Escaping discourse: a critical analysis of fleeing a forced marriage as a journey of personal transformation

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the concept of ‘escaping discourse’ in the sense of attempting to understand how individual agents who are born and socialised into a strict discourse are capable of escaping from that discourse and doing something different. The thesis takes as its data source the case of Jasvinder Sanghera as depicted in her memoir *Shame* (2007) that chronicles her escape from a forced marriage and the consequences she experienced thereafter. Sanghera was socialised into a discourse that promulgated adherence to the concepts of family honour, amongst which the practice of forced marriage was normalised. Her transformational journey of physical flight from the family home in order to avoid a forced marriage and her later establishment of the charity Karma Nirvana, are described in detail in her memoir.

The thesis takes a qualitative approach towards addressing the research purpose. Critical discourse analysis, specifically sociocognitive analysis, is employed as the methodology of critical inquiry, whilst grounded theory is used to code and analyse the data.

The mechanism of escape that comprises the findings of the thesis is depicted as a three-stage model within the central concept of ‘subjugation – the cultural role of females’. These three stages comprise ‘cloistering strategies’, ‘drifting back to the family fold’, and ‘disownment mitigation strategies’. Stated in theoretical terms, the thesis finds that physical escape from the family home is only part of a sequence of activities that combine to achieve the ultimate aim of total escape. What is ultimately required is a change not necessarily in external circumstances but rather a change that comes from within the victims themselves in terms of the development of a ‘new’ person. This is conceptualised as a journey of personal transformation that involves moral growth within the individual in terms of a technology of the self, incorporating self-care and self-knowledge.
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful family. To Paul, you have been my cheerleader and coach, a deep well of help and strength. To Grace, Lily and Elana, you have been my motivation and distraction, an endless source of inspiration and joy. You are my life’s best work. And in answer to your question, “Have you finished your study yet Mummy?” Yes, indeed I have.
Acknowledgements

There are several people without whom this research would not have been possible.

To Dr James Latham who encouraged me to commence this research journey, introduced me to Foucault, instilled in me a critical mind, shared my love of musicianship and left me in very capable hands following his retirement.

To Dr Nikola Djurkovic who provided valuable editorial corrections to the final draft. Thank you for reading it cover to cover.

I am indebted to Professor Robert Jones for introducing me to the important issue of forced marriage and honour based violence, for guiding me through the bramble bush of qualitative research, for showing me the wonders of grounded theory and critical analysis and for his immense support in ensuring the completion of this thesis prior to his retirement. Words fail.
Declaration

I, Amanda Rachel Muhleisen, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy from the Faculty of Business and Law, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia, contains no material which has been accepted for the award to the candidate of any other degree or diploma or to the best of my knowledge, been previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome.

Amanda Rachel Muhleisen
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<td>AVA</td>
<td>Against Violence &amp; Abuse</td>
</tr>
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<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDS</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLU</td>
<td>Community Liaison Unit</td>
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<td>CSC</td>
<td>Centre for Social Cohesion</td>
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<td>DHA</td>
<td>Discourse Historical Approach</td>
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<td>FC</td>
<td>Freedom Charity</td>
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<td>FM</td>
<td>Forced Marriage</td>
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<td>FMPO</td>
<td>Forced Marriage Protection Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMU</td>
<td>Forced Marriage Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>HBV</td>
<td>Honour Based Violence</td>
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<td>IKWRO</td>
<td>Iranian and Kurdish Women’s Rights Organisation</td>
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<td>KN</td>
<td>Karma Nirvana</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<td>SBS</td>
<td>Southall Black Sisters</td>
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<td>SCA</td>
<td>Sociocognitive Analysis</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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Chapter 1 Introduction

This opening chapter introduces the research question of the thesis within the context of the purpose, significance and scope of the study. An examination is undertaken of the main protagonist of the thesis, together with that of Karma Nirvana, the social enterprise created by Jasvinder Sanghera in order to progress her campaign against forced marriage and honour-based violence. This chapter also presents a short examination of several other organisations that campaign about these issues within the United Kingdom (UK). The chapter concludes by broadening the analysis beyond the immediate UK context of this thesis by presenting an examination of how these important issues are also dealt with by several other countries, namely: France, Netherlands, Germany and Australia.

The chapter is structured as below:

1.1 Purpose of the thesis
1.2 Significance and scope of the thesis
1.3 Jasvinder Sanghera – social activist
1.4 Karma Nirvana – social enterprise
1.5 Other forced marriage social activist organisations
   1.5.1 Southall Black Sisters
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1.7 Structure of the thesis
1.8 Summary
1.1 Purpose of the thesis

Honour-based violence against women is prevalent in many countries across the globe. Within honour-bound societies women “seldom step out of line but instead conform their behaviour to societal dictates” (Baker, Gregware & Cassidy 1999, p. 167). Socialisation from an early age invariably creates a set of involuntary and entrenched predispositions that are extremely difficult to resist (Bourdieu 1991). The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the actions of one such female who dared to step out of line and challenge the norms and mores of the honour-based community in which she was born and raised. This female, Jasvinder Sanghera, established the first specialist community-based project in the United Kingdom (Karma Nirvana) offering refuge, advocacy, support and advice to female victims of forced marriage, family-honour shaming, and honour-based crimes and violence. Sanghera’s objective in establishing Karma Nirvana was to initiate social change that no longer tolerated honour-based violence against women.

In the literature there is much debate around the relationship between discourses and subjectivity. Do organisational or societal discourses determine individual subjectivity or is there room for human agency, and if so, to what extent and in which circumstances (Bergstrom & Knights 2006; Newton 1998)? When active agents enter into societal or organisational environments it is sometimes difficult to argue deterministically that they enter as cultural dopes or docile bodies to the surrounding discourse. However, in contrast, when people are socialised from the time of their birth into the norms and traditions of certain institutions and communities (for example, an honour-based community) this pre-reflexive inculcation forms a strong and durable bond that makes it difficult for individual members to challenge – they know nothing else. In this scenario of pre-conscious conditioning, the role of human agency within broader discourse is far more difficult to theorise. Power operates by constituting identities in a manner that is productive to maintaining certain societal or organisational imperatives. The process of subjectification focuses on the constitution of a person as a decision-making identity.

Adopting a critical stance one could argue that actors become attached to an identity that is the very product of relations of domination (Fleming & Spicer 2007). This
analysis allows us to frame the research question that occupies the intention of this thesis:

“How can agents, brought up and constrained within the confines of a strict discourse, exhibit the freedom of thought that allows them to do something different when the prevailing discourse has presumably disempowered them from such unorthodox thinking?”

This thesis adopts Bandura’s concept of agency (2006), which promotes an agentic perspective towards human development, adaptation and change through the adoption of socio cognitive theory. The justification for this is explained in detail in Section 6.3.

1.2 Significance and scope of the thesis

Twelve thousand honour-based crimes have been committed in the UK since 2010, together with an estimated 60 honour murders (Nammi 2015). Despite increasing efforts to tackle the issue of honour-based abuse and forced marriage during the past decade (including criminalisation of forced marriage in the UK in 2014) there exists little concrete evidence that the problem is declining in severity. The size of the problem means that many thousands of young women (and men) have their lives blighted by the concept of ‘honour’ wherein the patriarchal nature of the impacted communities acts to promulgate practices based upon the role of women as the property of men and whose actions reflect upon the status of men within society (Gilbert, Gilbert & Sanghera 2004; Husseini 2009; Shahani 2013).

Because of the extremely violent nature of honour-based abuse (in particular the threat of honour killings), together with the reluctance of many victims to resist the practice because of the possibility of bringing shame on their families, many young women (and men) find it difficult to escape their entrapment within the discourse of honour. Their close confinement within the discourse, often within communities that are isolated from mainstream society and opposing discourses, implies that for many victims the practices that are imposed on them are perceived to be normal. Hence, a number of issues are implicated within the research question posed by this thesis, including: how is it
possible for victims to perceive a different concept of reality from the one that is imposed on them; how can they physically escape from the entrapment of the discourse; and how can they resist the temptation to return back into the discourse when their upbringing has minimised the possibility of them living an empowered and independent life?

The scope of the thesis is limited to a critical discourse analysis of one particular journey of personal transformation provided by the experiences of Jasvinder Sanghera as portrayed in her memoir *Shame* (Sanghera 2007). Whilst it is recognised that an analysis of only one individual case is not capable of providing generalised findings relating to the issues raised by the research question, nevertheless some significant conceptual processes can be uncovered that may be used to provide guidance related to the problems experienced by victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage.

### 1.3 Jasvinder Sanghera – social activist

Jasvinder Sanghera was born in the English city of Derby in 1965, the daughter of immigrant parents from Punjab in India. At the age of 14 she was informed by her parents of their intention to force her into marriage with a stranger from overseas. To avoid this fate, she ran away from home. In 1993 she formed the charity Karma Nirvana to campaign against forced marriage and honour-based violence and to provide support and advocacy for victims. In 2014, forced marriage was made a criminal offence in the UK. While Jasvinder Sanghera and Karma Nirvana are credited with influencing the government’s turnaround on criminalisation of forced marriage, securing the legislation was the collective effort of a multiplicity of government and law enforcement agencies, grassroots service providers, criminal justice system professionals, parliamentarians, activists and survivors.

Sanghera’s journey is described in her memoir *Shame* (Sanghera 2007). Many harrowing stories of mainly female victims of forced marriage who have been supported by Karma Nirvana are described in her second book *Daughters of Shame* (Sanghera
2009). Her third book *Shame Travels* (Sanghera 2011) describes her trip back to her father’s village in Punjab in an attempt to claim her Sikh heritage.

Sanghera’s parents never allowed her to accompany them at any time during their frequent trips back to Punjab, despite this privilege being extended to all of her siblings. The fact that Sanghera had run away from home and rejected a forced marriage had brought shame upon her family and her father explained that he could not expose her to other members of his extended family: “Shame travels Jasvinder. If you visited my family, you would taint them with your disgrace. I will not be a party to that” (Sanghera 2007, p. 182). However, when she visited her father’s home village after his death she found that she was warmly welcomed. No shame or dishonour was attached to her. She also discovered that the religion she had rejected, Sikhism, did not advocate forced marriage and preached equality for all. Sanghera attempted to come to terms with the reasons why her parents had acted in such a manner. In so doing, she starts to embrace her heritage and her religion with newfound knowledge.

In her memoir *Shame*, Sanghera (2007) explains how in the early days after the formation of Karma Nirvana, she struggled to attract attention, resources and financing. She was offered a rent-free room at the back of the Rape Crisis Centre in Derby as a base. It was sparsely furnished with only one desk and one chair, and no telephone. Sanghera traipsed the streets of Derby distributing leaflets to raise awareness of the organisation, with only limited success. With the help of other women at the community centre she started to win small grants, allowing her to install a telephone and pay her limited expenses. Her first breakthrough came when she organised a women-only Health Day, which attracted support from the local councillor and Member of Parliament as well as from local businesses and supermarkets who provided food. Various other professionals offered to speak at the event and provide support and advice to those attending. Over 300 women attended, 120 of whom completed feedback evaluation forms, allowing her to win a large Lottery Grant. This grant enabled her to hire three staff and form a Management Committee. Her networking allowed her to form links with local police, health authorities and other voluntary primary care organisations. Suddenly the demand from local women became almost overwhelming, throwing Sanghera and her team into crisis. At this time she was also undertaking a
degree course at Derby University, as well as suffering a marriage breakdown whilst being pregnant, caring for her two other children and living in a damp, decrepit house. Under emotional and physical stress, Sanghera was forced to take time out from her punishing schedule. She left Derby and moved her family to a house in the countryside, outside the city.

Refreshed after her break, and armed with a first-class honours degree in sociology, Sanghera returned to her work at Karma Nirvana in 1997. The volume of work was high, with women who had been abused, who had run away from home, and had been disowned by their family (even facing death). Sanghera realised the need for specialist cultural refuge accommodation for women where they could feel at home without necessarily abandoning all the aspects of their heritage. Karma Nirvana formed a partnership with the national charity Refuge and managed to win funding to establish four specialist refuges opened in 2002. Sanghera started to take her work beyond Derby, advocating for specialist refuges to be established in other cities, and achieved her first success in Stoke-on-Trent. She started to campaign across the country, addressing audiences in schools, universities, police forces, local authorities, and health authorities, sometimes attracting demonization and even death threats. She formed links with the Forced Marriage Unit and united with others to persuade the police to re-open many cases that were now suspected as being honour killings.

Sanghera’s campaigning over the years has been relentless, as have her attempts to expand the strength of Karma Nirvana. Despite many sympathetic voices being raised against the practice of forced marriage, the British authorities were initially reluctant to entertain the prospect of making it a criminal offence. Sanghera, on the other hand, was always in favour of criminalisation, believing that it would send a stern message to perpetrators as well as give victims more ammunition to oppose their abusers. She has spent a long time lobbying the powers that be. “We had a consultation with the last government back in 2005 and they rejected us because they said ‘we do not want to offend communities’, which is unbelievable when you think this is a horrific abuse that is happening to British citizens” she said (Brooker 2013).
Brooker (2013) relates that the recent advice from Sanghera to young girls who are taken from Britain overseas on the pretence of a holiday is to hide a spoon in their underwear. As they pass through the airport security screens an alarm will be set off giving the girl a chance to explain in private to an airport official what is happening to her. Sanghera laments, “Sadly we have to resort to such desperate measures because professionals and schools are still failing to engage with the problem fully” (Brooker 2013).

Sanghera was one of nine female activists who appeared in the movie Honor diaries (2014) relating their stories of hardships suffered in honour-bound communities. Sub-titled ‘culture is no excuse for abuse’:

…the film gives a platform to exclusively female voices and seeks to expose the paralysing political correctness that prevents many from identifying, understanding and addressing this international human rights disaster. Freedom of movement, the right to education, forced marriage and female genital mutilation are some of the systematic abuses explored in depth (Honor diaries 2014).

Sanghera has spoken out about the cases of forced marriage that involve mentally incapacitated people who do not possess the capability to consent freely to a marriage. She was particularly critical of a High Court judgement in 2013 that refused to annul the marriage of a mentally incapacitated man whose parents imported a wife from overseas for him. This judgement was criticised because of the practice in some British communities of parents marrying off their disabled children in the hope that their spouses will act as carers. Many of these imported spouses are unaware of the situation they are letting themselves into and are often from very poor families overseas (Pidd 2013).

Sanghera was a major advisor for the 2016 BBC3 telemovie Murdered by my father (2016) which presents the scenario of a young schoolgirl, Selma, murdered by her father for refusing to participate in a forced marriage with her cousin and choosing to have her own boyfriend. The telemovie presents the murder in graphic detail with Selma being murdered by having a plastic bag stuffed in her mouth and her nostrils held closed by
her father. This murder mirrored the actual honour killing method suffered by Shafilea Ahmed, who was murdered by her parents in 2003 (Carter 2012).

Following the criminalisation of forced marriage in 2014, the first conviction was recorded one year later in 2015 when a 34-year-old man was sentenced to 16 years in prison. He pleaded guilty to four counts of rape, one count of bigamy and one count of voyeurism.

The court heard that the man was particularly possessive and controlling of his victim during the time they knew one another. Between March and September 2014 he repeatedly raped and threatened his victim before forcing her to marry him against her will in an act of bigamy on his behalf (CPS 2015).

Commenting on the conviction, Sanghera (2015) stated that this was an historic day for campaigners against forced marriage and that the probability of victims reporting their cases to professionals would now be expected to rise. However, one conviction was not enough when it was well known that thousands of other cases exist that have escaped conviction. Sanghera urged the government to have a mass campaign to make the populace aware that criminal law now exists against forced marriage, but the government has failed to do this.

What is really worrying is that the Forced Marriage Unit has been repatriating British subjects taken abroad to be forced into marriage – but not securing convictions. They are rescuing these people in their hundreds and a third of the cases involve under 17’s. Under the legislation it’s a criminal offence to take someone abroad for the purpose of a forced marriage yet none of these cases has been prosecuted. What is happening to all the perpetrators in the known cases like these (Sanghera 2015)?

Ever willing to speak it like she sees it, Sanghera argued that such inaction is still caused by the fear of the authorities being called racist. She argued that there is still no government initiative to tackle forced marriage with the same vigour that is displayed toward domestic violence initiatives. Her disappointment was particularly strong against the Education Department that still refuses to send out “the right message to every
school that continues to turn a blind eye to the sudden and inexplicable disappearance of their teenage pupils” (Sanghera 2016, p. 301).

Dyer (2015) has reported on the problem facing many women who flee their families in terror because of the threat of a forced marriage, only to be faced with a lack of support services once they have departed. This gap in service provision has also been a major campaigning issue for Sanghera. The isolation they feel after they have left home is enough to drive them back to their family even though they know the consequences that await them.

When she [Saliha] finally gathered the strength to leave, the police took her to a refuge. Here she was put in a room with no access to a phone or internet access. No one came to ask how she was coping. She quickly became suicidal and was taken to hospital. Only then did a social worker come to visit. Saliha now identifies her time in the refuge as when she felt most isolated and alone – feelings that drove her to return home to her abusers (Dyer 2015).

Dyer (2015) believes that victims are still being let down by services that are supposed to protect them. She advocates that foster placement should be considered as a first option for young people affected by forced marriages and honour abuse.

Palin (2015) reports that Sanghera has now taken her campaign worldwide and her memoir *Shame* has been translated into eight different languages. She has addressed audiences in several different countries including America, Canada, much of Europe and Australia. In 2015, she visited Australia and presented seminars in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, receiving extensive media coverage and stating that her hotline was also receiving calls from victims in Australia even though it was only designed to help people in Britain.

Sanghera’s list of awards has continued to grow over the years in recognition of her pioneering achievements in advocating for victims of forced marriage and honour abuse. These achievements are all the more remarkable in light of her mother’s dire
warnings after she ran away from home when she was called a ‘prostitute’ who would be “rolling in the gutter” without the support of her parents (Sanghera 2007, p. 155).

- 2007: Woman of the Year Award
- 2007: Asian Woman Achievement Award
- 2008: Inspirational Woman of the Year Award
- 2008: Ambassador for Peace Award
- 2008: Honorary Doctorate University of Derby
- 2009: Pride of Britain Award
- 2010: Cosmopolitan Wonder Woman Award
- 2011: Listed in Guardian top 100 Most Inspirational Women in the World
- 2012: Global Punjabi Society Award
- 2013: Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)
- 2016: Listed in Who’s Who

Stemming from her traumatic experiences, Sanghera has always endeavoured to raise her three children (two girls and one boy) in an open and independent way in order to allow them to make the choices in life that were denied to her. Her elder daughter attended university, graduated with a degree in law, and is now practising as a human-rights lawyer. She met her husband at university and they married in a love-match in 2012: “Mum, you have given me this. You said no to a forced marriage and gave me the life that brings me here. Thank you” (Sanghera 2016, p. 292).

More than anything I have wanted to give my children the life that was kept from me – and to save them from the pain that still lurks in the darker shadows of our cultural heritage (Sanghera 2016, p. xiii).

1.4 Karma Nirvana – social enterprise

As a registered charity, Karma Nirvana has always relied on donations and funding to keep it going. In the early days it relied on victims ringing their call centre. In 2008, the Forced Marriage Unit awarded Karma Nirvana a grant to operate its Honour Network Helpline (Talwar 2009). Six thousand calls were received during the first year.
However, the funding was for only one year and was discontinued thereafter, prompting the organisation to send out desperate calls for assistance to enable it to continue its services (Talwar 2009). Despite these problems the helpline struggled on, receiving 30,000 calls during the first four years (Sanghera 2016). Ideally, the organisation needed the security of long-term government funding, but in an era of government budgetary cutbacks the competition from other funding demands was intense. However, the helpline managed to continue to operate on a limited basis with availability only Monday to Friday during working hours. In 2015 the helpline was receiving about 700 calls per month, but many others were missed because all the lines were engaged. Funding relief for Karma Nirvana came in the form of the 2016 Budget which allocated funding to operate the helpline during weekends and evenings, thus being able to capture calls that came into the centre after hours (Karma Nirvana 2016a).

Karma Nirvana now operates a wide range of services for victims of forced marriage and for professionals who require advice and guidance. These encompass: helpline, training, KN youth, roadshows, campaigns, community roadshows, and internationalisation efforts (Karma Nirvana 2016b).

**Helpline**: a dedicated telephone *Helpline* offers advice, advocacy and support to potential and actual victims. It also offers this service to front-line professionals and support services out in the community. The helpline connects victims to potential agencies that can offer assistance and also assists in relocating victims from their home into temporary accommodation.

**Training**: specific *Training* in all aspects of forced marriage and honour-based violence is offered to relevant clients. Such training can be tailored to the specific needs of each client. Clients include: police forces, local authorities, social workers, and the Crown Prosecution Service. As part of this service, a ‘train the trainer’ program is also offered so that organisations can deliver their own in-house courses to their own staff.

**KN Youth**: a youth program called *KN Youth* operates with the aim of involving young people in the work of the charity. The organisation employs its own dedicated Young Person Officer who visits schools and colleges across the UK delivering interactive
sessions to school children. These sessions are intimate and aimed at gaining the trust of young people. For example, after one particular session the charity received 32 calls within a two-month period. The program works by recruiting contact persons in individual schools who spread the message locally amongst students, teachers and governors and organise their own events to raise awareness.

**Roadshows:** Karma Nirvana also operates *Roadshows* that are specifically aimed at those front-line professionals and support services that most directly experience the issues of forced marriage and honour-based violence such as police, teachers, health workers and social workers. Roadshows are aimed at raising awareness and providing professionals with the advice and knowledge they need in order to effectively carry out their work. Typical roadshows have focused on such issues as: forced marriages affecting children and young people; forced marriage protection orders; repatriation of forced marriage victims; and criminalisation of forced marriage. Roadshows are free, half-day events and operate in cooperation with local partners such as local councils, health authorities and police forces. Roadshows have been held in over 80 towns and cities across Britain.

**Campaigns:** Karma Nirvana also operates *Campaigns*. Perhaps the most effective is the annual Day of Memory for all victims of honour killings. The idea took root following the extensive media coverage surrounding the killing of Shafilea Ahmed and was intentionally kept alive through the creation of a Day of Memory. The ultimate aim was to get as many organisations as possible across the country to specially mark this day amongst their staff, as well as a large media and social media campaign each year on this particular day.

**Community Roadshows:** In 2011 Karma Nirvana commenced its program of *Community Roadshows*. The idea of a roadshow is to invite affected members of the community to a dedicated venue in order to listen to inspirational talks from survivors and professionals, share stories and raise enthusiasm. The first event for 2016 took place in Luton in April to be followed over the coming months with events in Harrow, Dagenham, Hammersmith, Manchester, Stoke, Cardiff, Bradford, Leicester and Birmingham.
The team arrived with leaflets and energy to a bustling line of people all clamouring to get into the venue. I noted women that reminded me of my mother being first generation and second-generation women wearing traditional dress and chattering in Urdu and Punjabi about forced marriages. I thought how far we have travelled their presence filled me with hope. Then to my left I heard about a coach pulling in filled with energetic students from a local Luton college (Karma Nirvana 2016c).

Internationalisation: The charity also wants to spread its message to an International audience. This is part of a longer-term vision for the organisation. Contact has already been established with a number of international charities and events to spread the word of their support services to an international audience.

1.5 Other forced marriage social activist organisations

Although Karma Nirvana has perhaps taken the leading organisational role in drawing attention to the issues presented by forced marriage, and has obtained the most publicity through the publication of Shame (Sanghera 2007), it is by no means the only organisation to have played a significant role in campaigning for a wide range of issues related to violence against women, including forced marriage and honour abuse. Three of the most prominent of these organisations are discussed below, namely: Southall Black Sisters, the Iranian and Kurdish Women’s Rights Organisation, and the Freedom Charity.

1.5.1 Southall Black Sisters

Patel (2008) explains that Southall Black Sisters (SBS) is a not-for-profit campaigning organisation offering advice, resources and advocacy for black women, especially South Asian women. It is based in West London although it has a national reach. It was established in 1979 and initially focused on the problems faced by African-Caribbean and Asian women in an era when anti-racist activity was intensifying.

We consciously adopted a secular feminist identity, one based on a shared history of racism and religious patriarchal control. The absence of the recognition of gender power
relations within the anti-racist movements and the absence of an acknowledgement of racism within white feminist movements had resulted in the invisibility of black and minority women. It was this invisibility which gave rise to our organisation and others like us (Patel 2008, p. 10).

The bulk of the day-to-day work within the organisation is taken up by the issues facing mostly South Asian women confronted with domestic violence and restrictions on their freedom, made worse by deprivation and racism: “our work by its very nature has therefore had to simultaneously challenge violence against women and racism” (Patel 2008, p. 10). Southall Black Sisters argues that the pursuit of multiculturalist approaches has silenced women’s voices by obscuring the role of the family in violence against women. In particular, the rising significance of a multi-faith agenda within British policy approaches has led to an emboldening of extreme religious patriarchal attitudes. Southall Black Sisters argues that it has been forced to challenge the rise of religious fundamentalism which is increasingly being worn as a badge of honour within minority communities but which provides many issues of female subjugation in the process (Patel 2008).

Southall Black Sisters has always taken a leading role in forced marriage issues. The organisation was offered membership of the Working Party on Forced Marriage, an initiative of the Home Office in 1999. However, the SBS representative withdrew from the working party when it insisted that family mediation and conciliation should form a key plank in policy directions. Southall Black Sisters argued that family members were the key perpetrators in abuse against victims. Forcing victims back into holding reconciliation meetings with family members would only add to their distress and possibly prevent them from seeking help (Southall Black Sisters 2016).

1.5.2 Iranian and Kurdish Women’s Rights Organisation

The Iranian and Kurdish Women’s Rights Organisation (IKWRO) was founded in 2002 by Diana Nammi. The organisation was formed in order to fill a perceived gap with regard to meeting the specific needs for support, advocacy and counselling amongst women from the Middle East and Afghanistan. The IKWRO focuses on the risks facing
women from such backgrounds with regard to honour-based violence, forced marriage, child marriage, female genital mutilation and domestic violence. In 2015 the organisation offered assistance to over 2,200 women and girls. An innovative program offered by IKWRO is their Girls’ Group. This group is open to females aged between 16 and 25 who meet once a month in order to discuss any issues that are of significance to them. Outings and activity days are also arranged. The program is designed to provide a support mechanism for young females in order to raise their confidence and self-esteem and to make them aware of others who are suffering from similar issues and problems (IKWRO 2016).

1.5.3 Freedom Charity

The Freedom Charity was formed in 2009 by Aneeta Prem. It focuses on issues related to forced marriage and domestic slavery. Aneeta Prem has written two books aimed specially at a teenage market and designed to raise awareness and spread understanding – *But it’s Not Fair* (Prem 2011) [forced marriage] and *Cut Flowers* (Prem 2016) [female genital mutilation]. Prem is a magistrate in London and a martial arts exponent who first became aware of forced marriage whilst teaching karate to young girls. The charity operates a 24-hour helpline and specialises in going into schools to warn children against the dangers of forced marriage (Freedom Charity 2016). Freedom Charity received nationwide media publicity in 2013 when a case of domestic slavery was uncovered by the organisation. Three women who had watched a television program on forced marriage the previous night that featured Freedom Charity rang the helpline to tell a remarkable story that they had been held for thirty years as domestic slaves in a south London house. Although an extreme case, domestic slavery is not unknown in Britain with 200 cases reported to police each year (Butler & Bowcott 2013).

1.6 International approaches to forced marriage

Strategic and legislative approaches to preventing, detecting and prosecuting issues relating to forced marriage vary considerably from one country to another. Several
European countries have already criminalised forced marriage (such as Norway, Denmark, Austria, Germany and the Netherlands), as has Australia. However, other countries such as the United States and France have decided not to criminalise forced marriage. In the sections below, a discussion is presented with regard to some of the main issues in forced marriage in several representative countries – France, Netherlands, Germany and Australia.

### 1.6.1 France

According to Gill and van Engeland (2014, p. 241) “France does not fully acknowledge forced marriage as an issue and therefore has no specific laws to address it”. The reasons for this lie in France’s political, religious and cultural history that stresses the paramount nature of the country’s secular and republican values.

France has approached the issue of FM [forced marriage] as one concerning religious and traditional practices that adversely affect the Republic. France has historically refused to employ the term ‘communities’ to describe different portions of its diverse population… Muslims living in France are expected to assimilate to mainstream French values; a principle intended to avoid unequal treatment or discrimination (Gill & van Engeland 2014, p. 247).

Thus, whereas a country such as Britain has embraced the concept of multiculturalism, France has always struggled to accommodate this idea within its value system. The nature of an all-encompassing set of secular republican values causes friction with any attempt to acknowledge that cultural issues involving minority communities actually exist.

Britain has adopted a victim-based approach. France, conversely, has prioritized the protection of its secular Republican values. While the British legal and governmental framework is quite tolerant in that it allows religious tribunals to exist, France prevents any form of cultural or religious doctrine from penetrating the legal realm. This difference derives from the fact that Britain attempts to accommodate difference via a policy of ‘inclusive multiculturalism’, whereas France practices a ‘restrictive multiculturalism’ to protect the secular Republic from religious and cultural practices.
which it sees as inherently threatening to the Republic’s core values (Gill & van Engeland 2014, p. 242).

In effect, France embraces a social integration model, subject to the concept of neutrality. This is based on the premise that all citizens are equal. Such equality requires submission to the values of mainstream society. Everybody, including immigrants, must view themselves as part of the republic, thus necessitating assimilation. No special or differential treatment resulting from cultural or religious tradition can be tolerated on the grounds that such actions would threaten the unity of the secular republic. Instead of criminalising forced marriage, France has instead chosen the path of criminalising various socio-cultural practices (such as the wearing of religious clothing in public) and also “strengthening existing civil and criminal laws that can also be used to tackle forced marriage” (Gill & van Engeland 2014, p. 241).

Because of this approach, reliable estimates of the number of forced marriages in France are not available, since French law prevents the collection of statistical data about religious issues.

No such questions are included in censuses…gathering statistics on religion might result in policies or measures targeted at specific minority communities, thereby violating France’s principle of equality between citizens…direct engagement with the issue would necessitate action on the part of the state to gather statistics and address the fact that diverse communities exist in France (Gill & van Engeland 2014, p. 249).

1.6.2 Netherlands

The Netherlands took preventive legislative measures in the early years of this century to combat various issues with immigration from certain countries. For example, the legal age of marriage was raised to 21 for migrants from countries such as Turkey and Morocco. New immigrants were also required to pass a language proficiency test to qualify for an entry visa. However, the issues of forced marriage and honour-based violence only came to public prominence in the Netherlands resulting from widespread media coverage of a number of honour killings over the period 1999-2004. As a result,
the government worked in partnership with several immigrant organisations to establish a program called Program Against Honour-Related Violence. The program received significant government financial funding and was planned to operate over a five-year period from 2005 to 2010. It was envisioned as a multi-agency network of organisations that would work in close collaboration with one another to devise appropriate plans and strategies as well as sharing information with one another (Yurdakul & Korteweg 2013).

Several immigrant organisations took leading roles in planning and operating the Program Against Honour-Related Violence. The Kezban Foundation and the Umbrella Organization for Turks in the Netherlands commenced programs aimed at domestic violence within the respective immigrant communities in the country. Additionally, the Refugees’ Organizations in the Netherlands and the Joint Organization of Moroccan Dutch devised the program called On the Right Side of Honour. Other immigrant organisations developed their own programs and services aimed at raising awareness about honour violence and gender equality through education, service provision (such as refuges and shelters), and problem solving. Overall, the Program Against Honour-Related Violence adopted a three-pronged approach – prevention, protection and prosecution: “to focus on changing mentalities within immigrant communities, improving people’s capacity to take care of themselves by accessing various social services, developing behavioural alternatives, and collaborating with professional parties” (Yurdakul & Korteweg 2013, p. 207).

The program was strongly inclusive of minority sensitivities throughout the period and supported the notion that immigrant communities were problem-solvers and not simply problem-makers. There was also an attempt to ensure that the overall theme of the approach was gender equality. In retrospect, the program achieved certain positive outcomes related to awareness, education and service provision, although whether it acted successfully to significantly change behaviour and patriarchal mindsets, was not clear. Certainly, once the funding stopped there was debate about whether the program had achieved enough traction to become self-sustaining. Issues were also raised about whether national level integration of strategies and services had been successfully
achieved, although there appeared to be agreement that progress had been made in various pockets at local levels (Yurdakul & Korteweg 2013).

This overall approach aimed at collaboration, inclusiveness, gender equality, and immigrant self-responsibility took another turn some years later when it was announced that the government was taking a strong stance against all forms of female oppression, singling out in particular, genital mutilation, honour killing and human trafficking. Forced marriage was going to be made a criminal offence and action taken against repeat marriage migration. This criminalisation occurred in terms of the Forced Marriage Prevention Act, enacted in December 2015. Research shows that in the Netherlands there are between 674 and 1,914 victims of forced marriage. The act of forcing another person to marry against their will now carries a sentence of imprisonment for up to two years (Government of the Netherlands 2016). The Act has also enforced various other measures designed to make it harder for people to be coerced into marriage against their will. For example: marriage partners must have reached the age of 18; full cousin marriages and those between auntie/uncle and nephew/niece are only legal if both partners swear an oath that they have given full consent; polygamous marriages contracted at home or abroad are not recognised; and if a husband refuses to cooperate in ending a formal or informal religious marriage then he can be charged with ‘holding his wife captive’.

According to Pieters (2016) approximately 250 underage children are forced into marriage every year in the Netherlands. In many cases the child is taken abroad for the marriage and then returns to the Netherlands. Until 2017 the government will place one million euros into tackling forced marriage, primarily to train teachers to recognise the signs of forced marriage as well as to encourage discussion of taboo subjects within impacted communities.

1.6.3 Germany

Honour killings became widespread news in Germany in 2005 when media reports drew attention to the fact that five such murders had occurred in Berlin in only one year. One
particularly brutal murder of a 23-year-old female by her brother was given prominent publicity. This was added to by the publication in 2011 of a Government report into forced marriages which revealed that in 2008 a total of 3,443 people sought assistance at social service centres because of issues related to forced marriage (Kern 2011). In 2011, forcing someone into a marriage against their will became a criminal offence carrying a five-year term of imprisonment (Johnson 2011).

In contrast to the approach adopted in the Netherlands, Yurdakul and Korteweg (2013) argue that German authorities adopted a more exclusionary and stigmatizing strategy towards tackling the issue. No specific programs aimed at addressing honour-based abuse were adopted. Instead, most debates revolved around the lack of immigrant integration, the different value systems held by immigrants as opposed to local German people, the need to carefully control immigration into the country, and the threat posed to female equality by patriarchal male mindsets. The clash of values between locals and immigrants led to popular debates about the necessity for everybody to adopt German values, as opposed to what was happening in practice with the creation of immigrant enclaves where non-German values, especially relating to gender equality, were practised. Lack of integration between immigrants and local people has enabled female suppression to continue and only by closer integration could such values be challenged. At the national level, the debate was conducted around two strategies for ensuring gender equality “by either integrating immigrants, i.e. making them German, or by excluding them from the country altogether through restrictive immigration laws” (Yurdakul & Korteweg 2013, p. 209). As part of these strategies, a change in the law demanded that incoming spouses should pass a German language test before being granted an entry visa. Further state measures to enforce integration into German society have included the establishment of compulsory ‘integration courses’:

In October 2010, the German government announced a new measure that would punish immigrants in Germany who did not attend ‘integration courses’ to help them assimilate into German society. The law calls on authorities to verify that immigrants applying to extend their stay in Germany have taken German language classes as well as a course on German values and laws. Failure to follow these courses would mean the applicant’s request could be denied (Kern 2011).
1.6.4 Australia

Forced marriage was made illegal in Australia in 2013 with a term of imprisonment of up to seven years for convicted perpetrators. Vanovac (2012) quotes the New South Wales Minister for Women, Pru Goward, as stating that there are approximately 1,000 cases of forced marriage per year in Australia. Hobday (2014) quotes a report from the organisation Plan International Australia that found there were 250 cases of forced marriage involving children during the two-year period 2012-2014. Palin (2015) quoted media sources that during 2015 foreign clerics had been visiting Australia in order to illegally marry off under-age girls. During the first nine months of 2015, the Australian Federal Police investigated 20 cases of suspected forced marriage, of which 11 involved children under the age of 18 (Palin 2015).

However, the scope and scale of forced marriage is not fully understood because of the lack of accurate statistics and the probability of vast under-reporting. The Melbourne-based welfare group Good Shepherd regularly sees cases of forced marriage, mostly as a result of women reporting domestic violence in their marriage. Resources devoted to addressing the issue of forced marriage are very scarce, although police in the southern state of Victoria were due to start a training program on the issue as from 2014 (Hobday 2014).

The detection of forced marriage in Australia is extremely hit-and-miss with a severe lack of coordinated strategy measures. Cases come to attention mainly through serendipity. For example, in 2010 a school in Victoria reported to child protection services that a 13-year-old girl was not attending school and it was feared she might be the victim of a planned forced marriage overseas. According to Burn (2013) the Department of Human Services obtained a Family Court ruling that the girl was not to be taken out of Australia until she reached the age of 18 and her passport was to be surrendered. Her name was placed on the watch list of the Australian Federal Police until she reached 18. Another case came to public attention in 2015 involving the marriage of a girl of 12 to a man of 26. This was only discovered when the man tried to claim social security benefits as the girl’s guardian (Evans 2015). Many other cases of forced marriage are only uncovered because of confrontation with the symptoms of the
issue rather than comprehensively addressing the causes. Symptoms include youth homelessness, female homelessness, youth self-harm, domestic violence, and teenage pregnancies (Evans 2015). Jasvinder Sanghera toured Australia in 2015 and was critical of the lack of resources devoted to detecting and prosecuting forced marriages. She noted that no helpline existed in Australia, except for one operated by the police that many people are too frightened to call (Palin 2015). As a result, many Australian victims rang the Karma Nirvana helpline in Britain seeking assistance.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured as below.

Chapter 1 – Introduction.

This chapter introduces the research question of the thesis within the context of the purpose, significance and scope of the study. Jasvinder Sanghera (social activist) and Karma Nirvana (social enterprise) are introduced and examined. Three other social activist organisations in the same field are also introduced, and the chapter concludes with a brief introduction to developments in four countries other than the UK.

Chapter 2 – Honour: a concept and a discourse.

In this chapter, ‘honour’ is analysed both as a concept and as a discourse. Within its broader meaning, ‘honour’ possesses a number of different connotations. However, this chapter will specifically concentrate only on that conception which relates directly to the relevance of Sanghera’s situation – that of family (or sexual) honour, widely referred to as izzat.

Chapter 3 – Forced marriage

This chapter analyses the issue of forced marriage. Statistics relating to the characteristics of forced marriages are presented; followed by the various reasons why such events occur; and the cultural and other barriers facing campaigners against the
practice. The chapter then adopts a chronological approach to analysing the sequence of measures enacted by the UK Government in an attempt to control and eliminate the practice.

Chapter 4 – Methodology and audit trail

This chapter presents the research design of the thesis by describing and justifying the theoretical and methodological orientation of the thesis. An aligned research scaffolding is adopted between epistemology (constructionism), theoretical perspective (critical inquiry), methodology (discourse analysis) and method (document analysis). The chapter explains the nature of discourse analysis, in particular that of critical discourse analysis, and justifies the use of a sociocognitive approach. A detailed audit trial is presented.

Chapter 5 – Synopsis and analysis of Shame

This chapter presents a synopsis and analysis of the memoir Shame (Sanghera 2007). Overall, the main theme that is identified in the memoir is that of ‘subjugation: cultural role of females’. A three-stage model is presented in this chapter that depicts the transformational journey of the main protagonist: ‘cloistering strategies’, ‘drifting back to the family fold’, and ‘disownment mitigation strategies’.

Chapter 6 – ‘Escaping discourse’: contribution to the literature

This chapter shows how the conceptual innovations depicted in chapter 5 add to the existing literature on this topic. In broad terms, this is achieved by taking the concepts of ‘power rituals’, ‘power-as-practice’ and ‘entrepreneurizing-as-emancipation’ (Goss et al. 2011; Rindova, Barry & Kitchen 2009) and juxtaposing these with the (earlier) Foucauldian concept of ‘discourse’ (1972, 1981) and (later) Foucauldian concept of ‘technology of the self’ (1988a, 1988b) in order to create a theoretical space which allows the possibility of agentic escape from the otherwise confining entrapment of a single discourse.
Chapter 7 – Conclusion

This chapter emphasises the implications of the findings of the thesis for both practitioners and academics. In addition, the criteria for the evaluation of quality are examined with particular emphasis on the criteria for qualitative studies. The chapter concludes by examining some limitations of the thesis and by advancing some suggestions for further research that future researchers may find rewarding.

1.8 Summary

This chapter has provided the important introductory issues associated with this thesis including the nature of the research question, the purpose of the thesis, and the significance and scope of the thesis. It has provided the background to the main protagonist of the thesis (Jasvinder Sanghera) and the social enterprise she created to further her campaign (Karma Nirvana). The chapter has also examined some other social activist organisations that operate within the broader context of the research topic and has extended the geographical scope in order to look at legislative and historical issues pertinent to several other countries.

