ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE AMONG INDIAN MUSLIM STUDENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the question of religion and ethnicity as a source of family diversity and ideology. An ideal-typical "traditional Muslim family ideology" was developed and tested. Eight Indian Muslim students at Rhodes University were asked about their attitudes and perceptions of marriage and family life, to determine the particular type of family ideology that these students embraced. Family-related issues such as marriage; the division of labour; gender roles; the extended family system; divorce; and polygamy were addressed. On the basis of the research results, it was found that these students largely adopted the "traditional Muslim family ideology". Religion and ethnicity were found to play an important role in the make-up of these students' perception of marriage and family life, and a strong preference for the extended family was shown.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The word 'Islam' means submission and peace, and anyone who follows Islam is called a Muslim. Islam in the youngest monotheistic religion, and its laws regulate all aspects of a Muslim's personal and social life. One-sixth of the world's population (approximately one billion people) are Muslim, and adhere to most aspects of Islamic law (The Modern Religion, 2000: http://www.themodernreligion.com). Most of the world's Muslim population can be found in the Middle East, South Asia, and North Africa. There is also a significant Muslim immigrant population in England, the United States, and France. There are approximately 500 000 Muslims in South Africa, 300 000 of whom are of Indian descent, living mainly in Kwa-Zulu Natal and Gauteng (Personal correspondence with the Jamiat Ulema KwaZulu-Natal, June 2000).

The basis of Islamic creed is the declaration of belief in the singularity of God (*Allah*) and the prophethood of Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). One cannot claim to be Muslim if one does not sincerely believe in these articles of faith. Muslims believe that the *Holy Qu'ran* was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) 1 421 years ago. The *Holy Qu'ran* is considered to be the word of God, and its contents form the basis of all Islamic law (*Shariah*). The actions (*sunnah*) and words (*hadith*) of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) are also used to establish and practice law, as he is seen is seen as the ideal Muslim who practised the spirit of all that is embodied in the *Holy Qu'ran*.

There are five important "pillars" that form the basis of Islam. These are: the declaration of faith in the oneness of God and the prophethood of Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) - (*shahadah*); the payment of *zakaat* – two and a half percent of one's net assets to help poor Muslims; to make a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina at least once in a lifetime if one can afford to do so (*hajj*); to perform prayers five times a day at the appointed times (*salaah*); and fasting in the month of *Ramadaan* (Waines, 1995:3-8). There is a strong emphasis on balancing individual and group interests, and nowhere is this more evident that in the rules governing the practice of marriage and family life.

This study originated from recent developments by the South African government to explore the possibility of legally recognising marriages concluded under Islamic law. The move by the South African government reflected a worldwide ideological acceptance of family diversity by family sociologists and law-makers. Muslim marriages, were not recognised as valid unions under past South African law due to their potentially polygamous nature, which was viewed as a threat to gender equality in marriage, as defined by the State. Marriage, according to the South African State, was defined as a life-long voluntary union between one man and one woman (Cronje, 1994:149 **in** Ziehl, 1997a:149). Consequently, this definition excluded same-sex marriages; marriages concluded under African customary and Islamic law; as well as those conducted according to Buddhist and Hindu customs.

However, the democratisation of the South African political and legal systems led to a reconsideration of the legal status of marriages concluded under cultural and religious systems, such as Islam, Hinduism, and traditional African customs. A greater commitment was shown to the recognition of various cultural and religious definitions of gender equality in marriage. This rethink was given substance by the introduction of the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act of 1998, and solidified the government's approach of accepting a variety of marriage and family conventions, arising out of the practice of cultural and religious traditions - a constitutionally enshrined right according to Section 15 (3) of the Final Constitution of 1996. This commitment was given further credence by the South African Law Commission which established a project committee in March 1999 to investigate the extent to which provision could be made in South African law for the recognition of Islamic family law (South African Law Commission, 2000: http://www.law.wits.ac.za/salc/issue/ip15.wp). The committee's findings were released at the end of May 2000, and proposed that Islamic forms of marriage and divorce, including polygamy, should be permissible, within the limitations set out in the *Qu'ran* (South African Law Commission, 2000: http://www.law.wits.ac.za/salc/issue/ip15/wp).

Marriage *(nikah)* is regarded as a religious contract, rather than a sacrament in Islam, concluded by an offer and acceptance between two qualified parties before two witnesses. The marriage contract can be dissolved through divorce (which will be discussed later). Both the bride and the bridegroom can stipulate conditions for marriage. Women are free to refuse to enter into a marriage contract. However, traditionally, the woman herself is not

allowed to negotiate her marriage contract. She is given into marriage by her guardian (*wali*), who is usually her father. In his absence, her grandfather or brother may act as her guardian. The guardian gives a woman into marriage with her consent and in the presence of two witnesses (Engineer, 1992:107). This usually takes place at a mosque, although this is not absolutely necessary, and the signing of the marriage contract may take place anywhere. The *nikah* is in practice not a union of two individuals so much as a contract between two families (Waines, 1995:94).

The bride receives a gift (*mahr*), according to the contract, paid to her directly by the husband, the agreed amount forming part of her personal property over which her husband, father, or any other person has no legal right (Waines, 1995:95). *Mahr* is an essential part of a Muslim marriage. Without it, a *nikah* cannot be concluded. The *mahr* must be paid before the solemnisation of the marriage contract. It is seen as a token of love, truthfulness and sincerity, rather than bridewealth.

Islam assigns the leadership of the family to men, and they are entirely responsible for supporting and maintaining their families. Maintenance includes food, clothing, and shelter. Women are not obliged to contribute to the family income, irrespective of whether they have the means to do so. A woman has the right to demand maintenance dues from her husband. Men are seen to be physically and emotionally stronger, while women are more sensitive and emotional. The wife is her husband's companion and helpmate, who, together with her husband, is responsible for the affairs of the household, the physical and emotional well-being of its members, and the socialisation of children (Haneef, 1985:143).

Ideally, the relationship between husband and wife should be reciprocal. According to the *Qu'ran*, the husband and wife are "each other's garments" (2:187). Thus, the relationship is an equal one in terms of appreciation for each other. Men and women are completely equal in terms of accountability to God, and in possessing unique personalities. As a result of these differing qualities, men and women are said to be entrusted with particular roles and functions in society. They are free to pursue personal interests, provided that their marital responsibilities, or any other aspects of *Shariah* are not neglected in any way. Generally, the family is seen as a refuge from society, and is as Lasch (1977) put it "a haven in a heartless world".

Islam permits polygamy and a man may marry up to four wives, as is illustrated by the following *Qu'ranic* verse:

"...marry such women as seem good to you, two, or three, or four; but if you fear that you will not do justice, then marry only one or that which your right hand possess. This is more proper that you may not do injustice."

(*Holy Qu'ran* 4:3).

The emphasis here is on the just treatment of women - material and emotional equality and fairness to all wives. It must also be noted that these verses were also revealed after the Battle of Uhud, in which ten percent of the male Muslim population was killed (Engineer, 1992:103). This sharply reduced the number of Muslim men, and led to a large number of widows and female orphans. These women needed to be taken care of, and in that social context, Muslim males were to marry these widows and orphans to care for them. Muslim males were permitted to marry up to four women, on condition that they were all treated in a just and equitable manner. If a man is unable to do so, then he should marry only one woman (Engineer, 1992:102). Polygamous marriages should only occur, then, under very specific and highly exceptional circumstances, such as a shortage of men in a particular society, or if a man is wealthy enough to support multiple wives. Engineer (1992:103) argues that the practice should be considered "as good as impermissible". Clearly, then, polygamy is not encouraged in Islam. However, some Muslim men treat it as a norm, and insist on retaining the practice, despite the absence of the context in which the verses were revealed, and ignorance of the strict rules governing polygamous marriages.

An Islamic marriage contract may be dissolved by the death of one of the spouses or by the act of divorce (*talaaq*). While Islam disapproves of the notion of divorce (it is regarded as the most hated of all legal institutions), it is recognised as a necessary social evil and tolerated under certain circumstances. Divorce should be pronounced twice by the husband, followed by a waiting period, in which time reconciliation may take place. If no reconciliation takes place, then divorce is pronounced for a third time, and the marriage is dissolved. The husband may not re-marry his wife until she has married and divorced another man. A husband may pronounce divorce without specified reasons and in the absence of his wife. While the right to institute divorce is regarded as the unilateral right of the husband, he may delegate this right to his wife either as a condition of the marriage contract or at a later stage (Moosa, 1999:4).

The delegated divorce (*talaaq-tafwid)* is a typically female-instigated divorce but is under-utilised because of a lack of awareness of its existence. The delegated divorce offers women equal access to divorce since it allows the wife to terminate the marriage in order to obtain her freedom expeditiously. There are also other options of divorce available to women, such as *khul* - divorce by mutual agreement of the spouses. However, if a woman asks for a *khul*, she has to return all or part of her dower (Moosa, 1999:5). While Mahomed (1998) contends that Islamic law grants parties equal rights of divorce, Moosa (1999:6), argues that it would be more correct to state that Muslim women have **equitable**, rather than equal, rights of divorce given the general lack of knowledge about protection mechanisms such as the delegated divorce. Divorce should be seen as a last resort after ensuring that every possible attempt has been made at achieving reconciliation, including arbitration by both families:

"If you fear a breach between the two, appoint an arbiter from his people and an arbiter from her people. If they both desire an agreement, Allah will effect harmony between them"

(*Holy Qu'ran* 4:35).

Islamic family ideology also advocates the extended family system. This is reflected in a number of *hadith* and *Qu'ranic* injunctions that demand respect for parents, and exhort children to take care of their parents in old age. Family participation is also encouraged in marriages, and the *nikah* is seen as a contract between families, rather than individuals. For example, family intervention is sought in cases where divorce is being considered.

Much has been written on the joint and extended family systems, and its numerous variations. Before one begins any discussion on these family systems, however, it is first necessary to define a nuclear family. According to Jithoo (1983:47), the nuclear family is a conjugal unit consisting of only two generations: husband, wife, and unmarried children. If the children are married, it ceases to be a nuclear family. The nuclear family should be seen as a phase in the developmental cycle of the family.

In terms of the extended family, Murdock (**in** Jithoo, 1983:47) states that an extended family consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated through an extension of the parent-child relation, rather than of the husband-wife relation, ie. by joining the nuclear family of a married adult to that of his parents. It is this definition of the extended family that has been adopted in this study. Owens (1968) distinguishes between commensal, co-

residential and coparcenary extended families. The co-residential extended family lives together within the same household. If this family ate together, then they would be regarded as commensal. A coparcenary extended family would share economic resources and finances, as is the case with family-owned businesses and traders. The term 'family', here, refers to the "hearth" group, that budgets and eats together.

Shah (1974), Karve (1953) and Bose (1963) all agree that the joint family is a group of people who generally live under one roof, eat food cooked at one hearth, hold common property, participate in common family worship, and who are related. The commonality of the kitchen seemed to be the crucial element in the definition of the joint family (as quoted by Jithoo, 1983:53). Jithoo, however, rejects the commonality of the kitchen as a determinant of a joint family. She defines a joint family simply as "two married couples living together and related" (**in** Steyn *et al.*, 1987:57). This definition still retains the genealogical and co-residential aspects, and is not restrictive in terms of commensality. I have adopted Jithoo's definition of the joint family in this study, as it is broad enough to accommodate a variety of extended family systems. In a lineal joint family, the husbands are related as father and son. In a co-lateral joint family, the ties are related through a brother-brother tie.

Traditionally, the co-lateral joint family form was regarded as the norm among Indians in South Africa. Power resided in the elders, and they in turn were responsible for caring for other members of the kin group. Kin group members were located in geographical proximity to one another, usually shared resources. However, research has shown that the extended family no longer predominates in Indian families in this country (Meer, 1969; Jithoo, 1968; 1971). According to Goode (1982:50) surveys conducted in the 1970's show that the majority of families in India live in nuclear households. However he does not provide any figures or sources to substantiate this claim. He also claims that the joint family is dominant among the rural, uneducated residents of India.

The proposals of the South African Law Commission have brought contentious issues such as the recognition of religious and ethnic marriage and divorce traditions; polygamy; and gender equality to the foreground. This has highlighted the need to research familiar ideology, and the effect that religion and ethnicity has on attitudes and expectations of marriage and family life, particularly within the South African Muslim community. This

study will focus on family ideology among Indian Muslim students. This group has been chosen as result of my personal involvement in, and membership of, this sector of the Muslim community. I have chosen to focus on this group for several reasons. It is generally accepted that the Muslim community in this country is in a state of flux (See http://www.jamiat.org.za; http://www.islamsa.org.za; and Moosa **in** Prozesky and de Gruchy, 1995). Religious and cultural influences have been eroded as a result of increased contact with non-Islamic cultures, due to the demise of apartheid. Marriage and family life are seen as the core of Muslim society, and changes (if any) of family ideology must be explored to understand the nature of the changes that the community faces.

It is at this juncture that I would like to expand on the meaning of family ideology, and its use in this study. According to Bernardes (1985:279) family ideology refers to a varied and multi-layered system of ideas and practices which holds that 'the family' is a natural and universally present phenomenon (**in** Ziehl, 1997b:149). However, according to Barrett (1980) family ideology may be seen merely as a set of ideas about family life that inform behaviour (practice) (**in** Ziehl, 1997b:149). In this study, the term 'family ideology' will refer to Barrett's definition. It is important to distinguish between the ideology of family life and the practice of family life. In other words, what people say, think, and believe is not necessarily translated into practice.

Virtually no research has been conducted on the experiences of young Indian Muslims in South Africa. An extensive body of literature exists on the history and sociology of the Indian family in South Africa (Palmer, 1957; Kuper, 1960; Meer, 1969; Watts, 1971; Jithoo, 1978, 1983, 1987, 1991). Limited research has also been conducted on family ideology among Indians (Kellerman and Ramasar **in** Steyn *et al.*, 1987). However, no research focuses exclusively on *young* Indian Muslims. Research on young Muslims is needed to examine any changes in family ideology across generations, and can serve as a comparison for previous studies on Indian families. Edross (1997) explored discourses of tradition and modernity among young "Malay" female students at the University of Cape Town. This study represented an attempt to redress the lack of research on this sector of the Muslim community. However, this study focussed entirely on students who identified themselves as "non-Indian" (Edross, 1997:29).

Eight students at Rhodes University were interviewed and their attitudes and perceptions of marriage and divorce conventions were explored. The main aim of the research was to explore the particular family ideology that these young Muslims embraced. Given the acceptance of Muslim family ideology and law by sociologists and the state, it is interesting to explore whether young Muslims are now embracing what Kellerman (**in** Steyn, 1987:535) has regarded as the traditional Western description of family ideology. The essential features of this ideology are: (a) sexual relations are restricted to marriage; (b) between one man and one woman; (c) who through mutual attraction; (d) are bound to each other for life; (e) with the object of producing and raising children; (f) in a neo-local residential setting; (g) with the husband as breadwinner; (h) the wife as housekeeper; (i) with the husband occupying the dominant position of authority.

These elements were used as a framework for the formulation of questions, and my analysis focused on concepts such as gender roles and the division of labour, monogamy, divorce, and the prevalence of the extended family. Before one can proceed to a study and analysis of such complex issues and concepts, it is necessary to explore the various theoretical debates that rage in the field of family sociology. The next chapter will explore the issue of family diversity and the contributions that various academics have made towards an understanding of the different family forms and ideologies that exist today.

1. EXPLORING FAMILY DIVERSITY

Traditional Conceptions of the Family

Any discussion on diverse, non-traditional, or alternative family forms needs to begin with some elucidation of these terms. These terms suggest a variation from the norm, but what is the norm or the ideal? In order to explore family diversity, it is first necessary to understand what is meant by "traditional". Structural-functional family theory was generally accepted as "standard family theory" (Cheal, 1991:3 as quoted by Ziehl, 1997b:55), and was representative of the type of theory that dominated discussions of the family until the 1960's. The traditional family pattern was defined as a legal, life-long, sexually exclusive marriage between one man and one woman, with children, where the male was the primary breadwinner with ultimate authority (Macklin **in** Sussman and Steinmetz, 1987:317). Functionalist family theory provided the theoretical basis for definitions such as these, and one needs to explore this perspective more closely.

Functionalism views society as a system - a set of interconnected parts that together form a whole. The basic unit of analysis is society, and its various parts are understood primarily in terms of their relationship to the whole. Social institutions such as the family and religion are analysed as a part of the social system, rather than as isolated units, specifically with reference to the contribution they make to the system as a whole, in order to meet its basic needs to exist (Ollenburger and Moore, 1992:14).

One of the most prominent functionalists, and certainly the most influential, was Talcott Parsons. Parsons has written extensively on the family, and the role of women within the family and society. While Parsons concentrated his analysis on the family in modern American society, his ideas had a more general application. He argued that the American family retained two basic and irreducible functions that were common to families in all societies. These two functions were the primary socialisation of children and the stabilisation of adult personalities (Haralambos and Holborn, 1994:462).

Families were seen as the most important vehicles of socialisation, where society's culture and norms were internalised by the child and structured into their personality. The child's personality was moulded in terms of the most important values of society. Parsons argued

that this was a vital function of the family since social life would not be possible without the sharing of common norms and values (Haralambos and Holborn, 1994:462). The family then stabilised the personality that was produced as a result of the internalisation of shared social values. The emphasis here was on marriage and emotional security, which countered the stresses and strains that were placed on the individual in society. The family was seen as a refuge, offering its members protection and security from social problems.

A second important aspect of the family was the differentiation of sex roles. According to Parsons, women played the "expressive" role in the family such as nurturing, care giving, and maintaining harmony. Men played the "instrumental" roles of providing food, shelter, clothing, and other essential survival needs through paid employment (Bidwell and van der Mey, 2000:74). A woman's position within the family was clearly defined:

"...The woman's fundamental status is that of her husband's wife, the mother of his children"

(Parsons, 1954:223-224).

Women were discouraged from seeking formal employment, as this would have been seen as a disruption of the family system. The family was seen as a small group that needed to fulfil vital functions if society was to function smoothly (Steinmetz, *et al.*, 1990:128).

Parsons contended that the economic division of labour characteristic of industrial societies was incompatible with the maintenance of extended families, but was ideally served by the nuclear family. When the family was restricted to a small group with a single breadwinner, who was also head of the family, conflict between family members working in different occupations was avoided (Muncie and Sapsford **in** Muncie *et al.*, 1997:14). The nuclear family prevented the competitive elements of industrial wage labour from undermining family solidarity. There was a functional relationship between the nuclear family and the needs of industrialism. Small family units, it was argued, were geographically and economically mobile, and able to respond to the changing demands of an industrial economy (Muncie and Sapsford **in** Muncie *et al.*, 1997:14).

For most of this century this 'cereal packet image of the 'family' dominated family sociology (Oakley **in** Haralambos and Holborn, 1994:488). However, beginning in the 1960's, this approach became the subject of widespread attack. Feminist writers have been

at the forefront of the critique against traditional family sociology, and have deconstructed the image of the happily married couple with two children, whose material needs were met by the male breadwinner, while the wife had a predominantly domestic role.

The Family: Haven or Prison?

Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) represented one of the first major attempts to deconstruct the myth of the family as a haven. Friedan described an 'underlying feeling of emptiness' that many American housewives were experiencing as a result of their non-participation in the world outside their home (Segal **in** Muncie *et al.*, 1997:298). Three years later, Juliet Mitchell declared that the family was a site of despair and violence (Segal **in** Muncie *et al.*, 1997:298). In the same year, Hannah Gavron documented the isolation and frustration of full-time housewives in *The Captive Wife: Conflicts of Housebound Wives* (1966).

Other studies also revealed high levels of depression, loneliness and low self-esteem among suburban housewives (Oakley, 1974; Brown and Harris, 1978; Bernard, 1973; and Bart 1971). In the 1980's Barrett and McIntosh (1982) continued the portrayal of the home and family as a prison, by comparing housework to working in solitary confinement, while men attended to more important tasks (1982:58). In most feminist writings on the family, housework and domestic tasks were portrayed as a burden to be avoided at all costs. Men's non-participation in the home was stressed, as well as the inequalities between husbands and wives.

Young and Wilmott (1975), however, argued that men's participation in the home had actually increased, and there was an increasing symmetry in the family. In a study of 1 928 people in London, they found that, while women still had primary responsibility for housework and childrearing, seventy two percent of husbands did housework other than washing up during the course of a week. They further argued that husbands and wives increasingly shared both leisure activities and decision-making (**in** Haralambos and Holborn, 1994:500).

However, these findings have been criticised by feminists. Oakley argues that the claim of increasing symmetry is based on faulty methodology. The figure of 72% is based on one

question in the interview schedule that asked whether men help at least once a week with any household chores. It was argued that even men who make a negligible contribution would be included in this figure (Oakley **in** Haralambos and Holborn, 1994:501). Oakley's own research supported her criticism of Young and Wilmott's claim of the emergence of the symmetric family. In a study of 40 British women, Oakley found that few men had a high level of participation in housework and childcare, concluding that few marriages could be defined as egalitarian (**in** Haralambos and Holborn, 1994:501).

Research conducted in South Africa has mirrored the findings of American and British studies. Machonachie's (1992) study of white couples revealed that the division of labour is highly segregated, with the majority of domestic tasks being performed by women. Machonachie (1992:13-14) also found that the tasks that women performed were greater in number; needed to be performed more regularly; were more time-consuming; and were more likely to be performed indoors, than the tasks undertaken by men. Her study also showed that the employment of a domestic worker further reduced men's participation in housework.

Even in terms of decision-making, there was little evidence to support Young and Wilmott's claim of the emergence of an egalitarian family. In a study of 1 120 people in 1984, Edgell found that women were still responsible for decisions relating to child-rearing and household tasks, such as interior decorations, domestic spending and children's clothes - areas which were considered unimportant. Men dominated three areas of decision-making: those related to moving house, finance and the car - all of which were regarded as important. Decisions relating to money closely reflected the overall pattern that Edgell discovered. He found that, typically, the husband decided the overall allocation of financial resources and had the most say in the case of decisions involving large sums of money, whereas the wife, in every family in the sample, tended to make the minor decisions (**in** Haralambos and Holborn, 1994:504).

However, feminist writers' tendency to dismiss the family as a patriarchal, oppressive institution has been acknowledged as being simplistic. Betty Friedan in *The Second Stage* (1981) publicly recanted her earlier work, *The Feminine Mystique*, and accused feminists of being anti-family. She argued that writers were mistaken in stressing women's need for autonomy, and highlighting their dissatisfaction with full-time motherhood. Other works

such as Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born* (1976) and Nancy Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) emphasised the importance of women's maternalism, and the transformative potential of the mothering experience (Segal **in** Muncie *et al.*, 1997:303).

Feminist writers have also paid more attention to the ambivalence that women have in relation to domestic work and mothering. Studies conducted in the United States show that nearly half of all couples think that income earning should be solely the husbands' responsibility and that only a minority of women would like to do less housework (21%) and/or would like their husbands to do more housework (36%) (Ferree, 1990:873 **in** Ziehl, 1997b:60). Other studies have shown that 61% of women in Britain and 68% of women in the former West Germany believe that a woman should stay at home when her children are under schooling age (Elliot, 1996:31). A further 29% and 22% respectively showed a preference for part-time employment while only 3% and 2% respectively believed that she should work full-time.

Even in a progressive society like Sweden, studies show that the vast majority of the population (82% in one survey) felt that it was better for a woman to stay at home and not be employed when her children were very young (as quoted by Ziehl, 1997b:60). Although younger men and women tend to be less traditional, almost one-third supported the traditional motherhood model. Another study showed that nearly two-thirds of men and half of women expressed a preference for the male being the main breadwinner (Ellingslaeter **in** Ziehl, 1997b:60).

Machonachie's South African study revealed that 85% of subjects believed that the husband should be the head of the home and 73% expressed the view that women with pre-school children should not work at all (1992:314). In a study of whites in Grahamstown, Ziehl (1997b:325) reported that 57% of respondents found working mothers unacceptable, indicating that the majority of women identify with traditional gender roles and the sexual division of labour within the family.

These empirical studies have resulted in the family and housework being portrayed in a more complex manner by feminists in the late 1980's and 1990's. Women are no longer seen as victims of social forces and the family is not portrayed as a prison. According to

Ferree (1990:880) a new gender approach has emerged, which sees women playing an active role in gender construction and family relationships. This approach also emphasises the symbolic meaning of housework, which has been seen as the key to understanding relationships within families. According to Segal:

"...feminist writing has veered between critique and celebration of women's domestic and maternal roles within families...touching upon the complexities of women's more ambivalent attitudes, it has all the while mostly attempted to stress the diversity of family forms"

(**in** Muncie *et al.*, 1997:309).

Elliot (1986:133) echoes these sentiments and argues that while the family may be a place of control, oppression, and potentially unstable relationships, negative readings fail to recognise the diverse ways in which family life may be experienced:

"Images of the conjugal family as both haven and prison lead to ambivalence and neutrality...Yet attention to the nurturant and supportive as well as the oppressive side of families is not just an ambivalence. It is, in part, a recognition of the fact that family life may be experienced in different ways by different people...It recognises that not only love and altruism, but the whole range of human feelings find expression in family life"

(Elliot, 1986:133).

One cannot, therefore, view 'the family' as a homogenous category, with a uniform experience. Ambiguities towards housework and the sexual division of labour demonstrate that the family experience is diverse. Writers have moved beyond simply criticising the Parsonian approach to the family, and have accepted that one cannot view the family in an either-or manner. It is not simply a prison or a haven for its members.

Ethnicity as a Source of Diversity

According to Hussein and O'Brien (1998:2),

"With the continuous movement of people across national frontiers fundamental problems have surfaced in the construction of new social boundaries and the structuring of families".

Ethnicity is also, then "a source of family diversity" (Haralambos and Holborn, 1994:419). According to Jary and Jary (1991:151) ethnicity refers to a shared racial, linguistic or national identity of a particular social group. It is a problematic term, and has sometimes been conflated with the term "racial group". Ethnicity incorporates several forms of collective identity, including cultural and religious forms. In this study, ethnicity refers

specifically to cultural ethnicity - the belief in a shared language, religion, and other cultural values and practices (Jary and Jary, 1991:151-152).

Various studies have been conducted on immigrant populations in England and the United States in order to ascertain the degree to which traditional beliefs and cultures have affected family structures and ideology among migrant populations. In England, these studies have focussed on South Asian (Indian Hindu and Muslim; and Pakistani Muslim families), as well West Indian families, as these groups form the largest migrant populations in that country. Increasing attention has been paid to the extent to which family relationships are typical of the societies of origin of ethnic minorities. This type of research has become more necessary as huge waves of immigration in the twentieth century has led to ethnically diverse populations in England. I shall be focussing specifically on research conducted on South Asian families in England, as these families are quite similar in terms of language and culture to South African Indian Muslims. England and South Africa are also similar in terms of racial and cultural diversity, and the results of these studies would prove quite useful in understanding Indian Muslim families in South Africa.

South Asian Families in England

Socio-historical Background

Migration from South Asia to England began in the 1950's, and was mainly from the Punjab (in what is now Pakistan), Gujarat and Bengal areas, and was unrestricted until 1962. The initial migration flow was of men for economic reasons and was part of a wider flow of migrants to fill the labour shortages in post-war Europe. The extended family, kin group, or village in South Asia would pool their resources to send one male member to Britain, who in turn would regularly send part of his earnings back home to be distributed (Hussain and O'Brien, 1998:3). The 1962 UK Immigration Law ended the automatic entry of South Asians into Britain. Entry into the country was limited to those who had work vouchers, or children under 18 years old. As a result, the number of adolescent boys entering Britain to work alongside their fathers, brothers or relatives grew significantly.

At this stage, the migration of wives took place at a very slow pace, and the predominance of males continued until the 1970's. Male migration kept the traditional family and kinship ties strong, with male workers returning to the subcontinent every few years to get married and participate in various family events. The final intention behind this flow of male migrants was that they would eventually return 'home' to their extended families, and that their younger male relatives would replace them in Britain and continue sending part of their wages home (Hussain and O'Brien, 1998:4).

Further immigration restrictions in 1971 ended the migration of single men and shifted the emphasis to family reunification by permitting wives and children to enter together as dependants of male workers. This led to an increase in the proportion of South Asian women to men. However, immigrants still had a difficult time bringing their own children to England, because immigration officers refused to believe that they were their children. (DNA testing has since eased this problem). Tax laws did not even recognise the responsibilities a recent immigrant may have towards any legitimate children living in their country of origin (Land **in** Muncie *et al.*, 1997:90). The European Court ruled in July 1992 that some of the English immigration rules restricting the entry of foreign husbands of British women were unlawful. British immigration laws initially made it enormously difficult for immigrants to establish a stable family life in England. This has been reflected in the way that South Asians have organised their family life in England.

Conflict and Change in South Asian Families in England

Cultural conflict and inter-generational studies have featured prominently in studies of South Asian families in England. Most discussions take as its starting point an assumption that there are major conflicts between parents born in the subcontinent and their British-born children. Emphasis is placed on the incompatibility of Muslim and western culture and on the discontinuities and contradictions between the two generations. Young South Asians are often portrayed as "a rootless generation caught between two cultures" (Ballard **in** Saifullah Khan, 1979:109).

Ballard (**in** Rapoport *et al.*, 1982) examined South Asian families (both Indian and Pakistani) in Britain and compared them to South Asia itself. Ballard found that South Asian families in Britain differed markedly from families in South Asia. South Asian families were traditionally based around a man, his sons and grandsons, and their

respective wives and unmarried daughters. These families lived and worked together in large multi-generational households, sharing domestic and production tasks (Ballard **in** Haralambos and Holborn, 1994:352).

However, in British households, women were increasingly working outside the home, and production was less frequently family-based because wage labour provided the most common source of income. Ballard claimed that married couples in Britain expect more independence from their kin. Consequently, extended families were less important, since some kin remain in South Asia, or are dispersed throughout Britain. Families were also split into smaller domestic units, since British housing could rarely accommodate extended family networks. Ballard has pointed out that these changes have not undermined family unity in anyway, and ties with the kin group remain strong (Ballard **in** Haralambos and Holborn, 1994:353).

Inter-generational cultural conflict is seen as the root cause of all social problems in Pakistani families. Women, especially, are seen to be caught between two different cultures and expectations, and find that their identity sometimes reflects two societies. Ballard (**in** Saifullah Khan, 1979:129), however, has argued that this is an oversimplification of a wide range of experiences. She goes on to say that young Muslim Pakistanis are not faced with an either-or situation, but have synthesised Muslim and British values:

"Each individual still has to choose a workable middle course between a culture whose totality he or she has never experienced and a culture which ultimately rejects them as an unwanted alien"

(Ballard **in** Saifullah Khan, 1979:129).

Mirpuri Families in Bradford

Saifullah Khan (1979) conducted a study of Muslim migrants originating from Mirpur, Pakistan, now living in Bradford, to explore family stress and structure among this group, and the extent to which family life had changed from the country of origin. Cultural changes had the most impact on family life for this group. In traditional Mirpuri village life, the individual was the centre of a complex network of rights and duties, which extended outwards from one's immediate family to that of kin and fellow villagers. Individualism and independence were discouraged and seen as selfish characteristics.

Family and kin took priority over individual preference. Relationships within the family were close and emotional and were generally regarded as relationships of locality and obligation. There was a high level of segregation between the sexes, but close same-sex interaction. (Saifullah Khan, 1979:43-44).

