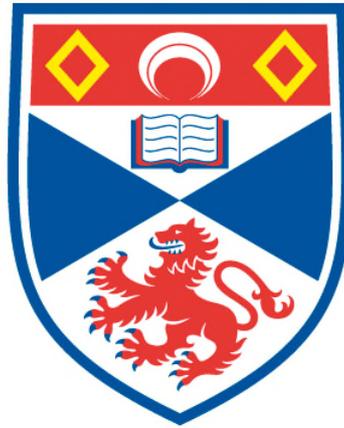


THE SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN FAMILY-RELATED MIGRATION TO SCOTLAND

Rebecca Folly

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews**



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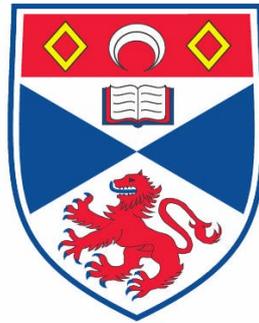
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The subjective experiences of Muslim women in
family-related migration to Scotland

Rebecca Folly



This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

September 24, 2014

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Abstract

Muslim family members constitute a significant migration flow to the UK (Kofman *et al.*, 2013). Despite such observations, this form of mobility is under-explored in geographic scholarship on migration. Accordingly, this thesis examines the subjective experiences of migration of a small group of Muslim women, who migrated either *with* or to *join* their families in Scotland. Participant observation, focus groups and the life narratives of eight women are used to gain an in-depth understanding of both the *reasons for* and the *consequences of* migration for this group of Muslim women. In addition, this thesis examines the role of a secular community-based organisation in supporting migrants in their everyday lives.

Drawing on conceptual approaches to migration, this study reveals diverse and complex motivations among participants in “choosing” to migrate. Far from “victims” or “trailing wives”, participants privileged their children’s needs but also the possibility to transform their sense of self through migration. The study draws attention to the struggles of daily life in Scotland where, bereft of extended family, the synchronisation of migration with childbirth resulted in some participants enduring years of isolation. Such struggles resulted in changes in the home, with husbands providing both physical and emotional support. The experience of migration affected the women’s religious identities, providing solace as well as a way to assert belonging in Scotland by drawing on Islamic theology. The community-based organisation provided a “safe space”, bridging the secular and non-secular and offering women the chance to socialise, learn and volunteer. The study shows that volunteering provided not only a way into paid work but also shaped women’s subjectivities and home lives. However, the re-direction of national government funding towards “Muslim problems” threatens to undermine the organisation’s ability to continue to meet the local needs of Muslim migrant women.

Dedication

This PhD is dedicated to the women who asked not to be named but who let me into their lives for 15 months and who changed me forever. This thesis would not have been possible without you and I truly hope that I have done your stories justice. I thank you for brightening some dark Scottish days with laughter and incredible food, when I too felt a long way from home. I will always remember you in my prayers.

This thesis is also dedicated to my Grandma, this one's for you kiddo.

Acknowledgments

I extend heartfelt gratitude to my supervisors, Dr Emilia Ferraro and Dr Louise Reid. Dr Ferraro has been with me since the beginning of this journey and has taught me to see the world differently, for which I am forever indebted. She consistently critiqued my work with encouragement, offering thoughtful insight. Dr Louise Reid gracefully stepped into the project a little later in 2012; I am so grateful for her diligence and commitment in helping me to pin down my ideas and her incredible ability to read and comment on a draft in a 24-hour turnaround time. My two supervisors have always made themselves available to me, despite the enormous time pressures they face in the ever-changing world that is academia in the UK. Thank you both for taking this journey with me and for believing in me.

Even after I migrated to the US in the last year of my PhD, the doors to the offices of the Department of Geography and Sustainable Development at the University of St Andrews remained (virtually) open to me. I would like to express my sincere thanks in particular to Professor Allan Findlay, Dr Mike Kesby and Dr David McCollom. Now in pastures new, I would also like to thank my former supervisor, Professor Donald Houston, Professor Ioan Fazey and Professor Danny Simatele. Finally, I'd be remiss to not thank the department for a 3-year tuition fee waiver.

A special mention must go here to Professor Jan Bebbington, who began this journey with me in 2010 as my co-supervisor until early 2011. In lieu of academic supervision, I have gained a dear pal, who has become and will remain always, a beautiful addition to my new family. Thank you Jan, from all of us.

Thank you to my extended St Andrews family: Mr and Mrs Jackson-Hutt and the Marconi girls: Caroline, Cinz, Lucy, Hannah (by extension) and Wei. I will always treasure our PhD days.

To my American family – you are all completely crazy and I love you. Thank you for embracing your new English daughter and sister. For my mother-in-law Jean, words cannot express my thanks for your support as I've worked to finish this thesis.

To my English family – firstly, thank you to my grandparents for your love and constant encouragement. Thank you to my four nephews, Ethan, Finn, Lukie and Jacob. You never fail to light up my heart and constantly remind me of the most important things in life: toy cars, pirate ships and mud pies. To my sister Ems, thank you for failing to convince me *not* to do a PhD and for always listening, trying to help and providing a much needed insider’s perspective that I wasn’t losing my mind! For my brother Steve, for being a constant friend to me, always encouraging and never judging. For my big brother Jon, for always judging, sometimes encouraging and despite all of that, for loving your little sister unconditionally. Thank you for always pushing me to be the best I can be. For my sister Nin, for believing in me and for never leaving my side (metaphorically) in 32 years. Unequivocally the most selfless person in the world, I watch you everyday rooting for your boys like you’ve always rooted for me and know that I could not have done this without you. Thank you.

Thank you to my Dad, for teaching me to sprint in Sol Joel Park instead of walk, for teaching me to drive a lorry instead of a bike and for teaching me that no matter how big your dreams, you can always go bigger. Mud, words will never suffice. Thank you for the seemingly endless big pieces of paper, library trips and most importantly, love. In my mind and in my heart, there is no doubt that everything I have achieved is because of you and your dedication to your family. My only hope is that I can offer the same to my children one day.

Finally, to my husband D. Somehow, somewhere, we both made decisions in our lives that put us in the same place at the same time on a snowy evening in St Andrews. What a journey it’s been since! On the rare occasions that we were in the same country, I will always be grateful to you for whisking me away to the Highlands for some fresh air and breathing space. It’s easy to forget now how much time we spent apart, yet no matter where you were in the world, you always found a way to get in touch to tell me to keep going. You have never lost faith in me, or in the importance of telling these women’s stories. Thank you for your kindness, love and patience. This marks the end of our first chapter and the start of a new one; I cannot wait to see what tomorrow holds.

Acronyms

DWP: Department for Work and Pensions
ESRC: Economic and social research council (UK)
FBO: Faith-based organisation
NGO: Non-governmental organisation
UK: United Kingdom
UKBA: United Kingdom Border Agency
US: United States

Glossary

Abaya: Loose full body garment (traditionally black in colour)
Alhamdulillah: Thanks to God
Allah: God
Burqa: Loose full body garment and full-face covering
Eid: Holiday marking the end of Ramadan
Hajj: Pilgrimage to Mecca during the twelfth month of the Muslim lunar year (*Dhul-Hijjah*)
Halal: Food that is allowed under Islamic law (*Shari'a*)
Headscarf: Scarf covering head, ears and neck
Hijab: Can be used to describe modest dress and head covering
Inshallah: If Allah wills
Madrasah: Islamic education centre
Mecca: City in Saudi Arabia and centre of Islamic world
Nikāḥ: Islamic marriage
Niqāb: Full-face covering, either leaving the eyes exposed or not
Qur'an: Islamic holy book and source of Islamic law
Ramadan: Month of fasting in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar year
Rukhsati: Bride leaving ceremony – from the Bride's parents' home to the husband's
Shari'a: Islamic law
Umma: Notion of transnational Muslim community

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Chapter I: Introduction

Muslim migration to Scotland

1.1 Introduction

In November 2013, an article in the Scottish broadsheet newspaper, *The Herald*, carried the headline, “What’s it like being a Muslim woman in Scotland today?” The report referred to recent research showing that the three expressions most commonly used by Scottish young people to describe a Muslim woman were “a threat”, “oppressed” and “a foreigner”. Such headlines reflect political and media discourses that depict Muslim migration from the global South to the global North as a problem, highlighting Muslim women as “victims” of forced marriage migrations (Grillo, 2011; Razack, 2004) and as “uneducated” and “backwards” (Kofman *et al.*, 2013, p. 9). This thesis aims to disrupt this depiction of Muslim migrant women by providing an in-depth account of the subjective migration experiences, including both the reasons for migration and the outcomes, of a small group of Muslim migrant women in Scotland. This thesis also examines the role of a secular community-based organisation in shaping everyday life for these women in Scotland. Section 1.2 presents the research objectives and questions. Firstly, however, the following section outlines the conceptual relevance of this thesis.

Family-related migration¹ is the principal mode of legal entry to Europe for migrants from the global South (Castles, 2010; Grillo, 2011; Kofman, 2004; Kraler *et al.*, 2011). Muslim women in particular are prevalent in this form of migration (Kofman, 2004; Kofman *et al.*, 2013; van Walsum, 2011). Despite their prevalence, Muslim family-related migration is under-explored in geographic scholarship on migration. Consequently, there is relatively little “known” about *why* Muslim women migrate, either with or to join their family members, and about the *lived realities* of this form of migration. Accordingly, this thesis attempts to explore the relevance of theories from geographic scholarship on migration to understanding not only *why* a group of Muslim women migrated to Scotland, but also the *effect* of this migration on these women’s everyday lives. In so doing, this thesis answers calls for geographers to “transcend...and redefine well established theoretical and conceptual boundaries of migration studies”

¹ Throughout the thesis, family-related migration refers to migrants who enter the UK either with, or to join, an existing family member (referred to in legal terms as “dependents”, UKBA, 2014).

(Smith and King, 2012, p. 128; see also King, 2012), thus advancing the theorisation of migration.