In the next chapter, chapter 2, ‘honour’ will be analysed both as a concept and as a discourse. In particular, honour will be examined within the context directly relevant to Sanghera’s situation, namely that of ‘sexual honour’ (izzat). The chapter will highlight not only how sexual honour plays out in terms of a patriarchal system of day-to-day subjugation of women, but also how it plays on the retribution that is often carried out against those women who are perceived to have violated the strict codes that under-gird the structures and practices of the belief system.
Chapter 2 Honour: a concept and a discourse

In chapter 1 a comprehensive examination was undertaken of Jasvinder Sanghera (the woman and social activist) as well as the organisation she founded to support victims of forced marriage and honour-based violence (Karma Nirvana). Despite Sanghera vividly describing the experiences she suffered in her memoir *Shame* (Sanghera 2007) no detailed understanding of the nature of ‘honour’ can be gleaned simply by reading about her transformational journey. In fact, during the course of the memoir’s trajectory, Sanghera herself barely understood the wider ramifications of the concept and the manner in which it impacted on women not only in the UK but also across the world. The purpose of chapter 2 is to fill that gap.

In this chapter, ‘honour’ is analysed both as a concept and as a discourse. Within its broader connotation, ‘honour’ possesses a number of different connotations. However, this chapter will specifically concentrate only on that conception which relates directly to the relevance of Sanghera’s situation – that of family (or sexual) honour, widely referred to as *izzat*. The chapter will highlight not only how family honour plays out in terms of a patriarchal system of day-to-day subjugation of women, but also how it plays out in terms of the retribution that is often carried out against those women who are perceived to have violated the strict codes that under-girth the structures and practices of the belief system.

The chapter is structured as below:

2.1 Honour
2.2 Sexual honour
   2.2.1 Honour killings and violence
2.3 Summary
2.1 Honour

The definition of *honour* is not a straightforward matter, because the concept is used in a wide variety of ways and has different connotations over time and between cultures (Appiah 2010; Barrett & Sarbin 2008; Stewart 1994). An early definition used by Westermarck (in Stewart 1994, p. 13) states “a man’s honour may be defined as the moral worth he possesses in the eyes of the society of which he is a member”. However, according to Stewart (1994) the best known definition is provided by Pitt-Rivers (1966, p. 22):

> Honour is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his *claim* to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognised by society, his *right* to pride.

These two definitions bring out a striking aspect of the concept of honour, namely whether it is composed of one factor only (a person’s moral worth in the eyes of others) or composed of two factors (one’s moral worth in the eyes of oneself and the eyes of others). It also raises the question of how concepts such as moral worth, value, excellence, and pride can be measured and attributed. As indicated, these criteria have changed over time and between cultures. The development of honour in Western society from antiquity to modernity has been sketched by Barrett and Sarbin (2008), who analyse how the evolution of the concept provides insight to the dynamics of identity maintenance. They argue that from the inception of the concept of honour it has always been connected to “knowing one’s place and the means of maintaining and restoring hierarchical order” (Barrett & Sarbin 2008, p. 7). Within hierarchical social structures “a man” was always expected to fight to retain his status within the social order. Within this context, honour “is associated with competitive aggressiveness, authority, status, and hierarchy in which if one refuses to fight when challenged, one is subject to insult, disrepute, shame, status degradation, infamy” (Barrett & Sarbin 2008, p. 6). Both Stewart (1994) and Appiah (2010, p. 13) arrive at the conclusion that “honour means being entitled to respect”, whilst Berger, Berger and Kellner (1974) note that in some environments, such as the military, honour has historically been used as a form of social control. The importance of the military in determining relevant aspects of the meaning
of honour is also reflected in the argument used by Barrett and Sarbin (2008, p. 6) that honour has always been closely related to “power, glory, fame, and reputation”. For example, the Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration awarded by the United States government to members of the armed forces who display “conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her own life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States” (US Department of Defense nd).

### 2.2 Sexual honour

For the purpose of this particular study we have delimited our study only to the concept of *sexual honour*. According to the Centre for Social Cohesion (CSC 2010, p. 3) sexual honour ‘arises from ideas that the reputation and social standing of an individual, a family, or a community is based on the behaviour and morality of its female members’. The origin of this concept derives from either of two separate theories (CSC 2010). The first evolved because early man wanted to ensure that the children he raised actually carried his genes and so those men who controlled the behaviour of their womenfolk came to be highly esteemed within the community. The second evolved from the perception by early societies of women as property that could be traded for other commodities, services and favours. Pure women carried a higher tradeable value, so that men were encouraged to closely monitor the sexual behaviour of their women in an attempt to increase their economic power.

Over time, men’s ability to uphold these ideas of ‘proper’ female behaviour and ensure that women conformed to these social norms became equated with their own social standing, status and ‘honour’. Upholding the honour of men and women therefore became dependent on restricting women’s actions, behaviour and thoughts (CSC 2010, p. 4).

Whatever the origins of sexual honour, the practice has become enshrined in many communities and, in effect, has taken on the role of institutionalised subordination of women. Gill (2013, p. 249) argues, “control of women is a key symbol of male power in societies with honour-centric value systems”. In short, honour has “pronounced
misogynistic moorings” (Shahani 2013, p. 276). Complex social structures have
developed around the practice governing relationships across families and communities.

The heart of it is a patriarchal society, a male-dominated society and that dominance is extended to women. Women are chattels to be done with as the owner sees fit and this type of behaviour that men indulge in is perpetuated from generation to generation, so that each generation following on is going to think that is the right thing to do and that is the only way to live (Husseini 2009, p. 174).

It could be argued that such honour-based communities constitute a discourse community. According to Foucault (1972, p. 49), discourse refers to “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak”, reinforcing Gill’s (2009) notion that honour is a socially constructed phenomenon. The manner in which people “think about, experience, apprehend, understand, interpret and assign meaning to the material objects of the world around them is through discourse and the structures it imposes on their thinking” (Jones et al. 2008, p. 614). A discourse community is a constraining system defined by a body of texts or practices that are unified by a common focus (Porter 1992). Within such communities people share, in whole or in part, common interests and common ways of speaking about things, they employ a common vocabulary with accepted meanings, bound together by stated and unstated conventions, power mechanisms and hierarchies (Little, Jordens & Sayers 2003; Porter 1992). Each grouping is bound together by agreement about ideology to form a community of assent (Morris 1996).

According to Husseini (2009, p. 157) some of the districts of many towns and cities in Britain “form some of the most tightly-knit immigrant communities in Europe, where tradition and honour play a crucial role in everyday life”. The isolated and closed nature of this diaspora and honour community can often work in a manner not best suited to female agency. But however tightly contained a community may try to be it can never seal itself off completely from surrounding discourse communities. Husseini (2009, p. 167) argues “women are attracted to the liberal western values that promise more independence and equality, while men want to maintain their patriarchal system”. Such a schism obviously enhances the possibility of honour-based violence and conflict.
Shahani (2013) is particularly interested in this question of female agency within honour-based communities: “patriarchal and misogynistic effects of honor and shame have been carried over and redeployed” (p. 5) in honour-based communities embedded in British society. This has created:

...a sharpening of gender hierarchies and the hardening of women’s oppression. Men have been authorised to violently constrain the movement of women, drastically limit their public role and, in extreme cases, murder them with impunity in the guise of honor killings”. [Women’s] bodies are invariably imagined as resources of men’s honor and volatile repositories of shame, making them subject to social control and sacrificial extermination. Women’s bodies have thus been repeatedly seized, invested with, and converted into, valuable possessions and dangerous beings...conveying at the same time, a sense of deepest menace (Shahani 2013, p. 5).

The community of assent that binds together the discourse of sexual honour derives from several advantages that purportedly flow from the maintenance of the system, such as: identity, self-image, self-awareness, and pride; increased security and career prospects; more social contacts and business opportunities; stability in a changing world; and a sense of superiority (CSC 2010). However, because honour is ‘mainly something for men’ (Stewart 1994, p. 107) it tends to carry negative consequences for the individual agency of women within the system. It is males who carry honour whilst females can only add to or subtract from such honour in terms of their meek and respectful behaviour: “diligent daughters, obedient wives, or dutiful daughters-in-law” (Sanghera 2007, p. 271). Women are supposed only to obey. They either carry no honour at all or else it tends to be of a limited or secondary nature (Arin 2001). A female can derive her identity only with respect to some male member of her family (Araji & Carlson 2001). Thus, she can only be known as somebody’s daughter, sister, wife or mother. Women are regarded as “the guardians and representatives of family honour [and] the notion of filial duty is difficult to shed without incurring feelings of vulnerability and guilt” (Hussain 2005, p. 526). Females are regarded as the property of men who have the “right to control women’s sexual and social choices” (Gill 2009, p. 478). Women are expected to display chaste behaviour and operate within a domestic environment, being wholly or largely excluded from public life. Male and female
interaction in a public environment is discouraged. Inappropriate behaviour by women can have a detrimental effect upon men’s honour, to the effect, for example, that mixed-sex business contact, or female entrepreneurial endeavour, can be interpreted as dishonourable to men (Essers & Benschop 2007).

There are several ways in which one’s honour can be damaged: defying parental authority; becoming too western in terms of clothing, behaviour, and attitudes; female sexual infidelity; use of drugs or alcohol; and speaking openly to others in the form of gossiping or failing to remain silent on private family issues (CSC 2010). Such actions are not dishonourable per se but only to the extent they become known to the wider community. When honour is damaged, its consequences can be far-reaching in the form of shame, ostracism, loss of social status and self-esteem, and economic damage. For these reasons, communities go to great lengths to ensure that honour is maintained and, when damaged, is rapidly restored or avenged. This gives rise to such endemic practices as forced marriage, domestic violence, honour killings, and female genital mutilation (CSC 2010). These practices have been extended by Gill (2009, p. 476) who employs the broad-based term ‘honour-based violence’ to refer to “any form of violence perpetrated against females within the framework of patriarchal family structures, communities, and/or societies, where the main justification for the perpetration of violence is the protection of a social construction of honour as a value system, norm, or tradition”. Such a definition also encompasses other forms of violence such as acid attacks, beatings, mutilations, selling into slavery, disownment, deprivation of freedom, education or friendship, and a wide range of psychological pressures and emotional blackmail.

Forced marriages of young girls by their families are widely employed as a form of honour-based violence, even within Western countries. Within the UK, Brandon and Hafez (2008) report the practice of parents removing girls from school once they reach a certain age and (presumably) sending them abroad to be forcibly married, a practice largely overlooked by schools and teachers for fear of being branded as racist or unsympathetic to minority cultures. In other circumstances, the extent of shame brought upon the immediate or extended family by certain types of inappropriate female behaviour is so extreme that the woman risks being killed by her male kin in order for
honour to be restored (Baker, Gregware & Cassidy 1999; Sever & Yurdakul 2001). For example, women who wish to marry a man of their choice, or refuse to marry a man chosen by male kin, or who wish to divorce an abusive husband (Guru 2009), or who transgress sexual mores by having an affair, or dating an unsuitable man (such as a man from another religion, ethnicity, caste or even village), or running away, or even by having minimal contact with unrelated males, risk punishment in the form of honour killings (Patel & Gadit 2008).

The opposite of honour is shame and paradoxically each concept is often defined in terms of the other; thus shame is the absence of honour, and honour the absence of shame:

Theoretically codes of honor and shame refer to both women and men, but honor is ultimately seen as being men’s responsibility, while shame is viewed as being women’s ‘burden’. Honor is thus actively achieved while shame is often passively defended, leading to an entirely different set of expectations for men and women. Men are expected to protect women’s honor, whilst women are expected to preserve it (Shahani 2013, p. 7).

These concepts of honour and shame lead to an interpretation of an oppressive system that locates women into a strange position of ‘doubleness’ emphasising the control and consequences of female sexual transgression.

The honor/shame model, which focuses primarily on female sexual transgression, is oppressive…it is meant to uphold men’s honor…it is also generative of gender hierarchy underwritten by sexual violence…women’s bodies become the focus of control within an extended family…for women are at once the focal point for securing familial reputation just as they constantly threaten loss of face. Their sexual volatility comes across as a kind of violence to family members who feel their ‘honor’ on the verge of constantly being compromised and attacked. This doubleness in terms of women’s capacity to support and subvert familial honor is vital to the parental generation when they consider the marriage options open to their sons and daughters (Shahani 2013, p. 8).
According to Gill (2006, p. 2) “fear of bringing shame on the family routinely acts to silence women about their experiences of [honour] violence and discourages them from resisting such forms of control”.

In cultural terms, the word *izzat* is often used to refer to ‘(sexual) honour’. The concept of *izzat* operates across many communities but “it is practised and interpreted differently according to religious group, caste and/or kinship network” (Virdi 2013, p. 112). For this reason, *izzat* had a more nuanced meaning than the simplified translation of ‘honour’ and can encompass an individual’s as well as a family’s honour, (self-)respect, reputation, merit, pride, virtue, morality, eminence and dignity within the community (Shahani 2013, p. 7; Virdi 2013, p. 111). Some idea of the complex nuances related to the interpretation of *izzat* can be gleaned from these various citations from the literature shown below:

- “Izzat is a learned complex set of rules an individual follows in order to protect the family honour and keep his/her position in the community” (Gilbert, Gilbert & Sanghera 2004, p. 112).
- Social hierarchies are based on izzat, hence “honor is seen through the prism of kin and community. A primary consideration in the community is therefore ‘what people will say’” (Shahani 2013, pp. 6-7).
- “Protecting the chastity of women and defending familial honor in feuding relations thus imbues a man with izzat: political influence, power and authority” (Shahani 2013, p. 7).
- “Izzat is tied to ownership…the concept of woman as object/commodity is deeply rooted in tribal culture…women are seen as embodying the honor of men, to whom they belong. As the sole protector of the female, the man must not lose his honor: otherwise his izzat, standing in society, becomes diminished…the only way to cleanse a man’s honor is to literally kill in the name of honor…a man who fails to do so is dishonourable or socially impotent” (Shahani 2013, p. 8).
- “Izzat…is harnessed as a cultural resource that underpins highly gendered social structures and power relations premised on the scapegoating of women” (Shahani 2013, p. 9).
- “Izzat is used in two distinct ways: first, it is a primary motivator to restore honour through violence, threats and intimidation, and second, izzat is employed to silence
women in the face of violence or abuse where women are expected to internalise the abuse and suffer in silence” (Virdi 2013, p. 108).

• “Any offence committed against a family’s / man’s izzat that would result in sharam (shame) warrants retribution, which could mean physical, mental or emotional assault” (Virdi 2013, p. 111).

• “…sharam is best understood as female modesty, in appearance, conduct and action, the betrayal of which undermines izzat…izzat allows one to gain respect within the family but also amongst the diasporic cultural / religious communities…izzat is a matter of male pride yet the responsibility for izzat ultimately depends on women…this evokes the quintessence of obligation and responsibility especially for females who are regarded as being the ‘carriers’ of family honour” (Virdi 2013, p. 112).

• “Izzat is maintained and perpetuated largely through women who expect to endure subordinate positions within the corporate family until they become a mother-in-law and are afforded greater power and autonomy. But this seniority can be obscured if a woman endures setbacks, such as failing to have (male) children and conflict between family members” (Virdi 2013, p. 112).

• “Though women are primarily the enforcers, symbolic representatives, and captives of izzat, all family members equally feel its significance…an essential component of izzat depends on community perceptions and gossip since an ‘immoral’ act does not become ‘shameful’ or ‘dishonourable’ until it becomes public knowledge” (Virdi 2013, p. 112).

• “To safeguard izzat, men are expected to control women since a misstep jeopardises family status in the community…an array of activities, actions and behaviours can damage izzat, all related to females: publically defying familial authority, becoming ‘Western’ as expressed by choice of clothes, behaviour or activities, engagement in sex/relationships outside marriage, adultery, use of drugs or alcohol, and being an object of gossip” (Virdi 2013, p. 112).

In consequence, izzat defines the operational and behavioural characteristics of community members – the social structure and its preservation in relation to the respective roles of men and women.

Respectable femininity is socially and culturally constructed as revolving around passivity, selflessness and submissiveness especially in relationships with men…the belief that women should remain hidden or low profile, which implies physical and psychological confinement in the public and private spheres is common in societies
where honour holds significant currency…an unwed woman must remain a virgin if she and her family are to be considered honourable. Meanwhile a man’s honour is determined by whether his wife, daughters, sisters, nieces and other female relatives preserve their virginity until they are married and remain faithful to their husbands thereafter (Gill 2013 p. 249).

Since women are regarded as the carriers of family honour this brings about “the fear of bringing shame to others (reflected shame) …[and] inhibits many forms of behaviour” (Gilbert, Gilbert & Sanghera 2004, p. 126). Research conducted by Gilbert, Gilbert and Sanghera (2004) revealed many women suffer mental health problems resulting from subsequent feelings of entrapment and subordination: the sense of ‘being watched’ and “being on a lead” (p. 126). Reflected shame is regarded as being far more disabling than individual shame (bringing shame on yourself). Husseini (2009, p. 176) quotes 1992 statistics that show that women from honour-based discourse communities in Britain “are three times more likely to commit suicide” than women who are not embedded in such communities. Gill (2013, p. 257) notes how family and community surveillance “exerts power over women’s sexuality” in the form of “freely circulated rumour and gossip”. For people who have not been socialised into honour-based communities it is not surprising that insight to such cultural issues is invariably absent: “it is hard for many people to understand that these women’s worst enemies are those who are closest to them” (Husseini 2009, p. 176). Gilbert, Gilbert and Sanghera (2004) note how family and community surveillance breeds fear in vulnerable women about confidentiality. These provide barriers to seeking assistance from within their own community. The authors quote an example from their own study where the local GP listened to a young girl’s problems and then related these back to her parents. Even attending a local surgery without being accompanied by parents or family members would be enough to elicit gossip from within the community and reports back to the family. Similar problems about confidentiality are also attached to translators of women’s stories who cannot be trusted to relate “faithful meanings” (p. 127) to such narratives. These examples serve as reminders about the problems inhibiting many women from speaking out about their issues.
The concept that non-community members can be looked upon to provide greater safety and nurture than community members would be regarded as a strange phenomenon for many people, but is well recognised by many young females in particular who look to exert greater agency and independence within honour-based communities. One victim said:

Why should we have to die for wanting no more than for our own voices to be heard, to have a say in our own lives?... my life will always be at risk... there are people in my community who want to see me dead, and they will not rest until I am. I will never be safe (Husseini 2013, p. 165-166).

This concept of constantly being on the run, hiding from parents and the community, and continually feeling unsafe is well illustrated in the case of Jack and Zena (pseudonyms) whose saga extended over a period of 17 years between 1992 and 2009. Zena’s family wanted her to marry Bilal, her cousin who lived overseas. Zena resisted and started a relationship with Jack, a local Englishman. Faced with hostility from Zena’s family the pair ran away and went into hiding. Zena’s father and brother issued death threats against the couple that they would be hunted down and killed (Julios 2015). A bounty hunter was hired. For 17 years the pair were on the run, constantly dreading discovery. Eventually the stress became too much and the couple separated in 2009.

A complicating factor for such women is that they often do not recognise that they are the victims of violence or unequal conduct. They interpret their treatment as a normal part of their culture. According to Gill:

The socialization of young women in such societies revolves around notions of family honour and cultural norms that become so deeply internalized that women often find it difficult to break away from these values. As a result of this socialization, many women feel that they are to blame for the emotional and physical abuse they suffer and so become complicit in their own subjugation (2009, p. 478).

For this reason, mothers, mothers-in-law, aunts, and older sisters often reinforce the oppressive system of patriarchal control over young girls. Their own prior socialisation
into the discourse largely prevents them from questioning the values and norms of the community.

We learn from Sanghera (2007) that within her community the concept of shame is tied to the concept of family honour. In an honour-based culture a man’s reputation ‘is at the centre of his self-worth’ and he must be prepared to ‘fight in response to even the slightest challenge to his reputation’ (Gladwell 2008, p. 167).

Even though she grew up in the UK, Sanghera was aware of the situation from an early age. Retribution for going out with an unsuitable boy would be meted out by brothers or uncles in the form of beatings for both boy and girl.

Everyone in the community knew that. I knew it by the time I was eight. No one handed me a book of rules but I knew the particular way in which I was supposed to act, walk, talk, even breathe (Sanghera 2007, p. 8).

Sanghera (2007) states that when women are forced into marriage they merely swap one form of abuse for another. According to her, in a forced marriage the wife is under constant scrutiny and control not only from her husband but also from her own family, her new family, and community leaders. The expectation is of respectful, quiet, and submissive behaviour that enforces female modesty and provides no threat to male possessive pride. Sanghera (2009) provides plenty of examples both from her own personal experience and from her association with Karma Nirvana. One ‘imported’ bride was disowned by her husband for allowing herself to be examined by a male doctor, and was only able to right the situation by going down on her knees to kiss his feet whilst begging his forgiveness in front of a gathering of the older community members in her mother-in-law’s house (Sanghera 2007, p. 223).

In effect, women who seek reassurance that they will be supported by their family and the community against abusive husbands have little alternative but to return to the violent relationship. Conditioned by the discourse, lacking alternative remedies, and persuaded by the rhetoric of family and community many women return, shamed and silenced, believing that the situation is their fault, blaming themselves for bringing their
husband’s cruelty on themselves. According to Sanghera, a traditional upbringing in an
honour-bound society leaves women ‘so vulnerable and unprepared for real life’
(Sanghera 2007, p. 276) that they are unable to cope if they do not conform. A woman
is unable to survive within the structures and mores of a society designed to not support
single women.

Sanghera’s mother had spent over 40 years in the UK and was still unable to speak or
understand English when she died. During this period she rarely ventured outside her
community. She was, in fact, the second wife of Sanghera’s father, and the younger
sister of his first wife. She had married the father when her sister had died at a young
age. For her this was a matter of family honour that she had undertaken willingly.
Marriage was a matter of duty. She accepted her lot in life.

At this stage it would be worthwhile to emphasise the point that some commentators
would argue that the type of analysis that has been conducted above exhibits a strong
element of cultural bias. This could be countered by framing arguments around
honour/izzat in terms of cultural relativism, thus avoiding judgement calls that would
label some cultural communities or minorities as regressive, backward or morally
inferior. Gill (2013) cites the following words of a leading barrister defending a family
in a court case involving honour-based abuse: “everybody must be ready to respect the
culture and conditions of those who have come to this country to make it their home and
that is something to be applauded and not to be tampered with” (p. 250). Supporters of
such cultural accommodation argue that honour-based practices are only problematic in
relation to Western cultural norms. Attempts to restrict such practices “represent a form
of neo-colonialism that seeks to impose Western morals and values on non-Western
communities…[or] cultural imperialism” (p. 250). Elsewhere, Gill (2006, p. 6) warns
against framing honour-based violence within a narrative of the “barbaric Other…[thus]
sowing the seeds of mainstream racism”. We must guard against populist narratives that
focus on cultural values and norms that are:

…simplistic, sensational and essentialist, stigmatising ethnic and religious groups and
dividing communities between ‘us’ and ‘them’ or ‘others’. Within this context the
‘others’ are criticised as outsiders and as problematic communities with barbaric and backward cultures (Gill 2006, p. 6).

On the other hand, Gill (2006) calls attention to the evolving debate about multicultural accommodation. The early debate about such accommodation drew attention to the justice claims of minority groups in their relationship with the broader state, and “refers to a wide range of state measures designed to facilitate identity groups’ practices and norms” (p. 7). Later debates focus more attention on the “potentially conflicting needs and interests of the three major players in any multicultural system: the group, the state and the individual” (p. 7). Gill argues that this latter debate implies the state should support the individual “in any conflict between the individual and her minority group…in essence this is an argument against multicultural accommodation and is often brought forward by the defenders of individual freedom, autonomy and individual rights” (p. 8). In support of such arguments, Husseini (2009, p. 161) quotes both the Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair who issued a statement saying “multiculturalism does not mean accepting the unacceptable” and Home Office Minister Mike O’Brien who agreed, saying “multicultural sensitivity is no excuse for moral blindness” (p. 161). There exists the danger of “tolerating human rights violations for the sake of multi-cultural accommodation” (Gill 2006, p. 1), a tension that is resolved for Gill (2006) through her statement that “there are certain acts or omissions directed at women that should not anywhere be considered acceptable, regardless of the social or cultural context” (p. 1).

2.2.1 Honour Killings and Violence

Honour killings came to prominence through court convictions and media publicity during the late 1990s but according to Husseini (2009, p. 158) “it is now known that such murders have been committed in the UK at least as far back as the 1970s”. These murders are often collaborative efforts, carried out with the full knowledge and support of the parents, extended family members and the surrounding community. In many cases the murders are performed by contract killers hired by the families; often having been tracked down by bounty hunters. Surprisingly, some of these are women who have “made a business” out of finding runaway girls because of their easier access to female
shelters and other support activities (Husseini 2009, p. 161). Many people in the know feel too intimidated to speak up or “to cooperate with the police, fearing reprisals from their own community” (Husseini 2009, p. 164)

Many honour killings are of a particularly horrific nature. Seven such cases are summarised below taken from the research of Julios (2015).

**Surjit Athwal – 1998:** Surjit suffered years of domestic abuse from her husband. She commenced an extramarital affair and planned to divorce her husband. Her mother-in-law Bachan Kaur Athwal tricked Surjit to return back to their ethnic homeland for the purpose of a holiday. Once there, Surjit was murdered by her relatives. Bachan returned to the UK alone. Surjit’s body was never found.

**Rukhsana Naz – 1998:** Rukhsana was forcibly married at age 15. At age 19 she took a lover and became pregnant whilst her husband was overseas. Her mother and eldest brother strangled Rukhsana with a plastic flex, placed her body in a sack and dumped her 100 miles away in a farmer’s field.

**Heshu Yones – 2002:** Heshu was 16 years old, still at school, when her father knifed her to death. Her father accused Heshu of becoming too Western. She also had a boyfriend from another ethnic and religious group. Her father attacked her in the family home, fatally stabbing her 11 times, slitting her throat, and leaving her to bleed to death.

**Shafiea Ahmed – 2003:** Shafiea was the eldest of five children who aspired to become a lawyer. Her parents, however, wanted her to get married to a man who lived overseas. She refused. Aged 17, Shafiea was pinned down to a sofa by her father and mother, a plastic bag stuffed in her mouth and she was suffocated by pinching her nose and covering her mouth. Her younger siblings witnessed the murder. Her body was taken to a remote site 100 miles away and concealed in undergrowth. Her parents did not report her as missing. The body was discovered 5 months later.

**Samaira Nazir – 2005:** Samaira was 26 years old, a recruitment consultant with a university degree in travel and tourism. She was planning to marry a man that her
family disapproved of because of his different ethnic origin. Her 30-year-old brother
and 17-year-old cousin stabbed Samaira to death within her parental home. She was
stabbed 10 times and a scarf wrapped around her neck so tightly that a police officer
had to cut it off. The murder took place in the presence of her mother who simply stood
and watched whilst two young nieces aged 2 and 4 were splattered with blood.

Banaz Mahmod – 2006: Banaz was 20 years old and still living at home when she was
murdered by her father and uncle. Her father had earlier married off Banaz but her
husband was violent and abusive and Banaz sought to divorce him. She wanted to enter
into a love marriage with another man from a different ethnic background who her
father disapproved of. Her father, uncle and three other men attacked Banaz in the
family home. With her father watching she was raped, garrotted, and stomped on. Her
body was stuffed into a suitcase and taken to another town where it was buried in the
garden of a suburban house. Police had to dig down two metres to find the body,
concealed under the footings of the house.

Rania Alayed – 2014: Rania married her husband Ahmed at age 15 but after 10 years of
abuse she fled the family home with her three children and moved to a refuge. She filed
for divorce and began living an independent life. She enrolled in a local college, made
new friends, and stopped wearing traditional clothing. Rania was lured to an apartment
under the pretence of a meeting. With the children in the next room, Ahmed murdered
Rania, stripped her body and concealed it in a suitcase. With the help of his two
brothers he drove her body to a distant location and buried it.

What is immediately noticeable about these murders is the extent of their brutality.
According to Husseini (2009, p. 166) the intent behind the murders is “designed to send
a clear warning to others, don’t step out of line or this could be you”. Because of the
secretive nature of such violence, accurate figures relating to the extent of the problem
are not available. However, Husseini (2009, p. 161) estimates that “17,000 women in
Britain are victims of honour-related crimes (kidnapping, sexual assault and murder)
every year”.

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There are no figures that state how many of the young women that disappear from the UK are murdered...300 girls aged 13-16 have disappeared off the school registers in [one city] alone...so many of these girls are intimidated or subjected to actual violence as they try to resist their parents’ wishes (Husseini 2009, p. 168).

In one honour killing in 2006, the father locked the house with his wife and himself inside plus their four daughters before spraying petrol everywhere and setting fire to the house. Everybody perished in the inferno. He had complained that his family was becoming too westernised and his daughters were resisting forced marriages overseas. One person described his mindset: “I’m the man; I shall have it my way. And yes it does come from his background, where he is brought up to believe that he is dominant. He’s the male. He’s the husband, he’s the father. That right or wrong, things should be done his way” (Husseini 2009, p.173).

The manner in which honour killings are regarded as heroic and masculine (because such murders are regarded as restoring or regaining lost honour in the eyes of others) is depicted by Gill (2013) below:

> Honour killings are a way of publicly displaying patriarchal power. Indeed, killing for the sake of individual or collective honour is often viewed as heroic in that the re-establishment of the family’s credibility in protecting its womenfolk restores the family’s honour...in many countries where honour killings occur regularly, perpetrators who are arrested proudly display their handcuffs...‘being a man’ links masculinity with aggression...the exercise of complete control over female relatives is, in this respect, viewed as a masculine virtue (Gill 2013, p. 249).

This concept of exercising complete control over female relatives as being representative of masculine virtue, rather than being viewed as a strength, is instead re-worded as constituting a male weakness by one British police officer who has experienced honour killings in the country: “honour is completely the wrong word. It is a control murder...it is not honour crime; it is ‘control crime’ and fear of losing that control” (Husseini 2009, p. 173).
It could be argued that many of the nuanced contextual characteristics of honour-based violence are not adequately captured by third party reporting of typical cases. A methodology that involves participant longitudinal ethnographic qualitative data would be far more suited to gathering the rich and textured circumstances that surround cases of honour-based abuse. With this argument in mind, the literature is now being increasingly enriched by personal memoirs written by survivors of honour-based violence. Some examples of such personal memoirs are shown in Table 2.1 (p. 43) together with short synopses of each writer’s personal story.

Jasvinder Sanghera has chronicled the way in which honour plays out for many young girls and women in Britain in her book *Daughters of Shame* (Sanghera 2009). Through her work with the charity Karma Nirvana she has experienced hundreds of personal stories, some of which are summarised below: “I listen to those stories told by women who have been drugged, beaten, imprisoned, raped and terrorised within the walls of the homes they grew up in” (p. 3). Stories like Uzma. She was born overseas and came to the UK to marry her first cousin. She quickly adapted to her new country. Her husband beat her to death with a baseball bat for being too Western.

It should be noted at this point that Sanghera uses the term ‘Asian’ as a descriptor for the honour-based communities that she analyses in her research. Within the British context the word ‘Asian’ has a very specific meaning and is not meant to refer to any individual or community from any Asian heritage. Rather, it refers quite specifically to the diaspora in Britain whose heritage is located in the South Asian geographical context (Bhopal 2004).

One school contacted Jasvinder to talk with three Asian girls aged 15 who were experiencing difficulties. These girls did not trust Jasvinder because she was Asian: “you’re a friend of my dad’s, we know he sent you” (Sanghira 2009, p. 12). When Jasvinder denied this one girl retorted: “well you must know someone who knows him, you’re in the network” (p. 12). Eventually Jasvinder gained their confidence and they opened up – being assaulted by a brother for talking to a boy, not being allowed mobile phones, being incarcerated in their bedrooms away from family contact. When
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Memoirs of honour based violence</th>
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<tr>
<td>Shah (2009)</td>
<td>At 16 Hannah discovered a plan to send her [overseas] for an arranged marriage, and she ran away. Hunted by her angry father and brothers, who were determined to make her an honour killing, she had to keep moving house to escape them. Then, worst of all, in her family’s eyes, she became a Christian...punishable by death. One day a mob of forty men came after her, armed with hammers, sticks and knives...with her father at the front.</td>
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<td>Younis (2012)</td>
<td>One of seven sisters and two brothers, Samina was a bitter disappointment to her parents who desperately wanted sons; as a result, she suffered terrible physical, mental and verbal abuse at the hands of her mother, father and two elder sisters. At age 16 on a trip [overseas] she was told that she must marry her second cousin, a boy she had met only once in her life and for whom she had no affection whatsoever.</td>
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<td>Ahluwalia and Gupta (2007)</td>
<td>Kiranjit Ahluwalia came to England in 1979 to marry a man she hardly knew. The next ten years were to be a nightmare of almost daily physical, mental and sexual violence at the hands of her husband. There was no one she could turn to for help or support. Domestic violence was a taboo subject and family honour was at stake for anyone who went outside the family for help. In desperation she killed the man who had tortured her for so long.</td>
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<td>Bronson (2005)</td>
<td>At the age of 19 Saira was married off to a man she had never met. She was taken to Britain where...her husband made her life a living hell and she suffered terribly from his unpredictable behaviour. Alone in a foreign land, unable to speak English, and without the support of her family, Saira had to fight for her own survival.</td>
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<td>Ali (2007)</td>
<td>Sameen was excited to learn she was going on holiday overseas for the first time. Only after arriving did she realise the purpose of the trip. Aged just 13 she was forced to marry a complete stranger. Within two months she was pregnant and returned to England. After finding another love she fled the family home...but was unprepared for the consequences of violating her family’s honour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ahmed (2008)</td>
<td>Brought up in a violent and traditional household where family honour is all, Saira is watched 24 hours a day. However, an innocent friendship with a boy enranges her ever-vigilant brothers and Saira is put on the first plane [overseas] and made to marry an older stranger who rapes her repeatedly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athwal (2013)</td>
<td>It began one normal Friday afternoon. Just another family gathering at our house in west London. Perched on the sofa sat my mother in law. She stared proudly around, smiling, and then spoke: ‘it’s decided then’ the old lady announced, ‘we have to get rid of her’. “Her” was Surjit Athwal. She was lured [overseas] strangled and dumped in a fast-flowing river, never to be seen again.</td>
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Jasvinder enquired about their schoolwork one, called Sanah, replied: “what’s the point of getting my work done when I’m just going to f*** off and marry some Paki?” (p. 15). That’s what had happened to Sanah’s elder sister and she was next in line. During the 6-week summer break from school she was incarcerated in her house, not allowed to go out. Her elder sister complained to their father that her husband had raped her. Her father replied: “that’s not rape, it’s a husband’s right” (p. 20). Sanah had run away to her sister’s house but her father brought in the police claiming she had gone missing. Two police attended, one white and one Asian. The Asian policeman took her to one side and Sanah begged him “they’re trying to force me into marriage…please don’t make me go home” (p. 22). He replied: “you and I both know this is what happens in Asian families. I think you should go home and go through with it” (p.22). Sanah was helpless: “he was the first adult I dared speak to about it and that’s what he said” (p. 22).

Heshu was 16 when her father killed her in London. She was knifed 17 times and had her throat cut. Her crime was that she had chosen a boyfriend from another religion. Her father was sentenced to life imprisonment. Fellow prisoners from his community hailed him as a hero for redeeming the family honour.

Honour, izzat, is the cornerstone of the Asian community…and it’s the job of girls and women to keep it polished…so many things can tarnish it…wearing lipstick, owning a mobile phone, cutting your hair, any of these things could be said to bring dishonour on a family because they are all signs that a girl is getting Westernised, which is what Asian families fight so hard against (Sanghera 2009, p. 25).

Samina was 14 when her father caught her playing on the swings in a public playground. He dragged her back home and shot her dead. Her friend was Shazia. At age 15 she was taken out of school and incarcerated at home ready for a forced marriage overseas. The family GP, a member of the same community, wrote medical sick notes to the school explaining her absence. Shazia said: “I hoped that someone – a teacher or social worker – would come to my house to see how I was” (Sanghera 2009, p. 36). But nobody did: “I felt completely helpless and abandoned” (p. 36). She was taken overseas and forced into marriage plus she had to sponsor her new husband for residence in the
UK. She wrote seven times to the British Embassy telling them she had been forced into marriage and not to give her husband a visa. The embassy never replied. Her husband was given a visa. She fled the family home and the police put her in a refuge. After that they offered no more support. The police thought their job was done. But her father tracked her down, presumably through her National Insurance number that he had been given by a friend at the job centre. She moved on again until eventually Jasvinder found her and gave her a job at Karma Nirvana. Shazia’s family told people (even their own family) that she had been killed in a car accident. For Jasvinder, this case highlighted the plight of Asian girls who run away from violence and are put in a refuge. No further support was offered them. The girls are not used to being on their own. No support means loneliness and emptiness. The girls feel helpless and aimless.

Jasvinder sees part of the problem as lying in the fact that Asian girls are brought up in close-knit isolated communities in the UK. Fatima lived in such a closed community in an area of Liverpool. These girls were all “kept close…they all lived in the same street and, where possible, picked spouses from the same family. It was a scenario very typical of the cases I see” (Sanghera 2009, p. 40). At age 5-6 she participated in a three-legged race as part of her school sports event. She was partnered with a white boy. News soon got back to her family. Fatima was “hit and slapped” (p. 72) by her brothers: “they said I was shameful to allow my leg to be tied to a white boy’s, they said I should not have held his hand, they said I had disgraced the family” (p. 74). The subjugation of Fatima started after that. Fatima was married off to an older man from overseas who could not speak English but was brought across to the UK. Fatima refused to prosecute her brothers for fear of retribution. In Jasvinder’s opinion Fatima was “a victim of the system that surrounded her every moment of the day” (p. 74).

Kiren calls Jasvinder in a desperate state. She is a prisoner in her house. There are padlocks on all the doors and barbed wire along the top of the garden fence. Her family are forcing her into marriage with her first cousin whom she has never met. On Jasvinder’s advice Kiren breaks out of her house and runs. She calls the police who want to take her home: “don’t let them take me home Jasvinder…my stepdad will kill me…he said if I tried to run away he’d kill me and dump my body somewhere no one would ever find it” (Sanghera 2009, p. 47). Jasvinder contacts a police friend who
arranges her release and sends her by bus to meet up with Jasvinder. From there Kiren is put in a refuge. Her story starts with the death of her real father and the arrival of her stepdad who arrives from overseas to marry her widowed mother. Her stepdad is violent and traditional. Kiren is forced to wear religious clothing and attend the local place of worship. Kiren had tried to run away previously and appealed to her uncle for help. He merely returned her to the family home. Her mother threatened her with cutting her tongue off and ranted: “if you don’t listen to us and do what we say, your stepdad is going to rape you” (p. 53). Safe in the refuge, Kiren agrees to prosecute her parents, a dangerous move. The police place her in the Witness Protection Programme. She is given a new name and moved to a small town in Scotland where she must sever all her past contacts.

But like many Asian girls in this situation Kiren becomes lonely and emotionally distraught “I’m the only Asian for miles around, I feel like an alien whenever I go out” (p. 102). Kiren had to be brought back and she dropped the case against her parents. Kiren commenced a restless existence, moving from town to town and job to job, commencing and dropping out of college on several occasions. Eventually she sent a message to Jasvinder: “my life is shit” (p. 251). Eventually, the inevitable happened; Kiren told Jasvinder she was going back home. She had been in contact with one of her uncles who promised her that if she came to live with him she could live a life of freedom. She did not have to get married and could attend college. Shortly after Kiren went back to her family she was on the run again. The promised freedom was an illusion and merely an excuse to lure her back into the family net. Kiren’s itinerant existence resumed.

Sanah’s school rings Jasvinder. Sanah has seen aeroplane tickets bought by her parents and fears she is going to be forcibly married overseas. Jasvinder arranges for the police to collect Sanah from school, escort her home to collect her belongings, and take her to a refuge. At home her mother screams at her “you’ll never be happy…you’ll never be successful” (Sanghera 2009, p. 59). Once in the refuge Sanah begins to become lonely and dispirited. Emotionally she was on edge and not eating properly. Her cousin has given her photo to some of his friends and they were looking for her. So Sanah stayed indoors, afraid to venture out. Eventually, Sanah managed to edge her way back into
favour with her sister and started meeting her. She was craving any small attention from her family. But such attention may have been manipulative. One day her sister rang Sanah telling her about a weekend outing they were having: “we’re all here, dad’s treating us, if only you’d do what he says, you could be here too” (p. 165). Gradually Sanah’s yearning to be reunited with her family increased. She remained in the refuge and had not found proper housing. Jasvinder worried that the inevitable would occur: “my constant fear is that she will get tired of her lonely struggle, go home, and give in to the forced marriage she has suffered so much to avoid” (p. 284).

Navjeet was born and brought up in west London. At age 20 she was taken overseas and married to a traditional man from the same religion before returning to London. After a tormented marriage she committed suicide by jumping under an express train at her local station, Southall in west London. She jumped together with her two children, who also died. Soon after, Navjeet’s mother, tormented by the fact that she had been responsible for her daughter’s arranged (forced) marriage, walked to the same spot on the station platform and also committed suicide under a train. That area of west London is a densely populated Asian area. Suicides are common of which “a disproportionately high number of total fatalities were women of Asian origin” (Sanghera 2009, p. 64). Nationally, “the suicide rate among young Asian women is three times the average for women of other ethnicities” (p. 64).

Shabana was aged 28 and living at home with her parents. Her mother suddenly announced that she had found the man for Shabana to marry. However, she told her mother she was already in love with another man. Her father raged at her: “who with? Tell me his name you hussy, grabbing her jaw and twisting her face” (Sanghera 2009, p. 82). Her father punched her and tried to strangle her before Shabana told him the name, John Henderson.