The village household was frequently a three-generational joint family unit comprising grandparents, married sons, and their wives and children, unmarried sons and daughters, and sometimes an unmarried, divorced or widowed uncle or aunt. Daughters moved to their husband's family on marriage. Property was held in common and resources pooled whether derived from work on the land or from wage labour. Decisions were made communally, but final authority rested with the head of the household, usually the eldest male (Saifullah Khan, 1979:44). Authority was allocated according to gender (men had more authority than women), and age (elders had more authority than juniors). The closest bonds of friendship and emotional attachment were within the family and close kin. The kin group (*biradari*) regulated and structured relationships in the kin group. These were elders who were respected and had the power to reprimand deviants to maintain the *izzat* (honour) of the group.

One of the most important sources of strain on migrant families was the initial separation from families. This situation was exacerbated by strict British immigration laws that prevented wives from entering England. Migrants were frequently separated from their families, resulting in different experiences and rates of social change. Communication between spouses, and between parents and siblings, were frequently hindered by the inability of one party to write letters and the necessity for communication through a third party (Saifullah Khan, 1979:49). Other sources of stress included death or illness in the family, where families could not provide support to each other as they would have done in the village.

One of the greatest changes of life in Bradford concerned the nature and effect of employment on the family. Men in the village in Mirpur worked in the fields, but were at home during certain times of the day, and were always on hand in times of emergency. In Britain, work was separated entirely from the family, often far from home, and for long night-shifts. Many women did not know where their husbands' factories were situated, and were unable to get in touch with them at work. (Saifullah Khan, 1979:52). For some

women, this meant adjusting to being alone at home for long periods of time for the first time in their lives. For some, this meant being subjected to a stricter form of *purdah* (veiling) and sex segregation, since men could no longer supervise women's interactions. The impersonality and large-scale nature of city life; lack of facility in English and English mannerisms; formal interactions; complex bureaucracy; and the fast pace of city life all served to make family life for Mirpuri migrants more difficult in Bradford. Men and women who had previously lived in a joint family found the sudden independence of living in England stressful. However, others revelled in the privacy and control of running their own households and families (Saifullah Khan, 1979:53).

Despite these stresses, the Mirpuri community in Bradford, developed a close-knit community that served as a substitute joint family. Socio-economic conditions as well as strict immigration laws militated against the formation of a traditional Mirpuri joint family structure. The pressures of urban living and adjusting to a foreign culture placed stress on the migrant family. This was experienced differently by each family. However, greater tension has occurred between migrants and their British-born and educated children, as Haleh Afshar (1994) has shown.

Pakistani Women in Yorkshire

Afshar studied three-generational households in Yorkshire, and found that there was conflict between grandmothers born on the subcontinent and their daughter-in-laws and grand-daughters born in England. Issues such as appropriate behaviour and the pursuit of education were most contentious. Subsequently, this led to significant differences in family ideology between the two generations. Young Muslim women in the study indicated that they would pursue an education and career. Many were opting to marry at a later age than previous generations. Arranged marriages were also rejected by most young women, and almost all the women in the study stressed love and equality as important characteristics in marriage. What was evident was that these students were trying to incorporate traditional beliefs about marriage and family, with western values they had internalised from British society (Afshar **in** Afshar and Maynard, 1994). As a result, many young women were ambivalent in their attitudes towards marriage and family life.

Pakistani Youth

Intergenerational conflict was also the central theme of Hussain and O'Brien's (1998) study. They found that while Islam played an important role in the lives of young Muslims, many were rejecting parental restrictions on education, freedom of movement. Traditional Pakistani family ideology, especially arranged marriages, which were largely based on cultural practices and superstitions inherited from Indo-Pakistani culture, rather than *Qu'ranic* stipulations, was rejected by younger Muslims. Many young women said that they would rather work, than stay home, as their mothers had done. Young men were against arranged marriages, and many had indicated that they would not reject the idea of marrying white, English women (Hussain and O'Brien, 1998:16).

Even concepts such as the veil had taken on a new meaning for young Muslim women in England. In a study of young British Muslim women, Dwyer (1999) found that perceptions of appropriate dress for Muslim women were changing. The women in her study argued that the veil was not an important element in their identity as Muslims.

Studies of families in England reveal that migrant families, mainly from Pakistan, experience stress and adjustment problems. There is also some conflict between the ideology of children born and raised in English society with western norms and values, and parents who cling to traditional beliefs about marriage and family. Young South Asians in England were searching for an acceptable middle path between the two. What these studies have shown is that ethnicity is an important source of family diversity. However, ethnicity is not the only factor that contributes to differing family forms and ideologies. Class and one's position in the domestic life-cycle also play an important role in explaining family diversity.

Class

Social class and economic factors affect the way families organise themselves and their attitudes towards family issues. Issues such as divorce and mortality rates, childbearing, and illegitimacy are all influenced by social class. Research has shown that those individuals in lower-income groups have a higher divorce and mortality rate than those higher up the social scale (Elliot, 1986:146; Haralambos and Holborn, 1994:515; Zinn and Eitzen, 1990:358; White, 1991:145; Elliot and Shamlin, 1992:291). There is also an

inverse relationship between social class and childbearing, ie. lower-income individuals tend to have more children (Zinn and Eitzen, 1990:292; Elliot, 1986:88). This is because those in higher-income groups consider children more of an expense, and have fewer children as a result of the cost of sustaining children (Zinn and Eitzen, 1990:291-292).

Illegitimacy rates are also highest among low-income groups (Collins, 1992:176; Burman and Preston-Whyte, 1992). Since illegitimacy represents one possible route to single-parent families, one could expect to find high rates of both of these in the lower echelons of society (Ziehl, 1997b:97). The extended family is also more likely to occur in the lower-income groups, since accommodation and housing is a resource that can be pooled in times of economic need. The chances of lower class women to be involved in single-parent households (since divorce and mortality rates among lower-income men is high) is highly probable. These single-parent households may then be absorbed into an extended family, leading to a higher incidence of extended family households among the lower-classes.

The Domestic Life-Cycle

In trying to account for various family structures, Fortes distinguishes between three phases in the domestic life-cycle of the domestic group. The first is the phase of expansion, which starts with the marriage of two people and lasts until the birth of the youngest child. This is followed by the phase of dispersion that often overlaps with the first phase, and continues until all the children are married. The phase of replacement is the third phase in the life-cycle of the family, and ends with the death of the parents and the replacement in the social structure of the families of their children (**in** Ziehl, 1997b:75). However, this approach assumes that all families go through a single, normal experience of family life. It is also difficult to apply in practice except where the household is connected to a particular physical structure or geographical location (Kertzer, 1984:211 **in** Ziehl, 1997b:75).

An alternative approach is one that takes the individual as the unit of analysis and documents the nature of the domestic arrangement in which he or she participates over time. This approach illustrates that households change over time and that individuals participate in a number of households in the course of a lifetime. Events such as marriage,

death, divorce, employment and unemployment all mark different stages in the life-cycle of the individual, and have implications for the nature of domestic arrangements. Attitudes towards family issues can also be influenced (Ziehl, 1997b:75).

Family Diversity in South Africa

South Africa's diverse ethnic populations have given rise to various family forms. Evidence has shown that the extended family form prevails in the black population, with whites subscribing primarily to the nuclear model. In a study of blacks living in the rural Eastern Cape, Pauw found that only 21% of households were nuclear, with 58% being extended or multiple families (as quoted by Ziehl, 1997b:109). Argyle's study of whites in Durban found that only 22% of households were extended and 67% were nuclear (as quoted by Ziehl, 1997b:109). However, the nuclear family is more prevalent among *urban* blacks. Mawick found that only 27% of families living in Johannesburg were extended. Schlemmer and Stopforth also found a similar pattern among black families in Phalaborwa where he observed that 69% of households had a simple, nuclear structure (as quoted by Ziehl, 1997b:109). Research conducted on Indian families in South Africa will be discussed at a later stage.

Conclusion

Up until the 1960's, the image of the functional, nuclear family was accepted as the ideal family type. This assumption was questioned and rejected by feminist scholars who showed that women, particularly, were unhappy with their role in the family. However, subsequent research has shown that it is inappropriate to argue that all women are dissatisfied with the structure and experience of their family. Families and the way that individuals experience family life differ, giving rise to a diversity of family forms and ideologies. Various other factors such as the family's place in the domestic life-cycle, class, and ethnicity all impact on the nature of the family, and contribute to the wide array of diversity that exist among families in contemporary society. Given the existence of such a wide array of families that exist, the next chapter will examine the difficult task of trying to define the family.

2. DEFINING THE FAMILY

The term "family" is one of the most commonly used words in our language, yet the concept is difficult to define because it can take so many forms (as has been discussed in the previous chapter) and have so many meanings. The U.S Census Bureau defines a family as:

"Any two or more related people - through birth, adoption, or marriage - living in one household"

(**in** Saxton, 1988:248).

Robert Winch defined the family as:

"A basic societal structure centred around the basic societal function of replacement. The core relationships are husband-wife, parent-child, and sibling-sibling"

(**in** Bidwell and van der Mey, 2000:8).

Joan Aldous and Wilfried Dumon offered one of the broadest definitions:

"It includes cohabiting groups of some duration composed of persons in intimate relationships based on biology, law, custom, or choice and usually economically interdependent"

(**in** Bidwell and van Der Mey, 2000:8).

However, Steinmetz *et al.*, in their preface, has pointed out that there is no such thing as "the family". Rather, the term should be seen as "a convenient short-hand for a variety of constellations of people" (1990:xi). Bernades, however, has gone even further, and called for the complete rejection of the concept of 'the family' (1986:594 as quoted by Ziehl, 1997b:189).

One of the earliest definitions of the family was proposed by Murdock (1949), who, writing from a functionalist perspective, claimed that:

"The family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted of the sexually cohabiting adults"

(Murdock as quoted **in** Haralambos and Holborn, 1994:454).

Murdock argued that despite the various forms that the family takes, it is one of the universals of social structure, and occurs in all known societies. Murdock examined the

institution of the family in 250 societies ranging from small hunting and gathering bands to large-scale industrial societies. He proclaimed that as all societies moved towards modernisation, they formed nuclear families - husband, wife, and children who shared a single residence. This view has been expanded by Goode (1982) who argued that the nuclear family "fits" the needs of industrialism. He further argues that as all societies are moving towards industrialisation, traditional family forms are breaking down.

"Family research in the post-World War II period has documented...that in all parts of the world...all social systems are moving fast or slowly towards some form of the conjugal family system and also towards industrialisation"

(Goode, 1982:108).

Goode uses the terms "nuclear" and "conjugal" interchangably, and defines this type of family as one that maintains little or no relations with their more extended kin. A nuclear family system, then, is one in which more social emphasis is placed on the conjugal bond (Goode, 1982:51). The conjugal family is founded on intimate relations, since a small number of people live in close contact with one another. Goode further argues that industrialising societies create formal agencies to perform the functions of the larger kin group, thereby allowing individual families greater independence. Elders no longer control economic and political opportunities, since industrialisation provides opportunities for career and educational advancement. Industrialisation gradually undermines traditional systems of family control and exchange (Goode, 1982:52).

Parsons, too, contended that the economic division of labour, characteristic of industrialised societies, is incompatible with the maintenance of extended families. When the family is restricted to a small group with a single breadwinner, who is also the head of the family, conflicts between family members working in different occupations are avoided. There is a functional 'fit' between the nuclear family system and the needs of industry, as small units are economically mobile and better able to respond to the changing demands of an industrial economy (Muncie and Sapsford **in** Muncie *et al.*, 1997:14).

However, research has shown that Parsons' and Goode's conception of the functional, nuclear family is flawed (See Laslett, 1971; Anderson, 1971, Young and Wilmott, 1962; Litwak **in** Elliot, 1986). All of these studies show that most families do not operate according to Parsons' theory. As Ziehl (1997b:120) puts it:

"The 'fit' which he claims exists is between the economy and the ***ideas*** *rather than actual composition and structure of families as concrete domestic arrangements (households)"*
(Emphasis added).

New Approaches to the Family

Research has indicated that a wide variety of family forms exist, as a result of various socio-economic forces such as class and ethnicity. Given the diversity of families, and the apparent discrepancy between family ideology and family practice, the task of defining 'the family' has become virtually impossible. Scholars of the family have taken a different approach to defining the family, and have emphasised the importance of viewing the family as a dynamic process, rather than a monolithic structure.

Ziehl (1997b:140-144) states that the challenge facing family sociologists is finding a definition broad enough to account for the diverse family structures which exist, and specific enough to be used as a meaningful tool for communication, analysis, research, and theorising. Ziehl suggests considering the family as a social institution, which would be seen as referring to all ideas and practices that relate to sexual relationships, parenting and residence. The family would be seen as synonymous with the social context within which sexuality is expressed, children are raised, and people live. Such a definition aims to be as inclusive as possible, and would not privilege one particular context or domestic arrangement above others.

Ziehl's arguments is similar to the approach suggested by Dallos and Sapsford (**in** Muncie *et al.*, 1997), who argue that family life should be seen as a dynamic *process*. They argues that regardless of what family form or grouping people live in, they all face the fundamental tasks of child-care; regulation of sexuality; establishing a sense of identity and boundary as an individual; patterns of intimacy as a couple and as some form of family unit; negotiating roles in terms of divisions of duties and decision-making; and defining some rules about the patterns of mutual obligations or duties (Dallos and Sapsford **in** Muncie *et al.*, 1997:165).

These authors argue that the definition of a family, then, can be seen as the negotiation and completion of these tasks. This suggests that family life is a fluid process, and the continuing attempts to complete and solve these tasks embody family life, rather than the

particular form (nuclear, single-parent, extended family, and so on) that emerges as an attempted solution (Dallos and Sapsford **in** Muncie *et al.*, 1997:165).

Family sociologists have therefore moved away from trying to conceptualise 'the family' as a concrete category, which inevitably excludes some family groupings and domestic arrangements. Viewing the family as a social institution and a process allows all family forms to be acknowledged, and is based on the way that people *live* rather than what they *think.*

The Household vs. the Family

An important issue in defining the family, is that of distinguishing between 'the household' and 'the family'. Ball (1974) defines the household as a spatial category where a group of people (or one person) is bound to a particular place. Families, on the other hand, are generally seen as groups of people bound together by blood and marriage ties (**in** Muncie *et al.*, 1997:11). The two are not co-terminus. Families may form households but do not always do so.

According to Gittins (1985:61), families are not always households, and households are not always families. Husbands may work away from home; couples may separate; or children may study away from home. Conversely, an extended kin group may live under the same roof but may not in all circumstances regard themselves as one family. Older relatives living with a nuclear family may not entirely regard themselves as part of that family and may or may not be so regarded by the nuclear family.

Ziehl (1997:126) argues that rejecting the notion of household as a defining characteristic of the family is "an injustice not only to the history but the contemporary usage of the term 'family'" (1997b:126). She further argues that writers such as Gittins (1985) may have gone too far in rejecting the notion of the family, and proposing a definition that tries to encompass almost anything. According to Gittins: "there is no such thing as the family - only families" (1985:8).

In my opinion, the most effect way of defining the family would be to view the family as a process in the negotiation and completion of certain necessary tasks as Dallos and Sapsford

suggest (**in** Muncie *et al.*, 1997). As a social institution, the family would refer to all ideas and practices which relate to sexual relationships, parenting and residence (Ziehl, 1997b). These approaches move away from the either-or tendency so characteristic of feminist critics of the 1970's and 1980's, which restrict the way that the family is conceptualised. The next section will examine the way in which the ideological acceptance of family diversity has affected family law in South Africa, given the vast variety of family forms and the difficulty that academics, family sociologists and law-makers have had in defining the family.

3. FAMILY DIVERSITY AND FAMILY LAW IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Question of 'Equality'

For most of the century, South African family law was based on and sought to promote the nuclear family. This type of family grouping was seen as the "ideal" family unit, and all other families that did not conform to this model were seen as deviant. Marriage was defined as the "life-long voluntary union between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all other people" (Cronje **in** Ziehl, 1997a:49). According to this definition, then, homosexual and polygamous marriages were illegal. Legislation relating to marriage severely restricted the rights of women, and placed them under the charge of their husbands:

"The husband's wish must prevail in all matters concerning the common life, including the spouses' place of residence and their standard of living"

(Kaganas and Murray **in** Murray, 1994:8).

Husbands were authorised to deal with their wives' property, and were also allowed to administer the joint estate in the case of a community of property marriage contract. Women had no contractual capacity, and could not sue nor be sued, with the husband's position as the head of the family being unassailable. Women were financially vulnerable, and there was no reciprocal duty of support between husband and wife. It was an arguable point whether an innocent wife could claim maintenance after divorce, but if the wife was found to be the guilty party then she was entitled to nothing (Kaganas and Murray **in** Murray, 1994:9). During marriage, the father was the natural guardian of the children, and was entitled to custody of his children. Domestic violence and rape within marriage were almost ignored by the courts.

Despite the persistence of such prejudice, women's legal positions within family law had improved in some respects by the 1950's, and the movement towards formal equity was firmly entrenched. For example, women had the right to vote, and could acquire and lose citizenship independently of their husbands. However, this was not enough, and through the efforts of Bertha Solomon, who mobilised women to protest against patriarchal family law, the Matrimonial Affairs Act of 1953 was passed, which restricted the marital power of

husbands and enabled courts to award maintenance after divorce to innocent wives (Kaganas and Murray **in** Murray, 1994:11).

The late 1970's (a period of activity for the feminist movement) saw a rise in concern that women were still being discriminated against under family law. June Sinclair was one of the most vociferous critics and argued that marriage should be seen as a partnership of equals, a perception that was entrenched by the Matrimonial Property Act 88 of 1984. This Act introduced the accrual system as the automatic consequence of marriage out of community for Whites, and an option for African spouses. More importantly, it abolished marital power, a move that was hailed as the "death of male domination and female subordination, and the birth of a partnership of equals" (Kaganas and Murray **in** Murray, 1994:12).

Rape in marriage had also received more attention from academics, professionals and feminist groups. Within a few years, marital rape exemption was abolished in its entirety. This reform was accompanied by others, and the last remaining barriers to formal equity were removed in the early 1990's. Marital power was abolished in all its manifestations and for all races by the General Law Fourth Amendment Act of 1993, which attempted to encourage gender equality and the abolition of discrimination against women (Kaganas and Murray **in** Murray, 1994:13).

While some of the legislation introduced in the last fifteen to twenty years has improved the position of women within the family, women were still treated as minors in the eyes of the law. For example, while Matrimonial Property Act of 1984 did away with the marital power that a husband had over the person and property of his civil law wife, it did not affect the law relating to the position of the husband as head of the family or the law relating to domicile and guardianship (Segar and White, 1992:63). This law has subsequently been amended. The Marriage and Matrimonial Property Law of 1988 extended benefits to African women by stipulating that a man may not contract a civil law marriage if he is already married under customary law. However, this legislation only allowed some women rights to enter into legal contracts and litigation. This law only affected African marriages contracted after the passing of the law and was not applicable to citizens of 'self-governing' territories (Kaganas and Murray **in** Murray, 1994:13).

Customary Law

Customary law further worsened African women's position. Indigenous customary law was not abolished by colonial administrators. Instead a dual legal system was devised where family relationships of the African population were to be regulated by customary law, and those of other race groups by civil law. This led to the translation of flexible customary practices into a rigid set of rules which could be applied by colonial authorities, and which have been subject to interpretation and evolution at the hands of the courts (Kaganas and Murray **in** Murray, 1994:16-17).

Under customary law, women were always subjected to the authority of a patriarch, moving from the control of their guardians to that of their husbands. The male head of the household represented the family and a woman could not contract or litigate without assistance. Husbands controlled virtually all the family's property, while wives' rights were confined to personal issues. Women could not initiate the divorce process, while men could unilaterally end the marriage and retain the bridewealth. In the event of divorce, the children belonged to the husband's family (Kaganas and Murray **in** Murray, 1994:16-17).

The Definition of 'the Family'

Most importantly, family law did not assist those women who fell outside the state's definition of the ideal family type - the nuclear family. Those women who shunned marriage, and who have become heads of their own families were particularly prejudiced. Laws relating to welfare, child support, grants and allowances almost entirely rejected any type of family arrangements falling outside the 'ideal' nuclear family grouping.

For example, the Children's Act of 1960 states that a parent's grant shall not be paid to a woman if she cohabits with a man with whom she is not married, as these circumstances were judged to be detrimental to the child's welfare. The notion that the man is the legal head of the family, and that this is morally correct permeated all family legislation. However, the tendency to view the nuclear family as the 'ideal' family unit was not an exclusively South African one, but a universal phenomenon. Global economic policy is based on the 'model' household unit which assumes that the household is headed by a male, who makes the decisions for the whole household which has common economic interests. This tendency persisted even though UNESCO had estimated that the majority

of African households are female-headed and contain no economically-active male This has resulted in the poorest African mothers receiving no State aid at all (Segar and White, 1992:62-63).

The total disregard for female-headed households is illustrated by the regulations governing family allowances. In terms of these regulations, a family is defined as a man and his wife living together, who have a child who is the issue of one of them and is maintained by one or both of them. A man who does not have a wife (or not living with her) and his child are also defined as a family. So, a single-parent family headed by a male is regarded as a family, but its female equivalent is not (Segar and White, 1992:63).

Family law prior to 1994 favoured and idealised the nuclear family, at the expense of alternative family groupings. However the introduction of a new democratic dispensation has altered many aspects of legislation governing marriage and family matters. According to Section 15 (3) of the Final Constitution, everyone is guaranteed the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion. This section allows for the recognition of marriages concluded under any religious or indigenous tradition and acknowledges the rights of communities to follow their own personal family law, whether the law is based on tradition or religion

The introduction of democracy in South Africa brought political change and a realisation and celebration of the diversity of the country. Consequently, there existed a need to eradicate the contradiction between a Constitution that was committed to gender equality, and freedom of religion and culture; and family law that legitimised one family form - the nuclear family.

Family Law in the New South Africa

Since 1994, the South African Law Commission has examined ways of making family more equitable in terms of gender equality and cultural and religious freedom. In August 1996 the Prevention of Family Violence Act 133 of 1993 was reviewed following criticism from the Human Rights Watch, as well as from participants at the Convention on Domestic Violence held at UNISA in September 1994, where participants came to the conclusion that changes to certain provisions of the Act are needed (South African Law Commission,

1996: http://www.law.wits.ac.za/issue/ip2.wp). Subsequent changes to this legislation provided greater protection to women who were being abused by partners and spouses. In May 1997, the Maintenance Act was reviewed after criticisms that the Act did not compel parties to provide maintenance (South African Law Commission, 1997: http://www.law.wits.ac.za/salc/issue/ip5.wp). In 1998, the Child Care Act was reviewed and specific attention was paid to the illegitimate status of children born of Islamic and Hindu unions - marriages that were not legally recognised (South African Law Commission, 1998: http://www.law.wits.ac.za/salc/issue/ip13.wp). These reviews and amendments all reflect the State's commitment to ensuring and protecting family diversity in family law.

The Marriage Act, 25 of 1961 came under scrutiny in 1999 (South African Law Commission, 1999: http://www.law.wits.ac.za/salc/discussn/marriage.wp). The Commission focussed on the limitations of the Marriage Act that did not recognise Muslim and Hindu marriages firstly, because they are potentially polygamous, and, secondly, because they were not solemnised by authorised marriage officers in compliance with the provisions of the Act. Other issues that were being examined included: the minority status of women in a customary union; the demands from the gay community for the recognition of gay marriages as valid marriages; and the prohibition of a marriage by a man or a woman and the direct descendant of his or her deceased spouse where they are not related to each other by blood was also being questioned. Changes to marriage legislation have addressed some of these limitations.

Diverse Family Forms in South Africa

The Recognition of African Customary Marriages

Acceptance of diverse family forms in this country was concretised in the form of Recognition of Customary Marriages Act of 1998. The over-riding object of the Act was to eradicate the inconsistencies of South African family law that deprived women of their basic rights. Its main object was to extend full legal recognition of marriages entered into in accordance with customary law or traditional rites. The Act also sought to improve the condition of women and children within these marriages by introducing measures that bring customary law in line with the provisions of the Constitution and international

obligations (Samuel, 1999:25-26). It also aims to reconcile preservation of culture and tradition with constitutional requirements to establish equal treatment and non-discrimination.

Several important facets of customary law are addressed. Section 2 recognises both monogamous and polygamous marriages. Section 3 stipulates that in order for a customary marriage to be valid, the consent of both spouses needs to be obtained. This is an important shift from the position where the families negotiated without making the woman's consent mandatory. Both must be over eighteen years old, and children under the age of eighteen require the permission of the Minister to marry. Bridewealth is not a requirement for a valid marriage and its non-payment will have no effect on the rights of spouses towards one another or their children (Samuel, 1999:27).

The most important aspect of the Act is that it grants equal status and capacity between spouses, and grants all women contractual and proprietary capacity. Women no longer require assistance to bring about court action. They have the right to enter transactions and contracts on their own behalf, as well as the right to acquire and dispose of assets. All the rights that were previously enjoyed by the rest of the country's citizens, and which were denied to African women under customary law, have now been conferred upon them (Samuel, 1999:28-29).

The introduction of the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act has brought customary law in line with constitutional stipulations of gender equality. The introduction of this legislation has shown that the State is serious in its quest to ensure that all South Africans have a right to practise their traditions, customs, and religion, and to enter into marriages in line with these traditions.

Same-Sex Relationships

Diverse family forms again came under the spotlight when the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) sued the Minister of Home Affairs in December 1999. The NCGLE claimed that people involved in same-sex relationships were discriminated against in terms of the Aliens Control Act 96 of 1991. Section 25 (5) of this legislation provides protection for spouses of South African citizens. However, the NCGLE argued that the benefits that were extended to "spouses" in terms of this Act were not extended to

partners in permanent same-sex life partnerships. The case was referred to the Constitutional Court after the Cape High Court found that the Aliens Control Act 1996 was unconstitutional
(Constitutional Court,
1999:http://www.concourt.gov.za/summaries/1999/natcoalsum.html).

The Constitutional Court concurred and found in favour of the NCGLE. Section 25(5) was held to discriminate unfairly against gays and lesbians on the grounds of sexual orientation and marital status and seriously limited their equality rights and their right to dignity. According to the judge:
"It did so in a way which was not reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom"

(Constitutional Court, 1999:
http://www.concourt.gov.za/summaries/1999/natcoalsum.html).

The Court accordingly held that the omission from Section 25(5) of partners in permanent same-sex life partnerships was inconsistent with the Constitution. Having found such an inconsistency, the Court was of the view that the whole of Section 25(5) could be declared invalid; or the relevant section could be amended by including partners involved in same-sex relationships
(Constitutional Court, 1999:
http://www.concourt.gov.za/summaries/1999/natcoalsum.html).

Islamic Marriages and the South African State

Marriages concluded under Islamic law, were not recognised by the State, as they were potentially polygamous. The consequences of this non-recognition were that any children born of such a union were seen as illegitimate. Spouses had no right to claim support from each other, and could not inherit from each other intestate (Ziehl, 1997:50).

The 1983 Appellate Division decision in the case of *Ismail vs. Ismail* provides a vivid example of the difficulties that the non-recognition of Muslim marriages brought to South African Muslims. According to Islamic law, Mr. Ismail was obliged to maintain his wife. He failed to do this, and after four years, terminated the marriage contract unilaterally by saying *talaaq* (I divorce you) three times. Mrs. Ismail claimed maintenance arrears and

took her case to a *moulana* (Muslim priest) who usually intervened in such cases. The *moulana* ruled in her favour, but Mr. Ismail still refused to pay. Mrs. Ismail then took her case to the Supreme Court, and argued that her marriage contract with Mr. Ismail entitled her to maintenance (Murray, 1994:38).

Judge Trengove denied the validity of the contract, and pointed out that many of its features ran counter to the trend to recognise complete equality between spouses. For instance, he argued that Muslim women do not participate in the marriage ceremony[1], and husbands have a unilateral right to terminate the marriage without good cause[2]. The marriage was also potentially polygamous, and would therefore "undermine the status of marriage as we know it" (Trengove as quoted **in** Ziehl, 1997:53). Finding that the contract was unenforceable because it was immoral, the Appellate Division rejected Mrs. Ismail's claim, and she received no maintenance.

Trengove's judgements raised some serious concerns regarding social and legal attitudes towards polygamy. The main argument against polygamous marriages was that such unions undermined the status of marriage, and threatened gender equality in marriage (Murray, 1994:39). Cultural imperialism prevented law-makers from realising that polygamous marriages did not necessarily offend a woman's dignity or reduce her rights in any way. In most polygamous societies, spouses are consulted and agree to the introduction of an additional wife. Murray (1994:39) argues that while many women are oppressed in polygamous marriages, the alternative monogamous marriage does not necessarily provide any additional protection for women. Violence is endemic in Western, nuclear families, and women are usually isolated and economically disadvantaged when the monogamous union disintegrates (Murray, 1994:40).

Muslim Marriages in the New South Africa

The need to recognise marriages concluded under Islamic traditions led to the appointment of a project committee to investigate Islamic marriages and related matters in 1990 by the South African Law Commission. The object of the investigation was to determine the

[1]Muslim women participate indirectly in the ceremony. Her consent is sought by three representatives, who communicate to the bridegroom and his witnesses that she is entering the marriage of her own free will.

[2]There are many steps which must be followed and divorce is seen as a last resort, and highly discouraged in Islam.

extent to which provision could be made in South African law for the recognition of Islamic marriages, matrimonial property, succession, and guardianship laws as well as other aspects of family law and the law of persons (South African Law Commission, 1999: http://www.law.wits.ac.za/salc). The investigation was delayed for several reasons, amongst which was the finalisation of the 1996 Constitution. In 1996, the status of the project was reconsidered, and the investigation was accorded a high priority rating. A new project committee consisting of legal academics, theologians, and legal practitioners was appointed to continue the investigation. Before the project committee could release its findings, however, the landmark case of *Amod vs. Multilateral Motor Vehicle Accidents Fund* aided the cause of the possible legal recognition of Islamic marriages.[3]

Mrs. Amod's husband was killed in a motor vehicle accident in 1993, and she had been attempting to sue the Accident Fund for compensation in terms of the Maintenance of Surviving Spouses Act. Initially, the validity of Mrs. Amod's Islamic marriage contract was denied by the Durban High Court, since the union was not registered as a civil marriage in terms of the provision of the Marriage Act 25 of 1961 (Wits Law School, 1998: http://www.law.wits.ac.za/judgements/1998/amodsum.html). Mrs. Amod was awarded R250 000 in compensation in October 1999, after Chief Justice Ismail Mahomed judged her husband's duty of support to be enforceable by the courts. After passing the judgement, Justice Mahomed said:

"...it could no longer be argued that a solemn, public marriage that was in fact monogamous was not worthy of the protection of the law simply because it was not a Christian marriage. Such an argument would display an unacceptable inequality, arbitrariness, intolerance and inequity"

(Rickard, 1999).

During debate in court, though, lawyers acting for the Fund argued that Parliament, rather than the Court, should have dealt with the issue raised by the Amod case.