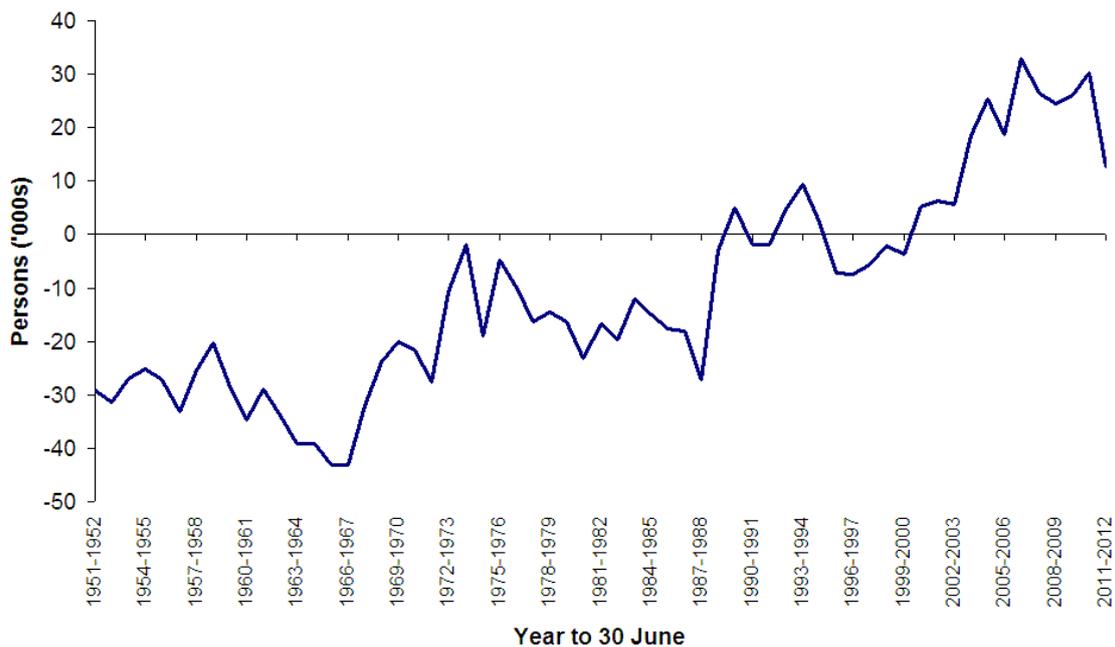
In extending the application of these migration concepts and approaches to the study of *Muslim* women in family-related migration, this thesis equally seeks to contribute to the burgeoning literature on Muslim geographies. Indeed, scholars have worked to disrupt essentialist notions of “the Muslim woman” over the last decade, resulting in a series of edited collections dedicated to this task (Aitchison *et al.*, 2007; Falah and Nagel, 2005; Hopkins and Gale, 2009). However, much of the research on Muslims in Britain focuses on young British-born Muslim men and women; thus not only are Muslims of other ages largely overlooked (Hopkins, 2009a) but also less is “known” about the lived experiences of Muslim *migrants* in Britain. This thesis thus seeks to contribute to the literature by examining the lived realities of Muslim *migrant* women in Scotland and in so doing, augment understandings of everyday life in Muslim households and families and the role of religion in migration.

Finally, this thesis aims to contribute to understandings of the role of institutions in supporting Muslim women in their everyday lives. Much of the scholarship on Muslim institutions examines mosques and schools (Gale, 2007; Kong, 2009). Whilst scholars have noted the importance of community-based organisations in Muslim women’s lives (Ehrkamp, 2013; Green and Singleton, 2007; Hopkins, 2006) there is a lack of empirical evidence about the nature of these spaces and their role in shaping the everyday lives of Muslim women. In seeking to extend understandings of these spaces, this thesis draws on conceptual insights from the literature on the role of third sector organisations in welfare state restructuring. Accordingly, the thesis discusses the value of looking to other areas of research within human geography to generate new insights and understandings of the lived realities of Muslim migrants.

This study is politically important in a climate of growing anti-Islamic and anti-immigrant sentiment in the UK and Europe (Kofman *et al.*, 2013). In addition, high unemployment rates and concerns over the residential segregation of Muslims in Britain have sparked political debate about the integration of Muslims in Britain (Bowlby and Lloyd-Evans, 2009; Hopkins and Gale, 2009; Phillips, 2006). Against this political backdrop, the study of Muslim migration to the UK is an important area of research.

However, both policy and academic literature have predominantly drawn on studies with Muslims in England and therefore less is “known” about the experiences of Muslims living in other parts of the UK, including Scotland (Ali, 2013; Hopkins and Gale, 2009). The question then becomes, how significant is Muslim migration to Scotland?

Figure 1.1 Net migrations to Scotland since 1951 (Scottish Government, 2014)



Census data and immigration statistics depict Muslim migration to Scotland as a growing trend. Net in-migration to Scotland has been growing since the 1950s and peaked in 2011 at 30,200 people, as shown in figure 1.1 (Scottish Government, 2014). Of Scotland’s foreign-born population, 63% have arrived in Scotland since 2001. In the 2011 census, 7% (369,000) of respondents declared they were born outside the UK, with India being the most common country of birth outside of the EU. Between the 2001 and 2011 Scottish census, the number of respondents who declared their religion as Muslim rose from 42,600 to 76,737, an increase of 0.6 % now representing 1.4% of the Scottish population (National Records of Scotland, 2014). However, despite the impression such statistics give, exact numbers of Muslim immigration to Scotland are unknown because the UK Border Agency does not record immigration statistics according to religion.

1. 2 Aims of the study

This thesis focuses on a small group of Muslim women who migrated to Scotland either *with* or to *join* their family, primarily from countries in the global South. The overarching aim of this research is to provide an in-depth account of Muslim women's subjective experiences of migration to Scotland. Specifically, this thesis aims to understand what makes some Muslim women migrate and the effect of migration on their everyday lives. To address the study's aims, the research involved the development of three objectives and six questions. These are written below and also shown in figure 1.2.

Research objective 1: Examine the migration processes of Muslim women in family-related migration

- 1) Who are Muslim migrant women?
- 2) Why do Muslim women migrate?

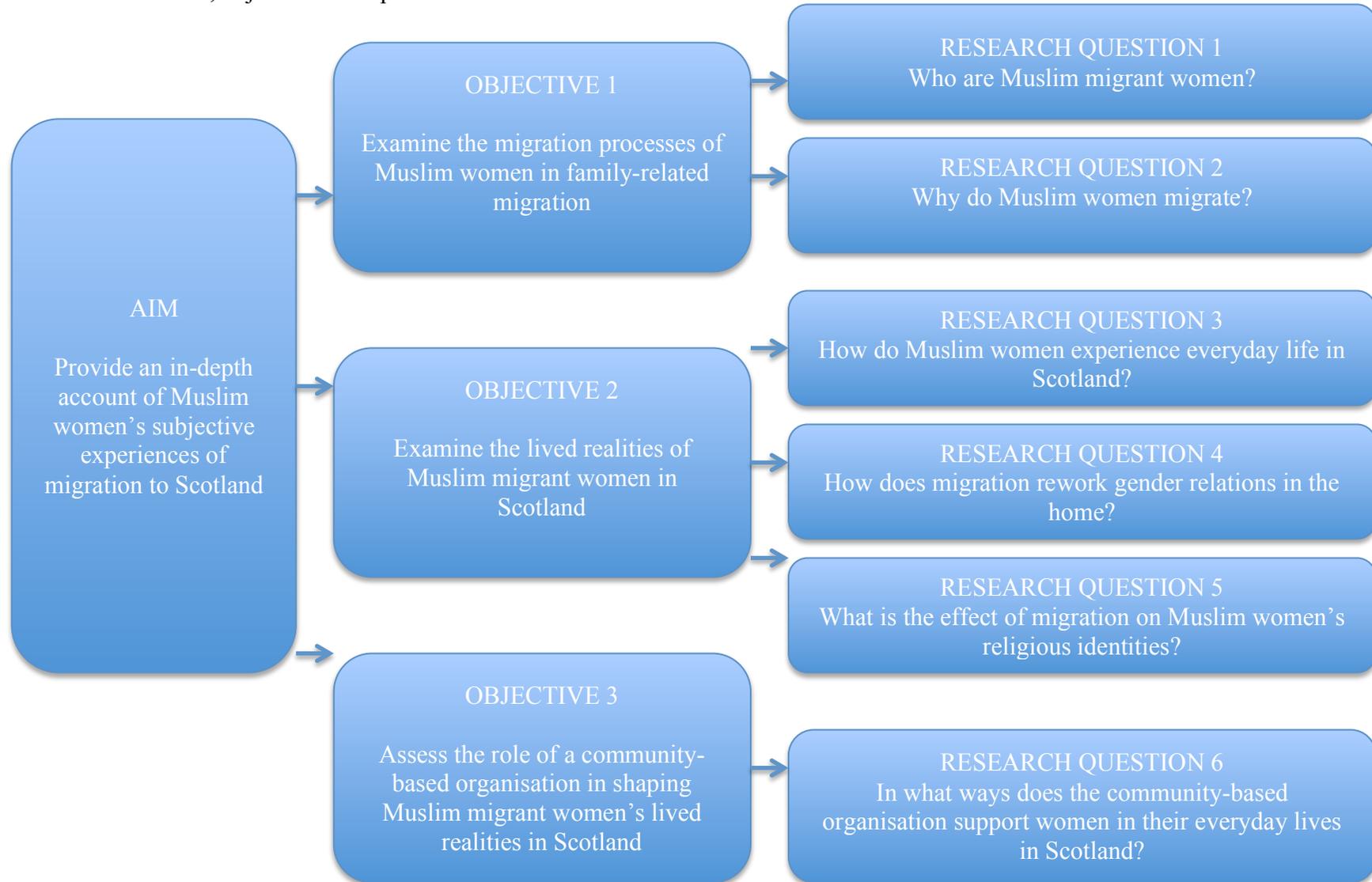
Research objective 2: Examine the lived realities of Muslim migrant women in Scotland

- 3) How do Muslim women experience everyday life in Scotland?
- 4) How does migration rework gender relations in the home?
- 5) What is the effect of migration on Muslim women's religious identities?

Research objective 3: Assess the role of a community-based organisation in shaping Muslim migrant women's lived realities in Scotland

- 6) In what ways does the community-based organisation support women in their everyday lives in Scotland?

