a 18 year old Newham-raised Muslim. Ahmed describes himself as a 'practising Muslim', which he defines as attempting to closely live as 'a good Muslim.' he makes a distinction between practising and non-practising Muslims. He defines the latter as 'Muslim by name and birth, but lacking belief in Islamic doctrine.' The emphasis in the conversation was on: Muslim youth in Newham, Muslim females, Community Relations, and Islam and Culture. 'Ahmed' is represented by the letter 'A', and the researcher by 'YFH'.¹⁰³

6.5.2. Transcript.

YFH Would you like to tell me what some of the major concerns are for Muslims in Newham?

A I think that the major concerns for Muslims living in Newham are firstly, I'll focus on the girls, because they are the ones who had difficulties in schools and colleges, etc.

YFH What kind of difficulties do they experience?

A Firstly, Muslim girls who go to schools and colleges, sometimes they are banned from wearing the hijab - the scarf you know - which in Islamic terms should be worn, you know. But obviously it depends on whether the school allows it or not. Years ago it may have been a problem for girls to wear hijab in school, but now today girls aren't too pressurised to wear hijab as they were used to. Still, if you are looking at a lot of schools and colleges, you see girls wearing the hijab, which I think is a good thing - because they are allowed to practice Islam.

YFH Do you find that some Muslim women consider themselves to be practising Islam ... but they might not chose to wear the hijab.

A I can't see that actually: I can't see that in practice, because if you are a practising Muslim and you are a woman you must wear the hijab - you know - you can't separate one thing from another. Either you are or you are not - you see - nothing is clearer than that.

YFH Have you heard about any problems at the college concerning women wearing a head covering?

A I don't think women are pressurised to wear the hijab, but obviously if a woman chooses to wear hijab, she can do. There's nothing stopping her from doing so. But in circumstances where the husband forces the wife or the woman to wear the hijab, that's obviously up to the husband, because obviously he wants his wife to be protected from something. He wants to see his wife wearing the hijab, so if there is a consensus between man and wife there is no problem. It's only when the woman feels she is being forced to wear the hijab, that's wrong. Because, in Islam there is no force.

YFH Are there instances when women are 'forced' to wear the hijab?

A I think that people who go by tradition usually are the ones who suffer from being forced to do something. Whereby if they were to go by Islam, then they would not have this attitude. They would know the reason why they are wearing the hijab, and they would be more confident - so I think

sometimes parents don't give their children proper teaching as to why they should be wearing the hijab, and just force it on them. And that's when the difficulty arises, and the children say 'why are we wearing the hijab?' and when they see the girls going to school not wearing the hijab, they wonder why they have to wear hijab, and why other girls are walking around like this. And I think that is where the problem is. But if parents can be a bit more flexible, and explain to their children why they are doing this, why they have to wear the hijab, and give them good reason for it - I don't think there should be any problems.

A I think that education has a lot to do with it. Obviously the parents have been brought up in a strict way, because back home you either get forced to do something or you don't do it - whereas when you are living in the U.K. children usually query their parents if they are told to do something, they say 'why should we do it?'

YFH It's interesting that you said 'back home'. Can you tell me what that means to you?

A Right, by 'back home' I mean Pakistan or India, you know, because obviously the education system there is much more strict, it's much more formal. if you haven't done your homework, I think a few years back, you would have been given the cane. There would be a very strict punishment for that - whereas in the U.K. there is no cane, maybe at private schools or whatever, but generally if you have not done your homework you are not generally beaten about the head or something.

YFH Are you referring to some of the urban areas within Pakistan, where some people can afford education?

A That's what I'm talking about, the people who actually have got the money.

YFH The majority of people can't go to school.

A That's right, people who live in villages on low incomes, they can't afford [for] their children to go to school.

YFH They're dependent on getting information from their parents and families.

A That's right. I think that's the reason why. But in this country, I've seen a major trend, a lot of Muslim women are wearing the hijab whereas a few years ago, I did not used to see many women wearing the hijab in the college. But I think it's a good thing anyway, because Muslim women are realising that their potential and they are practising Islam, which is the main thing. A few years ago, it would have been difficult for them ... as for the boys, they have a lot of problems in - I don't know whether you

heard of it - there's been a lot of drug abuse in ... college, and a lot of taking of pills.

YFH Is this [drug abuse] an issue affecting Muslims in Newham?

A I think so, because they are picking up bad habits and when they go home, their parents obviously have a different expectancy of their son or their daughter, that they would be doing good, but obviously they don't know the world outside - it's a completely different thing.

YFH Is there anything being done to resolve the problem of drug abuse among young people in the college?

A I think that lots of groups have been set up actually, like the Khilafah is one of the Muslim groups, and the Minhaj-I-Sunnah - they've actually got their own rooms in the College, where they actually practice and give talks to the youth. They've mentioned a couple of times, you know, teaching the youth - and they also do Friday congregational prayer; so I think that is going to have a good effect on them.

YFH Are community elders aware of these kind of problems affecting youth in Newham?

A They may have been, but I think more a sort of awareness among the youth, because generally speaking from childhood they've been taught Islam by their parents, whereas when they have got to sixteen or seventeen they are sort of querying it and going out themselves and looking at Islam themselves, and looking at books and literature, and seeing what Islam is, you see. And once they find out what the reality is, obviously they become more confident themselves, and they become more practising Muslims rather than traditional Muslims. I think that's a major occurrence.

Because a few years ago, you never used to see a lot of youth in the mosque, but now, you know, it's increasing which is a good sign.

YFH What do you know about Mosque attendance in Newham? Do many Muslim youth go to Mosque?

A I think it's a large percentage, because the youth have all got together and established these groups for young Muslims, Minhaj-I-Sunnah and Khilafah, all these groups aims are to get the youth together and to make them more aware of Islam, and what Islam is asking of you.

YFH Are these 'groups' focusing their outreach along ethnic lines? For example, are other groups of Muslims, such as Somalis encouraged to get involved with the groups you mentioned?

A I think that generally they are concentrating on people from the ethnic backgrounds of Pakistan and India, but it does not mean to say that Muslims from other backgrounds are not coming in. Because I have seen actually a few converts to Islam, from English, and there have been black people, but generally the majority are from India and Pakistan.

YFH Is there any conflict between people on the basis of cultural differences?, for example, Somalian Muslims and Muslims with Indian sub-continent links?

A I think that more or less conflicts occur more due to ill-behaviour or ignorance.

YFH What do you mean by that?

A Right, I'll expand on that. A few months ago, there was this Somali man in the mosque, and they'd come for prayer, and he was reading [?] his prayer, and the Pakistani man in front of him. Now, when he went to prostrate on the floor, he actually touched the man in front and obviously he did not like that. So when he had finished his prayer he got up and started an argument in the mosque; this is very unusual, because you are not meant to quarrel in the mosque, and the Pakistani man, he got up and he said to the Somali man 'what do you think you are doing? I'm reading my prayer, and you are sort of pushing me from the back. What do you think you are doing?' And they started arguing, very loudly, it was really unnecessary, honestly! And everyone got together, and pulled them back, but these sort of things really should not happen.

YFH Why do you think it did happen?

A Attitudes ... they do get them from their backgrounds, but I think generally speaking everyone has got prejudices in themselves - and obviously they don't reveal them all the time, but they only come out within some sort of conflict, and I think it was just a matter that was very unnecessary because the way I saw it was there is no need for that, what a Pakistani man could have done was asked him in a polite manner 'can you not do this to me, because it is not good' or whatever, but he chose to quarrel which is really unnecessary.

YFH What was the reason he chose to quarrel rather than 'asking him in a polite manner?'

A I think that the reason for it was that it had been going on for a few days, which I found out later. [laughter] And obviously he was up to here with it. And that was obviously his last - if he does it again, I'm going to give it to him. Even so I think it was unnecessary, because in a mosque. in

places of worship, you should have more consideration. But I think that generally speaking everyone is well behaved. But it is only in that sort of coincidence [sic].

YFH Do you think that more non-Pakistani people might start going to the mosque?

A That's right, like a Bengali mosque? This is happening in Newham ... and the way I see it is there has been a tendency, I've seen a lot of Somalis come to the mosque, but obviously they hang around in their own group but it does not mean to say they don't come to the mosque to pray. They do come. Which is a good thing, because it actually gives unity to the Muslim community.

YFH People get to know each others differences?

A That's right. I think it is a good thing, and it should be encouraged. The whole purpose is to unite the Muslim nation, not looking at their race.

YFH Do you think that there are many people with the same opinion as you?

A People do have their own opinions. Whether it's Arab or Somali. But the way I see it is that everyone's a Muslim, you should be respecting your Muslim brother; fair enough he comes from a different background, that should be understood, but at the end of the day he is a Muslim, and he is your brother. As long as you have got this sort of attitude, and you respect each and every one, then there is no problem. It's only when you start looking at someone else by their race or by their kin or by their colour, then problems occur. But Islam purges us of these things, eliminates them, you should not have this problem.

YFH Could you tell me something about what you feel the relationship generally is between Muslim, Hindu and Sikh?

A I think that generally there is a good relationship between Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus in Newham. But obviously you heard of some clashes, you heard of some riots between Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs which I feel is very unnecessary.

YFH Why do you think these clashes happen?

A Obviously there are some sort of village backgrounds, between the Hindu and the Muslim - that's the first thing.

YFH But why should that be a problem?

A I think that, to be honest, generally speaking the problems start when

children start going to the college, you get conflicts between gangs, you have different gangs and they have conflicts between one another.

A One might be Muslim, one might be Sikh. Because, generally, Muslims and Sikhs might mingle in the college, but when they are outside I don't think they would mingle, because they've got other friends. Generally speaking, I don't think Muslims would hang around with Sikhs, or Sikhs would hang around with Hindus, unless they had a purpose.

YFH So they keep amongst themselves?

A I think that they keep to their own set.

I think that, what happens is, when I don't know if you know about the ... Mosque in India and the Hindus destroying that? There's a lot of confrontation in the U.K., it came up in the newspapers, and I think that's what spurred the confrontation. Muslims started attacking the temples, and the Hindus started attacking the mosques.

YFH Do you think that events like the one you mentioned are linked to events abroad?

A Definitely. But, speaking again, it does not have to happen because, I don't know if you remember Salman Rushdie and his satanic revelation The Satanic Verses, that caused a lot of confrontation in the U.K. Not just in the U.K., everywhere in the world. Muslims in Bradford got together and burnt his book, it's that bad, so it does not have to be .

It does not have to happen here. It can happen in the U.K. I think when incidents like that occur, it sparks off their temper and they start attacking each other. Generally speaking, I don't see that problem in Newham - everyone seems to be calm and relaxed. It's only when something happens, like a gang of Hindus attack a Muslim or something like that.

YFH Do you think there are friendships across so called 'ethnic' groups, for example, among Muslim, Hindu and Sikh?

A Definitely. I think that is possible. Because if they are living in a multicultural area, and your neighbour is going to be either black, Asian or white, you see what I mean? And obviously, if he or she is your neighbour, you are going to have good relations with him - try your best to be good to them, so - yeah - I see that friendship in Newham.

I mean, ourselves, we are strictly from Muslim families, but our next door neighbour is English - we have good relations with her, you know, we are always exchanging things with her. Ever since we've been there we have

had good relations with her, so I think if I can give my example, if we can have a good relationship, then why can't everyone else in Newham, you know? [laughter] So generally speaking I think there are definitely families who have good relations with people of other ethnic origins.

YFH How could the types of conflict you have mentioned, affecting young people, be resolved?

A First of all I think the drug abuse problem. I think that could be solved by the youth themselves, because obviously someone knows where the drugs are coming from, and where they have been distributed, and obviously if they wanted to put a stop on that they could, very easily. People they know who are addicted to drugs, they can set up their own helpline or their own groups, to help people who have been on drugs for a long time, to get them off. I think that the youth has very much the key to their problems.

YFH 'Traditionally, elders might normally be turned to as conflict resolvers?

A Definitely, it would be the elders who give opinions and advice, but obviously you have to look at the practical side of things. When the children go out to the colleges and schools, it's not the life inside the house, it's the life outside the house which is the key factor - and if they can correct that life, then obviously the life in the home would be a lot better for them as well. So I think that's the key issue.

YFH You have stressed the importance of youth as conflict resolvers. Why?

A I think that such a problem ain't natural, it's in the youth itself. It's only the youth who can understand each others problems, and how they can resolve them.

YFH Why do you think the youth can understand them?

A Because the youth have been brought up in such a culture, they know each other, and they understand what the problems are. Whereas the parents haven't got the experience, going out to the colleges, and thinking for themselves what goes on, and what happens in the colleges. I think that only the youth, because they are the ones that have been in the colleges, and they know all the problems of today.

YFH Would there be any difficulty in elders accepting that the youth might be better placed to resolve some of the problems of youth?

A I think the elders want to keep that role. Definitely. But there is nothing stopping the youth from helping each other out. This is the key thing. If the youth can help each other in solving their problems, I think if the

parents can help the youth at home, and the youth can help themselves outside, then that's the good thing - because they are going to be helped both places. So I'm not neglecting the parents, and I'm not neglecting the youth, -

YFH There's a role for everybody really?

A Definitely, And I think once this can take place there'll be much more of an understanding of their problems, and how they can be helped ...

... I think that is the problem in this country, especially the girls, I think. Because when they go to colleges, and see what is going on, they think - they sort of want to chose their own husbands, when they go home they are told by their parents that they are going to have an arranged marriage, which sometimes they find it hard to accept.

YFH But within Islam, it allows for the girl to decide?

A It does. Islam definitely allows for the girl to decide.

YFH Some girls believe that they are pressurised into a marriage, by their parents, rather than being allowed to say 'yes' or 'no'. I understand that is not Islam, but might that be a 'traditional practice'?

A I think that's more tradition, when parents pressurise their girls or their daughters to marry some sort of person. Islam does not allow anything like that. Islam allows for girls to chose their husband, it doesn't force anyone to marry someone else.

YFH Why do you think some parents might do that? They might consider their action as Islamic.

A I think they are not true to Islam. I think what they are going on is their tradition, and what their ideas are from back home. That you give the girl to a boy in a certain family, or somewhere else, this is wrong because these traditions go against Islam. Islam does not say that you must make your daughter marry someone, whether they like it or not. No! Islam allows choice, and it allows for consensus between husband and wife. And I think when parents pressurise their children to marry a certain girl or a certain boy, then that is wrong, because they are definitely going by tradition - not by Islam.

YFH Girls have run away from home sometimes, to avoid being pressurised into an arranged marriage.

A Now I think the problem of that, particularly for the parents: if the parents were more flexible and had a bit more consideration for their son or their

daughter, they would not go by their tradition, they would go by their conscience and by Islam, because they would know that living in a country where boys and girls chose who they are going to marry, now if you enforce a marriage on someone else you are most likely to end up with a divorce at the end, or the marriage breaking down ...

YFH Do you think that this is acknowledged by parents and religious leaders?

A I think it has been recognised, and I think that another thing that is happening is that in arranged marriages, there has been more of a scope for the bride and the groom to chose their husband, they actually have a say of 'yes' or 'no', whereas ... [before] you didn't have that - you either married the person or you didn't.

YFH Do you think that is more accepted within a class of people from a certain background. What I mean by that is a certain level of education and income?

A I think that people who have had a good education, from a certain family background, they understand these issues, and they would have more consideration for their son or their daughter. Whereas people from villages, with a tradition of marrying their daughter off to so-and-so, without any consideration, you just marry them, that is it, I think that is true.