The Project Committee released its findings at the end of May 2000, and proposed that couples have the right to choose a marital system which is compatible with their religious beliefs and the Constitution which guarantees individuals the right to practice cultural marriage traditions. Both new and existing marriages should be governed by this statute. The Islamic form of divorce (*talaaq)* should also be recognised. A husband may

[3] Before this case, the Cape High Court gave limited recognition to monogamous marriages concluded under Islamic law in the 1996 *Ryland vs. Ryland* case (Moosa, 1999:2).

pronounce divorce without specified reasons and in the absence of his wife. While the right to institute divorce is regarded as the unilateral right of the husband, he may delegate this right to his wife either as a condition of the marriage contract or at a later stage (Moosa, 1999:4). Polygamous marriages would be permissible, but only within the limitations set out in the *Qu'ran* itself (South African Law Commission, 2000: http://www.law.wits.ac.za/salc/salc.html). Islam permits polygamy and a man may marry up to four wives, as is illustrated by the following *Qu'ranic* verse:

"... marry such women as seem good to you, two, or three, or four; but if you fear that you will not do justice, then marry only one or that which your right hand possess. This is more proper that you may not do injustice"

(*Holy Qu'ran* 4:3).

This verse stresses that if a man is incapable of treating all wives in a just and equitable manner, then he should marry only one. The Project Committee also suggested that any new legislation recognising Islamic marriages, should provide for new and existing marriages. In the case of new marriages, it was proposed that legislation should provide for: the age of consent to be 18 years; actual and informed consent to the conclusion of a marriage in written form; the designation of marriage officers who are entitled to perform Islamic marriages; the registration of marriages by the signing of a marriage register; the formalities pertaining to the time, place and manner of solemnisation of Islamic marriages; the appropriate marriage formula for the solemnisation of an Islamic marriage; a prohibition on marriages within certain prohibited degrees of relationship, including the rules relating to fosterage according to Muslim Personal Law (South African Law Commission, 2000:http://www.law.wits.ac.za/salc/salc.html).

Regarding divorce and the potentially contentious issue of dissolution of a marriage by *talaaq*, it was submitted that there were compelling reasons of public policy to preclude the dissolution of marriages except on the type of grounds contemplated in the Divorce Act of 1979. The Project Committee suggested that marriage officers should be required to recognise a *talaaq* in the presence of the parties and that, for record and official purposes and for consonance with the Constitution, a *talaaq* should be confirmed by a court before it takes effect. It was also suggested that legislation that recognises aspects of Muslim Personal Law must also provide for an effective system of dispute resolution. In order to deal with constitutional concerns, it was suggested that any proposed legislation stipulating the grounds on which the conclusion of a polygamous marriage would be permissible, has

to be narrowly circumscribed in recognition of the limitations set out by the *Qu'ran* itself (South African Law Commission, 2000: http://www.law.wits.ac.za/salc/salc.html).

In view of the fact that wives and children frequently require special protection to ensure their continued welfare upon the dissolution of a marriage, it was proposed that protections similar to those in the Divorce Act, 1979, and the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998, should be included in any statute giving recognition to Muslim Personal Law (South African Law Commission, 2000: http://www.law.wits.ac.za/salc/salc.html). The closing date for comment on these proposals was 31 July 2000. At the time of writing, no further documentation was released either by the Project Committee, academics or religious organisations regarding the proposals outlined by the Law Commission.

Conclusion

South African family law-makers have committed themselves to ensuring the recognition and acceptance of diverse family forms in South African family law. Previously, South African family law, like its British counterpart, sought to promote the nuclear family type. However the recognition of Islamic and customary marriages, as well as the recent judgement in favour of the NCGLE, and the review of other pieces of legislation such as the Maintenance Act, the Child Care Act; Domestic Violence Act; and the Marriage Act, clearly show that the state is committed to accommodating family diversity and gender equality in its legislation. This move gives substance to constitutionally-enshrined rights of cultural and religious freedoms, as well as the right not to be discriminated against in terms of sexual orientation. Not only are scholars of the family accepting diverse family forms and ideologies, but this acknowledgement is being given substance by law-makers in South Africa who are increasingly amending the law to accommodate the wide variety of family structures and forms in this country.

4. INDIAN MUSLIM FAMILIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Socio-Historical Background

The Arrival of Islam in South Africa

Islam grew by two phases of immigration in South Africa. The earliest Muslims were part of the involuntary migration of slaves, political prisoners and criminals from Africa and Asia that lasted from about 1652 to the mid-1800's (da Costa and Davids, 1994:1). Included in this group were the "Mardykers", the Malay servants of Dutch officials who were on their way back to the Netherlands from the East. Many of these servants opted to remain at the Cape. The main group of immigrants came from East Africa, Madagascar, and West Africa (da Costa and Davids, 1994:2). Islam spread rapidly as a result of institutionalisation, and an emphasis on education and literacy. Other factors that acted as a catalyst for the growth of Islam at the Cape included conversion, adoption; the purchase of Slaves by free Muslims and intermarriage (da Costa and Davids, 1994:3).

The Arrival of Indian Muslims in South Africa

When slavery was abolished in 1838, British authorities realised the need for an alternative system of labour, and Indians were brought in as indentured labourers to work on the sugar cane fields in Natal. Between 1860 and 1868 and again from 1874 to 1911, some 176 000 Indians of all faiths were brought to Natal. Approximately 7-10% of the first shipment were Muslim, and generally came from Malabar, the west coast of South India, and Hyderabad in the south. The indentured Muslims were followed by free immigrant Muslims, mainly Sunni Vhoras from Surat, and Mehmons from Kathiawad and Kutch (Meer, 1969:187). (See Appendix 1). It was this second group that would form the commercial bourgeoisie of the Indian community (Shell, 1998:28).

The founding father of Islam in Natal was Sheikh Ahmad, who arrived with the indentured labourers of the 1860's. Soofie Saheb, the second founding father, arrived in 1895, and saw that impoverished Indian Muslims were at risk of being absorbed into Hinduism. He demarcated special Islamic folk festivals to lure the "vulnerable", and also established Muslim orphanages and schools (*madressahs*). After serving their indentures, Natal Muslims were free to live in the interior of South Africa (except in the Orange Free State

where Indians were prohibited from entering). Some Indian Muslims went to Cape Town, while others went to the Transvaal and Kimberley (Shell, 1998:30).

Traditional Ethnic and Cultural Divisions with the Indian Muslim Community.
Despite, Muslims forming the minority of Indians in South Africa, most immigrants brought with them various cultural and linguistic traits from India. Muslims spoke either Urdu or Gujarati, with there being more Urdu-speaking Muslims that Gujarati (Meer, 1969:62). Urdu-speaking Muslims, though drawn from such diverse Indian regions as Gujarat (Miabhais), Hyderabad and Madras (jointly recognised as Hyderabadis), the North West Frontier (Pathans) and the United Province, intermarried freely and became integrated into a common community (Meer, 1969:62).

Muslim Gujaratis were divided into Vhoras and Memons, the former coming from a large number of villages, mainly from Surat, the latter from Kathiawad and Kutch. They are also marked by differences in dialect, and certain finer points of custom. These two groups did not intermarry. Marriage within the Vhora community used to be regulated in terms of the village or locality of origin in India. This practice has been discontinued and the community has consolidated into one large group. Kathiawadi and Kutchi Memons do not intermarry as a rule. These two regional groups are further divided into village groups, and it was also usual for members of unequal villages to avoid inter-marriage.

These various identities played a significant role in the development of Islam in South Africa. For example, the first mosque in Durban was built by Memon traders in 1884. This was soon followed by the construction of the West Street mosque by the Gujarati-speaking Surtee section of the Muslim community (originating from Surat in the Gujarat province in Northern India). The regional differences among Muslims in India clearly formed an inescapable part of the Indian Muslim identity in South Africa (Tayob, 1995:62). According to Hill (1980), these traditions have had very little significance for younger Muslims though. In a study of the impact of race legislation on Indian Muslims in Cape Town, Hill noted that very few young Muslims identified with traditional Indian beliefs. Rather, these beliefs had greater significance for their parents.

The Creation of a South African Indian Identity

Despite the various identities that both Hindu and Muslim Indians brought with them from India, a uniquely South African Indian identity was formed. The South African environment brought people who had been widely dispersed in India into close contact within a relatively restricted geographical area. This created a feeling of close neighbourliness and unity. This feeling of common identity was, to an extent, thrust upon them as result of their minority status. Non-Indians saw them as a single cultural group, and the government treated them as a single political entity. Common persecution and the fight against apartheid also contributed to the formation of a common identity. Therefore, major issues of conflict that divided India, have never featured prominently in the South African Indian community. This may, in part, account for why studies of Indian families in South Africa have never been differentiated in terms of religious or linguistic differences.

The History of the Indian Family in South Africa: the '*Kutum*'

It is interesting to note that there is no word in any of the South African Indian languages equivalent to the English word 'family'. The closest are '*kutum*' (Gujarati, Hindi and Urdu); *kudubom* (Tamil) and *kuduma* (Telegu). These terms define a kinship system of several nuclear families, hierarchically arranged by male seniority. The nuclear units may be two or more generations deep, three being the usual pattern in pre-modern times in India (Meer, 1969:64).

The circumstances of their immigration and the attitude of the Natal government made it difficult for Indians to realise this traditional family structure in the early years of their residence in South Africa (Palmer, 1957; Kuper, 1960; Meer, 1969). Most Indian immigrants were indentured male labourers who had entered into labour contracts for a specific number of years. Both the Natal government and the planters were interested solely in their labour, and neither foresaw nor planned for the development of an indigenous Indian community. Therefore, the barrack accommodation that was initially provided to indentured labourers, made no provision for families (Meer, 1969:64). Although there were women and children in the immigrant batches of 1860, Indian marriages (both Hindu and Muslim) were not recognised until 1874, and no regulation

covered the entry of women into the colony or established the right of nuclear families not to be separated (Meer, 1969:64).

In fact, the planters had no use for women and would have excluded them completely, had it not been for the pressure on the British government through the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission. This commission criticised the system of indenture as tantamount to slavery, and insisted that it should be modified to bear some relation to emigration by including a representative slice of the whole community in the indentured group. The commission emphasised the inclusion of women, and the Natal Agreement in 1860 stipulated a minimum proportion of 25% in each labour consignment (Meer, 1969:64). However, women and children were considered to be a bother by the Government of Natal and the planters, and their needs were generally ignored. Many planters refused to support them with rations, or even allow them on their premises, insisting that they were the responsibility of their male workers.

Most Indian labourers had unrealistic expectations about their future in South Africa. Many left India in "a state of adolescent irresponsibility" (Meer, 1969:64), or "peasant simplicity" and were lured by stories of easily gained wealth. Others had left without the permission of their parents, or without their wives and children. Just as the planters felt that the Indians would return to India on completion of their indenture, the labourers felt that they would return after making their fortune. This probably accounts for their apparent acceptance of an un-institutionalised, "un-Indian" family pattern founded on loose unions. These arrangements were conceived as temporary, which would be replaced by the traditional extended family structure once they had returned to India (Meer, 1969:65). The Free or Passenger Indians who began to immigrate to South Africa in the 1880's, also came as single males or groups of males, and they sent for their families to join them much later (Meer, 1969:65).

Meer (1969:65) concludes that an incomplete or quasi-nuclear family, not institutionalised by any form of marriage was the typical pattern in the early years of South African Indian life. Whatever attitudes the Indians brought to the South African context, there was little chance for them to establish the orthodox Indian family structure. When permanent residence in South Africa became a certainty, however, family organisation was restructured according to more traditional lines. Two married couples living together and

related is called a joint family (as quoted by Jithoo **in** Steyn *et al.*, 1987:57). Jithoo's definition, however, accommodates a variety of family structures, including extended families where a nuclear family of a child is joined to that of his parents. The joint family became, both by choice and economic necessity, the most common pattern, and continued to be so until the 1950's. Jithoo (1968) studied 107 families in five Durban areas, and found that 50% of families in the higher income group, 28% of middle-income families, and 30% of lower-income families were joint (as quoted by Meer, 1969:236).

The Nature of the '*Kutum*'

According to Meer (1969:66), irrespective of the composition of his immediate household (nuclear or otherwise), the average Indian is firmly rooted to his *kutum.* The *kutum* consists of all those with who he can trace consanguinity through a common paternal grandfather or grandfather's brother. The average size of the *kutum* is anything between 50 and 100 people. These are the essential members who must attend all informal occasions, ranging from picnics to formal engagements such as weddings, and prayers. The *kutum* is a restricted kinship group tracing descent through a male head. Members of a *kutum* are in similar relation to each other as members in an immediate family. This is reflected in the fact that aunts, uncles, and cousins are not only addressed by common terms, but the associated sentiment and role expectations are also extended to them in a decreasing order of intensity, depending on the closeness of blood ties. Traditionally, this included economic obligations, but with the individuation of labour in industry, this has reduced. Where businesses were run as family concerns, social and economic obligations continued to persist (Meer, 1969:66).

Parents and children, siblings and cousins, paternal uncles and their wives, nephews and nieces, all have mutual expectations, and demands and privileges inter-flow. All members of the *kutum* expect to be consulted and kept informed about potential changes in the status of members through proposals, engagements, marriages, education and so on. According to Meer (1969:66):

*"The **kutum** is like an intimate collective conscience which socialises and controls; binds and integrates members into a closely watched system of social interaction".*

Gender Roles in the '*Kutum*'

According to Meer (1969:70), there is a tacit agreement that women are subordinate to men, and do not make decisions without her husband or father's participation. Differentiation of gender roles are said to begin in childhood, where girls are encouraged to participate in domestic chores in preparation of adulthood. Men are considered the breadwinners, and preference is therefore given to males in terms of education. Indian men rarely help with domestic chores.

However, the urban milieu has proved inconducive to an extended family household, and according to Meer (1969:66) this pattern had given way to the nuclear family structure. She cited the results of various surveys conducted in Durban between 1946 and 1968 that found that almost half of all Indian families were nuclear in nature, as evidence of the decline of the extended family. Naidoo (1946) found that only 38% of 1 000 families living in municipal housing were joint; Kuper (1953) found that 56% of the 400 families surveyed in Merebank, Durban were joint; Maasdorp (1965) reported that only 30% of 940 families surveyed in Durban were joint (as quoted by Meer, 1969:236). Meer, however, goes on to state that:

"Whatever the proportion of the of the physically observable distribution of the joint family, there is no doubt that the idea of a joint household...influences Indian attitudes and sentiments to a considerable extent, and shapes relations within the community and with other South Africans. It is therefore realistic to take the extended, rather than the nuclear, family as the focal point of South African Indian life"

(Meer, 1969:66).

Simkins (1986) has conducted significant research on extended and multiple family households, and has calculated what he terms the "multi-occupancy rate", ie. the number of 'families' and single-person units per dwelling (as quoted **in** Ziehl, 1997b:105). These show that households containing more than one 'family' or individuals other than the restricted nuclear family group, were most common amongst Indians in South Africa. This high 'multi-occupancy rate' substantiates Meer's claim of the extended family being the focal point of South African Indian family life. Despite finding that up to half of all Indian households in Durban in 1969 were joint families (**in** Simkins, 1986:24), Meer did point out that the nuclear family structure was seen as a more attractive option by Indian couples. According to Meer (1969:66):

"When the average Indian girl marries, she expects to live with the family of her husband's parents: she is envied and considered very lucky is she becomes the wife of an independent nuclear family".

Recent studies have shown that the joint family is becoming less common among Indians. Jithoo (**in** Steyn *et al.*, 1987:62) asserts that "the joint family is not as common as it was a decade ago". She found that the break-up of the traditional joint family was due to various external factors such as government regulations that gave rise to housing schemes in keeping with the spatial segregation of the Indian population. Internal factors such as the widening of professional and educational opportunities for Indians, and the acceptance of western values stressing individuality, also contributed towards the break-up of the joint family and development of the nuclear family (**in** Steyn *et al.*, 1987:62-63).

Kellerman (**in** Steyn *et al.*, 1987:540) claims that Indians are increasingly subscribing to the Western nuclear family as the normative ideal. However, this type of family is only attainable for middle-class people. He goes on to state that people in the working class are forced by economic necessity to organise themselves into extended families. However, in her latest study, Jithoo (1991) has argued that the joint family is a minority within the Indian population. Increased educational and career opportunities have led to many young people opting out of taking over the family business. Increased tension between mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws has also contributed significantly towards young couples moving out of the family home. Jithoo argues that a new type of joint family will emerge that consists of several nuclear households not under a common residence (1991: 354).

She argued that joint families in Durban were following a similar trend to families in Madras. Even when joint families split up into nuclear units, they still continue to maintain strong family ties, and subscribe to the norms associated with the joint family system (1991:352). Family bonds will not weaken as a result of physical nucleation. She goes on to state that the numerical existence of the nuclear family household as a co-residential group should not be seen as evidence of the complete destruction of the joint family pattern among Indians in South Africa.

Family Ideology among Indians in South Africa

In a survey undertaken by Markinor in 1982, to ascertain attitudes to marriage and family life, it was found Indian family ideology did not significantly differ from other race groups

in the country (ie. Whites, blacks and Coloureds). Among the four groups, there was agreement about the main requirements for a successful marriage, viz. an emotionally, spiritually and physically intimate relationship and total commitment and fidelity (as quoted by Kellerman **in** Steyn *et al.*, 1987:541). However, it was found that Indians stressed the importance of having children more than any other race group. Divorce was acceptable when the parties did not love each other, or when relations with relatives and in-laws were unsatisfactory. This last point can be seen as expected, given the importance of the joint family (in whatever form) for Indians. Only 20% of Indians surveyed were in favour of complete sexual freedom for the individual, and a woman's right to have a child without a stable relationship.

Ramasar's 1987 study revealed similar attitudes to sex and co-habitation (**in** Steyn *et al.*, 1987). The Indian community has not embraced any alternatives to marriage such as co-habitation. In a study of attitudes and practices relating to pre-marital sex and co-habitation among Indians, Ramasar found that Indian society was still very conservative in its perception of marriage and sex. Religious convictions played an important role, and co-habitation was not seen as an alternative to marriage. There was also stigma attached to illegitimate births in the community (**in** Steyn *et al.*, 1987).

As I have pointed out previously, there has been a tendency to ignore religious differences in the Indian community. Studies, therefore, have not differentiated between Muslim and Hindu responses. In India, however, deep religious divides have produced studies that focus on Muslim families specifically. The next section will focus on Muslim families in India.

Muslim Families in India

Lateef (1990:126) has argued that the institutional importance of marriage and family is an enduring belief in India, and is of central importance to women, especially. This is demonstrated by cultural practices and religious and social traditions which continue to support role differentiation, marriage and the family. Family relationships among Indian Muslims are intricately defined. These definitions control the degree of authority that can be exercised over relatives; the courtesy and obedience to be extended; the relatives before whom a female may appear unveiled; and whom she may address directly. Within

marriage, the husband and his family usually control all outside relationships, and women are usually almost entirely dependent on their husbands. It is only after a few years that a woman's position in the family improved and her participation in decision-making increased.

Muslim Families Previously

Gore (1968:150) has found that the increase in the number of nuclear families, due to urbanisation, has helped to make marriage more of a relationship between two people. While the involvement of the rest of the family is reduced, family ties still remain strong. To a large extent, South African Indians have followed the same trend, as Jithoo (1991) has found. Gore (1968), however, argues that traditional restrictions and behavioural constraints have not been totally discarded. He has found that the urban nuclear family is only marginally less restrictive in maintaining customs and practices (especially those relating to women) than the traditional joint family. There has been no redefinition of equality in male-female status (1968:168).

Muslim Families in the 1990's

In a study conducted on one thousand urban Muslim women (some of whom were veiled) in India, in 1990, Lateef, found that family life has changed considerably since Gore's study in 1968. Married couples spent more time together engaged in leisure activities. Sharing leisure time together is contrary to the traditional Indian pattern of segregated roles. Traditionally, women shared their activities with other women in the family, and when they went beyond the family, it was with women of a similar background and caste or social standing. However, 55% of respondents in Lateef's study indicated that they indulged in a wide variety of social activities with their spouses. A further 21% accompanied their husbands only to the doctor or to visit relatives, and only 18% said that they shared no joint activities with their spouses at all (Lateef, 1990:130).

Lateef was quick to point out that while the majority of respondents go everywhere with their husbands, socio-economic status was an important factor in determining the extent of this activity. Upper-class couples had spent more time together than those in the working-class. However, the fact that 46% of working-class women participated in activities with their husbands should be considered as a move away from the traditional separation of activities. Respondents were also asked whether their husbands took an active interest in

the running of the house and in childcare activities, and whether or not they helped with household chores. Sixty-nine percent of respondents responded positively to the question, with upper-class couples forming the majority of this group. Forty-eight percent of respondents felt that budgetary decisions were made jointly with their husbands, and 28% felt that they controlled the family budget. This indicates closer interaction and co-operation on matters that were traditionally controlled by men. Again, however, career women and upper-class women had a greater say in financial decision-making compared to lower-class housewives (Lateef, 1990:130-132).

Family Ideology Among Female Indian Muslim Students

In a separate study, 209 female students were asked to pick careers that they were interested in. Such choices were thought to reflect attitudes towards women's employment and students' perceptions of gender roles. Almost half of the respondents picked teaching as their preferred profession. Teaching is a traditionally favoured profession among Muslim females, since women can teach at a primarily female educational institution thereby facilitating the segregation of men and women. Moreover, it is considered to be a flexible career, easily adapted to family moves and changes. Only 23% of students did not know, or did not respond to the question. Lateef has argued that while the majority had planned careers, they did not appear to have well-defined aims or goals (Lateef, 1990:132). She concludes that this reflects the continued conditioning of women towards marriage and family, and an acceptance of traditional gender roles.

The Influence of Veiling (*Purdah)* on Marriage

Purdah has been characterised as an extreme form of sex role differentiation (Saifullah Khan, 1974:1 **in** Lateef, 1990:133), and has generally been regarded as an oppressive practice. Attitudes propagating the seclusion of women are common in India., though urban Muslim women do not regard *purdah* as religiously binding, nor are they compelled by their husbands or families to observe the custom. The continuation of *purdah,* then, does not appear to be an extreme role of sex role differentiation, which it was at an earlier time. This was reflected in answers that respondents gave to questions relating to family decision-making and gender roles in marriage.

Twenty-five percent of respondents in *purdah* accompanied their husbands everywhere, and a further 15% went to the doctor and to visit relatives. This implies that the traditional

demarcation between the domestic realm of the wife and the public realm of the husband was beginning to blur (Lateef, 1990:136). Regarding budgetary decisions, about 39% of women in *purdah* and 47% of non-*purdah* respondents felt that decisions were jointly made; 26% non-*purdah* and 20% veiled respondents felt that their husbands decided. Those women not in *purdah* were only marginally better off than women in *purdah* - a further reflection of the blurring of male-female segregation among Muslims in urban India.

Family ideology among Muslim women in India has indicated that there has been a significant change, especially in the last 20 years or so. Values relating to gender roles and decision-making within the family have altered, with men and women attaining increasing symmetry in the family. However, these changes are more apparent among urban upper-class and professional women.

Conclusion

Despite initial difficulties, the extended and joint families have persisted among Indians in South Africa. The Indian *kutum* has been regarded as the focal point of family life in South Africa. However, research has shown that this family system is on the decline as a result of industrialisation, improved educational and career opportunities, and family conflict. Family ideology among South African Indians did not differ markedly from other race groups, but was still conservative on matters relating to sex and co-habitation. Traditional gender roles were still adhered to in India, although increasing symmetry was being attained in middle and upper-class households. The next section will examine the methodology that was utilised to examine attitudes to marriage and family among Indian Muslim students.

5. METHODOLOGY

The phrase 'qualitative methodology' refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data - people's own written or spoken words and observable behaviour (Bogdan and Taylor, 1999:7). Qualitative social research relies largely on the epistemology of the interpretive and critical approaches to social science (Weber's *verstehen*, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, and phenomenology), and focuses on understanding the **meanings** that people attach to certain aspects of their social and personal lives. Consequently, it is more concerned with **understanding action**, rather than merely observing **behaviour** (Silverman **in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:562).

The basis of the qualitative tradition in sociology is Weber's assertion that sociology should be concerned with the interpretation of action in terms of its subjective meaning (Weber as quoted by Silverman **in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:565). Action is defined as "all human behaviour when and in so far as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it" (Silverman **in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:565). Weber held that one could only reliably study the nature of human action and its meanings through the development and use of "empathetic understanding" – *verstehen* – that allows for the "formation of concrete components of mental reality and their relations into a conceptual construct" (Wallace, 1994:233). Empathetic understanding requires the researcher to cultivate the capacity to "feel" themselves empathetically into a mode of thought which deviates from their own, and in so doing to deduce the pattern of motives that constitute the meanings that an actor assigns to various aspects of his or her environment. Weber's *verstehen* forms the foundation of qualitative methodology, which is the type of method that I have chosen to use in this study.

Action arises out of socially shared and sustained meanings, which define social reality. Behaviourists argue that human behaviour can be explained as a response to a stimulus. This response can be observed and laws formulated which relate the observed response to the stimulus. However, this perspective fails to take into account the fact that people assign meanings to situations and to the actions of others and react in terms of the interpretation suggested by these meanings (Silverman **in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:565).

Weber, for instance, had a profoundly voluntaristic and rational view of social action. In his view, social structures are what people make them, and are the products of purposive choices and actions (Fallding **in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:502). A few months before his death in 1920, Weber wrote that Western societies were unique because of what he called their specific and peculiar **rationalism**. Weber had started to examine the nature and development of rationalism in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1978). In this book, Weber argued that the specific rationalism of Western societies could not be easily explained. In *Economy and Society* (1965), Weber outlined four ways in which social action could be motivated. Traditional action is motivated by customs and habits. Affectual action is motivated by strong feelings and emotions. However, Weber did not consider traditional or affectual action to be rational, since these forms of action did not result from careful consideration (Luyt *et al.* **in** Romm and Sarakinsky, 1994:129).

On the other hand, Weber pointed out that there are many instances where action is clearly considered and motivated, either by particular values or by the desire to achieve a stated practical goal. Weber referred to action that is consistent with a particular value as value-rational action. Similarly, action that is concerned with attaining a specific goal is called goal-rational action. People behaving rationally in terms of a goal seek the best practical method or technology to achieve their goal. People behaving rationally in terms of a particular value are not necessarily concerned with the practicalities of their action. Their behaviour is shaped by their values (Luyt *et al.* **in** Romm and Sarakinsky, 1994:129-130). However, Weber's categories of traditional, affectual, value rational and goal rational actions are seldom seen in their pure forms. Most likely, human action is likely to contain a mixture of these types.

People may also respond differently to the same objectively defined stimulus, depending on the context and the meaning that they assign to the situation. In other words, human beings are members of different "worlds", and like actors, we assume several roles simultaneously, with each world requiring different knowledge and appropriate behaviour and actions. For example, a woman may be a wife, sister, mother, co-worker, daughter, and friend simultaneously with each role requiring different knowledge and behaviour. Since action stems from meanings, one needs to explore from where these meanings arise.

The meaning of the social world is given to us by the past history and present structure of our society. Social reality is pre-defined in the very language in which we are socialised, since language provides us with categories that both define and distinguish our experiences. Language also allows us to define the typical features of the social world, and gives us a set of what Schutz (1964) calls 'typifications'. Typifications deal with symbols, categories of people and implied patterns of behaviour. Typifications provide the individual with a frame of reference that he or she can use to shape their actions and make sense of the acts of others (Silverman **in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:567-568).

According to Berger and Luckmann, "man is a social product" (**in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:556). The individual, however, is not born a member of society. Human beings are born with a predisposition towards sociality, and they become a member of society. In the life of every individual, there is a temporal sequence, in which an individual is inducted into the social dialectic. The first stage of this process is internalisation, which Berger and Luckmann define as:

"...the immediate apprehension or interpretation of an objective event as expressing meaning, that is, as a manifestation of another's subjective processes which thereby becomes subjectively meaningful.."

(**in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:558)

Meanings, then, are socially sustained, and people may behave in socially expected and appropriate behaviour. Berger (1966) portrayed the social world as both a prison and a theatre, in which we are manipulated while believing that we are doing 'what any reasonable man would expect' (as quoted by Silverman **in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:568). The social world is seen as an objective reality. Individuals come to know the social world through a shared stock of knowledge, and this knowledge is continually made apparent in the actions of others (Silverman **in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:568). Social order depends on the co-operation of all its members. The stock of knowledge upon which social action is based tends to change rather slowly, and reflects the vested interest that we all have in avoiding anomie, by maintaining a system of meanings that confirms the non-problematic nature of our definitions of ourselves.

Therefore, "man makes the social world" (Silverman **in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:569). The existence of society depends upon it being continuously confirmed in the actions of its members.

According to phenomenologists, Berger and Pullberg (1966) social structure, therefore,

"has no reality except a human one. It is not characterisable as being a thing able to stand to stand on its own and exists only in so far and as long as human beings realise it as part of their world"

(as quoted by Silverman **in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:569-570).

According to Rose (1962:10), human beings live in a "symbolic environment", and act in terms of the social meanings that they ascribe to the world around them. Roles, then, are merely "clusters of related meaning", perceived to be to appropriate in certain social settings (as quoted by Silverman **in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:570).

The central aim of qualitative research, then, is to understand people from their own frame of reference and experience reality as they experience it, through, as Weber has suggested, an empathetic understanding of the meanings that are attached to certain social acts.
He goes on to argue that the meaning of a thing is only in relation to human action, either as a means or an end – a relation of which the actor or actors are aware. There are also many individual things in an actor's environment, and each thing will stimulate a variety of responses and hold many meanings for the actor.

Qualitative methods are particularly useful for the study of families, since these methods are suited to understanding the meanings, interpretations and subjective experiences of family members (Daly **in** Gilgun *et al.*, 1992:3). Families are a unique social grouping, with many defining characteristics: privacy; a collective consciousness that is not readily available to non-family members; relationships rooted in blood ties; shared traditions; and intense involvement in a variety of areas. Qualitative methods do not aim to identify structural or demographic trends in families, but rather focus on the processes by which families create, sustain and discuss their own family realities. Families are groups that construct individual and shared meanings, and there is a congruency between families as a primary locus for the construction of meaning and the assumptions of qualitative research that look to capture that meaning (Daly **in** Gilgun *et al.*, 1992:4). The family is an extremely private sphere of society, and gaining access to this sphere is challenging.

Qualitative research methods allow for the construction of relationships with participants, that enables trust and rapport to develop. This in turn results in increased accessibility to private areas of family meanings. Unstructured interviews, observations, diaries and letters allow participants to discuss their experiences in their own language, and social setting (Daly **in** Gilgun *et al.*, 1992:5).

The task of empathetic understanding – *verstehen* – is to grasp how the actor configures these various responses meaningfully. The second task that faces the researcher is to understand how the actor converts these meanings into motives. According to Weber, the method of empathetic understanding culminates in configuring a single, complex, typical, motive across all actors in a given social relationship. However, different empathetic understandings and analyses of the same actors meanings and motives (and therefore different understandings of the same social relationship) may be put forward by different researchers. Weber's solution to this problem is the development of an "ideal type". This is the method of analysis that I have chosen to use in this study.

The Ideal Type as a Method of Analysing Qualitative Data

According to Weber, all interpretation of meaning, like all scientific observations, must strive for "clarity and verifiable accuracy of insight and comprehension. This implies two interpretations of meaning: an initial one, and a verifying one, made by different investigators of the same phenomenon (Wallace, 1994:235). Weber therefore suggests a standard for comparing the two interpretations. He argues that without such a standard, there can be no "verifiable accuracy" (Wallace, 1994:235).

The interpretation and explanation of a historical event demands the construction of concepts that are specifically tailored for that purpose - the ideal type. However, he is quick to point out that ideal-types are not new conceptual methods. Rather, he is merely making explicit what is already done in practice. In everyday life, we continually use ideal types to guide our thinking and action, through the use of stereotypes. Most researchers are not fully aware of the types of concepts they are using, leading to ambiguous concepts. Weber's aim in suggesting the use of ideal types to study society is to eliminate this confusion, and achieve clarity in meaning (Giddens, 1971:141).