HENDERSON? A white man? …he yanked her to her feet, ‘you are a disgrace, you disgust me, you are no better than a prostitute’. With the flat of his hand he landed a blow on her right cheek that sent her to the floor again. ‘Get out!’ As she dragged herself onto all fours he aimed a kick at her left buttock. ‘Get out! I cannot bear to look at you! Get out of my sight!... I’d rather see you dead than have my family shamed (p. 82).
Locked in her bedroom, her sister came to warn Shabana that their father had found out where John lived and that he was going to get someone to slash John’s face. For the sake of safety she ended her relationship with John. She also turned down other potential suitors chosen by her mother, each time provoking family rows. She was threatened with “a posse of hired men to rape her” (p. 107). A newspaper article describing an honour killing was left on her bed. Faced with such hostility her thoughts turned to suicide. Shabana started to make plans to flee her home. Jasvinder made plans for Shabana to immediately leave her home. Two policemen collected her from work and escorted her to a refuge. From there Jasvinder wanted to relocate her to Norwich, a town where another of Jasvinder’s escapees was living. She thought the two women would get on well together and be company for one another. Shabana’s response was immediate:

You’re sending me to Norwich to be supported by a f***ing Paki? No! No way! There is no way I am going to have anything to do with a Paki – it’s just too dangerous (p. 183).

This explosive retort epitomised the hazardous relationships that existed between young girls and other members of the same community: “they’ve grown up with the Asian network as an all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful force in their lives” (p. 183) – aunties, uncles, shopkeepers, taxi drivers all keeping surveillance on the activities of young girls and reporting them back to their parents. With this sort of endemic surveillance “you grow up not trusting anyone because you never know how they might link in to your family” (p. 184).

However, with Jasvinder’s encouragement, Shabana eventually met with Yasmin (see below) and lived together in the same refuge in Norwich. She started to flourish, becoming more independent and in control of her life. Relishing her freedom she started to wear fashionable clothes, style her hair, and visit restaurants. She started to apply for jobs and started to search for a flat of her own.

Until this time Jasvinder had had no experience of male victims of forced marriage but now she found one, Imran. He was 31 and had lived a miserable life. At age 10 he was promised in marriage to his uncle’s daughter who lived overseas. Imran started to go off
the rails at this prospect. At age 17 his mother sent him overseas where he was drugged, shackled, and imprisoned, forced to undergo a strict religious training to teach him discipline. Eventually he escaped and found his way back to the UK. He lived an itinerant life away from his family but they would not leave him alone and kept “needling and nigling at him to get married to the girl to whom he had been betrothed” (Sanghera 2009, p. 95). The pressure was relentless; “do it for your mum…you can’t let mum down” (p. 95). Then came the call: “your mum’s in hospital, she’s really ill” (p. 95).

How many Asian sons and daughters have had that call? And how many mums and aunties, grandmas and grandpas have made miraculous recoveries once the errant child has buckled down and done what the family want? Imran’s mum was no different…she muttered vaguely about her blood pressure and then got down to business: ‘If anything happens to me today it will be your fault Imran…should I not live after today the only thing I wish for is to know that you are married. Please Imran will you do that for me? Will you make your mother happy?’ (p. 95).

Imran agreed and his mother recovered to wave him off overseas for his marriage five days later. The pair returned to live in the UK with his mother. But the marriage failed. Imran wanted to leave but his mother threatened him with disownment. Imran left and never returned but ever since had led a lonely and drifting life “in an emotional wasteland…innocent lives ruined in the name of honour” (p. 98).

Yasmin had run away from home ten years previously when Jasvinder met her and she had been on the run ever since from her family. She had moved nine times. She has grown up submissive and sheltered in a small seaside resort. She had no freedom other than working in her father’s business. Forced marriage was always on the cards. It had happened to her elder sister. At age 15 she started truanting from school. This is where she met Abdul, a black man: “for [our community], a black person is the lowest of the low” (Sanghera 2009, p. 119). Yasmin and Abdul began to spend time together secretly until such time as Abdul was arrested on suspicion of a drug offence. Yasmin and Abdul were taken to the police station. Yasmin was not implicated. She asked the Asian policeman (PC Ahmed, who was also the local hate crime officer) not to tell her father.
She was now 16, not a minor, and not charged with any offence. However, PC Ahmed did tell her father. His job was “protecting vulnerable people including those who might find themselves subjected to a forced marriage. This didn’t stop him from doing what he perceived to be his duty as an esteemed member of his community” (p. 120). Her father raged:

PC Ahmed came to see me in the shop this afternoon…you have a black boyfriend…you were arrested with him whilst walking down the road…you tried to involve PC Ahmed in your deceit. PC Ahmed – a respectable member of our community – you asked him to conceal your filthy, dishonourable ways’. The litany went on and on drowned out by her mother’s weeping lamentations: ‘oh the shame, we are ruined, how could you do this to us?... It will kill me, the shame’ (p. 121).

Jasvinder pointed to a problem in situations such as these. Many agencies that support young girls from minority communities instinctively put members of the same community in the frontline. PC Ahmed is the epitome of this: “there are probably hundreds of PC Ahmed’s in Britain” (p. 184). Young girls do not trust them.

Yasmin was incarcerated in her bedroom awaiting her fate. Soon after her father told her that PC Ahmed had evidence that she had a black boyfriend and there would be a meeting that coming Friday. Yasmin could not wait. She found an opportunity to escape. She called a taxi and fled her home with nothing. They stayed at a friend of Abdul’s in a student block. But the network tracked her down and her family came knocking at the door accompanied by three big burly men. After a violent confrontation Yasmin was dragged from the room and taken home whilst preparations were made to send her overseas for a forced marriage. However, after police intervention she was taken away from her family and started to stay with a school friend. She moved often, fearing that she was being tracked down by her family until eventually she attempted suicide and was found by passers-by slumped on the pavement. In hospital Yasmin was unnerved by the presence of an Asian doctor: “I didn’t trust him, I thought he must know my dad, I thought he was bound to be part of the network” (p. 135). Released from hospital Yasmin had nowhere to turn. She fled from town to town ending up in
Norwich before her family tracked her down after three years and she moved again. Again they tracked her down.

It’s like a game of cat and mouse. I move, they find me. I move, they find me…I’m twenty-six now…when is it going to stop? Am I going to be running for the rest of my life? (p. 138).

Tarvinder was aged 16 but looked no older than 12. Her mother had discovered she had a boyfriend from another ethnic group. Tarvinder feared her parents were plotting to take her abroad for a forced marriage during the school summer break. Her parents were sending threatening messages to her boyfriend. The police escorted her from college and placed her in a refuge. Next morning her mother rang Karma Nirvana, initially quite pleasant but then becoming more aggressive. She turned up at reception and started to wail “but I am her mother…how will I hold my head up?” (p. 144). She became more argumentative, talking about her health and how this would affect her. Two days later she sent a letter to be passed on to Tarvinder stating that her little sister was repeatedly searching the house for her, her grandmother had stopped eating, her grandfather was ill and sick with worry. Finally, she rang in an aggressive manner stating that the family “would go to any lengths to get our daughter back” (p. 145). Jasvinder feared reprisals against her from the family. Soon after, eight family members kidnapped Tarvinder, slapping and punching her as she was pushed screaming into a car. Tarvinder rang the police stating “she was safe and well, that running away had been a mistake, and that she had returned home of her own free will” (p. 146). The police were not fooled. Tarvinder was tracked down to her grandmother’s house and returned to the refuge. Her mother and cousin were accused of kidnap and given a one-year suspended prison sentence.

Meera was 13 years old. Previously she had been a diligent A-grade student but when her grades began slipping her teachers became concerned. The headmaster phoned her parents and mentioned that perhaps the reason for her slipping backwards lay in her relationship with another boy at school. The relationship was not serious, merely talking together and occasionally holding hands. Meera was never seen again. The school rang her home for several days with no response until finally her mother answered with the
news that Meera had gone missing. Her parents had not at that time reported her missing to the police (Sanghera 2009).

Surjit was kept in close confinement whilst a young girl. She was one of only four Asian children in her school. She was constantly warned that she must have no interaction with Western children as this would bring shame on the family and diminish her marriage prospects. Her brother and male cousin chaperoned her at all times. Her absences from school were numerous because she was kept at home learning domestic skills. The school never inquired why. At age 16 she was taken to another house where she met a male who was destined to be her husband. Her father enquired, “what do you think?” to which Surjit replied, “he is not for me dad” (Sanghera 2009, p. 192). Her father’s reply was brutal:

…you had better get used to it…whether you like it or not you are marrying him in a few weeks and if you think about running away I will find you and kill you…I am prepared to go to prison (p. 192).

Other family members were also screaming and shouting at her. All she remembers was the threat of death. Her prospective husband was in the UK on a visa that was running out and he needed to get married quickly to stay. After the wedding Surjit was forced to sign the paperwork which would allow her husband to stay. With her family standing over her she wrote: “I love him and want to be with him forever. Please don’t send him back” (p. 193). Her mother told her: “you are now your husband’s property and I don’t want to hear any bad reports about you coming from his family. You must do everything he wants” (p. 194). Surjit suffered years of abuse and rape: “I was treated like a piece of meat and the British Government gave him a passport to do this” (p. 194). She wondered why none of the UK authorities realised her plight or did anything to help her – her school, the Registry Office, or the Immigration Department. She was suicidal. She had three miscarriages because she was too frail to carry the babies. She could not speak out because of the fear of death. One day she fled the house and her family hired a bounty hunter to track her down. She feared the network would catch her and kill her. She was on the run. She avoided the Asian community: “I never made one brown friend” (p. 198). Out in the cold, she had been set up to fail.
Maya had suffered violence and abuse all her life, initially at the hands of her parents and then, after a forced marriage, at the hands of her husband. At age 16 Maya developed a friendship with Peter and eloped. She was tracked down, taken back home, and physically beaten by her father. He screamed that she was a prostitute and that he was prepared to kill one of them to preserve his respect. Incarcerated in her home, Maya was sent overseas and married off to a man who accompanied her back to the UK. Her life was blighted by his violent and controlling ways, forcing her to give up an academic course she had started, monitoring her calls and forbidding socialising. Eventually the marriage disintegrated and ended in divorce. Her husband married another woman from overseas and brought her to the UK. But Maya was left virtually destitute. Maya keenly felt the lack of safe facilities, away from the grasp of the Asian network:

I refused to go to an Asian women’s refuge because I knew a few ladies there who worked with domestic violence services, but they also went to the temple and gossiped (Sanghera 2009, p. 200).

Benazir was aged 19 and had a bright career in front of her. She was in the first year at university studying chemistry. She came to Karma Nirvana fearful that she was about to be forced into marriage. She had seen air tickets in her parents’ home. Jasvinder outlined all her options and found a refuge willing to take her. But then Benazir changed her mind. With tears flowing down her face she stated:

I’m sorry Jasvinder but I can’t go to the refuge. I’m not brave like you. I can’t face disownment from my family. I’d rather get married to a stranger than let them all down (Sanghera 2009, p. 250).

One year later Jasvinder met Benazir again. She was pushing an infant in a pram “blank face, grim set mouth, hollow, dark-ringed eyes” (p.250). In the eyes of her community she was now a respectable woman.

Sajida was determined to go through with a love marriage and managed to persuade her own parents to agree with it. At the very least her parents were able to live with the choice of partner she had willingly and freely chosen. Not so other elements of her
extended family. On the day of her marriage two men stabbed her to death before fleeing overseas. Young couples take this risk all the time (Sanghera 2009).

2.3 Summary

Chapter 2 has undertaken a comprehensive examination of the nature of sexual honour both in terms of how this system, as a concept and as a discourse, plays out in day-to-day reality for women and as an overarching patriarchal mindset that punishes through violence and killings, those women who are deemed to have violated its codes of obedience.

In the next chapter, chapter 3, the thesis will examine the practice of forced marriage. This practice is one of the enforcement mechanisms that comprises the wider system of honour-based female subjugation and was the focal point of Sanghera’s struggle throughout *Shame*, before she established Karma Nirvana to carry through her social activism aimed at helping other women affected by the practice.
Chapter 3 Forced marriage

Forced marriage, including early and child marriage, is both a breach of human rights and a form of gender-based violence. Forced marriages take place in diverse communities all over the world and predominantly affect young women and girls but also, less often, boys and young men (Landvogt 2016).

This chapter analyses the issue of forced marriage. It commences by presenting some statistics relating to the characteristics of forced marriages; followed by the various reasons why such events occur; and the cultural and other barriers facing campaigners against the practice. The chapter then adopts a chronological approach to analysing the sequence of measures enacted by the UK Government in an attempt to control and eliminate the practice.

The initial approach adopted by the government followed the direction of community engagement but this soon gave way to ‘regulation’ and ‘exit strategies’. Commencing in 2007 the authorities pursued the civil path of Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPO) followed by criminalisation of forced marriage in 2014.

The chapter is structured as below:

3.1 Forced marriage and the issue of consent
3.2 Statistics relating to forced marriage
3.3 Why do forced marriages occur?
3.4 Raising awareness of forced marriage: cultural barriers
3.5 2000: A Choice by Right
3.6 Approaches to tackling forced marriages
3.7 2000: Community Liaison Unit
3.8 2005: Forced Marriage Unit
3.9 2007: Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act
3.10 2011: Towards criminalisation of forced marriage
3.11 2014: Criminalising forced marriage – Anti-social (Crime and Policing) Act
3.12 Statutory and practice guidelines for frontline professionals

3.13 Summary

3.1 Forced marriage and the issue of consent

There is a critical literature around the concept of consent that is far more nuanced than the binary concepts of arranged and forced marriage. Anitha and Gill (2009) identify coercion and duress in the form of blackmail, threats or other forms of pressure as factors that may ‘override the will of the individual’.

3.2 Statistics relating to forced marriage

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has been in existence since 2005 and collects and publishes a range of statistics relating to various aspects of forced marriage. Data relating to advice and support, gender, age, and countries are shown below (FMU 2015):

Advice and support: During 2015 the Forced Marriage Unit provided advice or support in relation to a forced marriage issue in 1,220 cases. This compares with 1,485 cases in 2012 and 1,682 cases in 2009. The broader range of advice probably accounts for this downward trend available from an increasing number of other support agencies and organisations that have progressively come on stream over the last decade.

Gender: The percentage of cases involving females has varied between 78% and 82%, revealing that this issue is not exclusively confined to females.

Age: In 2013, 15% of cases involved children below the age of 16. Children aged 16-17 constituted 25% of cases, 18-21 constituted 33% of cases and those aged over 21 constituted 25% of cases.

Countries: In 2015, the total number of cases of 1,220 comprised people whose ethnic origin comprised 67 different countries. Of these countries, Pakistan represented the
highest percentage (44%) down from 56% in 2011. This was followed by Bangladesh (7%) down from 8% in 2011; and India (6%) unchanged from 2011.

The practice of forced marriage is largely hidden and the number of such marriages that take place in the UK every year is unknown. Quoting various sources, Full Fact (2012) states that between 8,000-10,000 forced marriages or threats of forced marriage take place in Britain every year. However, nearly two thirds of this data refers to ‘threats’ of forced marriage rather than actual weddings. Full Fact (2012) believes this data should be treated with scepticism because it refers only to instances that have come to the attention of authorities. Due to a lack of systematic collection of data, and also the fact that most forced marriages occur with a great deal of secrecy, the true extent of the problem is unknown.

The charity Karma Nirvana received more than 6,700 calls about forced marriage and honour abuse on its national helpline during 2015:

…the charity came across 190 pregnant victims of forced marriage [in 2015] of which 7 were aged under 15. In a two-month period at the end of [2015] teachers referred 36 students to its helpline from 14 schools, including 11 from one school in Birmingham the day after the charity gave a presentation. Childline said it handled a 30% increase in calls about forced marriage [in 2015] more than half of which were from children aged 15 or under with some as young as 9 (Halliday 2016).

3.3 Why do forced marriages occur?

AVA (2016) states that there are three categories of forced marriage – those occurring entirely within the UK with no overseas element involved; those occurring when a British person is taken overseas to marry; and those occurring when a partner is brought into the UK to marry a British national.

In chapter 2 of this thesis it was argued that forced marriages occur mainly because of the desire to maintain family honour or izzat. However, the government has identified a broader range of motives (Cabinet Office 2014a, pp. 7-8) as shown below, but it must
be noted that the motives below are not necessarily independent of one another and ‘family honour’ may be implicated in the majority of these reasons:

- Controlling unwanted sexuality (including promiscuity, or being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender) – particularly the behaviour and sexuality of women
- Controlling unwanted behaviour, for example, alcohol and drug use, wearing make-up or behaving in, what is perceived to be, a ‘westernised manner’
- Preventing ‘unsuitable relationships’ e.g. outside the ethnic, cultural, religious or caste group
- Protecting ‘family honour’ or ‘izzat’
- Responding to peer group or family pressure
- Attempting to strengthen family links
- Achieving financial gain
- Ensuring land, property and wealth remain within the family
- Protecting perceived cultural ideals
- Protecting perceived religious ideals which are misguided
- Ensuring care for a child or adult with special needs when parents or existing carers are unable to fulfil that role
- Assisting claims for UK residence and citizenship
- Long-standing family commitments

One aspect of the statistics on forced marriage and the motives behind it, relates to the fact that approximately 20% of the victims are male. AVA (2016) states that the main reason that males are forced into marriage is because their families know or suspect that they are gay.

Another reason may pertain to the practice of forcing males (and females) into marriage because they suffer from a learning disability and hence, by definition, do not possess the mental capacity to make an informed consent decision of their own free will. Communities most affected by forced marriages also have a tendency to follow the practice of cousin marriages. Research has indicated that cousin marriages tend to produce an over-representation of children being born with mental and physical disabilities. In a research study carried out in Bradford UK, Sheridan et al. (2013, p.
1350) concluded that “Consanguinity is a major risk factor for congenital anomaly…consanguinity was associated with a doubling of risk for congenital anomaly”.

### 3.4 Raising awareness of forced marriage: cultural barriers

Issues associated with forced marriage and honour-based violence did not come to prominent public awareness until the later years of the 1990s. Awareness was originally raised by voluntary organisations and charities working closely with problems associated with violence against women especially in tightly-knit communities. Such charities included Karma Nirvana, Southall Black Sisters, and Ashiana Network (Julios 2015).

Sanghera (2009) narrates the many and varied barriers that she encountered whilst trying to raise awareness of forced marriage following the establishment of Karma Nirvana. Following the publication of *Shame* (Sanghera 2007) she was contacted by many frightened and threatened girls as well as by frontline workers – police, social workers, health workers – with requests for information and advice. She travelled the country giving presentations, workshops and seminars spreading awareness. Schools became a prime focus for Sanghera who was determined to warn children about the dangers of forced marriage. Unfortunately, many schools wanted nothing to do with her. The issues were “culturally sensitive” and the schools “didn’t want to upset parents” (2009, p. 10). Sanghera bemoaned that for too long the authorities did nothing. If the police tracked down youngsters, they were returned back to their families. Frontline police officers were often suspicious of what was going on but lacked cultural understanding: “it’s always been drummed into us, be careful of cultural sensitivities…the last thing we need is another accusation of racism” (p. 30) said one policeman.

One morning Sanghera found the words NO SHAME scrawled in the dust on her car. Now she was fearful for her safety and that of her children. She had already installed a panic button. The police reminded her to take extra precautions by varying her route and
where she parks her car – “be sure to do them, don’t forget or get careless” (Sanghera 2009, p. 68).

Jasvinder stated that many people brought up in Western liberal democracies like Britain found it hard to comprehend or believe what went on in the “tangled web” of honour-based communities, “its mores – the behaviours it disapproves of, the loyalties it insists on, the fear it engenders, the punishments it metes out – are incomprehensible” (Sanghera 2009, p.135). That’s why she strived to educate those workers in the frontline to raise their awareness – police, social workers, health workers, and teachers. Often she was rebuffed. Karma Nirvana wanted to target schools in Derby with a high percentage of affected communities in order to warn girls about the issues of forced marriage and the dangers faced during the long summer holidays when girls were most at risk of being taken abroad for marriage. Her initial strategy was a simple one: to put up informative posters inside the schools. All the schools refused permission: “they thought it important not to offend cultural and religious sensitivities… they didn’t want to upset the parents” (Sanghera 2009, p. 140). Not satisfied, she approached the local council which also turned her down. However, the local newspaper was more accommodating and published a two-page spread about the work of Karma Nirvana.

Sanghera started her PhD at Derby University on the topic “why survivors survive”. Soon after, a lecturer warned her that she had recently been to a meeting of a Sikh women’s club. The comments and threats made at the meeting had disturbed her: “Jasvinder must be silenced. If she appears on Panorama [a current affairs TV program] she will be killed, we will kill her. She knows our tradition of honour killings” (Sanghera 2009, p. 154). Jasvinder was shocked and panicked, to such an extent that she considered giving up her work. It was too dangerous. The matter was reported to police who taught her how to check her car for bombs, a routine she had to perform every morning from then on.

Because of Sanghera’s work, she was in constant danger of violence herself. One day whilst on the train she recognised a man whose sister she had helped escape her family two years previously. The man started to frighten and intimidate her, walking up and down the passageway, brushing up against her, staring at her, and sitting provocatively
just behind her. Fearing for her safety she fled to the next carriageway and had to be escorted to safety by a policewoman who was also on the train.

Sanghera’s reputation was spreading fast and her name was becoming demonised in many Asian homes. She learned from young girls that their parents would not allow her name to be mentioned in their home. She knew that many people hated her and wished her ill. She was constantly looking over her shoulder for potential danger. One day she arrived at her office to find human faeces had been smeared across the windows. As always, she made a report to the police, but as usual they were powerless to act without further evidence. Their message however remained the same: “keep vigilant, and try not to worry too much” (Sanghera 2009, p. 235).

3.5 2000: A Choice by Right

The patient and painstaking work carried out by grassroots organisations such as Karma Nirvana received a boost when national newspapers and media outlets began to publicise prominent cases involving honour-based violence and forced marriages. The honour killing of Rukhsana Naz received wide media coverage in 1998 and started a public debate that quickly unearthed other possible examples of forced marriage and honour killings. A Home Office Working Group on Forced Marriage established in 1999 conducted a wide-ranging public consultation exercise between August 1999 and April 2000. The terms of reference of the working group were:

- Probe the extent of the problem
- Engage all of the relevant service delivery agencies, affected communities and relevant non-governmental organisations on this issue
- Stimulate a public debate to raise awareness of the issue of forced marriage, and
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for tackling the issue of forced marriage effectively, including preventative measures

The findings of this working group were published in June 2000 under the title *A Choice by Right* (Home Office 2000).
For the first time in UK public policy pronouncements, the report made a clear distinction between arranged marriages and forced marriages. Parents usually initiated arranged marriages but the bride and groom made the final decision. Arranged marriages follow long cultural traditions and were to be regarded as culturally and legally acceptable. However, forced marriages were conducted without the valid consent of both parties, where duress is a factor. In short, the distinction lay in the right to choose.

The report was keen to give voice to the victims of forced marriage through various examples and case studies (Home Office 2000, p. 5):

- I can’t wait to finish school really, but if I don’t stay on I’ll have to get married (15-year-old girl, North London)
- I can follow boy bands but I can only have a boyfriend who is Hindu or my Dad will go mad (15-year-old girl, North London)
- My Mum was saying – you’ve got to marry him or your Dad will divorce me (16-year-old girl, Bradford)
- My cousin’s parents tricked her into going to Pakistan to see her dying Grandfather. But they forced her to marry this older man. So when she got back to England she did a legger. Now no-one knows where she is (young woman, Bradford)
- We don’t want to leave our families, we just don’t want to be forced into a marriage (young woman, Leicester)
- My parents thought I’d accept the marriage, get my cousin over here and keep my mouth shut like my sister. But I’ve proved them wrong. I called up the police and told them what happened. At the moment I’m living with a friend and I hate my parents for what they’ve done (17-year-old woman, anon)
- My parents have told me that if I promise to marry this man when I graduate then I can carry on at university. But since I’ve been here I’ve met someone else and now I don’t know what I’m going to do (20-year-old woman, Liverpool)
Box 3.1
Two examples of forced marriage

‘A’ was forced by her parents to marry her cousin ‘B’ from their village back home. When they first told her about the idea she made it clear that this was not what she wanted but they insisted that they should do as she was told. ‘A’ did not feel that she could go against her parents’ wishes – she didn’t want to hurt them despite her friends urging her to take a stand.

She married her cousin but was desperately unhappy and after two months she attempted suicide. Fortunately, a friend found her in time and she was unsuccessful. ‘A’ remains with her husband although he treats her badly. She suffers from depression and attends an Asian women’s support group following a referral by her GP. ‘A’ says she can’t leave her husband because it would bring shame on her family and hurt her parents.

Source: *A Choice by Right* (Home Office 2000, p. 9)

The report rejected criminalising forced marriage. Instead it concluded that “challenging and changing attitudes is the key to preventing forced marriage…and the test will be whether or not the incidence of forced marriage reduces over time” (Home Office 2000, p. 20). It is notable that the representative from Southall Black Sisters resigned from the working group in May 2000 “over its refusal to abandon the use of mediation involving victims and their families” (Julios 2015, p. 80). The SBS representative believed that this form of mediation placed victims at further risk of abuse from their family members.

The task of challenging and changing attitudes as recommended by the working party, by necessity, would involve a long and tireless campaign conducted both at macro and micro levels of public discourse. For voluntary grassroots organisations such as Karma Nirvana this implied continuing with their traditional approach at community level without the addition of any extra tools in their armoury to tackle forced marriage.

Sanghera still struggled to get permission to put up forced marriage posters in schools. However, she did sometimes succeed in presenting seminars to schoolchildren warning them about the dangers. It was not unusual for young girls to approach her silently after the seminar and reveal that they were also in danger. She often mentioned the honour killing of Heshu Yones who was murdered by her father for having a Christian boyfriend. She liked to relate this story, especially in multicultural schools. After one
presentation, a boy put his hand up and said, “who do you think you are coming here and telling us how to live our lives?” (Sanghera 2009, p. 228). His arrogant confidence for a boy of 15 troubled Sanghera. He went on to state: “if my sister was doing the things that you said, I would kill her” (p. 229). Sanghera calmly replied to him that he was living in the UK and that it was illegal to kill a girl simply because she talked to a person of the opposite sex. The boy retorted:

I don’t care which country I am in. She is my sister and it is my duty to guard her honour.
If she did the things you talk about I would kill her (p. 229).

The teacher immediately wrapped up the meeting and tried to explain to Sanghera that he was only showing off. Sanghera disputed this: “he did mean it…and if he has any sisters I’d be very concerned for them” (p. 229).

Sanghera’s campaign work gradually brought her into contact with many frontline professionals which allowed her to develop a strong network of advocacy assistance. Tony Hutchinson had spent 25 years in Cleveland Criminal Investigation Department but knew nothing about forced marriage and honour-based violence until he attended a conference where a Karma Nirvana official was presenting. The event set him thinking about how many incidents he had experienced in the past were really related to honour. He organised a seminar in his local area and invited Sanghera. He wanted to start a 24-hour free phone number dedicated to callers with issues of forced marriage and honour-based violence. The project was local to start with but hopefully would spread to other areas. The helpline became known as Choice Line. Twenty female police officers were selected for training. Sanghera caused some controversy by insisting that all of them should be white. It was vital that those who answered the phone should be able to establish an immediate rapport of trust. The grapevine was so strong that young Asian girls simply would not trust members of their own community. The launch was attended by about 300 people who spread the message: “there is help and there is hope; forced marriage is wrong” (Sanghera 2009, p.268). Posters advertising the helpline were actually put up in some city mosques. Sanghera was pleased to notice that some posters still survived in place months after they had been put up. On one of them someone had scrawled “ten years too late” (p. 268).
3.6 Approaches to tackling forced marriage

Shariff (2012, p. 550) draws attention to three possible approaches to forced marriage – regulation, exit and community engagement:

*Regulation* is framed as “protecting vulnerable individuals” by setting cultural minority practices against universal principles of human rights. Deviant behaviour that falls outside these principles is punished. “However, this approach has been found to harbour a racist and exclusionary narrative, one that demonises cultural minorities and essentialises culture as backward or oppressive.”

*Exit* “seeks to enable individuals as free agents who are unable to realise their own preferences within a cultural minority to leave that group. This approach of ‘agency through exit’ is problematic because “it forced women to choose between their culture and their freedom and fails to understand the connection between culture and identity.”

*Community engagement* can be regarded as “inter-cultural dialogue”, an accommodation between the host and guest cultures that solicits community dialogue as an essential part of the solution.

Shariff (2012, p. 550) notes that ‘community engagement’ was initially favoured by the Government but was increasingly abandoned as being “too risky” because it tends to give legitimacy to “self-designated spokespersons and buying into a false representation of cultural groups as homogeneous”. Instead, the approaches of ‘regulation’ and ‘exit’ were increasingly adopted by government policy.

This change of government policy favouring regulation and exit over community engagement also raised additional issues including the contrast between women’s rights and cultural recognition.

The literature highlights the contentious issue of whether forced marriage is solely a cultural issue or solely a gender-based issue or indeed it could be argued to be both…The location of forced marriage as a cultural issue serves to position it as the ‘other’ and
therefore as outside the business of mainstream agencies charged with the protection of vulnerable children or adults (Chantler 2012, p. 180).

Razack (2004, p. 129) poses the question how is it possible to acknowledge and confront patriarchal violence against minority women without descending into cultural deficit explanations that stigmatise those communities? Shariff (2012, p. 551) attempts to address this issue by championing an approach of ‘agency through community engagement’, an approach which affords minority women individual subjective agency within the confines of community dialogue. However, Shariff (2012) was pessimistic that a policy of communitarianism had been seemingly abandoned by Government in favour of regulation and exit that promoted women’s rights over community rights.

Tracing the progression of early government policy on forced marriage from community engagement (via the Community Liaison Unit) to the latest policy of criminalisation, Shariff (2012) argues that although the Government initially saw community engagement as part of the solution, it has increasingly moved towards the view that community engagement is part of the problem. There is a view that women of culture cannot be agents. Community has been turned into a pariah. The author puts the onus for this change in direction onto the feminist and women’s rights agenda that emphasises the force of paternalism in minority culture. This has led to a rejection of community. However, Shariff (2012, p. 551) argues that this in turn has led to a replacement of male hegemony in minority culture by a “growing state paternalism in which British values have been pitted against Asian values”.

The state’s agenda has been to privilege women’s rights to the exclusion of community. This ‘turning against community’ occurred when government “sought to engage with critical voices from within the South Asian community, especially women’s support agencies, thus shielding itself from accusations of racism while defending its intervention through a human rights narrative” (Shariff 2012, p. 554). The author points to the early establishment of the Working Group on Forced Marriage which was pondering the policy of involving families in group mediation around forced marriage cases. This was forcefully opposed, particularly by the representative of the Southall Black Sisters organisation on the working group, who viewed interaction with
potentially violent (male) family members as increasing the risk to vulnerable and unprotected women. This representative subsequently resigned from the working group as a result of this issue. Shariff (2012, p. 554) saw this as a turning point in the government’s move towards exclusion of community: “[the government was] confronted with a particular strand of feminist discourse… [that] was important [but] lent itself to creeping claims of cultural deficiency within the government literature, repositioning the South Asian minority as a violent and backward other”.

Shariff (2012, p. 554) thus saw the debate as one that framed forced marriage as an “endemic cultural practice…at odds with British values and against its interests…substituting a state paternalism aimed at protecting South Asian women from their communities”. The author argues that in its wake there has occurred an increasing trend within British society to stigmatise Asian values, highlighting a perturbing neo-colonial, racist, and xenophobic discourse with a focus on pushing British values. Quoting the Prime Minister David Cameron, the author notes how he blamed “passive tolerance” for enabling the introduction of alien and unacceptable beliefs and practices into Britain which “has allowed segregated communities to [behave] in ways that run counter to our values…muscular liberalism is advocated as an antidote” (Shariff 2012, p. 555).

By highlighting the growing emphasis of feminist discourse within the South Asian community, focusing on women’s rights rather than community identity, Shariff (2012) was drawing attention to the manner in which Government was paying increased attention to such organisations as Southall Black Sisters and Karma Nirvana. Writing on behalf of Southall Black Sisters, Patel (2008, p. 9) argues that it is within the family where Asian women “are most vulnerable to abuse, violence and unequal treatment”. According to the author, the discourse of multiculturalism “has colluded in the silencing of women’s voices… obscuring, for example, the role of the family in gendered violence and abuse” (Patel 2008, p. 9). Southall Black Sisters was established in 1979 as a campaigning secular feminist organisation. Within this mission, Patel (2008, p. 10-11) also identifies what she calls “an even greater danger” which she labels ‘multi-faithism’ wherein “religion has started to emerge as the main badge of identity in minority communities”.

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The government promotion of the faith agenda and the drift from multiculturalism to multi-faithism provides an opportunity for fundamentalist and religionists to set an agenda that poses a major threat to the human rights of Asian and other minority women”. SBS has been forced to challenge the recent rise of fundamentalist identities that have been fostered by the rise of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu religious fundamentalist movements in the UK and abroad (Patel 2008, p. 10).

Patel’s (2008, p. 11) worry is that all these fundamentalist groups have at their heart support for the patriarchal family as the central control agent, enforced by self-selecting conservative male religious leaders “who demand absolute conformity to their interpretation of religious laws”. These groups endorse “exclusionary if not extremist political agendas…this very rarely includes recognition of the individual rights of women or other powerless sub-groups within the community” (Patel 2008, p. 13).

A new settlement is taking place between faith groups and the state in which faith groups use the terrain of multiculturalism to further an authoritarian and patriarchal agenda. These groups use the language of equality and human rights whilst at the same time eschewing these very ideals. The result is that secular spaces and secular voices within minority communities are being squeezed out, which in turn means that fewer alternatives will be available to minority women and others from restrictions on fundamental freedoms (Patel 2008, p. 15).

With these arguments as a backdrop, this chapter now continues with an analysis of how Government policy on forced marriage has increasingly followed a path away from ‘community engagement’ and towards ‘regulation’ and ‘exit’ as its primary directions.

### 3.7 2000: Community Liaison Unit

The Community Liaison Unit (CLU) was established by the Government in 2000 with the intention of locating the forced marriage issue within a strategy of wider community engagement. The members of the Unit came from South Asian heritage reflecting the Government’s intention that strong cultural insight should drive the solution to the issue of forced marriage (Shariff 2012).
A good deal of the work performed by the Unit involved ‘rescue’ work of forced marriage victims overseas who often found themselves isolated and imprisoned in rural villages. The Unit performed a great deal of consular assistance but very soon encountered a problem once victims were returned to the UK. There was a noticeable absence of any coherent support services and victims almost invariably drifted back to family networks. The Unit realised that close contact with the community was vital to enabling forced marriage victims to survive once back in the UK and this led to a new focus on the domestic dimension of forced marriage and the appointment to the Unit of a domestic violence expert. Following this development, the emphasis appeared to shift away from community engagement and towards legal regulation as a means of enabling behavioural changes (Shariff 2012). The Community Liaison Unit changed its name to the Forced Marriage Unit in 2005.

3.8 2005: Forced Marriage Unit

The UK Government established the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) in 2005 as a joint Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office unit. The role and functions of the FMU are shown in Box 3.2 (on the page that follows).

The FMU defines the practice of a forced marriage using the same binary distinction between arranged and forced marriages as employed by the Home Office report *A Choice by Right* (Home Office 2000) and based around the notion of ‘consent’. This distinction is depicted in Box 3.3 (on page 71).

3.9 2007: Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act

Early in 2007 Sanghera attended the House of Lords for the second reading of the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act (UK Government 2007). Forced marriage was described as “a form of domestic violence and sexual enslavement…with a direct link to honour killings” (Sanghera 2009, p. 109). But why was it endemic in UK and not dying out as a result of contact with UK culture? Lord Ahmed answered the question of why a large proportion of the Asian community never seemed to assimilate into British
culture, putting the blame on arranged and forced marriages which took place with people from abroad: “this means the community continues to go backwards rather than move forwards” (Sanghera 2009, p. 110).

**Box 3.2**

**Role and functions of the Forced Marriage Unit**

The FMU works with other government departments, statutory agencies and voluntary organisations to develop effective policy for tackling forced marriage. The FMU also has a caseworker who leads on cases involving people with learning disabilities. The FMU runs an ongoing outreach programme raising awareness amongst frontline practitioners such as police, teachers, doctors, nurses and social workers across the UK. It also works in partnership with community organisations and voluntary organisations to tackle forced marriage. The FMU also provides an annual Domestic Programme Fund to support small projects to tackle forced marriage. The FMU runs a public helpline that provides confidential advice and support to victims and to practitioners handling cases of forced marriage. Caseworkers in the FMU have experience of the cultural, social and emotional issues surrounding forced marriage.

**UK cases:** the FMU offers information and support to those who fear they will be forced into marriage and can discuss their options with them.

**Overseas cases:** the FMU can assist British nationals facing forced marriage abroad by helping them to a place of safety and helping them to return to UK.

**Immigration cases:** the FMU can help those who have already been forced into marriage to explore their options, including assisting those who are being forced to sponsor a spouse’s visa for settlement in the UK.

The FMU is always happy to talk to frontline professionals handling cases of forced marriage at any stage in a case. It can offer further information and advice on the wide range of tools available to tackle forced marriage, including legal remedies, overseas assistance and how to approach victims. FMU staff can also speak at conferences or run training workshops to teams of frontline practitioners and provide free leaflets and posters.

Source: Cabinet Office (2014b, pp. 16-17)

Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPO) were introduced in November 2008 in terms of the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 “to protect someone who is facing being forced into a marriage or who is in a forced marriage” (Ministry of Justice 2012, p. 2). A FMPO can impose any prohibitions, requirements or restrictions that might be necessary depending on the case to protect the person who is in danger from forced marriage. “Examples of the terms a court might order are: to prevent a forced
marriage from occurring; to hand over passports or travel documents; to stop intimidation or violence; to reveal the whereabouts of a person; to stop someone from being taken abroad” (Ministry of Justice 2012, p. 3). A FMPO can therefore be regarded

**Box 3.3**

**Distinction between forced and arranged marriages**

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning difficulties, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is illegal in Great Britain. It is recognised as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

A marriage must be entered into with the free and full consent of both parties, you should feel you have a choice.

An arranged marriage is not the same as a forced marriage. In an arranged marriage, the families take a leading role in choosing the marriage partner, but both parties are free to choose whether to enter into the marriage or not.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they’re bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor.

In some cases, people may be taken abroad without knowing that they are to be married. When they arrive in that country, their passport(s)/travel documents may be taken to try to stop them from returning to the UK.

Source: Forced Marriage Unit (FMU nd, p. 2)

as a type of injunction that forbids a perpetrator “from doing certain things” (Rights of Women 2014, p. 3), three specific quoted examples from actual cases being:

- The Respondent must not take the Applicant out of the Birmingham area
- The Respondent must not harass, pester or molest the Applicant, directly or indirectly
- The Respondent must halt any arrangements for the wedding of the Applicant

Breach of a FMPO was originally treated as contempt of court (however, in later legislation breach of a FMPO became a criminal offence).
By introducing FMPOs, “the UK became the first country to use civil rather than criminal law in this manner” (Julios 2015, p. 79). The first FMPO to be issued was generally regarded as a resounding success. A 32-year-old National Health Service trainee doctor from East London, Dr Humayra Adedin, was forced into marriage in Bangladesh by her parents and held captive for four months. The High Court in London issued a FMPO calling for her release, following which a Bangladeshi court ordered her to be released to the British High Commission and returned to the UK (Julios 2015, p. 80). By the end of February 2011 a total of 293 FMPOs had been issued (Home Affairs Committee 2011). Between 2014 and April 2016 a total of over 800 FMPOs had been issued (Halliday 2016).

The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 defined ‘force’ to include “coerce by threats and other psychological means”. Rights of Women (2014, p. 1) clarified the definition of ‘force’ within a ‘forced marriage’ as shown in Box 3.4.

**Box 3.4 Definition of ‘force’ within a forced marriage**

The definition of force used by the Government includes physical, psychological, sexual, financial, and emotional pressure as well as emotional and psychological abuse or harassment. Forced marriage involves situations where you feel pressured to the point where you agree, but only because you feel that you did not have the choice to say no, and you would not have consented had the pressure not been placed on you.

Women and girls often describe a ‘feeling’ or just ‘knowing’ that they could not say no to a marriage, and that if they did, there would be some kind of consequence if they tried to resist e.g. ostracisation, being told they have brought shame on the family, and even being physically harmed.

The pressure put on you to marry against your will can take place in many ways. It can be physical abuse, which includes threats of violence, actual physical violence and sexual violence. It can also be emotional and psychological, for example, being made to feel as if you are letting the family down, being told that you are a bad daughter, being told that you have gone against your cultural or religious expectations, or being made to feel that you are bringing shame on the family. Emotional and psychological abuse can also include close family members making threats of self-harm or suicide, or saying that they have become ill as a result of your refusal to agree to their wishes. Abuse can also be financial and this can include taking your wages, or not giving you any or enough money. In some cases, you may be held against your will, moved from one place to another, or not allowed to leave your home and therefore may be unable to choose whether you want to enter into a marriage.

Source: Rights of Women (2014, p. 1)
The opposite of ‘force’ is defined as ‘consent’ but Rights of Women (2014, p. 2) recognises that “Many women do not identify what they are going through a forced marriage. You may define your experience as ‘what the family expects’ rather than ‘force’ or ‘pressure’”.

Consent means you have made a free choice to get married and it is your own decision. Even if you say you agree to marry, this does not always mean you have consented. You must have the freedom to choose whether or not to enter the marriage. If threats of violence are made against you or another person, or you have been detained against your will, or you believe entering the marriage is required because that is what your family expects, then you may not be able to refuse the marriage and therefore you do not have the freedom to make a choice (Rights of Women 2014, p. 2).