Figure 1.2 Research aims, objectives and questions



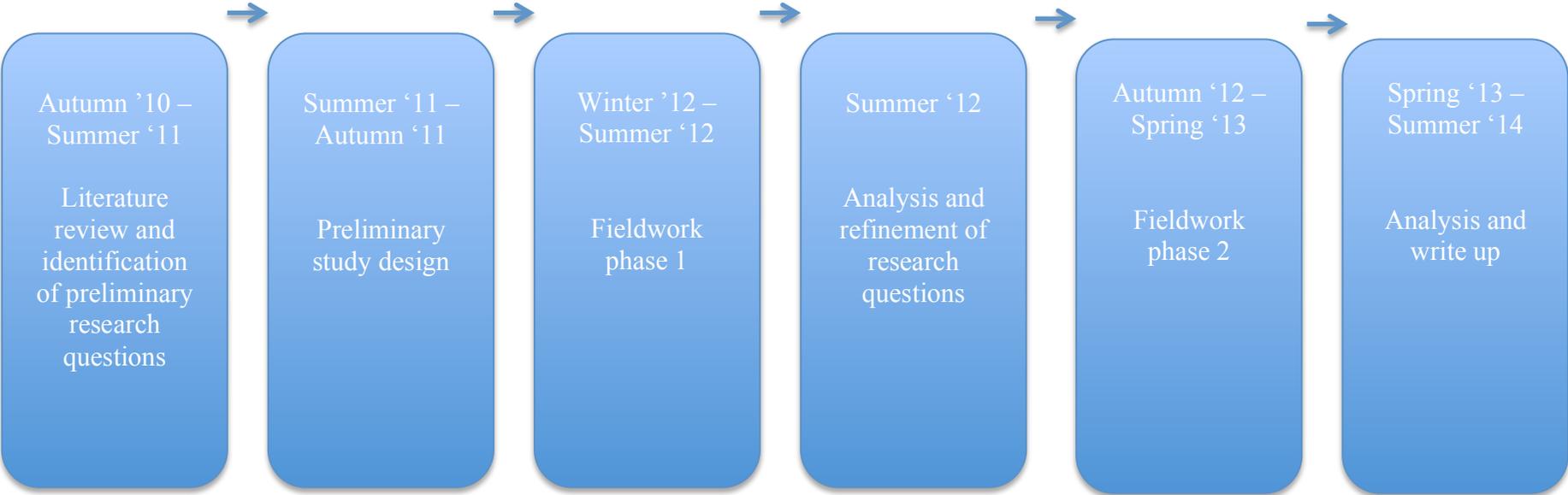
1.2.1 Limitations of the study

In outlining the overall aims and objectives of this study, highlighting the limitations of the work becomes important as well. This thesis is concerned with migrants in family-related migration. Thus in focusing exclusively on individual Muslim women in family-related migration, the study excludes Muslim women who migrated as primary labour migrants, for example “professional” independent Muslim migrant women. Furthermore, the study excludes Muslim migrant women who have migrated to longer-established migrant communities within the UK, for example the South Asian diaspora in parts of England. In so doing, however, the thesis raises a number of important insights and considerations concerning the experience of migrating “alone”, *i.e.* without nearby extended family or social networks. However, in undertaking research only with Muslim migrant women, the study does not include the perspectives and experiences of other family members, for example their husbands or children. In reality, this narrow focus afforded the possibility to spend significant time with the participants, getting to know them and arguably enabling a deeper insight into their lives than a focus on all of the members of the household would have afforded. This is discussed in further detail in a series of methodological reflections at the end of chapter 3, as well as in relation to recommendations for future research outlined in the conclusion of the thesis, chapter 7.

1.3 Study timeline

The study took place in six stages, shown in figure 1.3. The two phases of the fieldwork allowed time to reflect on what had been learnt and observed in the field and to undertake some preliminary analysis of the field diary. As such, the research questions were refined in between the two fieldwork phases in the summer of 2012. The gap between the stages coincided with *Ramadan* and the summer school holidays, as during this time the research participants spent more time with their families and were not able to participate in the study.

Figure 1.3 Research timeline



1.4 Methodological approach

This thesis adopts a feminist research approach, seeking to “add in” the voices of Muslim migrant women to the literature on family-related migration (McDowell, 1992, p. 403). Feminist approaches privilege relational knowledge and personal experience in understanding the world, emphasising a social constructed reality through webs of power (Staeheli and Lawson, 1995, p. 322). A feminist approach is therefore appropriate for this study that seeks to explore Muslim women’s subjective experiences of migration. This study is also influenced by ethnography and draws on ethnographic approaches to gain a deeper insight into Muslim women’s lives.

The study took place at a community-based organisation for migrant women in Scotland, where I volunteered as a class tutor. Volunteering offered three advantages to the study: (1) it allowed me to meet and get to know Muslim migrant women and vice versa; (2) it provided a bounded space for participant observation to learn more about the women; and (3) involvement over the course of 15 months allowed me to make a more in-depth ethnographic study of the community-based organisation in itself. The study included participant observation, a field diary, focus groups, life narratives and staff interviews. In all, the study incorporated over 250 hours of participant observation, 8 life narratives, 3 “official” staff interviews and 4 focus group discussions involving 19 participants in total. The evidence was analysed using *NVivo* data analysis software. The thesis also seeks to make a methodological contribution by engaging in discussion around the implications of doing this kind of research. A detailed discussion of the methodology and methods used in this study takes place in chapter 3.

1.5 Definition of terms

Specifically, this study concerns the migration experiences of Muslim women who have migrated to Scotland in family-related migration, *i.e.* they migrated with their children or their husbands or both, or they migrated to join or reunite with their husbands or extended family members in the UK. In the UK immigration policy context, family members include spouses, civil partners and children, as well as adult dependent relatives who require long-term care from their relative in the UK (Securing Borders and Reducing Immigration, 2013). Kofman (2004) breaks family migration down into three broad categories, although she cautions against a fixed typology. These are: (1) family reunification in which family members join a UK citizen or non-citizen; (2)

family formation or marriage migration in which a UK citizen or settled person marries a foreign spouse and brings him or her to the UK; and (3) entire family migration, in which temporary permit holders bring their “dependents” with them, for example, students. This thesis is concerned with Muslim women in all three categories of family-related migration. Whilst this thesis is primarily concerned with relations between husbands, wives, and children, it follows Ryan *et al.* (2009, p. 64) who cautions against treating the family as a “bounded geographical unit” and suggests instead the inclusion of grandparents, cousins and siblings.

The term “migrant” has numerous interpretations and no single definition of the term applies (Migration Observatory, 2014). Throughout this thesis, the term “migrants” includes foreign-born UK nationals, foreign citizens, recent migrants without indefinite leave to remain (less than five years), and asylum seekers and refugees (Migration Observatory, 2014). The term “migrant” is thus used synonymously with immigrant, *i.e.* a migrant to the UK. This thesis is concerned specifically with migration to Scotland; however, references to government policy and policy discourse are those of UK-wide policy (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) unless otherwise stated.

A cautionary note

Undoubtedly, this study risks reinforcing the singular category of “Muslim woman”, thus undermining the study’s attempts to capture the uniqueness and complexity of women who identify as Muslim and follow Islam. Moreover, in using the category “Muslim migrant women”, the study has the potential to overemphasise religion while underemphasising class, gender, or “race” in shaping women’s experiences of migration (see Nagel, 2005). In grappling with this research dilemma, the study follows Nagel (2005, p. 5) who argues that the current politicisation of Islam requires “more complicated readings of the Muslim woman category, even if this means, in a sense, legitimating the category itself.” In this way, the category of *Muslim* migrant woman effectively emphasises the neglect of migrant women from “Muslim countries” in human geography scholarship on migration.

Within the thesis, a concern also arises to avoid an essentialist concept of “woman”, as critiqued by feminists, and the study acknowledges postmodern approaches that

highlight the discursive construction of the category “woman” (Riley, 1988). As with the category of “Muslim woman”, this study does not seek to emphasise being a woman over other aspects of the research participants’ identities but is again a means through which to bring evidence to the fore about this neglected social group. Likewise, there is a danger of essentialising Islam, and thus from the outset this study acknowledges the many different dimensions of faith.

1.6 Organisation of the thesis

Chapter 2 presents a critical review of the literature. Section 2.2 outlines current debates around Muslim immigration to the “West”² and sets the wider context of the study. Section 2.3 discusses major theoretical debates in human geographic scholarship on migration over the last thirty years, discussing the development of migration theorising from a predominant focus on economic factors to cultural and feminist approaches, which seek to capture the diverse meanings behind migrant decision-making. Following on from this, two conceptual approaches to the study of migration are introduced and discussed in relation to extending understandings of why Muslim women migrate, thus addressing research objective 1. Section 2.4 explores the burgeoning literature on Muslim geographies that has emerged over the last ten years. In particular, I examine research on gender relations, the Muslim household and religion. At the end of the section, the beginnings of a conceptual approach is outlined for examining women’s lived experiences of migration, thus addressing research objective 2. Feeding into research objective 3, the final part of the chapter, section 2.5, examines the literature on Muslim institutions and their role in shaping the everyday lives of Muslims. Following this, I discuss the literature on third sector organisations that may enable a deeper analysis of the role of a community-based organisation in shaping Muslim women’s everyday lives, thus addressing research objective 3.

Chapter 3 sets out the methodology used in this study. The chapter begins in section 3.2 by outlining the methodological context for the study, which includes a discussion of both the ontology and epistemology of the study. The methodological approach is outlined in section 3.2.1. In section 3.3, I outline the research process, including selecting and accessing the field, ethics, recruitment, data collection and data analysis.

² Throughout the thesis, I note that the West is a problematic term (see Hopkins, 2009b).

These stages did not occur in chronological order but took place in two phases, as shown in Figure 3.1 in chapter 3. In outlining the research process I discuss the choice of research methods and link them to the research objectives and questions in Table 3.1. The final two sections, 3.4 and 3.5, present a detailed account of my positionality and the methodological and ethical considerations that arose during this study.

Chapter 4 explores the findings of the study in relation to research objective 1, and research questions 1 and 2. The chapter presents the socio-demographic profiles of the research participants and their modes of legal entry to Scotland, addressing research question 1. The second half of the chapter uses a biographical approach together with concepts and approaches from the migration literature to understand why research participants' migrated to Scotland, addressing research question 2.

Chapter 5 examines the lived realities of the research participants in Scotland, thus contributing to research objective 2 and research questions 3, 4 and 5. In particular, I discuss the impact of migration on motherhood, access to work and gender relations in the household, addressing research questions 3 and 4. Following this, I focus on women's changing relationship with their faith through migration, addressing research question 5.

Chapter 6 draws more extensively on staff interviews and participant observation to discuss the role of Fountain Point – the field site for this study - in shaping the everyday lives of the research participants, addressing research question 6. I examine the evidence together with concepts and approaches from both the literature on Muslim institutions and third sector organisations.

Chapter 7 draws together the preceding chapters to offer an overall conclusion for the thesis, examines whether the research aims and objectives have been addressed, and discusses the contribution of the thesis to scholarly knowledge. The limitations of the study are reflected on before setting out some potential policy implications and a future research agenda for migration research with Muslim women.

Chapter II: Literature review

Geographies of Muslim migration: a conceptual framework for the study

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to bring insights from the human geographic scholarship on migration together with literature on Muslim geographies to build a conceptual framework for this study. As discussed in chapter 1, Muslim migration from the global South to North, particularly migration involving family members—primarily spouses—is understood to be growing both in numbers and political significance (Kofman *et al.*, 2013). Section 2.2 explores this phenomenon to provide the wider context and justification for this study, which aims to illustrate the subjective migration experiences of a small group of female Muslim migrant spouses to Scotland.

Following this, section 2.3 reviews the key insights from human geography concerning family-related migration, specifically *why* families migrate either as a unit or as individuals to reunite with an existing family member. This section then considers concepts and approaches from the literature on internal (long-distance) migration as well as more recent scholarship on migration and subjectivity. In so doing, the section outlines a conceptual framework for exploring why Muslim women migrate, thus contributing to RO1.

Section 2.4 follows by exploring what is currently “known” about Muslim women. The section seeks to show that whilst a substantial body of work now exists to challenge essentialist readings of the “Muslim woman”, less is known about how the process and consequences of *migration* shape Muslim women’s everyday lives and in particular their subjectivities around religion, home life and motherhood. In reviewing potential conceptual approaches for exploring this issue, this section addresses RO2.

The penultimate section, 2.5, moves away from a focus on individual migrants and the household to consider the role of institutions in shaping post-migration life for Muslim migrant women, which is the focus of RO3. This section argues that whilst there has been significant focus on religious institutions, for example the mosque or *madrasahs* (Islamic education centres), the influence of secular community-based organisations in Muslim women’s everyday lives is underexplored.