"An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally

absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one sidedly emphasised viewpoints into a unified analytical construct (Gedankenbild). In its conceptual purity, this mental construct cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a utopia"

(Weber **in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:63).

Thus, the formulation of an ideal type involves the abstraction and combination of many elements, which, although found in reality, are rarely or never discovered in a specific form. Fallding (**in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:502) notes that Weber in the course of a few pages describes the ideal type as a 'utopia' a number of times. According to Weber: "In its conceptual purity, this mental construct cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality" (Weber as quoted by Giddens, 1971:142). The ideal type is a utopian concept in the sense that it is what the sociologist believes the people under study would be striving for, were they unaffected by the compromises of life. The ideal type, however, is not the sociologist's ideal for anyone, and is not something that he or she would want to enforce on anyone. Rather, it is the researcher's ideal of them. According to Fallding (**in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:503), it is:

"[the] most sympathetic picture of them according to [the sociologist's] understanding of what they want for themselves...their actions, attitudes, etc. are idealised".

Weber goes on to say that the ideal type is an attempt to analyse historically unique configurations or their individual components by means of genetic concepts (Weber in Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:65). However, he is quick to point out that ideal types are not simply general descriptive constructs, which he calls *gattungsbegriffe*, and differentiates between the two. *Gattungsbegriffe* simply summarise the common features of groupings of empirical phenomena, while an ideal type involves the accentuation of certain features.

Weber, himself, applied these principles in his famous study on Protestantism and capitalism, and used the example of the concepts of 'church' and 'sect' to illustrate this distinction. He argued that these concepts could serve as the basis for a classificatory distinction, and religious groups can be said to fall into one category or the other. However, when Weber applied the distinction in order to analyse the importance of sectarian movements for the rationalisation of modern western culture, he reformulated the concept of 'sect' and emphasised the specific components of sectarianism were particularly

influential in this regard. The concept then became an ideal type (Giddens, 1971:142). Thus, the characteristics of the 'Calvinist ethic' that Weber analysed in *The Protestant Ethic* were taken from the writings of various historical figures, and involved those components of Calvinist doctrine that Weber identified as of particular importance in relation to the formation of the Capitalist spirit. He argued any descriptive concept could be transformed into an ideal type through the abstraction and recombination of certain elements (Giddens, 1971:142). It is only through ideal-typical concept-construction that the viewpoints of individual cases become explicit (Wallace, 1994:235).

Conducting Qualitative Research

The main method of conducting qualitative research is field research. Field research refers to the study of people in their daily lives. The fieldworker ventures into the worlds of others to learn about how they live, talk and behave in order to understand the meanings that observed activities have for those engaging in them (Emerson **in** Neuman, 1994:330). Field researchers apply a social constructionist perspective on social life, and argue that people create and define the social world through their interactions. Human experiences are filtered through a subjective sense of reality, and this affects how people view the world.

Consequently, the context is critical in qualitative research, since researchers look at settings and people holistically, to understand the meanings of social actions, and all perspectives are seen as important and meaningful. Qualitative researchers are also concerned with how people think and act in their everyday life, and have been described as "naturalistic" in this regard (Lincoln and Guba **in** Bogdan and Taylor, 1999:8). All settings and groups are seen to be meaningful, and no aspect of social life is considered too trivial or mundane to be studied. A flexible research design is followed and research procedures are usually specific to the individual setting or researcher. Data takes the form of words from documents, observations, and transcripts (Neuman, 1994:317).

Two modern extensions of field research, ethnography and ethnomethodology, build on this perspective. Ethnography refers to the act of describing a culture and understanding another way of life from the native point of view (Neuman, 1994:333). Ethnomethodology refers to the study of the methods of people, and is concerned with the means by which

people construct, account for and give meaning to their social world. Ethnomethodologists examine ordinary social interaction in great detail to identify the rules for constructing social reality (Neuman, 1994:334).

Field research involves observing, listening and making detailed notes about members of the community under study. All actions and words are recorded and analysed, and no action is considered worthless in field research. A third method of field research, and the method that I have chosen, is interviewing respondents. Interviewing has a wide variety of forms and a multiplicity of uses. The most common type of interviewing is individual, face-to-face verbal interchange, but it can also take the form of face-to-face group interviewing, mailed or self-administered questionnaires, and telephone surveys (Fontana and Frey **in** Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:361). Interviewing can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured.

Structured interviewing refers to a situation in which an interviewer asks each respondent a series of pre-established questions with a limited set of response categories. There is generally limited room for variation in response, except where open-ended questions occur. Semi-structured, in-depth enthnographic interviewing provides more flexibility in responses (Fontana and Frey **in** Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:363-365). Semi-structured, non-directive, in-depth, informal interviews were used in this study. According to Neuman (1994:358), the field interview is "a joint production of a researcher and a member". Experiences are mutually shared, and respondents speak and express themselves normally. Trust and familiarity must be established between the interviewer and the respondent to ensure that personal and sensitive and issues can be dealt with.

Field interviews do not have a clear beginning and end, and can be picked up later. The questions and the order in which they are asked are tailored to specific people and situations. Moreover, it is like a friendly conversational exchange, and is sometimes interspersed with jokes, asides, diversions, and anecdotes, which are recorded. The interviewer usually adjusts to the respondents' norms and language usage (Neuman, 1994:359). I found this method to be most appropriate for my interviews since I had a close relationship with all the respondents. I also found that I had to focus on different questions and issues with each respondent. This is apparent in the different areas of focus in each interview. Some aspects of family and marriage were more important and

meaningful for others, and more emphasis and discussion occurred here. This required a flexible interviewing method, and I found in-depth, semi-structured interviews to be most appropriate for this study.

The Research Strategy

Using Weber's methodology, I developed a descriptive construct (*gattungsbegriffe*) of a modern, Western family ideology, adapted from Kellerman's description of **traditional** western family ideology (**in** Steyn, 1987:540). According to Kellerman, the main characteristics of western family ideology include: (a) sexual relations are restricted to marriage; (b) between one man and one woman; (c) who through mutual attraction; (d) are bound to each other for life; (e) with the object of producing and raising children; (f) in a neo-local residential setting; (g) with the husband as breadwinner, (h) the wife as housekeeper; (i) with the husband occupying the dominant position of authority.

I then modified and recombined these characteristics accordingly to develop a modern Western family ideology, as I felt that Kellerman's characteristics would not adequately reflect current thinking and beliefs about family life. It seemed to me that beliefs concerning pre-marital sex; the division of labour; and divorce had changed, particularly among younger individuals. I felt that Kellerman's description of family ideology failed to recognise these changes. The main features of the **modern** Western family ideology include: sharing of domestic tasks; approval of working mothers; neo-local residence (disapproval of the extended family household); choice of partner being an individual decision; love as a basis for marriage; and monogamy, with an acceptance of divorce.

I then identified the main characteristics of Islam that were of particular importance in relation to family ideology. These included a prohibition of pre-marital sex; a strict sexual division of labour; the approval of polygamy and divorce; and the close involvement of the extended family. Through a synthesis and abstraction of these elements, I developed a traditional Muslim family ideology, which emphasised these aspects of Islam. A traditional Muslim family ideology would incorporate the following: disapproval of working mothers with women being responsible for domestic tasks; preference for the extended family system; choice of partner dependent on larger kin group approval; an approval of polygamy and divorce. Thus, I developed general descriptions of western and Muslim

family ideologies. These descriptive types can be summarised as follows, and are compared with Kellerman's descriptive construct:

	Traditional Western Family Ideology (Kellerman)	**Modern Western Family Ideology**	**Traditional Muslim Family Ideology**
A	Pre-marital sex is discouraged	Pre-marital sex is accepted	Pre-marital sex is prohibited
B	Only monogamous marriages are acceptable	Only monogamous marriages are acceptable	Polygamous marriages are also acceptable
C	Choice of marriage partner is an individual one - love and mutual attraction are the basis for marriage	Choice of marriage partner is an individual one – love and mutual attraction are the basis for marriage	Choice of marriage partner is dependent on kin approval - love and mutual attraction is not the primary basis for marriage
D	Marriage is for life – divorce is unacceptable	Divorce is acceptable	Divorce is acceptable
E	Children are an essential part of marriage	Children are not an essential part of marriage	Children are an important part of marriage
F	Preference for a neo-local residence and disapproval of the extended family system	Preference for a neo-local residence and disapproval of the extended family system	Acceptance and/or preference for the extended family system
G	The husband is the sole breadwinner	Approval of working women and mothers	Strong disapproval of working women
H	Disapproval of the sharing of domestic tasks	Approval of the sharing of domestic tasks	Disapproval of the sharing of domestic tasks

Using these descriptive types, I conducted interviews with four married couples, comprising of a young Christian couple and a young Muslim couple, as well as an older Christian couple and an older Muslim couple to develop an understanding of their world-views concerning marriage and family life, in relation to the typologies I had developed. I also chose these married couples to see if there were any significant differences in attitudes and perceptions across generations and religions. (See Appendix 2 for the interview schedule).

Couple 1: Naomi and Robert

Naomi and Robert are a White, middle-class couple who have been married for 32 years. She is 61 years old, and Robert is 63. Naomi holds a degree in education, while Robert does not hold any tertiary qualifications. They both attend the Dutch Reformed Church, and consider themselves practising Christians, who believe strongly in Biblical teachings. They have two sons, Phillip and Leon, who are married, and three grandchildren. Their sons live and work in Port Elizabeth. Robert worked as a building contractor until 1998, when ill-health forced him to retire. Naomi taught at a local school until 1996, and then decided to retire. This couple has lived their entire lives in Grahamstown. I interviewed them at their home in Grahamstown.

I asked the couple if they thought that pre-marital sex was acceptable:

Naomi: *Oh! No. Definitely not. I strongly believe that people should wait until they are married. I don't think that it's right. Anyway, what with AIDS and everything, I think that it's best to wait until you're married. And as Christians, that's what we're supposed to do too.*

Robert: *Yes, I agree with Naomi. In our day, you know, things were really different. It wasn't like how it is now. Young people, then, wanted to get married and settle down. Nowadays, well things are different. I don't think that it's right. I think that people should wait until they're married. I think that if they did, then there wouldn't be this AIDS problem.*

The couple clearly disapproved of premarital sex, and thus adhered to an element of the traditional Western family ideology. Robert also highlighted that attitudes towards marriage and sex had changed through generations. Naomi also cited religious reasons for her disapproval of pre-marital sex.

I then asked the couple if it was acceptable for a man to have more than one wife. They showed strong disapproval of polygamous marriages, and indicated that they did not see these marriages as acceptable.

Robert: *No, marriage is only between one man and one woman. That's the way it is. I don't think that it's right for a man to have more than one wife. Why should he, anyway? A marriage is between* ***one*** *man and* ***one*** *woman, and that's the way it is.*

Naomi: *No. I don't think it's right either. Like Robert has just said, marriage is between a man and a woman - not two women and a man! It's against our*

religion too. As a Christian, I believe that marriage is between a man and woman. I don't approve of polygamy.

They further indicated that they would not participate in such a marriage, nor was it acceptable for others to do so.

Interviewer: *Would either of you want to participate in a polygamous marriage?*

Robert: *No. I would not want to. I don't want two wives.*

Naomi: *No. I wouldn't want to either. It's just not marriage for me, you know. You're supposed to have a husband, and it's supposed to be just you and him. No sharing.*

Interviewer: *Do you think it's acceptable for others to participate in polygamous marriages?*

Robert: *Not really. I think that marriage is really about one man and one woman, as I've said before. If you allow these sorts of things, then you're going to complicate things. And then everyone will want to do their own thing. No. It's not right for others to do it either.*

Interviewer: *And you, Naomi?*

Naomi: *I suppose that people are free to do their own thing, you know.* (Pause). *But marriage is so serious. No. I really don't think that others should do it also.*

However, I feel that Naomi is ambivalent about the right of others practising polygamy. Naomi seemed a bit hesitant when I asked for her answer. It seemed to me, that she was going to say that she approved of others practising polygamy. However, I believe that her husband's answer and presence had intimidated her somewhat, and she felt pressured to agree with him. There appears to be some difference of opinion between the couple regarding the practice of polygamy by others. However, they were unanimous in their rejection of entering into a polygamous union, and stressed that the practice ran counter to their religious beliefs. Robert appeared to oppose the legal recognition of polygamous marriages as well.

They also believed that the choice of partner should be an individual choice, independent of kin approval. Robert said that love should be the basis of marriage. Naomi used her own marriage to illustrate this point. She said that her parents did not approve of Robert initially, but this did not prevent her from marrying him.

Interviewer: *Do you think that the choice of marriage partner should be an individual one? I mean, should love and mutual attraction be the most important basis for marriage? Did family approval play any role in the choice of your marriage partner?*

Robert: *No, I don't think that the family's approval plays any role. When I wanted to marry Naomi, her parents didn't like me. They didn't think that I was good enough for their daughter.*

Naomi: *Yes, there were lots of problems, you know. My father didn't think that a builder could take care of me. But we loved each other and we wanted to get married, and we did! And now, none of my sisters ever talks about how the family didn't like Robert in the beginning.*

Interviewer: *So, as long as the two people concerned love each other, then that's all that matters?*

Naomi: *Yes. That's it. As long as they know that they love each other, then that's the most important thing. I loved Robert, and he loved me. I didn't care that he was a builder, you know. I just knew that her loved me, and I knew he would take care of me.*

For this couple, then, kin approval played little role in their choice of marriage partner. Love was the most important basis of marriage.

They both felt that divorce was an acceptable means of ending an unhappy marriage.

Robert: *Well, marriage **should** be for life, you know. That's what you say to your wife or your husband on your wedding day. You promise to love them until you die. But that's not always possible now. Sometimes things happen, and divorce is the only way in the end.*

Naomi: *Yes. There are lots of people that I know who are divorced. I think that it's OK if you really don't love each other anymore. I mean, what else can you do?*

For this couple, marriage was not necessarily a life-long union. They both accepted that things can and do sometimes go wrong in a marriage, and felt that divorce was an acceptable means of ending an unhappy marriage.

The couple also felt that having children was important to them, and necessary in marriage:

Naomi: *Yes, children are important in a marriage. It brings the husband and wife closer, and it creates a bond. That's **your** family now. Yes, I think that children are important in marriage.*

Robert: *Yes, it's a lot of responsibility, but having your children and being a parent is wonderful. It's important in marriage.*

While Robert and Naomi spoke of children in a positive manner, the couple disapproved of their children living with them after marriage, and expressed a preference for a neo-local residence system. Robert said that young couples needed to be on their own, and that parents were not responsible for their children after they were married. They pointed to the example of their own sons, who were now living and working in Port Elizabeth.

Robert: *No. I didn't want my sons to live with us after they were married. Why should they? They're married, and they have their own lives to lead. They must find their own way. They need to be independent. Like Phillip and Leon. They left home after finishing university and married girls from PE. They have good jobs and their own houses and families.*

Naomi: *They're doing very well and are happy on their own. Phillip has two daughters and Leon's wife had a baby boy recently. I think it's nice when they live on their own, you know. Not dependent on us.*

The couple believed that housework and domestic tasks were the responsibility of the wife, and that men were responsible for earning a wage. The couple agreed that women should be allowed to work, as long as it did not prevent them from fulfilling all their maternal duties. Naomi, herself, pointed out that she was a working mother, and was a full-time teacher when she had her own children. She went on to say that she was able to spend a lot of time with her children, since she was always there when they got back from school.

Interviewer: *Do you believe that domestic tasks, such as housework, cooking, and taking care of the children should be shared?*

Robert: *Men are responsible for putting food on the table. Women are responsible for taking care of the family. That's the way it is. Women do the housework and cooking, and take care of the children. Of course, women can work if they want to. But it is the men who must earn the money. Well, now we are both pensioners you know, so we both bring in money!* (Laughs).

Naomi: *Yes, I worked for a long time, you know. I was a teacher. Robert didn't have a problem with it, and I was fine as a working mother. I was always there for the children when they needed me. I took them everywhere that they needed to go, and supervised their homework. I don't think that there's anything wrong with working mothers. You must just make sure that your children are taken care of first. And that's what I did.*

I got the impression that Naomi was trying to reconcile her belief in the traditional division of labour, ie. the husband as breadwinner and the wife as housekeeper and caregiver, with her decision to work. It seemed as though she was trying to "prove" to me that she was a good mother, despite working. This case also substantiates Barrett's definition of family ideology, which suggests that what people believe may not necessarily be what they practice. According to Barrett (1980), family ideology may be seen merely as a set of ideas about family life that informs behaviour (practice). Robert believed that men should be the breadwinners, with women assuming responsibility for domestic tasks in the household, yet his wife also worked.

Despite this, however, this couple subscribe to a traditional division of labour, and adhere to Kellerman's description of the husband as breadwinner and the wife as housekeeper. Throughout the interview, I noticed that Robert usually spoke first, and Naomi tended to agree with him. It seemed to me that he occupied the dominant position of authority in the household, and this reflects a further acceptance of Kellerman's traditional, western family ideology.

This couple seemed to have largely conformed to Kellerman's description of the traditional, Western family ideology. Religion also plays an important part in their beliefs concerning marriage and family life. They disapproved of pre-marital sex and polygamous unions for themselves and others, citing religious reasons. They indicated that their choice of marriage partner was entirely an individual one, with little concern for kin approval. Naomi and Robert used their own marriage as an example to illustrate that love was the most important basis for marriage for them. The couple subscribed to a traditional division of labour, although there was an approval for working mothers - suggesting a contradiction between their ideology and practice. On the whole, however, this couple ascribe to a traditional western family ideology as described by Kellerman.

Couple 2: Charlotte and Mike

Charlotte and Mike have been married for a year and a half. Charlotte comes from an English-speaking family, while Mike is Afrikaans-speaking. She is 26 years old and Mike is 28 years old. Charlotte holds a secretarial diploma, while Mike does not have any tertiary education. They do not have any children. Neither of them attends church regularly, but consider and identify themselves as Christians. Charlotte works as a

secretary for a lawyer in Grahamstown, while Mike is a policeman. They are a middle-class couple, and have lived in Grahamstown their entire lives. I have known Charlotte for two years, and have developed a relatively close friendship with her. Charlotte and Mike live in a modest two-bedroomed flat, where the interview took place.

I asked the couple if they approved of pre-marital sex. They indicated that they did, but did not specify whether they had engaged in pre-marital sex before their own marriage.

Charlotte: *Yes it's OK, as long as protection and birth control are used. I mean, it's modern times now. People used to be careful about these things a long time ago, but it happens you know.*

Mike: *Yes. It happens, and there's nothing wrong with it. I mean, even school-kids are doing it.*

This couple saw pre-marital sex as an acceptable, common practice. Charlotte's reference to "modern times" in her response substantiated Robert and Naomi's claims that attitudes to pre-marital sex had changed across generations. While this young Christian couple did not object to pre-marital sex, Naomi and Robert objected to the practice on religious grounds.

The couple were asked if they would ever enter into a polygamous union.

Charlotte: *No. Never. It's just not the type of thing I would want. I mean I'm happy with things the way they are, and I wouldn't want it to change. It's just not us.*

Mike: (Laughs). *Having two wives? No. I'm just not that type of guy, you know.*

Apart from not wanting to personally participate in a polygamous union, Charlotte and Mike did not approve of others entering into such a marriage either.

Charlotte: *Gosh, I just don't think that it's right. I know it's part of some people's cultures, but I just don't like it. I really think that women are abused in those sorts of marriages and that isn't right.*

Mike: *I agree. I mean, that's just not how it's supposed to be. Seems a bit unfair on the women too, I feel.*

Charlotte and Mike, like Naomi and Robert, objected to the practice of polygamy by others, and felt that the practice oppressed women in those marriages. This ideological

rejection of polygamy represented an adherence to both traditional and western marriage ideologies.

I asked Charlotte and Mike if kin approval played any role in their choice of marriage partner.

Charlotte: *No, not really. Mike's parents were happy that he was marrying me, but that didn't make a difference really.*

Mike: *The same with me. The families liked each other, and they sort of knew each other. But that wasn't really important to us.*

They believed that the choice of partner should be an individual choice, independent of kin approval, with love as the primary basis of marriage.

Interviewer: *Do you think that kin approval is important?*

Mike: *As long as the two people involved loved each other, then it doesn't matter what everyone else says. They aren't the ones who are going to live with the person, you are. And as long as you love them, then that's all that matters.*

Interviewer: *So, other factors such as race or religion?*

Charlotte: *No. I really don't think that that matters. As long as those two people love each other, and they can work things out, then that's all that matters.*

For this couple, then, the decision to marry and choice of marriage partner was entirely an individual one, independent of kin and family approval. Other factors such as religious affiliation, or cultural and ethnic background were also not mentioned, indicating that these factors had little importance for this couple.

The couple also felt that divorce was an acceptable means of ending a marriage:

Interviewer: *Do you think that divorce is an acceptable means of ending a marriage?*

Charlotte: *It is. There's nothing wrong with getting a divorce. It happens all the time. Yes. It's fine.*

Interviewer: *And you, Mike?*

Mike: *There's nothing wrong with marriages ending divorce. Like Charlotte said, it's so common now anyway. It's not really something that people find a problem with. No-one questions it.*

This couple viewed divorce as acceptable, common practice, and did not object to it at all.

Although, the couple did not have any children of their own yet, they spoke of parenthood in glowing terms, and were very enthusiastic. I asked them if children were an essential part of marriage.

Charlotte: *I wouldn't say that it's essential, but to us, it's very important. Some people just don't want children, you know. But Mike and I would like to be parents someday. Yes, it is important in our marriage.*

Mike: *We both love children, and we do want them. I think that they're wonderful, and I can't wait to be a father.*

Despite, talking about children in these terms, the couple disapproved of their children living with them after marriage, and expressed a preference for a neo-local residence system, like Naomi and Robert. They said that they would never live with their own parents, and would not want heir children to live with them, once they had been married.

Interviewer: *Would you want your children to live with you after marriage?*

Mike: (Laughs). *We haven't even had them yet, and you're asking me about them living with me when they're married!*

After a brief pause, Mike continued:

Mike: *I'd have to say no. I guess because I wouldn't want to live with my parents and I don't expect them* [Mike's children] *to live with me. It's better when you live on your own.*

Charlotte: *I've been living on my own now for quite a while. Even before I got married, so I am very independent, and I would* ***never*** *want to go back home. I have my privacy, and I don't have my parents checking up on me. If you're living with them, then you have to go by their rules. I would never want them to interfere in my marriage.*

This couple does not prefer or approve of the extended family system, and shows a clear preference for the neo-local residential system. They also stressed the freedom and independence that came with living away from parents after marriage. This was also

something that Naomi and Robert stressed. This reflects an ascription to the western family ideology.

The couple believed that housework and domestic tasks were a joint responsibility, especially if the wife was working. The couple approved of working mothers, and considered it a necessity to attain an acceptable standard of living. This couple did not have any children as yet, and indicated that they did not believe that a working mother would be any less of a mother, as one that stayed at home.

Charlotte: *I work full-time now, and Mike doesn't mind at all.*

Mike: *Actually, these days it's necessary you know. There has to be more than one person working. I don't think that a man earns enough alone, and his wife has to work too.*

Not only did Mike approve of his wife working, but felt that a dual-income was necessary to maintain an acceptable standard of living. I asked Mike if he would still approve of Charlotte working when they had children:

Mike: *Actually, then it would be even more necessary. I mean it's so expensive having children, and I think that we'd send the child to a creche or something.*

Interviewer: *And you, Charlotte? What do you think?*

Charlotte: *Oh! Yes. I would still work. I enjoy work. Yes, Mike is right. We would probably send the child to daycare or something. I don't want to give up work just yet. And as Mike just said, we need the extra money anyway.*

I also asked them if they shared domestic tasks.

Mike: *Yes. I cook sometimes even! I help Charlotte. She works too, and I can't expect her to take care of the house and work too.*

Charlotte: *We definitely share the housework. Mike's a big help around the house.*

Although the couple, shared domestic tasks, the fact that Mike "helped" out, indicated that Charlotte was seen being primarily responsible for domestic tasks. The couple, however, approve of the sharing of domestic tasks and working mothers, and rejects Kellerman's traditional western family ideology of the man being the breadwinner, with the wife as

housekeeper. Mike's views are in direct contrast to Robert's who felt that the husband should be the main breadwinner.

This couple largely adhere to a modern, western family ideology. They approve of pre-marital sex, and see it as a common practice. While they indicated that they would not practice polygamy themselves, they did not disapprove of others following the practice if it was a cultural or religious tradition. Love was seen as the primary basis of marriage, with very little importance attached to kin approval. This couple did not have much attachment to their larger kin group, as they indicated that they would never live with their parents or allow their children to live with them. They regarded children as important to marriage, and looked forward to parenthood. Divorce was seen as an acceptable means of ending a marriage. This couple approved of the sharing of domestic tasks and working mothers. On the whole, they largely conform to a modern, western family ideology, given their acceptance of pre-marital sex; divorce; and the sharing of domestic tasks. This is in contrast to the older Christian couple, Naomi and Robert, who disapproved of pre-marital sex and polygamy entirely, and subscribed to a traditional division of labour.

Couple 3: Imraan and Taheera

Imraan and Taheera are an Indian Muslim, middle-class couple that have been married for 22 years. Taheera is a 49-year old school-teacher, while Imraan, 51, holds an administrative post at Rhodes University. Taheera holds a Masters degree in Biology, while Imraan has completed a Ph.D. in Microbiology. They have two sons, both of whom attend university. Imraan is originally from Potchefstroom, in the North West, but studied at a Pakistani univesity. Taheera was born and educated in Pakistan. The couple met while at University.

I asked the couple if they believed that sex should be restricted to marriage alone:

Taheera: *Yes. Definitely. In Islam, sex before marriage is not allowed, and adultery also carries a huge punishment. Yes. I believe that sex should be for marriage alone.*

Imraan: *Yes. As Taheera has said, as Muslims we believe that sex is for marriage only. I strongly believe in that, and I really don't believe in pre-marital or extra-marital sexual activity.*

Religion clearly played an important role in this Imraan and Taheera's attitude to pre-marital sex. They both strongly disapproved of pre-marital sex, and extra-marital sex, and felt that sex should be restricted to marriage alone. They used Qu'ranic injunctions as the basis of their beliefs.

Their views towards polygamous marriages were also strongly influenced by Islam, and they both indicated that they approved of polygamy. This is in contrast to Charlotte and Mike, who both felt that pre-marital sex was acceptable. However, Taheera and Imraan also share Naomi and Robert's disapproval of pre-marital sex.

Imraan: *I don't think that there's anything wrong with polygamy. It is allowed in Islam, and I don't see a problem with the practice. As long as a man treats both women equally, then there's nothing wrong.*

Taheera: *The most important thing about polygamy is that the husband needs to love both women equally and not show favouritism at all. That's very important.*

Interviewer: *Would either of you want to participate in a polygamous marriage?*

Imraan: *Well, I know that I wouldn't want to have more than one wife. It's very difficult to do that. Especially fulfilling all the conditions of the Qu'ran.*

Interviewer: *Would you allow Imraan to take on an additional wife if he did want to, Taheera?*

Taheera: *No. I don't think so. I don't think that he could love both of us equally, you know. And if he can't, then I wouldn't let him.*

While Imraan and Taheera both approve of polygamy ideologically, they indicated that they would not practice it themselves. I asked them if they objected to others practising polygamy.

Imraan: *No. There's nothing wrong with other people practising polygamy.*

Taheera: *As long as they treat both women equally, there's nothing wrong with it.*

Polygamy was seen as an acceptable practice by this couple. Although they indicated that they would not personally participate in a polygamous union, they did not object to others entering into polygamous unions. This acceptance of polygamous unions represented a marked departure from both Christian couples who indicated that polygamy was

unacceptable for all. Imraan and Taheera subscribe to the traditional, Muslim family ideology of an acceptance of polygamy.

I then asked the couple whether the choice of marriage partner should be an individual choice, and if love was the most important basis of marriage. They both indicated that other factors such as kin approval and religion played a vital part in the choice of marriage partner, and used their own relationship as an example:

Taheera: *Well, I feel that love is important for marriage. A marriage without love would not be very successful, I don't think. But there are other factors that do play an important role too.*

Imraan: *Yes, love is important but I think that the families need to be taken into account. Like when we were getting married. I had met Taheera when we were studying, and I knew that she was the woman that I wanted to marry. But it wasn't just a matter of marrying her. I had to make sure that my family liked her and that her family liked me.*

Taheera: *I think that religion plays a very important role too. Although we loved each other, I would not have married Imraan if he was not a Muslim, and I don't think that he would have married me if I were not Muslim. And our parents would not have allowed me to marry a non-Muslim either.*

Kin approval was very important in the choice of marriage partner for Imraan and Taheera. While Naomi and Robert, and Charlotte and Mike both stressed love and individual preferences in their decision to marry, other factors such as kin approval and religious affiliation were of paramount importance to Imraan and Taheera. Love was not the most important basis for marriage, and this couple ascribed to an element of the traditional, Muslim family ideology.

Interviewer: *Would you allow your sons to marry a non-Muslim woman?*

Imraan: *No. Absolutely not.*

Taheera: *No.*

The couple indicated strongly that they would not allow their sons to marry non-Muslim women. Family and kin approval obviously plays an important role in their attitudes towards marriage partners. Parental approval played an important role when they were getting married, and this still continues with their own children too. They felt that kin approval was an important factor in the choice of marriage partner. Religion was seen as

the most important factor and basis of marriage, however. Imraan and Taheera both felt that they would not marry a non-Muslim, neither would they allow their sons to do so. Love was a secondary consideration for this couple.

The couple also felt that divorce was an acceptable means of ending an unsuccessful marrriage.

Imraan: *No. There's nothing wrong with getting divorced. Sometimes things just don't work out. And it is also allowed in Islam.*

Taheera: *Yes. It's fine. Provided that there's absolutely no alternative.*

References to the *Qu'ran* were again made in this answer, and reflects the influence that religion plays in this couple's family ideology. As with the two previous couples that I had interviewed, Imraan and Taheera also approved of divorce as a means of ending an unsuccessful marriage.

I asked them if having children was an important part of marriage.

Imraan: *Yes. They are. I think that they complete marriage. But not having them very soon after marriage. I think that a couple needs time to get to know each other and get used to each other before they have children. It's a big responsibility, and you have to be sure that you are ready for it.*

Taheera: *Yes. They are important in marriage. When Imraan and I got married, we didn't have children immediately, but after a while, we felt that we were ready. Yes. They are important in marriage. I think that they bring a lot of happiness too, as well as being a big responsibility.*

The couple indicated that they did not feel very strongly about their children living with them after marriage. If their children indicated that they would like to live on their own, then they would accept the decision. If they decided to live with them after marriage, that would also be acceptable.

Interviewer: *Would you like your children to live with you after marriage?*

Imraan: *They are free to do so if that's what they want.*

Taheera: *Yes. If that's what they want then they can live with us. But we aren't very strict about it.*

Imraan: *I doubt that they are going to find work in Grahamstown, though. So I am sure that they will move anyway. But we will miss them.*

This couple accepts and approves of the extended family household. While Naomi and Robert both rejected this type of family grouping. Imraan and Taheera, themselves, have never been part of an extended family system, since Imraan spent a considerable amount of time completing his studies in the United States. However, they did indicate that they approved of the extended family system, and that other members of their family were involved in such a family set-up.