The concept of ‘coercion’ can be defined in various ways from both a legal and popular point of view. Some examples include:

- Compulsion; force; duress. It may be either actual (direct or positive) where physical force is put upon a man to compel him to do an act against his will, or implied (legal or constructive) where the relation of the parties is such that one is under subjection to the other, and is thereby constrained to do what his free will would refuse (Law Dictionary nd)
- The intimidation of a victim to compel the individual to do some act against his or her will by the use of psychological pressure, physical force, or threats (Legal Dictionary nd)
- The overwhelming of the will of another by force or threat of force…[it] is the means by which a person or group of people impose their will upon another or others (Freeman 1997)
- The use of a certain kind of power for the purpose of gaining advantages over others (including self-protection), punishing non-compliance with demands, and imposing one’s will on the will of other agents. The kind of power needed for these functions is the sort that… other forceful or violent agents possess (Anderson 2015)
An important inclusion in the definition of coercion is the employment of ‘psychological means’. In other words, coercion does not refer only to physical intimidation or threats. USLegal.com (2016) states “psychological coercion includes theories of mind control, thought control, or a brainwashing claim that a person’s mind can be controlled by an outside source”. Baldwin, Fehrenbacher and Eisenman (2015) conceptualise psychological coercion as a series of nonphysical tactics employed to increase compliance by depleting the individual’s capacity for coping with stress. These tactics include isolation, sleep deprivation, poor access to nutrition and threats to family. The Neurotypical Site (nd) defines the role of ‘coercive psychological systems’ as depicted in Box 3.5.

**Box 3.5 Coercive psychological systems**

Coercive psychological systems use psychological force in a coercive way to cause the learning and adoption of an ideology or designated set of beliefs, ideas, attitudes, or behaviors. A victim may be subjected to various types of coercive influence, anxiety and stress-producing tactics over time.

In a psychologically coercive environment, the victim is forced to adapt in a series of small "invisible" steps. Each step is sufficiently small that the subject does not notice the changes or identify the coercive nature of the process until much later, if ever. These tactics can be reinforced in a group setting by well-intended, but deceived, "friends and allies" of the victim. (Good-cop/Bad-cop). This keeps the victim from setting up the ego defenses normally maintained in known adversarial situations.

Psychological coercion overcomes the individual's critical thinking abilities and free will - apart from any appeal to informed judgment. Victims gradually lose their ability to make independent decisions and exercise informed consent. Their emotional defenses, cognitive processes, values, ideas, attitudes, conduct and ability to reason are undermined, and decisions are no longer through meaningful free choice, rationality, or the inherent merit or value of the ideas or propositions being presented.

Source: The Neurotypical Site (nd)

AVA (2016) states that deception is sometimes used as a ploy in a forced marriage, especially when “tricked into going abroad”. Efemini (2010) quotes two typical cases involving deception and trickery in facilitating a forced marriage. Pinkin (pseudonym) had completed her degree in Psychology and was looking forward to commencing her first job with the British Medical Association. Her family was called overseas due to the
illness of her grandfather. Once there, Pinkie was forced into marriage to a man she met only on her wedding day. Pinkie returned to the UK and her husband joined her one year later.

Sophia aged 16 was excelling at college studying her A levels. Sophia went overseas for a holiday with her family. Whilst there, she was forced to marry a man old enough to be her father. She returned to college ill and distressed. Her attendance began to fall. She started to self-harm and felt suicidal. The college authorities provided her with support. She left her family situation but subsequently worried about the fate of her two younger sisters who were facing the same problem.

Anitha and Gill (2009) argue that problematic issues are associated with the clear binary distinction between arranged and forced marriages based around the notion of ‘consent’. They state that: “feminists have long argued that there is a problem with the very notion of marital consent under conditions of patriarchy” (Anitha & Gill 2009, p. 173). The authors point out that until the mid-1980s, coercion or duress were narrowly interpreted by the courts to mean “an immediate threat to life, limb or liberty” (Anitha & Gill 2009, p. 169), hence framed in terms of actual or threatened physical force. However, a new phase in the definition of coercion occurred from 1983 (in the case of Hirani v Hirani) when the key issue became “Whether the mind of the applicant (the victim) has in fact been overborne, howsoever that was caused” (Anitha & Gill 2009, p. 170). After this ruling cases coming before the courts took note of instances involving emotional types of blackmail and pressure: examples include “being made to feel responsible for bringing about a loved one’s death to threats of suicide made by the coercer” (Anitha & Gill 2009, p. 170). The authors quote the words of Justice Singer in a case in 2004 involving the abduction of an adult woman to an overseas destination:

...there is a spectrum of forced marriage, from physical force or fear of injury or death in their most literal form, through to the undue imposition of emotional pressure which is at the other end of the forced marriage range, and that a grey area then separates unacceptable forced marriage from marriages arranged traditionally which are in no way to be condemned, but rather supported as a conventional concept in many societies. Social expectations can of themselves impose emotional pressure and the grey area to
which I have referred is where one may slip into the other: arranged may become forced but forced is always different from arranged (Anitha & Gill 2009, p. 171).

The authors note that the allusion to ‘social expectations’ goes a long way to extending the ambit definition of ‘coercion’. Nevertheless, they still see a problem in the concept of ‘free will’ in the sense that this is still seen as the norm of:

…self-constituting, free individuals entering into a consensual marriage as contrasted with a marriage contracted through coercion…the preoccupation with ‘free will’ that informs the legal discourse ignores the fact that consent itself is constructed in the context of power imbalances and gendered norms…put simply many coercive forces often go undetected. Another problem is that the conceptualisation of the legal subject as an autonomous agent who is able to choose and act freely is not a gender-less, race-less being; this notion of the free self is predicated on the normative experiences of a white man (Anitha & Gill 2009, p. 171).

For the authors, although recognition of psychological pressures in bringing about forced marriages is to be welcomed “the patriarchal structures remain unexplored beneath this façade of an individual ultimately free to choose and to change her mind”. Women’s agency is exercised within restrictive structural constraints, dominant moral codes, and a myriad of subtle, covert forms of coercion: “control is exercised in ways that are far more subtle than the dramas imagined in current definitions of forced marriage… [there exist] a range of constraints, both articulated and unstated” (Anitha & Gill 2009, p. 172).

3.10 2011: Towards criminalisation of forced marriage

In May 2011, a Home Affairs Committee (2011) published a report on forced marriage that was critical of Government inaction on this issue since 2008. The Committee conducted a range of interviews with experienced people operating in this area (including Jasvinder Sanghera from Karma Nirvana) and presented a range of findings and recommendations for the consideration of Government as shown in Box 3.6 (on the page that follows).
By the end of February 2011 a total of 293 Forced Marriage Protection Orders had been issued. Only five breaches of these orders had been recorded over this time period resulting in only one term of imprisonment for contempt of court. These figures reveal that there is little or no monitoring of compliance with an order once it is issued and little effective follow up once a breach is detected. Jaspinder Sanghera gave the following evidence:

“I am not aware of any other injunction in this country under which the individual is returned to the perpetrators…FMPOs are issued to our victims, in the main minors, then those victims are returned to multiple perpetrators in that house. Once that front door closes, I am not aware of who is monitoring the implementation of that order…our victim is put under great pressure and that is a huge concern to us” (section 2/9).

There was a concern that some professionals consider the problem to be solved once a FMPO is issued and did not appreciate the further risks that can ensue. Added to this is the ignorance of many professionals about the existence of FMPOs. Karma Nirvana reported that during its national road shows 70% of the professionals attended had not heard of the Act.

The report concluded that the existing provisions sent only a weak message to perpetrators and recommended that forcing a person to get married should become a criminal offence in order to send a stronger message. Criminalisation had been considered in the past but rejected on the grounds that the communities most affected might feel targeted by such a measure. The committee was critical of this argument: “I cannot think of another criminal offence that has been considered and rejected on the grounds that the perpetrators might feel got-at” (section 2/11).

The committee was made aware that the response of frontline professionals is crucial is the intervention process against forced marriage. The role of teachers, GPs, police, and social workers is critical, especially teachers. Evidence provided to the committee revealed that such frontline workers suffer a good deal of ignorance and disbelief of the risks, as well as a fear of causing offence and appearing racist if they intervene. Karma Nirvana had written to 100 schools with an offer to train teachers in the risk factors and to put up posters in their school. Only one response had been received showing a willingness to participate. Jaspinder Sanghera gave evidence about one case where a schoolgirl told her teacher she was in danger of a forced marriage. In response the teacher contacted the family: “the first rule is that you do not contact the family…that young girl was put at risk and still is not back at school” (section 3/23).

The report concluded that many schools are refusing to engage in preventative measures.

Source: “Forced marriage” Home Affairs Committee (2011)

If the Home Affairs Committee (2011) was hopeful that its report would stir the Government into further legislative reform on forced marriages, it must have been sorely disappointed with the Government’s lukewarm response to its main recommendations (UK Government 2011). This is depicted in Box 3.7.
Box 3.7 Government response to the report of the Home Affairs Committee 2011

The Government disagreed that the current legislation was ineffective in protecting individuals from forced marriage: “Although the current civil legislation does not directly punish those initiating the forced marriage, unless the order is breached, it does protect victims, which is the main objective” (comment 2).

The government also rejected the committee’s recommendation that forcing a person into a marriage should be made a criminal offence. The Government considered that no evidence had been provided that criminalisation would send out a clearer message to perpetrators than existing criminal sanctions in relation to offences such as assault, kidnap and people trafficking.

The Government also rejected the committee’s recommendation that annual reminders should be sent out to schools regarding their responsibilities to protect children from forced marriage: “it is not the Department’s role to be directive or prescriptive to schools on such issues [its role] is to signpost schools to available resources and support in order to tackle forced marriage issues effectively” (comment 5).

The Government responded to the precarious position of many voluntary sector agencies to funding cuts by stating: “[the Government] has made clear that local authorities must not see the voluntary sector as an ‘easy cut’ when making difficult decisions about spending” (comment 11). The Government announced that Karma Nirvana’s Honour Network helpline would continue to be funded until 2014.

Source: “Forced marriage” UK Government (2011)

The lack of response from Government regarding the necessity for greater awareness training and activism within schools came as a disappointment to grassroots agencies working at the coalface to combat forced marriages. Such agencies responded by stepping up their advocacy and activism through such vehicles as social media and national seminars, conferences and roadshows. One example, taken from a PowerPoint slideshow presentation by Karma Nirvana in November 2015 stated the following (#KNYOUTH 2015):

• We want posters up
• Teachers to know how to help
• Issues talked about in assemblies
• We are seeking Government support to help with our goal of greater school engagement
It also came as a disappointment that the Government still refused to criminalise the offence of forcing a person into marriage. However, a door seemed to have been left partially open by the Government’s statement that its refusal was due to a lack of evidence being provided that such criminalisation would send a clearer message than existing legislative measures. If such evidence could be provided the Government would reconsider the matter.

The Prime Minister at the time, David Cameron had always been regarded as a person amenable to enacting strong measures to combat forced marriage. When in opposition in February 2008, David Cameron “spoke of measures intended to ‘clamp down’ on the ‘frankly unacceptable’ practice of forced marriages. He said that a Conservative Government would consider making these marriages illegal” (Gay 2015, p. 9).

Only three months after the Government had stated that existing legislative measures were adequate to tackle forced marriage, a turnaround was announced. In October 2011, the Prime Minister announced that a breach of a Forced Marriage Protection Order was to be made a criminal offence (Cameron 2011).

…the most grotesque example of a relationship that isn’t genuine is a forced marriage…Forced marriage is little more than slavery. To force someone into marriage is completely wrong and I strongly believe this is a problem we should not shy away from addressing because of some cultural concerns…as a first step I’m announcing today that we will criminalise a breach of forced marriage protection orders. It is ridiculous that an order made to stop a forced marriage isn’t enforced with the full rigour of the criminal law.

Coming so soon after the Government’s lukewarm response (UK Government 2011) to the report of the Home Affairs Committee (2011), the Prime Minister’s strong rhetoric on this topic came as a surprise, employing words such as ‘grotesque’, ‘slavery’, and ‘completely wrong’ whilst reducing the possible counter arguments relating to ‘cultural concerns’. In the same speech the Prime Minister opened the door even wider to the possibility of criminalising the act of forcing someone into a forced marriage (Cameron 2011).
I’m also asking the Home Secretary to consult on making forcing someone to marry an
defense in its own right, working closely with those who provide support to women
forced into marriage to make sure that such a step would not prevent or hinder them from
reporting what has happened to them.

The reason for the sudden turnaround has been widely debated but it is believed that the
actions of Jasvinder Sanghera from Karma Nirvana were influential at this time in
changing the Prime Minister’s mind. Sanghera had been in contact with Cameron from
the time he had been in Opposition and was the Shadow Cabinet Leader.

‘I approached all three parties about the issue and David Cameron was the Shadow
Cabinet Leader then. I asked him to hear our survivors talking about their experiences and
he invited us to a meeting in Bradford’. After that meeting, Jasvinder gave him a copy of
her autobiography *Shame*. ‘He said is this your story? And I replied yes that is what
happened to me. He read it, then wrote a letter to me saying that it had turned his head on
the issue of forced marriage. When I saw Samantha Cameron yesterday she said Dave
never forgets that book, Jasvinder’ (Bell 2014).

It is noticeable that in announcing the consultation exercise on forced marriage, the
Prime Minister stated that the Home Secretary would work closely with already existing
support agencies (such as Karma Nirvana). The consultation exercise commenced in
December 2011 and ran for a twelve-week period. The findings were released in June
2012 (Home Office 2012), of which the headlines were as follows:

- 297 responses
- 54% favouring criminalising forced marriage
- 37% against; and 9% undecided
- 80% felt that current legislation was not being used effectively

As a separate exercise, Karma Nirvana conducted a public poll that elicited over 2500
responses, 98% of which supported criminalisation (Julios 2015, p. 82).
3.11 2014: Criminalising forced marriage - Anti-social Behaviour (Crime and Policing) Act

On 8 June 2012 the Prime Minister announced that forcing someone into marriage would become a criminal offence:

Forced marriage is abhorrent and is little more than slavery. To force anyone into marriage against their will is simply wrong and that is why we have taken decisive action to make it illegal. We have spent time with those who work tirelessly to raise and address this issue and I want to send a clear and strong message: forced marriage is wrong, is illegal, and will not be tolerated (May 2012).

It is noticeable how the Prime Minister emphasises that the Government has ‘spent time’ with support agencies, highlighting in doing so the critical role played by these agencies in bringing about this change in the law. Again noticeable is the strong and emotional rhetoric employed by the Prime Minister, using words such as ‘abhorrent’, ‘slavery’, ‘simply wrong’ ‘illegal’ and ‘will not be tolerated’. The Home Secretary, Theresa May, added to the strong rhetoric on this issue whilst also emphasising that individuals had the right of choice in marriage decisions and that the Government would be employing a multi-pronged strategy on tackling forced marriages:

It is the right of every individual to make their own choices about their relationships and their future. Forced marriage is an appalling practice and by criminalising it we are sending a strong message that it will not be tolerated. But we know that legislation is not enough and we will continue to work across government and with frontline agencies and organisations to support and protect victims (May 2012).

In terms of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (UK Government 2014) the act of forcing someone to get married was made a criminal offence: “a person commits an offence if he or she uses violence, threats or any other form of coercion for the purpose of causing another person to enter into a marriage”. In addition, breaching a Forced Marriage Protection Order also became a criminal offence in terms of the same Act, carrying a prison sentence of up to five years (Whaymand 2014).
By criminalising forced marriage the Government followed a trend that had already been started in Europe some years before. Norway was the first European country to criminalise forced marriage in 2003, followed by Germany in 2005 and Belgium in 2007 (Chantler 2012). Nevertheless, criminalisation was not without its critics, some of whom pointed to the inconsistency that the Government had previously staunchly opposed this move for many years focusing on several reasons (Gill & Anitha 2009, pp. 260-261):

- It may reinforce racial stereotypes
- It would fragment laws relating to violence against women
- It would not be an effective deterrent, nor would it provide adequate protection for victims
- It would add little to the existing body of law on murder, kidnapping and offences against the person
- Police intervention is often counter-productive
- It would be difficult to obtain sufficient evidence in individual cases to satisfy the criminal burden of proof required in order to prosecute
- There is the danger of regarding the problem to be solved once a law is enacted and that society has done its bit

Shariff (2012: 550) argues that the Government decided to criminalise forced marriage “despite nationwide concerns that the move will stigmatize minority communities, reduce reporting and push the practice underground”.

Gill and Van Engeland (2014) argue that there are many practical issues that mitigate the effectiveness of criminalisation of forced marriage, notwithstanding the increased risk to already traumatised and anxious victims. After much investigation the police or Crown Prosecution Service might decide that there is not sufficient evidence to proceed with a prosecution, or the victim may be so anxious that they decide not to go through with the entire criminalisation process, sometimes at the eleventh hour. There are many difficulties involved in the process of prosecuting a forced marriage and many of these are to the potential detriment of the safety of the victim. The British criminal system is adversarial in nature. The system demands that victims and witnesses have to appear in
court, give oral evidence and be subject to cross-examination. The law regarding the taking of statements is very precise. Victims, especially young girls, are vulnerable and often frightened so that they may give what appear to be conflicting or contradictory statements at different periods of time. Inconsistent testimony will be used to try and discredit victims. They may become confused especially when confronted by hostile cross-examination in court. Allegations of forced marriage are invariably accompanied by the gathering of very sensitive and confidential information from the victim, much of it associated with personal family matters and relationships. In court this information will be shared, discussed and debated openly in front of witnesses and others. These public proceedings may be lengthy. All this puts the victim at great personal risk, not to mention other witnesses who may be called upon to give evidence.

Gill and Van Engeland (2014) also argue that most victims do not want their parents or family members to be stigmatised as criminals – they merely want the marriage to be stopped:

[Criminalisation of forced marriage might deter victims] from seeking help out of fear that family members would be prosecuted as part of state-run legal proceedings over which they, as victims, would have very little control; any prosecution would be brought by the state in the public interest, rather than initiated by the victim in his/her interest. Not every victim seeks ‘satisfaction’ for the wrongs they have suffered. Most do not want their family to be punished and seek only to ensure that they are not forced into an unwanted marriage (Gill & Van Engeland 2014, p. 245).

Gill and Anitha (2009) raise the argument that the primary concern of victims relates to their personal safety, not to the prosecution of the offence:

…significant material resources must be made available to improve women’s chances of successfully leaving or improving the violent situations that many encounter on a daily basis…there is an urgent need for well-funded specialist organisations…and support services for victims…these include funding specialist outreach services, supporting education and awareness work in schools and in the community, securing welfare services and childcare structures, and continuing the provision of specialist refuge spaces (Gill & Anitha 2009, p. 265-266).
Shariff (2012, p. 549) argues that criminalisation of forced marriage has “intensified debate over how to address the practice without alienating communities… [criminalisation] treats forced marriage as a cultural event fostered by a deviant and alien ‘other’…seeking to liberate women from their culture but itself views community with suspicion and denies subject agency”. Tracing the chronology of the debate, the author notes that criminalisation “is the culmination of over a decade of debate in which government policy has moved increasingly away from community engagement on the issue”. Quoting the honour killing of Rukshana Naz in 1998, she argues that this event accelerated the “momentum to address the supposed ‘cancer of multiculturalism’… framed within a human rights and women’s rights paradigm” (Shariff 2012, p. 550).

Gill and Anitha (2009) stress the argument that a focus on legal remedies does little to address the myriad issues of gender inequality on which forced marriage thrives. There exists a wider social context of violence against women and it is within this context that forced marriage should be located rather than focusing on the issue as a cultural problem which merely stresses the notion of ‘difference’: “the UK perceptions of forced marriage are concerned not only with ‘them’ (the ‘backward’ minority’ other) but also with ‘us’ (the progressive modern British individual). [Criminalisation] far from being empowering, actually perpetuates the widespread infantilising of minority women” (Gill & Anitha 2009, p. 263). A discourse is created that emphasises the self-determined autonomy of British women as against the protection offered to minority women.

Despite these critical voices, it was the proponents of the criminalisation of forced marriage whose voices were heard the loudest and who pointed to the argument that the law carries an extremely strong symbolic value and sends a clear message that the host culture does not tolerate such a practice to be perpetrated.

3.12 Statutory and practice guidelines for frontline professionals

Following the enactment of this legislation the Government issued detailed statutory guidance (Cabinet Office 2014a) and practice guidelines (Cabinet Office 2014b) to
Perpetrators who force their children or other family members into marriage often justify their behaviour as protecting their children, building stronger families and preserving ‘so-called’ cultural or religious beliefs. When challenged on this practice, they often do not see anything wrong in their approach...Many young people will be living through their entire childhoods with the expectation that they will marry someone of their parents or other family members choosing. What needs to be communicated to all of those at risk is that forced marriage is a CRIME and that they have a fundamental human right to be able to choose their future spouse (Cabinet Office 2014a, p. 7).

The Government made its view clear that forced marriage is an integral element in the maintenance of ‘family honour’ (Cabinet Office 2014a, p. 5), which it described in the following terms:

The terms ‘honour crime’ or ‘honour-based violence (HBV) or ‘izzat’ embrace a variety of crimes of violence (mainly but not exclusively against women) including assault, imprisonment and murder where the person is being punished by their family or their community. They are being punished for actually, or allegedly, undermining what the family or community believes to be the correct code of behaviour. In transgressing this correct code of behaviour, the person shows that they have not been properly controlled to conform to their family and this is to the ‘shame’ or ‘dishonour’ of the family...it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members. Victims will have multiple perpetrators not only in the UK: HBV can be a trigger for a forced marriage.

These guidelines were aimed primarily at frontline professionals in statutory agencies, especially police, health professionals, social workers, and education professionals. The Government realised that the complex issues surrounding forced marriage could not be tackled by only one agency. For this reason a multi-agency approach was being pursued which demanded that the separate agencies take a cooperative and synergistic approach, working collaboratively across normally distinct professional boundaries. Four crucial areas of work were emphasised: raising awareness, staff training, developing inter-
agency policies and procedures, and developing prevention programmes through outreach work.

The essence of this multi-agency approach was to take a victim-centred approach to the issue. In this approach, personal safety was regarded as paramount. Important principles included: victims should always be listened to and must be taken seriously; victims have a right to receive accurate information about their rights and choices; and their wishes should be respected. A key aspect of taking a victim-centred approach was that professionals should be aware of specific arrangements that may inadvertently place a victim at risk of harm. These included “failure to share information appropriately between agencies, the danger of involving families, breaches of confidentiality, and all forms of family conferences, counselling, mediation, arbitration and reconciliation” (Cabinet Office 2014a, p. 4). The importance of observing the ‘one-chance rule’ was also made clear to frontline professionals:

All chief executives, directors and senior managers providing services to victims of forced marriage and honour-based violence need to be aware of the ‘one chance’ rule. That is, their staff may only have one chance to speak to a potential victim and thus their staff may only have one chance to save a life. This means that all professionals working within statutory agencies need to be aware of their responsibilities and obligations when they come across forced marriage cases. If the victim is allowed to walk out of the door without support being offered, that one chance might be wasted (Cabinet Office 2014a, p. 1).

A tragic aspect of the principle of ‘keeping victims safe’ was the realisation that the greatest risk of harm came from members of the victim’s own family and community. Significant portions of the statutory guidance and practice guidelines were devoted to saving forced marriage victims from the very people who should have been charged with safeguarding their own children from harm – the danger of involving the family and the community: “in cases of forced marriage, involving the family and the community may increase the risk of significant harm to the child or young person” (Cabinet Office 2014a, p. 19).
Experience shows that the family may not only punish them for seeking help but also deny that the person is being forced to marry, expedite any travel arrangements and bring forward the marriage (Cabinet Office 2014b, p. 76).

Due to language problems it was sometimes necessary to use interpreters or advocates in cases involving forced marriage. The Government stressed that such interpreters/advocates should always be an accredited and independent person. Under no circumstances should such people be a family member, relative, friend, neighbour, or anybody of influence in the community (such as a community elder). Such people could engage in nefarious activities to the detriment of the victim:

…sensitive information may be passed on to others and place the person in danger. Furthermore, such an interpreter may deliberately mislead professionals and/or encourage the person to drop the complaint and submit to their family’s wishes (Cabinet Office 2014b, p. 76).

This aspect of not approaching or involving families and the community if forced marriage was suspected formed a significant part of staff training. A lot of the work of contacting and communicating with victims took place in secret and subject to much surreptitious activity for example, the advice to “use a code word to ensure [you are] talking to the right person” (Cabinet Office 2014b, p. 76). Professionals were advised to take great care in choosing venues where they met with victims for interviews:

- The room should not be adjacent to the public part of the building as there have been cases reported of people, particularly women, being forcibly removed by their families
- They may not wish to be seen by a practitioner from their own community
- Develop and agree a safety and support plan in case they are seen by someone ‘hostile’ at or near the department, venue or meeting place e.g. prepare another reason why they are there (Cabinet Office 2014b, p. 75).

In many instances, victims had to be removed from the parental home in order to be taken to a place of safety. Professionals were warned that leaving home was the most dangerous time for women experiencing a forced marriage and measures should be
taken to ensure their safety. Strategies must be devised between the victim and the multi-agency professionals for leaving home and the following procedures adhered to:

- Complete a safety plan before they leave the family home
- Arrange for an adult e.g. a social worker or specialist domestic violence service worker, to accompany them if they insist on returning to the family home to collect their possessions. If necessary arrange for a police officer to also escort the responsible practitioner
- Ensure an accredited interpreter is also present in case the family makes threats
- Advise the victim how their actions may compromise their safety
- Take precautions to ensure the person’s identity, benefit and other records are confidential
- Encourage them to change their bank account and mobile phone so they cannot be traced (Cabinet Office 2014b, p. 82).

As part of the multi-agency approach, victims who are removed from the family home should, with their consent, be referred to “appropriate local and national support groups, counselling services and women’s groups that have a history of working with survivors of forced marriage” (Cabinet Office 2014b, p. 81).

**3.13 Summary**

This chapter has traced the chronology of forced marriage from ‘community engagement’ to ‘regulation’ and ‘exit’; and from civil measures to criminalisation. Important issues examined have included the ongoing debate between macro community issues (such as stigmatisation) and the acknowledgement of universal human rights by focusing on violence against women. The Government has now firmly adopted the stance of taking a criminalisation and gender-based approach, largely through the advocacy of Jasvinder Sanghera and the Karma Nirvana organisation, which form the basis of this thesis.

In the next chapter, Chapter 4, the thesis addresses the methodological approach adopted in the analysis of Sanghera’s struggle to escape a forced marriage and her eventual establishment of Karma Nirvana.
Chapter 4 Methodology and audit trail

This chapter presents the research design of the thesis by describing and justifying the theoretical and methodological orientation of the thesis. Using a framework suggested by Crotty (1998), the research scaffolding of the thesis follows an approach that is relevant and appropriate for addressing the research question and also adopts a consistent alignment between epistemology (constructionism), theoretical perspective (critical inquiry), methodology (discourse analysis) and method (document analysis). The chapter explains the nature of discourse analysis, in particular that of critical discourse analysis, and justifies the use of a sociocognitive approach (van Dijk 2008) in this thesis as well as the use of an autobiographical memoir as the source of the document analysis. Finally, the chapter presents a detailed audit trail of the coding and analysis of the data, together with a justification of using grounded theory for this purpose.

The chapter is structured as below:

4.1 Research scaffolding
   4.1.1 Epistemology and theoretical perspective
   4.1.2 Methodology and methods
   4.1.3 Research design

4.2 Quantitative versus qualitative research
   4.2.1 Types of qualitative research

4.3 Discourse analysis
   4.3.1 Types of discourse analysis
      4.3.1.1 Constructivist approaches
      4.3.1.2 Critical approaches

4.4 Types of critical discourse analysis
   4.4.1 Adoption of the sociocognitive approach in this thesis

4.5 Use of an autobiographical memoir as text

4.6 Audit trail

4.7 Summary
4.1 Research scaffolding

Crotty (1998) provides an initial framework for guiding researchers in constructing their research design. He does this for two reasons, first to present a consistent definition of terminology that is often used in a confused manner and second to give researchers a sense of stability and direction during the research process. Crotty (1998, p. 2) argues that there must exist a sense of alignment between four major elements of the research design, which he describes as a research “scaffolding not an edifice”. This is determined by providing answers to the following four questions (Crotty 1998, p. 2):

- What *methods* do we propose to use?
- What *methodology* governs our choice and use of methods?
- What *theoretical perspective* lies behind the methodology in question?
- What *epistemology* informs this theoretical perspective?

The definition of each of these italicized elements is given below:

- **Epistemology**: the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology.
- **Theoretical perspective**: the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria.
- **Methodology**: the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes.
- **Methods**: the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis (Crotty 1998, p. 3)

4.1.1 Epistemology and theoretical perspective

Crotty (1998) gives three examples of basic epistemologies – objectivism, constructionism, and subjectivism. He also advances a non-exhaustive list of theoretical
perspectives – positivism and post-positivism, interpretivism, critical inquiry, feminism, and postmodernism. It is important that the choice of epistemology must correlate with the appropriate choice of theoretical perspective. For example, ‘objectivism’ postulates the existence of entities that have meaning residing in them independent of human consciousness. Careful study of these entities, therefore, is capable of discovering the truth that resides within them. Underlying this epistemological stance is the theoretical perspective of ‘positivism’ which allows a variety of measures to be employed by the researcher to uncover the nature of this truth.

In contrast, the epistemology of ‘constructionism’ advocates that ‘reality’ is not objective and separate from the individual, but rather constructed by the individual. In other words, there is no meaning without a mind. Social constructionists believe that meaning is not an external truth to be discovered, but that meaning is constructed as a result of the individual interacting with the world. This is in direct contrast to the objectivist epistemology existing in traditional science that assumes “the nature of the world can be revealed by observation” (Burr 2015, p. 3). In essence, it posits that in the search for meaning, identity, and underlying themes, if it cannot be observed it does not exist. A social constructionist epistemology resists this view by acknowledging the processual nature of the enquiry and posits that the effect of interacting with the discourse constructs meaning. With this assumption made, it is reasonable to expect that individuals may construct meaning in different ways, thereby constructing different meanings from the same phenomena. Unlike an objectivist epistemology where subject and object are separate, a constructionist epistemology views subject and object as being partnered in the production of meaning (Crotty 1998).

In order to provide more insight into social constructionism, Burr (2015, pp. 3-4) outlines four aspects that one must believe in order to be consistent with this epistemology.

• A critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge: Social constructionism insists that we take a critical stance towards our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world and ourselves, and cautions us to be ever suspicious of our assumptions about how the world appears to be.
• Historical and cultural specificity: The ways in which we commonly understand the world, the categories and concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific. Whether one understands the world in terms of men and women, pop music and classical music, urban life and rural life, past and future, etc., depends upon where and when in the world one lives… and we should not assume that our ways of understanding are necessarily any better (in terms of being any nearer the truth) than other ways.

• Knowledge is sustained by social processes: If our knowledge of the world, our common ways of understanding it, is not derived from the nature of the world as it really is, where does it come from? The social constructionist answer is that people construct it between them. It is through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated.

• Knowledge and social action go together: These ‘negotiated’ understandings could take a wide variety of different forms, and we can therefore talk of numerous possible ‘social constructions’ of the world. But each different construction also brings with it, or invites, a different kind of action from human beings.

In this thesis, the choice of a ‘constructionist’ epistemology with a ‘critical inquiry’ theoretical perspective is entirely consistent with one another. Having established this alignment, we must now also establish a subsequent alignment with the chosen ‘methodology’ and ‘methods’.

4.1.2 Methodology and methods

Methodology refers to the manner in which research is conducted; it is the type of theoretical perspective informing the research (Hesse-Biber & Levy 2011). The methodology chosen is shaped by the purpose, assumptions and interests of the research (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault 2016). There exist myriad methodologies employed in research studies. These include, but are not limited to, experimental research; survey research; ethnography; phenomenology; grounded theory; mixed methods research; case study; heuristic inquiry; action research; discourse analysis; and feminist research.
(Waller, Farquharson & Dempsey 2015). As shown later in this chapter, the methodology of ‘discourse analysis’ drives the research process in this thesis. In addition, grounded theory is used as the methodology for coding and analysing the data within the context of critical discourse.

With regard to ‘methods’, Crotty (1998) provides an even longer non-exhaustive list of examples, whilst acknowledging that there are so many different types of methods that exist in research studies that only a flavour of some of the more popular can be given. For example: sampling methods; questionnaires; observation; interviews; focus groups; case study; life history; narratives; statistical analysis; theme identification; document analysis; content analysis; and conversation analysis.

As before, the choice of methodology and method(s) must be consistent with one another and must also be aligned with the overlying epistemology and theoretical perspective. In this thesis, the chosen methodology is that of ‘discourse analysis’ and the method is that of ‘document analysis’ (the memoir Shame).

### 4.1.3 Research design

The sections above show that in this thesis the following research design (scaffolding) has been chosen:

- Epistemology: constructionism
  - Theoretical perspective: critical inquiry
  - Methodology: discourse analysis
  - Method: document analysis

Not only are these research choices consistently aligned with one another, but they also form a coordinated research design for the purpose of addressing the research question of the thesis:
How can agents, moulded and constrained within the confines of a strict discourse, exhibit the freedom of thought that allows them to do something different when the prevailing discourse has presumably disempowered them from such unorthodox thinking?

This research question is based upon a version of ‘reality’ that is constructed within the minds of the relevant participants (constructionism) who are attempting to envision an alternative life course independent of the extant power structures against which they must struggle (critical inquiry). One significant example of such a struggle is that of Jasvinder Sanghera whose actions, thoughts, and emotions are analysed in depth (discourse analysis) through the medium of her memoir Shame (document analysis).

4.2 Quantitative versus qualitative research

Originating in positivist science, quantitative research differs from qualitative research in two important ways. The quantitative research approach contends that there is a knowable reality independent of the research process, that the natural world is patterned and predictable, governed by rules that allow causal relationships to be identified, tested and used to predict and control social reality. The quantitative research approach also invokes a hierarchy that privileges the researcher as knower, acting upon human subjects who are considered merely objects for the purpose of research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011).

The difference in the type of data collected using quantitative or qualitative methods provides a clear distinction between the two methodologies. Quantitative data is numerical and therefore measurable in terms of quantity whereas qualitative data is non-numerical, often using words to describe and is not quantifiable (Higgs et al. 2010; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003). Qualitative research involves “an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world” in which researchers “study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 3). It is in essence processual. In contrast, quantitative research is concerned with “measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes” (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, p. 10).
Sarantakos (2005, p. 47) highlights the points of difference between quantitative and qualitative approaches by comparing them on seven points: nature of reality, causes and effects, the role of values, natural and social sciences, methods, the researcher’s role and finally, generalizations. These are depicted in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1 Comparison of quantitative and qualitative methodologies**  
(Adapted from Sarantakos 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Quantitative methodology</th>
<th>Qualitative methodology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of reality</td>
<td>Objective; simple; single; tangible sense impressions</td>
<td>Subjective; problematic; holistic; a social construct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causes and effects</td>
<td>Nomonological thinking; cause-effect linkages</td>
<td>Non-deterministic; mutual shaping; no cause-effect linkages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of values</td>
<td>Value neutral; value-free inquiry</td>
<td>Normativism; value-bound inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and social</td>
<td>Deductive; model of natural sciences; based on strict rules</td>
<td>Inductive; ideographic; interpretations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sciences</td>
<td>Quantitative; mathematical; extensive use of statistics</td>
<td>Qualitative; less emphasis on statistics; verbal and qualitative analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Passive; distant from the subject; dualism</td>
<td>Active; equal; both parties are interactive and inseparable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher’s role</td>
<td>Inductive generalizations; nomothetic statements</td>
<td>Analytic or conceptual generalizations; time-and-context specific</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative methods assist in making sense of the world by organizing the “undisciplined confusion of events and the experiences of those who participate in those events as they occur in natural settings” in order to provide us with a “certain type of
knowledge and with the tools to resolve confusion” (Morse & Richards 2002, p. 5). A qualitative research approach views the world as being continually socially constructed through human interaction and views the subjects of research as potential sources of rich data, vital to the research process. As the aim of the current research is to analyse Jasvinder Sanghera’s story to emerge insights into the process by which she was able to exhibit agency in defiance of the prevailing discourse, a qualitative methodology is appropriate.

### 4.2.1 Types of qualitative research

The field of qualitative research is rich with different types of approaches designed and developed in efforts to emerge the quality of information that is able to best represent the phenomena being studied. A popular but by no means exhaustive selection of these is presented below, together with a justification for inclusion or non-inclusion in the present research study.

**Ethnography and autoethnography**

Derived from the Greek *ethnos* meaning culture, and *graphia* meaning to write or present (Grbich 2013), Geertz (1973, p. 193) asserts that the aim of ethnographic research is to get a “holistic understanding of how individuals in different cultures and subcultures make sense of their lived reality”. The researcher achieves this by undertaking field research, observing people in their natural setting in order to “provide detailed accounts of the *everyday practices and customs* (italics in original) of a culture, subculture, or group” (Geertz 1973, p. 193). Closely associated with anthropology, ethnography uses cultural immersion in order to understand how and why people come to share ways of doing and being. Ethnography is a dialectic rather than linear process. It requires the researcher to collect data, analyse it, collect more data, refine interpretations, collect more data and so on (Agar 1980).

Ethnographic research has taken place in a variety of settings from foreign countries (Evans-Pritchard 1940) to work organizations (Burawoy 1979).
Ethnography is an appropriate method to use when the research question demands “an in depth understanding of the social context (italics in original), in particular the culture within which individuals engage in a particular set of behaviours” (Hesse-Biber 2011, p. 197). Ethnographies often times focus on “uncovering the meaning of a social reality for participants but are less concerned with how that social reality came into existence through the constructive effects of various discourses and associated texts” (Phillips & Hardy 2002, p. 6); the reverse is true of the research in this thesis, rendering ethnography inappropriate for the research task.

There is clearly a strong link between ethnography and autoethnography. The difference is essentially one of research focus. The focus of ethnography is outward, whereas the focus of autoethnography is inward; on the auto, the self – so autoethnography is concerned with researching the experiences of the researcher’s own life (Grbich 2013), and is therefore not suited to the current research.

**Grounded theory**

Like ethnography, grounded theory uses an inductive approach and seeks to generate substantive and formal theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) coined the term grounded theory to refer to the discovery of theory from data. It is a systematic, iterative and interpretive approach to research. The concept of grounded theory represented a distinct departure from the prevailing wisdom of the era whose methods were designed to verify the validity or otherwise of the researcher’s theory; in other words, grounded theory marked a shift from theory directed research, to theory generating research using “observations of reality to construct both meaning and theories” (Grbich 2013, p. 80). Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 2) contend that “generating data goes hand in hand with verifying it”.

Consistent with a social constructionist perspective, grounded theory locates “the phenomena of human experiences within the world of social interaction” and presumes that “reality is a constructed and shifting entity” thereby enabling “social processes [to] be created and changed by interactions among people” (Grbich 2013, p. 80). Grounded theorists’ focus is on understanding the context within which every day interactions of
participants occur; how they behave, interact and construct reality and how this reality is reconstructed through interaction with the research process. This means that grounded theory has proved suitable for coding and analysing the data used in this thesis with reference to the transformational journey of Jasvinder Sanghera in her memoir *Shame*.

**Phenomenology**

With its early roots in the 18th century, phenomenology was born in efforts to remedy perceived wrongs of natural scientists whose research assumed there existed “an objective reality independent of individual consciousness” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011, p. 19). Closely associated with the work of German philosopher Edmund Husserl and French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology is interested in how the individual experiences consciousness or social reality; how they think about what they experience. In short, phenomenology is “a methodological (theoretical) perspective aimed at generating knowledge about how people experience” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011, p. 19). While Sanghera’s experience of being cocooned within the discourse of honour is of interest to this research, it is not the primary focus of it, rendering a phenomenological methodology inappropriate.

**Deconstruction**

The poststructuralist epistemology of deconstruction is “an analytic strategy that exposes, in a systematic way, multiple ways a text can be interpreted. Deconstruction is able to reveal ideological assumptions in a way that is particularly sensitive to the suppressed interests of members of disempowered, marginalized groups” (Martin 1990, p.: 340). Burr sees the role of deconstruction as bringing to the fore identity and power implications of a discourse by taking apart texts and showing how they work to present us with a particular vision of the world, and thus enabling us to challenge it” (2015, p. 21).

Deconstruction affords the researcher the opportunity to break down selected texts and put them back together in a manner that demonstrates the unsaid, hidden messages that may be constructed as a result of interaction with the text. As the aim of the research is not to emerge the silenced voices within the discourse but rather to understand
Jasvinder’s agency in resisting the prevailing discourse, this approach is not suited to the current research.

Content analysis

Content analysis is “potentially one of the most important research techniques in the social sciences… [i]t seeks to analyze data within a specific context in view of the meanings someone - a group or culture - attributes to them… [C]ontent analysis goes outside the immediately observable physical vehicles of communication and relies on their symbolic qualities to trace the antecedents, correlates, or consequences of communications, thus rendering the (unobserved) context of data analyzable” (Krippendorff 1989, p. 403). While content analysis has traditionally been a quantitative method of analysis, in recent times qualitative content analysis, and indeed mixed approaches, have become more common. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) explain that the main difference in these two approaches lies in research design. While quantitative approaches are predominantly deductive and follow a preconceived, linear path through the various phases of the research process, qualitative approaches are largely inductive, employing a “spiral design [that] allows them metaphorically to dive in and out of the data as they proceed. In this model, a researcher generates new understanding, with varied levels of specificity, during each phase of the project and uses this information to double back and gain more information” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011, p. 234). This process, like a positive feedback loop, generates an increasing number of inputs that may be used by the researcher to make sense of the data and build knowledge.