In each of the sections of this chapter and throughout the thesis, Muslim geographies and human geographic scholarship on family-related migration have formed the primary basis for the literature reviewed. The growing interest in Muslims and Islam has garnered attention across the social sciences and humanities. However, this thesis is particularly concerned with the way in which Muslim women's identities shift through time and space and thus draws predominantly on geographical perspectives from this literature. Likewise, the study of migration stretches across diverse disciplines, including anthropology, history, sociology and economics, to name just some. Two works in particular stand out in capturing these disciplinary offerings to the study of migration: Brettell and Hollifield (2008) and Castles and Miller (2009). Within human geography, migration research is equally diverse and a series of excellent reviews exist that capture the development of the discipline (see for example Bailey, 2005; King, 2012). Thus this review does not attempt to review this whole body of literature but instead draws attention to the insights it provides as to *why* people migrate and the *outcomes* of migration on both individuals and family life.

2.2 Muslim family-related migration to Europe

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington DC in 2001 and the resultant US-led “war on terror”, a group of scholars has drawn on multidisciplinary perspectives—including EU law, sociology, political theory, geography and international relations—to examine and understand the impact of the changing political landscape on different migrant groups, particularly Muslim migrants (Adamson *et al.*, 2011; Aitchison *et al.*, 2007; Bonjour and Hart, 2012; Falah and Nagel, 2005; Kofman, 2004; Kofman *et al.*, 2013; Nagel, 2002; Razack, 2004, 2008). In so doing, scholars highlight the “us” and “them” discourse that has emerged surrounding Muslim immigration to the US and Europe (Bonjour and Hart, 2012) and the dichotomous language used in discourses of Islam/West: “they” hate “our” values; the world is either with “us” or with “the terrorists” (Nagel, 2002, p. 978).

In response to such discourses, growing debate has taken place between geographers and sociologists of the spatial strategies employed by the US and Europe, the so-called West, to restrict migration from “Muslim” countries (Kofman, 2004; Nagel, 2002). Specifically, strategies to “secure” borders from “terrorists” have taken the form of

tightening immigration control; changing asylum, refugee and family legal categories; discourses on citizenship; and the restriction of migrants' access to social programmes, for example, welfare payments (Nagel, 2002, p. 978; see also Adamson, 2011; Kofman, 2004; Kofman *et al.*, 2013). In addition, some perceive the use of integration and language tests for migrant applicants domiciled outside of the UK as a form of remote control of the UK's borders, working to ensure that migrants to the UK are "desirable". In particular, Kofman *et al.* (2013, p. 4) argue that integration and language tests are used to tackle under-achievement in Muslim communities in Britain, as they prevent the migration of uneducated spouses, who are ill equipped to educate the next generation of children (see also Kofman and Vacchelli, 2011). Indeed, the literature agrees that these tests target Muslim migrants coming to Europe for family reunification purposes (Adamson *et al.*, 2011, pp. 848-849; see also Kraler *et al.*, 2011). As Kofman *et al.* (2013, p. 1) note, "Family migrants in Europe are disproportionately female and often, implicitly and explicitly, associated with unskilled migrants from rural areas and/or Muslim countries."

Despite the politically contentious nature of Muslim immigration, human geographers have largely overlooked Muslim family-related migration and, for the most part, have engaged only minimally with more "mainstream" migration theory in working to understand *why* Muslims engage in this form of migration. Consequently, Muslim migration is largely explained in relation to arranged and forced marriages (Grillo, 2011). This is problematic because some policy and media discourses conflate arranged and forced marriages, resulting in negative stereotypes of Muslim family migrants, particularly female spouses, as *victims* in migration processes and at the mercy of an oppressive and illiberal culture (Grillo, 2011; Kofman *et al.*, 2013; Razack, 2004, 2008). This renders Muslim women's agency in migration decision-making invisible and reveals little about the complexity that lies behind family migration processes.

In the context of rising tensions surrounding Muslim immigration, some policy and media discourses emphasise patriarchal culture and gender inequality in Muslim communities as a way of highlighting the "clash" between Islam and the West (Hopkins and Gale, 2009; Nagel, 2005; Ruffer, 2011). Muslim migrant women are homogenized in this essentialist discourse, which positions them as the "main importers of 'backwards' practices" (Kofman *et al.*, 2013, p. 1). In response to the negative

stereotyping of “the Muslim woman” in media and policy discourses (Falah, 2005), geographers have worked to destabilise essentialist readings of Muslim women, men and youth. At least three important edited collections dedicated to this task now exist (see Aitchison *et al.*, 2007; Falah and Nagel, 2005; Hopkins and Gale, 2009). In providing nuanced accounts of Muslim women’s everyday lives, scholars reveal the heterogeneity among Muslim women and distance themselves from empowerment discourses that “infantilise” Muslim women (Ehrkamp, 2013, p. 19). Consequently, substantially more is now “known” about the everyday lives of Muslims in the West. However, in British-based scholarship much of the focus has been on British-born Muslim youth or young adults in the South Asian diaspora in England (Hopkins, 2009a; Hopkins and Gale, 2009). Thus, scholars need to bring further attention to the experiences of ethnically diverse Muslims living outside communities with long-standing migration histories, particularly in Scotland (Ali, 2013; Hopkins and Gale, 2009), to Muslims who have *migrated* to Scotland (as opposed to British-born Muslims), and to Muslims of other ages (Hopkins, 2009a). In exploring the experiences of a small but diverse group of female Muslim migrant spouses to Scotland, this thesis thus seeks to contribute to this important body of work.

Finally, existing research has examined the importance of institutions in shaping Muslim identities and subjectivities, distinguishing between “sacred” non-secular and secular spaces (see Dwyer, 1999, 2000; Ehrkamp, 2005; 2007; Gale, 2007; Kong, 2009). Much of this work focuses on “traditional” “Muslim spaces”, although the emphasis on Muslim youths has also resulted in a focus on schools (Kong, 2009). A handful of scholars have drawn attention to community-based or neighbourhood organisations in Muslim women’s lives (Ehrkamp, 2005; Green and Singleton, 2007; Hopkins, 2006) but to date little research examines the nature of these organisations. In particular, the importance of *secular* community-based organisations in Muslim women’s everyday lives has been largely overlooked. This raises questions over the extent to which such organisations are accessible to Muslim migrant women, the type of services and programmes offered, the organisational structure and, in particular, the impact of such organisations on Muslim migrant women’s everyday lives.

This section has sought to justify the three research objectives outlined in chapter 1, section 1.2, by outlining the wider context of the study. This thesis seeks to examine the

subjective migration experiences of a small group of Muslim women who have migrated to Scotland either with their families or to join or reunite with a family member. To this end, this study seeks to provide an illustrative account of *why* the women migrated (*i.e.* the reasons and motivation for their migration) and the *consequences* of migration (*i.e.* the outcomes and lived realities for the women in Scotland). In so doing, this thesis also examines the role of a secular community-based organisation in shaping post-migration everyday life for this group of women. Examining the migration process as a *whole* is important, as King (2012) notes that geographic migration research has tended to separate the study of determinants and consequences, citing Castles and Miller,

The study of migration has fallen into two rather separate bodies of investigation: research on the *determinants, processes and patterns of migration*, and, second, research on the *ways in which migrants become incorporated into receiving societies*

(Castles and Miller 2009, p. 20, original authors' emphases)

King (2012, p. 137) suggests, "The distinction is artificial and hampers a full understanding of the phenomenon of migration." Thus, in considering both the reasons for and outcomes of migration together, this study seeks to bridge this dichotomy to offer a "fuller" understanding of the migration experiences of the research participants. In so doing, the thesis equally seeks to contribute to advancing understanding of family-related migration by addressing calls from migration scholars to provide "more elaborate accounts" of family-related migration (Smith, 2011, p. 663).

Having established the wider context and primary justifications for the study, the remainder of the chapter is organised around the three research objectives outlined in chapter 1, section 1.2. To begin, the following section examines human geographic approaches to migration, focusing on existing approaches to explain *why* people migrate, thus contributing to research objective 1.

2.3 Human geography and the study of migration

Human geographers are adept at theorising the movement of people across space and, as such, migration studies enjoy a long history within the discipline (Halfacree, 2004a; King, 2012). The aim of this section is to review the key conceptual approaches used to explain and understand why people migrate. This discussion seeks to provide a conceptual framework to contribute to research objective 1 of this study: to explore the

reasons behind the migration of a group of female Muslim family-related migrants. To begin, however, the section considers how the field of migration studies has evolved within human geography.

Within human geography, early scholarship on family migration drew upon human capital models of migration (Becker, 1962; Mincer, 1978). Such models emphasised higher wages and career development as reasons for migration decisions and practices. Theorised in such a way, migrants were seen as “passive dupes” responding to the “stimulus” of job prospects and earning potential (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993, p. 334). Indeed, the general premise was that people moved for economic betterment (Halfacree, 1995). This premise was based on long-standing theories within geography that migration is prompted by structural forces leading to uneven development and spatial inequality (King, 2012) and explained by “laws” of migration (Ravenstein, 1885; Lee, 1966).

Up until the early 1990s, these economic roots shaped the way in which migration scholars understood families, in particular female spouses. Female family migrants were conceptualised as “trailing wives”, who prioritised the husband’s career in the decision to migrate, thus sacrificing their own careers and aspirations (Bonney and Love, 1991; Boyle and Halfacree, 1999; Lee and Roseman, 1999; Lichter, 1983; Morrison and Lichter, 1988). Moreover, despite the recognition of the “wife’s sacrifice” in married couples’ migration (Bonney and Love, 1991, p. 335), geographers primarily continued to research migration until the mid-1990s from either the perspective of the individual or the household as a whole. In this sense, they treated the household as a “black box”, with little regard for the inner workings of the household, specifically gender relations (Silvey, 2004). Thus despite the “natural synergy” between human geography and the study of migration (King, 2012, p. 135), critics underscored the failure to account for human agency, consciousness and gender in geographical migration research (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993), prompting McHugh (2000, p. 72) to ask, “Where is the ‘human’ in human migration?”

This neglect of the “human” in migration reflects the epistemological and methodological approaches to the study of migration among population geographers in particular; positivism and quantitative research portray migration as an “unproblematic

objective phenomenon” (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993, p. 334). The lack of innovative methodology and the incorporation of social theory in population geography (Findlay and Graham, 1991; White and Jackson, 1995) sparked concerns that were complemented by the cultural turn in geography more broadly, which led to calls from migration scholars to recognise migration as “cultured events rich in meaning for individuals, families, social groups, communities and nations” (McHugh, 2000, p. 72; Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; Fielding, 1992).

King (2012, p. 142) refers to the subsequent “transition” from theorising migration as prompted by “economic and demographic responses to structural forces” to a focus on culture, gender and human agency in shaping migration processes. Drawing on both cultural and feminist geographic perspectives, in addition to a diverse range of methodologies, including life histories, autobiographies and ethnographies (for example, Findlay and Li, 1997; Halfacree, 2004a; Lawson, 2000; McHugh, 2000; Ní Laoire, 2008), this “cultural turn” in geographic migration studies is marked by a wave of qualitative research (King, 2012; Smith, 2004). However, according to Bailey (2005, p. 191) this shift in the study of migration is more a result of “contingency”, rather than “triggers and smoking guns that changed the field overnight.” In this way, the field of population geography is understood and appreciated for its dynamism and reflection of shifting societal issues (Bailey, 2005).