Interviewer: *Have either of you lived with your parents after marriage?*

Imraan: *No. We were married after we both completed our Masters, and then we went to live in America where I was doing my Ph.D. We lived on our own all the time. My mother visits us regularly, and we see her too. And we try to go to Pakistan to see Taheera's mother too.*

Taheera: *When we came back to South Africa, then Imraan got a job at the University of Durban-Westville and lectured there. We moved to Durban and lived on our own, so we have never lived with our parents. Now we're in Grahamstown, and we live without any family here too.*

Imraan and Taheera have had little experience of living in a joint or extended family. The couple have moved several times as well, as a result of Imraan's job commitments. According to Goode (1982), the joint or extended family is inconducive to an industrialising economy. However, there is a 'fit' between the nuclear family and industrialisation, since the nuclear family is more mobile. This appears to be the case with Imraan and Taheera. It is easier for them to move, rather than ask the whole family to move with them. The rest of their family appears to have followed the same pattern:

Interviewer: *Do any of your siblings live with your parents?*

Imraan: *Well, my brothers and sisters are located all over the country. My mother lives with my oldest brother and his family. We didn't want her to live alone. So it's just that brother* [who lives with a parent]. *Everyone else lives on their own.*

Taheera: *My brothers and sisters live on their own too. My mother lives with my brother in Pakistan. I am in South Africa, and the others in Canada, England and Australia.*

Both their siblings have relocated overseas as a result of increased job and educational opportunities. However, the extended family system still prevails with this family, since

Imraan and Taheera's mothers do live with their sons. Obligation to parents is one of the central characteristics of the *kutum*, and remains so in this family.

Imraan and Taheera both have limited experience of living in an extended family. All their siblings live on their own, and they themselves have never been part of an extended family. However, both their mothers live with a son who is married, indicating that there is some experience of extended family living. This couple approved of the extended family even though they were not part of an extended family, and had very little experience of living in one. This represents, to me, an adherence to an element of the traditional, Muslim family ideology.

Interestingly, Imraan pointed out that there was very little chance of his son finding finding a job in Grahamstown, and that he would be forced to leave home. Jithoo (1987:63) pointed to increased educational and career opportunities as one reason for the break-up of the traditional Indian joint family. Certainly, this case gives some substance to Jithoo's claim. However, nucelation, in this case, seems forced, as Imraan and Taheera both looked disappointed that their son would have to leave home. Through this one can see that there is a deep attachment between the parents and son in this family – one that is likely to continue after marriage. This is in contrast to Naomi and Robert, who did not approve of their children living with them after marriage. They stressed independence from parents. Charlotte and Mike did not even entertain the idea of living with their parents after marriage.

I asked the couple if they approved of the sharing of domestic tasks. They indicated that housework and domestic tasks were largely the responsibility of the wife, and that men were responsible for earning a wage. However, Imraan did point out that he helped with domestic tasks when required to do so.

Taheera: *I think that women are generally responsible for the home, and that men must take responsibility of going out to work. In my own home, I know that I am responsible for the housework and cooking, and things like that. Imraan is the main breadwinner. But he does help out now and again.*

Imraan: *I see nothing wrong with men helping their wives when they need help, but generally speaking, women are responsible for the domestic tasks.*

Despite an adherence to a traditional division of labour, the couple approved of working mothers:

Taheera: *Yes. I approve of working mothers. I work. But I think that women should work if they know that they aren't neglecting their children in any way. I am lucky because I teach, and I was able to spend lots of time with my children.*

Imraan: *Taheera is right. As long as the family is not neglected, a woman can work. But if it starts affecting the family, and the children especially, then I think that a woman should stay at home.*

Both Taheera and Naomi felt that they were able to successfully combine a career in teaching with motherhood. In a study of family ideology among female Muslim university students in India, Lateef (1994) found that almost half of respondents picked teaching as their preferred profession. Teaching is a traditionally favoured profession among Muslim females, since women can teach at a primarily female educational institution thereby facilitating the segregation of men and women. Moreover, it is considered to be a flexible career, easily adapted to family moves and changes, due to its favourable working hours. This certainly seems to be the case with both Taheera and Naomi, both of whom felt that their job gave them sufficient time to meet the challenge of motherhood and a career.

As with Naomi and Robert, Imraan and Taheera agreed that women should be allowed to work, as long as it did not prevent them from fulfilling all their maternal duties. Taheera indicated that she did not feel that her working caused her to neglect her family in any way. This couple adheres to a traditional division of labour, unlike Charlotte and Mike, who felt that a dual-income household was vital for the maintenance of an acceptable standard of living.

In terms of family ideology, this family ascribes to a traditional, Muslim family ideology. They strongly disapproved of pre-marital sex. The couple approved of polygamy, but indicated that they would not enter into a polygamous marriage themselves. They did not object to others practising polygamy either. They believed that housework and domestic tasks were largely the responsibility of the wife, and that men were responsible for earning a wage. However, Imraan did point out that he helped with domestic tasks when required to do so. They agreed that women should be allowed to work, as long as it did not prevent them from fulfilling all their maternal duties. Taheera indicated that she did not feel that

her working caused her to neglect her family in any way. Children were considered an important part of marriage and family life.

The couple indicated that they did not feel very strongly about their children living with them. If their children indicated that they would like to live on their own, then they would accept the decision. If they decided to live with them after marriage, that would also be acceptable. The couple, themselves, have never been part of an extended family system, since Imraan spent a considerable amount of time completing his studies in the United States, followed by lecturing commitments away from home. However, they did indicate that they approved of the extended family system, and that other members of their family were involved in such a family set-up.

They felt that kin approval was an important factor in the choice of marriage partner. Religion was seen as the most important factor and basis of marriage, however. Imraan and Taheera both felt that they would not marry a non-Muslim, neither would they allow their sons to do so. Love was a secondary consideration for this couple. They also approved of divorce as a last resort to end an unsuccessful marriage. Religion and *Qu'ranic* injunctions played an important part in the make-up of this couple's family ideology.

Couple 4: Aniessa and Zubair

Aniessa and Zubair are an Indian Muslim, middle-class couple that have been married for 3 years. Aniessa is a 23 year old housewife, while Zubair, 25, is self-employed. Aniessa holds a Banking diploma, while Zubair has not completed any tertiary education. They have a two-year old daughter. They are both originally from Durban, but have settled in Johannesburg as a result of Zubair's work commitments. Aniessa and Zubair's families were close family friends, and the couple had known each other for almost their entire lives.

This couple disapproved entirely of pre-marital sex:

Aniessa: *No. I don't think that pre-marital sex is right. I think that people should wait until they are married. Absolutely not.*

Zubair: *As a Muslim, as well, it is not allowed. No. I don't approve of pre-marital sex either.*

As with Imraan and Taheera, Aniessa and Zubair also disapproved strongly of pre-marital sex. They also referred to *Qu'ranic* injunctions that prohibited pre-marital sex. However, they approved of polygamy, and used Islam as the basis of this acceptance.

Zubair: *Polygamy is allowed in terms of Islam, and a man can have up to four wives. But he has to treat them all equally. As long as he does that then I don't have a problem with polygamy.*

Aniessa: *Yes, I approve of polygamy. I don't see anything wrong with it.*

Interviwer: *Would you participate in a polygamous marriage?*

Zubair: *No. I don't think that I can ever love two women the same. I don't think I would be able to do that. No.*

Interviewer: *And you, Aniessa?*

Aniessa: *No. I wouldn't want Zubair to have another wife, neither would I want to be someone else's second wife.*

Interviewer: *So, while you would not enter into a polygamous union yourself, is it acceptable for others?*

Zubair: *Yes.*

Aniessa: *Yes.*

Aniessa and Zubair both approve of polygamy ideologically, but indicated that they would not participate in such a marriage themselves. They approved of others entering and practising polygamy. Both Christian couples in this study rejected polygamy entirely, both for themselves and for others. Both Muslim couples approved of the practice for others, but would not practice it personally. This ideological acceptance of polygamy represents a major difference between western and Muslim family ideology.

Although love was important, religion was seen as the most important factor in the choice of marriage partner. The couple did not think that the choice of marriage partner was an individual one. They felt that kin approval was important if the marriage was to succeed, and for the preservation of family harmony. Aniessa indicated that she would not have

married Zubair if her parents did not approve of him, and vice versa. They also indicated that they would not have even thought about marrying each other if they were not Muslim.

Interviewer: *Do you think that love is the most important thing when it comes to choosing a marriage partner?*

Aniessa: *Yes. Love is very important.*

Zubair: *Yes. You **must** love the person that you marry.*

Initially, this couple seemed as though they subscribed to an element of western family ideology. However, further probing revealed a different picture. I asked them if there were any other factors that were important in choosing a marriage partner. Aniessa used her own relationship with Zubair in her answer, and I found that kin approval and religion played a significant role in choice of marriage partner, as was the case with Imraan and Taheera. I asked the couple if any other factors had impacted on their choice of marriage partner.

Aniessa: *Any other factors? Well, I suppose I should talk about me and Zubair. Yes. I loved him. We had grown up together, and our families knew each other very well and were friends. My older brother and Zubair were best friends, and my parents liked Zubair a lot. So I suppose that that was important too.*

Zubair: *I think that we were lucky because we loved each other and the parents liked us. Aniessa's parents liked me and my parents liked her. Both families knew each other, which was important. I guess the families liking us is important too.*

Interviewer: *Would you have married regardless of whether your parents liked you?*

Aniessa: *No. The family liking the person is important. Actually, that's really important. And now that I think about it, I don't think that love is the only thing. My brother fell in love with a Hindu girl, and he really wanted to marry her. My parents didn't like her because she was not Muslim, and that created a lot of tension in my family. There were a lot of problems. Eventually she converted, but my mother and father weren't too happy in the beginning. They're OK now. So I guess there are other factors too.*

Interviewer: *What would these other factors be?*

Zubair: *Well, religion for one. I would not marry a non-Muslim.*

Aniessa: *Neither would I.*

Zubair: *And making sure that your family accepts your wife. That's important to avoid any problems, like what Aniessa was talking about now.*

Religious affiliation and kin approval were of paramount importance in the choice of marriage partners for this couple. Love was of secondary importance. Aniessa's brother's experience had clearly affected her attitudes to factors that affect the choice of marriage partner, and parental approval is an important factor in her choice of marriage partner. This couple's views were similar to Imraan and Taheera's views on factors that affected the choice of marriage partner. There was no significant difference between the two Muslim couples I had interviewed, concerning love was a basis for marriage, despite the age difference between the couples. Both Christian couples, on the other hand, stressed the importance of individual preference and love in deciding to marry. Kin approval held very little importance for Naomi and Robert; and Charlotte and Mike.

Aniessa and Zubair both approved of divorce as an acceptable means of ending a marriage.

Interviewer: *Do you think that divorce is acceptable.*

Aniessa: *Yes. It is. And the whole procedure about talaaq is in the Qu'ran too. There's nothing wrong with getting a divorce. Sometimes things just don't work out.*

Zubair: *Yes. It's fine. There's nothing wrong with getting a divorce. It's sad, though.*

Aniessa: *I think as long as all the proper procedures are followed, and there's no way of getting back together.*

Religion also played an important part in this couple's views on divorce. Aniessa mentioned Qu'ranic injunctions on divorce, as well as the Islamic method of *talaaq*.

As with the other couples that were interviewed, Aniessa and Zubair both felt that children were an important part of marriage and family life.

Aniessa: *Yes. I think that children are very important in marriage. I mean, Zubair and I really love each other, but when Ayesha* [their daughter] *was born, I think our marriage felt complete. She really does bring us such happiness. Not that we were not happy before she was born, but now things are really good.*

Zubair: *Children are a very important part of marriage.*

The couple felt quite strongly about the extended family system. Immediately after their marriage, the couple lived with Aniessa's parents. They indicated that they preferred this living arrangement, and found that they derived much emotional and financial support from their parents. However, work commitments forced them to move. They indicated a strong preference for the extended family system.

Interviewer: *Would you have wanted to live with either of your parents after marriage?*

Aniessa: *Actually, we lived with my parents after we got married. It was really nice too. We had Zubair's parents living up the road from us, and we lived with mine, so we were close to both of them.*

Zubair: *But now I got this job and we had to move.*

Zubair sounded quite disappointed when he said this, so I asked him if he preferred living with Aniessa's parents.

Zubair: *Yes. Things were very convenient, you know. We were newly-weds and they helped us. We didn't have to pay rent or anything, and after Ayesha was born, Aniessa's mother used to take care of her. Things were great. But now this job is far away from home and we can'' have that anymore.*

This couple showed a preference for the extended family, and were it not for work commitments, they would still have continued to live with Aniessa's parents. The extended family was seen as a source of support and help, financially and emotionally. Unlike Imraan and Taheera, this couple has had experience of living in an extended family. Their experience of extended family living is also in contrast to the two Christian couples, who have had very little experience of joint family living, and who show no preference for, or acceptance of the extended family system. Contrast to two Christian couples.

Aniessa and Zubair also indicated that work commitments forced them to move, and led to a nucleation of their family. This is similar to Imraan's assertion that his sons will probably move as a result of their inability to find work in Grahamstown. The couple believed that housework and domestic tasks were entirely the responsibility of the wife, and that men were responsible for supporting their family. Zubair did not approve of

working mothers at all, and felt that children were neglected by women who worked. Aniessa indicated that she worked at a bank before the birth of her daughter, but left work soon after, as she felt that she couldn't cope with the demands of a career and motherhood.

Interviewer: *Do you believe that domestic tasks should be shared by the husband and wife?*

Zubair: *No. It's a woman's responsibility.*

Aniessa: *Well, if I needed help with something, then maybe I would ask, but generally I also think that women are responsible for housework and taking care of the children.*

Aniessa and Zubair adopted a traditional division of labour. Religion also played an important role in their attitudes to the division of labour.

Interviewer: *Do you approve of working mothers?*

Zubair: *No. Not at all. Like I said, women are responsible for the home, and men should go out and work. That's how it is according to Islam too. And I believe very strongly in that.*

Aniessa: *I worked for a while after Ayesha was born, and it was very difficult. I don't know how I would have coped where it not for my mother. I don't think that working mothers have a complete mothering experience, you know. Things used to be so rushed, and there was never enough time for me. I was always rushing around trying to take care of Zubair and Ayesha. After a while, I knew that things were too hectic, and I gave up work. I suppose we could afford to, as well. I don't know what I would have done if my mother hadn't helped me out. It was definitely the right thing to do, and I can see now why women are not encouraged to work in the Qu'ran.*

Aniessa's response is in direct contrast to Charlotte and Mike, both of whom felt that working mothers were acceptable. Aniessa also spoke of the difficulty in trying to be a working mother. When I asked Charlotte about combining motherhood and a career, Mike and her intimated that they would use day-care facilities. Taheera and Naomi, on the other hand, spoke of their ability to successfully combine motherhood with teaching. However, one has to bear in mind, that Taheera and Naomi both spoke of the favourable hours that teaching provided.

Religion played an important part in this couple's family ideology. Qu'ranic injunctions relating to pre-marital sex and polygamy; and the division of labour strongly influenced

Aniessa and Zubair's attitudes and beliefs relating to these aspects of marriage and family life. They ascribe to a traditional, Muslim family ideology, and have a strong preference for the traditional division of labour and the extended family. They both indicated that polygamy was acceptable, but would not practice it themselves. They approved of divorce as an acceptable means of ending a marriage.

On the basis of this research, I found that the two Christian couples subscribed to the modern, Western family ideology. The two Muslim couples largely adhered to the Muslim family ideology. The major difference between the two groups was the Muslims couples' ideological approval and acceptance of polygamy. The Christian couples both indicated that polygamy was totally unacceptable. Another difference between the two groups was the factors affecting their choice of partner. Both Muslim couples indicated that kin approval, as well as religious affiliation was very important in their choice of marriage partners. This indicated that this issue was not entirely an individual choice. The two Christian couples indicated that love was the major basis for marriage, and kin approval was of little significance. Both Muslim couples indicated an ideological approval of the extended family household, while both Christian couples indicated that married couples must live independently of their parents. Both the Muslim and Christian couples indicated that divorce was an acceptable means of ending a marriage.

The issue of sharing of domestic tasks brought out interesting responses. While the younger Muslim couple entirely rejected the notion of sharing domestic tasks, and strongly disapproved of working mothers, the older Muslim couple found working mothers acceptable. I believe that the educational background of the older Muslim couple plays a significant role in this "deviation" from the traditional Muslim family ideology. However, domestic tasks were still seen as the woman's primary responsibility. The two Christian couples differed in terms of the sharing of domestic tasks. The older Christian couple, also found working mothers acceptable, but did not believe in sharing housework. By contrast, the young Christian couple approved of working mothers, and shared domestic tasks.

From the results of these preliminary interviews based on the general descriptions of western and Muslim family ideologies that were developed, I found that the ideological acceptance of polygamy and the extended family, as well as the importance of kin approval and religion in the choice of marriage partners distinguished Muslim family ideology from

Western family ideology. Using the general descriptions I had developed as a basic framework, I developed an ideal type of a Muslim family ideology, through an abstraction and accentuation of certain elements, which were seen as distinctive and influential in Muslim family life. The ideal Muslim family ideology included (a) the approval of polygamy; (b) the extended family system; (c) the traditional division of labour; (d) the importance of kin approval of marriage partners. These elements were seen as influential in relation to an Islamic family ideology.

I conducted in-depth interviews with eight university students. Students were asked questions relating to various aspects of each of these family ideologies, to ascertain which family ideology they ascribed to, and the meanings that family and marriage life had for them. The interview schedule was based on the ideal Muslim family ideology that I had developed, and focussed on marriage; gender roles and the division of labour; the relevance of the extended family; divorce; and polygamy in these interviews. These were elements that were highlighted as they were distinctive about Islamic family ideology. The complete interview schedule is included as Appendix 5. Throughout the process, I bore in mind that the ideal type was a mental construct that could not be found empirically anywhere in reality. As Weber himself pointed out, the ideal type is a utopia (as quoted by Fallding **in** Thompson and Tunstall, 1971:502). Therefore, no individual is likely to subscribe to every element of an ideal type.

However, the ideal type does allow a researcher to contrast contexts by accentuating the specific and the unique, and emphasises how specific circumstances, cultural meanings, and perspectives of specific individuals are central for understanding the meanings that marriage and family life hold for each person. It also allowed me to analyse and present the actor's world view in a structured manner, and to interpret the raw data from interviews more coherently. The ideal type allowed me to analyse abstract concepts such as the perceptions and attitudes to marriage; house-work; and family life in a meaningful and substantial manner. Weber defined the use of the ideal type best when he said: "It serves as a harbour until one has learned to navigate safely in the vast sea of empirical facts" (Weber, 1949:104).

As indicated above, the method of data collection employed in this study involved in-depth interviews obtained from a small number of individuals. This enabled me to gain in-depth

information about specific individuals' views on family and marriage-related issues. A tape recorder was used to gather information. The interviews were then transcribed. The results are presented in the form of case studies, which allows one to gain a perspective on each individual and the meanings they attach, as well as the experiences they have had that influence certain aspects of family ideology, thereby being true to the qualitative tradition. No field workers were used in this study, as I had conducted all the interviews. I experienced no problems in obtaining relevant information, and went back to certain respondents to gain additional information. Respondents were eager to participate in the study, and gave freely of their time. The data obtained from the case studies were analysed in terms of the following themes: marriage; gender roles and the division of labour; the relevance of the extended family; divorce; and polygamy.

6. ANALYSIS

This chapter reports on the results of the interviews conducted with students. The material is organised in terms of the themes discussed in the previous chapter: marriage; gender roles and the division of labour; the extended family; divorce; and polygamy. Each subjects' responses are presented separately and a summary provided. (See Appendix 3 for the interview schedule). In order to protect their anonymity, fictitious names have been used.

NADIA

The first case is Nadia, a single, 21 year old female student in the final year of a Pharmacy degree. She originates from Newcastle, a small town in Northern Kwa-Zulu Natal. She is the eldest child and only daughter, and has three brothers. Nadia comes from a conservative, middle-class, Gujarati-speaking Muslim household. She describes herself as modern, but is a fairly devout Muslim, and adheres to the Islamic dress-code for women by covering her hair at all times, and wearing long, loose-fitting clothes.

Her parents are self-employed and run a small business. Nadia is the first female in her family to attend university, and has excelled academically at school and at university. She lives with her parents and siblings in a four-bedroomed house in Newcastle. After living in a university residence for two years, she moved into a single-bedroomed garden flat last year, where she lives independently. Her land-lady is an elderly Afrikaner woman, who lives with her grand-daughter, also a university student.

Nadia's flat is modestly furnished, and has all the usual furniture that one would expect to find in a student "digs". Her flat consisted of a small kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom. The interview took place in her bedroom, which had a single bed, desk, bookshelf, dressing-table and bedside table. I noticed that she had many Islamic frames and Qu'ranic verses on the wall, and her bookshelf was full of Islamic books, in addition to her textbooks. There was also a prayer-mat on the floor next to her bed, that had just been used. She also appeared to have an interest in horses, and there were several pictures of horses on the walls as well.

I have known Nadia since 1997, and lived with her in a university residence for three years. In that time, I have come to know her and her family quite well, after meeting them on several occasions. I did not start with the interview immediately. Initially, we spoke about general issues. Nadia inquired about my work and family at home, and I asked her about her family. I also asked her about her brother, who is also studying at Rhodes University.

Nadia is not currently involved in any relationship, nor does she intend to while she is at university. She indicated that the completion of her degree was her priority, and that all her attention and energy was devoted to obtaining her degree. This interview was the longest one that I had conducted, and Nadia had a lot to say about the various issues that we had discussed. She was very keen to participate in this study, and spoke openly and enthusiastically. There were no interruptions during the interview. After the interview was over, Nadia and I had a cup of tea. She was very hospitable and had also asked me several times during the interview if I wanted anything to eat or drink.

Marriage

When I asked Nadia, what her views on marriage were, her first statement was:

"Marriage...honestly I have to say that I've lost faith in that institution."

From this, I gathered that she seemed quite disillusioned with marriage, and expressed disappointment with the institution. It later emerged that her attitude was formed by the experiences of her aunt, and mother – both of whom had difficult marriages. Nadia expressed very strong views on marriage, and saw marriage as an egalitarian partnership:

"When I think of marriage, I think of two people growing together. I mean, in the end, that's what it's all about for me. And my husband should provide me with lots of stimulation - mentally, intellectually, spiritually and of course physically too. OK, I guess that it might sound a bit idealistic but I think that it's possible. And the Muslim marriages that I see today don't come anywhere near that. I don't really think that men understand what's it like for women."

Nadia felt that it was difficult to find equality in Muslim marriages. This, again, reinforces her disillusionment in Islamic marriages – a view that was founded on her observation of the marriages of those around her. She wanted equality and respect and her views were also reflected in what qualities she valued in a husband.

"Well, I think that to have a good marriage, we'd have to be compatible. I mean, I would have to be able to talk to him about things that are important to me, and stuff that's important to him to too. He'd have to be intelligent. Not like have a degree or anything, but I'd have to be able to have a decent conversation with him, you know. Obviously, the physical aspect of marriage is important, and we'd have to be attracted to each other. I don't want him thinking about any other woman! Someone I can trust - definitely that's important. I mean, that's the person you're gonna share your life with, so you better be able to trust them, because if you can't trust your own husband, then who are you gonna trust, right? I think that compromise is important too. Like I said, my husband can't expect me to do everything, and if he loves me, then he'll help me. He's got to see me as an equal, you know".

Nadia's response here reflects her concern for equality and respect. She expects her husband to help her around the tasks. The sharing of domestic tasks, then, is an important area for Nadia.

I asked Nadia if she would ever consider an arranged partner, or perhaps someone that a close family member had introduced her to.

"No, I don't think that I would want that. The guy hardly ever turns out how your parents think he will. Most of the time, they put on an act for the parents and older people. I wouldn't mind being introduced to someone, but my parents or whoever shouldn't expect me to marry him, you know. I've seen how these things turn out. There were other women I knew that had arranged marriages. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. For me, I don't think it'll work".

Marriage was very much an individual choice for Nadia and she rejected the option of an arranged marriage entirely. Unlike the young Muslim couple, Aniessa and Zubair, whom I had interviewed previously, Nadia's choice of marriage partner would not be dependent on the approval of her parents and kin group either. Aniessa and Zubair stressed how important it was for their parents to approve of their marriage partners. The older Muslim couple, Imraan and Taheera, also stressed that kin approval and religious affiliation were very important to them. Love and physical attraction were important in Nadia's choice of marriage partner, indicating an identification with an element of the ideal Western family ideology. Her views were similar to Charlotte and Mike, the young Christian couple, who also stressed love as the most important basis for marriage.

Gender Roles and the Division of Labour

Nadia's need, and emphasis for equality was again reflected when she spoke about gender roles the division of labour. She was quite critical about the male interpretation of Islamic principles concerning the allocation of tasks in the home.

"The thing that really irritates me is that all these really religious people always talk about following the example of the Prophet [Muhammad]. *And I mean, he did housework, and he allowed his wife to work. His first wife Khatija was a businesswoman, and she was a leader in war and everything. Nowadays, though, it's like written in stone or something that the woman should stay at home and the husband should go to work. I mean, what about the guy staying at home and the woman going to work. Why is it that the woman basically has to sacrifice her career or her dreams for her husband? Things should be equal you know, especially now that more and more Muslim girls are at university."*

Nadia sees increased educational and career opportunities for Muslim women, as a reason for increased participation from men in the home. This is similar to the views expressed by Charlotte and Mike, who found working mothers acceptable, and approved of the sharing of domestic tasks. Nadia approves of a reversal of gender roles, and feels that domestic tasks should be shared equally. This is in contrast to Aniessa and Zubair, who identified with a traditional division of labour, where the husband is the breadwinner and the wife assumes responsibility for domestic tasks. Nadia's approval of the sharing of domestic tasks indicates an acceptance of another aspect of modern, western family ideology. Her feelings and insistence on equality in terms of gender roles were coloured by experiences of those around her:

"Like my aunt, for example. She married this guy who was still studying, and she thought that things would be equal in the marriage since he was an educated guy. But he expected her to do everything! That's the thing, men hardly ever show appreciation for anything. Anyway, they got divorced, and she still hasn't remarried because she's scared about marriage now. And I know of families where the woman works and she's expected to come home and take care of the family and her husband. And her husband just sits at home."

Nadia, therefore, expects domestic tasks to be shared if her husband were educated. It seemed to me that she saw education as a source of liberation for her, especially from traditional Indian beliefs about acceptable gender roles. I asked her whether Indian traditions and ethnicity had any significant impact on her. While Nadia said that tradition and ethnicity did not have any significance in her own life. She believed that Indian traditions, particularly in the socialisation process of children, had played an important role in the inequalities that she saw in Muslim marriages. She later points out that it is not

religious ideology that is responsible for the inequities between men and women, but individual practices.

"It's the way that we're socialised. I mean, like in my family, I have three brothers, and from the time that I l was little, I had to learn to do the housework and cook. I mean, why weren't my brothers taught to do housework and clean up and cook? Sisters basically serve their brothers and then when they get married, they have to look after their husband. It's definitely all about the way that you're brought up. Guys basically have things easy, and girls have it drilled into their heads that they must be good in the home or else you're worthless. [long pause] *OK, I know that in terms of Islam, it's accepted that women are supposed to be responsible for the home and that men go and work to support the family. But that's an equal relationship, you know, like a partnership. The way it is now, Muslim women are slaves and their husbands are the masters! I guess, it's also got to do with being Indian too, because it's not just with Muslims, but with Hindus as well. I have friends who are Hindu and they have the same thing in their homes too. I was reading this article about women in Iran and I mean, that's an Islamic country, and women are free to work there. They go to work in hijab and everything, and they're doctors and lawyers and engineers too. Indians generally expect women to be quiet and reserved and everything, and if you have an opinion about anything, then they call you a 'big mouth'. In this country, I suppose, because we're all from India and the older people still want to follow Indian traditions, which aren't necessarily Islamic, that's the problem."*

Despite her rejection of traditional gender roles, her own personal interpretation of a Muslim marriage, seemed to indicate an acceptance of traditional gender roles. She was clearly ambivalent about her feelings regarding the differentiation of gender roles, which is an important part of Islamic family ideology.

"OK, the way I see it is that women are supposed to be responsible for the home and children, and men are supposed to take care of them. It's equal. But if a woman wants to work, then she's free to do so, and there's nothing that says that she's not supposed to work. If a woman works, then her husband's got to help out since the whole thing in Islam is about equality. That's what is stressed the most. But like I said, all the men stress what women are supposed to do. And no-one tells a guy that he must be nice to his wife and comfort and care for her. There's a saying that men and women are like a garb for each other. And that basically sums up what marriage in Islam is supposed to be, you know. I'm not saying that I disagree with what's in the Qu'ran. I have no problem with being a housewife. It's just that I think that Muslim men need to go and read up and become aware of what's expected of them, rather than focussing on what women are supposed to do all the time. Tthe thing is that things are supposed to be equal in Islam, but it's just the way that it's practised that is the problem and that gives Islam a bad name. And then everyone thinks that Islam oppresses women when it's actually the men that do it and not the religion. Like in the Prophet's time, women were really respected and appreciated. Nowadays, no-one actually cares. I think of my parents own marriage and I don't think that my mother's appreciated, especially by my father's family."

It seemed to me that Nadia experiences some conflict and tension in reconciling traditional Islamic family ideology with her own personal beliefs about marriage and family life. Nadia also does not see herself engaged in a long-term career. She indicated that she

thought it was acceptable for women to work, but could not see herself working for very long. She said that it would be difficult being a working mother, indicating that she had accepted that her husband would not share much of the domestic tasks with her. I asked if she would work after completing her degree.

"I would. I mean I've studied and worked hard and I think that I have a right to work. But I wouldn't mind being a housewife too. I mean, as long as I have a choice in the matter, you know! That's the most important thing. I know that it's tough being a working wife, but if my husband was to help then things would be easier. Don't get me wrong, I don't want him to do all the cooking and cleaning, but just to help out sometime. Yes, I would want to work when I'm married. But not for too long, because if you have children then it becomes really difficult to cope, and your marriage might be affected too."

In terms of gender roles and the division of labour, Nadia seems to be experiencing the ambivalence that writers such as Rich (1976), Chodorow (1978) and Friedan (1981) emphasised in their writings on housework. On the one hand, she feels that housework and domestic tasks should be a joint responsibility, and even supported the notion of her husband staying home and attending to domestic tasks, while she went out and worked. However, when I asked her what her interpretation of an Islamic marriage is, she described a relationship where the traditional division of labour prevailed. She further indicated that she would not work for very long, and expressed how difficult it was to be a working mother, thus showing an acceptance of the traditional division of labour – an element of a traditional Muslim family ideology.

Her ambivalence further reflects the findings of studies conducted in the United States, Germany, Sweden, and South Africa, all of which found that the majority of women preferred the traditional division of labour (Ferree, 1990:873; Elliot, 1996:31; Ziehl, 1997b:325; Machonachie, 1992:314). Nadia's responses also highlight Barrett's assertion that family ideology should be seen merely as a set of ideas about family life that inform behaviour (**in** Ziehl, 1997b:149). It is important to distinguish between the ideology of family life and the practice of family life. In other words, what Nadia says, thinks, and believes may not necessarily be translated into practice.