Analysis of texts, where the researcher uses text as the primary form of data, has traditionally been the most common form of content analysis. In the quantitative context this has meant tabulating the number of times a particular word or phrase appears in a text, elevating the significance of those that appear with greater frequency than their counterparts. In the postmodern era, we take account of the role of power and politics in the content and context of texts and look to what is not said to emerge what has been marginalised or silenced by the text and thereby excluded from the discourse.
Case study

Case study is defined as a “research strategy that involves the empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, using multiple sources of evidence” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003, p. 473). While case studies “have been around as long as recorded history and... account for a large proportion of books and articles in psychology, anthropology, sociology, history, political science, education, economics, management, biology, and medical science” (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, p. 302), there exists in academia a tension around the validity of case study as methodology (Denzin & Lincoln 2011; Grbich 2013; Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011). The main goal of a case study is to come to a thorough understanding of the chosen phenomena and the factors that contribute to its construction and maintenance over time.

Feminist research

Feminist research has its origins in the second wave feminist movement that began in the United States in the early 1960s. Feminist research goals “foster empowerment and emancipation for women and other marginalized groups and... often apply their findings in the service of promoting social change and social justice for women (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2007, p. 4). Feminist theory was not used because the purpose of this research was to develop a conceptual model of escaping discourse. Although this does encompass aspects of feminist research, it was found to be more appropriate to focus the methodology on Grounded Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis.

4.3 Discourse analysis

Traditional qualitative approaches oft times begin with an assumed social world and focus their research efforts toward comprehending its meaning for participants. In contrast, discourse analysts focus their research efforts on understanding how the social world was created or constructed, and how it is maintained over time (Phillips & Hardy 2002).
Discourse analysis places the researcher in a strong position to evaluate claims and interpretations within the present discourse (Potter 1996). As the term suggests, discourse analysis is concerned with discourses. Beyond this, there is considerable variation in the understanding of what is meant by discourse analysis. This is due, in part, to the existence of many and varied ideas of what is meant by the term discourse and the fact that discourse analysis is a method able to be used without issue in varying epistemologies and research disciplines (Crotty 1998). For the purpose of this research, what is meant by each of these terms will be clarified.

Parker (in Phillips & Hardy 2002, p 3) defines discourse as ‘an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being’. This demonstrates a strong link between social interactions and discourses; in other words, social interactions may not be completely understood without first considering the discourses that gave them meaning.

Burr (1995: 32) defines the term discourse as “a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events… a particular picture that is painted of an event (or person or class of persons), a particular way of representing it or them in a certain light”. This definition is chosen for this research as, like Parker’s definition, it demonstrates a strong link between social interactions and discourses but extends this by including the sources of discourse beyond that of text, acknowledging that there are several versions of events that are each valid and that ‘particular’ ones are privileged over others. This is consistent with the social constructionist stance that individuals create or construct their own ‘reality’.

The work of discourse analysis is to ‘explore the relationship between discourse and reality’ (Burr 1995, p. 3); to explore “the ways in which language constructs objects, subjects and experiences, including subjectivity and a sense of self” (Willig 1999, p. 2). It is concerned with identifying the rules that “govern bodies of texts and utterances” (Fairclough 2003, p. 123) and in so doing, facilitates the emergence of the invisible within the present discourse. The existence of the ‘invisible’ or ‘silenced’ within a discourse implies the existence of a power dynamic that privileges one voice over another, thus deciding what may be uttered – made visible, given voice – in the
discourse and consequently, what may not. Another dimension to discourse analysis is to consider the role of power as an effect of discourse.

Given it is possible for a number of discourses to exist in relation to one event, each with a different view and requiring different types of action, it then follows that the dominant or prevailing discourse will be continually the focus of resistance and interrogation. Individuals may “exercise power by drawing upon discourses which allow our actions to be represented in an acceptable light” (Burr 1995, p. 43).

There are several theoretical assumptions underlying discourse analysis. These are discussed below and concern issues of objectivity, the researcher and researched, reflexivity and the aims of the research (Burr 1995).

- **Objectivity**: The issue of objectivity is concerned with acknowledging that true objectivity is not possible from a social constructionist viewpoint. “Experimenters, within the traditional scientific paradigm, are able to stand back from their own humanity and reveal the objective nature of the phenomena under study without bias and without ‘contaminating’ the results with ‘leakage’ from their own personal involvement” (Burr 1995, p. 110). But the social constructionist not only sees the scientist’s talk of objectivity as part of the discourse and therefore unable to be separate from it, but also posits that the scientists view of the world has an influence on every aspect of the research from data collection to presentation of findings.

- **Researcher and researched**: It has been established that there are power relations present in any discourse. In a research context, the voice of the researcher can be considered to have greater power than that of the researched. Therefore, the researcher’s version of events is attributed greater credence than that of those being researched as the researcher has the power to interpret and attribute meaning to their experiences.

- **Reflexivity**: This issue acknowledges that when an account of an experience is given, that account is at the same time a description of that event and part of the event by virtue of the fact that it is being discussed (Burr 1995).
• The aims of research: Unlike positivist research, social constructionist research is not concerned with the discovery of ‘truth’ as it believes there are many possible ‘truths’ that may exist simultaneously (Burr 1995). The aim of research from a social constructionist viewpoint is to emerge the invisible and unspoken within discourses in order to affect change for those who need it. In the case of this research in this thesis, those who need it are deemed to be those constrained by the prevailing discourse of family honour.

4.3.1 Types of discourse analysis

There are myriad approaches to discourse analysis including ethnography, literary analysis, linguistic analysis, content analysis, genealogy, conversation analysis, narrative analysis, photographic analysis, institutional analysis and critical discourse analysis to name a few. In order to make sense of these and move toward an appropriate approach, theoretical perspectives in discourse analysis are first discussed.

Following analysis of a series of empirical studies of discourse analysis, Phillips and Ravasi (Phillips & Hardy 2002, p. 20) identified two key theoretical dimensions; the first being the relative importance of text versus context and the second the degree to which power is more (critical approach) or less (constructivist approach) the focus of the research. This is depicted in Figure 4.2.

![Figure 4.2 Different approaches to discourse analysis (Phillips & Hardy 2002, p. 20)](image-url)
4.3.1.1 Constructivist approaches

*Interpretive structuralism* is constructivist and context based. It is concerned with the discursive production of ‘reality’ in particular contexts (e.g. organizational change in the context of the Australian higher education sector) but without specific focus on power.

*Social linguistic analysis* is constructivist and text based. It is concerned with specific examples of text and talk (e.g. interviews, newspaper articles, focus groups and stories) and seeks to understand these both in terms of how they are constructed and organised, and also how they contribute to the construction and organisation of other phenomena. Like interpretive structuralism, social linguistic analysis is concerned with how discourses are produced, but without specific focus on the power relations that encourage or inhibit what may or may not be communicated (Phillips & Hardy 2002).

4.3.1.2 Critical approaches

*Critical linguistic analysis*, like social linguistic analysis, is concerned with the discursive production of ‘reality’ but differs in that it includes a strong emphasis on emerging the power dynamics that frame the text. This boundary serves to decide what is included or excluded from the text. Power is seen in the Foucauldian sense as either repressive or emancipatory; what is silenced within the text is mystified and what is given free voice is manifest.

*Critical discourse analysis* must not be interpreted in terms of the usual dictionary definition of ‘critical’ meaning being negative, disapproving or judgemental. In contrast, the term critical is used here in a specific sense. Its meaning may be traced back to the influence of the Institute of Social Research at the Frankfurt School and the Neo-Marxist work of its scholars, one of whom – Max Horkheimer – coined the term critical theory to mean a process of self-critical and emancipatory critique. This marked a point of departure from the prevailing positivist epistemology that theories could accurately mirror reality which Horkheimer rejected as inadequate for studying the social world (Kelemen & Rumens 2008).
Critical approaches to discourse analysis are typically called critical discourse analysis (CDA), a term coined by Norman Fairclough in 1989. The basic premise of CDA is that discourses are shaped by social groupings, culture and constructs, and has the power to limit our knowledge and beliefs (Fairclough 1995). In other academic circles, however, the more general term Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is used, the rationale for which is espoused by van Dijk (2009, p. 62) below:

This more general term suggests that such a critical approach not only involved critical analysis, but also critical theory, as well as critical applications. The designation CDS may also avoid the widespread misconception that a critical approach is a method of discourse analysis… CDS is not a method, but rather a critical perspective, position or attitude within the discipline of multidisciplinary Discourse Studies.

There is no one CDA approach. Scholars who ascribe to CDA come from various theoretical perspectives and so use a variety of methodologies and methods tailored to the specific research task, so the attributes of CDA apply to the scholar rather than the methods used. Critical discourse analysis scholars have a healthy scepticism and are conscious of not taking anything for granted. The CDA scholar strives to reveal the underlying ideological positions within the discourse, always mindful of their position as researcher; engaging in a continual process of self-reflection in respect of the research process (Kendall 2007). Critical discourse analysis requires accountability in terms of the contradictions existing within and between discourses, and “the means by which discourse makes particular statements seem rational and beyond all doubt, even though they are only valid at a certain time and place” (Jäger & Maier 2009, p. 36).

The aim of CDA is to untangle the web of discourse to better understand what is said and how it is said thereby emerging power structures that limit or expand the discourse. It seeks to contribute to greater understanding of serious social problems such as social power abuse and the resulting inequality, in order to provide solutions (van Dijk 2009). Fairclough (2009, p. 163) believes CDA “aims to contribute to addressing the social ‘wrongs’ of the day (in a broader sense – injustice, inequality, lack of freedom, etc.) by analyzing their sources and causes, resistance to them and possibilities of overcoming them”. Critical discourse analysis is not passive; it is intended to result in some sort of
social action whether education programs, publication of texts, contribution of expert opinion or some other action.

4.4 Types of critical discourse analysis

Wodak and Meyer (2009) identify six main research strategies within CDA:

- Discourse-historical approach
- Corpus-linguistics approach
- Social actors approach
- Dispositive analysis
- Sociocognitive approach
- Dialectical-relational approach

The ordering of these different approaches is not random. Wodak and Meyer (2009) identify the ordering from top to bottom in terms of a continuum. Those approaches towards the bottom tend to proceed deductively, whilst those towards the top possess a more inductive perspective. In addition:

Linked to this distinction is the choice of objects under investigation: more deductively oriented theories which also propose a closed theoretical framework are more likely to illustrate their assumptions with a few examples which seem to fit their claims…more inductively-oriented approaches usually stay at the ‘meso level’ and select problems where they attempt to discover new insights through in-depth case studies and ample data collection…of course, all approaches moreover proceed abductively, i.e. oscillate between theory and data analysis in retroductive ways (Wodak & Meyer 2009, p. 19).

Discourse-historical approach

With its foundations in the Frankfurt School’s critical theory, the discourse-historical approach (DHA) is characterized by being interdisciplinary and problem-oriented, analysing changes in discursive practices both over time and in various genres. According to Wodak (in Kendall 2007), one of the most important characteristics of the discourse-historical approach is its interdisciplinarity. This is consistent with DHA
following triangulation, a philosophy based on the concept of ‘context’ that “implies taking a whole range of empirical observations, theories and methods as well as background information into account” (Reisigl & Wodak in van Dijk 2009, p. 89). The DHA is often used in research concerning identity construction and unjustified discrimination, focusing on the historical formation of discourses (Wodak 2015).

**Corpus-linguistics approach**

The corpus linguistic approach utilizes computer support to analyse textual data, making it well suited to analyse programs involving large volumes of data. These large volumes provide an opportunity for discourse analysts to broaden their empirical base and conduct both quantitative (e.g. frequencies, statistical significance, data extracts) and qualitative research (co-locational environments, semantic patterns, discourse functions) (Mautner 2009).

**Social actors approach**

Building on Foucault’s definition of discourse as ‘socially constructed ways of knowing some aspect of reality’ (Van Leeuwen 2009, p. 144), the social actors (actors being participants within the discourse) approach is a linguistically-oriented method of critical discourse analysis that frames discourse as the re-contextualization of social practice. Seeking to understand how the practices of transformation or re-contextualization serve to establish a discourse, this approach evaluates what is written or said about a given reality (e.g. leadership) across a range of sources within the same context and connects it to the practice that attributed its meaning (Van Leeuwen 2008).

**Dispositive analysis**

This approach refers to CDA based on Michel Foucault’s discourse theory and seeks to address questions concerning knowledge: what constitutes valid knowledge at a certain place and time, how this knowledge comes to be known and passed on, the role it plays in ‘constituting subjects’ and the consequences for influencing and developing society (Jäger & Maier 2009). Foucault’s work on power and dominance is central to the focus of this method that focuses on “current discourses and their power effect, on uncovering the linguistic and iconographic means – in particular, the collective symbolism – by
which discourses work, and on the function of discourse to legitimize and secure
dominance in bourgeois-capitalist modern society” (ibid, p. 35).

**Sociocognitive approach**

The sociocognitive approach espoused by Teun van Dijk holds important the concept of
cognition, which he embraces as a notion jointly defined by all the disciplines and
understood under the label of ‘cognitive science’. In postulating the significance of the
sociocognitive approach, van Dijk stresses the “relations between mind, discursive
interaction and society” (van Dijk 2009, p. 65).

**Dialectical relational approach**

The dialectical-relational approach, a critical methodology developed by Norman
Fairclough, sees semiosis – or meaning-making – as being established through a process
a negotiation between different points of view to arrive at the ‘truth’. This process is
laden with power dynamics that determine which ‘truth’ is sanctioned as valid and may
result in unequal power relations. The dialectical-relational seeks to address the
resulting social injustices by ‘analysing their sources and causes, resistance to them and
possibilities of overcoming them’ (Fairclough 1995, p. 231).

**4.4.1 Adoption of the sociocognitive approach in this thesis**

Having outlined the various approaches to CDA in the sections above, this thesis adopts
the sociocognitive approach as the primary research strategy. This approach is
championed by Teun van Dijk (2008, 2009). In this section, the significant aspects of
the sociocognitive approach will be discussed together with a defence of the reasons for
adopting this approach in the thesis.

By adopting a critical approach as our main type of scholarly investigation, van Dijk
(2009, pp. 63-64) identifies three properties typical of critical studies of discourse:

1. They aim to analyse and thus to contribute to the understanding and the solution of,
   serious social problems, especially those that are caused or exacerbated by public
text and talk, such as various forms of social power abuse (domination) and their resulting social inequality.

2. This analysis is conducted within a normative perspective, defined in terms of international human rights, that allows a critical assessment of abusive, discursive practices as well as guidelines for practical intervention and resistance against illegitimate domination.

3. The analysis specifically takes into account the interests, the expertise and the resistance of those groups that are the victim of discursive injustice and its consequences.

By using the memoir *Shame* (Sanghera 2007) as the source of the data employed in this thesis we are acknowledging the struggle of Jasvinder Sanghera to free herself from the discourse of honour and the imminent danger to herself of being forced into an unwanted marriage with a stranger at a very young age. Her family exerts social domination on her and community members resulting in extreme unequal treatment between males and females within a discourse that articulates females must only obey the patriarchal hierarchy. The approach is openly normative in that it places the human rights of females such as Sanghera above the cultural sensitivities of those communities that demand the right to enforce a discourse of honour. Emphasis is laid not only upon the manner in which the over-arching discourse attempts to dominate its subjects, but also upon the ways in which impacted victims display resistance and the manner of their struggle. Thus, it is argued that the topic of this thesis meets the essential criteria for being deemed a critical analysis.

More specifically, the adoption of sociocognitive analysis is justified by the nature of the research question addressed by this thesis: “how can agents, moulded and constrained within the confines of a strict discourse, exhibit the freedom of thought that allows them to do something different when the prevailing discourse has presumably disempowered them from such unorthodox thinking?” In other words, the emphasis of the thesis lies not only in how discourse can produce and reproduce compliant actors, but also how actors can successfully challenge and escape from the confinement of a discourse. The theorisation in this thesis thus needs to revolve not entirely around the conception of actors as cultural dopes, but around the possibility of agentic freedom.
from the entrapment of the discourse. Such agentic resistance relies upon the visualisation of discourse as possessing cracks and fissures that certain actors can take advantage of, hence presupposing the conception of cognitive independence rather than discursive disempowerment. Such agents will possess the ability to identify relevant constraints and push back against these barriers, creating for themselves a form of processual struggle as the precursor to agentic escape. This process displays dynamic aspects on an ongoing basis of perpetual ‘agent-constraint’ struggle giving rise to the notion of a transformational journey.

By adopting this form of argumentation, it is argued in this thesis that contexts should be regarded as subjective participant constructs. Although the contextual umbrella of the socially based discourse of honour undoubtedly influenced and constrained Jasvinder Sanghera’s socialisation, it should not be regarded as an objective force that directly caused her to act out certain thoughts, beliefs, and behaviours in a strict deterministic fashion. Van Dijk (2008, 2009) suggests that contexts are subjectively deciphered by participants according to properties of a situation that are here-and-now relevant for them. This argument provides us with the theoretical basis to analyse how Sanghera was able to devise the discursive resistance strategies she later employed that enabled her to challenge the discourse of honour.

Van Dijk (2008) argues that any approach to the study of discourse that is context free can lead to “superficial, formalistic, and sometimes trivial descriptions that seriously under-analyze discourse” (van Dijk 2008, p. ix). The notion of context is used to indicate that some event or discourse needs to be seen and studied in relation to its environment. However, we must be careful not to regard context as some kind of objective social situation, a “found” thing, which acts as a direct cause of other aspects of talk and text (van Dijk 2008, p. 12). Such an approach of social positivism would see all people in the same social situation speaking in the same way. Rather than adopting a deterministic stance, van Dijk’s proposition is that it is not the features of a social situation that directly influence (or are influenced by) discourse, but the way the participants define such a situation. Contexts are participant constructs. It is the “definition, interpretation, representation, or construction of participants of their social situations…that influences how they speak, write, listen, and understand” (van Dijk
Contexts are interpretive achievements. Social structures can only affect discourse through the interface of the participants. The relationship is mediated by the mental representations of language users. For this reason, the theory of context can be regarded as a sociocognitive one.

The useful notion of mental models places this theory of context on a firm cognitive footing. It is not possible to explain the detailed production and interpretation links between society and discourse without a cognitive interface. Societal and situational environments do not directly influence language use and discourse – such influence is possible only through mental models. Mental models represent the way language users variably interpret or construct situational events. Thus, van Dijk defines context as a special kind of mental model “that is, as subjective participant representations of communicative situations, and not the communicative situations themselves, as is the usual approach” (van Dijk 2008, p. 22). In order to capture the subjective interpretations of communicative situations van Dijk employs the concept of context models as a device for controlling how participants produce and understand discourse. Context models are regarded as a plausible mental interface between society, situation, and discourse. They provide “the crucial missing link in the cognitive theory of text processing between mental models of events talked about and the way discourse is actually formulated” (van Dijk 2008, p. xi). At each moment and in each situation, context models define how participants see the current situation and how they act in it. They enable language users to “dynamically construct their subjective analysis and interpretation of the communicative situation on line” (van Dijk 2008, p. 56).

Because participants regard contexts as the subjective construction of the relevant dimensions of events and situations they possess a number of important properties and fulfil a number of roles and functions. For instance, contexts come in different sizes or scopes, and may be more or less micro or macro. Because they are subjective interpretations we need only consider those aspects of context that are regarded as for-me-here-and-now relevant for the participants. Thus there is a built-in delimitation that prevents a theory of context becoming a theory of everything. Through the concept of subjective relevance participants can select those elements of a communicative situation that are relevant for them at a particular time and place. This convenes with the concept
of a mental model of participants (perhaps representing opinions or emotions) of the relevant properties of the situation in which they participate. This thesis therefore accounts for the “uniqueness of each talk or text as well as the common ground and shared social representations of participants” (van Dijk 2008, p. x).

4.5 Use of an autobiographical memoir as text

Critical discourse analysis is extremely flexible because it can be used in relation to any form of talk or text. In this thesis the memoir *Shame* (Sanghera 2007) is used as the source of data for our critical discourse analysis. Ford et al. (2005, p. 26) state:

> Autobiographies…as self-exemplifying exercises, offer a unique means for gaining behind-the-scenes insights that are especially valuable in understanding the personal experiences of their authors as well as the connection between their life experiences and the development of their interests and ideas…autobiographers are the ultimate participants in a dual participant-observer role, having privileged access to their own inner thoughts.

*Shame* provides three significant reasons why it serves as an excellent text for critical discourse analysis. First, it presents the journey of a young girl as she struggles to overcome a strong power-knowledge discourse based upon family honour and establish her own independent life based on her own life choices. Second, Sanghera, as a victim, provides an intensely personal account of her experience of being shamed and disowned by her family for refusing to undergo a forced marriage. She charts in detail the passage of her life growing up in an honour-based community. The epiphany of being disowned by her family and her subsequent attempts to survive form the backbone of her text. It is argued in this thesis that Sanghera’s ability to capture the richness and complexity of her journey provides information at least as important (if not more so) than can be achieved through alternate approaches such as structured or unstructured interviews. Third, of particular significance in Sanghera’s text is her evocative portrayal of the swing of her emotions in reaction to evolving developments, events and context ranging between helplessness, anger, despair, sadness, hope and resilience. This cathartic nature of her text, as argued in this thesis, is a quality that can be more easily exhibited in a
personal memoir than can be captured through the medium of a face-to-face interview when “emotions are often moderated by the interaction between researcher and respondent” (Goss et al. 2011, p. 217; Patient, Lawrence & Maitlis 2003).

For example, Juliet Corbin used personal memoirs written by Vietnam veterans to develop a theory of ‘surviving’ (Corbin & Strauss 2008). Corbin found such memoirs to be a treasure of information. The authors who write personal memoirs are found by Corbin to be valuable informants in that they tend to be more insightful and articulate than other forms of information from veterans. Part of the motivation for writing a personal memoir according to Corbin might be to “bury the ghosts that haunted them” (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 222): In this respect such accounts can be extremely cathartic.

4.6 Audit trail

This section presents the audit trail of the findings of this thesis. An audit trail is designed to show the reader how the data was collected, coded, analysed and conceptualised. In other words, it is not sufficient to progress straight from a presentation of the methodology to a presentation of the findings without revealing to the reader the process the researcher followed in the manipulation of the data. Although the sociocognitive approach was followed as the main research strategy for the critical dimension of the thesis, the methodology adopted for coding and analysing the data in Shame was that of grounded theory.

Grounded theory

I broadly followed the methodology of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1998) in terms of coding and analysing the data presented in Sanghera’s memoir. However, it must be remembered that grounded theory has a contentious history mainly because the pioneers of this methodology – Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss – went their separate ways after their initial collaboration and separately promulgated different versions of grounded theory (Jones & Noble 2007) – ‘forced’ grounded theory (Strauss) and ‘emergent’ grounded theory (Glaser). These two
different schools now have their own adherents. For the purpose of this thesis, my approach tends towards the Straussian approach. This is because the emergent approach of Glaser cannot be faithfully adopted due to the nature of the data. Glaser postulates following a process called ‘theoretical sampling’ (Glaser 1978) in which successive data collection follows the emergence of ‘themes’ as they emerge from successive layers of analysis and these themes are then pursued by consciously seeking out additional data sources which can densify and complexify these themes on an ongoing basis. However, this approach is not strictly possible when analysing an already established data source such as a memoir. The most rewarding approach in this case is to code the data according to themes and categories and then attempt to connect these categories into logical processes.

Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 99) postulate the collection and coding of data according to what they call “the paradigm model”.

Simplified the analytic ordering looks something like this: A (conditions) leads to B (phenomenon), which leads to C (context), which leads to D (action/interaction, including strategies), which leads to E (consequences) (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 124).

As the data is collected it is grouped into these pre-named categories in order to form an orderly progression. In effect, the paradigm model amounts to a ‘causal-consequence model’ which Glaser condemned as ‘forced’ (Glaser 1992) because of its pre-ordained existence rather than being allowed to ‘emerge’ naturally from the nature of what the data is actually telling us.

As stated earlier in this section, because of the nature of the data in the form of a personal memoir, it proved more appropriate and convenient to broadly employ the Straussian version of grounded theory in order to code and analyse the data. When coding the data, I was specially looking for causal-consequential relationships. Since Sanghera’s memoir details her life journey, the model was destined to take on a dynamic rather than a static form. Dynamic models are invariably divided into different stages as conditions, context, strategies, and consequences build one upon another in a continuous manner. Events in and of the present moment can always be related back to
previous events, which in turn will impact upon the course of future events. As a grounded theorist codes and analyses their data they are encouraged to write memos and draw diagrams on a continuous basis. Memos are defined as “written records of analysis related to the formulation of theory” (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 197). The purpose of memos and diagrams is as follows:

Memos and diagrams help you to gain analytical distance from materials. They assist your movement away from the data to abstract thinking, then in returning to the data to ground those abstractions in reality…they free you to work with ideas using a kind of free association, one idea stimulating another without the constraints of either worrying about logic or staying too close to reality…to be able to see what is in the data, you must be able to think creatively. Writing memos and doing diagrams help to stimulate this creativity…the most important point of all – stay conceptual in your memos. They pertain to the concepts that represent abstractions of incidents, events, happenings. As you know, it is concepts that move your analysis beyond description to theory (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 199, 200, 203).

The notion of memos and diagrams proved very valuable to me and I found myself fairly readily slipping into the routine of accumulating my insights, concepts and theorisations in the format of memos and then trying to diagramise these causal and consequential connections. Another technique of grounded theory that proved useful to me is that of ‘sorting’. As my memos began to build up, it was necessary not to get overwhelmed by the amount of verbiage, but rather to keep on top of this proliferation by sorting different memos into concepts and themes. Sorting is therefore a form of arrangement. But this arrangement is not that of data, but that of ideas – conceptual sorting is the name of the game not data sorting (Glaser 1978).

*Analysis of the data*

I read the memoir *Shame* (Sanghera 2007) within one day, occupying two separate sittings. On completion, a set of notes was compiled summarizing my thoughts about the plot. A naïve division was initially made into three stages - the period up to Sanghera’s running away, the period up to the formation of Karma Nirvana, and the final period after the formation of Karma Nirvana. The novel was read again, this time
paying careful attention to the swing of incidents and reactions as Sanghera progressed through her complex journey.

Each chapter was read slowly, sometimes several times. Copious notes were made of each incident and Sanghera’s emotional and behavioural reaction to each one. Close attention was paid to the nature of her ‘agent-constraint’ struggle. Her writing style is so emotive and her descriptions so vivid that pages and pages of (handwritten) notes soon began to fill my dedicated notebook. My notes were purely descriptive and summary in form. Any of my thoughts that entered into the realm of conceptual analysis were collected separately in the form of a notebook of memos. I did this purposefully in order to clearly segregate purely descriptive events and incidents from more conceptual and theoretical approaches in my thinking. I was aware that as my theorisation of Sanghera’s journey progressed it was essential to ‘one-up’ the data from description to conceptualisation in order to achieve the objective of making a significant contribution to knowledge.

My analysis of chapter 1 will be used as an example. This chapter is only 12 pages in length but packed full of revelations about Sanghera’s early life in Derby. With very little effort my notebook of incidents had reached five pages before I realized that if I carried on in this manner my notebook would soon be as long as the memoir itself. Incidents related to her mother’s strong religious convictions and the effect that this had on the family; the strange distance between her parents who never displayed any affection for one another; the special treatment handed out to her brother who was favoured over the girls who had to perform endless chores and were strictly controlled; the stifling effect of the local gurdwara (temple and gossip shop); the openly racist attitude of her mother and other community members who spoke of white girls as having no morals or self-respect; the manner in which Sanghera was singled out as being the most awkward member of her family; her mother’s refusal to speak English or make any attempt to integrate into the wider community; her father’s hard work and loving nature; and her father’s reminiscences about the village he had left in order to come to England.

After completing my descriptive notes of chapter 1, I wrote the following memo.
Sanghera’s opening chapter reveals a retrospective character who is basically cynical about her upbringing. Why is she so hostile to her mother and the rest of her community whilst painting her father in a rather sympathetic manner? When writing about her father her style is soft and reminiscent. When writing about her mother her style is harsh and condemnatory. She is eager to describe her mother as being a ‘backward’ and uneducated person, racist and isolationist in character. Her upbringing is styled as ethnocentric in nature. Her culture is superior to all others. All other cultures only serve to dilute the strength of her culture and so integration with others must be avoided upon the penalty of severe punishment (including violent beatings). Sanghera’s disapproval of this lifestyle is clearly seen in this opening chapter.

I continued in this vein until the end of chapter 7, the point where Sanghera ran away from home accompanied by her boyfriend Jassey. This chapter ends with the triumphant cry “WE DID IT” (Sanghera 2007, p. 68). From my point of view this was a stage of epiphany in Sanghera’s journey. The die had been cast. Her action would shame the family. I knew from my wider readings on this topic (although this was not mentioned in her memoir) that Sanghera could have been killed by her family for dishonouring them if they managed to track her down. I felt this was an appropriate time to bring together all my notes thus far and sort them into some form of conceptual order to try to make sense of the journey so far.

I began to sort my notes into themes and categories. One category soon began to take shape, that of ‘cloistering strategies’. Sanghera’s description of her isolated life had been painstakingly detailed in many separate incidents. I referred to some of my memos that spoke of her mother’s attempts to keep Sanghera away from the corrupting influence of external life. Her life was pathetically unworldly and cocooned. The strategies designed to achieve this objective included (of course) forcing their daughters into early marriage with very traditional men. But other strategies included devaluing education, community spying on wayward female behaviour, cultural elitism, and non-fraternisation. The overall objective of these strategies was to enforce the cultural role of females in terms of the discourse of honour as being one of ‘subjugation’ and this conceptualization was chosen as the key theme.
The result of this categorization was Figure 5.1 titled ‘Subjugation: the cultural role of females’ (p. 137). I conceptualized that females such as Sanghera were born and raised into a discourse where females were strictly cloistered by means of a range of strategies designed to keep them unworldly and submissive. Females who did not question this discourse became compliant with their subjugation. Females who resisted (like Sanghera) were met with various forms of retribution (such as physical or psychological abuse). If this retribution was effective, then females became complaint with their subjugation. If this retribution was ineffective, then the only viable means of response from females like Sanghera was to physically divorce themselves from the problem by running away from home.

From chapter 8 onwards, Sanghera’s account of her life appeared to become more and more complex and tragic. My audit trail of her memoir continued as before. I kept a notebook of incidents and responses plus a separate notebook of memos to capture my many thoughts of ‘what was really happening here’. I was also looking for epiphanies, turning points of such significance in Sanghera’s life that they marked a distinct change in her actions and thoughts. The death of her sister Robina was one such event, which appeared to mark the change from emotional guilt to hyperactive energy. One of my memos at this stage stated:

**Box 4.2**

**Memo 2: Robina’s death and the emotional consequence**

Sanghera has always tried to get back into her family’s good books. She has always been keen to try and impress them with her achievements and how they ought to be proud of her. But the death of her sister appears to have changed that. Sanghera’s rhetoric is now openly hostile and condemnatory of her family and their attitudes. She blames them for Robina’s death. She now wants to change the world and rid it of the kind of bigotry that has caused Robina’s death. This change from ‘appeasement’ to ‘vengeance through reform’ seems to mark a significant turnaround in the momentum of the journey.

Again I found myself noting an almost endless catalogue of incidents and reactions as Sanghera’s life continued on its way. I noted the frequent and seemingly endless drifting from one town to another, one accommodation to another and one job to another. Her marriage to Jassey dissolved. She embarked on an affair. She married a
second time only to again see this fail. She gave birth to three children. Her moral life seemed to be in turmoil. Another of my memos captured my thoughts at this stage.

**Box 4.3**

**Memo 3: Moral dissonance**

Sanghera is tortured by her lack of a moral compass. In view of the fact that she was brought up in such a cloistered atmosphere of unworldliness, she has experienced moral ups and downs that have left her confused and puzzled. She does not know what she wants. She cannot think straight because of her rudderless background and her inability to chart her own personal independent life course. The result of this is that she just drifts and is easily susceptible to temptation (such as nightclubbing and pubbing with her younger sister Lucy which results in an extra-marital affair and more tragedy for her).

I also noted her frequent physical illnesses and emotional bleakness. She was continually drawn back to her family, trying to keep in touch with different family members, calling them to meetings and telephoning them. I had noted the word ‘drifting’ in the memo about ‘moral dissonance’ (above) but now I aligned this with Sanghera’s yearning to be reunited with her family. The theme of ‘drifting back to the family fold’ was employed to conceptualise this period post running away from home and resulted in Figure 5.2 (p. 154). This figure shows that by running away from home, Sanghera had brought retribution of herself through being disowned. This involved ongoing vilification and demonization of Sanghera by her family and community. If this had proved effective she would have been drawn back to the family fold and to the subjugation that she had striven so hard to avoid.

I also noted at this time that ‘Sanghera thinks she has escaped from the problem but in reality she has not’. This was a conceptual breakthrough for me because I began to contemplate the notion of ‘escape’. When is an escape not an escape? Sanghera may have physically escaped the confinement of her family but she has not escaped the psychic prison that she has subsequently spun around herself. Such thinking led me not only to a conceptual breakthrough on my part but also a theoretical one, as shown in the following memo.
Sanghera has escaped her family but has not escaped herself. This perpetual yearning for her family (despite what they did to her) is still trapping her. She must escape from her own psychic prison in order to make any progress to escape. Foucault argues that moral growth (technology of the self) comes through attention to our own self-care and self-knowledge. Sanghera has lost her moral compass. She is not taking care of herself. She is not growing as a person. Where is she heading? Until she becomes a ‘new person’ (Foucault) by challenging her destiny she cannot hope to claim any semblance of ‘escape’.

My conceptualization at this stage of the memoir revolved around how Sanghera could defeat the ‘yearning of drawback’. My notes were sorted into ‘strategies’ that she appeared to employ to disavow herself of this temptation. If these strategies were not effective then she could be drawn back into the family web and on the first plane out of the country for her forced marriage. I was already memoing that Sanghera had not really escaped from her confinement and was sorting my notes to reveal how she emotionally and behaviourally constructed these strategies. I categorized these strategies into the theme of ‘disownment mitigation strategies’ that gave rise to the creation of Figure 5.3 (p. 155).

I noted how Sanghera had once used the word ‘cocoon’ and I decided to run with this concept, mainly because it gives rise to the idea of something of beauty that emerges from the confining notion of something that is otherwise designed to protect and isolate from potential attack from the outside. The idea of ‘escaping from the cocoon’ occupied my attention at this stage. But I realized that this notion did not amount to a one-off incident, but rather a series of incidents in the form of a process. In other words, I tried to conceptualise this in terms of a verb gerund (…ing) giving the journey an essentially ongoing conceptualisation. I categorised successive incidents and reactions in terms of a spectrum of escape. Each incident was laid on top of others, each moving Sanghera progressively towards the notion of ultimate cognitive escape from her psychic prison (cocoon). Three separate phases emerged in this process – ‘cracking’, ‘breaking out of’, and ‘standing outside’ the cocoon, the last of which denotes the establishment of Karma Nirvana.
Various incidents denoted ‘cracking the cocoon’ such as Sanghera’s increasing alignment with the world outside the discourse of honour (human contact, socialisation, and acquiring independent wealth). Other incidents built on top of this in terms of ‘breaking out of the cocoon’ (involvement in community activities, education, counselling, and the increased ability to challenge and renounce ingrained taboos such as family secrecy). Finally, ‘standing outside the cocoon’ signified her cognitive escape from her previous destiny with her realisation that she was destined to help others and adopt the mantle of a social activist with new insights into wider political and cultural battles that she was urgent to tackle.

4.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the research design of the thesis by describing and justifying the theoretical and methodological orientation of the thesis. A research scaffolding comprising constructionism, critical inquiry, discourse analysis, and document analysis has been adopted in order to guide the direction of the thesis. In particular, a sociocognitive approach to critical discourse analysis has been adopted to underpin the thesis. A detailed audit trail of the coding and analysis of the data has also been presented.

The next chapter, chapter 5, presents a synopsis and analysis of the autobiographical memoir *Shame* in order to uncover the main theme and different stages of the transformational journey of Jasvinder Sanghera.
Chapter 5 Synopsis and analysis of Shame

This chapter presents a synopsis and analysis of the memoir *Shame* (Sanghera 2007). The chapter is presented by means of a bifurcated structure: first a synopsis and analysis of chapters 1-7 (the period preceding the act of running away by Jasvinder) and second a synopsis and analysis of chapters 8-35 (the period after the act of running away by Jasvinder).

Overall, the main theme that is identified in the memoir is that of ‘*subjugation: cultural role of females*’. The analysis presented in this chapter depicts such subjugation as being propagated by a set of cloistering strategies designed to keep young girls in a state of unworldliness. Non-compliance with these strategies can evoke various forms of retribution in the form of physical and psychological abuse. Girls who evade this retribution by running away (like Jasvinder) can expect to be disowned by their families, a period potentially characterised by emotional bleakness and further physical and psychological threats and abuse. The consequence of this may involve a tendency for girls to ‘*drift back to the family fold*’ unless (like Jasvinder) they are able to successfully employ a sequence of ‘*disownment mitigation strategies*’. Such strategies have as their objective the gradual sequencing of actions designed to move females towards a state of ultimate ‘worldliness’ whereby they are more able to live independent and emancipated lives. The notion of a ‘*cocoon*’ is invoked to conceptualise this transitional journey through the stages of ‘*cracking, breaking, and standing outside the cocoon*’.

The chapter is structured as below:

5.1 Synopsis of text: chapters 1-7
5.2 Analysis of text: chapters 1-7
   5.2.1 Subjugation: cultural role of females
      5.2.1.1 Cloistering strategies
      5.2.1.2 Retribution for non-compliance
5.3 Synopsis of text: chapters 8-35
5.4 Analysis of text: chapters 8-35
   5.4.1 Drifting back to the family fold
   5.4.2 Disownment mitigation strategies

5.5 Summary

5.1 Synopsis of text: chapters 1-7

This section presents a synopsis of the first seven chapters of the memoir *Shame*, up to the point of Jasvinder’s action of running away from the family home in an attempt to avoid being taken overseas for the purpose of a forced marriage.

Jasvinder’s father was born and raised in a small village in Punjab India. He came to the UK during the 1950s and settled in the Midlands town of Derby. At the time, her father explained that the UK needed workers and was offering favourable conditions for workers to settle in the country and the prospect of a better life. An additional reason was that the world was changing fast and it was necessary “to keep up to date” (p. 14). He didn’t want a life for his children where sons would end up driving a bullock-drawn plough or daughters would suffer the drudgery of carrying large pots of water on their heads from the river.

Her father was widowed at a young age when his first wife died from a snake bite in India. According to custom, his dead wife was now replaced in the marriage by her younger sister, then aged 15. This second wife was Jasvinder’s mother. At the time of the marriage she had lived in the same tiny village all her life. She had “never been further than she could walk…never been to town… never seen a proper toilet or indoor kitchen or English furniture” (p. 15). When Jasvinder’s mother joined her new husband in the UK she didn’t know anybody. Although she subsequently lived in the UK for the next 40 years she never learned to speak English.

Jasvinder’s family eventually swelled to seven children (six girls and one boy; Jasvinder was the second youngest girl). Her father was very quiet and serious and always “followed what the mother said” (p. 9). He appears to have been a steady and reliable
provider for the family, working night shift at a local foundry his entire career. At weekends he was a regular at the local pub where he would invariably get somewhat intoxicated and play rough and tumble with the children when he arrived home. Jasvinder “loved her father dearly” (p. 9). In contrast, Jasvinder was never really close to her mother. The mother was the dominant one in the family. She worked at a variety of jobs, mainly in local textile factories. Her devotion to the Sikh faith was intense. Jasvinder describes how her mother would play recordings of early morning prayers loudly across the house, waking up the children, as well as sprinkling holy water about the house, chanting and lighting joss sticks. She attended the local gurdwara (Sikh temple) twice daily.

A significant element of Jasvinder’s upbringing was the different importance attached to boys and girls. Jasvinder noticed from an early age how her brother was treated in a special way. He was regarded as the favourite. The boy did not have to perform any chores. His mother prepared his food for him and laundered his clothes. Importantly, he was given lots of freedom, including being allowed out on his own. However, the situation was completely different for girls. They were not allowed out alone. They were not allowed to talk to boys. They had to perform a wide variety of household chores, most significantly learning how to cook. Girls had to wash their own clothes, get their school uniforms together, and serve themselves food from a large pot in the kitchen whenever they felt like it. Jasvinder had her own separate chores to complete, including sweeping the stairs. When her father returned home from work in the morning after his night shift she had to make his tea before leaving for school. When she returned home from school in the afternoon she had to wake up her father ready for his night shift as well as preparing his lunch, a task that usually took about one hour.

Because Jasvinder was one of the younger girls she was able to observe from an early age the fate of her elder sisters. Girls were groomed for an early marriage. Forced marriage was the norm. The process was always the same. At about the age of 15-16 the girl would be shown a photograph of a man the family had chosen for her to marry. The man always lived abroad, invariably in Punjab, and was connected to the family in some way, often a relative. Soon after, the girl would be sent to India where she would remain for several months whilst the marriage took place. The girl would return back to the UK
alone but married, where she would continue to live with her family. During this time she would save up money to bring her husband to the UK, sponsoring his immigration and signing the required papers. Once her husband arrived, the girl would then move from the family home to take up residence with her husband.

Because the fate of girls was so severely prescribed to early forced marriage, the manner of their upbringing was of utmost importance. Girls were groomed to be good wives and daughters-in-law, able to act the role of a homemaker by being able to cook and sew, whilst being respectful and subservient. This behaviour maintained the good name of the family. Jasvinder’s mother in particular was always concerned about what other people in their community thought about them. Improper behaviour by girls brought dishonour and shame on the family. Once a girl was married, in effect she became the property of her husband (and his mother). She went to live in his house and look after him and please him. Failure to do this would bring disgrace on her family. It was the girl’s duty “to have a respectable marriage and uphold the good name of the family” (p. 21). Because of the dire consequences brought by dishonouring and shaming the family, Jasvinder’s mother saw her role as preparing her daughters for this situation: “no daughter of mine will go ignorant to her mother-in-law’s house” (p. 9).