In keeping with Bailey’s (2005) assertions, the years following this cultural turn have been characterised by diverse theoretical approaches to understanding migration. In so doing, “research examined how acts, performances, institutions and discourses affected the relationship between populations and those with power and influence” (Bailey, 2005, p. 192). Population, social, cultural and feminist geographers have all contributed to a lively debate around the issue of migration (Silvey, 2013; for reviews see Bailey, 2005; King, 2012; Mahler and Pessar, 2006; Silvey, 2004, 2006). Consequently, the notion of the migrant as a rational economic actor has been destabilised (Smith and King, 2012). Indeed, noting the “great complexity” of migration in 2010, Castles (2010, p. 1537) states, “Economic factors are important, but hardly ever sufficient to understand any specific experience” and in the twenty-first century, “movements for purposes of study, professional advancement, marriage, retirement or lifestyle are assuming greater significance” (Castles, 2010, p. 1567). Such assertions have led some

scholars, particularly those concerned with the “mobilities paradigm” (see Cresswell, 2006; Sheller and Urry, 2006) to suggest that the increasingly fluid nature of borders in the twenty-first century renders the study of *migration* less relevant (Urry, 2007). However, as both Castles (2010) and King (2012) note, migration is both political and exclusionary, based on uneven access to economic, political and social rights, and wider power relations: who is able to migrate and under what conditions, thus remains a critical area of inquiry.

Examining how and why people migrate amid such diversity is a concern among geographers, however, who have proposed that this diversity poses a threat to theorising migration (Castles, 2010; King, 2012; Smith and King, 2012). King (2012) illustrates this by drawing attention to the different types of migration that have been studied by geographers (see table 2.1) and the dichotomies and binaries in human geographic research on migration (see table 2.2). King (2012) asserts that the invisible boundaries that exist in the study of migration prevent scholars from drawing on conceptual approaches from other “types” of migration to extend existing understandings. Thus, King (2012) maintains that classifications or categories of migrants “need to be problematized theoretically and blurred in practice” (2012, pp. 136-137).

Table 2.1 A typology of migration (King, 2012, p. 137)

Distance	Geographical
• intercontinental	• rural-urban
• international, within a continental region	• urban-rural
• internal, interregional	• rural-rural
• local	• inter-urban
Time	Timing/ sequencing
• permanent	• first-time migration
• temporary	• return migration
• circulation—seasonal or shuttle migration	• repeat migration
•	• chain migration
Stage in life cycle	• onward or serial migration
• baby/ young child	• transnationalism
• youth	Family / gender
• adult	• individual male
• elderly	• individual female
• corpse (where is the migrant buried?)	• household / family
	• group male
	• group female
	• mass migration / displacement

Table 2.2 Migration as a dichotomised field of study (King, 2012, p. 137)

Migration binaries	Epistemological dichotomies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • process versus product • internal versus international • voluntary versus forced • temporary versus permanent • legal versus “illegal” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • macro versus micro • structure versus agency • emic versus etic • theoretical versus empirical

Drawing on Graham’s (2000) calls for “overlapping layers of theory” in order to extend understandings of migration, Smith and King (2012, p. 130) suggest, “clearly, there is merit in debating and writing more frequently about migration *theories*, as opposed to migration *theory*” (emphases added). In keeping with this, the following section introduces and considers two conceptual approaches that will be used in this study of Muslim women’s migration: (1) internal migration and (2) subjectivity and migration. Conceptual approaches to internal migration have been specifically concerned with understanding why families migrate and thus lend themselves to this study of Muslim family-related migration in working to understand how the decision to migrate relates to the wider *family*. More recent conceptual insights related to migrants’ subjectivities submit that the “possibilities” of transforming the selfhood is an important motivator in the decision to migrate. This approach will provide a lens through which to explore the more *individual* aspects of Muslim women’s migration.

2.3.1 Internal family-related migration

Much of the work on family-related migration has focused on internal migration within the UK and Europe (Cooke, 2008; Kofman, 2004; Kraler *et al.*, 2011; Smith, 2011). Scholars concerned with internal (sometimes referred to as long-distance) family migration seek to understand how and why families migrate, *i.e.* the decision-making process and the differential impacts that migration has on the family members (Cooke, 2001). Drawing on qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods, scholars have disrupted long-standing assumptions that family migration concerns only the “nuclear” family unit and is instigated by the male earner, *i.e.* the husband or male partner, and is driven *only* by economic factors. They point out instead that a “wide variety of families, migrations and institutional contexts” characterise family migration (Bailey and Boyle, 2004, p. 238; Cooke, 2008; Halfacree, 2004a; Kofman, 2004; Smith, 2011).

A shift in focus to the “non-economic” determinants of family-related migration in recent years has stressed quality of life and amenities as important reasons for long-distance migration within the US and UK (Halfacree, 2004a; Cooke, 2008). Halfacree examines the way in which the decision to migrate expresses itself through the notion of social moorings: “a range of issues whereby a person gains meaning to his or her life” (Moon, 1995, p. 514 cited in Halfacree, 2004a, pp. 245-246). Halfacree (2004a) presents the results of his own study of rural-urban internal migration to illuminate this, see table 2.3.

Table 2.3. Employment vs. environmental reasons for long-distance urban-to-rural migration (Halfacree, 2004a, p. 245)

<i>Employment</i>	2%
<i>Environmental</i>	(82%)
Physical qualities	62%
Social qualities	28%
Privacy / fewer neighbours	15%
Leisure potential	15%
Familiarity issues	8%
<i>Housing</i>	77%
<i>Accessibility</i>	35%

Note: Percentages sum to over 100% due to multiple responses. Original source: Halfacree (1992)

Halfacree (2004a) outlines these social moorings to emphasise “the less immediately instrumentalist goals” of migration. Drawing on Gordon and Jones’s (1989) study with expatriate wives in Belgium, Halfacree brings to light the diverse motivations of female spouses in family migration, citing financial security, social and travel opportunities and a sense of adventure. Indeed, attention to the individual family members within the household has helped to illuminate that family-related migration is at times driven by the personal motivations and life histories of individual family members (Green, 1997; Hardill *et al.*, 1997). Facilitated by qualitative approaches, these studies have also illustrated the “diverse human agency of family migrants...highlight[ing] intra-family conflicts, strain and anxieties, negotiations and compromises” in family migration decision-making (Smith, 2004, p. 268). In turn, this has challenged dominant conceptions of the breadwinning husband as the “lead” migrant who instigates migration (Smith, 2004). Likewise, increasing recognition of the heterogeneity of family types, for example single-parent households and same-sex couples, also

challenges assumptions around who instigates family-related migration (Bailey and Boyle, 2004; Smith, 2011).

Another developing focus has been on the lifecourse and the relational nature of family-related migration. Scholars have discussed the important role of intergenerational family relationships and extended family in shaping family migration decision-making (Bailey, 2009; Cooke, 2008). Specifically, Michielin *et al.* (2008) bring to light the relationship between children and parents in shifting migration patterns; increasingly relevant to migration decision-making within families is the desire of children to live near aging parents or grandparents' desire to live near their grandchildren (see also Bailey, 2009; Mulder, 2007). Such scholarship points to both synchronization and contingency in shaping migrant decision-making, thus emphasizing the value of lifecourse approaches in providing in-depth insights into family-related migration (Bailey, 2009; Smith, 2011). In keeping with this, scholars increasingly consider other lifecourse events in shaping migration, for example, the timing of childbirth, which may motivate people to re-locate for financial or quality of life reasons (Bailey, 2009; Cooke, 2004; Smith, 2004). In a similar vein, children's education can be a driver of internal migration, with parent's playing the "postcode" lottery to gain access to good schooling for their children (Butler, 2003). Thus, the reproductive realm can be of equal or even greater concern than the productive realm, *i.e.* employment, in shaping family-related migration. However, as Smith (2004, p. 270) suggests, this also raises questions about parenting norms and "why different meanings of motherhood/fatherhood as well as different ideas about what it means to be a wife/husband/partner, are enmeshed with the decision to move."

As discussed in section 2.2, some policy and media discourses of Muslim immigration to the West depict Muslim women as "victims" in migration processes. The concepts and approaches to understanding internal migration outlined above provide a series of lenses through which to examine the reasons why a group of Muslim women migrated to Scotland. For instance, in illuminating the motivations and personal histories of individual family members in driving family-related migration, these insights may be helpful for examining the extent to which participants' prioritised their *own* goals in the decision to migrate. Furthermore, in what ways was their migration shaped by the desire to live closer to extended family? Or driven by educational benefits? How do "Muslim"

parenting practices and normative expectations of mothers and fathers influence the decision to migrate?

This section has outlined conceptual approaches in the internal migration literature that offer potential insights for this study of Muslim family-related migration to Scotland. The following section considers recent scholarship on the “felt” aspects of migration and the role of subjectivity and imagination in shaping migration, thus extending some of the most recent conceptual approaches to migration to this study of Muslim family-related migration.

2.3.2 Migration and subjectivity

Recent scholarship on migration studies the “complex forms of subjectivity and feeling that emerge through geographical mobility” (Conradson and McKay, 2007, p. 167; see also Silvey, 2013). Such scholarship underlines the relational nature of subject formation, implicating the discursive fields through which migrants’ subjectivities are formed (see Silvey, 2004; Conradson and McKay, 2007; Hopkins and Noble, 2009). It follows then, that scholars have worked to understand the ways in which migration, a major lifecourse event that disrupts everyday life, results in new forms of subjectivity (Conradson and Latham, 2007; Datta *et al.*, 2009; Ley and Tse, 2013; Silvey, 2005, 2013). Much of the research on migrant subjectivities focuses on shifting subject positions as an outcome of migration and this focus on migrant’s subjectivities *after* arriving in the host country seems, to some extent, to overlook migrants’ *anticipations* of how their sense of self will change through migration as a *driver* of migration.

However, recent scholarship has uncovered the possibility for new forms of selfhood as a *driver* of migration, illuminating *perceptions* of migration as providing an opportunity through which “the self can be worked upon” (Conradson and Latham, 2007, p. 232). Indeed, in their work with New Zealand skilled migrants in London, Conradson and Latham (2007, p. 234) suggest that among some migrants “the attractions and experience of relocation to London” and the possibilities for “resubjectification”, can be as important as employment or economic factors in influencing the decision to migrate. Thus, Conradson and Latham (2007, p. 235) argue that for these New Zealanders, migration is shaped by their perceptions of the “affective possibilities” of London,

meaning the possibility for “new modes of feeling and being. It is about the connection between mobility, enactment and the potential transformation of the self.”

In so doing, the authors draw on Fielding (1992, p. 205), who examines the possibilities of migration in terms of freedoms, including “freedom to present oneself as a different sort of person, freedom to become a different person.” However, caution is needed, because as Freeman (2005, p. 157) found in her study with Moroccan migrant women in France, the notion of freedom associated with autonomy and individualism is based on “Western liberal conceptions of subjectivity and freedom”. Instead, she declares that the Moroccan women in her study expressed a “notion of relational freedom and identity.” Likewise, Silvey (2007, p. 222) highlights the “long history of ethnographically informed disruptions of western dualisms about self/other, individual/community, and interiority/exteriority”.