The Extended Family

The extended family system appealed to Nadia as she saw it as a source of support and encouragement. Her maternal aunt and uncle were both divorced, and now live with their mother. She indicated that the family had emotionally and financially supported them. I

asked Nadia whether her larger kin group and family plays an important role in her life and in the lives of those around her:

"Yes. It does play a very important part in my life and in my other family members' lives too. Whenever we need anything, we go to our family. By family I mean, my aunts and uncles and so on. They're important because they help you out in times of need. Also, my mother's brother and sister are both divorced, and the family really helped out. And then they are back at home living with their mother now. So family is important."

Nadia got along quite well, and maintained close ties with her wider kin group, despite living in a nuclear household all her life. She indicated that she visited her uncles, aunts, and cousins very regularly. Family functions and religious gatherings were usually attended by the larger kin group, and it seemed that the traditional Indian *kutum* was being sustained in this family. Nadia indicated that these were usually happy occasions, which she looked forward to. It was important to her that this relationship be maintained after she was married, especially for her children to enjoy. I asked Nadia if she wanted to live with her in-laws after marriage:

"I guess I would if he [her husband] ***really*** *wanted to. It would also depend on what sort of person his mother was! I mean, if she's really interfering and is a pain, then I wouldn't want to, because I know that it would cause lots of problems with both families. But having your mother-in-law around can be really nice too, especially if she's nice. I mean you would get lots of help and advice. And I think that if you have kids, then it's nice growing up with the rest of the family, like I did. Cousins, and aunts and uncles and stuff are really important you know, and family in general is really important, because you don't really have anyone else! I also think that if you live with your mother-in-law, then you always have family around, because people will always be visiting. And that's nice. You're not all on your own."*

The extended family plays an important role in Nadia's life. She indicated that she had a close relationship with her wider kin group, when she said: "...it's nice growing up with the rest of the family, like I did". She has indicated that she would be prepared to live with her mother-in-law, should her husband desire this. Her wider kin group is important, as a source of support, companionship and encouragement, and she has seen how they helped her uncle and aunt in times of need. Nadia's responses are in contrast to Charlotte and Mike, and Naomi and Robert, both of whom stressed independence from parents after marriage. However, Aniessa and Zubair also spoke of their dependence on family after marriage, and the support that it provided. Nadia therefore subscribes to an element of the traditional Muslim family ideology, in terms of her acceptance and attachment to the extended family.

Divorce

Nadia felt that divorce was an acceptable means of ending a marriage. She was, however, quite critical of the male interpretation and practise of the system of *talaaq*. She felt that Muslim women were discriminated by this.

"Gosh, you know that's the one thing that Muslim men really abuse! I really think that men, OK not all Muslim men, but most of them, take divorce so lightly. You know that hadith about divorce, right? It's the most hated of all halaal acts, and people take it so lightly. It's supposed to be a last resort. And in the Qu'ran they say how you're supposed to get counselling and the families must try to bring the couple together and everything. But these days people think that as soon as there's a problem, then you make talaaq! And that's not how talaaq was supposed to be. And the worst is that some men divorce their wives for such petty reasons too. And they give three talaaqs in one go, which isn't allowed. I really don't think that it's fair because the men have all the power and they abuse it."

Nadia's concern for gender equality and respect again surfaced in her discussion of divorce. Her primary concern was that women had no significant rights during the divorce process. She later says that she feels the divorce process discriminates against women. She is especially critical of the rule that prohibits men from remarrying their wives. A man may only remarry his wife, after she has married and divorced another man. While she approved of divorce, her recitation of a *hadith* concerning the seriousness of divorce, shows that she is very wary of the institution. The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said that divorce was the most hated of all permissible acts in Islam. She has also had experience with divorce, as she had indicated that her uncle and aunt had both gone through divorces.

She also felt that parental pressure to get married was another factor that led to divorce:

"For some people, like especially young people, marriage is like a fashion. And the parents want them to get married, rather than at least get to know each other. And then they get married, and they find that they don't really like each other and then they have to get divorced. And for me, that's making a mockery of marriage. I mean, it's not taken seriously at all. And it's not like you can say: 'I made a mistake and I want to get back with you'. You can't. Well, not unless the woman remarries. I think that's a bit unfair, anyway. So you see, it's really serious but people nowadays don't take it seriously at all."

Nadia was not opposed to divorce, and felt that it was necessary if both parties were unhappy. Close family members had gone through divorces and had experienced the trauma of divorce:

"Both my aunt and uncle have been through a divorce, and it was really sad. Fortunately they didn't have children. But if the husband and wife are both not happy, then it's really

the only thing that you can do. I mean, no-one wants to be trapped in an unhappy marriage."

Nadia saw divorce as an acceptable means of ending an unsuccessful marriage. Her views are congruent with both Muslim couples that I had interviewed previously. Both Aniessa and Zubair and Imraan and Taheera also saw divorce as an acceptable means of ending a marriage. It is important to note that all these individuals referred to the Islamic method of *talaaq*, when referring to divorce, thus indicating that religion played an important role in their attitudes to divorce. Both Christian couples, while approving of divorce, did not speak of divorce in religious terms.

Polygamy

I asked Nadia what she thought about polygamy, and whether she would ever participate in a polygamous union. She indicated that polygamy was acceptable, as it was a part of Islam. However, she would not enter into a polygamous marriage herself. Nadia did not think that it was possible for a man to emotionally sustain more than one wife, especially in terms of the limitations set out in the *Qu'ran*. She would not allow her husband to take on an additional wife.

"Definitely not! Firstly, I don't think I'm capable of sharing my husband, and secondly, I don't think he would love both of us equally. And I mean, if you can't love them both equally, then you should just divorce one of them. It's difficult sharing [a husband], *especially if you have to live in the same house with the other wife. No thanks! And physically, also, the husband has to spend the same amount of time with each wife, and that's also so difficult. Anyway, I don't think that there are too many people our age who would want to have more than one wife. All the people I know are older, like my parents' generation. God, you'd have to be rich too, you know."*

I also asked her how she felt about new legislation, such as the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, and the possible legal recognition of polygamous Muslim marriages.

"Well, I think that it's good that they're introducing these laws. Like I said, I wouldn't do it, but there are other women that would, and they need some sort of legal protection, I suppose."

While Nadia herself would not participate in a polygamous marriage, her response indicated that she did not object to others practising polygamy. Nadia feels that women in polygamous marriages need some sort of legal refuge. Her response below indicates that she feels that some Muslim women in polygamous unions are receiving a "raw deal".

Nadia also appeared to be aware of the socio-historical context in which the verses allowing polygamy were revealed. This seemed to have fuelled her disappointment in and criticism of polygamy. She felt that Muslim men abuse their right to have more than one wife, as they do with their right to divorce their wives.

"...that's something else [polygamy] *that men abuse. I mean, they think that if you get tired of your wife, then you can marry someone else. But that's not how it's supposed to be. Polygamy came about in a specific time, and there are so many conditions, but men only obey certain rules. Like you're supposed to treat all your wives equally, but they usually pay more attention to the new wife. I mean I know someone who's a first wife, and she leads a miserable life. Her husband almost ignores her now. And especially if the new wife is younger, then the first wife really suffers. Like I was saying, that verse was revealed during the wars and there were lots of widows and orphans and everything. I mean, the Prophet was capable of loving all his wives equally, but normal Muslim men, I don't think they can."*

Like both Muslim couples that I had interviewed previously, Nadia indicated that she ideologically approved of polygamy, although she would not personally participate in a polygamous marriage. In contrast, the two Christian couples that were interviewed rejected polygamy outright.

Summary

There appears to be a contradiction between Nadia's belief in the ideology of an egalitarian marriage, and her acceptance that women are primarily responsible for childcare and domestic tasks. When she expressed her views on the division of labour, she argued that it was possible for men to be responsible for domestic chores and childrearing. However, she indicated that she would not work for very long, especially if she had children. Clearly, she is ambivalent about her feelings towards the traditional division of labour. It seems that she accepts that men and women play different roles, but wants more respect shown towards women's role – something which is absent from her parent's marriage, and was also prevalent in her aunt's failed marriage.

She said that her choice of marital partner would not be dependent on kin approval, yet her kin group is extremely important in her life. She is also critical of the male interpretation and practice of Islam, especially with regard to the division of labour, polygamy, and divorce. Her views have been influenced by the experiences of Muslim women close to her, whom she feels are repressed. She is highly sceptical of Muslim men, and does not want to be oppressed in any way. However, it seems to me that she feels that this is

inevitable, and that it is almost impossible to find equality in an Indian Muslim marriage, where cultural attitudes relating to gender roles still prevail.

She is highly supportive of the extended family, and feels that it provides support to individuals in times of need. Both her uncle and aunt turned to the family during their divorce. They relied heavily on the family for moral and emotional support during the court proceedings. They also now live with their mother (Nadia's maternal grandmother). She also feels that a close relationship with the wider kin group is essential in a child's life. Nadia's views on the importance of the kin group are in keeping with the results of other studies which stress the importance of the extended family among South African Indians (see Meer, 1969; Jithoo, 1991). Nadia seems to be trying to find what Ballard (**in** Saifullah Khan, 1979:129) describes as "workable middle path" between two cultures.

She ascribes to some aspects of a Western family ideology in that she approves of the sharing of domestic tasks and working mothers, although there is some ambivalence towards these issues. She also indicated that her choice of partner would be an individual one, based on physical and mental attraction. She accepts polygamous marriages, as an important aspect of traditional Muslim family ideology, but would not enter into one herself. She attached great importance to the extended family household - an important aspect of traditional Muslim family ideology. She also found divorce acceptable.

AMINA

Amina is a single, 23 year old female student in the final year of a Pharmacy degree. She originates from Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal. She is the third of four children, and has 2 sisters and a brother. Amina comes from a conservative, wealthy, Gujarati-speaking Muslim household. She describes herself as extremely modern, despite her strict upbringing and her education in an Islamic school. She does not wear a scarf at home or at university, but dresses fairly conservatively. She admits that the freedom comes with studying away from home has changed her, and made her more out-going.

She says that she does not think that her parents would approve of her behaviour at university, especially now that she started smoking. Her father owns an investment company, while her mother is a housewife. Attainment of tertiary education has always been stressed in her family, and all her siblings have attended, or are attending university.

She lives in a large 6 bedroomed house in an upmarket Indian area in Durban with her parents, grandmother, older divorced sister, and her younger unmarried sister. Amina has lived in a university residence for the entire duration of her degree.

Her room is well decorated, with many *Qu'ranic* frames, family photographs, and pictures of friends from university. The presence of a TV, hi-fi, and cellphone all indicate that she is well-off. Amina also has her own car. She is not involved in a romantic relationship, and has never had a boyfriend. She says that she has no immediate plans for romance after leaving university. I have known Amina for 4 years, and have developed a close friendship with her. She was initially apprehensive about participating in the study, and was concerned that she "didn't know enough about marriage" to talk about it. However, she later expressed interest in participating, and spoke freely and without hesitation, although she was concerned about the protection of her identity. I assured her that her identity would be protected, and that a fictitious name would be used. There was only one interruption during the interview when a fellow student came into the room to borrow some notes from Amina. Amina was extremely hospitable, and we chatted generally for about 20 minutes before starting the interview.

Marriage

Despite her claims of being modern, Amina admits that she is very "traditional" about marriage.

"OK, I'm really traditional about marriage. I think that it's sacred and I take it redlly seriously. I firmly believe that the man's got to put the bread on the table. Yeah, I know it sounds old-fashioned and everything, but I think that the man has to support his wife and children. I suppose Islamically that's how it is also. But for me, I would rather take care of the home and my husband must support me. I guess it's OK for women to work and all, but for me personally, that's how it should be."

Amina identifies strongly with two important aspects of traditional Muslim family ideology. She disapproves of the sharing of domestic tasks. While she felt that being a working mother is acceptable, she would not do it herself, and disapproved of working mothers on a personal level. Her conception of a Muslim marriage involves a traditional division of labour.

Love, trust, honesty and communication were the most important characteristics for a successful marriage:

"Well, love obviously. I mean if you don't love the person, then it's difficult for a marriage to survive. It's not just love though. I mean both people have to be honest with each other. OK, let's put it this way: My sisters is divorced, and I can see what went wrong there, so I know that honesty is really important and they didn't have it. Her husband was not honest about some things and you know lies can really destroy a marriage. Yeah, so honesty. What other qualities? Well, you hear all the time, that 'men are from Mars and women are from Venus', so communication is obviously important too, but that comes from honesty, and trust too. So, it's not just love. I mean, marriage is a long-term commitment, so it's not just about 'I love you, you love me, and we're gonna live happily ever after'."

Initially, Amina's response indicated an acceptance of the Western concept of love being the basis of marriage, and this being an individual choice. However, she also stressed that honesty and communication was vital. Her sister's unsuccessful marriage had clearly affected the way Amina approached marriage and qualities that she would find attractive in a husband. I asked Amina if there were any other factors that would affect the choice of marriage partner for her. She said that there were not any other factors, and again stressed love, communication and honesty. However, further probing revealed a different picture. After some hesitation, she admitted that race, religion and culture would play an important role in her choice of marriage partner, as would parental and familial approval.

"Actually, I think race would play a role. I think my parents would prefer an Indian Muslim or maybe a Coloured Muslim at worst. I can't see them accepting a black or a white that easily. I've heard lots of my relatives, like the older aunties especially, saying that as long as we married an Indian, they wouldn't mind. If I had to fall in love with a Hindu guy, they'd be OK with it as long as he converted. That's the main criterion for me anyway, he's must be Muslim. I suppose, come to think of it, another thing that's sort of important is that the families get on and like the guy and the girl. I mean, family conflict doesn't really help a young couple. It puts a lot of stress on the couple, and then it could affect the marriage. I've seen marriages where the families don't get on with the girl and then it starts affecting the husband and wife."

As with Aniessa and Zubair, Amina's choice of marriage partner, then, would take into account parental and kin approval, as well as religious affiliation. This is in contrast to Nadia, who stressed love as the primary basis of marriage. The two Christian couples in my preliminary study, Charlotte and Mike, and Naomi and Robert also stressed love. Racial and cultural compatibility was also stressed in Amina's answer. In this way, Amina identifies with an aspect of the traditional Muslim family ideology I had outlined previously, ie. the choice of marriage partner being dependent on kin approval, with love being of secondary importance.

She also said that she would not entertain the idea of marrying a non-Indian.

Interviewer: *So, you would never marry a non-Indian guy?*

Amina: *I can't say that I would. Most of the people that I know and hang out with are all Indian. They're Hindu or Christian, but all Indian. I really can't see myself marrying or even going out with a black or white.* [pause] *Well, the thing is that maybe in the end, I feel that they've been brought up differently. I guess the whole cultural thing is important. They're different. But I'm not sure. You know, I say that now, but who knows what could happen? It's a tough issue that one, so I can't really say.*

Amina has conformed to her family's norms and values, and has internalised them, by indicating that she would not marry anyone outside her own race group. Amina's action can be described as motivated by a particular value, and be regarded as value-rational action. Meer (1969:66) described the Indian extended family or *kutum* as an intimate collective conscience that socialises and controls its members. Her beliefs about race as an important factor in the choice of a marriage partner were very strongly influenced by her family. She is also very concerned with their approval, and it seems unlikely that she will go against the family wishes and beliefs.

Gender Roles and the Division of Labour

Amina had already indicated that she subscribed to the traditional division of labour within the family. She had already indicated that she might work after she was married. She also felt strongly that she would not work when she had children, though.

Interviewer: *Do you want to work after you have children?*

Amina: *No! No! I think it's really important for me to be at home, when I have children. Especially when they're really young, because it's such an important time in their life. I mean, I wouldn't want my child to be put in day-care or at a creche. I mean, they'd be brought up my strangers. Yes, there are Islamic creches and everything, but still I wouldn't want to to do that. I also don't want my mother or mother-in-law to be looking after my children. No, I'd like to stay at home, at least until they're at school, and then I might go back to work. But I know that it's difficult being a working mother. I'm not sure but that's what I would like to do. But certainly for the time that they're little then I would want to be at home with them. OK, if my husband really didn't want me to go back to work, then I wouldn't. Especially if we didn't need the money, but if he didn't have a problem then I would go back."*

While Mike and Charlotte approved of day-care, and indicated that they would utilise such a facility, Amina rejects this entirely. As with Aniessa, Amina stresses how important it is

for her to be at home with her children. Aniessa described the difficulty she experienced when she was a working mother, and Amina, too, has pointed out that it would be difficult being a working mother. While Naomi and Taheera, both indicated that they were able to successfully combine motherhood and a teaching career, Amina doubts her ability to accomplish this.

Interestingly, though, Amina stressed that her parents would expect her to work for a short while.

"I mean, I would want to at least experience what it's like to work, you know. I've studied for so long, and I think my parents would want me to work too. Like, my mother always tells me that I should do whatever I want now before I get married."

So, while parental expectations for educated Muslim women had increased, men were not expected to increase their participation in the home. Amina's conforming to kin values is emphasised in her response about parental expectations to work. Kin approval is very important in her life, and decisions concerning marriage and family life are influenced by the expectations of her family. Amina's mother's advice to her seemed to me like a "warning". I got the impression that her mother felt that her daughter would be restricted after marriage. I asked Amina why her mother had said this.

"I think that she doesn't want me to regret anything. She always tells me that I have opportunities that she didn't, and that I shouldn't waste my life. After marriage, she thinks I might not get to do some things, like travelling or working, so I should do them while I am single."

Amina, however, does not think that she will be restricted after marriage. She felt that she would still have freedom, although things would change.

Interviewer: *So, do you think that you will be restricted by your husband?*

Amina: *No. I don't think so. I think that my husband will allow me to do certain things. Obviously, I will have to change, and he will have to change. Marriage is very different and you have another person in your life now. I think my mother doesn't want me to make the same mistake as my sister, that's all.*

The Extended Family

I asked Amina if she would want to live with her in-laws after marriage.

"No! I think that there might be too much interference you know. That whole mother-in-law daughter-in-law thing. Anyway, I think it's better when couples move out on their own. There are fewer problems that way. My brother lives on his own, and things are OK. My sister lived with her in-laws and there were lots of problems, so I guess I learnt from her mistakes. Anyway, I'd have more privacy too and that's really important. My grandparents live with us, and while it's nice to have them around, it gets difficult sometimes. Especially, when they interfere. Older people are sometimes still stuck in the old ways, you know. My grandparents are old-fashioned and we don't see eye to eye. I think they would have a heart-attack if they were to know that I smoke or go to clubs!"

Amina has experienced the extended family structure, since her grandparents live with her, and sister lived her husband's family during their marriage. It is because of her sister's experience with the extended family structure that Amina prefers to adopt the nuclear family structure, and feels that there would be less conflict between herself and her husband's family. In this way, she has adopted what is largely an element of the Western family ideology, ie. a preference for the nuclear household. Unlike Aniessa and Zubair, as well as Nadia, who preferred the extended family and saw it as an element of support, Amina sees the larger family as a potential site of conflict – especially between her and her mother-in-law. Jithoo (**in** Steyn *et al.*, 1987) cited the conflict between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law as an important factor that had contributed to the decline of the extended family structure among Indians in South Africa. This seems to be the case with Amina, who has opted to live independently after marriage to avoid conflict and interference.

I found this response from Amina somewhat surprising, seeing how attached she was to her family values, and her conformance and internalisation of kin values. To some extent, this seemed to me, as a form of rebellion. She also highlighted the generation-gap that existed between herself and her grandparents, when she spoke of their disapproval of her smoking and going out to night-clubs. Her concern for kin approval is further highlighted by this last point. However, it seemed that Amina is seeking the independence from family that Charlotte and Naomi and Robert spoke of in their interviews. I also believe that the considerable time that Amina has spent away from home has contributed to this. Charlotte indicated that she had lived independently of her parents before she married Mike, and could not imagine herself living with her parents. Amina's response seems to mirror this attitude.

Divorce

Amina, as with all other respondents, sees divorce as acceptable. Like Nadia, she too, has also experienced the divorce of a close family member. She was very emotional when she spoke about her sister's divorce:

"Well it's very sad when a couple divorces. My sister's divorced, and it affects a lot of people, not just the husband and wife. She had children, and now she and the kids live with us. It's not a very easy situation. Especially with children. Her husband didn't turn out how we thought he would. People change. I suppose it's human nature."

As with Nadia, the larger kin group played an important role in providing support and encouragement to members going through a divorce. Amina's divorced sister now lives with her parents in their home, resulting in an extended family structure. They also support her two children.

Interestingly, both Amina and Nadia have pointed to the young age that some Muslim men and women are marrying as a possible reason for higher divorce rates. She also highlighted the fact that some men abused the system of divorce in Islam, and was critical of the way some men practised divorce. Amina also argued that the simplicity of the divorce process might also be a contributing factor:

"Well some women tend to get trampled on when their husband just divorces them out of the blue. Now, that's not fair. OK, from what I know, divorce is really discouraged, but if the couple are not happy, then they should rather split up than stay together and be miserable. I went to an Islamic school, and I know people who are like 18 or 19, and their parents tell them to make nikah. And then after a year or something, they have a child already. And then they ended up divorced by 22 or 23. I mean that's not how it's supposed to be. It's really serious, but sometimes people don't take it seriously, and divorce is abused because it's a really a simple process in the end. The man just says 'talaaq, talaaq, talaaq', and it's over. It's not supposed to be simple, but they make it that way."

Polygamy

Amina indicated that she approved of polygamy, but stressed that it was acceptable under specific circumstances only. Her responses indicated that she would enter into a polygamous union only under specific circumstances. Again, as with Nadia, the male interpretation and practice of polygamy came under criticism. Polygamy was seen as an institution for exceptional circumstances, rather than a conventional norm:

"Well, I don't know too many people who have more than one wife actually. Polygamy is allowed, but it's not encouraged. And I do think that some men look at it as a way of replacing a wife. But I have no problem with it personally. OK, let's put it this way: If I was married, and let's say I couldn't have children or something, and my husband wanted to have another wife so she could give him a child then I wouldn't have a problem with it. I mean, I think that's a legitimate reason. He would love us both too, since the other wife

would have given him a child. It would be difficult but I wouldn't object. Naturally, it's not an ideal situation, but if it happens, then I'm OK. I think I would have a problem with the guys that have like three or four wives. Now that's ridiculous! I mean, just because the Qu'ran says you're allowed up to four wives, doesn't mean that you have to actually go and marry four women."

Amina's response is in contrast to the two Muslim couples whom I had interviewed previously. While they both approved of polygamy ideologically, they indicated that they would participate in such a marriage. Nadia also indicated that she would not participate in such a union. Amina, on the other hand, indicated that she would allow her husband to take on an additional wife, should she be unable to bear children. Not only does she approve of the practice ideologically, but might participate in a polygamous marriage, should the need arise. She displayed doubt, though, about a man's ability to emotionally support more than one wife.

"It is difficult, I'm sure...OK, if the guy decides that he wants to have more than one wife, then he's got to make sure that he can take care of both of them, otherwise it's sin. If he's rich, then it won't be a problem. Loving two women equally? That might be a problem. I think that you also have to think of the women. I mean, they're the ones sharing a husband, which can't be easy. I think that it is possible, but it's really difficult and it's not for everyone, you know."

Summary

Amina has internalised and accepted traditional gender roles. She does not find it repressive, but sees the division of labour as an equal exchange. Like Nadia, she also expects her contribution to the marriage to be equally appreciated. Amina would like to live separately from her parents, and will probably be able to afford to do so. She cited avoidance of conflict and greater privacy as the primary reasons for moving out. Growing up in an extended family, she has experienced conflict with her grandparents over acceptable behaviour. Her exposure to western cultures and traditions at university has in some way caused conflict. She admits that she can't really behave how she wants to, when she is at home, and has to restrict herself. However, she seems to have found a middle-path, given her acceptance of traditional gender roles and conformity to kin rules norms and values. Amina also brought up an interesting issue when she said that her parents had expected her to work. While parental expectations of Muslim women working had increased, expectations of Muslim men participating in the home had not.

The influence of her grandparents and other older family members may be the reason why she sees race and culture as important criterion in the selection of a marital partner. Issues

such as these have generally had more significance for older generations, and these values have been transmitted to Amina. While she may not attach great importance to the extended family system, kin approval of her marriage partner is significant. She also does not dismiss the possibility of allowing her husband to take on an additional wife. She cited the specific circumstance of an inability to bear children, as an acceptable reason for taking on an additional wife.

Amina has adopted elements of both Western and traditional Muslim family ideology in her responses. She does not approve of the sharing of domestic of tasks, and disapproves of working mothers. Her choice of partner is dependent on kin approval, and she cited race and religion as the main criterion in her choice of partner. She also did not dismiss entering into a polygamous marriage. These are all elements of a traditional Muslim family ideology. However, she disapproves of the extended family household, and indicated that she preferred a conjugal family system - an important aspect of modern, Western family ideology.

ZAID

Zaid is a single, 23 year old male student currently completing an Industrial Psychology Honours degree. He originates from Auckland Park, Gauteng, and is the youngest of three sons. Zaid comes from a conservative, middle-class, Urdu-speaking Muslim household. His father passed away when he was fairly young. Both his brothers are married and live on their own. Zaid describes himself as extremely modern, but adheres to Islamic requisites in terms of prayer and food restrictions. He admits that he goes out to clubs but does not smoke or drink. He says that he does not think that his mother would approve of his behaviour at university, especially with regard to relationships with female students in his first year at university.

Zaid is currently involved in a long-term relationship with a Hindu third year medical student studying in the Transkei. However, during the interview he was extremely reluctant to talk about her or his relationship with her. He was also concerned about issues of confidentiality, and asked me repeatedly if I was going to use a pseudonym. He says he does not have any concrete plans of marriage, but has introduced his girlfriend to his

mother, which he regarded as a significant step. He also indicated that furthering his career, rather than marriage, is his primary concern. He also indicated that his girlfriend was not interested in marriage right now, and was concentrating on completing her degree. Zaid is the first person to attend university in his family.

He lived in a university residence for the entire duration of his undergraduate studies, but moved into a student flat this year. The flat is situated in a large block of flats about five minutes away from Rhodes University. It consists of a bedroom, lounge, kitchen, and bathroom. The interview took place in the lounge. There were many electrical appliances in the flat such as a TV, video, fan, heater, microwave oven, as well as a cellphone. The flat had a very "homely" feel to it, and great attention to detail was paid to curtains, linen, and so on. Zaid had earlier indicated that his mother came with him to Grahamstown to help set up the flat, which would explain the "feminine" touch to the flat. There were also many photographs on Zaid's walls, as well as Qu'ranic frames, and Islamic sayings. In addition, there was also a Palestinian flag in his room, indicating that he had an interest in that area of the world. Zaid was cleaning up his kitchen when I arrived for the interview. He asked me if I would like anything to eat or drink, and was extremely polite and hospitable. We spoke about general issues at first, before we started the interview proper.

Marriage and Conjugal Roles

Zaid's attitudes and expectations of marriage can be described as traditional. When I asked him what his expectations of marriage were, he described them in terms of conjugal roles and the division of labour. This, to me, indicated that the division of labour was a central issue in his family ideology, and beliefs about marriage and family life. I asked him what he expected of marriage:

"OK. Well, in my marriage, I would expect my wife to be there for me. OK, she can work if she wants to, but she must also remember what her responsibilities are: taking care of the children and the house and everything. I'm not saying that she's got to be subservient, but my attitude to marriage is that the man is the head of the household and the woman, well, takes care of the children and cooking and all of that stuff. That's the way that my parents were, and things were OK. I mean all these feminists and everything. In a Muslim marriage that's how it's supposed to work. And that's the way it is in the Qu'ran too. Women are the mothers and the men go out and work. See, the thing is that I expect my wife to be a good mother, so she can still work, but she's got to remember that."

Zaid considered respect and dedication as crucial elements of a successful marriage, and spoke very strongly about this. Clearly, this issue was of central importance for him. He

did not talk about love at all, indicating that this was not of any significance to him. In this way, he has rejected an element of western family ideology, ie. love as the basis of marriage. However, he stressed that he would have ultimate authority in the household, as his own father had. He also indicated that he strongly disapproved of working mothers and the sharing of domestic tasks. He did not talk about "helping out", like Imraan did. Like Zubair, he was very much in favour of the traditional division of labour. This can be seen as adherence to important aspects of traditional Muslim family ideology. Acceptance of his authority was seen as important to avoid conflict. Yet again, Zaid stressed role differentiation in marriage:

Zaid: *Well, the first thing is that my wife must respect me. I mean, in terms of Islam too, that's really important. She needs to understand me. I think that if we have that, then there won't be any problems, you know. That's how all the problems start.*

Interviewer: *What sort of problems?*

Zaid: *The problems start when the wife starts ruling the husband. Like my brother's wife. They're always fighting because she rules him. She's a doctor so she's like the head of the house, because she brings in the cash. I believe in the equality thing and all, but women have a different responsibility from men, and I think that if they stick to what they're supposed to then, everything will be OK.*

Zaid's attitudes and beliefs towards marriage and role differentiation seems to have been strongly influenced by his perceptions of his brother's marriage. Previously, he had spoken of respect and dedication, and he reiterated these sentiments. This is obviously of central importance to him, and an essential part of marriage. Interestingly, though, he did not speak of a mutual respect. He stressed that his wife must respect him, and be dedicated to him, but did not speak of his respect and dedication to her, even though he said that he believed in equality within marriage. Nadia spoke of a respect for women's roles within the family, and Zaid ignored this entirely.

Extended Family

Zaid indicated that he would live with his mother when he got married as she was alone. This indicates an acceptance of the extended family system. However, his tone of speech indicated that he was doing this out of obligation to his mother, rather than through choice. This is in contrast to Zubair and Aniessa, both of who indicated a preference for the extended family out of choice, rather than an obligation. In this case, Zaid feels obligated

to live with his mother after marriage. His older brothers, and their wives had moved out of the family home, when they had gotten married, and now he felt that he needed to support his mother, since "she had nobody else". I also felt that perhaps Zaid felt indebted to his mother for all the effort that she had put into his university education and later, his student flat. From the appearance of the flat, a lot of time and effort was put in.

"Yes, I'll probably live with my mother. She's alone now, because both my brothers are married and live on their own. At least then I can take care of her. So, yes, I think that I would want to live with her."

Zaid's attitude indicates that his obligation to his mother is still strong. Meer (1969) and Saifullah Khan (1979) both indicated in their analyses of traditional '*kutums*' that individual aspirations are usually sacrificed for the sake of the larger group. This seems to be case for Zaid. He indicated that he would have preferred to live on his own after marriage, but has forsaken this to take care of his mother. Naomi and Robert did not speak or express any preference for their children taking care of them in old-age. Neither did Charlotte or Mike speak about caring for their parents later on in life. The extended family system, and obligation to family and kin are of central importance to Zaid.

Divorce

Divorce was seen as an acceptable means of ending an unsuccessful marriage. Zaid indicated that he thought the system of *talaaq* was not taken seriously by most Muslim men. He felt that a secular divorce order received more respect.

"That whole thing is a bit out-dated, I think. I mean, OK, people respect the legal divorce more actually, especially with the maintenance and all. See, if the couple just made talaaq, then the husband doesn't think that he has to pay maintenance for his children, but if they go to court and there's a settlement and everything, then he pays up. So in the end, talaaq isn't respected. I feel a bit sorry for the women actually, because the man just says talaaq, and then they're divorced and it seems like they don't really have a choice in the matter."