YFH Would you say that there are different attitudes towards this, depending upon financial status and educational background?

A I think they would, actually, because obviously if you are from a middle-class background, ... the more money you have, the more you are going to spend and the more traditions you are going to go for ... A lot of traditions that Muslims have for their weddings actually come from India, and you can only afford to spend money on these traditions if you have the money in the first place... whereas if you are from a very poor background, from a village, you are just going to have enough to get your daughter married off - you are not going to have the fancy jewellery, you are not going to have ... band going past you. As you were saying, it's the middle and the lower class gap.

YFH Many of the issues you have raised are to do with interpretations of Islam, because really these issues that come up to do with Islam are about different ways of interpreting the Qur'an.

A That's right. This is one thing I was going to mention.

YFH And agreement of people on their interpretations, if you take a wider vision around the world - even different places within the one country of

Pakistan, there are so many different interpretations.

A I think that the way around that is to accept that people are from different parts of the country, they have their background, but I think that the important thing to remember is that they are Muslims. So obviously they are going to have different sorts of customs and rituals.

YFH One thing I found in Pakistan is that certain traditions were being practised in certain cases that were not Islamic - so you just said about respecting that people come from different backgrounds and traditions, but someone might believe that they are practising Islamic traditions because that's their information ... but these specific things that were occurring would be considered totally un-Islamic, but the people practising them -

A - believe them, yes ... many of the traditions that have come into Pakistan have come from India, especially these are most often seen at weddings, I think, because first you have the bride putting the henna on her, and you have her dressing up in all the gold, glamorous gold so she is like a gold object [laughter] and then you've got - I mentioned this to my brother - they are non Islamic, if you go by Islam all these things are not allowed.

YFH The idea of dowries is creating a very big problem.

A That's right. If you go by Islam, then you don't have any of this, it's a very simple wedding.

YFH So why do you think people hold onto those traditions? Do you think that is anything to do with peer pressure? because people in the environment might all be doing that?

A I think that's the main thing. People around me are doing it so why can't we do it? But obviously you are not looking at the logic behind it, where it has come from, why they are doing it. Is it Islamic? I don't think people question it, or is it non-Islamic? Whereas someone who is a practising Muslim will definitely think of it. This would be the first question on his agenda.

YFH So would you say that people are 'practising' Islam in that they are trying to learn more about it, and question interpretations, whereas other Muslims might not question and challenge 'traditional practices'?

A Yes, I think I'll go along with that. I think that the practising Muslim is much stronger than just the Muslim by name. Because he understands the true nature of Islam, and once you understand the nature of Islam you know what Islam expects of you, and what is forbidden - whereas the person who actually says 'I am a Muslim' he does not pray, he does not

give zakat, I think he would have a much lesser understanding of what Islam is, he would just accept these traditions as being in Islam - obviously he would not have the knowledge to go and find out for himself. So I think that is very much the case. People are accepting Muslims as being Islamic, whereas if they were truly to find out these things are not.

YFH One of the things I observed in Pakistan, was the worship at shrines. Is this Islamic?

A That is not Islamic ... but that seems to be a tradition in Pakistan, I've seen that.

YFH It seems to be a very powerful one among some Muslims, and has a lot of meaning for people.

A ... Islam clearly says you must not go to anyone else to answer your prayers, to prostrate in front of someone dead is forbidden in Islam - and to ask favours of someone who is dead is forbidden as well. The majority of people who go to the places like that are people who have just accepted a tradition and they have not questioned it.

YFH Are you aware of people justifying un-Islamic practices in the name of Islam?

A They find a reason to do it! [laughter]. People do find reasons, they have actually justified their cause, but they've got no substance behind it.

YFH How do they justify it?

A I'll give you an example: my uncle, he's a Sunni Muslim, and Brelwi, they go to extremes, they call the Prophet by 'Ya Muhammad', you see in Islam you are not allowed to say that, whereas in this Sunni sect of Islam they say that which is forbidden. Now I had a talk with him about that and I said "listen uncle, this is wrong, you are not allowed to say 'Ya Muhammad.' Islam says you must not call someone who is dead, ya actually means your life. You can say 'Ya Allah' because you are saying O God, God is alive, you are allowed to say that, but you can't say 'Ya Muhammad.'"

He said to me, "well, I'll talk to you later about that," which obviously meant that he had no reason for that, but he just went along with that because all the rest of the gang - and also they have so many other things. you know. They've made up things, they have these '*urs mubarak*', every month they make a lot of dishes and stuff and they give all to this holy saint, which is not allowed in Islam ... it's happening everywhere in Pakistan, the Sunni sect, they practice it. It might happen here. *Ya'ani* they

call it.

This is the problem. There have been a lot of innovations coming into Islam, which are not supposed to be there. But are there because of these ignorant people. They don't wish to understand that this is not on.

YFH Do you think this constitutes a threat to Islam, in some ways?

A Yes, I think in that way it is a threat, because if there is a newcomer to Islam, he approaches Islam like these people in that manner, obviously he won't know, we'll think it an Islamic practice. But obviously he won't know the logic behind it - it's only a true Muslim, a practising Muslim that can actually identify things as innovations, you know, say this is on and this is not on. There are people who are actually prepared to justify this, just for the sake of what they are doing is right. I find that hard to believe sometimes.

Endnotes:

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1. London Borough of Newham. Annual Report 1994. Newham: Strategic Policy and Equality, Chief Executive's Department, 1995, p 10
 2. 'Sara' transcript, op.cit.
 3. The extent of *qat* consumption amongst Somalis has been featured in several media reports. For example, see the report by Julie Flint on: Correspondent, BBC2, 23 March 1996. This report described the devastation on communities in Somaliland, in terms of health and family conflict. Also see Fred Halliday discussing the controversy on *qat* in the context of Yemenis and Somalis in Cardiff, London, and Sheffield. Halliday, op.cit., pp.122-128 & passim.
 4. This context extends outwards to the sharing of public space in break periods, and was demonstrated during attendance at a Christmas party. 1996.
 5. The researcher is aware of instances of conflict occurring among Muslim mosque attenders - as a result of variations in understandings of Islam - for example, based on different cultural approaches towards prayer, religious practices, and mosque usage. Although, in principle, the mosque should be accessible to all Muslims - irrespective of ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural differences - in practice in Newham many mosques have until recently been frequented by Muslims from a similar 'ethnic' background. This may occur as a result of identification factors between the worshippers, rather than as a result of intended exclusion.
 6. 'Sulaiman' [pseud.], interview with researcher, transcript of notes, Newham, August 23, 1997.
 7. For a discussion on social identity and language, see: David Crystal, The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.38-45 & passim. An overview of body-language is contained within: Desmond Morris, Manwatching, (London: Cape, 1977). A discussion on non-verbal communication is contained within: Victoria A. Seitz, Your Executive Image: The Art of Self-packaging for Men and Women,(Massachusetts: Bob Adams, Inc., 1992), pp.17-59. Inter-personal communication (including eye-contact and facial expressions) are analysed within: Philippa Davis, Your Total Image: How to communicate success, (London: Judy Piatkus, 1990), pp..27-74.
 8. Bailey, Andrew. TalkWorks (London: British Telecom, 1997), p.4.

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9. Geoffrey Williams, Islam: The British Experience (London: St. Catherine's Conference Report No. 29, 1991), pp. 2 (reporting on Jorgen Nielsen's address to the St. Catherine's Conference on Islam at Cumberland Lodge, 27-29 November 1991).
 10. Cartwright and Zander, op.cit, p.23.
 11. Forest Gate Community School, a secondary school in Newham, produced a video in 1996 presenting their perceptions and experiences of bullying peer-pressure, and the demands to 'conform' to a sub-culture which includes drug-taking. This video is to be distributed nationally. See: 'Film can deal blow against intimidation.' Newham Recorder, October 16, 1996.
 12. "Sickening facts on bullying in schools" Bill Howell, Newham Recorder, July 10, 1996.
 13. "Pupil 'mediators' help diffuse school conflicts." Chris Taylor, The Express (Newham), September 20, 1997. (citing Ruth Musgrave, Education and training officer, Newham Conflict and Change). For an account of how mediation works in Newham schools, see: 'A change of climate', Stephen Hoare. The Guardian (Education). September 2, 1997. 'The little peace makers.' Newham Recorder, September 17, 1997.
 14. Miles, Rosalind. The Rites of Man: Love, Sex and Death In The Making Of The Male (London: Paladin, 1992.) pp. 90-1
 15. For a discussion on youth culture see: Brake, Michael. Comparative Youth Culture: The Sociology of Youth Culture and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain, and Canada. (USA: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd in association with Methuen inc., 1985, repr.1987. Routledge, 1990.
 16. For a discussion on Basil Bernstein's theory of 'restricted codes', see: Michael Haralambos, Martin Holborn & Robin Heald, Sociology: Themes and Perspectives, (London: Collins Educational, HarperCollins, 4th ed., 1995) pp. 752-3.
 17. 'Sportsnight', interview between Des Lynam and Naseem Hamed, BBC1, 9 April 1997. Hamed is a world champion boxer, and is also significant as a role model for many Muslim youth in Newham.
 18. Newham Recorder, 31 January 1996.
 19. Television "soaps", for example, Brookside and EastEnders are frequently used by educators and the caring professions as a teaching aid within Newham. Subject matter relating to controversial issues can be addressed, for example, abortion, homosexuality, drugs, racism, violence, bullying,

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- homelessness, and employment prospects. See 'EastEnders reviewed by a cross section of Newham Youth.' Newham Recorder, 11 September, 1996.
20. The following Group Question was given: *In your opinion, is the programme EastEnders representative of the East End of London. Imagine that a television company has come to you, seeking help with a new soap opera, called Newham Life - about the **real people of the East End**. The TV company has offered you a contract, to assist with the development of the script. Your role is to develop a scenario, depicting aspects of Newham life. Consider the following issues: What sort of stories should be written? Should the programme explore real issues? Imagine that there was a character based on yourself! How would you portray this character?*
 21. These cultural factors include popular music, dress-codes, slang, and attendance at parties or entertainment venues. There are also specific 'East End' cultural traits, relating to interpersonal relations.
 22. Sanjeev Bhaskar, 'Face Behind the Voice', Radio Times, 12-18 July 1997.
 23. Goodness Gracious Me! BBC Radio 4, 20 June 1996. Produced by Gareth Edwards and Anil Gupta, featuring Meera Syal, Kulvinder Ghir, Sanjeev Bhaskar, Nitin Sawhney, and Nina Wadia.
 24. In regard to so-called 'Islamic dress', the *Qur'an* does offer guidelines regarding 'female modesty' - but in terms of specifics this can be a controversial area open to wide interpretation. The term 'Islamic dress' is used here cautiously, acknowledging the cultural and religious variations in its interpretation - whilst not claiming any specific archetypal form in its usage. Certain assumptions apply when the term is used by different interest groups.
 25. Akbar S. Ahmed, Postmodernism and Islam, Predicament and Promise, (London: Routledge, 1992) p.182-3
 26. Salina Ali, 'Style-Wise, and Halal,' Q-News, 20-26 September 1996
 27. Dress codes + garments are known by different names, reflecting diverse origins of individuals, and languages spoken within the borough. *Burqa* refers to a face veil, and is taken from the Arabic verb *barqa'a* - "to veil, drape"; *baraqi* is a "veil worn by women; long, leaving the eyes exposed." Hans Wehr, Arabic-English Dictionary, p.54]

Shadir is Arabic for 'tent', usually transliterated in Anglicised form as '*Chador*'. [ibid, p. 460]

Hijab - from the verb *hajaba* - is "a cover, wrap, drape, curtain." [ibid, p. 156]

28. *Shalwar khameez* is a two piece garment, consisting of long, baggy trousers over which is worn a long-sleeved overshirt. The term is used for male and female attire.

29. Costs associated with placing and replying to advertisements in the Asian Times Marriage Service section, as at June 1996: advertisements cost £45 (£75 for a boxed advert) and run for six weeks. Replies to advertisements incur an administrative fee of £6 per letter

The cost of placing and replying to advertisements in the Eastern Eye Matrimonial, as at June 1996: advertisements cost £25 or £35 for four or eight weeks respectively. Replies to advertisements are charged at £5 per letter.

30. All advertisements taken from 'Matrimonial', Eastern Eye, June 14, 1996

31. Eastern Eye, March 15, 1994.

32. "Asian Times Marriage Service", Asian Times June 20, 1996

33. "Q-Introductions", Q-News International, 7 February 1997

The cost of placing an advertisement in Q-News International, as of February 1997, is £20 for 4 issues. There are no boxed advertisements. Respondents are instructed to send a £1 administrative cost per reply.

34. "Q-Introductions," Q-News International, 26 July-1 August 1996.

35. "Hard work is equal to prayers." Rina Khan interviews Ruby Malik. The Friday Times (Karachi), vol. VII, No. 6. 13-19 April 1995.

36. Thufayel Ahmed, "The Way It Is: Women's Rights." Eastern Eye, March 15, 1994.

37. 'Riffat,' [pseud.], Interview with researcher. Tape recorded, May 1996.

38. Celia Anwar, op.cit, p.175

39. Ibid, p.172

40. Ibid., p.178

41. 'Amina' [pseud.], Interview with researcher, transcript of notes, Newham,

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- November 1996.
42. 'Salama' [pseud.], interview with researcher, transcript of notes, Newham, December 1996.
 43. 'Mo' (pseud) Interview with researcher, transcript of notes, Newham, November 1996.
 44. Anonymous source, Newham Council employee, interview by researcher, transcript of notes, May 1996.
 45. "Girl escapes plot to marry her off forcibly," Q-News International, No.230, 23-29 August 1996.
 46. "Father snatched girl over boyfriend row." Eastern Eye, 29 March, 1994.
 47. The Guardian, "Homeless Asians Hide Their Shame", Stephen Lyle, 24 April 1996. Discussing: Jacqui Davies, Discounted Voices Report, (Leeds University, Race & Public Policy Unit, 1996)
 48. ibid, citing: Kamal Faizi, Chief Executive of Sadeh Lok Asian Housing Association, Huddersfield.
 49. ibid, Amanda Mukerji.
 50. Rahila Alam, "A Kenyan Asian in Britain", chap. in From Where I stand, ed. Desmond Mason. (London: Edward Arnold, 1986) p.54.
 51. Cllr. Shama Ahmed, "Council Member,", chap. in Rita Chadha & Theo Bryer (Eds.), Newham Woman: Lives, memories, opinions. (Newham: Stratford City Challenge History Publication, 1996) p.56
 52. Teaching session for young adults, 'Stereotypes and Prejudice in Newham', part of a personal development course run by the researcher in Newham, February 1994.
 53. Fieldwork notes, April 1996, Newham
 54. 'Asma', [pseud], field work notes, Newham, April 1996.
 55. Fieldwork notes, Newham, May 1996.
 56. 'Aisha' interviewed by researcher, transcript of notes, Newham, April 1996.
 57. Celia Anwar, op.cit., p. 177.
 58. 'Halima', [pseud.], interview with researcher, tape-recording, Newham,

March 1996.