Notwithstanding such concerns, insights from this body of work could help to illuminate some of the most intimate meanings and expectations that Muslim women attach to migration, which may be hidden by focusing only on the more pronounced reasons for migrating. However, in so doing, it is also important to consider the ways in which Muslim women’s *perceptions* of the possibilities for resubjectification through migration are dependent on their *imaginings* of life in Scotland. This raises the possibility of looking more closely at the *imaginative geographies* underpinning Muslim women’s migration to Scotland. Said’s (1978) seminal work, *Orientalism*, examines imaginative geographies as a product of discourses of power through which the West was positioned in opposition to the “Other”—the exotic “East”. In so doing, Said (1978) “illustrates the power of our ideas about other people and places” (Holloway and Valentine, 2000, p. 337). Examining migration through the lens of imaginative geographies can illuminate the ways in which migration is shaped by migrants’ perceptions of life and imagination of the destination country.

In a study with British migrants to rural France, Benson (2012) shows that an imagination of the rural idyll, in which neighbours are friendly and life is more relaxed, prompts this form of migration. Benson (2012, p. 1688) argues, therefore, that this migration is driven by the way rural France is “imagined to uniquely offer a particular way of life.” Likewise, recent attention to student mobility has also pointed out the

imaginative geographies that shape this form of transnational migration (Beech, 2014; Findlay *et al.*, 2012; Madge *et al.*, 2009). Indeed, the “choice” of a UK education emphasises the continued power of postcolonial discourses that position the UK education system as superior (Madge *et al.*, 2009). Beech (2014, p. 172) testifies that the British Council, which, she reminds, is in itself a postcolonial institution, uses promotional material such as DVDs to “market the UK” to students as “*the* place to receive a world-class education, alongside other opportunities for personal growth.” Beech’s (2014) emphasis on personal growth thus shows that the possibility to transform the self, or “to be someone different,” is a perception shaped by imaginative geographies.

Writing on Muslim women’s migration from Indonesia to Saudi Arabia for domestic work, Silvey (2005, 2007) examines the role of religious discourses in shaping Javanese domestic worker migration to Saudi Arabia. Specifically, Silvey (2007, p. 219) evaluates the “imagined geographies of gendered piety” that are deployed by recruitment agencies. These agencies draw on the idea of the *umma*, that is the global community of Muslims, to stress Saudi Arabia as a “safe” “Muslim” environment, where the women are unlikely to come into contact with *haram* (forbidden) things and that in this traditional Islamic state, men and women rarely meet. Furthermore, Silvey (2005, p. 141) observes that migration to Saudi Arabia offers these women the chance to pilgrimage to *Mecca*, one of the five pillars of Islam, and thus offers them “religious prestige” on return to Indonesia. Again then, it is possible to see how opportunities for feeling or being through migration are tied up with imaginative geographies and have an important influence on migration behaviours.

This section has sought to introduce some alternative conceptual approaches and insights for examining Muslim family-related migration. With this aim in mind, the focus has been less on the *family* and more on the *individual* reasons people migrate. In so doing, the section draws attention to recent conceptual approaches that emphasise the possibilities for resubjectification through migration as a *driver* of migration behaviour. Through this lens, it is possible to explore the extent to which the chance to be a different person, to feel differently, is a consideration for Muslim migrant women in “choosing” to migrate. Furthermore, the insights here enable a deeper exploration of the ways in which religious and gendered discourses work to shape Muslim women’s

imaginative geographies and thus their perceptions of the possibilities that migration offers for resubjectification.

2.3.3 Summary

This section has reviewed the human geographic scholarship on migration and in particular family-related migration. To begin, the section reviews the economic roots of migration theory and the conceptualisation of the migrant family as rational economic actors. The cultural and gendered turn in human geography has complicated this reading, bringing to light instead the diverse influences and factors that shape migration processes. However, such diversity concerns scholars who suggest that migration remains the preserve of the minority, not the majority, and thus who can migrate and under what circumstances remains a critical avenue of inquiry (Castles, 2010). Accordingly, the section reviews recent calls from geographers to “blur” and “transcend” conceptual boundaries in geographic migration research to advance understandings of migration (Smith and King, 2012, pp. 136-137). In keeping with these calls, the remainder of this section explores concepts and approaches from *internal* family-migration literature and more recent conceptual approaches to subjectivity and imaginative geographies in shaping migration. These have been evaluated as potential lenses through which to examine Muslim family-related migration, thus serving the dual purpose of extending existing understandings of family migration but also propelling Muslim family-related migration into the heart of the “mainstream” migration literature.

2.4 Muslim geographies

This section reviews the burgeoning literature on Muslims and Islam within human geography. Current debates are examined; in particular, contributions to understanding gender relations and religious geographies. In so doing, I seek to explore what is currently “known” about Muslim women and their experiences in the West. In addition, I highlight areas of the literature that require further research or clarification and suggest how my research will contribute to this body of work. Accordingly, this section is organised into three sections. To begin, I examine studies on gender relations in Muslim geographies. In the second section I outline a conceptual frame for exploring the lived realities of Muslim migrants in Scotland, thus addressing research questions 3 and 4.

Following this, I explore existing scholarship on religious geographies and migration, which provides a conceptual frame for research question 5.

2.4.1 Gender relations

Until as recently as the turn of the century, scholarship on Muslim men and women in the UK focused almost exclusively on “cultural conflict” within South Asian Muslim families, emphasising patriarchal family practices as the root cause of the socio-economic exclusion of young Muslim women in the UK (Dwyer, 1999, p. 7). This discourse characterised Muslim men, in particular, as controlling and oppressive and thus their masculinities were stigmatized (Hopkins, 2006). As Silvey (2005, p. 129) remarks, “Western scholarship on women and Islam has tended to depict Muslim women...as either victims of an oppressive culture...or as behind the scenes but truly powerful agents.” In the last fifteen years, however, scholars have worked to disrupt essentialist readings of Muslim men and women, drawing on feminist approaches to examine the gendered ways in which Muslim men’s and women’s identities are constructed (Hopkins, 2009c; see also Ahmad and Sardar, 2012; Aitchison *et al.*, 2007; Falah and Nagel, 2005; Hopkins and Gale, 2009). Such approaches account for the relational nature of gender identity, socially constructed around biological sex and reinforced by performance *i.e.* repetition (Butler, 1990; see also Hopkins and Noble, 2009). According to this feminist approach to gender, scholars of Muslim geographies have examined the ways in which Muslim gender identities change in different contexts or at different times. This body of work may provide useful insights to this study, which seeks to understand how Muslim women experience everyday post-migration life and, more specifically, the impact of migration on gender relations, as outlined in section 1.2 in chapter 2.

Research shows the importance of transnational social ties in shaping the gender identities of Muslim women (Kong, 2009). For instance, both Dwyer (1999, 2000) and Freeman (2005) find that Muslim women are expected to behave according to normative expectations and practices in the home country, whilst also managing competing societal expectations of “Western women”. Similarly, Mohammad (2005) suggests that transnational social ties between Pakistan and the South Asian diaspora in England lead to more conservative expectations of women’s behaviour. Mohammad (2005) asserts that such expectations result in a series of temporal and spatial constraints

on young British-Pakistani women. For some Muslim women, such transnational forces are particularly powerful in the homespace. For example, Dwyer (1999) points out intergenerational conflict between migrant mothers/fathers and their British-born daughters, which results in competing gendered expectations of young women. In response to these gendered expectations, Dwyer (2000) discusses young Muslim women's resistance to gendered ethno-cultural constraints on their life choices by drawing on more modest forms of veiling³ and the teachings of the Qur'an (Dwyer, 1999, 2000). Thus Dwyer brings to light the ways in which young Muslim women construct their gendered (and religious) identities to resist exertions of power in the home (Dwyer, 1999, 2000; see also Ehrkamp, 2013).

Scholars also demonstrate the relationship between the changing economic climate and gender identities. For example, Dwyer (2000) found that high unemployment as a result of economic restructuring in the north of England meant that the only available jobs were those conceived as "feminine" or "soft skill," for example secretaries or childcare. This meant some British-Pakistani women *had* to take such jobs in order to provide for the family. More recently, Dwyer and Shah (2009) provide evidence that young Muslim women's access to higher education and employment results in more egalitarian gender relations in the home for some women. These points raise important areas for further investigation, particularly as migration has been shown to lead to un(der)employment for female spouses, as evidenced in section 2.3. This will be discussed further in section 2.4.2.

On the subject of home, the Muslim homespace is an important site for the construction, negotiation and contestation of gender identities. Yet, only recently has attention been afforded to this intimate space within the literature on Muslim geographies (Datta, 2009; Hopkins, 2009a; Phillips, 2009). Within human geography there is a significant body of work that discusses notions of home and belonging, particularly as it relates to migrants. Ralph and Staeheli (2011, p. 522) provide a helpful review of this literature and conceptualise the home as both mobile and sedentary: migrants' transnational social ties lend to the notion of a home that stretches across national borders, yet

³ Following Secor (2002), this thesis refers to any form of female religious dress as veiling. Veiling is a diverse practice and highly contextual (see Secor, 2002). See glossary on page 5.

simultaneously migrants seek a grounded home for a more “stable sense of self”. In working to examine the lived realities of Muslim migrant women, this thesis acknowledges this conceptualisation of home as both mobile and sedentary (bounded) but is concerned specifically with how life is played out in the ‘bounded’ home in the new country, i.e. Scotland. To this end, this study focuses on the way in which gender relations are negotiated in this bounded homespace and how living arrangements and the location of the fixed home in relation to “ordinary” daily activities shape life for Muslim migrant women.

For a long time the Muslim homespace was largely understood as a “private”, “female” space and frequently a site and source of gender inequality (Ali, 2013; Mohammad, 2005). Such assertions find their basis in understandings of “Muslim gender roles” of the female “mother/nurturer” and the male “breadwinner”, thus illuminating the relationship between gender and religion (Dwyer and Shah, 2009, Nagel, 2005). Specifically in the UK, Muslim women’s high levels of economic inactivity, reported in census data, have been attributed to their roles as caregivers to both children and the older generation and their responsibility for housework (Bowlby and Lloyd-Evans, 2009; Moosa and Woodroffe, 2009). Indeed, this domestic division of labour is understood to place not only temporal but spatial constraints on young British-Pakistani Muslim women in particular, which restricts them from accessing higher education and employment (Mohammad, 2005).

However, recent insights submit that not all Muslim women necessarily contest these gender roles. For instance, research shows that that some Muslim men and women draw on religious discourses to emphasise these gender divisions in Muslim homespaces as “natural and desirable” (Nagel, 2005, p. 3; Dwyer and Shah, 2009). Furthermore, this emphasis on gender inequality in the home fails to consider the personal “choice” to parent, and the negotiations between husbands and wives around issues of parenthood. As Hopkins (2009a) asserts, the over-emphasis on young people in Muslim geographies has resulted in the neglect of Muslims of other ages, and less is known about shifting family relations at various points in the lifecourse, for example, becoming a mother or father. Arguably then, engaging in research with Muslim women of other ages and exploring issues of parenthood in the context of migration may allow further insights

into “choices” around parenting, motherhood and divisions of labour in Muslim homespaces.