Zaid's views on divorce raised some interesting issues. He argued that Muslim men take secular divorce proceedings more seriously than Islamic ones. Certainly, this can be said in the *Ismail vs. Ismail* case, discussed earlier. In that case, Mr. Ismail refused to maintain his wife for the three months after he divorced her, as is obligatory in terms of Islamic law. Mrs. Ismail referred the case to a Muslim priest who judged that Mr. Ismail was responsible for his wife. However, this judgement was ignored. The case was taken to

secular court, but Mrs. Ismail was unsuccessful in her claim, since the judge ruled that an Islamic marriage contract was invalid. Zaid's point is important in the light of the possible legal recognition of Islamic marriage contracts. One of the problems raised in initial discussions on the status of Muslim marriages concerned the extent to which Muslims themselves adhered to the dictates of Muslim family law. Differing levels of adherence would certainly make the application of legislation difficult.

Polygamy

Zaid indicated that he approved of polygamy, and did not object to the practice in any way. He said that he would consider having more than one wife, and thought it was very possible to emotionally support both wives.

"Well, it is allowed. Having two wives. It's not easy though, because you've got to love both of them and that's hard. But I think that I could do that, if the time came. I mean, if I loved two women then I might marry them both. It would be a bit expensive but I would do it."

In addition to ideologically accepting polygamy, Zaid, like Amina, also indicated that he might even consider having more than one wife, should the need arise. I asked him how he felt about legislation that would recognise polygamous marriages.

"Yes, I think it's good. I mean sometimes those women aren't treated so well. Also, I mean it'll show that Islam is being recognized in this country, you know. That's good."

Zaid is quite happy that polygamous Muslim marriages might be recognized. For him, the impending legislation also has more of a symbolic meaning, in terms of the recognition of Islamic value systems. He seemed to be more concerned with this aspect of the law, rather than the protection that it might offer to women in polygamous unions. He went on to say:

"Like in countries like England and America, they don't really care about Islam. But here, I mean, we even have a law that might recognize Muslim marriages. It's really good."

Summary

Zaid subscribes to a traditional division of labour. Despite his claims of approving of working mothers and wives, it seemed to me that he would prefer to the sole breadwinner in the home. This represented a source of authority for him. Money and financial contributions to the household was important in his family ideology, and pointed that this could be a source of conflict if his wife earned more than him. His beliefs stem from the

experience with his brother and his wife. He has indicated that he would live with his mother when he was married, as he believed that it was his duty to maintain his mother in her old age. This type of kin obligation reflects ideology and practice of traditional extended families, where children feel responsible to care for their parents in their old age. (See Meer, 1969; Jithoo, 1971; Saifullah Khan, 1979).

Additionally, he approved of polygamous marriages, and indicated that he might enter into a polygamous marriage in the future. He saw divorce as an acceptable means of ending a marriage. His choice of partner seemed to me to be an individual decision, based on love, given that his girlfriend is not Muslim. However, he was very reluctant to talk about her, which suggests that his mother might disapprove of her. If this is the case, then kin approval would be of some importance in his choice of marriage partner.

EBRAHIM

Ebrahim is a single, 22 year old male student currently completing a B. Sc. degree. He originates from Benoni, Gauteng and is the eldest of four children. He has 2 younger sisters who are both at school, and a younger brother who is married with one child. His brother lives with his parents and sisters in the family home. Ebrahim comes from a conservative, middle-class, Gujarati-speaking Muslim household. His father owns a furniture shop and his mother is a housewife. Ebrahim describes himself as "fairly" modern, but admits to being "old-fashioned about some things". He adheres to Islamic requisites in terms of prayer and food restrictions. He does not go out to nightclubs, nor does he smoke or drink alcohol.

Ebrahim is currently involved in a long-term relationship with a final year Muslim, Pharmacy student who is also studying at Rhodes University. They plan to marry once Ebrahim has found a stable job. Ebrahim is the first person to attend university in his family, but has indicated that his sister will also attend university once she finishes school. He lived in a university residence for three years, and moved into a student flat, where the interview took place, at the beginning of last year. His flat is extremely large and well-kept, consisting of a bedroom, kitchen, lounge-cum-diningroom, and bathroom. He has his own car, and the presence of a cell-phone, TV, video, and various other appliances indicated that he was relatively well-off. He was also wearing branded shoes and clothes, a

further indication of his economic status. He said that his parents had helped him furnish the flat, indicating that they had taken a keen interest in his living arrangements here. There were also several Islamic frames on the wall, and his prayer-mat was out, indicating that he had just completed his mid-day prayer.

Marriage

Ebrahim stated that he was believed that he was fairly modern when it came to marriage. I asked him what his expectations and perceptions of marriage were:

"Marriage. Well it's all about love and respect really. I think that the most successful marriages are the ones were the husband and wife respect and care for each other. I think of all the young people that I know who are married, and that's what I see in those marriages. And compromise too. That's how I think of marriage. Sometimes, men try and control their wives, and force them to do things. I don't think that's how things are supposed to be. People should want to do things for each other. In Islam, too, that's how marriage is like a partnership, like a friendship. You both need each other."

Ebrahim's views seem to mirror Nadia's in terms of the need for respect and equality within marriage. Ebrahim stressed that Muslim marriages were a "partnership", thus indicating a concern f or egalitarianism in marriage. Friendship was also an important characteristic. He told me that he had a plutonic relationship with Nazia, his girlfriend, for a year. He believed that this was a solid foundation for a successful marriage, rather than "falling in love". This represented a rejection of the western family ideology that stresses love as the basis of marriage. Ebrahim highlighted an important point when he stated that young Muslims sometimes are deprived of the opportunity of getting to know each other before getting married, since dating and free intermingling of the sexes are not allowed in Islam.

"We aren't really supposed to be 'going out' and stuff like that, since it's not allowed in Islam. But sometimes, people don't really get to know each other. They know each other for two or three months. They see each other a couple of times, and then the parents want them to get married. The old people don't really like people to date and stuff. Then, when they get married, they find that they don't really know the person. That's when the problems start, and they start forcing each other to do things. I think that I'm really lucky to have had the chance to get to know my girlfriend. Possibly my future wife. Here at Rhodes, you really get to know a person, since we're all away from home. OK, that doesn't necessarily mean that all marriages here are successful, but at least you know the person."

I asked Ebrahim how his parents feel about his long-term relationship with Nazia:

"Well, we haven't actually spoken about it really. They know that I've had a girlfriend for a while now, but they haven't asked. They know that when I am sure I will tell them and then we'll make proposal and all that."

Kin approval and participation is of central importance for Ebrahim. He has indicated that he still has to speak to his parents about his relationship with Nazia. If they approve, then, the larger kin group will get involved, and seek permission from Nazia's family for her hand in marriage. Ebrahim has shown concern for tradition and cultural norms here, by making reference to "make proposal", and his action can be seen as value-rational. Larger kin approval (his own family and that of his girlfriend) is important to him, in the choice of marriage partner. Aniessa and Zubair both emphasized how important acceptance from their families was in their decision to get married. Amina, too, also stated that other factors apart from love (such as approval as well as racial and cultural compatibility) were of central importance for her. Charlotte and Mike did not mention seeking permission or approval, as Ebrahim did, when they spoke of their courtship and marriage plans.

Ebrahim indicated that he would not have dated Nazia as long as has, if he were at home.

"I don't think we'd have gone out this long if we were both studying at home. I think both the parents would have wanted us to get married or engaged or something like that. I don't think either of us want that now. I think we both took advantage of the fact that we're not at home. I really am lucky though to have had the freedom here."

I got the impression, as he spoke, that Ebrahim would have given in to parental pressure to marry. He is clearly concerned about what his parents think. He said that he was the only young man who was not married. A cousin who is a year younger was recently married, and he feels that his relationship with Nazia will come under greater scrutiny when he goes back home at the end of the year.

"Well, now that Mohamed's (his cousin) gotten married, everyone's gonna be looking at me!"

I asked Ebrahim what role culture and ethnicity played in his choice of marriage partner, and in his life:

"Well, with Muslims, they look at what language you speak and your family and everything. But that's not really important for me. For the older people it is, like my grandmother. She's always telling me to bring home a nice Gujarati girl. But I really don't care. Nazia is from an Urdu family, and I know that my grandmother won't be happy. But she's [Nazia] *is such a great person, that I really don't care what language she speaks. No, it isn't important."*

From this response, his concern for larger approval was evident, since he spoke of his grandmother's unhappiness with Nazia's linguistic and ethnic background. Ebrahim did sound nervous when he spoke about this issue, an indication perhaps that this might be more a problem than he had indicated.

I then asked Ebrahim if religion or race might influence his choice of wife:

"Definitely religion. She has to be Muslim, and that's non-negotiable. Even if she's from a Hindu family, she must be willing to convert. There's no way that I would allow my children to be brought up by a non-Muslim. Anyway, it's too difficult to have two religions in the same house. Race, well, I'm not sure really. No, I don't think so."

Although Ebrahim indicated that race would not be a determining factor in his choice of marriage partner, I didn't think that this was the case. The fact that he only mentioned Hindu in his response to my question, indicated to me that he would only considering marrying another Indian, given that most Hindus are Indian. This was similar to Amina's attitude of "culture" being of primary significance. Larger factors such as race and religion play an important role in Ebrahim's choice of marriage partner. Ebrahim's concern for what others in his family thought further indicated the role that kin and the larger family play in his choice of marriage partner. As with Amina, Ebrahim has internalized many of the family's norms, especially with regard to what constitutes an acceptable wife.

Gender Roles and the Division of Labour

Ebrahim indicated that he would not object to his wife working.

"No. I don't have a problem with that at all. Actually, I think it would be really great if she did work because she would know about the world. Look, if I marry Nazia, I think it would be really unfair to ask her not to work. After all, she's also worked hard and studied, and that would be wrong. Why should she have to stay at home? Like I said, when you work, you learn more about the world, and I think that would make her a better mother in the end too. I wouldn't want her to work when we started having a family though, since I think it's really important for children to have their mother at home. I would never force my wife to stop working. But I would expect her to realize it for herself. Besides, it's really hectic being a working mother and there's not enough time to actually enjoy being a family."

Although he indicated that he would allow his wife to work, this seemed to me as though Ebrahim was doing her a "favour" since she had studied. Increased educational opportunities for women seem to have had an impact on Ebrahim's views on working

women. One wonders if he would still allow his wife to work if she did not have a university degree. To some extent, Ebrahim's beliefs reflect Nadia's view that education should be a source of liberation for Indian Muslim women from traditional Indian beliefs about acceptable gender roles.

The fact that Nazia had a university degree certainly influenced his beliefs about allowing his wife, for a limited time at least. He strongly disapproves of working mothers, however, and felt that the twin burdens of holding a career and being a mother would put a strain on family life. Like Aniessa and Zubair, as well as Amina, the difficulty of being a working mother is again highlighted. He indicated that while his wife worked, he would not increase his participation in the home. With regard to the division of labour, Ebrahim adopted a traditional approach:

"Well, like I said, my wife must take care of the children and the house. I really don't see myself cooking and cleaning, and doing housework. OK, if we didn't have children, and my wife was working, then I would help out now and again. But the moment we have kids, things change. Then I think that a mother must be at home."

Ebrahim seems to have adopted a traditional approach to the division of labour and gender roles in marriage. He indicated that he would "help out now and again" initially, but that this would change when children were brought into the equation. He clearly disapproves of the sharing of domestic tasks and working mothers, and identifies with two important aspects of a traditional Muslim family ideology.

Extended Family

Ebrahim indicated that family was very important to him. His concern with kin approval in terms of marriage partners indicated that his family was of central importance to him. He is currently in a traditional three-generational *kutum*, since his brother and his family also live at home with Ebrahim's parents. Ebrahim indicated strongly that he would live with his parents during the initial phases marriage.

"Yes. I would live at home. I think that it's really important for my family to get to know my wife. And she can get to know the way things are in my family. The only way that can happen is if we live with the rest of the family. My brother and his wife and daughter live at home, and so far it's worked out well. But they will probably move out soon. I also think that we would be able to learn a lot from my parents. And my wife can be with my mother too. If she needed help with the children or anything like that. Anyway, I think it's important for me and my children to have the family all around us. And my mother could teach them Gujarati too. We have a big enough house, so I think it would work well."

The extended family is very important to Ebrahim, and like Nadia he sees it as a source of support. While Amina saw this as a site of conflict, Ebrahim sees the extended family as a means of avoiding conflict. He also mentioned that his children would be cared for by his mother. This represented a departure from his earlier view that his wife would have to stay at home and care for the children. His statement about his mother teaching the children Gujarati again reflects his concern for culture in marriage and family life.

Divorce

Ebrahim saw divorce as an acceptable means of ending a marriage. However, he was quite critical of the institution of *talaaq* and the way that it is practiced.

"Yes. Well, it's always sad that people get divorced, but it's necessary if the couple is really not happy. About talaaq, well, I don't question what the Qu'ran has to say about it. But I know people who didn't follow the proper rules. Like it's supposed to be such a long process, but they decide to divorce and that's it. You're supposed to speak to the elders of the family and everything, but people decided on their own."

Ebrahim also criticized the way in which the Islamic divorce system was abused, especially in terms of divorces involving petty reasons. He recalled an incident where a man pronounced *talaaq* on his wife and then remarried her a few months after:

"I remember my mother telling me about this guy once. He married this woman, and she was quite a nice person. There was nothing really wrong with her or anything. And then one day, she did something wrong. I don't know what it was really. Probably something small. Anyway, he was in a bad mood, or something, and then he gave her three talaaqs right there and then. And that's it. The end of the marriage. What an idiot! And he can't remarry her now. I don't know what he did eventually. That's not how divorce is supposed to be. But some men are like that."

Ebrahim indicated that this was not allowed, and felt that the institution was being "abused". Zaid also brought up this issue, when he spoke about some men's refusal to pay maintenance after *talaaq*. Clearly, this is an important issue that needs to be addressed by Muslim theologians.

Polygamy

Ebrahim indicated that he would never enter into a polygamous marriage himself, but found polygamy acceptable for other Muslim men. He said that while it was allowed in Islam, he didn't think that he would be able to care for both wives in an equitable manner, as set out in the *Qu'ran*.

"You can have up to four wives, I think. But that's quite difficult. The thing is that some Muslim men do it, because it's allowed. But there are so many conditions and you have to care for them equally and buy all of them the same things too. I can't see myself living with two women. I mean, loving two women? No. I would never do it and I don't know of too many men now that would do it, considering how expensive it is too."

While Zaid considered the option of entering into a polygamous union, Ebrahim has dismissed it entirely. He did not believe that it was emotionally possible for him to love two women equally. He also cited the high cost of maintaining two wives as a further reason to marry only one woman. Interestingly, in his response, Ebrahim stressed that he found polygamy acceptable for other Muslim men only. I asked him if he thought it acceptable for men of other religions and culture to practice polygamy:

"Yes. I think it's OK. As long as they treat the women well. As they are supposed to according to their religion or culture. I think that's the most important thing. I mean, if it's part of your religion, then people should be free to practise it."

Unlike Mike and Robert, who disapproved of all men practising polygamy, Ebrahim feels that polygamous marriages were acceptable on cultural and religious rights. However, he stressed the importance of the rights of women involved in polygamous marriages. This issue was of some importance to Ebrahim. I then asked Ebrahim what he thought of legislation that would recognize Muslim marriages, both polygamous and monogamous unions.

"I think it's a good thing. I mean, if they aren't being treated fairly, then they can seek legal assistance, and they can go to courts. It's difficult being in a marriage like that and some men just don't take it seriously. So, yes, I think it's good".

Ebrahim was clearly in favour of the introduction of legislation that would govern polygamous marriages concluded under Islamic law. Unlike, Zaid, who stressed the recognition of Islamic traditions, as important, Ebrahim felt that it would provide protection to women involved in such unions, which was very important to him.

Summary

Having been free from parental restrictions for the past four years at university, Ebrahim seems somewhat apprehensive about going home and conforming to parental expectations. However, despite this, he attaches great importance to kin beliefs, traditions, and culture. He has adopted a traditional approach to gender roles and the division of labour, but is compromising. It seems to me that the educational level of his wife would greatly

influence his attitude to conjugal roles. His girlfriend's educational level seemed to be the major determining factor in his views on the division of labour and conjugal roles.

What struck me most, was his attachment to his larger kin group. The marriage of close family members have had an impact on him, and this may influence his family ideology. Although he does not spend much time with his family and larger kin group, he spoke very fondly about them. This is indicative of Meer (1969) and Jithoo (1991), who argued that physical dispersion was unlikely to reduce family bonds. The experiences of others have also affected his attitudes to divorce and polygamy. Like other respondents, he was especially critical of the way in which divorce procedures were being effected by some Muslims.

Ebrahim has adopted a traditional Muslim family ideology. He indicated that he would not share domestic tasks, nor did he approve of working mothers. He also indicated that he would live with his parents after marriage. He indicated that race and religion were important factors in his choice of marriage partner, and was concerned with the larger kin group's opinion of his partner. Love was not the sole basis of marriage, and other factors such as religious and racial affiliation were important. This view is similar to that of Aniessa and Zubair, the young Muslim couple I interviewed, who said that they would not have married each other if their families did not approve. He approved of polygamous marriages for other men, but said that he would never enter into one himself.

AHMED AND FEROZA

Ahmed and Feroza have been married for 5 years. The couple was married in a small, traditional Islamic ceremony with family and friends present. Feroza's consent was sought the day before by her father and two uncles. The marriage contract was signed on her behalf by her father in the presence of Ahmed, his father, and the *moulana* at a mosque soon after the later afternoon prayer. A small wedding reception, which was attended by both their extended families and friends, was held at a nearby community hall after the signing of the marriage contract. Feroza and Ahmed both wore traditional Islamic attire. According to Feroza:

"It was a really nice ceremony, not too big or anything. It was a wonderful day."

They did not have their marriage legally registered, as they did not think that it was an important issue, although Ahmed did indicate that they would do so after they finished university. He believed that it would be more important and necessary then. Ahmed is a 24 year old Management Honours graduate, and Feroza is a 23 year old final year Pharmacy student. They are both from Durban, and come from wealthy, conservative, Gujarati-speaking households. They are distantly related and have known each other since their teens. Ahmed attended an Islamic school before coming to university, and is a *hafiz* (one who has memorized the entire *Qu'ran*). He considers himself a devout Muslim, and adheres to Islamic restrictions on food, alcohol, and drugs. He is regular in terms of prayer, and was actively involved in the Muslim Students Association on campus. He has two older brothers, both of whom are married and live on their own. His father owns his own investment company, and several other businesses, while his mother is a housewife.

Feroza attended a public girls' school in Durban. She is the eldest child and has a younger brother who is still at school. She considers herself fairly religious, in terms of prayer, food, etc. Her father is a businessman as well, and her mother is a housewife. Feroza does not wear a scarf, but dresses modestly. I interviewed Ahmed and Feroza in their immaculate two-bedroomed flat, owned by Rhodes University. They are the only students in the building, which houses mainly lecturers and staff of the university. The flat is very well-furnished, and certainly more "luxurious" than any of the flats of the other students whom I had interviewed. The presence of many electronic appliances such as a television, video, laptop computer, and cell-phone indicated that this couple originated from wealthy families. Their lounge, diningroom and kitchen were exceptionally furnished, and it was plain to see that a lot of money, time and energy, had gone into this flat. In addition, Ahmed drives the latest model Volkswagen Golf GTi, a further indication of his socio-economic status.

Ahmed lived in a university residence during his first year at Rhodes, while Feroza has never lived in a residence. Although the couple was extremely busy, they were hospitable and keen to participate in the study. There were no interruptions during the interview, which took place in the lounge.

Marriage

Ahmed and Feroza's decision to get married was largely an individual one. They indicated that both parents were surprised when they learnt that the couple wanted to marry.

Feroza: *Well, we knew each other for a long time. Ahmed liked me and told me so. I was in Std. 9* [17 years old] *at the time. He was in Matric and was going to come to Rhodes. So we waited until I finished Matric. We really wanted to be together and that was the main reason for getting married. We didn't want to be away from each other, so we decided that we would get married and live together in Grahamstown. I would study. We came up with a plan.*

Ahmed: *Feroza's parents weren't too happy because they thought she was too young to get married. She just came out of school. I think they felt that I wouldn't let her study and that it wouldn't work being married and studying at the same time. I had to convince them though, and the thing was that I really missed her in my first year here when she was in Matric. Anyway, they realized that it was for the best and agreed, and we made nikah*[4] *in December 1995.*

Their action was motivated by affection and strong emotions. It was interesting to note that while other respondents had claimed that many parents were encouraging young Muslims to marry, Feroza's parents discouraged her from marrying Ahmed. Their concern for the continuance of her education also reflects a change in traditional attitudes about education for Indian Muslim girls. Although Ahmed and Feroza's decision to marry was an individual one, larger kin group approval was sought, indicating that this was not entirely an individual decision.

I asked the couple what their expectations were of marriage:

Ahmed: *To tell you the truth, we had none. We were just concerned with being together. That's all we were interested in because we had to spend so much of time apart for that year.*

Feroza: *We were also so young that we didn't really give it much thought. I think we went in with the approach that we loved each other and that things would work out. I don't think either of us really knew. I think maybe that's why my parents were so against it in the beginning. I couldn't cook or anything, and I don't think they thought we were prepared.*

I then asked them what they thought of marriage now - five years later.

Ahmed: *Well, it's a lot of work. But it's great too. I mean it has its good days and its bad days. But I've learnt a lot you know.*

[4]Signed the marriage contract.

Feroza: *I think that people sometimes make a bigger deal than it really is. Look, I'm not saying that marriage is easy, but if both people work at it, then it's not too bad. We've learnt a lot about each other, and I think that I was lucky to have lived alone with him. Without any interference from anyone. We both really knew each other and that helped a lot.*

Feroza's last comment indicated to me that she considered herself fortunate to have lived independently of her in-laws and parents after marriage. Her use of the phrase: "Without any interference from anyone", suggests that she may share Amina's feelings about the extended family, ie. that too much family interference may harm a marriage, and cause conflict. Jithoo (1987) also asserts that conflict, particularly between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, is a major factor in the breakdown of the extended family among Indians. Feroza also cites her familiarity with Ahmed as an important reason for the success of their marriage. Like Ebrahim, they feel that it is important for a couple to get to know each other before getting married.

For this couple, love was the most important reason for marriage:

Feroza: *Well, I can't speak for everyone else, but I know what worked for us was that we really loved each other.*

Ahmed: *Yes. I suppose you can say that this is a bit simplistic, but to me love is the most important thing because everything flows from there. If you love someone, then you can trust them and they can trust you. That's the most important thing, I think.*

Feroza: *I also think that understanding is really important too. Like, there are times when we're both busy and Ahmed will have to make his own supper. Or times when he can't take me somewhere because he's busy. Then I will have to understand.*

While this married couple stressed trust, they argued that it emanated from love. Ebrahim and Zaid both stressed other factors such as friendship, respect, etc. and played down love. However, as I have pointed out previously, family approval was an important factor in the decision to get married.

I asked the couple if ethnicity and tradition played any significant role in their choice of partner:

Ahmed: *Well, we were distantly related so I guess that I already knew that she was Surtee* [Gujarati-speaking]. *I don't think it was too important though. Anyway,*

my parents wouldn't have minded since my brothers both married Urdu girls. There wasn't a problem there".

As with Aniessa and Zubair, whose families were well-acquainted, Ahmed and Feroza's families also knew each other well. This familiarity would most certainly have affected the couple's parents' approving the marriage. The couple both indicated that linguistic and ethnic differences had no significant impact on them. They stressed that religion was the most important criterion. However Ahmed's use of the word "Urdu" indicates that race and ethnic background are important for him since the majority of Urdu-speaking people in this country are Indian Muslims. Race and religion would play some role for him, since he did not mention Hindu or Christian or any other race groups in his response.

Gender Roles and the Division of Labour

I asked the couple to describe the division of labour during the previous day, to ascertain how the couple divided tasks.

Feroza: *OK, yesterday. After namaaz* [prayer], *I made breakfast and we ate. Ahmed dropped me off on campus becauseI had an early lecture. Then he came back home and made the bed and washed the dishes. He doesn't have that many lectures anymore so he helps me when I leave early. We both came home for lunch. I had a free afternoon. I made supper and then we washed the dishes and cleaned the kitchen. We both had a lot of work to do. Yes, that's basically it.*

The couple have a domestic worker who comes twice a week to clean the house and wash their clothes. From the description that Feroza gave me, it appeared that there is a relatively even distribution of labour, although it seemed to me that Feroza was primarily responsible for domestic tasks, with Ahmed helping out whenever Feroza was too busy. When I arrived for the interview, I noticed that Ahmed was wiping his hands after having cleaned the kitchen. Feroza was typing an assignment. They both admit though, that this is not how things will always be:

Feroza: *I think that now we're more like digsmates. I mean Ahmed knows that I'm studying too and he has to help out. I know that next year things will change. I won't see Ahmed as often as I do now. He won't have time to help either. Rafiq* [a close friend] *told us that the honeymoon is over. I guess that is what is. I mean, even we realise that this is not how it* [marriage] *really is.*

Feroza's comments indicated that she believed that the division of labour would change next year. I asked them how things would change next year:

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Feroza's comments indicated that she believed that the division of labour would change next year. I asked them how things would change next year:

Ahmed: *Well, we're moving to Johannesburg since I have a job there.*

Feroza: *And I'll be hoping that I get my internship there.*

Ahmed: *I think when we're both working, things will be more hectic. I guess we'll have a maid or something since we'll both be so busy.*

The presence of a domestic worker would surely reduce Ahmed's participation in domestic tasks, and would lead to a more traditional division of labour.

I asked the couple how they reached the decision to move to Johannesburg:

Ahmed: *Well, I had quite a few offers from companies. I think it was based on finances really, since we were gonna go where one of us could get a job.*

Feroza: *I can do my internship anywhere so we decided that were going to go where Ahmed got* a job.

The decision to move was thus a joint one, but with Ahmed's career in mind. Feroza indicated that she was disappointed that they could not live in Durban with one of their parents, indicating a preference for extended family living. Feroza also said that she was a bit scared about moving to a new city after having spent 5 years in Grahamstown.

I asked about whether Feroza was going to work full-time after she completed her internship.

Feroza: *Gosh, I haven't really thought about it. Yes, I think I would want to work for a while if I can find a job in Johannesburg. I'm not too keen on working for really long, though. Maybe about three or four years. After that we'd like to have children. Maybe when they're older I might work. I'm not sure. I've never been the career type really. I'll see though."*

Ahmed: *Well, I have no problem with Feroza working. She knows that she can work if she wants to. I mean, she won't have to work to support us or anything like that, since I'll earn enough to support us both. And from a religious point of view, she knows that she doesn't have to work as well.*

The couple sound like they have already reached an agreement that Feroza would not work for very long. Although, Ahmed said that she had a choice, Feroza's nervous tone and body language suggested that she was convincing herself. Ahmed's point of him being able to support them both is a valid one, as this is an important factor in women choosing to work. He also cited religion as a further reason for her not to work. The probable

presence of a domestic worker will probably reduce Ahmed's participation in domestic chores. I felt that there were many similarities between this couple and Aniessa and Zubair. Aniessa, too, only worked for a short while after the birth of her child. Zubair indicated a strong disapproval and unwillingness to share domestic tasks, as does Ahmed. To a large extent, religion has also played a role in their attitudes to marriage and the division of labour, since both men (Ahmed and Zubair) consider themselves devout Muslims, and used *Qu'ranic* injunctions in their responses.

The Extended Family

The couple had already indicated that they would be moving to Johannesburg as a result of work commitments. This certainly provides some substance to Goode's claim that industrialisation was undermining traditional extended family forms. Ahmed also indicated that he would not be taking over his father's business - yet another sign of the breakdown of traditional extended family functions. Ahmed and Feroza both said that had there been a choice, they would have wanted to stay with Ahmed's parents.

Feroza: *I think we would have stayed with his* [Ahmed's] *parents. They're all alone now because his brothers are overseas. At least my parents still have my brother. I would have been able to see my parents too, because they live nearby"*

Obligation to parents, even after marriage, is therefore an important part of this couple's family ideology. In a previous response, Feroza mentioned that she was glad that she had the opportunity to live independently of her in-laws and parents. This, to me, indicated that she did not prefer the extended family system. However, in her response above, it seemed to me, that she felt obligated both to her parents and her in-laws to have lived near them, had she had the opportunity to do so. Zaid also mentioned that he would live with his mother when he got married in order to care for her.

According to Jithoo (1987, 1991) increased educational and career opportunities were an important factor that led to the nucleation of Indian families in South Africa. However, in this case the nucleation is not out of choice. Thus, studies investigating the breakdown of the extended family need to consider whether nucleation is taking place through choice or not. Ahmed and Feroza's situation represents such a case, as they have openly indicated that they would have preferred to have stayed with Ahmed's parents after marriage. This was also the case with Aniesssa and Zubair, who also preferred the extended family

system, but were "forced" to relinquish living with their parents after marriage due to employment commitments. Additionally, Imraan and Taheera also indicated that it was unlikely that their sons would live with them after marriage, due to limited career opportunities in Grahamstown. Improved education and career opportunities have clearly affected the type of family system and structure of these individuals. Ahmed and Feroza mentioned, however, that they did have some relatives in Johannesburg, whom they could visit. They would also try to visit their parents as often as they could. Family bonds would not diminish as a result of distance.

Divorce

Ahmed and Feroza both admitted that it was not something that they had given much thought too, but approved of divorce as an acceptable means of ending an unhappy marriage. There were also no divorces among people in their immediate family. Ahmed did, however, express his opinion on the method of *talaaq*. Unlike, other respondents, however, he did not criticise the way that divorce was pronounced:

"I think that the method of divorce that is set out in the Qu'ran is equal. The only thing that worries me is when three talaaqs are given at the same time. There's some controversy about that. But yes, some people do abuse it...but not the majority of Muslims."

Ahmed was commenting on the controversy surrounding men who proclaim divorce three times in a single instance. According to the *Qu'ran*, a man may proclaim divorce twice, and then a period of separation may occur, during which time the couple may seek counselling and reconcile should they desire this. However, recently some men have proclaimed all three *talaaqs* at once, thereby ending the marriage immediately. Some schools of Islamic jurisprudence accept this method, while others do not.

Feroza also indicated that she thought that the system of *talaaq* was fair:

"I don't think that people follow all the steps that you're supposed to. I also think that the parents should get involved more, and help the couple."

The family and larger kin group play an important role in this couple's family ideology, and this is again reflected in Feroza's comments that call for family intervention when couples are seeking a separation.

Polygamy

Ahmed and Feroza both stated neither would enter, nor be part of a polygamous union. However, they felt that the practice was acceptable and would not condemn anyone else involved in a polygamous marriage. Feroza said that she didn't think she would ever be able to share her husband. Ahmed said that he would never be able to love two women.

Ahmed: *The main criterion for polygamy is that you must be able to love them both and support them both. It's tough enough having one wife! But two! No. I couldn't do that.*

Feroza: *I think it's also about the women actually being able to share their husband. You can't be jealous or anything. I don't want to even think about how jealous I would be, knowing that Ahmed was with someone else! I don't think I could do it. No.*

Interviewer: *You've both indicated that you would not practise polygamy yourselves. But, is it OK for others to practise polygamy?*

Ahmed: *Yes. It's fine for others to practise it. I wouldn't though.*

Feroza: *Yes. It's fine.*

For this couple, polygamy is not an option. Ahmed and Feroza, like the other Muslim couples I had interviewed previously, could not see themselves in a polygamous union, but would not disapprove of anyone else in a polygamous union.