59. 'Malika', [pseud.], interview with researcher, tape-recording, Newham, January 1996.
60. op.cit. Celia Anwar, p.
61. Frith, Simon, The Sociology of Youth (Great Britain: Causeway Press Ltd., 1984, reprinted 1986.), p.22
62. Ali Wardak, University of Edinburgh, cited in Vivek Chaudhury, The Guardian, 19 September 1995.
63. Ibid, citing Tariq Modood.
64. Ibid.
65. "Chief steps up the drug war." Re. Metropolitan Police Commissioner Paul Condon's statement against drugs. Newham Recorder, April 10, 1996.
66. "A man who turned his home into a factory to manufacture the drug ecstasy was jailed for a total of ten years on Thursday. When police raided 72-year-old Francois Kerserho's home in...Canning Town, they found enough Ecstasy 'sludge' to make half-a-million pounds worth of the drug. Retired chemist, Kerserho was caught in his laboratory on July 11 last year. When police moved in he was surrounded by chemical apparatus and almost six kilograms of ecstasy... .

"... Kerserho's British henchmen set up two front companies to legitimate the ordering of vast amounts of ingredients needed for the deadly drug, while Kerserho himself used false names to order chemicals. Police also found literature about a pill-making machine on the premises."

"Drug factory main is jailed" Newham Recorder, May 22, 1996.
67. Newham Recorder, 31 January, 1996.
68. 'Jib' (street name for caseworker), Newham Drugs Advice Project Youth Awareness Programme (NDAP:YAP), Newham, February 7, 1996
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Following the publication of this story, the researcher - and several of her female friends and colleagues - have been harassed by men loitering and

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- kerb-crawling within an area previously considered 'safe' streets. This region has recently acquired a reputation for prostitution. On one atypical occasion, the researcher was verbally abused with sexually explicit language, by men who had only a few moments earlier, emerged from a local mosque. This incident occurred late afternoon. In the light of these developments, female friends and colleagues have felt it necessary to reconsider their normal routes to and from their destinations.
72. Field work notes, not attributable
 73. Historically, images of African and Asian women have been portrayed in specific ways: for example, the stereotype associated with Asian women is one of subservience and timidity; the stereotype of African women is often associated with sexual deviance, and eroticism; Muslim women have also been associated with erotic imagery, including that associated with veiling. These images have been discussed in detail elsewhere. For example, see Edward Said, Orientalism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978); Judy Mabro, (ed.) Veiled Half-Truths, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1991).
 74. Newham Recorder, Matthew Eastley, "Police wage vice war," April 24, 1996.
 75. Newham Recorder, May 8, 1996. "Vice: Bid to keep sleaze off the streets".
 76. Advertisement seen in Forest Gate newsagent's window, May 1996.
 77. Fieldwork notes, not attributable
 78. Newham Recorder, "Danger of more crime." May 1, 1996.
 79. Khalid Alavi, interview with researcher, transcript of tape-recording, Lahore, 30 April 1995.
 80. "Police chief out of touch with community" Q-News 2-8 August 1996
 81. Ibid.
 82. 'Khadija', social services worker, interview with researcher, transcript of notes, Newham, March 1996.
 83. According to Newham Council, " ... women make up 66% of Newham's workforce." London Borough of Newham, Inside Newham, Newham Council Staff Newsletter, Issue No.1, August-September 1996.
 84. The researcher is actively involved in provision of employment training

for Muslim women in Newham.

85. Shavid Javed Burki, The Nation's Social Development in Pakistan: A Nation In The Making. (Pakistan: Oxford University Press, Pakistan and Westview Press USA, 1986), p.152.
86. 'D.H.' [pseud.], interview by researcher, transcript of notes, Newham, April 1996. The class group is predominantly 'Asian' (including Muslims).
87. 'Haleh,' [pseud.], interview with researcher, tape recording, Newham, March 1995.
88. Ibid.
89. Muhammad Anwar, Pakistanis In Britain: A Sociological Study (London: New Century Publishers, 1985) incorporating the author's earlier book entitled The Myth of Return. (London: Heinemann, 1979) p.165
90. Geoffrey Williams, Islam: The British Experience. (London: St. Catherine's Conference Report No. 29), p.2 (reporting on Jorgen Nielsen's address to the St. Catherine's Conference of Islam at Cumberland Lodge, 27-29 November 1991)
91. Letters: Home Truths" Mohammed S Ali, Eastern Eye, June 14, 1996.
92. Williams, op.cit, p.2
93. Attia Hosain, Phoenix Fled, (London: Chatto & Windus 1953, Virago Modern Classics, 1988), bibliographical frontpiece.
94. Anita Desai, 'Introduction', *ibid.* , viii
95. *ibid*, ix-x
96. *ibid*, xxi
97. 'Sultana' [pseud.]. Interview with researcher, April 1995. Transcript of notes, Pakistan.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. In Urdu, *izzat* is translated as 'honour; to respect', whilst *sharam* is defined as 'the sense of disgrace; to make or be ashamed.' . M. Raza-ul-Haq Badakhshani, Gem Pocket Dictionary: English into English & Urdu.

(Lahore: Azhar Publishers, n.d.), pp. 186 & 348

101. This issue was introduced in the Yorkshire Television documentary 'Network First: Stolen Brides' (March 1997). The programme produced a support leaflet providing advice on protection and support services available concerning abduction.
102. It may be necessary to separate 'Muslim responses' to moral transgression, from 'Islamic responses' to moral transgression. There are multiple interpretations of belief - informed by historical, tradition and other developments - which result in differing responses within given situations. The idea of a 'Muslim response' implies a uniform approach, which disregards the possibility of variations between population groups. Approaches are as diverse as populations themselves, and will depend, in part, upon the influences of environment, sense of tradition, Islamic interpretative factors, and social-economic factors.
103. 'Ahmed' (pseud.). Interview by researcher. Tape recording. July 1996.

This thesis encompassed an exploration of the link between socio-economic and political aspects of 'race and racism', including the historical context of race relations, and the implications of unresolved cross cultural conflict within Newham. Interactions between the white population of Britain and people of colour - including the majority of Muslims in Britain - have been informed by historical factors relating to the British economic situation and the colonisation of Commonwealth countries. Historically, people of colour - including Muslims - were classified according to 'real or imagined' characteristics. Entire 'population groups' were classified into a hierarchial order which culminated in the delineation of boundaries between people within the social and political spheres of Britain and the ex-colonies. These boundaries manifested themselves within unequal access to social and economic provision, the development and maintenance of specific types of conflict, and infrastructural systems of discriminatory practice.

Muslim migration to Britain has meant the exchange, and in some case incorporation, of cultural variants into the societies of migration. The diversity and regional variations within 'Muslim' cultures are represented in the borough of Newham - especially through the varied understandings and interpretations of Islam and the levels of belief. These interpretations are informed by numerous factors which are/were relevant within the social, economic and political

structures in place within homeland countries. These systems - to some extent - inform the experiences of a proportion of Newham's Muslims. These factors include traditionalist notions of societal life, attitudes towards continuity of 'tradition', the experience of residence within the borough, and the experiences of others.

The Muslims of Newham are diverse in terms of religious interpretations, aspirations, values, traditions, and lifestyle practices. These differences can result in intra-group and inter-group conflict. The 'boundaries' may account for the development of mosques organised on sub-national and ethnic lines. Whilst sharing approaches to specific core values, interpretations of Islamic sources by different Islamic interest groups can vary considerably on certain issues.¹ This can lead to tension between diverse Muslim population groups, which may interpret Islam according to a particular set of characteristics, formulated within the culture of the country of origination. A proportion of Muslims perceive themselves in relation to one or several identities. These identities may be distinct or an amalgamation and synthesis of particular values, customs, practices, and beliefs. Identities may include approaches to interpretation of religious belief, and in some cases, rejection of Islamic doctrine.

Within Newham, cultural boundaries exist between and within different population groups. Individuals may identify with different groups in specific contexts. For example, Muslim youth might attend a mosque for Friday prayers, but also participate in youth sub-cultural groups that are not linked to Islam, and

may contradict 'Islamic values systems'.

Knowledge and beliefs are acquired from within these settings, and boundaries are defined concerning the expected 'appropriate' behaviour of the family member. Beliefs may include some of the prevalent attitudes, with regard to roles, assumptions, prejudices, and stereotypes. They relate to group members, and those considered to be, outside of the group. Beliefs are initially acquired from the views expressed by those involved in the early stages of socialisation and later, those expressed by the broader community.²

Muslims, like non-Muslims, are subject to patterns of socialisation within Newham. Within this framework, roles are defined for all members of the family; delineating boundaries between male and females. These roles are determined by a set of factors and conditions which are deemed to aid in the development, maintenance and sustenance of the family unit. They are learnt, in part, by the observation of others. Self-perception is invariably linked to the roles played within society and the status given to that role. Whatever status is accorded is determined by a set of factors particular to a community. Muslim family networks may depend upon the maintenance of constructs, which enable them to function and reproduce their ways of life. Infrastructures are developed and form an essential medium for the 'passing down' of values, customs, and norms.

Muslim elders, well-socialised into specific cultural frameworks within homelands, might ordinarily be expected by other members within the significant

framework to conform to the rules and norms of others from that homeland culture - thus reinforcing its continuity of traditional elements. Departures from the rules upset order, and subsequently there are methods employed on occasions to dissuade a person from violating them. Systems consisting of penalties and sanctions are used to discourage deviation from the norm.

Family kinship systems might ordinarily contain established opinion regarding uniform approaches and a common outlook in respect of specific core beliefs. The family member may be expected to demonstrate a 'shared interest' in the values and traditional practices associated with the community. This can create conflict between local Muslims, and traditionalist Muslims. Traditionalists include: a) Muslims receiving a substantial part of the formative processes of socialisation in homeland countries, and b) new traditionalists: those successfully socialized to upholding the traditionalist values of an 'idealised' homeland culture. Members of this group may have been raised in Newham.

Traditionalists, successfully socialised according to the ideals and values of their places of origination, may have difficulty in understanding the perceptions of local Muslims raised in Newham. The essential cultural attributes acquired by elders from within homelands are for many an advantage in that environment - but may be considered by local Muslims to be a distinct disadvantage regarding 'peer' group identification within an East London context. Within Britain, the power to influence also exists through alternate infrastructures, including political processes and media influence. Within the U.K, access to status and

forms of power can be gained by alternate means to kinship networks. Local Muslims, along with their peers, have been instilled with the knowledge and skills appropriate to survival within Newham. This includes patterns and styles of inter-personal communication; for example, body language and the expression of non-verbal cues, and subtleties and nuances incorporated within the use of English language.

Interaction across diversity exposes local Muslims to a broad range of influences and choices. They are faced with the question of identifying and belonging to the broader community infrastructure(s), and are subject to the subcultural influences and the need to adapt to the common 'norm' (represented in media, linguistic, and social contexts).³ These localised common norms and behavioural patterns are part of a complex web of association, where daily interactions may form part of a network system of dependency, trade, consumption, and service. This interaction has occurred within the localised infrastructure, resulting in the formulation of aspects of common identity between many Muslim and non-Muslim residents. World views and perceptions of people within society impacts upon Muslims in Newham and relationships across diversity. It can be assumed that all human beings are part of a process of socialisation, and therefore, in some regard, are subject to the influence and patterns of development relating to that infrastructure. This may have profound implications where the infrastructures of origin might seem to contrast and conflict.

Although the processes and practices of socialisation may vary across nations, state, and communities, there are common elements to be found within all systems. Variation may occur in relation to the influences of people, situations, and environments. In general, societies utilise in socialisation the mediums of familial relations, guardians, religion, peer groups, education, mass media, and group membership - or elements of these processes.⁴ The British education system enshrines a set of principles, in which it seeks to transmit survival skills and impart the notion that individuals have a role to play in the determination of their lives. This can conflict with values of Muslim elders - for example - those who came from tribal regions in which forms of conflict resolution occurred within a *Jirga* system (council of elders).⁵

Participation within the educational infrastructure has brought local Muslim children in Newham into contact with non-Muslims who are part of differing belief systems, cultural values and norms. This environment provides a meeting ground for access to divergent influences and sub-cultural norms and values. Within Newham, schoolchildren are to some extent dependent upon the infrastructure of the educational environment of which they are a part. This may exert influence upon them in the form of peer pressure groups, which contain established opinion regarding uniform approaches and a common outlook, in respect of specific core beliefs and practices. Peers may be expected to demonstrate a 'shared interest' in the dominant values of the group.

Generations of Muslims have been socialised to acquire local codes and

patterns of Interpersonal communication; resulting in increased opportunity, and generation of wealth. Economic choice may - to some extent - dictate the boundaries of where Newham residents might choose to live. Presently, where people have economic choice, there are a range of criteria which may be used in the selection of a residential environment. Of those Muslims who became more established and accomplished within the social and economic infrastructure, many took up residence outside of the initial clusters. In contemporary Newham, Local Muslims are to be found residing within all sectors of the borough, although proportionate demographic distribution has not occurred across the borough. There remains several examples in Newham's wards, where sectors of a neighbourhood contain people linked to a specific region of the Indian subcontinent.

Muslims, like others in the borough, may and often do elect to reside among other Muslims, non-Muslims, or any combination of these groups. Criteria may include factors associated with perceived shared social class, and expression of 'understood' local or non 'local' values, attitudes, concerns. This can transcend notions of clustering on the basis of ethno-religious, and cultural grounds. They may share aspects of a Newham local collective identity, including concerns regarding the borough's social and economic development, and their place within the structure. In this context Muslims may consider themselves as part of the Newham community identity:

" ... [a] group of people with whom any individual shares values. These

values usually arise from shared 'ways of life'. Most typical, the community involves people in a small geographical area, such as a village, an urban neighbourhood, or the suburbs. However, a community can also include those who don't inhabit the same physical space, for instance, those who share moral concerns about road building, but who don't live anywhere near each other."⁶

According to this framework, Muslims may perceive themselves as part of a local identity or identities. These identities may be compounded of loyalties operable within potentially conflicting situations. They may encompass values and attitudes - considered inappropriate by elements within the Muslim population - to the 'given/perceived status as Muslim. These perspectives may be evident within the:

- levels of achievement and entrepreneurial activity
- housing patterns: living outside of neighbourhood clusters
- severance and maintenance of kinship links
- the development of a common identity
- marriage patterns
- rejection of 'tradition'
- friendship patterns
- expression of localised cultural behaviour patterns
- participation in sub-cultural activity
- varied understanding and interpretations of Islamic doctrine
- levels of religious belief
- secularism of Muslims, 'apostasy', religious conversion, 'reversion'
- separation of the term 'Muslim' from the framework of Islamic doctrine
- patterns of conflict
- systems of Conflict Resolution.

This thesis examined the concept of a local identity arising out of the shared space and interaction within the socialisation framework existing within the borough's infrastructures. The researcher located elements of collective local identity, which manifested itself within shared values, aspirations, and - in some

cases - resentment of refugee and/or underclass foreign migrants. Local identities contain a set of beliefs, values, practices, patterns and styles of interpersonal communication. Within this framework there exists aspects of shared collective identity. This identity may be comprised of any or all of the following elements:

- resentment from local and/or established Muslims - of non-local underclass, and/or refugee migrants - may occur as a result of : 'visibility' and re-classification as foreigners by non-Muslims;
- differences in patterns and styles of interpersonal communication

Levels of integration has for some Muslims, meant broader acceptance by local populations, and subsequently, the prospect of improved life chances and economic survival within localised communities.⁷ Integration also has resulted in a duality of conflicting roles for many Muslims. Muslims socialised within the 'local' Newham infrastructural framework could be considered to be part of twin and parallel processes of socialisation - each of them, demanding adherence to respective values and ideals. The educational framework, as a socialization process, impacts significantly upon this relationship:

“A general feature of most systems is that they seek to inculcate the values and norms to which a particular society prescribes and to this extent they perform a socialisation function.”⁸

Participation in the broader infrastructures of society has, for some Muslims, led to extreme difficulties. This often presents exceptional demands upon Muslims caught within this conflicting pattern of 'duality'. However, from within this

‘marginal’ position, there may have emerged a unique insight into the problems affecting Muslims within contemporary UK society.