Equally, however, Muslim women’s exclusion from “public” spaces, specifically employment and education, has been shown to result from wider racialised and gendered discourses in society. For example, Bowlby and Lloyd-Evans (2009) discuss the “Islamic penalty” faced by Muslims trying to enter the workforce, referring to employers’ dislike of the *headscarf* and the requirement to pray five times a day. Dwyer (2000) found that one young British-Pakistani Muslim woman was declined admittance to study medicine at university because recruiters believed she would drop out from the course because of cultural expectations that she marry and have children. It is easy to see, therefore, how these gendered and racialised discourses *push* women into the private homespace as a site of refuge. This is in keeping with feminist scholars, who criticise Eurocentric readings of “private” spaces as spaces of female subordination, underscoring instead the importance of the home as a site of refuge from wider racialised discourses, particularly for Black and ethnic minority women (Silvey, 2006). However, this does not only relate to women, as Hopkins and Smith (2008) found that anti-Muslim narratives following the events of September 11, 2001, prompted young Muslim men to spend more time in the private space of the home, seeing it as a space of refuge that would limit the potential for conflict or harassment outside of the home. This not only undermines the notion of the home as an inherently “female” space, but also underscores the way in which the formation of gender identities in the home articulates with broader political, racialised and gendered discourses.

Of further relevance to this study is recent research that examines the way in which gender relations and constructions of the Muslim home shift through a change in living arrangements. Specifically, Phillips (2009) shows that moving out from the maternal or paternal home and into a new home space after marriage challenges normative constructions of both men’s and women’s roles. However, Phillips (2009) notes the ways in which cultural norms around marriage and motherhood also work to reproduce gendered discourses of home, thus drawing attention to the contradictions within Muslim homespaces. Migration to Scotland inevitably implies a change in living arrangements for Muslim women in family-related migration. How then, does this

change in living arrangements affect gender relations and everyday life for these women? This is worthy of examination in this study.

There are also important questions that arise from a consideration of Muslim homespaces in relation to the proximity of the home to extended family and friends. Datta (2009) deliberates the loss of social networks and familiarity experienced by some Bangladeshi families in London, as they moved away from existing family and friends. In a similar vein, some scholars note the personal geographies of young Muslim women. For instance Mohammad (2013) and Phillips (2009) posit young Muslim married couples moving into a new homespace preferred to move within close proximity to their mothers so that they may still get help with childcare and their domestic roles. However, the focus on residential clustering and the South Asian diaspora in British scholarship has tended to overlook those families who do not live near existing family members (but see Marranci, 2007; Mir, 2007). What then, is the experience of migration for Muslim women who migrate to Scotland alone with their husbands or children and do not have existing family or friends in the city? Bereft of kin and friends, how does migration shift life in the home for these families?

This section has discussed the focus on gender identities within the burgeoning scholarship on Muslim geographies with a particular emphasis on how gender identities are constructed within the home in relation to lifecourse events such as parenting, but also the wider political, cultural and economic context. However, this literature raises a series of questions about how *migrant* women experience life in the home and supports Hopkins (2009a, pp. 217-218) who maintains, “A focus on Muslim homespaces and the construction and contestation of gendered identities remains an important topic for future research.” Indeed, the dominant focus (in British-based scholarship) on Muslim young adults has marginalised Muslims of other ages (Hopkins, 2009a). These young adults tend to be the children or grandchildren of migrants (the second or third generation), and thus are not necessarily *migrants* themselves (but see Marranci, 2007). As such, there is considerably less “known” about the ways in which the lived experience of *migration* results in the *reworking* of gender relations in Muslim families. This is problematic, as section 2.2 draws attention to policy and media discourses that position Muslim migrant women as the “main importers of ‘backwards’ practices” (Kofman *et al.*, 2013, p. 1).

This thesis thus aims to redress this balance by examining the lived realities of Muslim married women who are *migrants* and who are neither “young” nor “old” but ranging in age from late twenties to early forties. In the following section I introduce and put forward insights from geographies of gender and migration as a conceptual frame for exploring the effect of migration on these women’s lives, addressing research objective 2.

2.4.2 Geographies of gender and migration

In this section, I present a conceptual frame for examining Muslim women’s lived realities in Scotland based on insights from gendered geographies of migration and more specifically, feminist geographic research on migration. I argue that engaging with this body of migration scholarship can help to advance our understanding of the effect of migration on Muslim women’s lived realities in Scotland and life in the Muslim homespace.

Feminist geographers have made important contributions to understanding the power relations that shape the gendered experiences of migrants, exploring the role of the state and the production of borders, life in the household and migrant identities (for reviews see Silvey, 2004, 2006; Willis and Yeoh, 2000). Likewise, research on gender and migration has proliferated in population geography since the cultural turn (King, 2012). Scholars have discussed the effects of migration on family migrants, concerned specifically with women’s exclusion from the labour market (for reviews see Boyle and Halfacree, 1999; Kofman *et al.*, 2000; Willis and Yeoh, 2000). Both bodies of work highlight that gender relations are reworked through migration (Silvey, 2004). In terms of thinking about the gendered experiences of migrants, insights from both of these conceptual approaches may help to gain a deeper insight into Muslim women’s lived realities in Scotland.

Much of the work in feminist geographies of migration has focused on the household scale, challenging conventional approaches to migration that largely overlooked the inner workings of the household in migration decision-making, as discussed in section 2.3 (Lawson, 1998; Silvey, 2004, 2006; Willis and Yeoh, 2000). Scholars have examined the ways in which migration plays out in this space and the costs and benefits

of migration to individual family members (Silvey, 2006; Willis and Yeoh, 2000). Feminists argue that there is nothing “ontologically given” about the household (Smith, 1992, p. 73), and that migration has a significant effect on the meanings given to this space and the gender relations that are constructed within it (Silvey, 2006). Taking these perspectives into account may afford insight into the effect of migration on life in Muslim households in this study.

Some of the earliest insights into women’s labour-related migration emphasised migration as an opportunity for new political identities. For a long time scholars understood such migration to provide female migrants with emancipation from patriarchal cultures (Lawson, 2000; Silvey, 2003, 2006). Studies have shown that migration can be empowering to women as they move away from patriarchal, traditional families (Hugo, 2002; Tacoli, 1999). Similarly, studies have shown that women who are “left-behind” experience “inversions of the traditional gender division of labour and male privilege”, although this can place additional strains on women (Pratt and Yeoh, 2003, p. 161). However, Walton-Roberts (2004, p. 371) argues, “Transnational practices are not always celebratory demonstrations of immigrant agency, but can also act as a mode of transmission for the expansion and perpetuation (although often refashioned) of traditional gendered hierarchies.”

Indeed, much of this work celebrates migration as emancipating and empowering by enabling women to participate in “public” life, primarily referring to wage earning through employment (Pessar, 1986). Yet there is a need for caution here, as such readings draw on women’s participation in the “public” realm, in this case paid work, as indicative of their empowerment and liberation from patriarchal structures. This assumes a rather blunt reading of patriarchy as men wielding power over women in the “private” realm and fails to consider women’s roles in the reproduction of patriarchal practices and gendered discourses of home. Migration scholars Pratt and Yeoh (2003, p. 161) recognise this and remark, “Patriarchal relations return in different guises in different times and places.” In a similar vein, some feminist scholars have drawn attention to the racist and colonial perceptions of early feminist research that equated women’s liberation and power with their actions in the “public” realm (Silvey, 2006, p. 69).

Feminists have also considered the transnational scale, examining the ways in which gender relations are shaped across national borders through time and space. Specifically, scholars have turned their gaze to transnational care networks, working to understand the ways in which female labour migrants practice mothering from afar, coining the phrase “transnational mothering” (Peng and Wong, 2013). In so doing, research has highlighted the advancements in information communication technologies (ICT) in enabling disjointed families to keep in touch (Parreñas, 2005). This body of work discusses the reordering of gender relations in the home, as the husbands “left-behind” have to take on more “feminine” obligations in caring for children (Hoang and Yeoh, 2011). As Boyle (2002, pp. 534-535) notes, “transnational migration itself impacts upon gender relations and, more specifically, the social reproduction of gender in transnational spaces.” Such insights thus provide a profound example of the ways in which masculinities and femininities are constructed in relation to one another (Hopkins, 2009c) and give salience to the performative nature of gender (Butler, 1990).

Despite this growing interest in mothering as a result of transnational family life, a striking absence remains of studies of motherhood among “tied” family migrants (Cooke, 2001). Consequently, the subjective experiences of female family migrants who migrate *with* their children, or become mothers shortly after migration, have been relatively neglected. This raises important questions concerning how being a migrant *and* a mother *and* a Muslim woman can shape the lived experiences of migration for Muslim women. Is there anything necessarily unique about motherhood or parenting for Muslim women or migrant women that their non-Muslim British counterparts do not equally face in daily life in Scotland? Here, research on gendered “tied” migration may be useful in illuminating the impact of migration on women.

The geographical scholarship on gendered “tied” migration offers a number of potential themes for exploring Muslim migrant women’s lived realities, specifically in relation to life in the home and access to paid work. This body of work has largely focused on internal and “developed World” family-led migration and has primarily examined the labour market outcomes of migration for married women (for reviews see Boyle and Halfacree, 1999; Bailey and Boyle, 2004). What emerges from this literature is the conclusion that married or partnered women endure prolonged periods of

unemployment or economic inactivity following long-distance migration (Boyle, *et al.*, 1999, 2001; Boyle and Feng, 2009; Halfacree, 1995; Morrison and Lichter, 1988).

Within this body of work, scholars have predominantly drawn on quantitative methods and in doing so have raised some important avenues for further enquiry. Specifically, such approaches demonstrate that the timing of migration is important as it occurs with other events in the lifecourse, for example marriage, pregnancy, childbirth or retirement (Bailey, 2009; Cooke, 2008; Withers and Clark, 2006). For instance, Cooke's (2001) quantitative research finds that female family migrants with children endure longer periods of labour market exclusion than their childless counterparts. Cooke thus advocates greater attention to life course events such as pregnancy and childbirth in family migration research, arguing that the term "trailing mother" may be more apt than "trailing wife" in explaining the post-migration employment outcomes on married couples. Furthermore, whilst Cooke's quantitative research has revealed an important trend, accounting for women's agency in *choosing* not to work, but to stay at home and raise their children, requires deeper exploration and research.