In an attempt to inculcate proper attitudes and behaviours, the freedom of girls, and their exposure to external influences, was severely restricted. Fraternisation with boys was not allowed. Jasvinder explains how by the age of 15 she had never been alone with a male who was not either her father or her brother, and had “never had a conversation with a boy, even at school” (p. 53). Not only were boys off limits, but also people of other cultures, especially white people: “the worst thing you can say to an Asian girl is that she is behaving like a white person” (p. 7). Jasvinder and her sisters were not allowed to mix with white people in case they “pick up white girls’ ways...because Mum said they didn’t have any morals or self-respect...whites were dirty people with dirty ways” (p. 7). However, the situation with Asian boys was quite different. They were allowed to “have a bit of fun with white girls – ‘white meat’” (p. 8) but when it came to marriage they would only be allowed to wed a ‘good Asian bride’. But the situation with Asian girls was quite different. Any fraternisation with a white boy would
bring shame on the family and would be met with a severe beating both for the girl and the boy from her brothers or uncles:

   Everyone in the community knew that. I knew it by the time I was eight. No one handed me a book of rules but I knew the particular way in which I was supposed to act, walk, talk, even breathe (p. 8).

The family home was the ultimate refuge from the corrupting ways of the outside society. Only Punjabi was spoken within the house. Only Punjabi food was eaten, and only Punjabi relatives and friends were invited round. Although standard uniforms were worn at school the girls had to change into Indian suits when they arrived home: “you came home and shut the door on Derby and all the white people with their dirty white ways” (p. 15).

Secrecy was an obsession with Jasvinder’s mother. Family issues had to be retained within the family and not spoken about elsewhere. If issues were not kept private to the family then “people would gossip about them in the gurdwara” (p. 23), which Jasvinder described as “the local gossip shop” (p. 7). It was her mother’s obsession with keeping a good face and displaying proper behaviour in front of their relatives and the community that drove the desire to “keep things private so we can’t be judged or shamed…a trouble shared is a trouble talked about” (p. 11).

As Jasvinder grew into her early teens she was able to observe and better understand the nature of her elder sisters’ forced marriages: “I didn’t like what I saw of their marriages” (p. 20). The girl was regarded “as part of the in-laws’ family” (p. 20) – that was where her life was and nobody else had a right to interfere. Their husbands had come from village settings in India. They were traditional, lowly educated, and abusive. The girls came sobbing back to their mother, complaining about their treatment. However, their mother refused to support her daughters or comfort them in any way: “that’s what marriage is like…it’s his house…he can behave as he wishes…you must learn how to calm him…stop crying” (p. 21). During these difficult sessions her father never interfered with what the mother said. In turn, the younger girls were instructed to keep everything secret and not utter a word about what had happened to other people.
Despite the treatment of Jasvinder and her sisters by their mother, she is keen to construct her narrative along the lines that she was the only girl who was somewhat different in her behaviour. Jasvinder was more rebellious. She was somewhat of a tomboy who from an early age was invariably running about the street and climbing walls before her mother reprimanded her. She even questioned the integrity of the family religion, asking why if Sikhism was such a peaceful and loving religion did it not question the non-equality of the Indian caste system. In addition, the favouritism displayed towards her brother riled Jasvinder: “the boy was the important one, that’s how it goes in Asian families” (p. 27). Whilst the girls were corralled inside the home, her brother was allowed to go out at night. He came home late at night and played loud music, waking the girls. When the girls complained their mother scolded them. But in the morning, when their brother was sleeping, their mother again scolded the girls, this time for making a noise themselves. This inconsistent treatment galled Jasvinder, as did the fact that her brother was allowed to carry on a relationship with a half-caste girl (half Asian, half white). Jasvinder’s mother was not happy about this relationship, but did not oppose it. When Jasvinder asked her mother why he was allowed to do this, but not the girls, she was beaten by her mother for her insolence: “don’t question me, of all my daughters you are difficult thinking you know best” (p. 27). The use of physical violence against the girls was a practice that occurred on several occasions.

Jasvinder’s rebellious nature became more pronounced as she entered her early teenage years. Her lack of freedom was keenly felt. When she was sent on an errand to the corner shop she had to go straight there and back. She had to come straight home from school. Any delay was always questioned. The eyes of the community were everywhere and improper behaviour would be reported back to her mother. In effect, community members acted as spies. In the early days, her neighbourhood of Derby had been quite culturally mixed with members of various mainly immigrant groups such as Irish and Polish people, but as time went on the area became almost entirely Asian. When Jasvinder started a newspaper round she loved the freedom of being on her own. On reaching adolescence she worked during the summer holidays (even though under age) in a pickle factory and a supermarket (giving all her earnings to her mother), although whether this was a ploy to further control her behaviour during the holidays cannot be
determined. Jasvinder could not help but observe the fashion trends amongst the white girls and when she saw them wearing the latest style of jeans she niggled her mother to buy her a pair. Her mother flatly refused this: “why would you want to show off your bum?” (p. 32). Surreptitiously she began to hold back 1GBP every week from her pay that she gave to her mother. She used the money to get her hair cut in the latest white fashion, short to the shoulders and permed. For this action she was physically beaten by her mother who went off in a tirade:

You have shamed us…think you are clever with your Western ways…no decent man will want you now…make yourself look cheap like the white girls…they will talk about us in the gurdwara (p. 37).

Jasvinder’s elder sister came up to Derby from London and stormed into the supermarket where Jasvinder was working, shouting at her and assaulting her. Her punishment was to be banished to London to live with her sister: “dishonouring your family…picking up Western ways…learn to be a dutiful daughter” (p. 38). Jasvinder had to stay in London for three months, long enough for the perm to fall out, all the time performing household chores and helping her sister in her home-bound business (sewing ties). Part of Jasvinder’s problem was in trying to avoid her sister’s drunken husband (who later died of liver poisoning).

On returning back to her home in Derby, the inevitable event happened to Jasvinder. She was shown a photograph of a man whom her parents had chosen for her to marry. She was 14 years old. Jasvinder immediately objected: “Mum I want to finish school and go to university” (p. 42). Her mother’s response was to inform her of her duty: “it’s your duty to marry him…it’s your duty to look after him” (p. 42). The die was cast.

Jasvinder was acutely aware that such practices did not occur within white culture. She observed that boys and girls would interact together in groups “laughing, chatting and mock wrestling” and that such behaviour seemed “all so normal” – “Mum would have killed me if she saw me doing that” (p. 42). She was also aware that her white classmates had begun talking about going to college or university and this was an outcome that Jasvinder wanted for herself. She continued to protest that she did not
want to get married and that her ambitions were to progress to higher education. On one occasion she aired these views in front of some of her ‘aunties’ whereupon her mother assaulted her by whacking her on the arm with a pair of heavy sewing scissors. Presumably such violence was initiated because Jasvinder was “blabbing about family troubles to outsiders” (p. 46). The necessity to remain secretive and not talk about issues outside the family seriously impacted on Jasvinder. She desperately wanted to seek external help about the situation she was trapped in (for example, telling a teacher), but found it difficult to do so. The “fear of being judged” had been ingrained in her by this stage, and she also felt “too ashamed to tell anyone” (p. 43). She was also fearful of what her family “would do to me” and what the rest of the community would say (p. 43).

This fear of both her family and of the community was well established. Her elder sisters (despite their own bad experiences of forced marriages) offered no support. They taunted her – “why are you any different, have you got flowers attached to you?” (p. 44) and reminded her that resistance was fruitless “nothing is going to change, grow up and face facts” (p. 49). Her Father, whilst not openly forcing her, tended to take a back seat and left everything to the Mother: “he didn’t try hard enough” (p. 44). Her ‘aunties’ also joined in the attack on her: “you must be a good girl and do this for your family, look how you are upsetting your Mother” (p. 47). Her Mother came to believe that Jasvinder’s resistance stemmed from the fact that she was “possessed…cursed” (p. 44) and took her to see a religious elder in order to strike out the demons. This ‘elder’ added to the relentless pressure placed on her by calling Jasvinder a “troubled spirit” (p. 45) and warning her about her destiny and the consequences of failing to fulfil her duty: “this is your fate… if you ignore it your family will suffer and you will meet with terrible misfortune…ignore your duty at your peril” (p. 46). So who was there to help her? Presumably nobody. Even her teachers seemed disinterested and Jasvinder was puzzled why they took no action even when they could clearly see what was happening to some students. One of her elder sisters was absent from school without explanation for six months during which time she had been sent to India to get married. When she returned her teachers did nothing – merely putting her down one year because she had
missed so much work. Such action was of little consequence, since her sister would leave school as soon as her husband joined her in the country.

Jasvinder’s resistance was cranked up a notch when she took an overdose of paracetamol, a cry for help! It made no difference. Whatever Jasvinder did only reminded her of her helplessness. Nobody was listening or helping: “I felt I was screaming my lungs out trapped in a soundproofed box” (p. 49).

Events took a strange turn stemming from a friendship that Jasvinder had kept up with an old work colleague, Avtar, from the supermarket. Her Mother did not oppose this friendship and Jasvinder was allowed to attend her house, probably because she had “strict parents and protective brothers” (p. 52). Secretly, Jasvinder commenced a relationship with one of these brothers, Jassey, aided by Avtar who arranged their meetings and acted as an alibi. Such meetings were completely illicit, hidden not only from her family but also from the wider community. Jasvinder and Jassey would meet in a park “right out of the Asian area” (p. 55). Her community was not trusted and meetings had to occur “away from the eyes of the Asian community” (p. 56). According to Jasvinder, such behaviour was common: “in the Asian community lots of girls and boys have to hide their romance” (p. 55).

This new scenario gave Jasvinder an additional argument to put to her Mother opposing her upcoming forced marriage: “I can’t go away… I’ve got a boyfriend… I’m seeing someone else” (p. 61). Her Mother’s reaction to this announcement was little short of a frenetic tirade. She started yelling and lashing out, beating herself, pulling at her hair and clothes, and trying to swipe out at Jasvinder:

‘Oh, the shame! What is this girl doing to me? She will kill me’. She clutched at her heart and steadied herself against a chair… ‘this one will not rest until she sees me dead. Ayee! I can hear them now, talking in the gurdwara…my daughter, my daughter has a boyfriend. You have ruined yourself girl. What will become of you? What will become of me? You have brought dishonour on us all’ (p. 61).

By way of punishment Jasvinder was banished to her room indefinitely and bolted in.
She grabbed me by the hair on the back of my head…and screamed ‘you will stay in your room. Go there now. Don’t think of coming out. I should never have trusted you. You will not go anywhere on your own’ (p. 62).

Events now began to move quickly towards another act of resistance from Jasvinder – that of running away from home. When her boyfriend became aware of what had happened to her he appeared one day outside her bedroom window. Plans were hatched – they would abscond together. After several days of incarceration Jasvinder took advantage of a lapse in the family’s surveillance of her. She escaped from the house and “ran as if the hounds of hell were after me” (p. 70). With no set plan they fled to a distant city at random, Newcastle, where they slept in their car before renting a squalid apartment.

5.2 Analysis of text: chapters 1-7

In this section a qualitative analysis is conducted of Sanghera’s text. The analysis concentrates on the main thematic concern of Sanghera up to the age of 14-15. The main theme to emerge from this analysis is that Sanghera was groomed for a cultural role of ‘subjugation’. This grooming process was comprised of a number of ‘cloistering strategies’ carried out both by her family (near and extended) as well as being bolstered by the beliefs and activities of her broader cultural community. Non-compliance with these cloistering strategies was met, in Sanghera’s case, with retribution (physical and psychological abuse) designed to steer Sanghera back onto a path of compliance and subjugation.

5.2.1 Subjugation: cultural role of females

Girls were groomed to be good wives and daughters-in-law. They were expected to be dutiful, compliant, obedient, respectful, and subservient. Once a girl was married she became the property of her husband (and his mother). She went to live in his house and was expected to look after him and please him. Her role was to be a good homemaker, able to cook, sew, and look after their children. This behaviour maintained the good name of the family within the community. Failure to do so, in the form of improper
behaviour by females, brought disgrace on her family through shame and dishonour in the eyes of the community. In short, female subjugation was the cultural norm.

5.2.1.1 Cloistering strategies

In strictly mono-cultural societies, subjugation of women can be more easily maintained than within pluralistic societies (such as the UK) where other alternative belief systems and lifestyles of women are clearly evident and can be readily copied. Hence, the inter-generational persistence of female subjugative systems can only be achieved through the employment of deliberate strategies enforced both by her family and the surrounding local community. We call these strategies ‘cloistering’. The definition of cloistering strategies is ‘strategies designed to enforce compliance to a dominant discourse and dilute the potential pressure from alternative discourses’. Cloistering strategies achieve their aim by keeping girls in an uninformed state whereby they remain ignorant of alternative lifestyles or belief systems. Education is anathema to cloistering strategies. Control and indoctrination are all-important. Hence girls are groomed within a closeted and isolated environment where unworldliness and non-independence dominate their cognitive and behavioural mindsets. In essence, females exist within a state of ‘un-freedom’. Cloistering strategies have the effect of keeping females trapped within a Plato’s cave-type psychic prison that minimises the chances of their personal rebellion against such subjugation; or, if such rebellion does occur, they find themselves unable to survive on their own and would find themselves drifting back to the family fold – conform or perish!

An analysis of Chapters 1-7 identified a set of eight different cloistering strategies and these are presented below.

Non-education

If girls are being groomed to be dutiful and submissive housewives, then education is not regarded as important. In fact, education is dangerous. Education aims to inculcate critical and questioning attitudes into its recipients, where assumptions are challenged and the status quo questioned. Education raises aspirations. These are not the required
capabilities for a girl, whose future role is seen to be one of cooking, sewing, cleaning, washing, and obeying her husband. Thus, Jasvinder’s aim of staying at school and subsequently attending college or university was firmly quashed by her mother. She must leave school at 15.

*Forced marriage*

Early school leaving is achieved through the strategy of forced marriage. This was the fate of Jasvinder’s sisters and was also earmarked for her. Girls were taken abroad to be married, invariably to a family relative, who was then brought back to the UK as her husband. Any girls who were the product of the marriage are then subject to the same process. The cycle continues.

*Cultural elitism*

‘Cultural elitism’ also serves as a significant cloistering strategy. This involved attempts by the family to cut themselves off from disrupting external influences by retreating into their own vacuum, continuing to enact only their own cultural practices, and resisting the adoption of any integrating practices or attitudes. This is most vividly displayed within the confines of the family home that acted as a replica of the parents’ homeland. Thus, when the family assembled at home they pulled up the drawbridge on the outside society. As soon as the girls arrived home from school they threw off their school uniforms and donned their Indian suits. Within the home, ‘Punjabisation’ was an enforced policy in terms of language, clothing, food, and visitors. The door was closed on all those dirty white people with their dirty ways.

*Non-fraternisation*

Non-fraternisation is an important cloistering strategy that ensures girls are kept isolated from the corrupting influence of alternative beliefs. Non-fraternisation was heavily based on sexist, racist, and casteist prejudices. Most significantly, girls were not allowed to fraternise with boys, to the point of not being allowed to talk to them, even at school. People from other cultures were also off limits, especially ‘dirty’ white people. White girls (‘white meat’) were especially despised for having no morals or self-respect.
But people from the same culture were also targeted for non-fraternisation if they were members of lower castes, especially those deigned to be chamars (untouchables).

Fashion rejection

‘Fashion rejection’ was another practice adopted by the family in order to keep girls in an unworldly state. Jaspinder mentions two separate examples of this in relation to her desires to purchase a pair of fashionable jeans and also to cut her hair in a style alien to the cultural style of her family. Her family met both incidents with insults, threats and punishment. They were seen as attempts by Jaspinder to make herself look ‘cheap’ by copying the ways of white girls (and hence unattractive to the objective of making herself available to a ‘decent’ man). Her family quickly slapped down activities regarded as modern, liberated, or Western.

Time scheduling

Perhaps Jaspinder’s earliest experience was that boys are the favourite sex in families such as hers. Their mother waited upon her brother. He performed no chores and was given large amounts of freedom. For girls, the opposite was the case. They were heavily restricted. This was achieved by strict scheduling of any potential free time that they may possess outside of school hours. Hence, girls had to fend for themselves within the house with regard to preparing their own food and laundering their clothes. Numerous chores had to be performed both before and after school. Girls had to hurry straight to school and straight back home after school with no delays or deviations. They were sent on errands to local shops, again under the constraint of straight there and back. During school holidays, employment was arranged for Jaspinder, again with the intent of restricting potential idle time.

Community spying

‘Community spying’ was a practice that backed up the attitudes and practices of the family. Jaspinder details how the area in which she lived quickly became an ethnic enclave that supported and reinforced the views of her family. As a result, the eyes of the community were everywhere. The family-community link was an important enforcement mechanism. Girls seen to be acting inappropriately were soon reported
back to their parents. Jasvinder came to regard the community as her enemy, to such an extent that young people attempted to engage in inappropriate activities (such as romantic attachments) well away from the Asian area. The community enforcement mechanism encompassed such locations as the local gurdwara (temple) and the all-pervading influence of religious and community elders. For Jasvinder, the gurdwara was the local gossip shop where parents were informed of the misdeeds of their offspring (invariably girls) and where parents could be shunned for failing to control such misbehaviour. In addition, the religious elder was regarded as an additional mechanism for enforcement at a level above that of the family. This person strictly enforced cultural traditions by backing up the parents’ decisions. For him, misbehaviour was the result of being possessed by demons that could only be appeased by being a dutiful girl and surrendering to her fate. Failure to do so would bring misfortune on her family.

**Family secrecy**

It must be remembered that these practices were taking place within the context of a far more liberal attitude towards girls within the wider UK society. Indeed, such restrictive and subjugating practices could be expected to receive extensive condemnation. Within this reality, the concept of ‘family secrecy’ played a significant role in keeping such practices from the awareness of external society. The crime of ‘blabbing’ about family matters to outsiders was taboo. Shame and dishonour would descend on the family as a result. Hence, Jasvinder learned to self-censor, thus locking her into a groupthink-type mentality. Her ingrained self-narrative became one of feeling ashamed and fearing judgement if she related family problems to outsiders. Perhaps the easiest route to disclose family secrets would have been via her teachers at school. They were her closest contact to non-community members. But in addition to her self-censorship and fear of retribution Jasvinder faced another hurdle here. Her teachers seemed apathetic and disinterested and hence she could not be sure what kind of reception her disclosures would receive. This detachment puzzled Jasvinder.
5.2.1.2 Retribution for non-compliance

Cloistering strategies are designed to keep girls in a state of unworldliness, making them more susceptible to subjugation. Girls who do not comply with such strategies (such as Jasvinder) can expect to be confronted with retribution in the form of physical and psychological abuse.

Physical abuse

Retribution for misbehaviour often came in the form of physical abuse: violence, banishment, and incarceration. Jasvinder relates that a severe beating would await both girl and boy for any inappropriate behaviour involving mixed gender contact of a non-family nature. This punishment was part of the discourse of the community and did not require a book of rules for it to be communicated. Jasvinder knew the discourse by the age of eight. Physical violence was on numerous occasions perpetrated against her by her mother for misbehaviour such as insolence, cutting her hair, talking about family matters to outsiders, and announcing that she had a boyfriend. Incarceration and banishment were also inflicted as punishments on Jasvinder. When she had her hair cut in a modern Western fashion she was banished to London to live with her elder sister until such time as the hairstyle grew out. When she announced she had a boyfriend and did not wish to be forcibly married off, she was incarcerated in her room, the door bolted, meals brought to her room, and discussion with other family members prohibited.

Psychological abuse

Her family and the community employed psychological and emotional abuse in various guises as retribution for wayward behaviour: guilt, name-calling, demonisation, yelling, screaming, and frenetic tirades. The accusation of bringing shame and dishonour on the family was at the top of the list. The reputation of the family in the eyes of the community (what other people thought of them – ‘being talked about in the gurdwara’) was paramount. Demonisations of Jasvinder, calling her names and insulting her, were punishments designed to make her see the error of her ways. The worst insult appeared to be the action of behaving like a white person – acting cheaply, picking up Western
ways, and not being dutiful. Not far behind was the belief that she was a troubled spirit cursed by demons. These events acted to bring upon her a situation of ruin where no decent man would want her as a wife. Emotional blackmail played a large part in this type of punishment, especially in emphasising the negative impact on her family, particularly her mother. Thus Jasvinder’s aunties reminded her that her misbehaviour was upsetting her mother. The religious elder warned her that by ignoring her fate she would bring terrible misfortune on her family. Even her own mother during a frenetic tirade told Jasvinder that her behaviour was killing her mother.

Figure 5.1 below reads as follows: eight cloistering strategies are employed. Females who comply with these strategies become subjugated. Females who do not comply face retribution. Effective retribution brings about subjugation. Subjugation then allows the cloistering strategies to be employed and re-employed in a perpetual fashion. In Jasvinder’s case however the retribution was ineffective. Jasvinder responded to the physical and psychological abuse by running away from home.
This section presents a synopsis of the memoir *Shame*, commencing from the point of Jasvinder’s action of running away from the family home in an attempt to avoid being taken overseas for the purpose of a forced marriage.

Jasvinder’s parents reacted quickly to their daughter’s display of defiance. Her friend Avtar was physically beaten in an attempt to force her to disclose the whereabouts of the runaway pair. However, Jasvinder had not disclosed her plans to anybody, hence total secrecy could be retained. In consequence, a private detective was employed to search for them. Within ten days the police were knocking at their door. Jassey was accused of abducting and harbouring Jasvinder. Once Jasvinder had explained the situation to him about her forced marriage the policeman gave a knowing response and stated “don’t worry I’m not going to tell your parents where you are” (p. 77). This was a breakthrough of sorts for Jasvinder. It was the first time she had experienced any sympathy about her plight: “I owe him a debt of gratitude. If he’d taken me home I’m sure I would have been on the next plane out [to her forced marriage]” (p. 77).

As time went by Jasvinder began to suffer emotional ramifications. She missed her family and its warm and comfortable familiarity. She felt isolated, lonely, depressed, lethargic and homesick, to such an extent that her physical health began to deteriorate. Jassey was always supportive despite her moods. He even got in touch with his own family who displayed some measure of sympathy. But Jasvinder’s family remained hostile. She tried to contact her family by phoning and writing but was always rebuffed. Her Mother raged at her: “you’ve shamed us…in our eyes you are dead” (p. 4). What rankled was the fact that Jasvinder had run away with a person from a lower caste. Jassey’s family were *chamars*, the lowest caste of untouchables who in India picked up animal manure from the fields. In contrast, Jasvinder’s family were *jats*, a higher caste of landowners. The husband chosen for Jasvinder was of the same status as them – a *jat*. Her Mother raged on:

Thanks to you I can’t walk the streets of Derby any more. I can’t go to the gurdwara because people are talking. People spit at me…You’ll get what you deserve for ruining
your family. You’ll see. In a few months’ time you and your chamar boyfriend will be rolling around in the gutter, which is no more than you deserve. You will amount to nothing, nothing, do you hear me? I hope you give birth to a daughter who does to you what you have done to me, then you’ll know what it feels like to raise a prostitute (p. 3).

Jassey and Jasvinder spent twelve months in Newcastle. Those purposeless days were spent in a blur feeling like a fugitive on the run after committing a crime. Jasvinder could not understand the situation: “Had I done something so terrible that my parents could disown me? Had they really stopped loving me? Was it such a crime to want my own life?” (p. 4). As a pair they were alone, lost and lonely, a scenario stemming from their confined upbringing:

…we’d been brought up by strict controlling parents… now we were rudderless…
drifting on a frightening and uncharted sea of possibility (p. 88).

The pair decided to move to Leeds. They found a better flat and started a market stall. Jasvinder “liked the human contact…my family’s rejection of me had made me feel totally worthless, but now I found I could do something” (p. 97). Jasvinder tried constantly to establish contact with her family but her phone calls were always rejected.

I understood my success would never please them. As far as they were concerned I was an outcast and outcasts belong in the gutter… The thought that I could survive – let alone thrive – outside the protective prohibitive scaffolding that had enclosed her and Dad all their lives was anathema to them. I should have understood that (p. 98).

After twelve months in Leeds they moved to Bradford. This time they lived in the Asian area. Jassey was now able to run the market stall by himself, so Jasvinder got a job at Argos. However, living in the Asian area she again began to feel cloistered and spied on by the community. Her health went sour again, physically and emotionally.

Everywhere I went in my new surroundings it was the same: questions from strangers who wanted to place me and possess me and suck me into the vortex that swirls around any place where Asians congregate (p. 100).
Emotional dissonance was evident in Jasvinder’s life. She felt that it was her that “had done something wrong and sinned against my family”. As a result “guilt hung over me like a big black cloud” (p. 101). Jasvinder’s problem lay in her inability to exhibit independent cognition.

I’d been challenging Mum since right back when I was tiny but when I won, when I escaped and got my freedom, I didn’t know what to do with it…I didn’t know how to lead a life outside the confines of the community that had always cocooned me (p. 101-102).

Another of Jasvinder’s problems was caused by the inevitable comparisons she made between her situation and those of others around her. For example, Jassey’s family got on well with both of them. They supported Jassey and visited often. Her younger sister Lucy was allowed to dress in Western clothes and fashion her hair in the latest style. She was also allowed to go to pubs and nightclubs. Her elder sister Robina obtained a divorce from her (arranged-marriage) husband and was allowed to re-marry in a ‘love match’. All these events riled Jasvinder but, as Jassey pointed out, it was probably Jasvinder’s actions that had paved the way for these more liberal arrangements to occur.

At age 18 Jasvinder fell pregnant. The pair married in a registry office. Only Robina and Jassey’s family attended. Otherwise they were shunned. Jasvinder felt the old familiar emotional emptiness: “I was weighed down by constant yearning for my Mum” (p. 111). When her daughter Lisa was born, her Mum did visit the hospital after being persuaded by Robina. But her manner was offhand and curt: “Mum’s indifference set me right back” (p. 114).

The last time I spoke to Mum she said I was dead in her eyes and now she’d proved she meant it (p. 114).

Jasvinder was so isolated that she “felt like a freakish monster” (p. 115) where nothing she could do or achieve would be sufficient to redeem herself.

I’d left home an errant schoolgirl but now I was a married woman with a thriving business and a beautiful baby. Was there nothing she could find to like in that? (p. 116).
In the meantime their business was thriving. But Jassey was working too hard and was always tired. The pair bought a new house, well outside the Asian area. These events should have been enough to satisfy Jasvinder. But there was a problem. Cracks stated to appear in their marriage mainly because Jasvinder’s love for Jassey (despite his constant support) had never really been genuine: “For all we’d been through together, all I owed Jassey, I still couldn’t love him” (p. 119).

Their marriage started to crumble when Lucy came to stay with them. Lucy was desperate. She had run away from her arranged marriage in Germany. Her parents, as expected, refused to have her back in the family home: “Stupid girl. Of course you can’t come home. Do you not think that we have been shamed enough already?” (p. 123). Jasvinder’s Mother gave her an ultimatum: “send her [Lucy] back to Germany. She has no business here. Her place is with her husband” (p. 124). But Jasvinder allowed Lucy to live with them. Lucy had lived a life of more freedom than Jasvinder and soon the two of them started going out together to pubs and clubs. This became a regular occurrence every weekend where they met up with a usual crowd. Jassey was supportive: “you go out and enjoy yourself…you deserve it” (p. 128). However, the inevitable happened – Jasvinder started an affair with a man called Surjit. In short order the affair deteriorated as Surjit became possessive, arrogant, and violent. Jasvinder confessed the affair to Jassey who forgave her.

In the aftermath of the affair Jasvinder started exercise classes, again supported by Jassey: “I found I could lose myself in exercise” (p. 135). Her mood started to lift. But her life was again disrupted, this time by Robina, who re-established contact with Jasvinder when her (love-match) husband began being violent towards her. Again her Mother did nothing to help her daughter. Jasvinder ruminated:

> Personal happiness wasn’t important. What mattered to them was having a daughter who was dutiful and respectable and did nothing to disgrace the family name. ‘Heavens girl, that’s what men are like. Why all the fuss?’ that’s what Mum would say (p. 139).

Her Mother’s reaction to this situation was to take Robina to see the community leader. According to Jasvinder “what he said went” (p. 140), but Jasvinder did not trust him
because of his belief in all the things that she thought were wrong, such as caste, forced marriage, and the importance of honour. She hid under the stairs when the Community Leader came to visit Robina and overheard everything. Robina spoke about her violent husband. The Community Leader replied:

These things happen. When men get angry you have to be calmer. When a pan of milk is boiling up, it’s a woman’s job to settle it down again…For the sake of your little boy and for the sake of your family you must stay with your husband. And for your own sake too. Where would you sit without your husband? Stop snivelling and go back to him. You know what happened when your sister ran away from home. You saw how that nearly destroyed your parents…If you leave your husband it will kill your parents – just when they are starting to get back their respect. Think about your family name. Do you want to bring more shame on your family? (p. 142).

As a result of this pressure Robina returned to her family home. Shortly afterwards, Jasvinder’s Mum phones her with the news that Robina is dead: “She’s committed suicide. She set herself on fire and died in hospital” (p. 146). Jasvinder rushes back to Derby, but on entering the house is snubbed by her family: her three elder sisters – Prakash, Ginda, and Yasmin – stand up and walk out. The funeral was held in Leicester and Jasvinder attends, despite the snub. There she sees the emotional displays of people who should have helped Robina: “the Community Leader, Mum and Dad: she’d asked them for help and they as good as turned their backs on her. They may as well have spat in her face” (p. 148). Jasvinder gazes at an old photo of Robina:

You could see the light of laughter in her eyes. She might have expected her family to cherish and protect that light, but they didn’t. Mum, Dad, the Community Leader…between them they stamped it out (p. 149)

Was Robina murdered? Jasvinder is suspicious and (surprisingly) her Mother agrees to accompany her to see a solicitor seeking advice. Jasvinder wants Robina’s husband (Baldev) punished. She purposely chooses a non-Asian solicitor, who tries to help, but the coroner gave an open verdict on the grounds that there was no evidence to suggest it wasn’t suicide. Mum and Dad take in Robina’s young son (Sunny, aged 6) and raise him themselves. He quickly becomes dad’s favourite. Through all this, Jasvinder’s
relationship with her Mother is improving. She starts to visit her Mum in secret but has to hide when other family members come visiting.

Jasvinder and Jassey now buy a house in Derby, a lovely 4-bedroom house that represents another step up for them.

We’d started with nothing and that house was what we achieved… ‘without us you’ll be rolling in the gutter’ that’s what Mum said when I was a sobbing teenager in Newcastle, and we’d proved her wrong (p. 155).

Mum and Dad visited their new house but Jasvinder’s relationship with her Mother was still “very brittle” (p. 155).

There were so many things I wanted to ask her: how could you have told me I was dead in your eyes? How could you have turned Robina away? How could you not have been there for me when I had Lisa? (p. 155)

At this time, one of her elder sisters, Ginda, started to experience marriage problems: “she’d done everything right: made the marriage Mum and Dad wanted and conformed to all the invisible but oppressive rules laid down by the community, but I could see now that it hadn’t given her a special pass to happiness” (p. 156).

Jasvinder accidentally bumps into one of her old school pals, Habiba. She tells Jasvinder that her family had spread the rumour that Jasvinder was dead, having died many years ago. Habiba had been a star pupil at school, having her work read out in assembly. However, she had been married off at age 15 to a man from India. Now she had 5 children and “a tired, worn face” (p. 157).

Times now started to become hard in Derby. The market trade fell off and Jasvinder stopped working the markets in favour of becoming an aerobics instructor. Jasvinder’s marriage started to deteriorate. Worse news followed – her Mother was diagnosed with terminal bowel cancer. Jasvinder visits her often and becomes her de facto carer. Jasvinder meets Rajvindar Sanghera (whose father owns a petrol station) and the two commence an affair. Jasvinder tells her Mother that her marriage is failing: “I don’t love
him Mum. I’ve tried and tried to, but I don’t” (p. 165). Her Mother turns her face away “and with all the contempt she could muster spat out, ‘Love!’” (p. 165).

Jasvinder leaves Jassey. She moves in with Raj, taking Lisa with her. However, Jassey wins custody of the child, with Jasvinder having only limited access.

Jasvinder’s Mum is now in and out of hospital before finally dying. Jasvinder saw the sense of helplessness in her Mum: “although she had lived most of her life in England, she was still a stranger stranded in a foreign land” (p. 175). The whole family was there as she dies. Afterwards “I drove myself home. The others didn’t even say goodbye to me…I’ve never felt so alone, before or since” (p. 179).

Jasvinder and Raj get married, in a registry office “without any fuss” (p. 181). Raj worked at the garage, whilst Jasvinder was an aerobics teacher.

Meanwhile, her Dad is struggling to bring up Sunny alone. Jasvinder pops by to help, but secretly. However, “we never recovered our old closeness; he kept an invisible barrier between us, almost as if he was afraid” (p. 181). Dad takes Sunny to his old village Kang Sabhu, something all the others had done with Mum. Jasvinder asks her Dad if he will one day take her to India. He replies: “Shame travels Jasvinder. If you visited my family you would taint them with your disgrace. I will not be a party to that” (p. 182).

Jasvinder realises that there is a need to help women like her Mum and Robina: “If Robina had only ignored the strictures of the community she relied on to protect her; if she could just have found the courage to reach out and embrace the country she was born in she needn’t have died. The tragedy of that possessed me” (p. 183). As a result, Jasvinder volunteers in the pregnancy-testing centre at a women’s drop-in centre. Here she meets Trish (white woman). Jasvinder realises that women value the support they get “it made me realise that there were women out there that I could help” (p. 185).

Jasvinder continues her work as an aerobics teacher. Raj also trains to be an aerobics teacher and they take classes together.
However, Jasvinder is now beginning to realise her need for education: “I was completely ill-equipped for independent life and I wanted to change that” (p. 187). She enrolled at the local college to do A-level English Language and Literature. Raj also joined her. She read Maya Angelou ‘I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings’: “That woman’s courage took my breath away. I could so identify with her feelings of abandonment and isolation. It was like she was speaking right to me” (p. 189). Jasvinder was eager to contribute in class but Raj used to put her down in class, “derisive snort” and “suppressed laughter” (p. 189). Jasvinder started to lose confidence in class: “but Raj couldn’t kill the pleasure I found in reading. Books opened up a whole new world for me”: “I found inspiration reading other women’s stories”: “For the first time in my life I had a sense of purpose” (p.190). School had often seemed pointless to Jasvinder. Her sisters had left at 16 to get married and enter factory work. Now things were different for her. She was aiming for a qualification. Her tutor suggested carrying on for a degree, and at the University Open Day she discussed studying a course “to help women with language and cultural barriers” (p. 191).

Jasvinder now has baby number two, called Maria.

But trouble with Raj was starting to brew. Raj’s dad sold the garage and Raj had to sell his house to pay off his ex-wife. So Jasvinder and Raj went to live in Nottingham with his parents: “I was about to become the dutiful Asian wife, trapped in her in-laws house. Like any bride whose marriage had been arranged, I would be under constant scrutiny” (p. 195). Jasvinder wore her Indian suit indoors. She acted mild and submissive and did not want to disrespect her mother-in-law. Raj did no chores and was encouraged in this by his Mother: “I won’t have my son washing pots. Not in this house” (p. 195). Jasvinder grew fearful of Raj. Raj and his Mother referred to Lisa (her first child) as an “untouchable” (p. 196) and Raj started to become abusive towards Jasvinder.

Jasvinder was getting more and more interested in her women’s project and Trish suggested she should enrol in a Listening Skills Course at the Rape Crisis Centre. During ‘revelation’ sessions Jasvinder was amazed at the openness with which the women talked about their experiences: “such openness was completely alien to me. It was like a foreign language” (p. 198). But during a one-on-one session with Alicia
everything came spilling out about Jasvinder’s experiences, issues she had never discussed before: “To ask for help and have your Mother turn her back on you. Your Mother! The person you rely on to love you and protect you” (p. 200). Jasvinder is persuaded to undertake counselling, thus “breaking another childhood taboo” (p. 201).

That session marked a turning point for me...secrecy was a cornerstone of my childhood...Mum had made me blind to so many good things in the world like truth, honesty and compassion (p. 200).

Jasvinder starts to spread the message about her idea for a women’s project. One woman suggests getting in touch with the Council for Voluntary Services. Here she meets Wendy Lloyd, her future mentor. Wendy listens to Jasvinder’s “storm of ideas” (p. 203) and gives practical advice: you need to access funding, write a constitution, and form a management committee with at least four members – all new concepts to Jasvinder. Wendy even suggests the name of the project – Karma Nirvana – peace of mind and enlightenment. Another friend Trish suggests a location for the project, an unused room in the Rape Crisis Centre, and suggests she might get it for free if Jasvinder gives a presentation to the management. But Jasvinder does not know what a ‘presentation’ is! However, on the day, she presents her case with passion, telling her stories about Robina, her Mum, and herself who all needed help when none was forthcoming. She knew that other women also needed help: “I see them every day in Derby, scuttling about like shadows, with their eyes on the ground” (p. 205). Jasvinder gets her room – just an empty space with one desk and a chair:

This is mine and it’s going to be special. I’m going to shape this and put my mark on it and achieve something for every woman who walks through that door. That’s my dream and I’m going to make it real (p. 207).

Jasvinder starts to spread the word about Karma Nirvana (KN) through her aerobics class. For the Asian women who were there “I knew for some it was the only proper outing they had in a week. Their husbands let them come because they knew they wouldn’t meet any men there…” (p. 209).
There she met Ayesha who had been sexually abused from the age of 8 by her brother and her uncle, with the connivance of her Mother. When Ayesha complained to her Mother: “My Mother slapped my face. Don’t you dare disgrace this family. Cry at the bottom of the garden if you must, but don’t bring your fuss in here” (p. 212). Ayesha was forcibly married at the age of 16 in Pakistan: “as a wife she swapped one sort of abuse for another” (p. 212). When she went sobbing to complain to her Mother she was told to be mindful of the family name and stop complaining. Jasvinder had experienced this also and began to think it was a pattern in the community. Her own Mother used to say “not a word of this to anyone. It’s a private matter for our family” (p. 212). Ayesha ran away and her family told everyone she was dead.

Ayesha’s story – which spoke so clearly of cruelty, denial and disownment – clarified my experience and made me see with absolute certainty that I’d been the victim and not the perpetrator of a crime (p. 213).

Meanwhile Jasvinder was experiencing more emotional and psychological abuse from Raj. Her marriage was deteriorating.

In September 1994 at the age of 29 Jasvinder starts as a student at Derby University: “I’d fulfilled my dream and I was going to college” (p. 215). Raj also started but in a different faculty – Law. Raj’s Mum disapproved, she did not like Jasvinder studying at university, but made it plain that she was very proud of her son.

Karma Nirvana was now starting to develop. Wendy helped to find little pockets of money for funding. Jasvinder rang around to spread awareness. She launched the KN project with a Women’s Health Day, “something unthreatening so the Asian men won’t mind their wives coming” (p. 217). Both the local councillor and the local MP attended and opened the event. Jasvinder had to be careful that nothing was perceived as a threat to “Asian women’s modesty or to their men’s possessive pride” (p. 219). Several hundred people attended and 120 evaluation forms were completed: “I was guarding them with my life because I knew they were the key to KN’s financial future” (p. 220).
Karma Nirvana begins to take off. The phone starts ringing often: “I was staggered by the number of them. It was as if a box of ugly secrets had been opened” (p. 221). There was the case of the 17-year old girl covered in cigarette burns inflicted by her brother and held captive in her room for ten months with the door locked and windows boarded because she refused to agree to a forced marriage. There was also the woman, Maram, who spoke no English, who was disowned by her husband for allowing herself to be examined by a male doctor. She blamed herself for allowing it to happen, Jasvinder states:

I wondered what shocked me the most, the way her husband had treated her or her belief that she had brought his cruelty on herself (p. 222).

This reminded Jasvinder of the day when she was a child and reported to her father that a man had flashed at her on her way home from school. Her father blamed her: “you must avoid these situations, do you want to bring dishonour on yourself?” (p. 223). Maram’s situation was resolved when her husband gathered together all the older members of the community in her Mother-in-law’s house and she went down on her knees, kissed his feet, and begged forgiveness.

A few months later, the Lottery Fund awards Karma Nirvana 125,000GBP over three years, enabling Jasvinder to appoint three staff members and a management committee.

Now Jasvinder’s marriage to Raj really hits problems. Jasvinder wants to attend a marriage in Leeds but Raj did not want to go: “and if I don’t go, you don’t either” (p. 225). For Jasvinder this was “all about control” (p. 225). She decides to go on her own and promises to be back by 6.00pm. However, she is late, and arrives back at 6.20pm. Raj and his mother throw Jasvinder out of the house. Where could she go? Perhaps to Glenda, Sylvia or Alicia: “they’d shown me that secrecy is a stifling bond rather than the protective cloak that Mum perceived it as” (p. 229). But she didn’t go to them through shame. Instead she went to stay with Narinder, a mutual friend of her and Raj, together with her two children. Raj finds out and comes storming round. Eventually Raj and Jasvinder make up, but she insists that they move out of his Mother’s house. They move into a half derelict damp house in the heart of the Asian area. Not long after Raj
starts an affair. By now Jasvinder is pregnant with her third child, but she throws Raj out of the house because of his affair.