Marginal Muslims may have all the skills and understanding necessary to deal with contemporary issues affecting Muslims in contemporary Britain. Marginalisation may result in the development of a unique insight, enabling contemporary conflict resolution within a British/Muslim context. Marginals may be able to utilise this position to provide specific and appropriate culturally sensitive practices and procedures within the field of Mediation and Conflict Resolution.

Although traditionally elders have held the role of conflict resolution practitioners, substantial numbers of Muslims seek conflict resolution assistance from outside of the Muslim framework. This may occur, particularly in conflict involving personal matters - involving issues of shame and honour. Local Newham-raised Muslims who commit a moral transgression may, in some circumstances, consider it inappropriate to discuss sensitive concerns with elders. Some youth feel that they have a greater understanding of present day problems, and may be best placed to resolve conflicts concerning peers. At the same time, views were expressed that elders have a role in the situations at home.

Families may face difficulty in effecting the control they might exert in countries of origination. Lacking this control can present difficulties in imparting a group's cultural values to each successive generation. The problems of

contemporary U.K. Muslim communities can be complex for elders to address. Faced with distinctly divergent traditions and ways of life, they compete with the influence of the wider society. Families may feel threatened by what many perceive as a breakdown and fragmentation of the infrastructures from which they came. They may view youth behaviour as a threat to their whole way of life, in which they trust.

Religious leaders have become increasingly more and more displaced, as each successive generation receives British enculturation survival tools, acquiring language and linguistic tools to the level of others in respective similar socio-economic groups. This enabled access to information, opportunities and choices.

The researcher found that - within Newham - informal neighbour discussions, and local media, significantly contributed to the transmission and support of specific (non-Muslim) beliefs regarding Muslims. Family, parental and/or guardian influences were also found by the researcher to be instrumental in the development of attitudes, values, and beliefs regarding Muslims in Newham. Messages conveyed to children incorporate attitudes regarding racism, Islamic practices, and Muslim 'characteristics.'⁹

This thesis determined that the following factors were influential in the development of conflict. Muslims were often associated, by other elements within the borough's population, with:

- ‘exploitation of community resources’;
- ‘erosion’ of the welfare state;
- declining healthcare provision in the borough;
- priority shifts in the housing queue; perceived as favouring refugees and/or underclass Muslim migrants;
- causing neighbour disputes, because of ‘unacceptable differences’ in lifestyles, customs, and practices;
- the Muslim birth rate, associated with fears of being overrun;
- the expansion of Muslim clusters within neighbourhoods previously dominated by a ‘white’ presence;
- the association of property devaluation with Muslim ‘in migration’;
- the ‘out migration’ of local ‘whites’ as a response to ‘in migration of Muslims.
- fears surrounding a perceived ‘growth’ of Islam - linked to the ‘imposition’ of mosques and perceived ‘inferior’ beliefs within the neighbourhood;
- the ‘oppression’ of women and concerns regarding ‘white’ women’s conversion to Islam.

The researcher found that neighbourhood discussions frequently connected the oppression of women with ‘Muslims’ and ‘Islamic’ practice. Distinctions did not appear to be made with regard to the overlay of ‘traditional’ practices upon Islamic interpretation. Practices maintained by certain Muslims in Newham were perceived in their totality as ‘Islamic’, although these practices could be called into question by some Islamic scholars. The researcher found that where cases of oppression existed, there was often a reluctance to inform various authorities, particularly in case of domestic violence:

"[Domestic violence and racially motivated crime] ... are notoriously tough to police. Much of this stems from the reluctance of victims to report the crimes in the first place, and press charges if they do."¹⁰

“Asian” women as a collective group, are actively involved in the struggle against female oppression, recognising that ‘traditional’ practices often bear some responsibility in assisting in the maintenance of certain oppressive practices.

Community Links launched the Asian Women's Domestic Violence Service in the mid 1980's and currently runs a 24 hour helpline service:

“Links, Apna Ghar group set up the confidential service to help counter Asian women's fear of talking about the cultural taboo of domestic violence. The service is available in English, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu”.¹¹

Within the borough there exists organisations with a specific focus on the provision of women's support services in relation to 'ethnic' group, for example, Somali associations. There are others that are more general and serve broader categories of people within the frameworks of 'Asian' or 'African' population groups.¹²

Organisations working to address some of the factors associated with domestic violence and family conflict recognise that they are hampered by 'Muslim women's reluctance to come forward', and that the situation is aggravated by the 'conspiracy of silence' which surrounds the issue. The reluctance to report domestic violence may relate to a lack of trust regarding institutions, and fears connected with a belief in the existence of racism within the organisational infrastructure. Personal experience, and/or the experience of others may contribute to this impression.

The researcher discovered the following reasons contributing to women's tolerance of their situation, and an identified reluctance to divulge sensitive information, in the interest of maintaining a conspiracy of silence. The researcher

identified twelve factors which may play a role in the experience(s) of these women. This model, based upon the researcher's personal fieldwork research and analysis, suggests the following distinctive categories as focal points, from which to view the concerns of some women within the domestic violence situation:

Domestic Violence Categorisation Model

1. Poor self-esteem: relating to a socialisation process sustaining a belief in men as superior beings with superior status. This belief is held by a number of Muslim women, including within the African (primarily Somali, Sudan, Ethiopia, Nigeria) and Indian (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indian) population groups.
2. Female family members as 'Guardians of Honour': Female family members are in many cases entrusted with continuing 'traditions' of maintaining codes of honour and female morality within the family.
3. Levels of literacy: resulting in inability to access information surrounding the issue and systems of support relative to domestic violence
4. A normalised acceptance of the husband's right to exercise physical punishment as a means by which to regulate women's behaviour.
5. Religious teaching, located within and subject to cultural/traditional interpretation. Beliefs associated with 'belonging to the husband' after marriage, and an acceptance of a fatalistic belief in 'it is the will of God' and cannot be changed.
6. Lack of infrastructural and individual support systems outside of the family unit.
7. Anxiety and fears surrounding isolation, loss of lifestyle, family and community.
8. Lack of confidence and self-belief in ability to comprehend the outside environment and cope without the support of the family/community unit.
9. Instilled with fears, myths, assumptions, and stereotypes, regarding the immorality and decadence of the outside 'western' world and its dangers to the 'good Muslim woman'.

10. Views associated with an evaluation of domestic violence as less worthy a cause to address than problems associated with social and economic factors. This valuation includes a normalisation of belief in the husband's right to exercise physical punishment in relation to 'his wife'.
11. Refugee status: reporting of domestic violence may result in a woman being deserted, divorced and subsequently deported. Legal right to remain with Britain is subject to remaining within her marriage for a period of one year. Many women, lacking English language skills and access into the wider community and social infrastructure, may be unaware that they can leave a marriage after one year's residency in the U.K.¹³
12. Racism and the power of information: desire to maintain a conspiracy of silence concerning - unsavoury - information considered to provoke prejudicial and discriminatory action by wider dominant white society towards Muslims. Attempt to deal with problems within the closed doors of community interest. Belief that information is used to inform ethnocentric and racist assumptions, increasing discrimination and disempowerment of Muslim communities.

The concept of shame and honour may prevent Muslims from seeking assistance within a religious Islamic framework, and can result in a role for non-Muslim interventions. Outsider organisations may be perceived as possessing a level of neutrality, in terms of judgementalism regarding specific types of personal problem, and perceived Muslim-values. In this context, Muslims may be concerned that issues of confidentiality may be breached within the local neighbourhood community of which they are a part. The implications of 'dishonour' can have profound effects upon the individual, significant others, and future status within the environment:

“...there also lies a rich undercurrent of courage which testifies to the resilience and resistance these women have shown, often without any of the support that one might expect a humane society to offer...”¹⁴

Women may show reluctance to approach 'authority figures' within their community, because these figures are not necessarily sympathetic to their requirements:

"Mumtaz ... had an Asian GP who told her that 'women should not try to leave their husbands'. Meen, a forty-two-year-old mother of two also sought help from her Pakistani GP who sided with her husband and kept her addicted to tranquillizers instead of helping her."¹⁵

Muslims requiring Conflict Resolution Intervention by 'outsider' organisations may consider that 'white' run organisations lack the understanding of the complex issues regarding the concept of shame and honour in the community.¹⁶ Outsider organisations attempting to fulfill this role require specific knowledge, skills, and experience pertaining to:

- ▶ cultural sensitivities
- ▶ aspects of racism
- ▶ concepts of individuality, autonomy, and personal power
- ▶ decision-making processes and personal power.
- ▶ assumptions and divergence in patterns and styles of interpersonal communication

Assumptions related to interpersonal communication can, in certain circumstances, inform perceptions and resultant patterns of behaviour towards others. This can have profound implications for trans-cultural communication within essential service provision, access to opportunity, and forms of social interaction. Within the researcher's professional experience, miscommunication has occurred at a service/user and neighbourhood interaction level.¹⁷ Factors impinging upon conflict, conflict and communication, and the management of

dysfunctional conflict within the borough are to be found within aspects of Interpersonal communication. These factors are of particular significance in the conduct of business related to and involving the diverse Muslim populations within Newham. The researcher's has discovered within face-to-face communication, the following influences may have significant impact:

BODY LANGUAGE:

- ▶ Facial expressions
- ▶ Eye contact: duration and positioning
- ▶ Zones of distance between communicants
- ▶ Physical touch
- ▶ Gestures
- ▶ Posture
- ▶ Mannerisms

ORAL COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Language spoken
- ▶ Tone of voice
- ▶ Voice quality: pitch
- ▶ Accents.

Natural pauses punctuate speech and add meaning in the form of subtle nuances. These elements influence the text, assisting in the transference of information between communicants. The researcher discovered that prejudice existed with regard to patterns and styles of communication, in addition to other factors related to personality characteristics, presumed beliefs, skin colouration, and social, linguistic factors. Significant factors include:

- ▶ Religion

- ▶ Cultural factors
- ▶ Levels of disclosure
- ▶ Physical appearance
- ▶ Social class and perceived social class
- ▶ Educational background
- ▶ Employment status and job/profession
- ▶ Personality characteristics: Attitudes, values; sense of humour
- ▶ Age, gender; sexual orientation
- ▶ Skin pigmentation

Discrimination on the basis of skin colour, 'real or imagined' cultural characteristics, and religion impacts upon society at all levels. Individual racism may be encountered at a local and/or institutional level. It is within the institutional framework that racism as a device serves to create unequal access to forms of social/economic influence, status and power. This results in exclusion and the maintenance of higher incidence of poverty among specific sectors of the community.

Overt racism may be expressed in a direct form 'overtly' or indirectly 'covertly'. Overt racism may be instantly recognisable because of the direct expression of hostility through language. Overt racism may be detected by insinuations, subtle nuances, normalisation of beliefs. Overt racism may be recognisable as it is often glaringly apparent, unlike covert racism, which may be more subtle. In the case of covert racism. It may go unnoticed, or attributed to other causes. There may be a total lack of awareness in relation to its existence, and therefore, it may go completely unacknowledged and unchallenged. A consequence of unidentified racism is that there is unlikely to be an acknowledgement of the part it plays in relation to the service provider and the

service user. Where racism is not perceived, it is likely to result in a reluctance to alter, that which is perceived to be universally correct, because of its assumed impartiality.

There are circumstances where the considered transgressor may turn outside the 'community' for assistance. This may occur particularly in cases involving morality, alcoholism, gambling, and drug addiction. They may turn to alternative available systems, which offer confidentiality, and do not make value-judgements in relation to cultural frameworks. Cultural traditions may be seen to impede the resolution of specific types of conflict. Those seeking help with concerns involving domestic violence, and/or rape, may feel prohibited from addressing this within communities. They may turn to 'western' systems of conflict resolution, in this case.

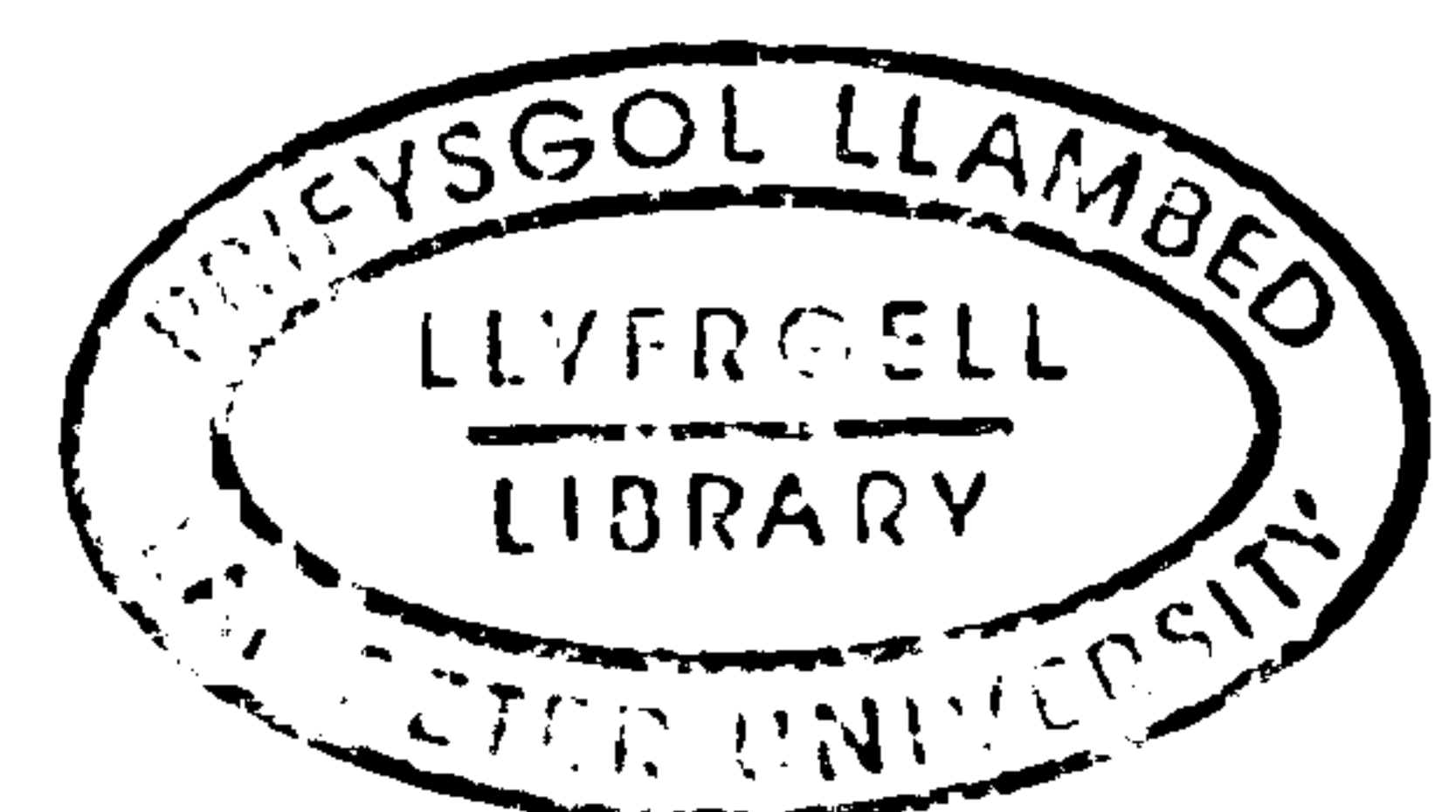
Not all conflicts affecting the Muslims of Newham can be addressed within an Islamic framework. For example, Muslims experiencing conflict of a personal nature, which may result in the risk of shame and/or dishonour. Through the development of a specific world-view, 'marginalised' British Muslims can play a mediatory role in resolving disparate moral perspectives and conflicts. The researcher argues for a separating out of the cultural and religious parameters. Once separated, they can be rejoined with understanding.