Summary

Ahmed and Feroza's marriage is somewhat different in that they are two full-time students away from home. Grahamstown itself is a small town, which allows them to spend a lot of time together between lectures, at lunch-time and so on. Right now, they seem to have a fairly equal division of labour, and as they themselves have said "we're more like digsmates". However, both have expressed that things would change once they left Grahamstown. Ahmed would participate less in the home, while Feroza would assume more responsibility at home. Ahmed's career seems to have taken priority. Finances seem to have been the main criterion in reaching this decision. Feroza seems content to have put her career in pharmacy on the back-burner for now.

The extended family system is very important for this couple. Both expressed their sadness that they would not have the opportunity of living with Ahmed's parents. however,

I feel that Feroza experiences some ambivalence towards living with her in-laws. Attachment to the kin group will not diminish and will continue to have great significance in their lives. Neither believed that they could ever participate in a polygamous union.

This couple subscribed to a traditional Muslim family ideology. While they have shared domestic tasks at university, a more traditional division of labour will occur once they leave university, with Feroza assuming responsibility for domestic chores and child-rearing. Their choice of marriage partner was initially an individual one, however family approval was very important to them. They both indicated a preference for the extended family system, but work commitments prevented them from living with Ahmed's parents after they left university. They both strongly disapproved of personal participation in a polygamous marriage, but did not see anything wrong with others practising polygamy, and saw divorce as an acceptable means of ending a marriage.

HUSSEIN AND ZAYNUB

Hussein is a 24 year old final year Pharmacy student, and Zaynub is a 24 year old final year B. Comm student. They are both from Laudium, Pretoria and come from wealthy, conservative, Memon households. They attended the same high school and started dating at high school. After completing Matric, Hussein came to Rhodes to study Pharmacy, while Zaynub studied B. Sc. at the University of Pretoria. They had intended to marry when Hussein came completed his degree at Rhodes. However, at the end of 1997, the couple decided that they would get married, and Zaynub would come to Grahamstown. They were married in December 1997. Zaynub decided to pursue a B. Comm degree at Rhodes University.

Hussein and Zaynub have been married for three years. They married in a traditional Islamic ceremony, and later had their marriage registered. They said that their marriage was a "big affair", as they were both the first child to be married for either family. All their friends and extended family were present, and many traditional customs were followed. For instance, the night before the wedding, both couples had a traditional celebration at their homes, called *mendhi,* which was attended by family and friends. The marriage contract was signed by Zaynub's father, brother, and uncle after the midday prayer at their local mosque. They then proceeded to a community hall, where a wedding

reception was held. There were approximately 600 guests at the reception, which Zaynub described as "lavish". The couple wore traditional Indian attire for the reception. They then honeymooned in Cancun, Mexico.

Hussein considers himself a fairly devout Muslim, and adheres to Islamic restrictions on food, alcohol, and drugs. He is regular in terms of prayer, and was actively involved in Islamic school at Rhodes University, which provided religious education to the Muslim children living in Grahamstown. He has a younger brother, who is also studying at Rhodes. His father owns a pharmaceutical company, while his mother is a housewife. Zaynub is eldest child and has a younger brother who is studying at the University of Pretoria. She considers herself fairly religious, in terms of prayer, food, etc. Her father is a businessman as well, and her mother is a housewife. Hussein lived in residence for four years, while Zaynub has never experienced residence life.

The couple lives in a well-furnished two-bed roomed flat in Grahamstown. From the furniture and appliances in the lounge, dining-room, and bedrooms, as well as the kitchen, one could tell that these respondents came from a wealthy background. There was a computer and printer in their spare bedroom, which is used as a study. They also have a television, video and hi-fi. Both husband and wife have cellphones. There were intricate Islamic frames and *Qu'ranic* verses on the wall. These looked very expensive, and were certainly more elaborate than any that I had seen in the homes of the other respondents. Hussein drives a BMW, and he and Zaynub both wear branded clothing, a further indication of their socio-economic status.

The couple was very hospitable, and keen to participate in the study. I have known Hussein for almost six years, and we had a close friendship. He and his wife spoke openly, and were very comfortable during the interviews I had conducted with them. There was one interruption during the interview when Zaynub's mother called her. However, she told her mother that she was busy and would call her back later.

Marriage

Hussein admits that it was at his suggestion that the couple marry. However, he said that he and Zaynub sought the permission of their families first, and ensured that the larger kin group approved. This represented an adherence to an aspect of traditional Muslim family

ideology, where the choice of marriage partner and the decision to marry is a group, rather than an individual one.

Hussein: *We missed each other a lot. Well, my studies were not going so well, and I realized that I would have to spend another 2-3 years here without Zaynub. I really didn't think that I could survive that, actually. I knew that the only way was to bring Zaynub here.*

Zaynub: *Yes, it was Hussein's suggestion. But I missed him a lot too. And I wasn't even enjoying my studies, you know. He told me that we should get married, and we could live together in Grahamstown. I thought about it, and discussed it with my parents. They said it was OK. I think they could see how much we missed each other, and that we couldn't wait any longer. I think we were at a marrying age too. We were both 22, so we weren't too young.*

Hussein: *Yes. I don't think that my parents would have approved if we were younger, you know.*

As with Ahmed and Feroza, this couple's decision to marry was initially an individual one. However, parental approval was very important, as was the case with the two other Muslim couples that I had interviewed previously. Zaynub's use of the phrase "marrying age" indicated that age was also an important issue in the decision to get married. Both Hussein and Zaynub had been out of school for three years, and felt that they were of a socially acceptable age to marry. The couple admitted that they knew marriage was going to be difficult:

Hussein: *Well, we knew that at least we would be together. We had spent so much time away from each other. I hated it. We both did. We knew it would be difficult. We had to furnish our flat and everything. My parents paid for everything, but still. We knew that it would be difficult to study and be a married couple too.*

Zaynub: *But, I think we knew what we were doing. Like, Hussein helped me a lot with things. And we knew that we were in this together. After all, we had to sacrifice something to be together. We couldn't have things easy.*

Hussein: *I don't think that our expectations have changed really. Probably because we knew how difficult it was to start off with.*

Zaynub: *I think I've realized that if you have the support of your partner, then things really work well. We're very organized and we plan things too. So at least we have a lot of experience when we start working.*

Zaynub and Hussein admitted that they had no illusions about marriage. While Ahmed and Feroza also married to be "be together", Hussein and Zaynub seem to have given more thought about living arrangements and housework. In this regard, their action can be regarded as goal-rational, according to Weber's typology of rational action. This may be a

result of the age at which they got married: Hussein and Zaynub were 22 years old, while Ahmed and Feroza were 19 and 18 respectively. However parental participation and support was important for both couples, since Zaynub pointed out that their parents had helped them furnish the flat, as was the case with Ahmed and Feroza. Aniessa and Zubair also depended on parental support in the initial stages of their marriage, as they lived in the garden flat of Aniessa's parents. Ebrahim, Nadia and Zaid also indicated that they would prefer living with their parents after marriage – thus indicating a high level of parental support and participation. Family approval and participation is of central importance for these individuals, unlike Charlotte and Mike who did not speak of any parental participation after marriage. Naomi and Robert stressed how important it was to them that their sons have independence.

Zaynub also admits that her experience in Grahamstown has served as experience for when she and Hussein start working. This seemed to me to be similar to Feroza's friend's statement that "the honeymoon was over". Zaynub, too, it seems, feels that the last three years had served as preparation for the "real world" – which would be very different from life in the idyllic student town of Grahamstown.

Gender Roles and the Division of Labour

I asked this couple to describe what happened the previous day in their household to ascertain how household tasks were shared:

Hussein: *Well, since it was Saturday, we could at least wake up late! We made breakfast together. And then we cleaned up. My brother came to see us, and we had lunch with him. Gosh, then we just lazed around really.*

Zaynub: *Generally, we share the work, though. Hussein can cook, and he have sort of a cooking roster according to our lecture timetable. Hussein does most of the shopping, actually. So basically it's pretty even. And I usually neaten up. We have a maid that comes once a week to wash the clothes and sweep and dust, so I guess that helps too. I think that Hussein does a lot around the flat. Like last week, I had an IS project to complete, and he basically did everything that week. Then there are times when he's very busy, and I do stuff. It's quite equal.*

This seemed like a fairly egalitarian relationship. Like Ahmed and Feroza, Hussein and Zaynub seem to support each other in times of need. However, the presence of a domestic servant reduces Hussein's participation in the home. Zaynub seemed quite proud of her husband when she spoke, in indicating that she was satisfied with the way things were.

Hussein, however, did not show the same amount of enthusiasm, and answered very few questions about the division of labour in his household. This seemed to me that he would prefer a traditional division of labour, with his wife assuming most of the responsibility for domestic tasks.

Hussein seemed more apprehensive about the way things would change next year. The couple were moving to Johannesburg. Zaynub had been recruited by an Information Technology company. I asked Hussein how the couple reached this decision:

"Well, Zaynub received lots of offers, you know. She has a really good academic record, so it was obvious that she would receive lots of offers at Grad Placement. So we decided that we would move to wherever she got a job, since I hadn't received any offers. The thing is that Zaynub was always going to get a job before me. I still have to do my internship and everything."

Zaynub's career was given preference in this case, in contrast to that of Ahmed and Feroza. It seemed that economics had played an important role in this decision, since Hussein went on to say that Zaynub was likely to earn more than him, and that the couple's decision was centered around establishing her career, a further indication that their action is motivated by goals.

I asked Zaynub whether she intended working for very long:

"Well, I'm not sure yet. I've landed a great job at IQ [a large IT company], *and I think I could go quite far there. I know that I'm really lucky to have been recruited from university, so I don't have to go find a job. I'll see how it goes. We'll have a maid too, so I don't think things will be too hectic. I don't know really. Things are so different when you aren't a student. If it's too much too handle, then I might stop working."*

The division of labour would definitely change, once the couple left Grahamstown. Zaynub would be expected to assume primary responsibility for domestic tasks. A full-time domestic servant would also be employed, which was likely to reduce Hussein's participation even further. Previously, Zaynub had said: "I've realized that if you have the support of your partner, then things really work well." However, now she pointed out that things might be "too much to handle". She did not expect to have Hussein's help after they left Grahamstown.

I asked Hussein if he objected to his wife working. He had this to say:

"Well, Zaynub's worked so hard. I mean, she's done so well, and I can't tell her not to work. That would be unfair. After all, she's done so much for me. I don't have a problem

with my wife working. Obviously things are gonna be different next year, but we've come this far, and if we both pitch in, then we won't have a problem, and things should work out."

The couple seems to have compromised on this issue. As Hussein spoke, though, I got the impression that he felt that he "owed" Zaynub for coming to Grahamstown. She had excelled academically, and allowing her to work seemed to be his repayment. Hussein mentioned helping out. However, from his wife's earlier response, I felt that she did not expect much help from him, which might result in her quitting work. In this discussion, no mention was made about Hussein's internship or career.

It seemed to me that a traditional division of labour would prevail once this couple had left Grahamstown, as was the case with Ahmed and Feroza. Zaynub would assume responsibility for domestic tasks, although the presence of a full-time domestic worker would assist her tremendously. It seemed unlike that this couple would continue sharing domestic tasks, as they have done in Grahamstown, and adhere to an element of the traditional Muslim family ideology in this way. Interestingly, I noticed that this couple did not use any religious dictates or *Qu'ranic* injunctions as the basis of their beliefs about the division of labour and gender roles, as Ahmed and Zubair had done.

The Extended Family

The couple had indicated that they would be moving to Johannesburg, as Zaynub had received an offer of employment from a company based there. As with Ahmed and Feroza, this couple has opted for a neo-local residential setting as a result of employment opportunities. However, this was not what they desired, and would have preferred to live with Hussein's parents.

Interviewer: *You've already said that you would be moving to Johannesburg because of the job offer that Zaynub has received. If you had received an offer from a company in Pretoria, would you have lived with either of your parents?*

Hussein: *If we had a chance to live with my parents or Zaynub's we would. Definitely. I think that we would want to spend some time at home. It would have been nice.*

Zaynub: *Yes. I would have wanted to have stayed with Hussein's parents, I think. It's something that my parents and his parents would have wanted.*

Interviewer: *Why would you choose to stay with Hussein's parents?*

Zaynub: *Well, firstly, I don't think that they've had a chance to really get to know me because we hardly go home. I think that it would have made life easier too for us.*

Hussein: *Yes. I think that we wouldn't be as worried about living on our own as we are now.*

Interviwer: *Why are you worried?*

Zaynub: *Well, we both know that it's really tough, and I think that having our parents so close would have made things easier. It's all a bit scary.*

This couple shows a strong preference for the extended family system. Zaynub also indicated that she would like to have a closer relationship with her in-laws. Like the other young Muslim couples that I had interviewed (Ahmed and Feroza, and Aniessa and Zubair), this couple also views the larger kin group as a source of support, protection, and encouragement. Aniessa and Zubair also indicated how fortunate they were to live with their parents after marriage. Again, however, the issue of the influence of increased education and employment available to Indians on the traditional extended family structure is highlighted. It seems to me that greater career opportunities has led to the nucleation of some families, as has been illustrated by the three married couples I have interviewed here: Aniessa and Zubair; Ahmed and Feroza; and Hussein and Zaynub. Imraan and Taheera also indicated that their son would also move away from home in search of better employment opportunities.

However, Hussein and Zaynub indicated that they would still keep in contact with their family since Pretoria was only an hour's drive from Johannesburg. There is strong attachment to the larger kin group though, and Zaynub said that she would really miss her relatives.

Interviewer: *You won't be able to see your parents and family as often as you would have were you to live in Pretoria. Is this going to affect you and your relationship with your family?*

Zaynub: *No. I don't think so. We're only going to be an hour's drive from Pretoria, and we'll be able to go home and spend the weekends in Laudium. I think that being away from home, and studying here has made them used to the idea of us not being at home. I don't think that it will seriously affect our relationship with our parents.*

Hussein: *We'll still be close to them. I suppose that we'll get used to it eventually. But I am sure that it won't affect us badly. Or the rest of the family.*

Hussein and Zaynub clearly have a strong bond with the rest of the family, and have indicated that they are willing to make an effort to see their family as often as they can. Physical distance would not reduce their attachment to their larger kin group. Hussein had also previously mentioned that his parents had paid for all their living costs while they were at university. The family thus remains an important source of financial and emotional support for this couple, and they have shown a preference for the extended family.

Divorce

Hussein and Zaynub had very little to say about this issue. Unlike other respondents, they did not mention personal experiences with family members who had gone through a divorce. The couple simply answered the questions I asked without any additional input. I thought that this was strange seeing how freely they had spoken about other issues. This issue did not seem important to them. I asked the couple if divorce was acceptable:

Hussein: *Yes, I think that it is. Sometimes, things just don't work out, and if there is no way of reconciling, then it's best to part. Yes, divorce is an acceptable thing.*

Interviewer: *And you, Zaynub?*

Zaynub: *Yes. I think that it's an acceptable way of ending a marriage. Obviously, a last resort.*

Interviewer: *How do you feel about the Islamic method of divorce?*

Hussein: *Well, I know that it's quite controversial, but I don't think that there's anything wrong with it. I think that people must just make sure that they do as the Qu'ran says, that's all.*

Zaynub: *Yes. I also think that people must take it seriously. Especially the men.*

Hussein and Zaynub both approved of divorce as an acceptable means of ending a marriage, but stressed that it should be regarded as a last resort. Zaynub also highlighted that men need to take the process of *talaaq* more seriously. This was an issue that was highlighted by other respondents, who criticized the male interpretation and practice of *talaaq*.

Polygamy

Hussein and Zaynub both indicated that they would never enter into polygamous unions, but approved of polygamy as an acceptable practice.

Interviewer: *How do you both feel about the practice of polygamy?*

Hussein: *Well, it's difficult loving two women. I mean, for me, anyway. It's not possible for me to love two women. I mean, having the same feelings for two women is difficult. The Prophet* [Muhammad] *was able to do it, but I don't think that normal Muslims like us can."*

Interviewer: *And you Zaynub?*

Zaynub: *Oh! Yes. It's very difficult. I agree. I'm not sure if people now can actually fulfil all the requirements.*

Interviwer: *Would you allow Hussein to have an additional wife, if he asked you?*

Zaynub: *No, I wouldn't. I suppose you could say that I'm being selfish, but I really don't want that.*

Interveiwer: *You've both said that you wouldn't want to enter into polygamous marriages. Is it OK for others to do so?*

Hussein: *Yes. There's no problem with others practicing polygamy.*

Zaynub: *Yes. That's fine with me too.*

Hussein and Zaynub, like other respondents, approve of the practice of polygamy ideologically. However, they both indicated that they would not enter into a polygamous marriage themselves, due to their inability to "share" their spouse. Unlike Zaid, who indicated that he might marry more than one woman, Hussein and Zaynub, both said that it was not possible for them fulfil the *Shariah* requirement of emotional equality.

Summary

Zaynub and Hussein seem to have a fairly egalitarian relationship. Their decision to marry was closely related to kin approval. Their extended families play an important role in their lives. This is indicated by the fact that Hussein's parents continued to support the couple after they were married. They also indicated that they would have preferred to live with Hussein's parents after they left university. The couple also admitted that they would commute every weekend to see their family. Zaynub's career seems to be favoured in this

relationship, and decisions relating to where they will live next year, were related to that. This seems to be the reverse of the previous case of Ahmed and Feroza, where Ahmed's career was given priority. Availability of jobs, then, played an important in decisions relating to moving and plans for next year. The couple had very little to say about divorce and polygamy, indicating that these issues were of little significance in their lives. Neither was in favour of participating in a polygamous union, but ideologically approved of the practice. They also saw divorce as an acceptable means of ending a marriage.

This couple seems to have adopted elements of both modern and traditional family ideologies. They share domestic tasks at university, Zaynub is primarily responsible for thee running of the household. Zaynub has indicated that she will be working next year at least. She was not sure how long she would work for, though it seemed to me that Hussein disapproved of working mothers. They have attached great importance to the larger kin group, and their decision to marry, while based on love, was also dependent on kin approval. They indicated that they would not participate in polygamous marriages, but approved of the practice. Divorce was seen as an acceptable means of ending an unhappy marriage.

7. CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore the attitudes, perceptions and views that a group of Indian, Muslim students hold about marriage and family life. The results of these interviews indicate that each individual here experiences family life differently by attaching different meanings to various aspects of marriage and family life. This is indicated by the varied responses that have been documented here. This has led to varying attitudes to marriage and family life. For example, Zaid views marriage in terms of authority and the division of labour. He demands respect and an acceptance of his authority from his wife, and sees this as the only way to avoid confllict. Hussein and Zaynub, and Ahmed and Feroza all stressed love, and indicated that this was an important, though, not the only reason that contributed to their decision to marry. Nadia and Amina's perception were strongly influenced by the experiences of close family members. Nadia, in particular, seemed despondent about marriage, and felt that equality and respect were lacking in most Muslim marriages that she had observed – particularly that of her parents'. Amina, however, was optimistic about marriage, despite her sister's divorce.

All spoke of children, naturally, indicating that children were of central importance in marriage, and an integral part of all their family ideology. Monogamous marriages were seen as the norm and polygamous marriages were to be entered into under exceptional circumstances, such as a woman's inability to bear children as was cited by Amina. With the exception of Amina and Zaid, the other respondents all indicated that they would not personally participate in a polygamous union, as they did not believe that they could emotionally sustain more than one wife or "share" their husband with another woman. However, they thought that it was perfectly acceptable for others to do so. This ideological approval of polygamy is what is unique to Muslim family ideology, and what differentiates it from western family ideology.

All the respondents in this study embraced elements of a traditional Muslim family ideology. However, it seemed to me that these young Muslims are searching for a modern version of a Muslim marriage, which also incorporated principles of equality and egalitarianism. Each student tended to have a different interpretation of equality – which was very different from a modern, Western notion of equality that tends to stress that men

and women should perform the same tasks. Rather, this interpretation focussed more on respect and appreciation. Nadia raised this issue when she spoke of the sharing of domestic tasks, and a greater respect and appreciation for a woman's role in the family. Ebrahim, too, saw marriage as a partnership of equals, with the husband respecting the wife and vice versa. The traditional division of labour was endorsed by all the students, but this was not seen as oppressive or unequal by these students. Men and women were seen as equally important but performing different roles.

These principles were also accentuated in the practice of divorce and polygamy, and all respondents stressed the rights of Muslim women in divorce and polygamy. Nadia stressed how some men neglect their first wives, while Ebrahim, Ahmed and Hussein all stressed how difficult it was to love more than one woman. Zaid argued that Muslim men did not take *talaaq* seriously, and conferred more respect on secular divorce proceedings. Certainly, any legislation governing Muslim marriages need to take into account the issues that students in this study have raised.

In a study of values that support quality marital and family life, Steyn (1996) found that love, respect, and communication were stressed by the 88% of the white and Coloured respondents she interviewed (1996:176-180). However, the Indian Muslim students in this study, saw love as a secondary consideration, when making the decision to marry. Other factors such as race, religion, and kin approval were important for a successful marriage and family life. This was stressed by Amina and Ebrahim who both indicated that they would not marry non-Muslim or non-Indians. Zaid and Ebrahim were involved in relationships with Indian women, with the former's relationship being with a Hindu, while the two married couples that were interviewed were both Indian Muslims. While these two married couples, indicated that love was an important consideration, the approval of their family was more important.

The extended family and larger kin group played a central role in the lives of all of these students, most subjects having had experience of extended family living or intending to, which contrasts markedly with Western experience. The experiences of close family members seem to have impacted individual attitudes towards extended families. Amina indicated that she would not live with her in-laws, as a result of her sister's experience. Relationships with in-laws (particularly mother-in-law and daughter-in-laws) were seen as

sites of conflict by Amina and Nadia, and confirmed Jithoo's (1987) observation that this was one of the factors that led to the decline of the extended family among Indians (**in** Steyn *et al.*, 1987).

For Zaid, the decision to live with his mother was seen as an obligation to take care of his mother. This is possibly a result of religious dictates which stress the importance of caring for one's mother in old-age. Both Nadia and Ebrahim saw the extended family as a source of support and security. As Ebrahim put it: "Blood is thicker than water". Both married couples in this study, indicated that they would have preferred to live with their parents, but work commitments prevented them from doing so. To a large extent, this substantiate's Goode's (1982) and Parsons' (1956) claim that there was an "fit" between industrializing economies and nuclear families, since it was more mobile and better equipped to deal with the needs of an industrializing economy. These two couples both accepted that it would be difficult to move their entire families with them. Rather, they would have to leave the family home. The extended family and larger kin group, however, still remain of great importance in the lives of these students.

The traditional division of labour and conjugal roles formed an important part of all respondents' family ideology. Nadia, Amina, Feroza, and Zaynub all indicated that they would give up their careers once they had children, but stressed and expected equality. Zaid and Ebrahim both indicated that they would want their wives to stay at home once they had children. Both Hussein and Ahmed were happy that their wives would probably not pursue long-term careers. All saw this as an adherence to Islamic family ideology. However, this cannot be seen purely as an adherence to religious dictates. Class and socio-economic issues need to be considered. These students can afford to choose to stay at home or allow their wives to stay at home.

However, Nadia seemed to experience conflict in striking a balance between what was expected of her as a Muslim woman, and her own personal beliefs about marriage and family. Her feelings reflect the findings of Afshar (1994) and Dwyer (1999) who found that young Muslim women were finding it increasingly difficult to reconcile their identity as Muslim women with their rejection of some aspects of traditional Muslim family ideology. This also reflects the ambiguities that many writers such as Friedan (1981); Rich (1976) and Chodorow (1978) referred to in their research about the way that women

feel about household chores and the division of labour. This issue will continue to pose a challenge to other young educated Muslim women, who are also trying to find a balance between religious and personal family ideology.

The results of these interviews confirm Dallos and Sapsford's assertion that marriage and family life should be seen as a dynamic process. Regardless of what family form or grouping people choose to adopt, they all face certain fundamental tasks, which every student here highlighted. These tasks include childcare; establishing a sense of identity; negotiating roles in terms of divisions of duties and decision-making (**in** Mucie *et al.*,1997:165). This was illustrated by Nadia and Amina's concern about their ability to successfully combine motherhood and career; Amina and Ebrahim's concern for kin approval in their choice of marriage partners; the adoption of the traditional division of labour by most students.

All respondents were critical of the way in which *talaaq* is practiced, and intimated that women were discriminated against. However, they all saw divorce as acceptable to end an unsuccessful marriage. Interestingly, Amina and Ebrahim both pointed to the young age that some Muslims were being married as a result of parental pressure. They saw this as an important contributing factor to increasing divorce rates in the Muslim community. This issue therefore needs to be addressed by religious leaders in the community.

These Indian Muslim students largely conform to a traditional Muslim family ideology. These students disapproved of the sharing of domestic tasks and working mothers. They showed a preference for the traditional, extended family. The decision to marry was not entirely an individual one, and kin approval played an important role in this. There was also an ideological acceptance of polygamy. Although most of the respondents indicated that they would not participate in a polygamous marriage themselves, they found it acceptable if others chose to do so. All saw divorce as an acceptable means of ending an unsuccessful marriage.

From this, once can conclude that the acceptance of a traditional division of labour; the approval of the extended family system; and the ideological acceptance of polygamy makes Muslim family ideology unique from western family ideology. More research, however, must to be conducted on Muslims from different age, educational, race and class

backgrounds to achieve a deeper understanding of the nature of the Muslim family in South Africa. Cross-cultural comparisons would also provide more insight of the changes (if any) that are taking place with regard to Muslims' perception of marriage and family life.

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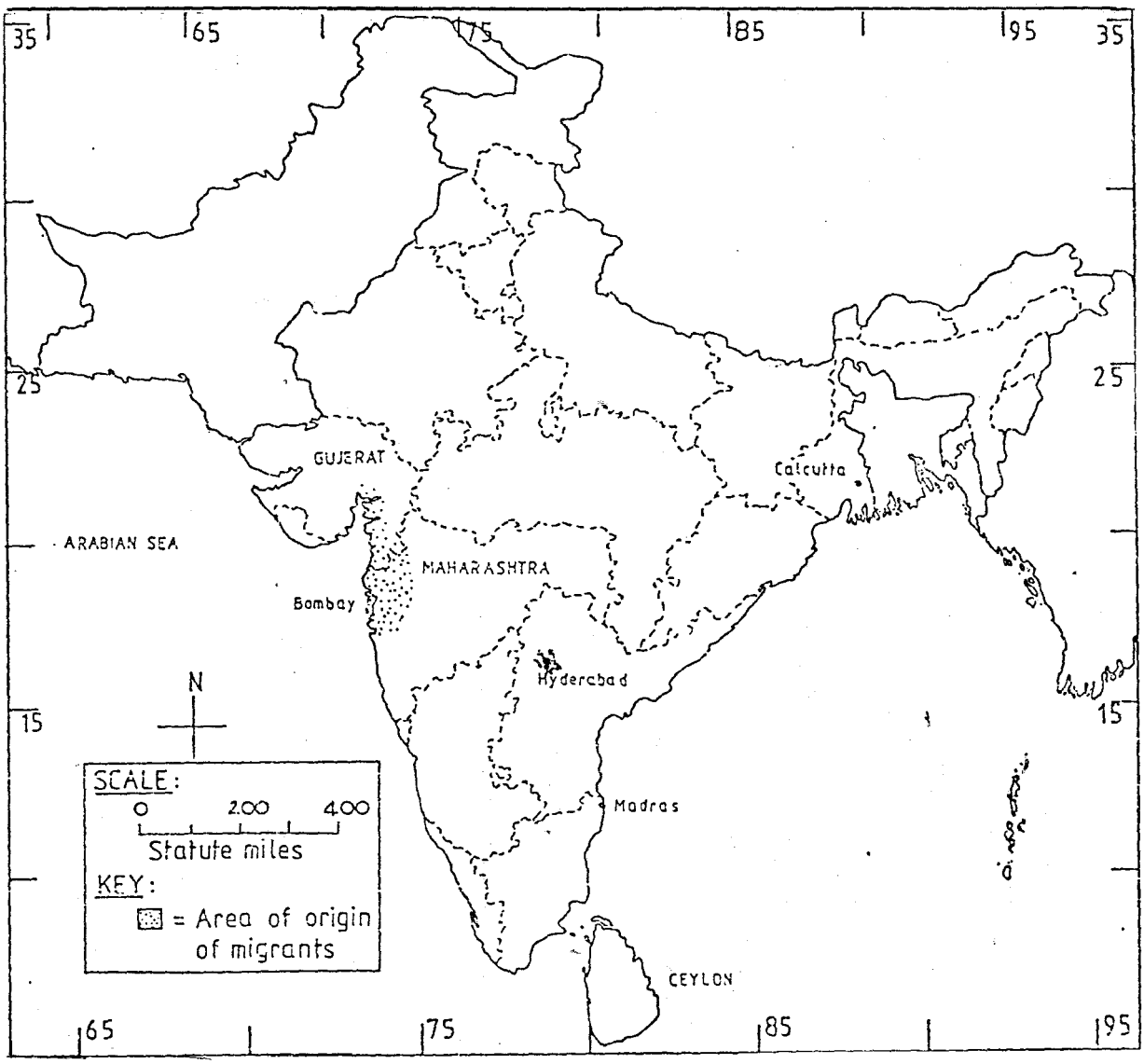
APPENDIX 1

Map Showing Origin of Indian Migrants



APPENDIX 2

Interview Schedule 1: Development of a Traditional Muslim Family Ideology

(Muslim and Christian Married Couples)

1. Is pre-marital sex acceptable?
2. Do you think that is acceptable for a man to have more than one wife?
3. Was love the most important basis for marriage? Were there other factors that influenced your choice of marriage partner?
4. Is divorce acceptable?
5. Are children an essential part of marriage?
6. Would you want to live with your parents now after marriage?/Would you want your children to live with you after they were married?
7. Are working wives and mothers acceptable?
8. Do you think that sharing domestic tasks such as housework and child-rearing is acceptable?

APPENDIX 3

Interview Schedule 2: Testing the Traditional Muslim Ideology

(Single Students)

Marriage

1. What do you think of marriage? What are your perceptions and expectations of marriage?
2. Is love the most important basis for marriage?
3. Would kin approval be an important factor?
4. Would any other factors such as race or religion play a role?

Gender Roles and the Division of Labour

1. Do you approve of working wives and mothers?
2. Would you want to work after you were married?/Would you allow your wife to work after marriage?
3. What do you think of the sharing of housework and child-rearing responsibilities?

Extended Family

1. Would you want to live with your parents after marriage?/Would you want to live with your in-laws after marriage? Why?

Divorce

1. Is divorce an acceptable means of ending a marriage?
2. How do you feel about the Islamic method of *talaaq*?

Polygamy

1. Is polygamy an acceptable practice?
2. Would you want to participate in a polygamous marriage? Why?
Is it acceptable for others to do so?

(Married Students)

Marriage

1. Why did you decide to get married?
2. Was love the most important factor in your decision to get married?
3. Did any other factors (such as race, religion, ethnicity) influence your decision and choice of marriage partner?
4. What were your expectations and perceptions of marriage then?
5. What are your perceptions of marriage now?

Gender Roles and the Division of Labour

1. Describe your day yesterday. Tell me who did what from the time you woke up.
2. Will this change when you leave university?
3. Would you want to work after completing your degree? Why?
4. How do you feel about your wife working?
5. Will you work when you have children? Why?

The Extended Family

1. Will you live with your family after you leave university and go back home? Why?

Divorce

1. Do you think that divorce is an acceptable means of ending a marriage?
2. How do you feel about the Islamic method of *talaaq*?

Polygamy

1. Is polygamy an acceptable practice? Why?
2. Would you participate in a polygamous marriage? Why?
3. Would you allow your husband to take on an additional wife? Why?