Jasvinder becomes more and more exhausted with the trials of her life – pregnant, university studies, Karma Nirvana, and her two other children to look after. During research for her dissertation (Sikh women disowned by their families) she discovers that Guru Granth Sahib believed in equality between men and women, was against forced marriage, and the caste system. Why then had her Mother used his teachings as a weapon against her children when such teachings were entirely different? Jasvinder contemplates suicide: she is lonely and still seeking acceptance from the community she has rejected. She takes stress leave from work. Trish helps and supports her and becomes her best friend. Jassey suddenly turns up offering to re-marry her but she turns him down, not wanting to hurt him again.

Jasvinder finishes her degree and moves out of the Asian area into a newer home, more modern and clean. She disliked living in the Asian area: “I resented the way disapproval spread throughout the community… the curious stares, the reproving glances, the way women drew aside in huddles keeping their children close to them when I went in and out of shops” (p. 249). Her new baby is born, a boy, Joshua – “I was proud of myself. I’d bought a house for my children… I might be exiled from my family and its history but I suddenly felt confident that we could make it on our own” (p. 251).

Jasvinder receives a First Class in her degree and is invited to deliver the vote of thanks at graduation day. None of her family attended the occasion.

The case of Zainab now occupies her attention. Zainab had drunk household bleach in a suicide attempt and was found abandoned and wandering on the streets. Her parents lived in Pakistan but had married her off to her father’s cousin living in Derby. She lived with him and his Mother. Zainab was treated like a slave, beaten, and imprisoned in the house, unable to speak English. The social workers wanted to contact her parents but at this time they were culturally unaware of what was happening and the consequences. The parents would have been angry at the shame of her leaving her
husband: “they care more about honour than they do about me” (p. 261). Jasvinder ruminates:

   How could anyone turn their back on their own child for the sake of a concept? How could that be considered honourable? To me it seemed a cause of shame (p. 261).

A bizarre thing happens to Jasvinder. She is contacted out of the blue by an old family friend. He is aware of her circumstances and the fact that she is unlikely to ever again be able to attract a man. He offers her a marriage proposal with a man in Leeds who needs a sponsor to enter the country!

Jasvinder’s Dad dies of a heart attack. She is a little more involved this time than when her Mother died and her sisters shunned her from the ceremonial task of washing her Mother’s body: “if the hands of an outcast touch her she’ll be contaminated” (p. 269). Her dad leaves all his assets to Sunny. Her sister Ginda storms out of the solicitor’s office in disgust.

Jasvinder ruminates about her Mother:

   The love Mum showed us was conditional. It was dependent on us being what she hoped for and expected: diligent daughters, obedient wives, dutiful daughters-in-law, model Asian citizens. I believe now that those were the things she thought would make us happy, keep us safe (p. 271).

Jasvinder originally believed that her Mum was motivated by arrogance, an obsession with the hierarchy of caste, the family’s reputation, and their honour. But now she modified that belief to one of fear. In a new country her parents only had “their precious community” (p. 271) to cling to, the only thing familiar to them.

Jasvinder becomes more and more isolated from her family. Her brother Balbir is sent to prison for arson where he is beaten up for being the brother of ‘that bitch who helps girls run away from home” (p. 271). Sunny starts to adopt conservative values, disagreeing with the work Jasvinder does and criticising her for allowing Lisa to have a boyfriend. Jasvinder visits relatives in Canada where an argument starts: “you married a
chamar, you disgraced your family, you are no better than a prostitute” (p. 273). Eventually she breaks contact with her entire family and goes to live in a small village outside Derby where she is “the only Asian in the village” (p. 273). But that’s how she likes it “away from the community into which I’ve never fitted comfortably” (p. 273).

She relates the case of Shazia, a 15 year old Muslim girl from Birmingham who was taken to Pakistan for a holiday but whilst there was forcibly married to her cousin who she had never met. He merely wanted a passport into the UK. Shazia was allowed back only if she signed his papers and sponsored him. When she returned to the UK she wrote to the British Embassy saying that she had been forced into marriage and forced to sponsor her husband into the UK. She never received a reply. After three weeks she rang the police to get a safe escort from her house to a refuge. But it was not a specialist Asian refuge and she felt lost. This convinced Jasvinder of the need for specialist Asian women’s refuges. Jasvinder ruminates that “a traditional upbringing leaves you so vulnerable and unprepared for real life that if you can’t conform you can’t cope” (p. 276). Shazia says: “I ran away because I couldn’t be the person Mum wanted but I don’t know how to be anybody else” (p. 277). Jasvinder sees the problem as being “the pull back to the culture you grew up with is very strong” (p. 277).

Jasvinder approached the national charity Refuge to form a partnership with KN and they agreed. She won funding to refurbish some derelict houses and four were opened in 2002. In that year, KN provided emergency accommodation for 52 women and children and had to turn away more than 125 others. Jasvinder starts to campaign nationwide amongst the police, teachers, and social workers. She cooperates in court cases, works with the Forced Marriage Unit, and talks to children in schools. She laments:

So many Asian women suffer at the hands of their families who hurt them in ways that a stranger never would. Their torment is invisible because honour-based violence happens behind closed doors (p. 279).

She also blames the British authorities “who in the past have been caught up in a fog of ignorance and misplaced cultural and religious sensitivity” (p. 280) but who by this time were starting to acknowledge the problems facing Asian women.
But Jasvinder is putting herself in harm’s way by her activities. She receives death threats “you’ll be chopped up into little pieces” (p. 282). She has to take safety precautions in her home including a panic button and checking her car for bombs.

In 2005, Jasvinder delivers a seminar at Dundee University. She is surprised at the level of ignorance about the issue shown by students but they were eager to learn more. On the way back home by train a man tells Jasvinder that he is an academic who was supervising a PhD student who told him she was being forced into marriage and threatened with death. Sometime later she died an accidental death that he now suspects was an honour killing.

5.4 Analysis of text: chapters 8-35

In this section a qualitative analysis is conducted of Sanghera’s text subsequent to the action of her running away from home to avoid a forced marriage. The analysis concentrates on the main thematic concerns of Sanghera from the age of 14-15 until her action of forming the organisation Karma Nirvana. Two themes emerge from this analysis: ‘drifting back to the family fold’ and ‘disownment mitigation strategies’.

5.4.1 Drifting back to the family fold

In Jasvinder’s case, retribution (in the form of physical and psychological abuse) did not result in her submitting to the subjugation that her family and community sought. Instead, Jasvinder continued her resistance by running away. Her family responded by disowning her. The action of running away is a drastic measure because of the severe consequences it brings to her family, to Jasvinder herself, and to third parties deemed to be implicated. Thus, her friend Avtar is physically beaten in an attempt to extract from her Jasvinder’s whereabouts. Additionally, her accomplice Jassey is accused of abducting and harbouring Jasvinder and the pair are tracked down by a private detective and subject to a police visit. Her family are subject to community disgrace such that it is claimed they cannot walk the streets. They have been shamed. People talk about them and even spit on them. Jasvinder is made to feel guilty and that she has sinned. Because
of the ruin that Jasvinder has brought on her family she is subject to demonization and
dire threats of nasty things that her family hopes will befall her. In particular, her
mother calls her a prostitute and hopes that any future daughter of Jasvinder’s treats her
in the same way. She predicts that Jasvinder will get what she deserves, that she will
amount to nothing, and that she will end up rolling in the gutter.

Perhaps the most serious consequence of Jasvinder’s act of running away is that it
results in her disownment. By being disowned she becomes an outcast – abandoned,
isolated, shunned, and rebuffed. But symbolically the retributive act of disownment
-carries a far more sinister outcome. Effectively, Jasvinder becomes dead in the eyes of
her family. She ceases to exist. She is a non-person. None of her family (except Robina)
attends her marriage to Jassey. None of her family attends her university graduation.
Her father refuses to take her back to his home village on the grounds that ‘shame
travels’. The birth of her daughter Lisa is met by snubs from her sisters; her mother is
offhand, curt, and indifferent. Her sisters walk out of the room when she goes back
home on the death of her mother. She is forbidden to join in the ceremonial washing of
her dead mother’s body. Her extended Canadian family call her a prostitute. None of
Jasvinder’s achievements ever receive any recognition. Nothing she does is, or ever will
be, good enough.

This treatment of Jasvinder merely substitutes one trap for another. Although she
-manages to escape her physical confinement by running away, she cannot escape her
emotional confinement so easily. The pull back to her home and family was a constant
-struggle to overcome. This emanated from her childhood cocoon of un-freedom that
-created a sense of unworldliness, making her incapable of living an independent
existence beyond the confines of her family and community. This scenario was almost
-immediately recognised by Jasvinder after running away. She was purposeless,
rudderless, and drifting. The void that opened up before her was frightening and
uncharted, to such an extent that she reflects that ‘freedom’ is meaningless if you don’t
know what to do with it. A traditional upbringing such as Jasvinder’s is designed to
leave girls vulnerable and unprepared for the external world such that they cannot
survive if they do not conform. They do not know how to be anybody else. Coping
mechanisms are undeveloped. Accordingly, the pull back to the familiarity of home and community (and subjugation) is ever-present.

Within such a scenario, emotional bleakness is an inevitable outcome. Feelings of isolation, loneliness, depression, lethargy, and homesickness bore down on Jasvinder, soon followed by a catalogue of physical ailments. It could be expected that such a situation might be alleviated if the family or community offered some measure of support or sympathy for Jasvinder after her ‘escape’. Such support was however never forthcoming, and, in fact, would have been counter-productive to her family’s overall pursuit of female subjugation if practiced. Accordingly, the pressure has to be kept on Jasvinder to give in and return back to the family fold, otherwise the whole strategy would come undone. As seen above, this extra pressure is exerted through the subsequent retribution of ‘disownment’. The crime of becoming an outcast is enforced by all measures that can be thrown at Jasvinder – by her immediate family, extended family, and all community elements. Eventually, Jasvinder will give up her resistance and commit herself back to her fate as a dutiful girl and wife. Such is the reasoning of her family and can be conceptualised as a process of ‘drifting back to the family fold’. In many ways this is akin to drifting back to a familiar cognitive space. Such a process is depicted in Figure 5.2 below. However, in the case of Jasvinder, she fought against her

Figure 5.2 Drifting back to the family fold

Subjugation: cultural role of females

Retribution - Disownment
Physical & psychological abuse
Demonisation
Emotional bleakness
Physical illness

Run Away

Drifting back to the family fold

Effective

Ineffective

Disownment mitigation strategies
disownment. How Jasvinder fights against this pressure is an important area of analysis. We label this ‘disownment mitigation strategies’.

5.4.2 Disownment mitigation strategies

In order to fight against the pressure of drifting back to the family fold, Jasvinder has to employ a number of strategies (Figure 5.3 below). In total, these strategies are aimed at overcoming disownment through an approach that aims to create a new sense of worldliness that her traditional upbringing has denied her. But herein lies the conundrum. Jasvinder, and girls like her, do not know how to be anybody else. She does not know what she does not know. There can be no rational plan for Jasvinder that neatly traces a direction to a state of worldliness. The path is haphazard. Serendipity is the overwhelming reality. Jasvinder evocatively details this journey in the remaining chapters of her memoir. Her haphazard journey is highlighted through her inability to put down roots. She is constantly restless and unstable. She drifts from one city to another, one house to another, one partner to another, and one job to another. Does she belong in Derby or somewhere else? Is she more comfortable living in an Asian area or

Figure 5.3 Disownment mitigation strategies

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<th>Disownment mitigation strategies</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cracking the cocoon</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinging to Jassey and Lucy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Human contact, socialisation, money, and housing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Breaking out of the cocoon</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community activities, education, non-Asian female friends, avoiding Asian community immersion</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Counselling, personal revelations, openness and non-secrecy without shame</td>
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<td><strong>Standing outside the cocoon</strong></td>
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<td>Establishing Karma Nirvana</td>
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<td>• Tackling wider realities of religion and political correctness</td>
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a non-Asian area? Questions such as these are eventually resolved ‘on the run’ in Jasvinder’s mind and inevitably through trial and error.

**Cracking the cocoon**

‘Cracking the cocoon’ is greatly facilitated by Jassey, a man she never really loved but who introduced her to the freedom that she would otherwise have found difficult if not impossible to achieve. Jassey was an understanding and compassionate person, unlike the traditional stereotype of an Asian man. Through him she was introduced into a wider world of human contact, a world that she found she enjoyed and which brought her out of herself. The market stall became a successful business and gave them access to money that made the purchase of their own house affordable. In addition, through Lucy she was introduced into a world of socialising in pubs and clubs that gave her access to the possibility of an illicit affair. It is important to realise that these early initiations into the realities of the wider world were brought about not by her own individual efforts, but through clinging to other people (her partner, her younger sister) and allowing herself to be led in whichever direction that resulted. As a result, her cocoon was cracked as money, human contact, socialising and home ownership opened her eyes to other possibilities.

**Breaking out of the cocoon**

The freedom afforded her by Jassey combined with the socialising afforded her by Lucy opened the door to more daring adventures by Jasvinder. In effect, once her cocoon had been cracked the act of ‘breaking out of the cocoon’ became a more attainable reality. She joined an aerobics class and graduated to an aerobics instructor. She volunteered for community activities. She sought out the education that had been denied to her as a girl and progressed from A-levels to a university degree. Her thirst for extra intellectualism brought her into the world of books, women’s stories and training courses such as listening skills. From there she was able to tackle her taboos of secrecy by indulging in conversations with other women, practicing openness and personal revelations without feelings of shame. By finding non-Asian female friends in whom she could confide she found herself benefitting from counselling sessions. One conclusion that Jasvinder eventually reached was that Asian immersion was not in her best interests. When she
lived in close proximity to her own community she felt claustrophobic, judged, and spied upon. She was questioned, placed, possessed and sucked in. When she needed legal advice she avoided an Asian lawyer. Eventually she found ‘freedom’ in a small village where she and her children were the only Asians. She liked it that way. Her conclusion that Asian women suffer at the hands of their own families and community who hurt them in ways that a stranger never would must have been a painful but ultimately sobering reality that enabled Jasvinder to find cognitive peace.

Standing outside the cocoon

Eventually Jasvinder was able to ‘stand outside the cocoon’ and take her destiny into her own hands by establishing an organisation that would support abused Asian women. The idea for Karma Nirvana crystallised in her mind through her reflections about Robina and her Mother, especially as she came into contact with other abused Asian women and realised she was not alone in her experiences and was uniquely placed to help other sufferers. As her absorption into wider realities became more evident, she was able to learn that micro situations are facilitated by bigger-picture macro contexts. It was painful for her to observe that political correctness in the wider UK society, fearful of upsetting cultural opinions and ethnic relationships, led the authorities to do nothing about the abuse suffered by Asian women. Her previous rejection of Sikhism on the grounds that it commanded female subjugation was found to be incorrect. It was cultural, not religious practices that led to such situations. Suddenly Karma Nirvana had taken on a broader political role with the realisation that individual female suffering could only be tackled by wider political action aimed at eliminating a dominant discourse.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has presented a synopsis and analysis of the memoir Shame (Sanghera 2007). The main theme of ‘subjugation: cultural role of females’ emerged as the major concern of the main protagonist Jasvinder Sanghera, epitomised in this case by the pressure exerted on her by family and community members to yield to a forced marriage. The qualitative analysis undertaken in this chapter has revealed that
‘cloistering strategies’ are employed by parents to keep their daughters in a state of unworldliness, thus making them less susceptible to non-compliance with forced marriage and subjugation. Girls who attempt to escape retribution (for example by running away) can expect to be disowned by their families, a period potentially characterised by emotional bleakness and further physical and psychological threats and abuse. The consequence of this may involve a tendency for girls to ‘drift back to the family fold’ unless (like Jasvinder) they are able to successfully employ a sequence of ‘disownment mitigation strategies’.

In the next chapter, chapter 6, we take this analysis one step further by examining and addressing the research question that was posed in chapter 1, namely: “how can agents, moulded and constrained within the confines of a strict discourse, exhibit the freedom of thought that allows them to do something different, when the strictures of the prevailing discourse have presumably disempowered them from such unorthodox thinking?”
Chapter 6 Escaping discourse: contribution to the literature

This chapter presents the modelling constructed in chapter 5 in order to examine the contribution of this thesis to the notion of ‘escaping discourse’. If an agent is born and brought up within the confines of a strict discourse, does that discourse disempower them from unorthodox thinking? In other words, does a mechanism exist that enables an agent to escape the discourse? This thesis has employed the case study of Jasvinder Sanghera as revealed in her memoir *Shame* in order to analyse how such an escape can be conceptualised.

The modelling in chapter 5 is depicted in Figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3. This modelling analyses how the discourse of honour employs a set of eight separate ‘cloistering strategies’ that act collectively in order to disempower young girls especially from contemplating any existence outside the discourse. Non-compliance is met with retribution in the form of physical and psychological abuse. Victims who run away from home in order to escape the discourse soon find that their state of unworldliness has not equipped them to survive the rigours of an independent lifestyle, motivating them to ‘drift back to the family fold’ as perhaps being the lesser of two evils. In order to resist this temptation, such absconding females must fight to implement a series of strategies that increasingly engage them in acquiring a broader sense of worldliness. These ‘disownment mitigation strategies’, in Sanghera’s case, follow a sequence that has been labelled ‘cracking the cocoon’, ‘breaking out of the cocoon’ and ‘standing outside the cocoon’.

Whilst this modelling is instructive in its own right, a stronger case must be made as to how these conceptual innovations add to the existing literature on this topic: this contribution is addressed in this chapter. There exists a small extant academic literature that analyses the transformational journey of Jasvinder Sanghera. In this chapter the findings of this literature are identified and summarised. The chapter then analyses how this literature can be extended. In broad terms, this is achieved by taking the concepts of ‘power rituals’, ‘power-as-practice’ and ‘entrepreneuring-as-emancipation’ (Goss et al. 2011; Rindova, Barry & Kitchen 2009) and juxtaposing these with the (earlier)
Foucauldian concept of ‘discourse’ (1972, 1981) and (later) Foucauldian concept of ‘technology of the self’ (1988a, 1988b) in order to create a theoretical space which allows the possibility of agentic escape from the otherwise confining entrapment of a single discourse.

The chapter is structured as below:

6.1 Existing literature
6.2 Cloistering strategies: trapped within the discourse
6.3 Resisting the discourse: the role of human agency
6.4 Drifting back to the family fold
   6.4.1 The processual journey of bewilderment-realisation-contempt
6.5 Standing outside the cocoon: Karma Nirvana
6.6 Summary

6.1 Existing literature

Jasvinder Sanghera’s journey and the establishment of Karma Nirvana has attracted much media attention but little in the way of serious academic study. A search of the literature has revealed only three major academic publications that have used the case study of Jasvinder Sanghera’s journey to analyse the establishment of a (social) entrepreneurial venture – Jones et al. (2008, 2009) and Goss et al. (2011).

Jones et al. (2008, 2009) use the example of Jasvinder Sanghera and Karma Nirvana to analyse the antecedents of the establishment of a social entrepreneurial venture. They draw upon the micro-sociological theories of pride, shame and deference (Goss 2005; Scheff 1990, 1997) to argue that emotions can act as both a stabilising and a destabilising force, and that it is the inherent instability of the shame-pride dynamic that forms the engine of entrepreneurial potential. The authors draw upon the concept of ‘bypassed shame’ to hypothesise entrepreneurial energy. When a person feels shamed as a result of an action that causes others to withdraw their deference, we can expect that person to try and restore the social bond by such reactive behaviour as apologising, or exhibiting contrition. However, in some situations the person may not display such
self-correcting internalised behaviour, but rather would externalise this in the form of ‘bypassed shame’, such as “self-righteous displays of anger and fury, or be translated into highly combative forms of energy and hyperactivity. Feelings of hostility, wanting revenge, and the desire for superiority and domination may come to the fore” (Jones et al. 2008, p. 613).

It is the dynamics created by bypassed shame (injustice and humiliation) … that engenders the push to re-order dominant norms through a search for new forms of (just) life and new excitements (Jones et al. 2008, p. 613).

At a later date, Jones et al. (2009, p. 878) employ the same theorisation foundation to advance three strategies employed by Sanghera aimed at “challenging the discourse of honour and paving the way for the establishment of Karma Nirvana”:

- **Positioning an oppositional discourse:** to provide a direct challenge to the veracity of the extant discourse of honour
- **Distributing the discourse:** spreading the message of her oppositional discourse throughout the community
- **Breaching the code of silence:** breaking the taboos and practices that surrounded the silencing power of the discourse of honour. Three silencing practices were targeted: preserving family secrecy, blaming the victim, and bringing shame on the family

Goss et al. (2011) also use the case study of Jasvinder Sanghera’s establishment of Karma Nirvana to locate the theme of entrepreneurship within the perspective of ‘entrepreneuring-as-emancipation’ (Rindova, Barry & Kitchen 2009). The term emancipation is defined as follows:

The act of setting free from the power of another…as such it makes the question of pursuit of freedom and autonomy relative to an existing status quo the focal point of inquiry. Viewing entrepreneurial projects as emancipatory efforts focuses on understanding the factors that cause individuals to seek to disrupt the status quo and change their position in the social order in which they are embedded – and, on occasion, the social order itself (Rindova, Barry & Kitchen 2009, p. 478).
In addition, the emphasis on entrepreneuring (as a verb) rather than entrepreneurship (as a noun) puts the focus on process through time, a dynamic situation involving actions and constraints as they interact progressively over time and space. Goss et al. (2011) employ the notion of ‘power-as-practice’. This lays emphasis on power rituals that occur in practice and over time concentrating on what actors “actually do, think and feel”, analysing the shifting dynamics of social interactions and “organised processes (interaction rituals) involving agency and constraint” (Goss et al. 2011, p. 212). A power-as-practice approach focuses on context and processes and “the fluctuating balance between agency and constraint” (Goss et al. 2011, p. 224).

Haugh and Talwar (2016, p. 647) citing the work of Goss et all (2011) contend that identifying the specific rather than ‘broad and unspecified’ constraint will provide insight into the processes by which change is affected.

Power rituals according to Collins (2004, p. 112) are enacted on the basis of “unequal resources” (material, ideological and emotional) between actors which means that some actors will tend to dominate immediate, situational interactions. Such interactions become divided between those who give orders and those who take occurs. Such situational dominance “demonstrates the operation of power at the micro level…a power ritual is an encounter where (at least) two parties engage in order to secure or establish control over some resource and where ultimately one party emerges (or is confirmed) as an order-giver, the other(s) as an order taker” (Goss et al. 2011, p. 214).

This extant literature will be drawn upon as necessary in the rest of this chapter. The aim of this chapter is to make a contribution to the extant literature by showing how the conceptual modelling revealed in chapter 5 can enhance the notion of ‘escaping discourse’ using the case study of Jasvinder Sanghera as presented in her autobiographical memoir Shame. The rest of this chapter broadly adopts the structure of the concepts identified in chapter 5, commencing with the notion of being ‘trapped within the discourse’, followed by ‘resisting the discourse’, ‘drifting back to the family fold’, and finally, ‘standing outside the cocoon’.
6.2 Cloistering strategies: trapped within the discourse

Chapter 2 of this thesis has presented the phenomenon of 'honour' as not only a concept but also a discourse. Jasvinder Sanghera was born in 1965 and fourteen years later was shown a photograph of a man chosen by her parents to be her husband. She was not presented with a choice. Two years later Sanghera ran away from home to escape being sent overseas for a forced marriage and was promptly disowned by her parents for shaming them. From the point of view of her parents Sanghera had committed an unforgivable 'crime'.

Analytically, what must be remembered is that for the whole of their lives her parents had been enmeshed within the discourse of honour. Girls are the property of men and are expected only to obey. They are expected to be dutiful and submissive. This discourse was passed down to Sanghera and was enforced not only by her immediate family but also by her extended family and the surrounding community. The analysis conducted in chapter 5 has identified eight 'cloistering strategies' which are designed to keep girls in an unworldly context, thus making them more amenable to the capture of the discourse: non-education, forced marriage, cultural elitism, non-fraternisation, fashion rejection, time scheduling, community spying, and family secrecy. Cloistering strategies are defined as 'strategies designed to enforce compliance to a dominant discourse and dilute the potential pressure from alternative discourses'. Such strategies achieve their aim by keeping girls in an uninformed state whereby they remain ignorant of alternative lifestyles or belief systems.

Discourses do not maintain any essential notion of the 'truth'. Rather they reflect a constructed notion of reality resulting from knowledge battles between different constructions of the truth. Foucault (1972, p. 49) refers to discourse as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak”. For Foucault (1981, p. 67) “discourse is a violence we do to things…a practice which we impose on them”. Powerful interests invariably ‘win’ these knowledge contests and then attempt to maintain their constructions in place by a system of silencing other and competing versions of the truth by three distinct strategies – establishing taboos, demonising dissidents, and installing ‘experts’ in significant societal positions who speak with the
authority to be heard and acknowledged (Foucault 1972, 1981). “Foucault’s notion of discursive power acts both to produce and prohibit certain ways of thinking” (Lie 2008, p. 123).

For Foucault, discourses are subtle mechanisms that frame our thinking process. They determine the limits of what can be thought, spoken and written in a normal and rational way. In every society the production of discourses is controlled, selected, organised and diffused by certain procedures. This process creates systems of exclusion in which one group of discourses is elevated to a hegemonic status, while others are condemned to exile. Discourses give rise to social rules that decide which statements most people recognise as valid, as debatable or as undoubtedly false. They guide the selection process that ascertains which propositions from previous periods or foreign cultures are retained, imported, valued, and which are forgotten or neglected (Bleiker 2003, p. 27).

Kiely (1999, p. 31) argues that “a particular discourse does not reflect but actually constructs reality. In so doing, it actually closes off alternative ways of thinking”. In other words, discourse acts to subtly dominate not only what we think but also how we think. Our thinking processes are controlled and moulded by discourse.

Things exist independently of discourses but we can only assess them through the lenses of discourse, through the practices of knowing, perceiving and sensing, which we have acquired over time. Discourses render social practices intelligible and rational – and by doing so mask the ways in which they have been constituted and framed. Systems of domination gradually become accepted as normal and silently penetrate every aspect of society. They cling to the most remote corners of our mind (Bleiker 2003, p. 28).

Lie (2008, p. 124) argues that “…each society has its own regime of knowledge and the constitution of subjects is therefore inseparable from knowledge-power formations…the subject becomes the product of discourse”. Discursive constructions have a suffocating impact on individual agency: a “multitude of miniscule techniques discipline the subject and paralyse her/him in a web of micro-level power relations” (Bleiker 2003, p. 34). The power of discursive webs engulfs human agency. As individuals, these cultural and linguistic entrapments are too mighty to be swayed. The implication is that individuals
are perceived as merely reflecting the dictates of externally-imposed circumstances, “simply creatures of habit…blind followers” (Bleiker 2003, p. 25).

The role of Sanghera’s mother in perpetuating the entrapment of the discourse of honour is crucial. Her mother rarely ventured outside her native village and (willingly) married Sanghera’s father at the age of 15 when his first wife (her elder sister) died. This was the discourse and it appeared normal. Of course, the younger sister would take on this role: it was her duty, her destiny. She knew nothing else. On relocating to England, the mother made little or no effort to integrate into the host culture. She refused to learn English. She demonised other races, other cultures, and other castes. Whites “were dirty people with dirty ways” (Sanghera 2007, p. 7) especially white girls who had no morals or self-respect. If her offspring refused to share her views or actions they were accused of shaming the family and bringing dishonour on them. Sanghera was emotionally abused and physically beaten. In effect, Sanghera’s mother taught her daughters that tolerance of diversity was shameful, and that unless they displayed the role of good wives and daughters-in-law who were dutiful, compliant, obedient, respectful, and subservient to their husbands, then effectively they brought dishonour to the family: “you have shamed us…think you are clever with your Western ways…no decent man will want you now…make yourself cheap like the white girls” (Sanghera 2007, p. 37). When her own daughters were emotionally and physically abused by their husbands the mother blamed the daughters: “that’s what marriage is like…it’s his house…he can behave as he wishes…you must learn how to calm him…stop crying” (Sanghera 2007, p. 21). Once married, the girl was her husband’s property. She went to live in his house and was expected to please him by being a good homemaker, cooking, cleaning, sewing and child-minding. Such behaviour preserved the good name of the family in the community and was strongly enforced by the mother: “no daughter of mine will go ignorant to her mother-in-law’s house” (Sanghera 2007, p. 9).

But it was not only Sanghera’s mother who enforced the discourse. The entrapment seemed all-encompassing. Her father was distant, offering no support, and allowing the mother to enforce the rules. Her teachers took no interest in the suffering of girls such as Sanghera. Her sisters’ husbands were abusive, traditional and uneducated, imported from rural villages overseas. The community performed the role of spies, reporting back
instances of non-compliance so that young people often felt unsafe in their own community and had to carry out many activities away from the gaze of the community.

An essential ingredient of the discourse was that non-compliant behaviour *per se* was not regarded as the critical issue. Such behaviour was only deemed to be dishonourable if it became known within the wider community. The mother was obsessed with keeping a good face within the community and drilled into her offspring the necessity for family secrecy to “keep things private so we can’t be judged or shamed” (Sanghera 2007, p. 11). Hence, gossip and public displays of non-compliance were mainly targeted for surveillance and control. Her mother wailed:

> Aye! I can hear them now, talking in the gurdwara…my daughter has a boyfriend. You have ruined yourself girl. What will become of you? What will become of me? You have brought dishonour on us all (Sanghera 2007, p. 61).

The manner in which this discourse pervaded every aspect of Sanghera’s life is instructive. She states that nobody handed her a “book of rules” but as early as the age of eight she knew “the particular way I was supposed to act, walk, talk, even breathe” (Sanghera 2007, p. 8). This reflects the argument of Bleiker (2003, p. 28) that the essential elements of discourses of domination “silently penetrate every aspect of society” and are then reproduced by bearers of that discourse through the mechanism of “cling[ing] to the most remote corners of our mind”.

6.3 Resisting the discourse: the role of human agency

One of the key conclusions of Foucauldian analysis is that the possibility of independent human agency becomes limited or impossible because of the power of the surrounding discourse not only to construct reality to also to reproduce it. Discourse puts us:

> …in a situation in which we can do nothing but express bewilderment at an overwhelming world around us – a world in which the potential for human agency seems to have vanished altogether…the subject becomes obliterated or reduced to an impotent passive object…resistance then becomes virtually impossible…we then find ourselves in
Observations of events would reaffirm to many people that this scenario is all too real for many people (especially young females) who are born and raised into a discourse of honour. They continue to act out this discourse thereafter. Such is not the case for Jasvinder Sanghera. Not only did she challenge the discourse, but she also successfully escaped the discourse and went on to establish the organisation Karma Nirvana in 1993 to support victims of honour-based violence and forced marriage. In this way, she played an influential role in persuading the government to criminalise forced marriage in 2014. Hence, the construction of the research question that underpins this thesis:

“How can agents, brought up and constrained within the confines of a strict discourse, exhibit the freedom of thought that allows them to do something different when the prevailing discourse has presumably disempowered them from such unorthodox thinking?”

Bandura (2006) promotes an agentic perspective towards human development, adaptation and change through the adaptation of social cognitive theory. To be an agent is to influence intentionally one’s functioning and life circumstances. People…are not simply onlookers of their behaviour. They are contributors to their life circumstances, not just products of them (Bandura 2006, p. 164)

There are four core properties of human agency:

*Intentionality*: people form intentions that include action plans and strategies for realizing them

*Forethought*: forethought goes beyond future-directed plans. People set themselves goals and anticipate likely outcomes of prospective actions to guide and motivate their efforts…visualized futures are brought into the present as current guides and motivators of behaviour [a] form of anticipatory self-guidance
**Self-reactiveness:** people construct appropriate courses of action and motivate and regulate their execution. This process links thought to action

**Self-reflectiveness:** people are also self-examiners of their own functioning. They reflect on the soundness of their thoughts and actions, and the meaning of their pursuits, and they make corrective adjustments if necessary (Bandura 2006, p. 164-165).

It is important to recognise that social cognitive theory does not postulate that people operate as autonomous agents. Humans function only as the “product of a reciprocal interplay of intrapersonal, behavioural, and environmental determinants” (Bandura 2006, p. 165). This interplay is particularly significant in the example of moral agency whereby people establish for themselves a set of moral standards and judge themselves against the yardstick of these standards. When people abide by their moral standards they reward themselves with positive self-sanctions, but when people violate their moral standards they confront themselves with negative self-sanctions.

The moral knowledge and standards about how one ought to behave constitute the cognitive foundation of morality. The evaluative self-sanctions serve as the motivators that keep conduct in line with moral standards. Moral thought is translated into moral conduct through this self-reactive regulatory mechanism (Bandura 2006, p. 171).

Despite Bandura’s (2006) articulation of social cognitive theory, it could still be argued that the human agentic core properties of intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness are unable to be conceptually independent of a Foucauldian discourse that both creates and reproduces its own elements. On what basis does human agency comprehend the capacity to do or think something different when agency itself has no way of discovering this aspect of difference? Discourses leave us “with an image of the world in which the capacity for human agency is all but erased, annihilated by forces that are not only impenetrable but also elude human comprehension” (Bleiker 2003, p. 28). As argued by Lie (2008, p. 121) “for those embedded in a discourse, the discourse *is* the reality” since the discourse possesses the power of formation through the “process of normalization” (Lie 2008, p. 122):
In being formed by the discourse, actors’ agencies thus reproduce the very discourse by which they are shaped...having the effect of strengthening the already established discourse and thus making other forms of knowledge less relevant...this has obvious implications for discourse and its relation to agency (Lie 2008, p. 122).

However, Bleiker (2003, p. 25) argues that “questions of agency...can best be understood if approached through the concept of discourse” and that it is still possible to “theorize discourses and still retain a concept of human agency (Bleiker 2003, p. 27). Without this possibility, theorists would be presented with a practical and observable conundrum:

If power and domination are so omnipresent, so invincible, how could anything ever change?... how could one explain all those challenges from below, the moments when people take to the street and shake, successfully or not, the foundations of the established order (Bleiker 2003, p. 28)?

This scenario is the one which faced Jasvinder Sanghera and which has posed the research question that underlies this thesis. Born, raised and trapped within the discourse of honour, actors such as Sanghera “are seen as mere representatives, bearers and reproducers of the discourse; individuals...are instruments of the discourse” (Lie 2008, p. 123). By what mechanism can they escape? One potential viewpoint is that a concept of agency can be derived from the anti-discourse notion that “socialization within a set of discourses is never ‘completed’ in the sense that all people equally incorporate the same discourse” (Lie 2008, p. 124). In other words, the discourse has different impacts on different individuals, thus going some way to validating the social cognitive theory of Bandura (2006). Each discourse is not equally ‘thick’ in relation to every individual, and so does not possess the same dominating and normalising impact on everyone. Instead of visualising discourses as entirely powerful across all individuals to the same essential extent, one could regard discourses as having a variable impact on individuals according to a spectrum of impact. Thus, we could envision the possibility that:
Discourses are often thin, unstable and fragmented. There are fissures, there are cracks, there are weak spots: windows of opportunity that lead to transformative pathways (Bleiker 2003, p. 29).

Singer, songwriter, and poet Leonard Cohen sang “there is a crack in everything – that’s how the light gets in” (Cohen 1992). The implication is that nothing and no one is perfect. Imperfections exist everywhere and it is through such weaknesses that transformative light is able to penetrate inside. Van Dijk (2008, 2009) suggests that contexts are subjectively deciphered by participants according to properties of a situation that are here-and-now relevant for them. Contexts are participant constructs and interpretive achievements. Certain individuals can take advantage of these ‘fissures’ and ‘weak spots’ in order to prioritise their own human agency over the normalising power of the discourse. One theoretical way to achieve this is by hypothesising that those individuals who are empowered to see something different within the discourse possess the agency to do and think something different as an empowering mechanism. Van Dijk (2008) argues that mental models act as a mediating influence and represent the different ways that agents can variably interpret or construct situational events. The concept of ‘seeing something different’ can arise from the observation that discourses tend not to be hermetically sealed. Examples can be observed around us which seemingly contradict the dictates of the discourse and which therefore provide the mechanism for taking advantages of weak spots in the discourse. For example, Sanghera was able to observe the actions of white girls who were planning to go on to further education rather than being taken out of school and forced into marriage. This notion of ‘attending’ is not new to the literature but can be profitably introduced at this stage into our analysis in order to account for the possibility of exploiting cracks in a dominant discourse. The notion of ‘attending’ was first introduced into the literature by Kleysen and Dyck (2001) within the context of organisational learning and intuition. They define attending as a process of searching or scanning the environment for information from opportunity sources. Those individuals who ‘attend’ to their environment expose themselves to people who hold alternative views. Such exposure can occur either by design or accident. Once avenues of direct contact are opened up then relational ties tend to develop with promoters of alternative views, which often influence the intuition of individual actors: “this intuition may be sparked by private
reflection which stimulates thinking and greater consideration of alternatives” (Liu 2009, p. 111).

In Sanghera’s case, such attending to alternative views was not pre-conceived but merely occurred as the natural result of inter-relationships within a pluralistic society. Within white society she observed the different and freer actions and attitudes of girls her age. They interacted freely with boys in groups “laughing, chatting and mock wrestling” and that such behaviour seemed “all so normal” – “Mum would have killed me if she saw me doing that” (Sanghera 2007, p. 42). Other girls avidly followed the modern fashions in clothing and hairstyle. Sanghera was chastised by her mother for requesting purchase of the latest style of jeans – “why would you want to show off your bum?” Her deceptive behaviour led her to surreptitiously hold back some money from her paper round in order to get her hair cut in the latest fashion, again leading to abuse from her mother – “you have shamed us…think you are clever with your Western ways” (Sanghera 2007, p. 37) and suffering banishment to London to live with her elder sister until the hairstyle grew out – “dishonouring your family…learn to be a dutiful daughter” (Sanghera 2007, p. 38).

These ‘benchmarking’ exercises carried out by Sanghera led her to see how much different life was like for girls ensnared within the elements of family honour. Comparisons became odious for her. Boys were treated differently from girls, with more freedom and less chores. She observed the painful experiences of her elder sisters, suffering emotional and physical abuse from their husbands in their forced marriages and being blamed by their mother, community elder, and surrounding community for bringing such abuse on themselves. She had never spoken with another male outside her father and brother and any attempt to do so or fraternise with boys (especially white boys) would be met with physical punishment. She was corralled inside the house and never allowed to socialise.

We can hypothesise from such observations that ‘attending’ begets ‘comparing’ which, in turn, leads to dissatisfaction with the status quo from a young girl who had already displayed tomboy behaviour, often leading to questioning and disagreeing with several aspects of her cloistered life. Through such a process we can appreciate how “the
possibilities for human agency…linger in discursive cracks” (Bleiker 2003, p. 29). The idea of an individual as a mere derivation of discourse can therefore be challenged by authors such as Fraser (1989, p. 125) who instead emphasise “understanding of an individual as being able to conduct morally reflexive acts and to distinguish between better and worse”. Accordingly, actors become “knowledgeable agents, not cultural dopes” (Boden 1990, p. 189). This again gives some veracity to Bandura’s (2006) social cognitive theory that sees actors as a product of reciprocal interplay between various elements, especially with regard to moral agency whereby people establish for themselves a set of moral standards and judge themselves against such standards. In Sanghera’s case, her ‘attending’ led her to determine the moral injustice involved in white girls exercising free will to attend higher education whereas she was forced into a marriage against her will whilst still at school. Her personal struggle also became a social struggle, an argument that (Honneth 1991) believes to have been overlooked by Foucault who ignored the intersubjectivity of social struggle that opens the way to resistance.

6.4 Drifting back to the family fold

After Sanghera ran away from home in 1981, accompanied by her boyfriend Jassey, the analysis in chapter 5 shows that she spent many years resisting the urge to return back to her family before she established her organisation Karma Nirvana in 1993. As shown in chapter 2, this situation is familiar to many young girls who leave the family home in an attempt to escape a forced marriage. Many fail the test and often return back home to face the consequences. We have diagnosed this situation as one of ‘drifting back to the family fold’, triggered by the inability of many girls to survive an independent life away from the cloistered environment in which they have been raised. In the end, their state of unworldliness defeats them: “…we’d been brought up by strict controlling parents…now we were rudderless…drifting on a frightening and uncharted sea of possibilities” (Sanghera 2007, p. 88). In many ways, this is akin to drifting back to a familiar cognitive space.
This process of returning back to the past has been analysed in the literature by Lewin (1951) who conceptualised the process as one of a coiled spring which returns back to its original shape once inward pressure on it is released. In order to maintain the pressure, it was necessary for Sanghera to develop strategies that would delay or eliminate the desire to return. For Sanghera this was complicated by the simple state of her intentions. She desperately wanted to return home but on her terms. These terms were for her parents to back down on their threat to send her overseas for a forced marriage. She wanted them to allow her to stay at school and go on to college and be able to live a life of her own choosing. But for her parents this was not an outcome they could contemplate. Family honour was at stake. Sanghera was disowned: “you’ve shamed us…in our eyes you are dead” (Sanghera 2007, p. 4). This state of impasse could only be resolved when Sanghera accepted this reality. As shown in chapter 5, it took her twelve years to reach this space in her life, during which her existence was wracked by personal tragedies, emotional emptiness and physical suffering.

Sanghera was restless. She drifted from town to town – Newcastle, Leeds, Bradford, Derby, and Nottingham. She undertakes various jobs including working a market stall, sales in Argos, and aerobics instruction. Sometimes they live in the Asian area and sometimes outside it. Sometimes their accommodation is pleasant and sometimes squalid. She suffers the death of her mother and the suicide of her sister Robina. She marries and divorces Jassey, gives birth to three children, endures a sad and abusive affair, and suffers more unhappiness in a second marriage.