This thesis demonstrates that Muslims with ancestral links within the Indian sub-continent, and Africa, are often perceived of as 'foreign' by members of the

non Muslim population, and are frequently classified at the neighbourhood, service user, and economic level, as 'Asians', sharing collective experience. This perception has profound implications in relation to the resolution of conflict.

The Muslims of Newham are diverse in terms of social, economic, ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds. There may be considerable variation in experience, traditions, customs, values, and religious practices and beliefs. Many classify themselves in relation to aspects of a local collective identity which may incorporate or transcend notions of a specific Muslim identity. The concept of a specific 'Muslim identity' can be misleading, discounting the diversity of Newham's Muslims, and the impact of factors impinging upon the development of local core belief, values, and approaches to conflict and its resolution.

Training in conflict management skills might be considered to be of benefit to community leaders or industrial relations managers, who may find themselves in the position of dealing with all manner of problems between people. Dysfunctional conflict leads to the breakdown of effective communication and by its nature, divisiveness, and fragmentation. Effective conflict management strategies are essential requirements to the successful functioning of any system that involves human interaction.



Endnotes

1. For an introduction to the different approaches towards specific issues of interpretation, see: Mohammad Hashim Kamali, Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1991).
2. "We acquire our knowledge and beliefs from those who share the world with us; we learn by observation of what they do. We come to share with others the beliefs that we've learned from them. Interests, purposes and knowledge which the individual brings to bear on his interpretation of his experience also derive from his membership of social groupings; we get the goals that we pursue, the tasks that we have to do, and the knowledge that we use in doing them from the groups to which we belong to. We desire the things approved of by other group members; we do the things normally demanded within the group and we draw our knowledge from a common stock available to and current among the members." Peter Worsley, Introducing Sociology (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970)
3. These cultural factors include popular music, dress-codes, slang, and attendance at parties or entertainment venues. There are also specific 'East End' cultural traits, relating to interpersonal relations. These factors are discussed below.
4. Within specific rural regions of Pakistan - the North West Frontier Province, (NWFP), and the Punjab, socialisation mainly occurs within the unit of the family, extended family relations and religious teaching. This is discussed in detail, within a Pakistan context, in: Hastings Donnan, Marriage amongst Muslims: Preference and Choice in Northern Pakistan, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), chapter 2 and 3, pp.25-113.
5. Donnan mentions systems of *jirga* in the context of Dhund villagers in Northern Pakistan. See: *ibid*, pp.30 & 73. The complexities of *jirga* and their power-structures in NWFP were recognised by Janhar Ali, in an interview with the researcher, in which he stated that these systems were still prevalent. Janhar Ali, interview by researcher, tape recording, University of Peshawar, Pakistan, 7 May 1995.
6. Amanda Root, "Empowering Local Communities through Transport." in: Local Government Policy Making Vol. 22, No. 4, March 1996. p.32
7. This has parallels with Robinson's analyses of the differing status and access to socio-economic opportunities available to migrants and established 'local' communities. See: Vaughan Robinson, 'Inter-generational differences in ethnic settlement patterns in Britain,' chap in Ratcliffe, Peter. (Ed.) Ethnicity in the 1991 Census, Volume Three: Social geography and ethnicity in Britain: geographical spread, spatial concentration and internal migration. London: HMSO:1996, pp.197-198

8. Julian Le Grand & Ray Robinson. The Economic of Social Problems, (London: Macmillan Press, 1976) p.54
9. Clark and Clark argue that prevailing racial attitudes are often communicated to children in subtle and sometimes unconscious ways. Kenneth Clark & M. Clark, Prejudice and Your Child (Boston, 1955)
10. Newham Recorder, 5 June 1996.
11. Newham Recorder, 'Battered Wives get new Hope.' 30 September, 1996
12. Domestic violence is given considerable attention in Newham. An "up to date guide on how best to provide support and encouragement to women fleeing or experiencing domestic violence" has been produced in the form of a directory for advisors. Newham Provider Development News, op.cit., p.4
13. J.C.W.I. Report, op.cit.
14. Amina Mama, 'Women Abuse' op.cit, pp101-2.
15. For a detailed discussion on the underreporting of domestic violence to the Police; police reactions; case studies of women's experience of domestic violence, and the reluctance of neighbours to intervene and/or report incidents of domestic violence within London neighbourhoods, see- Amina Mama, 'Black Women and the Police', op cit, p141.
16. For information relating to the sensitivities involved in the care of Muslims see: Alix Henley, Asians in Britain: Caring for Muslims and their Families: religious aspects of care (Cambridge: National Extension College, produced for the DHSS/King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, 1982). For an examination of racist bias, diagnostic bias, religious impactors, and the impact of colonial ideas and slavery, within the context of ethnic minority treatment and psychological ill health, see: Roland Littlewood and Maurice Lipsedge, Aliens and Alienists: Ethnic minorities and psychiatry (London: Routledge, 3rd ed, 1997, Penguin Books Ltd, 1982.
17. Essential services provision within Newham, is directed towards facilitation of an 'inclusive' service. This policy intends to provide access for residents, to Newham's health, wealth, and welfare infrastructure. Where a miscommunication miscue occurs, situations may be incorrectly interpreted and result in inappropriate responses to a given situation. This factor would impact upon Newham's policy regarding 'inclusion' within the decision making processes of policy development and the implementation of appropriate practices in service delivery.

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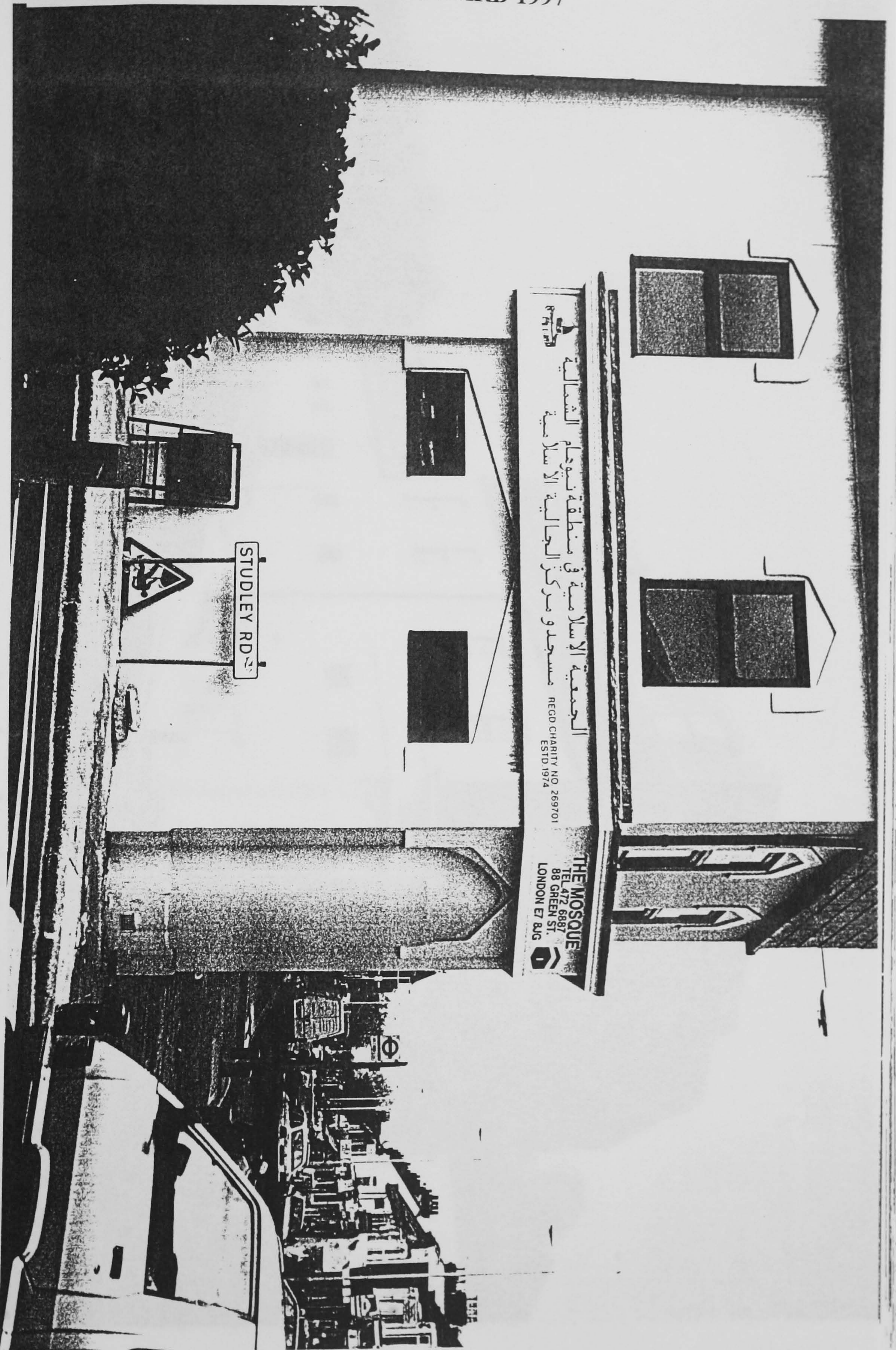
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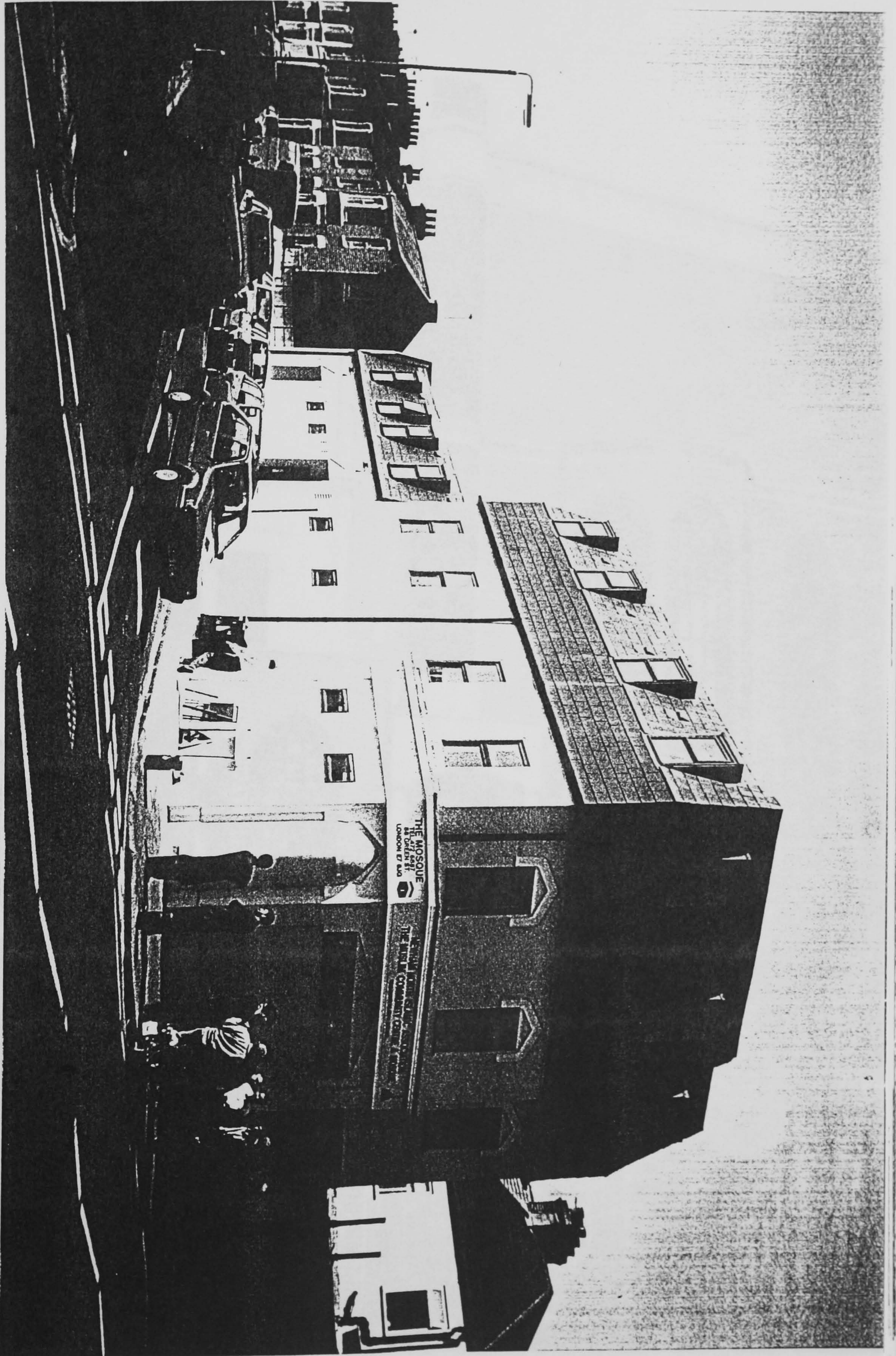
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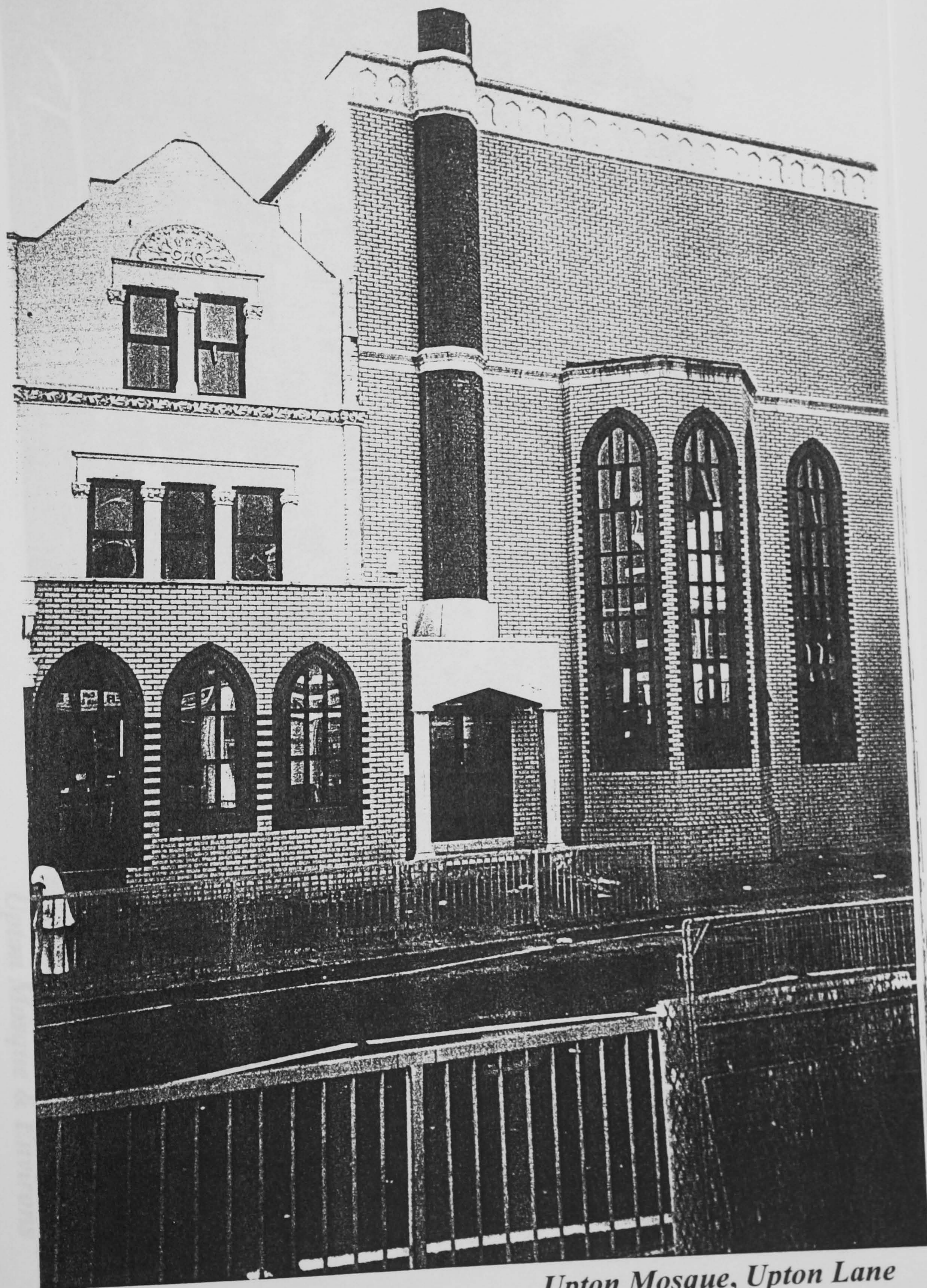
APPENDICES



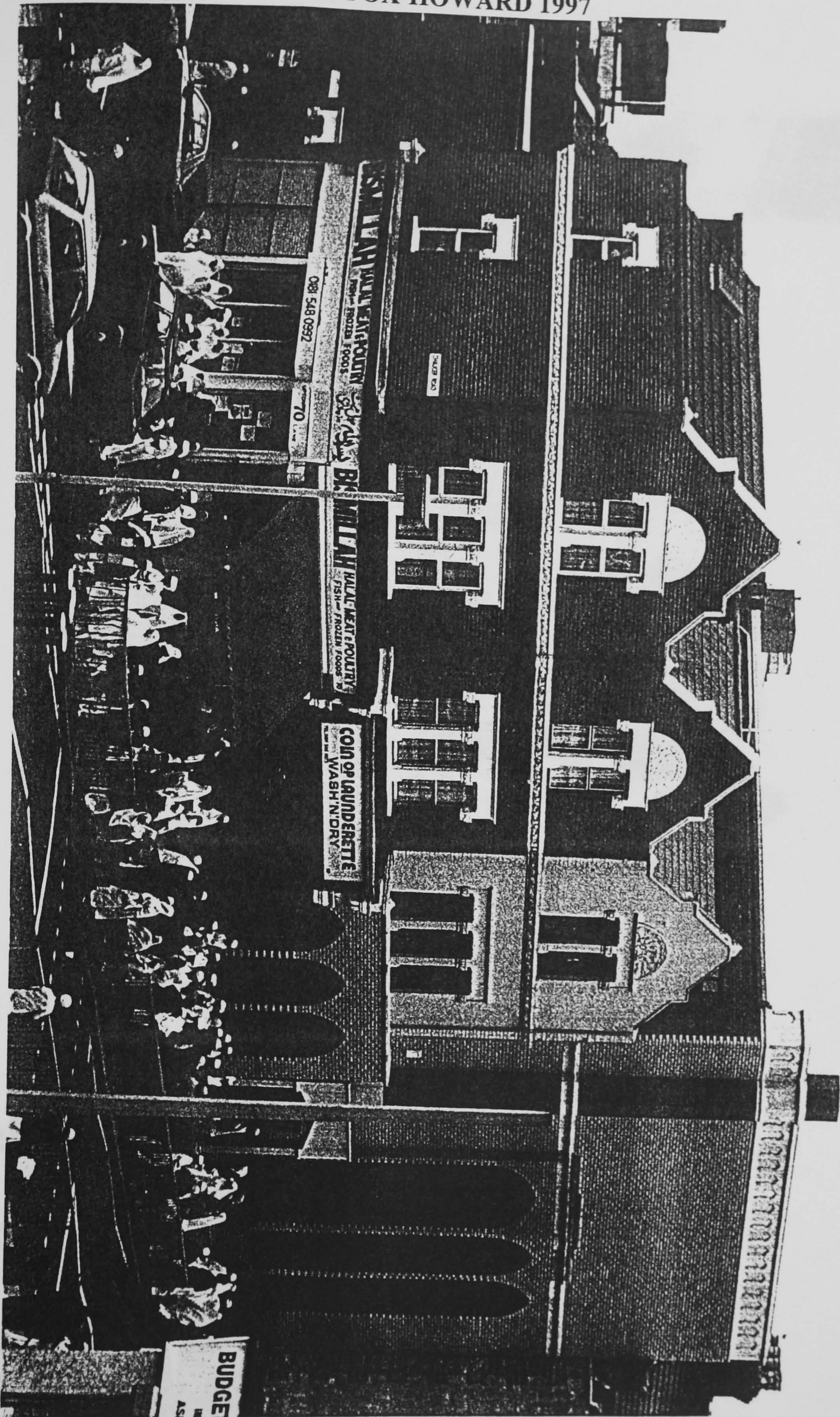
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Newham North Islamic Association, Green Street



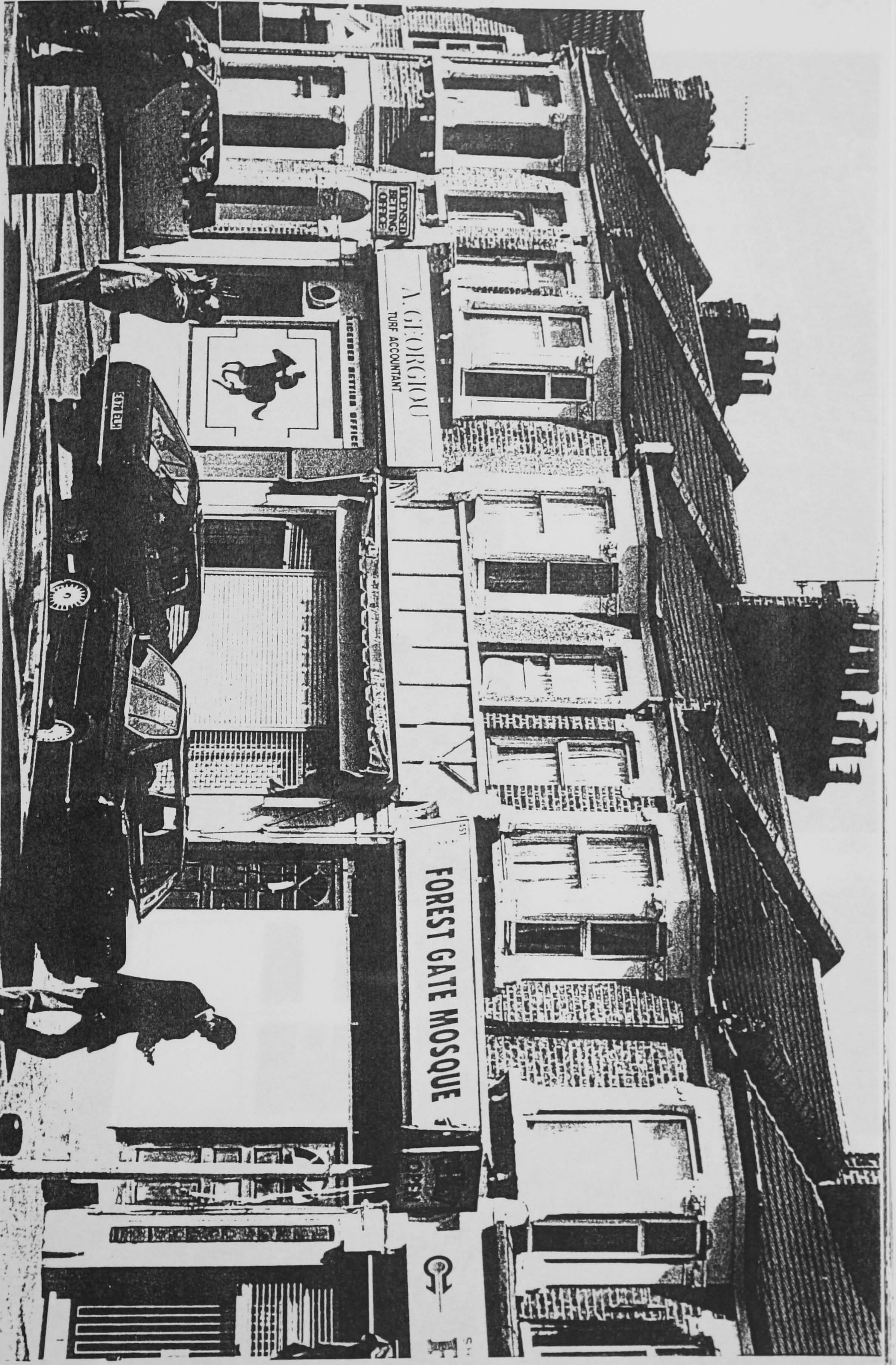
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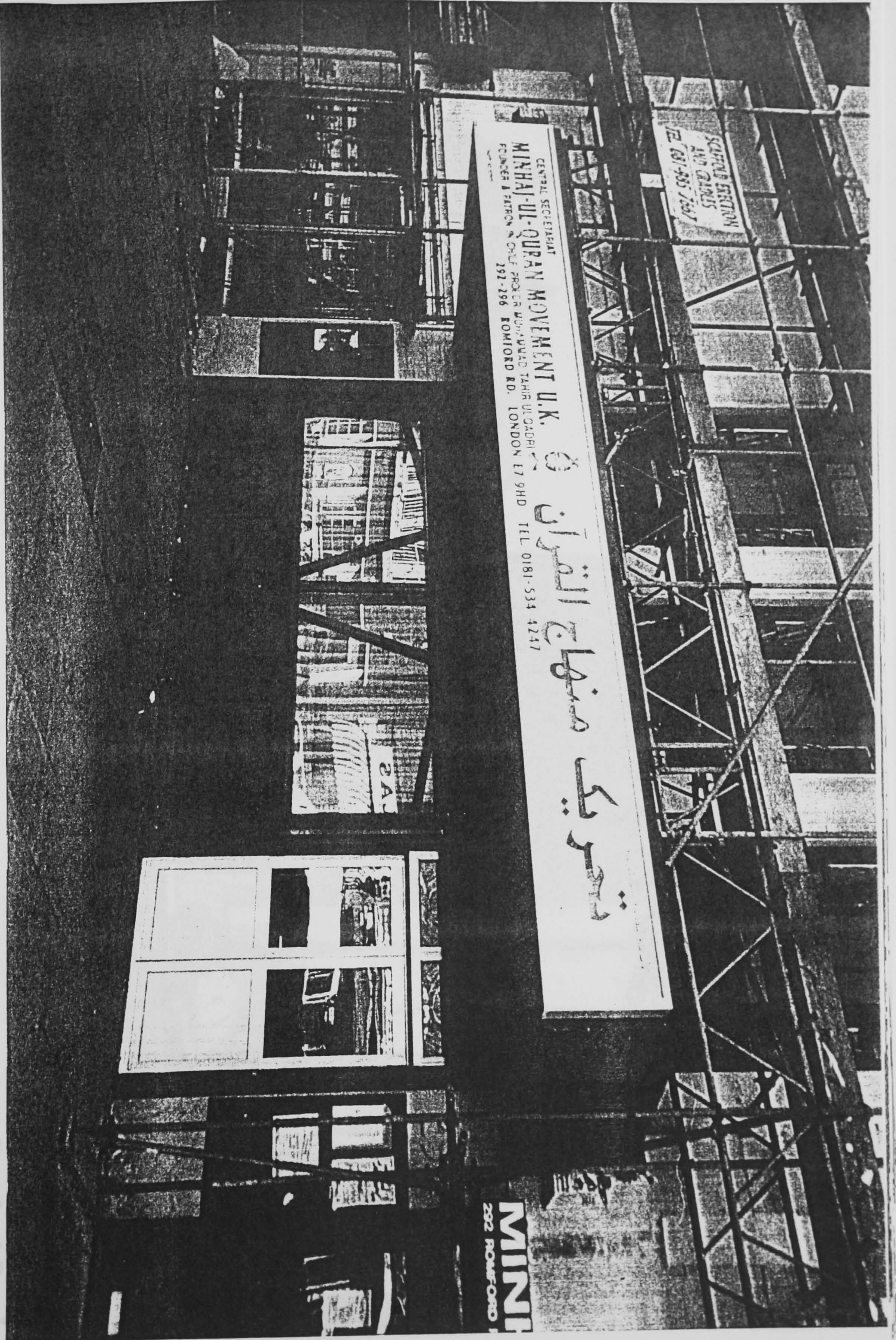
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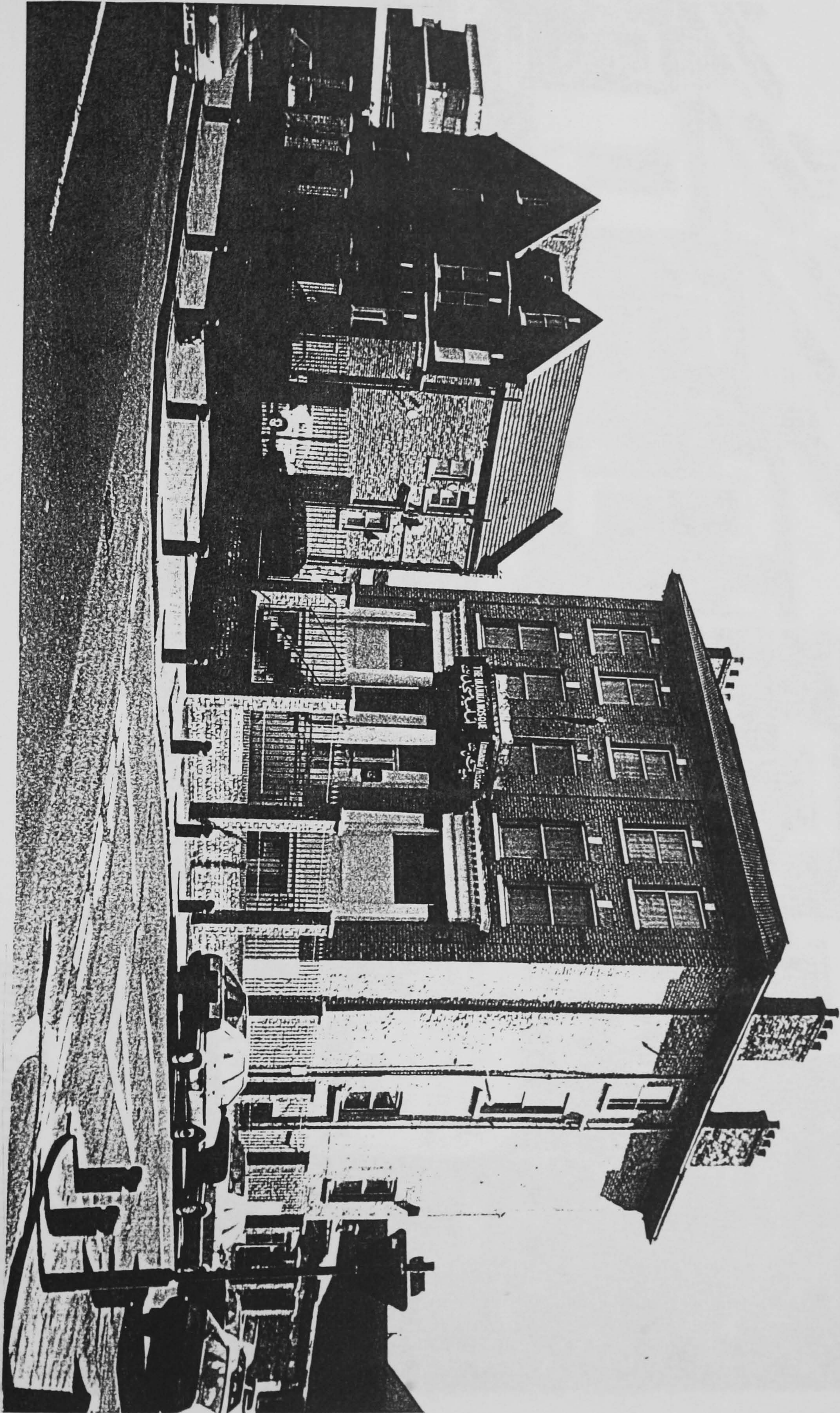
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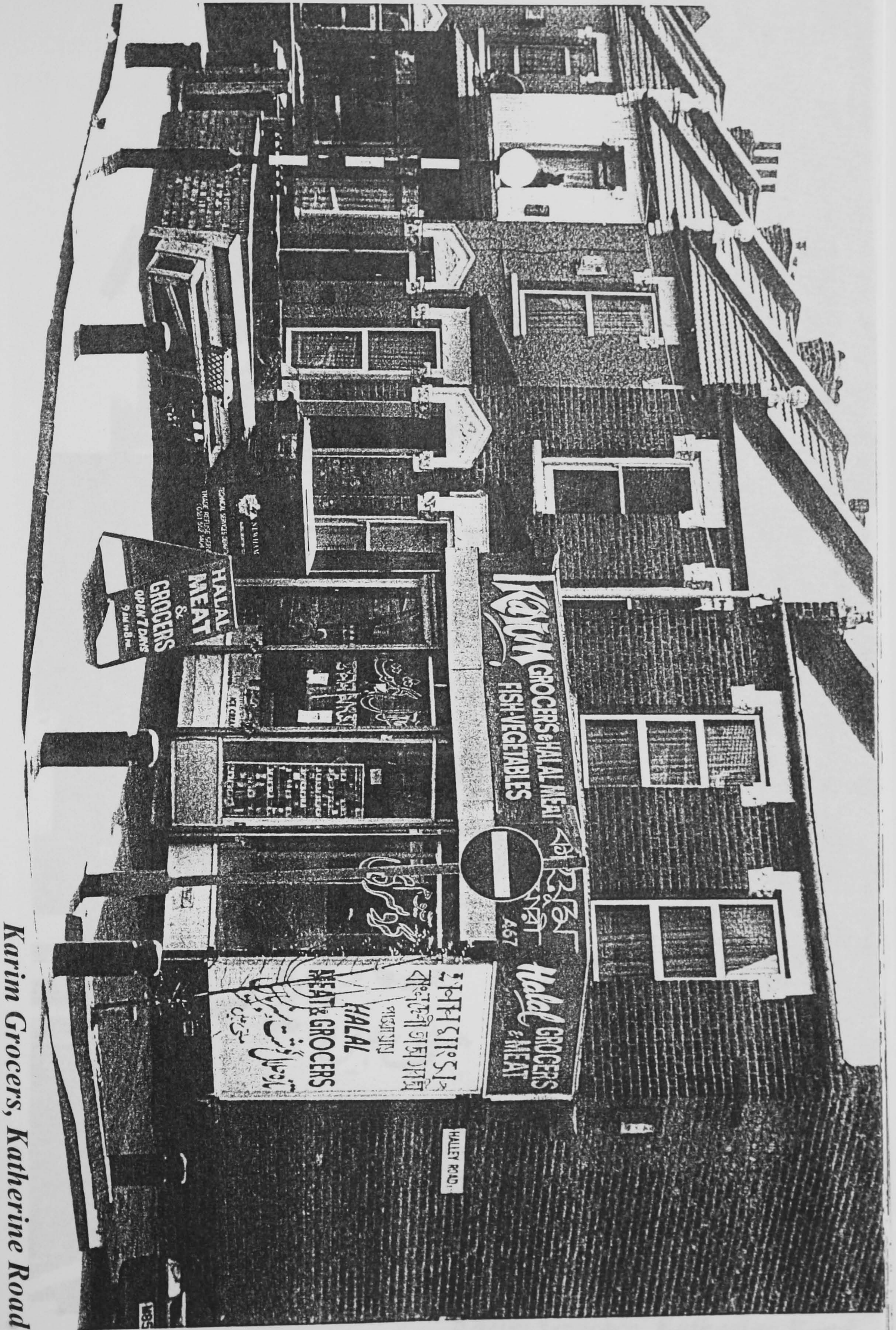
Forest Gate Mosque, Romford Road