A significant aspect of Sanghera’s journey during this twelve-year period is the interaction between her desire to be accepted back into the family fold on her own terms and the continual rebuttals she received from the family and community. To analyse this scenario, we can draw on the work of Goss et al. (2011) and their notion of ‘power-as-practice’. These authors place the focus on process through time, a dynamic situation involving actions and constraints as they interact progressively over time and space. Power rituals occur in practice over time concentrating on what actors do, think and feel, focusing on context and process and the fluctuating balance between agency and constraint. With regards to Sanghera, throughout her journey she is able to learn through experience, adapting her behaviours and moderating her emotions. She is able to grow.
as a person, developing her moral worth, reflecting, and coming to terms with her own purpose in life beyond that of simply belonging to a family that has disowned her and accused her of shaming them.

This process of Sanghera’s growth during the period of unsettlement between her running away (1981) and establishing Karma Nirvana (1993) can be analysed by reference to Foucault’s later works which focus on the concept of ‘the technology of the self’. Although critics have pointed to the omission of agency as a key weakness of Foucault’s theorisation, it is important to point out that his later works on governmentality stress the concept of a “modality of power attached to … how the subject governs itself, that is, the conduct of conduct” (Lie 2008, p. 124). With regard to Foucault’s later writings, Oksala (2005, p. 4) writes “the subject is studied not only as an effect of power/knowledge networks, but also as capable of moral self-reflexivity – critical reflection on its own constitutive conditions – and therefore also of resistance to normative practices and ideas”. According to Lei (2008, p. 128), Oksala (2005) maintains that this approach does not alter Foucault’s notion of the subject: “Foucault still denies the autonomy of the subject, because it will always be constituted in cultural power/knowledge networks”. But the conditions of possibility are found within the freedom which is internal to the discourse itself, within “the virtual fractures that appear in the invisible walls of our world, the openings of possibilities for seeing how that which is might no longer be what it is” (Oksala 2005, p. 208).

Leclercq-Vandelannoitte (2011, p. 1251) argues in a similar manner, stating that in his later writings, Foucault (1988b) “recognises individuals as moral agents, responsible for their own individual behaviour and able to find satisfaction in constraining situations through ethics, technologies and care of the self”. Rose, O'Malley and Valverde (2006, p. 100) argue that Foucault sees freedom as “an array of invented technologies of the self” that exist side by side with discourses of domination, bringing into play such aspects as “choice, autonomy, self-responsibility and the obligation to maximise one’s life” (Rose, O'Malley & Valverde 2006, p. 91). Foucault “focuses on a more active, individual subjectivity, less imprisoned in and less constructed through scientific discourse and power relations, more geared to self-knowledge supporting work of self on the self” (Willcocks 2004, p. 248): “in personal space, human agency emerges
through active, passive, regulated, and resistance possibilities” (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte 2011, p. 1251).

Betta et al. (2010, p. 229) argue that “…the individual who challenges (or resists) destiny, or a given personal order, and manages to establish a new personal order” can be described as an innovative subject. The concept of an innovative subject phrased in such terms corresponds with the personal journey of Sanghera in her attempt to resist her destiny as a dutiful wife in a forced marriage. According to Betta, Jones and Latham (2010, p. 229) “…the agency of an innovative subject is embedded in a Foucauldian technology of the self, based on self-care and self-knowledge”.

…technology of the self encompasses self-care and self-knowledge as a form of moral obligation towards oneself…self-care which could be for example, an act aiming at improving personal well-being; and self-knowledge which allows us to understand what one needs to do, or not to do, in order to make sense of oneself and care about personal development (Betta, Jones & Latham 2010, p. 241).

For Foucault (1988a, p. 18) a technology of the self “permits individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality”. Betta et al. (2010, p. 237) argue that these operations on their own bodies are often “set within a context of moral dissonances”. It is often the case that facing “quandaries and dilemmas enable people to find the greater power within them” (Betta et al. 2010, p. 238).

By juxtaposing Goss et al’s (2011) concept of power rituals through power-as-practice with the Foucauldian concept of ‘technology of the self’, we will be able to see how Sanghera employed self-care and self-knowledge to increasingly control the fluctuating balance between agency and constraint during this crucial period of ‘drifting back to the family fold’. This theorisation will be located with a personal transformational journey of Sanghera’s that, in this thesis, has been labelled the ‘bewilderment-realisation-contempt’ process.
6.4.1 The processual journey of bewilderment-realisation-contempt

Analysis carried out in chapter 5 has shown that, following her act of running away, Sanghera was disowned by her family. She suffered physical and psychological abuse and demonisation from her family that resulted in emotional bleakness and physical illness. If Sanghera had allowed these strategies to impact on her then Sanghera would invariably have given way to fate and drifted back to the family fold in the same manner as many other young women in the same situation. Her mother raged at her: “thanks to you I can’t walk the streets of Derby any more…people spit at me” (Sanghera 2007, p. 3). The intolerant and spiteful attitude of her mother even extended to her wishing ill fate and unhappiness on the runaway young woman in a tirade of revengeful narrative:

You’ll get what you deserve for ruining your family. You’ll see. In a few months’ you and your chamar boyfriend will be rolling around in the gutter, which is no more than you deserve. You will amount to nothing, nothing, do you hear me? I hope you give birth to a daughter who does to you what you have done to me, then you’ll know what it feels like to raise a prostitute (Sanghera 2007, p. 3).

Faced with such ‘constraint’ we can analyse Sanghera’s ‘power-as-practice’ in terms of what she actually did, thought and felt. Her reaction to such vengeance was a feeling of ‘bewilderment’. She was not capable of analysing why her mother should display such behaviour simply because Sanghera wanted to stay at school and not be married off to a stranger: “had I done something so terrible that my parents could disown me? Had they really stopped loving me? Was it such a crime to want my own life?” (Sanghera 2007, p. 4). This lack of understanding as to the nature of the situation led Sanghera into a perpetual process of trying to make her parents and family see the error of their ways and allow her back into their life. She tried constantly to establish contact with her family but her phone calls were always rebuffed. She began to feel that she was really to blame for the situation: “had I done something wrong and sinned against my family…guilt hung over me like a big black cloud” (Sanghera 2007, p. 101). She ploughed on with her life. Together with Jassey they started a thriving business with a market stall, got married, and gave birth to a daughter. But her mother and family still
shunned her: “now I was a married woman with a thriving business and a beautiful baby. Was there nothing she could find to like in that?” (Sanghera 2007, p. 116).

In analysing Sanghera’s journey at this stage it appears that her emotional bleakness stemmed from her constant attempt to win back her family’s affection and seek appeasement the best way she could: “I was weighed down by constant yearning for my mum…mum’s indifference set me right back” (Sanghera 2007, p. 111, 114). Her problem was that she was unable to exercise independent cognition.

When I escaped and got my freedom I didn’t know what to do with it…I didn’t know how to lead a life outside the confines of the community that had always cocooned me (Sanghera 2007, p. 101-102).

Sanghera’s problem was to believe that running away gave her freedom and escape. Clearly it did not. Using the terminology adopted in chapter 5, she has succeeded only in ‘cracking the cocoon’. She could only really be emancipated once she became able to cognitively escape the discourse rather than just physically escape her confines. In other words, she needed to grow as a moral person in terms of Foucault’s concepts of self-care and self-knowledge. The analysis in this thesis is that Sanghera needed to move on in terms of her ‘power rituals’ relating to what she actually does, thinks and feels against the constraints ranged against her. Such ‘moving on’ actually comes in terms of the gradual realisation that she would never be forgiven. She had to self-reflect as to the real motive behind her family’s opposition.

I understood my success would never please them. As far as they were concerned I was an outcast and outcasts belong in the gutter…the thought that I could survive – let alone thrive – outside the protective scaffolding that had enclosed her and dad all their lives was anathema to them. I should have understood that (Sanghera 2007, p. 98).

In other words, Sanghera would never be given acceptance and forgiveness because her family and community were incapable of such actions stemming from their own entrapment within the discourse. From the viewpoint of her mother “personal happiness wasn’t important…what mattered to them was having a daughter who was dutiful and
respectable and did nothing to disgrace the family name” (Sanghera 2007, p. 139). In terms of the discourse of honour, acceptance of Sanghera’s ‘crime’ would result in dishonour and shame in the eyes of the community. Her family were obliged to maintain their rage simply to rescue themselves in the face of their community’s displeasure: “the last time I spoke to mum she said I was dead in her eyes and now she’s proved she meant it” (Sanghera 2007, p. 114).

Once Sanghera’s ‘bewilderment’ had progressed into ‘realisation’ of the true nature of the ongoing saga, she was able to grow in terms of self-care and self-knowledge. Using the terminology adopted in chapter 5, she was now about to enter the stage of ‘breaking out of the cocoon’. An epiphany occurred for Sanghera on the death of her sister Robina. When Robina’s marriage started to break down she was taken to see the community leader, a man whom Sanghera hated because he epitomised all the things wrong with the discourse of honour. The community leader chastised Robina to return to her abusive husband and blamed her for the breakdown: “when men get angry you have to be calmer, when a pan of milk is boiling up it’s a woman’s job to settle it down again” (Sanghera 2007, p. 142). Robina was forced to return back to the abusive marriage. Shortly afterwards she committed suicide by setting herself on fire. Resulting from this incident, Sanghera’s journey entered into a phase of ‘contempt’ – “the community leader, mum and dad, she’d asked them for help and they as good as turned their backs on her, they may as well as spat in her face” (Sanghera 2007, p. 148). In contemplative mood, Sanghera stares at an old photograph of Robina:

You could see the light of laughter in her eyes. She might have expected her family to cherish and protect that light, but they didn’t; mum, dad, the community leader, between them they stamped it out (Sanghera 2007, p. 149).

Sanghera’s attitude started to harden. She became more resolute. Her contempt drove her moral growth. She appeared to have entered a stage of ‘how dare you!’ “How could you have told me I was dead in your eyes? How could you have turned Robina away? How could you not have been there for me when I had Lisa?” (Sanghera 2007, p. 155). These rhetorical questions display the extent of Sanghera’s sense of indignance. She was now not seeking favour or appeasement. She had seen the ‘truth’ and she was
contemptuous of those who had let her and Robina down. Another of her sisters Ginda also started to experience marriage problems. She had done everything right to please her parents and had succumbed to an arranged marriage and all the other oppressive rules “but it hadn’t given her a special pass to happiness” (Sanghera 2007, p. 156).

Sanghera’s life experiences were accumulating through this journey – her own relationship problems, the birth of her children, her fluctuating economic circumstances, and the death of her mother. Her contempt for those who had imprisoned her and for the system that had destroyed Robina led her to a desire to help people like Robina (and herself) who had been failed by their community.

If Robina had only ignored the strictures of the community she relied on to protect her; if she could just have found the courage to reach out and embrace the culture of the country she was born in, she needn’t have died. The tragedy of that possessed me. I could feel the sorrow and anger fermenting inside me, building an energy that propelled me towards action. I felt I owed it to Robina to do something constructive with my life...to change the world that had failed my family...fuelled by bitterness I wanted to show [my family] that I didn’t need them...I would prove to them that I could tread my own path and still make something of myself (Sanghera 2007, p. 183).

This narrative reveals how Sanghera’s increasing sense of self-care and self-knowledge is accompanied by the realisation of how her community has failed her and her sister, how this has fuelled the emotions of anger and sorrow, and how the desire to ‘change the world’ through her own emancipation and her own achievements is leading her progressively towards the establishment of a new person – herself.

The march towards the establishment of Karma Nirvana is now set in train. She volunteers to do community work that makes her realise how many people there are who desperately need help. She enrolls in college in order to enhance her abandoned educational journey and finds a new world in reading about women’s stories. Encouraged by her new female friends she enrolls in a listening skills course and experiences another epiphany in her life journey – how to open up to strangers and allow others to help you in the solving of your personal problems. This was previously a
taboo for Sanghera (part of the family secrecy discourse) but now she had managed to crack that taboo and felt better for it: “to my amazement the world was still turning just the same” (Sanghera 2007, p. 200). She was not being judged, shamed or scorned. Just the opposite – she was being valued.

I sat there that evening and it was as if my eyes had been opened. I looked back at my childhood and realized that the web of secrecy mum had spun around us had made me blind to so many good things in the world, things like truth and honesty and compassion (Sanghera 2007, p. 200).

Shortly afterwards Sanghera establishes the organisation Karma Nirvana. From this point any possibility of ‘drifting back to the family fold’ is erased. Sanghera’s ‘technology of the self’ has developed to the stage of denying any sense of moral regression. She has effectively moved on to embrace the concept of ‘becoming a new person’. In terms of Figure 5.2 (p. 154) we would argue that the retribution sought by her family through the act of disownment has not been effective. Instead of drifting back to the family fold and the state of subjugation that this would imply, Sanghera has broken this regressive pull through employing her own ‘disownment mitigation strategies’. The experience of Karma Nirvana and the further development of ‘a new person’ now lie ahead of her. Using the terminology adopted in chapter 5, she was now entering the stage of ‘standing outside the cocoon’.

6.5 Standing outside the cocoon: Karma Nirvana

In the above section it has been argued that Sanghera resisted ‘drifting back to the family fold’ through her own moral growth in terms of self-care and self-knowledge as she navigated through power rituals exhibiting a bewilderment-realisation-contempt journey. In effect, it is argued in this thesis that Sanghera became another person. Foucault (1988c, p. 9) states that “the main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning”. Betta et al. (2010: 235) explain that “…individuals who question their own life patterns and work on new ones [bring about] a transformation through personal growth which signals the presence of a new life and
subject…a subversion of a given personal order… with the purpose of establishing a different person”.

…a notion of self which is based on the wish to become someone else for personal or ethical reasons…the concept of self-care (Foucault 1988b) describes a network of obligations towards oneself for reasons of establishing a new self out of an old one. Such a network is made possible by a technology of the self that also encompasses a true knowledge about oneself. The main characteristic of a technology of the self is the combination of self-care and self-knowledge in so far as one can care for oneself only when one knows oneself (Betta et al. 2010, p. 232).

Thus far in this thesis it has been argued that Sanghera navigated through her ‘bewilderment-realisation-contempt’ process by continuously targeting her own personal life. She was (eventually) able to change by ‘working on herself’, reflected in development and personal growth. She is able to escape her confinement by escaping from herself. Through incessant attention to her needs and rights she indulges in a process of ‘writing the self’. Her desire to activate a personal change is fuelled by her desire to transform a given destiny. Betta et al. (2010, p. 237) state:

…”care of the self”…requires the individual to know oneself in order to be able to renounce the parts of the self that are not productive… ‘what must one know about oneself in order to be willing to renounce anything’ (Foucault 1988b, p. 17) …to give up something in order to create something new is driven by the need to establish a new subjectivity.

By employing this Foucauldian notion of technology of the self we are able to argue effectively that Sanghera was enabled to ‘stand outside the cocoon’ by ‘becoming a new person’. By establishing and operating Karma Nirvana she was able to shed the image of a culturally subjugated woman in favour of entrepreneuring-as-emancipation. This provides the theoretical ammunition for this thesis to argue that Foucault’s concept of a ‘new person’ allows Sanghera to achieve the emancipation she seeks by transforming how she thinks. She becomes empowered to challenge established truths of the old discourse and transform them into new truths in terms of the new discourse. She begins to employ emotive terms to describe the realities of the discourse of honour and shed
the feelings of guilt she had borne for so long: “cruelty, denial and disownment…made me see with absolute certainty that I’d been the victim and not the perpetrator of a crime” (Sanghera 2007, p. 213). She rages against her mother and the system that she represents: “to ask for help and have your mother turn her back on you. Your mother! The person you rely on to love and protect you” (Sanghera 2007, p. 200).

The love mum showed us was conditional. It was dependent on us being what she hoped for and expected: diligent daughters, obedient wives, dutiful daughters-in-law, model Asian citizens (Sanghera 2007, p. 271).

Sanghera surveys her threadbare fledgling organisation (just a room, a desk and a chair) but she foresees what it can become and whom it can help:

This is mine and it’s going to be special. I’m going to shape this and put my mark on it and achieve something for every woman who walks through that door. That’s my dream and I’m going to make it real (Sanghera 2007, p. 207).

The Bandurian (2006) concepts of ‘intentionality’ and ‘forethought’ are clearly displayed in this vision, but, as argued, such agency notions are only theoretically possible when located within the concept of a ‘new person’, emancipated from the grip of an old discourse. When Sanghera starts to advocate for the many victims of forced marriage who contact Karma Nirvana she is able to support them in terms of her transformed thinking process that no longer allows her to adopt the burden of a subjugated woman. Hence, when an abandoned, illiterate woman (Maram) contacts Karma Nirvana with the story that she had brought disgrace on herself by allowing herself to be examined by a male doctor, Sanghera ruminates:

I wondered what shocked me the most, the way her husband had treated her or her belief that she had brought his cruelty on herself (Sanghera 2007, p. 222).

The concepts of ‘honour’ and ‘shame’ begin to occupy her attention. The fact that parents and community cared more about honour than they did about the human rights of forced marriage victims continued to fuel her contempt. In effect, honour was dishonour: honour was shame:
How could anyone turn their back on their own child for the sake of a concept? How could that be considered honourable? To me it seemed a cause of shame (Sanghera 2007, p. 261).

Sanghera’s crusade uncovers the startling realisation that “Asian women suffer at the hands of their families who hurt them in ways that a stranger never would” (Sanghera 2007, p. 279). Her willingness to criticise her parents’ subjugation to ‘their precious community’ only succeeds in bringing further opprobrium on her from members of this community. Her nephew turns against her ‘liberal’ views, displaying all the stereotypes of a typical community male. Her extended family in Canada castigates her for being a prostitute, marrying a chamar, and disgracing her family. She appeared to be fighting this battle on her own. This became increasingly dangerous for her when she started receiving death threats to her and her children: “we know where you live…you’ll be chopped up into little pieces” (Sanghera 2007, p. 282). She increasingly rails not only against her family and community but also various elements of the host (British) culture that did nothing to help victims of forced marriage. Teachers, police, and social workers appeared to show little understanding of the cultural problems that were being faced. She blamed political correctness and the concessions made to “misplaced cultural and religious sensitivity” (Sanghera 2007, p. 280).

Sanghera’s journey of self-care and self-knowledge continues to flourish as she enrols in a university degree and graduates with first-class honours. She moves out of the Asian area into a new home. She disliked living in the Asian area because of what it represented and how she was treated for daring to become her own person: “I resented the way disapproval spread throughout the community…the curious stares, the reproving glances” (Sanghera 2007, p. 249). Nevertheless, she continues to display all the attributes of a ‘new person’:

I was proud of myself. I’d bought a house for my children…I might be exiled from my family and its history but I suddenly felt confident I could make it on my own (Sanghera 2007, p. 251).
Karma Nirvana continued to expand its reach and the services it offered. She won funding to refurbish derelict houses to offer refuge to forced marriage victims. This was necessary because “a traditional upbringing leaves you so vulnerable and unprepared for real life that if you can’t conform you can’t cope” (Sanghera 2007, p. 276).

6.6 Summary

Jones et al. (2008, 2009) have previously analysed the journey of Jasvinder Sanghera and her establishment of Karma Nirvana employing micro-sociological theories of pride, shame and deference. They theorise the concept of ‘bypassed shame’ as constituting the source of emotional energy and combative hyperactivity that led her to establish Karma Nirvana. Whilst acknowledging this creative aspect of the literature it is the contention of this thesis that Sanghera’s journey is better analysed in the form of a process taking into account the dynamic aspects of a complex transformation occurring over time. Taking this into account, this thesis has sought to build on the theorisation promulgated by Goss et al. (2011) that adopts the process of entrepreneuring-as-emancipation as its point of departure. By employing ‘power rituals’, agents can involve themselves in a dynamic of ‘power-as-practice’ that occurs over time and takes the form of individual acts of human agency being continually opposed by ‘constraints’ in an ongoing contextual battle. By concentrating on what agents actually do, think and feel it is possible for an analyst to chart the fluctuating balance between agency and constraint over time.

One shortcoming of the work of Goss et al. (2011) is that it does not explicitly account for the mechanism by which an agent achieves emancipation from an extant discourse. Despite accounting for a dynamic process of interactions over time, the criticism could be advanced that the conceptualisation of an interactive series of agencies and constraints does little to identify or theorise the mechanism of escape by means of which this emancipation is achieved. This thesis attempts to remedy this gap by extending the work of Goss et al. (2011) by theorising it within the notion of ‘escaping discourse’.
A similar criticism could be directed at the social cognitive theory popularised by Bandura (2006) that is widely acknowledged as one of the most complete articulations of the nature of human agency. The question still remains as to how the cogency of human agency can be postulated within the confines of an overarching discourse that, through its ability both to construct and reproduce the nature of the ‘real’, has seemingly disallowed the empowerment of individual and independent constructions.

This thesis seeks to contribute to the literature through an attempt to theorise the elimination of such shortcomings. By employing notions from both the early and late writings of Foucault we employ the concepts of ‘discursive cracks’ and ‘technology of the self’ to articulate how agency and discourse can co-exist using the example of Jasvinder Sanghera’s journey.

In this endeavour the thesis adopts the assumption that not all discourses are equally ‘thick’ in terms of their impact on individual actors. Discourses contain weak spots that individual actors can take advantage of. These discursive cracks provide windows of opportunity that can open up possibilities of transformative pathways. We can probe open this theorisation a little more through employing the work of van Dijk (2008, 2009) which suggests that contexts are subjectively deciphered by participants according to properties of a situation that are here-and-now relevant for them. Hence, contexts are participant constructs. Contexts are interpretive achievements. It is this cognitive interface that allows language users to variably interpret or construct situational events. This allows different agents to find different weak spots in specific discourses according to properties of the situation that they find most compelling in terms of the here-and-now. This thesis contends that different actors, such as Sanghera, can utilise processes like ‘attending’ in order to draw her attention to alternative viewpoints that allow her to see something different. By exploiting such a fissure in the discourse the active agent is able to conduct morally reflexive acts in order to distinguish between better and worse situations.

By means of this theorisation it is the contention of this thesis that it is possible to hypothesise the process by means of which an agent is able to ‘escape the discourse’. But the theorisation of this thesis does not end there. Drifting back to the family fold is
an ever-present condition that can only be ultimately prevented by means of ‘cognitive escape’ and not just ‘physical escape’. Using Sanghera’s data, the thesis has presented a processual journey encompassing *bewilderment-realisation-contempt*, a transformation that involves increasing attention to self-care and self-knowledge as constituting the ‘technology of the self’. The thesis hypothesises that ‘drifting back to the family fold’ is deemed increasingly remote as the innovative agent adopts a form of moral obligation towards oneself.

Self-care and self-knowledge can build to the point at which an agent is deemed to have become a ‘new person’. The new person ‘stands outside the cocoon’, the ultimate step in the escape journey because by becoming a new person the agent has been transformed into someone else that they were not in the beginning. The new person successfully confronts their pre-destined life patterns and carves out for himself or herself a different order, one that subverts the given personal order and establishes a different person. Hence, by employing ‘technology of the self’, Sanghera is able to escape the discourse – not by changing the discourse but by changing herself. Innovation of the self precedes all subsequent innovative actions.

The next chapter, chapter 7, forms the conclusion to the thesis. It returns to an examination of the significance and purpose of the thesis and whether these objectives have been achieved. The chapter also presents some limitations and shortcomings of the thesis and suggestions for further research.
Chapter 7 Conclusion

This chapter represents the concluding chapter of the thesis. It rounds off the thesis by examining several aspects stemming from the previous six chapters. In particular, the chapter emphasises the implications of the findings for both practitioners and academics. In addition, the criteria for the evaluation of quality are examined with particular emphasis on the criteria for qualitative studies. The chapter concludes by examining some limitations of the thesis and by advancing some suggestions for further research that future researchers may find rewarding.

The chapter is structured as below:

7.1 Implications for practitioners and academics
   7.1.1 Implications for practitioners
   7.1.2 Implications for academics
7.2 Criteria for evaluation of quality
   7.2.1 Sociocognitive analysis
   7.2.2 Grounded theory
7.3 Limitations of the thesis
7.4 Suggestions for further research
7.5 Summary

7.1 Implications for practitioners and academics

Implications for practitioners and academics stem from the findings of the three-stage model of the thesis presented in chapter 5, and depicted in Figures 5.1 – 5.3: ‘cloistering strategies’, ‘drifting back to the family fold’, and ‘disownment mitigation strategies’.

7.1.1 Implications for practitioners

For practitioners, ‘cloistering strategies’ lays emphasis on the methods employed by family and community members aimed at keeping young girls in an unworldly state and
hence less likely to possess the enlightened empowerment that would enable them to resist the strength of these strategies. The implications for practitioners lie in how they could devise approaches that would assist young girls in this achievement of early empowerment. For example, the diminished importance of education for girls could be countered by more strenuous efforts by education and welfare authorities to follow up on prolonged or frequent absences from school by young girls. This would involve more frequent visits to the family home and more strenuous investigations into family excuses provided by parents to justify these absences. It seems the relevant authorities have previously been too inclined to be ‘fobbed off’ than would now appear to be justified. In addition, the ‘spiriting off’ of young girls overseas for forced marriages could be more actively policed. For example, incoming spouses could be subject to more rigorous eligibility tests, such as the ability to speak English, before a visa is issued and perhaps the possession of a higher level of educational achievement. The available evidence is that a large percentage of incoming spouses (especially females) cannot speak English and too many incoming male spouses are from rural and traditional areas, and more inclined to be abusive towards their wives. Hence, traditional honour-based practices, instead of being phased out over time are actually being reinforced from one generation to the next. Finally, more credence could be given to complaints from spouses after the marriage event has occurred that they had been forced into marriage against their will and who request the visa of their incoming spouse to be denied. There is evidence that in the past such visas have been granted despite requests from spouses not to do so.

With respect to the process of ‘drifting back to the family fold’, the model suggests that the issues relating to emotional bleakness and isolation are major factors that persuade many young females to return back to their abusing family, despite the consequences they face. The implication for practitioners lies in the necessity to provide more support services for absconding females (and males) than have been available in the past. Because of their state of unworldliness, many young people feel lost and incapable of surviving without strong cultural support. In the past this has led to charities such as Karma Nirvana to take the lead, but there is a need for more resources from the authorities to be placed into this area, in the form of culturally appropriate refuges and
support services. Absconding females in particular are less likely to return home if they feel safe, supported and protected in their location and enjoy closer contact with others who share the same situation.

With respect to the process of ‘disownment mitigation strategies’, the implications for practitioners lie within the three phases of ‘cracking the cocoon’, ‘breaking out of the cocoon’, and ‘standing outside the cocoon’. As depicted in Figure 5.3 (p. 155), these phases range across a number of successive approaches such as human contact, socialisation, and the availability of accommodation and financial resources (‘cracking the cocoon’); community activities, ongoing education, avoiding hurtful situations or memories, and counselling sessions (‘breaking out of the cocoon’); and creating substitute life activities, and facing the realities of broader exposure to the realities of issues such as religion and politics (‘standing outside the cocoon’). Practitioners should be aware from these findings that solutions to the issues faced by absconding girls do not lie in simple one-off events but rather in a progression of interventions that successively impact upon victims in a positive way, gradually moving them away from the entrapment of the discourse of honour. Thus, for example, once victims are placed in secure and culturally-appropriate accommodation, efforts can be made to introduce activities such as outings and engagements with others, involvement in community activities, acquiring additional educational qualifications, counselling and listening sessions, and assistance in gaining paid or voluntary employment (especially in areas that these victims know about from personal experience and can provide empathetic guidance to others).

7.1.2 Implications for academics

The implications of the findings of this thesis for academics and for the wider literature lie in the conceptual processes articulated in the thesis aimed at theorising the notion of ‘agency escape’ from the entrapment of a wider discourse. The thesis has contended that the literature can be enhanced through closer inspection of the process of ‘entrepreneurship-as-emancipation’ in order to give a more nuanced role to the mechanism of agentic escape. This has been enabled by employing a sociocognitive
approach to critical discourse analysis that allows us to theorise the idea of a cognitive interface between society and discourse. This mediator makes possible the argument that because context is regarded as a subjectively determined construct, then discourses cannot be regarded as possessing equal thickness across their domain. Rather individuals are able to discern discursive cracks and fissures in discourses that they are enabled to take advantage of in order to push forward the cogency of individual agentic escape. Discursive weaknesses allow ‘escapees’ to perceive aspects of the context that are here-and-now-relevant for them.

However, although the presence of discursive cracks allows for the theorisation of removing oneself from the discourse, they do not adequately theorise the process of preventing regression back to the embrace of the discourse (the coiled-spring effect), conceptualised in Figure 5.2 (p. 154) as ‘drifting back to the family fold’. This thesis has theoretically accounted for this prevention of regression in terms of the development of victims into a ‘new person’. In other words, ultimate prevention is only guaranteed when the victim perceives external circumstances through fresh eyes. This involves the concept of changing oneself from within rather than attempting to change the ‘reality’ of external circumstances. By depicting a conceptual journey through ‘bewilderment-realisation-contempt’, the thesis has charted a journey of individual transformation that leads to the creation of a ‘new’ person through the process of ‘technology of the self’ in terms of self-care and self-knowledge.

### 7.2 Criteria for evaluation of quality

This thesis has employed a qualitative approach to collecting and analysing the data. Specifically, the thesis has used critical discourse analysis (specifically sociocognitive analysis) as the theoretical backdrop combined with grounded theory as the method for coding and analysing the data. However, there is considerable debate and disagreement about whether traditional criteria for assessing quality employed in quantitative analysis can also be employed in qualitative analysis. For example, Wodak and Meyer (2009, p. 31) argue that it is “indisputable that the classical concepts of validity, reliability and objectivity used in quantitative research cannot be applied in unmodified ways”. In
particular, with reference to critical discourse analysis, the authors present the viewpoint that “within CDA, there is little specific discussion about quality criteria” (Wodak and Meyer 2009, p. 31). This represents a problem from the point of view of attempting to justify the quality of any thesis that is based on CDA. However, with specific reference to sociocognitive analysis (SCA), the authors do suggest that the following principle should be adopted:

SCA suggests accessibility as a criterion which takes into account the practical targets of CDS: findings should at least be accessible and readable for the social groups under investigation (Wodak and Meyer 2009, p. 31).

With reference to the Strauss and Corbin (1990) version of grounded theory, these authors also agree that the usual canons of good positivist research are inappropriate for qualitative studies. Nevertheless, “in a grounded theory publication, the reader should be able to make judgements about some of the components of the research process” (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 252). They argue that certain kinds of information should be presented to the reader based on seven separate criteria that give reasonable good grounds to judge the adequacy of the research process. These criteria (presented as questions) are detailed below.

1. On what grounds was the original sample selected?
2. What major categories emerged?
3. What are some of the events, incidents, actions, and so on (as indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?
4. How did theoretical sampling and theoretical formulations guide some of the data collection?
5. What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations?
6. Were there instances when hypotheses did not hold up against what was actually seen?
7. How and why was the core category selected? Was this sudden or gradual, difficult or easy?
7.2.1 Sociocognitive analysis

The criterion suggested by Wodak and Meyer (2009) is that of ‘accessibility’. The practical targets of the topic of this thesis are those people who are trapped in strong discourses and who are attempting to escape the entrapment of their discourse. Specifically, in this thesis, this involves mainly young women subject to the discourse of honour and their attempts to emancipate themselves. The memoir of *Shame* (Sanghera 2007) was used as the ‘text’ for this thesis. This memoir is highly accessible, having been read around the world in eight different languages, and selling millions of copies. It has brought the issue of forced marriage and honour-based abuse to popular attention. In this thesis, I contend that the findings are accessible and readable for the social groups under investigation. The model of ‘subjugation’ and ‘escape’ encapsulated in Figures 5.1 – 5.3 depicts a three-stage process that should be highly relevant to potential victims of forced marriage in terms of a conceptual process that made ultimate sense for one particular victim (Jasvinder Sanghera). In turn, the concepts outlined, although not generalisable across all cases, are capable of being assimilated and modified by potential victims in order to make sense of certain procedures that may prove useful for them in their particular contextual circumstances. These concepts should prove to become even more accessible to impacted social groups as the findings are presented in future conferences, published in academic papers, and publicised through media outlets.

7.2.2 Grounded theory

The seven questions identified in the section above will now be addressed at this stage.

On what grounds was the original sample selected?

The ‘sample’ referred to in this criterion is that of the single text *Shame*. This memoir was chosen because of its specific depiction of the journey of a victim of a proposed forced marriage, which contains vivid descriptions, clear details, and sharp emotions experienced throughout a traumatic event that lasted for many years.
What major categories emerged?

Because the memoir *Shame* is written as a linear chronology, concepts emerged in progression from the days of her childhood progressively until the formation of Karma Nirvana and thereafter. Hence, the three stages of ‘subjugation’, ‘drifting back to the family fold’, and ‘disownment mitigation strategies’ gradually emerged as coding continued through the memoir. Hence, certain categories became obvious fairly early on in the memoir, such as ‘cloistering strategies’ comprised of various strategies that were specifically coded for during her childhood years, such as non-education, forced marriage, cultural elitism, and non-fraternisation.

What are some of the events, incidents, actions, and so on (as indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?

These major categories were indicated during coding and analysis in terms of significant turning points, or epiphanies, that appeared to change the direction of Sanghera’s journey. The first major event was that of Sanghera being shown a photograph of a man that her parents had chosen as her future husband, combined with the action of running away from home and her subsequent disownment by her family. Other events and incidents included her feelings of depression and isolation that haunted Sanghera for many years and that kept prompting her to make contact with her family, thus risking the danger of ‘drifting back to the family fold’. This danger led to the emergence of categories such as ‘abuse’, ‘demonisation’ and ‘emotional bleakness’, which Sanghera had to counter through strategies aimed at mitigating this disownment.

How did theoretical sampling and theoretical formulations guide some of the data collection?

Theoretical sampling in its strictest form (as pursuing ideas through further focused data collection as they emerge from the coding) was not followed in this thesis, because the data were already complete in the form of a delimited ‘text’ and no additional data collection outside this source was attempted. Nevertheless, theoretical formulations did aid the researcher to specifically look for, and code, further evidence of some concepts
as and when they emerged. For example, when the concept of ‘cloistering’ emerged fairly early in the memoir, the researcher specifically looked for other examples of ‘cloistering’ that were designed by her parents and community to keep girls such as Sanghera in a dependent and unworldly state. Once this focus was pursued it became clear that there existed a set of strategies that were employed in an interlocking system to achieve their objective.

What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations?

As shown in chapter 4, numerous memos were written on an ongoing basis, all of them floating ideas and conceptual connections. For instance, the content of Box 4.3 led to the formulation of the hypothesis of whether Sanghera’s rudderless journey after running away was responsible for her inability to immediately break the connection with home and whether this drifting added to the probability that she was more susceptible to temptation (such as going to night clubs and having an extra-marital affair). In addition, the content of Box 4.4 explored the hypothesis that Sanghera could only escape her entrapment if she regained her moral compass by becoming a ‘new’ person in terms of self-care and self-knowledge.

Were there instances when hypotheses did not hold up against what was actually seen?

Yes. At one stage it was hypothesised that Sanghera could only ‘escape’ once her family accepted her back into the family and modified their insistence on an immediate forced marriage for Sanghera. I began to search for strategies that were being employed by Sanghera that were gradually softening the opposition of her parents. This turned out to be a dead-end. Gradually, the theorising turned to the hypothesis that ‘escape’ was only possible not by a change in the external circumstances faced by Sanghera but by a change within herself to become a ‘new’ person through technology of the self.

How and why was the core category selected? Was this sudden or gradual, difficult or easy?
The core category easily emerged from the data, specifically because of the delimited nature of the research question based on how can agents escape from strict discourses? The main concern of Sanghera was coded as ‘escaping discourse’. Her ‘escape’ from the discourse was identified in terms of three stages: ‘cloistering strategies’, ‘drifting back to the family fold’, and ‘disownment mitigation strategies’. In particular, the ultimate escape was coded within the concept of ‘standing outside the cocoon’, a scenario of cognitive escape encapsulated within the event of establishing Karma Nirvana to help women with cultural problems, and coinciding with the moral revelation of Sanghera as an independent and empowered ‘new’ woman.

7.3 Limitations of the thesis

This thesis has selected one ‘text’ as the sole source of data capture in order to address the research question of how agents are capable of escaping a strict discourse. Some may argue that a greater attempt to capture a wider source of data would have paid higher dividends. However, in itself, concentration on a single document source as the topic of a critical discourse analysis is not invalid (Phillips & Hardy 2002), especially, as in this case, the data source comprises a long and detailed narrative of 289 pages involving a significant and critical episode of an event. The question of which text to select as the source of data depends upon addressing a number of relevant questions: for example, what texts are most important in constructing the object of analysis; what texts are produced by the most powerful actors; and which texts are available for analysis? (Phillips & Hardy 2002, p. 75). In response to these questions, this thesis decided that Shame represented a powerful text for highlighting the strong entrapment of the discourse of honour and constructing the objects of ‘subjugation’ and ‘escape’; that the central figure of Jasvinder Sanghera represented a powerful actor who has become known as the driving proponent of legislation and other action against the practice of forced marriage; and whose memoir was immediately available as a self-contained text for analysis.

Another of the potential limitations of the thesis is that it concentrates on only one ‘journey’ within a certain cultural context. This context is that of the
pluralistic/democratic nature of the primarily Anglo-Saxon cultural scenario within modern Britain. The basis of this analysis has therefore confined the thesis within a certain set of social and cognitive circumstances that are only experienced by a certain subset of victims of forced marriage and honour-based violence. Questions may well be asked as to how victims trapped within other cultural circumstances would have behaved, for example, within societies that articulate different conceptions of the role of women, or that encompass different legislative environments? Other questions may relate to how women facing honour killings rather than only disownment would have behaved in such circumstances. Sanghera’s parents did not embrace a cultural/religious mindset that advocated death as the solution for bringing shame on the family. For them, the solution was to disown their daughter and state that she was ‘dead in their eyes’ in order to redeem their family honour in the eyes of the community. If the probability of an honour killing had been a reality for Sanghera then, obviously, the various strategies she employed to reach out to her family after running away would not have been contemplated and her strategy to ‘escape’ would have taken on a different approach. Although this limitation is recognised in this thesis it should still be realised that sociocognitive analysis is well placed to take advantage of the swirl of circumstances that embrace any particular research study. Sociocognitive analysis articulates the interface of cognition with societal context in terms of issues that are here-and-now significant for any particular protagonist. The immediate relevance of such aspects in terms of how they impact on the cognitive interpretation that drives this form of critical discourse analysis, is one of the primary reasons why sociocognitive analysis was selected as the methodology for analysing Sanghera’s journey of transformation.

7.4 Suggestions for further research

Suggestions for further research revolve around the possibility of future researchers extending and/or modifying the overall model presented in Figures 5.1 – 5.3 and further exploring the concept of agency. The model as presented cannot be regarded as ‘wrong’ in grounded theory terms, although it should always be regarded as ‘incomplete’ in the
sense that it is capable of being modified when confronted with different or extended contextual circumstances (Strauss & Corbin 1990).

One suggestion for further research is to add to the breadth of the data sources by including other memoir-type books that are available to the general public. Several of these have already been mentioned in chapter 2, including Shah (2009), Younis (2012), Ali (2008), Ahmed (2008), and Athwal (2013). None of these texts was selected for this thesis because none of them provide a description of the issues of forced marriage and honour-based abuse through a transformational journey as experienced by Sanghera in terms of before and after the potential of a forced marriage. However, each of these other memoirs do provide insight to smaller aspects of the overall transformational journey and therefore provide possibilities for adding to the depth and variability of the model expounded in this thesis. Additionally, memoirs could be used that describe the salient aspects of these issues as experienced within a different culture, especially a culture that is regarded as being more repressive in terms of its attitude towards female emancipation. Sanghera’s journey was heavily influenced by the more promiscuous nature of the surrounding discourse within which the discourse of honour was based. However, if the surrounding discourse was essentially similar to the aspects of the discourse of honour experienced by Sanghera, then her journey would most probably have been substantially different. Memoirs such as those written by Hirsi Ali (Caged Virgin [2006] and Infidel [2007]) could be useful in this regard.

Other suggestions for further research involve extending the data source beyond memoir-type texts and adding to the data richness and variety through personal interviews. As explained in chapter 4, personal interviews of this nature are not always superior to written memoirs because the presence of an interviewer can act as a deterrent to the respondent being as openly emotional and truthful as could be expected in a written text. Especially when interviews involve a highly personal account encompassing the relating of traumatic events, a respondent cannot be expected to be openly cathartic in front of a stranger. This would particularly be the case involving young girls and women who derive from the discourse communities most affected by these issues. Nevertheless, the case for personal interviews could still be advanced, either as a stand-alone method or in combination with written texts on the grounds of
introducing more variability to the data. Such participants could be sourced from the clients that are already known to charities such as Karma Nirvana, Southall Black Sisters, Iranian and Kurdish Women’s Rights Organisation, and Freedom Charity as described in chapter 1. Indeed, the volunteers and officers who work for these charities have often experienced forced marriage and honour-based abuse themselves, and could be usefully sourced as interviewees.

A final suggestion for further research revolves around the concept of agency. For example, this thesis has utilised Bandura’s (2006) concept of agency in the social cognitive space. Other researchers could explore how this analysis would be changed if alternative concepts of agency were employed such as self-agency, causal agency theory and human agency.

7.5 Summary

This chapter rounds off the seven chapters that comprise this thesis. It has analysed the implications of the thesis for practitioners and academics. In addition, the criteria for the evaluation of quality have been examined with particular emphasis on the criteria for qualitative studies. The chapter concluded by examining some limitations of the thesis and by advancing some suggestions for further research that future researchers may find rewarding.
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