Minhaj-ul-Quran Movement UK, Romford Road



Imania Mission, Romford Road



Karim Grocers, Katherine Road



Halal GROCERS'S
& MEAT

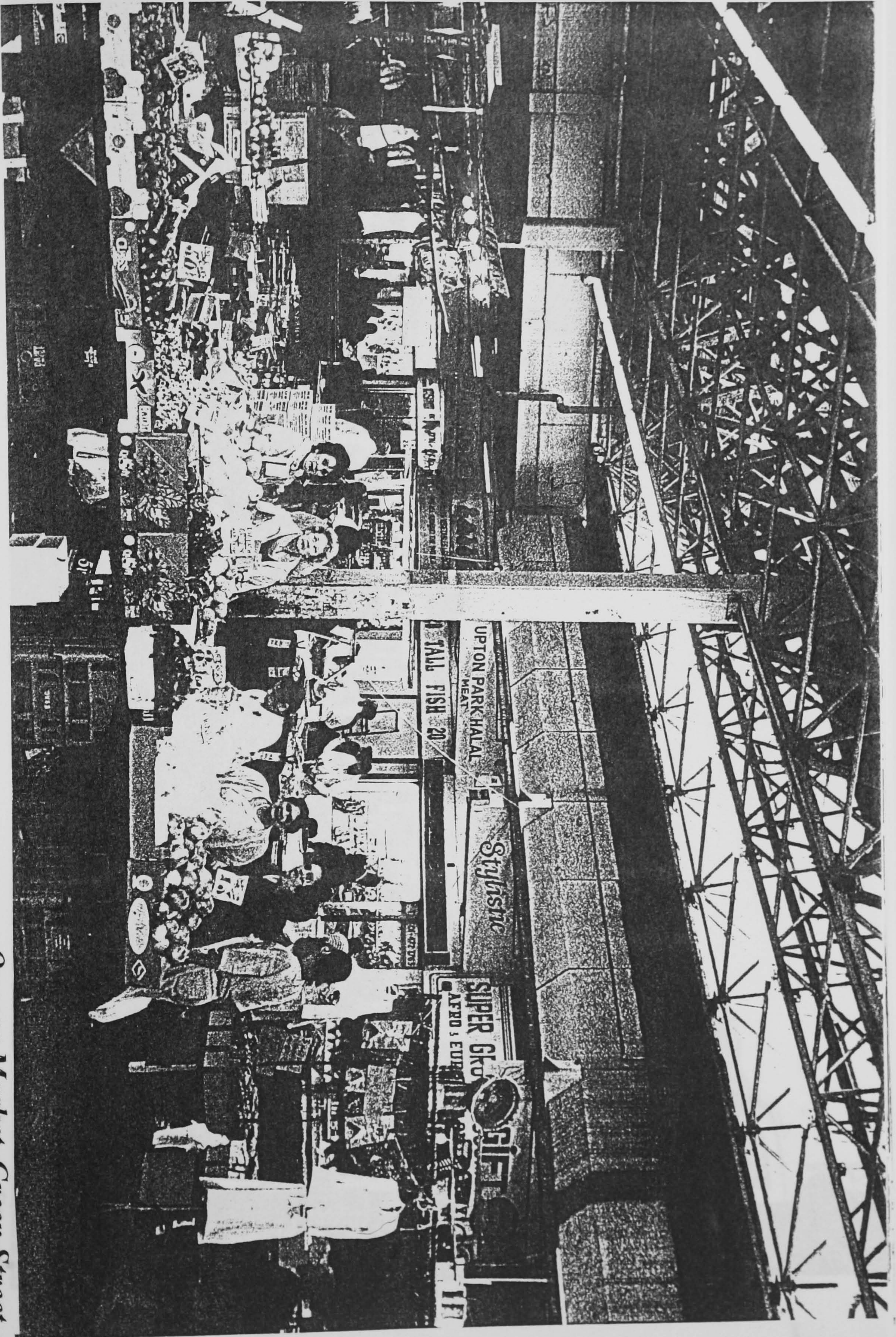
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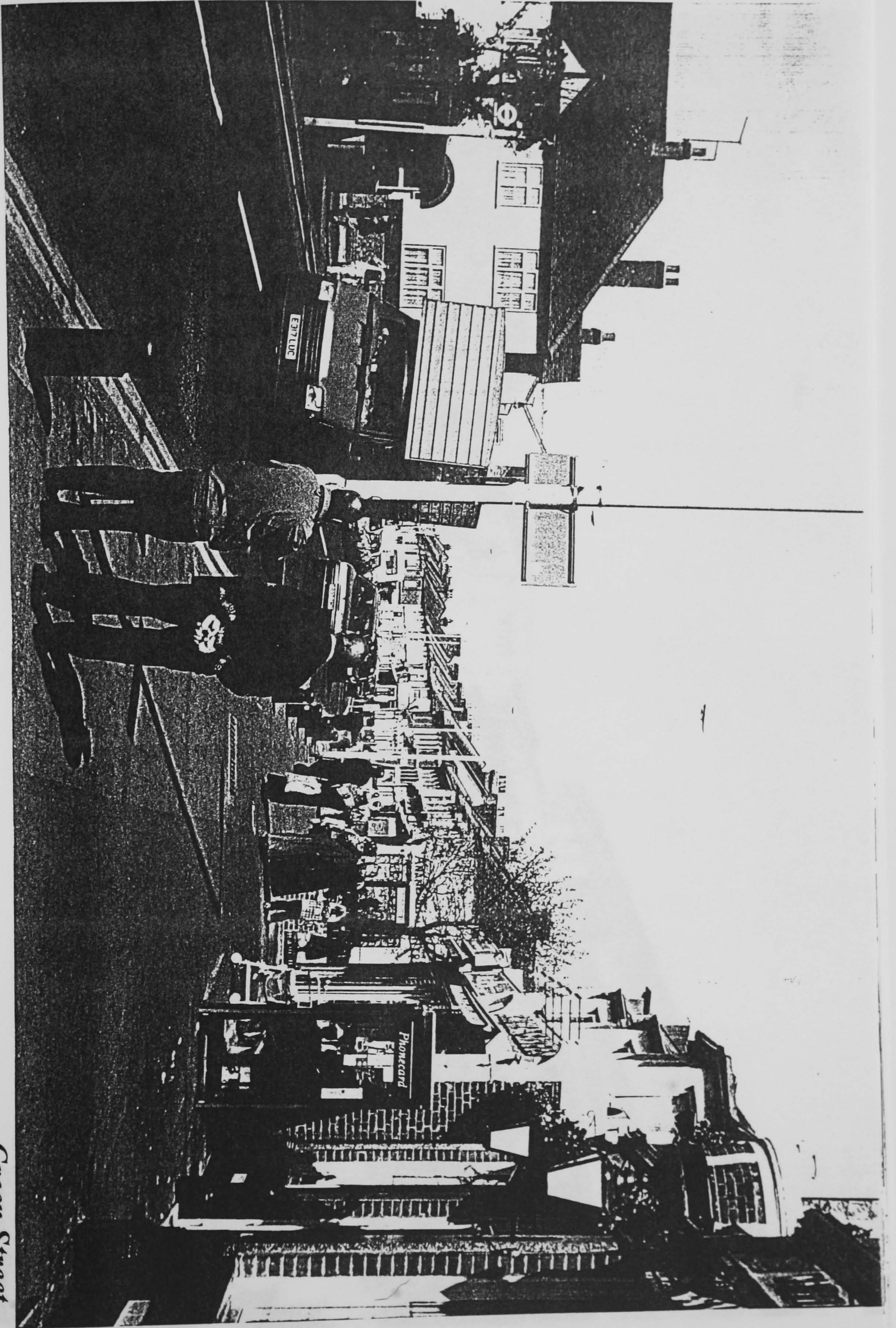
**HALAL
MEAT & GROCERS**

تازه حلال گوشت و سبزیان
ملتی ہیں

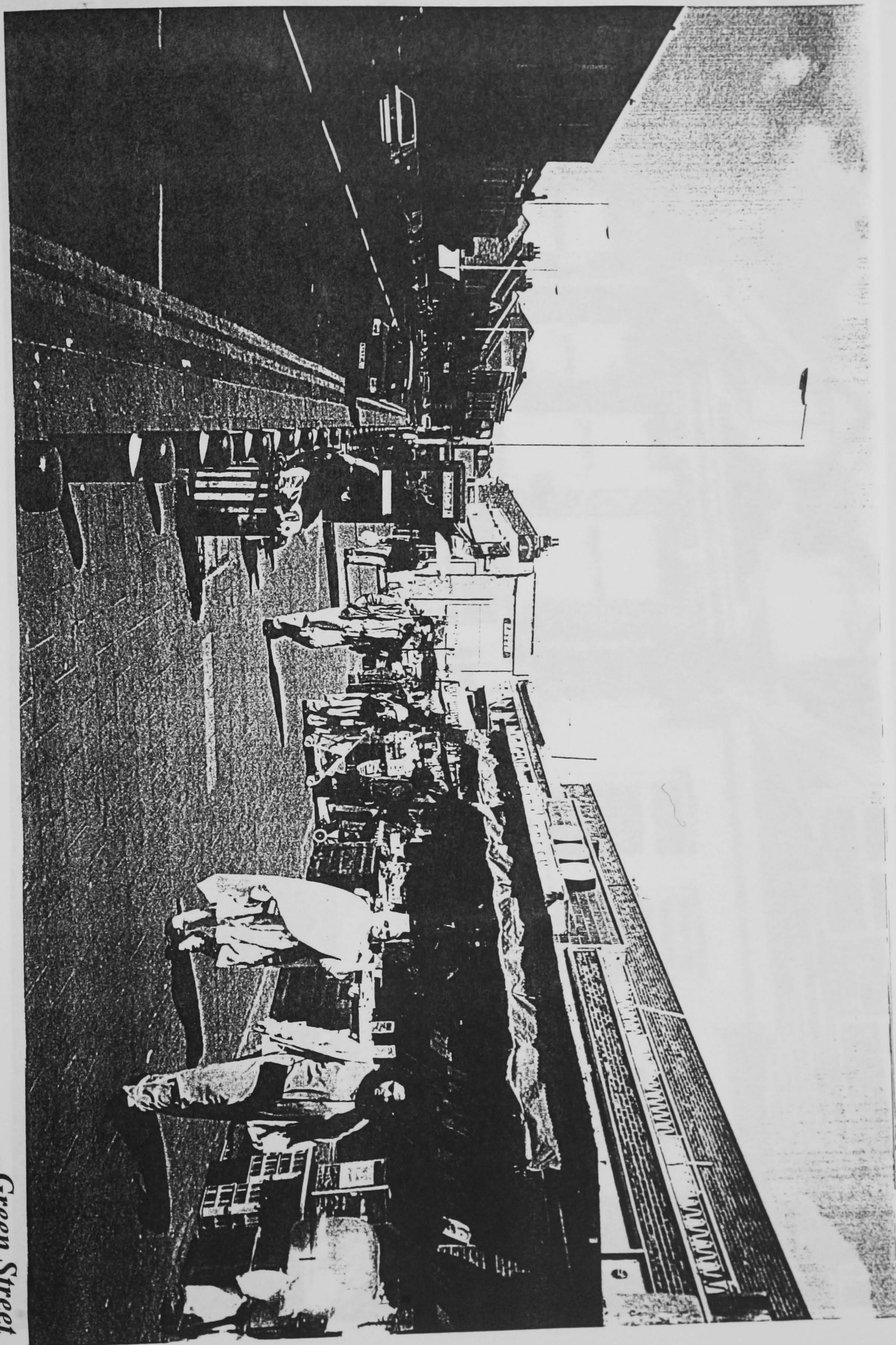
Karim Grocers, Katherine Road



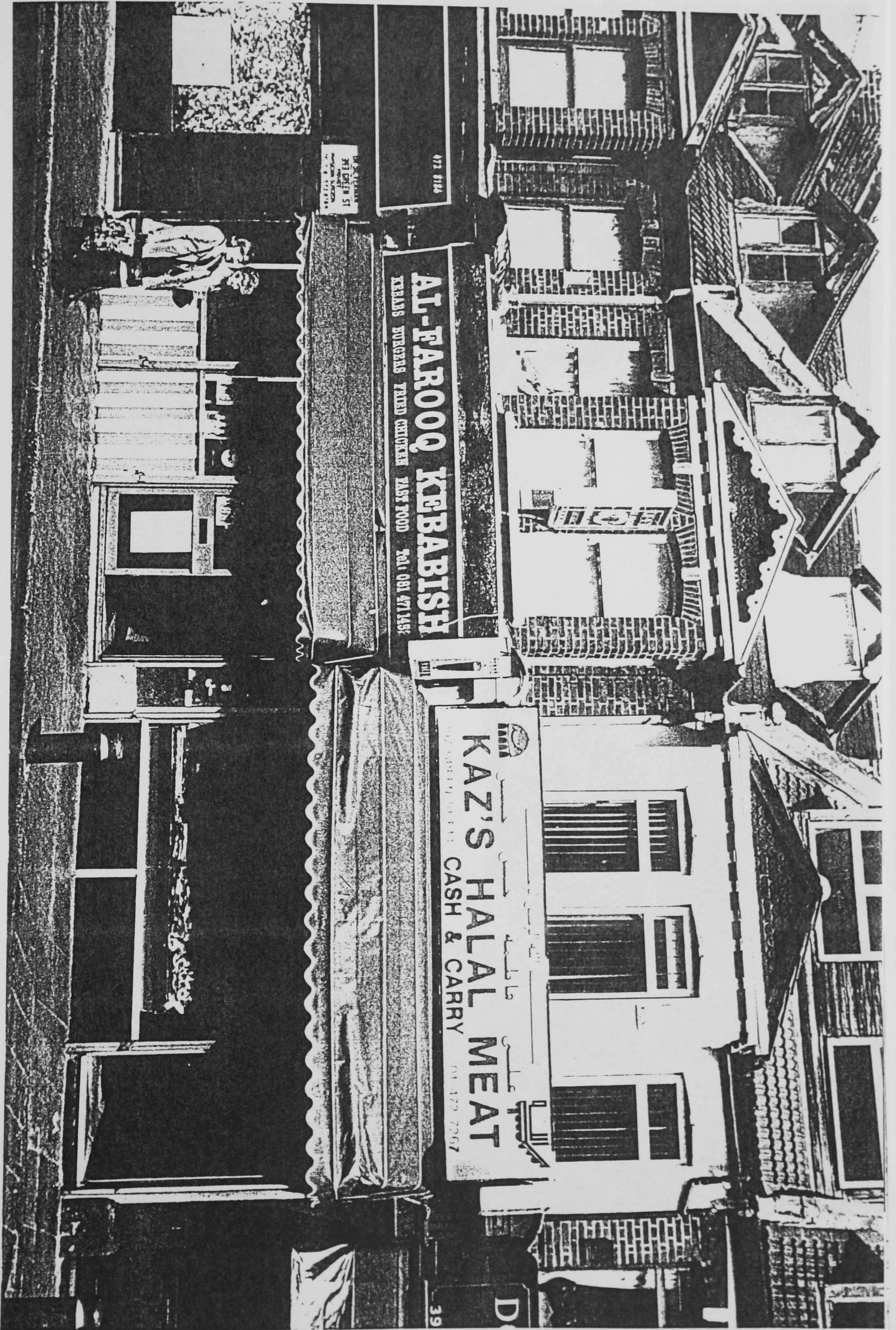
Queens Market, Green Street



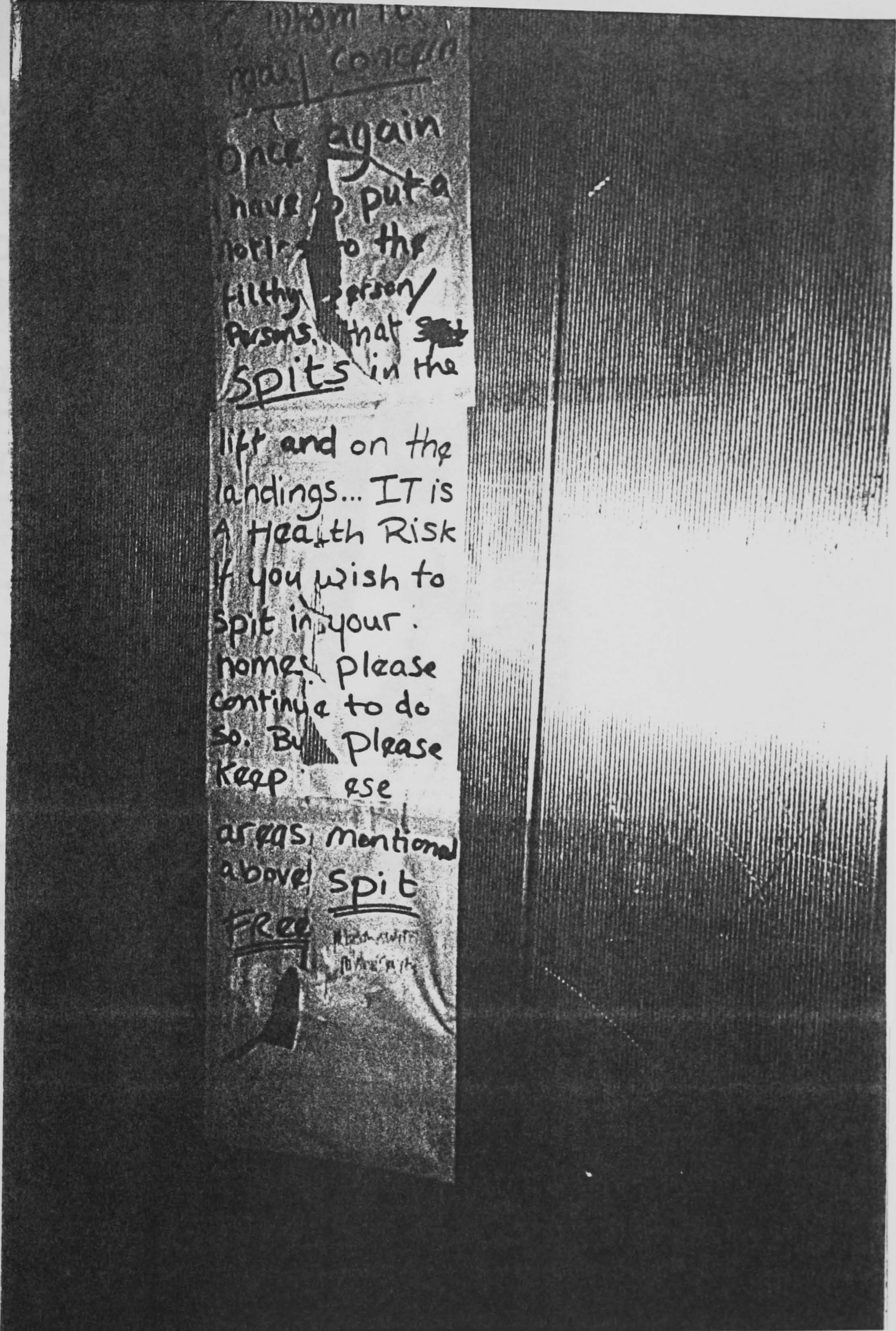
Green Street



Green Street



Green Street



Public comment, Upton Lane

TRADING

Meneka Das, 24
Singer/Actress

Niketa Amin, 16
Student



'I look out for trendy stuff but at the same time I like my clothes to be casual. If I wear jeans, they're neat-looking but I'm most at home in leggings and boots. I usually go for figure-hugging clothes that make me feel good.'



'I normally like clothes which are practical and trendy. However, I often wear shalwar kameez as I believe clothes should make you feel comfortable and free to move around.'

Back in their own clothes, h

Meneka swapped
with Priya

Niketa swapped
with Puneet



'I liked my borrowed look, but don't really need it for the occupation I'm in. I'd wear it again if there was an occasion, but it's more



'My borrowed style was very much like me. I felt quite confident in the jeans and T-shirt, especially with fewer eyes looking my way. It's comfortable and something I'd wear every day.'

PLACES (Who's wearing who's clothes?)

Priya Vadher, 22
Sales Executive

Dina Shrestha, 18
Business Student

Puneet Chahal, 24
EE Ents Editor

Poppy Begum, 18,
Student



'I like clothes which emphasise flair and, therefore, look feminine. I wear a variety of styles, but because of the nature of my work it only permits me to dress smartly most of the time.'



'I usually buy anything that catches my eye. Sometimes, I go for a casual look and other times smart - a mixture of both is essential for me. My culture has its limits, it stops me wearing 'wild' clothes.'



'I choose clothes which are fun and trendy but they've got to be comfortable. At work I dress in a T-shirt and jeans which gives me freedom to move around.'



'My preferred look is anything leather or black. I'm into rock music and like listening to 'Gun 'n' Roses. I always wear heels and jeans. I like my clothes to portray a rough, untidy but trendy image.'

Here's what they thought about their borrowed style...

Priya swapped with Niketa

Dina swapped with Poppy

Puneet swapped with Meneka

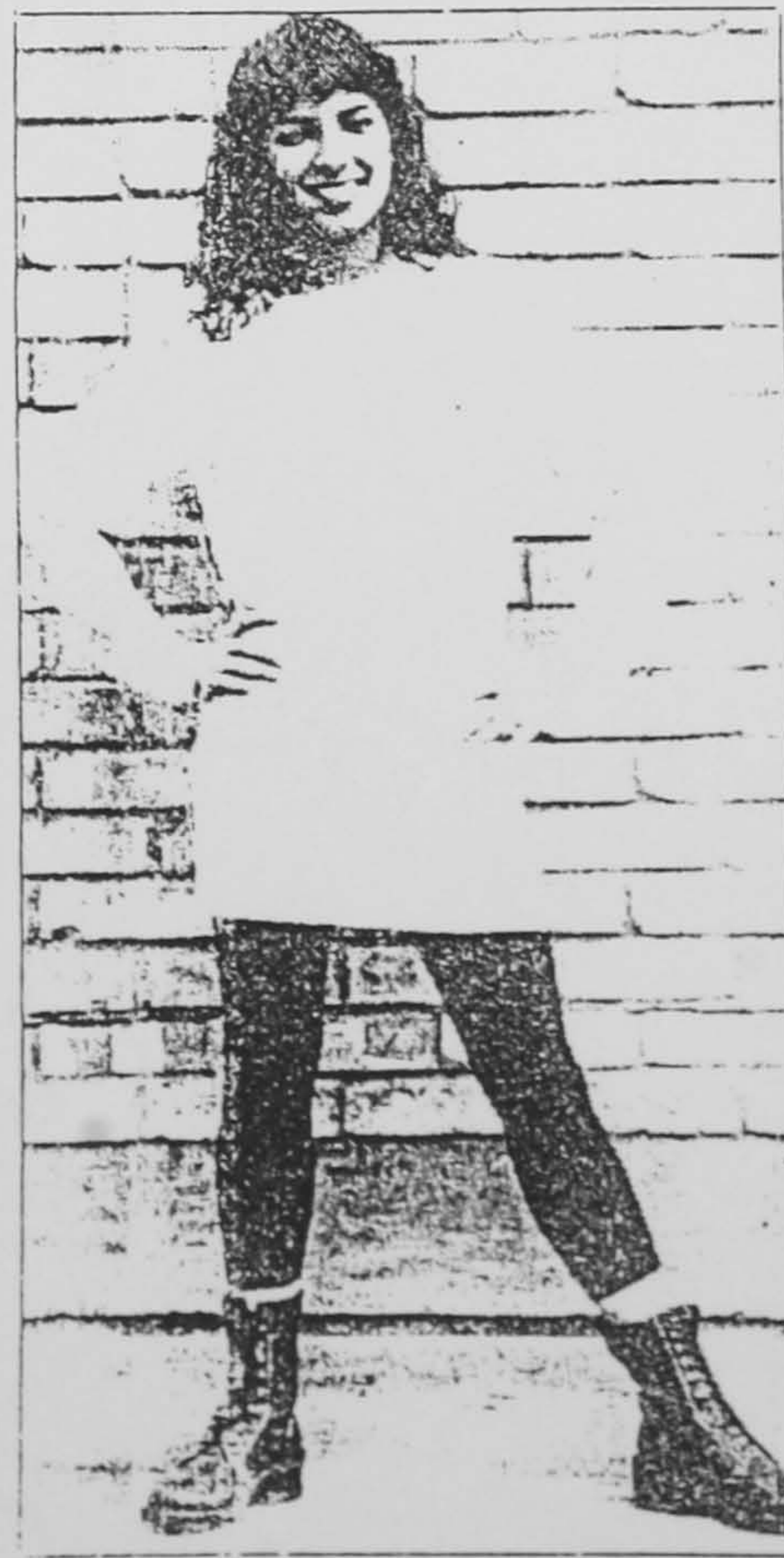
Poppy swapped with Dina



'My borrowed style was definitely different from my usual look. I would definitely wear shalwar kameez but not this particular style. I'm not narrow-minded, so I like to experiment with my look. Individuality is the name of the game.'



'I was really uncomfortable, there is no way you would see me on the streets like this - plus the fact that my mum would kill me! It was too adventurous, even aggressive. I'm glad to be back in my own clothes'



'I'd never worn something so tight, and the boots were terrible. I'd feel too conscious in it. It was definitely not my style - I'd never think of wearing those boots and leggings again, it's too 'wild'.'



'I do wear Eastern clothes, but nothing as uncomfortable as this. It limits my walking pace and makes me look older, but I think could get used to it and wear it on the odd occasion. It's changed my looks completely, making me look rather feminine.'