Scholars of gendered "tied" migration share a concern with feminist geographers about the role of the state in shaping gendered experiences of migration. Feminist geographers have shown that national borders and mode of entry have significant implications for everyday life. For instance, research documents the patriarchal role of the state in creating migrant "dependency" on their "sponsors" in family-related migration (Merali, 2008; Raghuram, 2004). Ineligible for welfare services such as healthcare, job seeking support or housing benefits, migrants are largely dependent on their family-member – their "sponsor" – to meet their basic human needs (Ruffer, 2011). Studies suggest that this places new migrants in a precarious position, highlighting the withdrawal of migrants from everyday life in the host society and in extreme cases, instances of spousal abuse (Merali, 2008; Raghuram, 2004). Research has also emphasised "brain drain" – skills and qualifications lost in migration because they are not recognised by professional bodies in the UK – resulting in unemployment or under-employment of migrants to the UK (Kofman, 2000).

In a similar vein, Halfacree (1995) discusses the patriarchal structuring of society that results in female migrant spouses being excluded from the labour market. He suggests

employers inherently see migrant spouses as lacking commitment to work. Thus, migrant women who migrate with their families tend to work in jobs requiring fewer “professional” skills and characterised by lower wages and unsociable working hours. Halfacree also notes difficulties in accessing affordable childcare in terms of both the cost and location in relation to job opportunities, highlighting the uneven geographies that structure access to employment, not only for migrant women, but also for all women with caring responsibilities. Others have noted that moving away from extended family results in the loss of intergenerational care (for example grandparents looking after grandchildren) and thus the expense of childcare forces women to compromise their career to look after their children (Bailey *et al.*, 2004).

The previous section examines the literature to understand how Muslim women’s lived realities are currently conceptualised and explores, in particular, the way in which gender identities are constructed and contested in different contexts. However, I suggested that the emphasis on young Muslim women and also British-born Muslims has resulted in less of an explicit focus on migrants. Furthermore, I suggested (following Hopkins, 2009a) that more could be done to examine life in the home and the way in which gender relations are constructed in this private space. To this end, I have presented and discussed insights from the literature on gendered geographies of migration in this section. These concepts will be used as a lens to examine research questions 3 and 4. The following section, 2.4.3, explores the literature on religious identities, thus feeding into research question 5.

2.4.3 Religious identities

Section 2.4 reported Dwyer’s (1999) findings that young British-Pakistani Muslim women draw on the Qur’an and more modest Islamic dress to resist the restrictive ethno-cultural practices of their parents. Yet despite Dwyer’s important observations, the emphasis on gender relations in the literature on Muslim geographies has resulted in less attention to the formation of religious identities (Hopkins, 2009c). This is beginning to change however, and scholars have recently focused on religious identity, largely in response to the growing literature on geographies of religion (for reviews see Gale, 2007; Kong, 2001, 2010; Olson *et al.*, 2013). In so doing, scholars have highlighted, as with gender, the formation of religious identities in relation to the local, national and transnational context (Olson *et al.*, 2013).

Much of the scholarship on religious identity is discussed in relation to gender and concerns Muslim women's veiling practices. Research shows that some Muslim women have responded to global events and increasing hostility towards Muslims and Islam by choosing to veil, that is to wear some form of religious dress, stressing the importance of the body as a site of Islamic identity (Ehrkamp, 2013; Ryan and Vacchelli, 2013a; Secor, 2002). In so doing, some Muslim women have drawn on a "discourse of choice" to challenge assumptions of veiling as indicative of their failed integration in the West and as evidence of their "subordination" in Muslim culture (Lewis, 2009, pp. 69-70). Seen in this way, veiling can be understood as a "clothed performance" (Lewis, 2009, p. 70), undertaken in response to racialised and gendered discourses.

Secor (2002) specifically refers to the importance of local and national forces in shaping women's choice to veil in Turkey. Secor (2002) discusses the way that, despite legislation prohibiting veiling in public spaces, some of her research participants chose to wear an adaptation of the veil to prevent being harassed in the street. Ehrkamp (2007) draws attention to *neighbourhood* surveillance that shapes the veiling practices of Muslim women, which are in turn influenced by *transnational* social ties. Specifically, Ehrkamp (2007) shows that the conservative interpretation of Islam among older generations of Muslim migrant women, Sunni Muslim communities, and migrants from rural communities in Turkey meant that some women felt they had to veil in public spaces. The literature here thus points to the multiple meanings attached to veiling and the historical, social and geographical specificity of the "act" of veiling (Lewis, 2009, p. 70; Secor, 2002; Dwyer, 1999, 2000). Furthermore, it demonstrates the importance of local social relations in shaping religious identities. This underlines the important social-spatial dynamics of veiling and thus raises questions for this study around the shifting practice of veiling before and after migration. However, in focusing on the way in which Muslim women veil in response to wider social processes and relations, it is important not to overlook their subjective experiences of veiling, *i.e.* what veiling means to them personally and, more pertinently in this study, how this changes through migration.

With particular relevance to the experience of migration, studies have shown that some migrants prioritise their Islamic identity over ethnic or national identity because it

provides “solace, certainty and reassurance in negotiating a new and unfamiliar environment” (Ryan and Vacchelli, 2013a, p. 97). Here, the notion of a transnational Islamic identity, the *umma*, provides Muslims with a “religious community transcending more localised forms of belonging” (Gale, 2007, p. 1019). Thus scholars acknowledge the importance of the *umma* in the everyday lives of migrants who are both uprooted from “home” and also face religious intolerance as a result of wider global events such as the terrorist attacks in the US, UK and Spain and the US-led “war on terror” (Ehrkamp, 2007; Aitchison *et al.*, 2007).

In addition to the importance of a transnational Islamic identity in migrants lives, studies suggest that “lived religion” shapes daily life for those with religious beliefs (Orsi, 2003; Sheringham, 2010). “Lived religion” refers to the extension of religion beyond the sacred realm and into people’s everyday lives. Insights from the migration literature illuminate the notion that, particularly in the context of migration, religion can help people to negotiate life in the host country. For example, in researching Turkish Muslim migrants to Germany, Ehrkamp (2007) found that sending children to the *madrasah* (Islamic education centre) and thus emphasising the centrality of Islam in their lives, was a strategy migrant parents used to forge a sense of belonging in their host community. Ryan and Vacchelli (2013a) examine the impact of migration on mothering practices among religiously conservative Muslim women in London. Using sociological theory, the authors show how Muslim women use Islam as a frame of reference, in other words as a guidebook for motherhood in the otherwise unfamiliar environment that they face as migrants in London. In a similar vein, Levitt (2003) considers the use of Islam and Christianity as a “moral compass” for new migrants to the UK and US. In addition, Levitt (2003) suggests that migrants draw on theological tenets to emphasise their exemplary conduct in their new communities and thus their worthiness as citizens. This reference to theology by Levitt’s (2003) research participants resonate with Ley and Tse (2013, p. 162) who caution “Spiritual experience cannot be adequately reduced to social facts” revealing the need to go beyond the material outcomes of faith to examine more spiritual aspects of faith in the everyday lives of migrants.

Research has highlighted the relationship between spirituality and migration; for instance, Silvey (2005, 2007) found that migrant women drew on their Islamic faith for

spiritual strength to cope with the hardships of post-migration life in Saudi Arabia, a faith that brought them closer in their relationship with *Allah*. However, despite Silvey's important insights, the relationship between spirituality and migration is underexplored (Ley and Tse, 2013). Ley and Tse thus call for further research to illuminate the deeper spiritual meanings of religion that arise through migration. In keeping with this, in their study of the Christian evangelical church in Europe, Ley and Tse (2013, p. 163) state: "In the liminal experience of immigrant dispossession, conditions exist for an estrangement from worldly habits and desires and an efflorescence of religious practice." Similarly, scholars have emphasised the need to more closely examine the ways in which religion incites diverse emotions in people. In particular, Hopkins (2009c, p. 12) suggests the need to attend to "the ways in which religion provides people with a sense of comfort, purpose and fulfilment during their everyday lives."

Drawing on such insights, what can this study reveal about the way in which Muslim women's religious identities are shaped through the experience of migration? How important is faith and spirituality in helping Muslim women to negotiate everyday life in Scotland and to what extent do women embody their religion as a way to cope with the difficulties of migration? These are just some of the questions that this thesis will seek to examine through an analysis of Muslim women's experiences of migration to Scotland. Extending this discussion of the role of religion in Muslim women migration experiences, the following section examines the role of both non-secular and secular institutions in shaping Muslim women's everyday lives in the host country.

2.5 The role of institutions in shaping migrants' everyday lives

This penultimate section moves away from the more intimate geographies of home and religion to examine the literature on the role of institutions in shaping Muslim migrants' everyday lives, thus contributing to research objective 3. The word institution here refers to both non-secular and secular spaces, including but not limited to mosques, Islamic schools, secular schools and community organisations. In evaluating this literature, this section contributes to the third and final research objective of this study: to examine the role of a community-based organisation in shaping Muslim migrant women's everyday lives. The first section, 2.5.1, is organised around the themes related to institutions in the literature on Muslim geographies. Following this, section 2.5.2 examines the emerging literature in geography on third sector organisations. These two

bodies of literature have developed separately to date and thus the ensuing discussion seeks to bridge the two bodies of work.

2.5.1 Muslim spaces

The surge in scholarship on Muslim geographies outlined in section 2.2 has extended to the study of Muslim spaces, including both secular and non-secular institutions and informal communal places of socialisation and worship (Aitchison *et al.*, 2007; Ehrkamp, 2007; Gale, 2007). Gale (2007) stresses the focus on non-secular spaces within the literature, for example mosques and Islamic education centres (*madrasahs*) along with Muslim bookstores and *halal* butchers in organising Muslim social life. Ehrkamp's (2013) research with Turkish migrants in Germany underscores the importance of communal places in the form of Muslim men's access to local teahouses. Others have examined both secular and Islamic schools and further education colleges (Dwyer, 1999, 2000; Dwyer and Meyer, 1996; Kong, 2005; Mohammad, 2005, 2013). Evidently then, both secular and non-secular institutions and communal places are important in shaping the everyday lives of Muslims.

Community-based organisations have been noted as important spaces for Muslim women in particular. For example, Green and Singleton (2007) underscore the importance of Muslim community centres in providing access to leisure opportunities for British Muslim women. In Hopkins' (2006) study with Muslim young men in Scotland, research participants commented on the plethora of community-based services catering to Muslim women. Further, Ehrkamp (2013, p. 24) refers to "neighbourhood institutions" where Muslim migrant women access both leisure and educational opportunities. Despite such observations, the literature has given little attention to community-based organisations and the support that they offer Muslim women. This leaves unanswered questions about the role of these organisations in shaping Muslim migrant women's everyday lives. How are community-based organisations run and what services do they offer? Are they secular or non-secular and does this distinction matter? This study will seek to answer these important questions in chapter 6. The following sections explore what is currently "known" about the institutions and communal places that shape the everyday lives of Muslims in the global North.

The mosque is recognised as a pillar of community belonging and a critical site not only for religious practice but also for the formation of migrants' religious identities (Ehrkamp, 2007). Ehrkamp (2007) stresses the centrality of the mosque in migrants' social lives, as it functions not only as a space of worship but also provides Qur'an instruction and leisure activities. However, she notes women's access to the mosque is largely restricted to the back rooms, out of sight from men. In this way, worship and socialising within the mosque preserves the traditional gendered social order of Muslim communities, which separate male and female spaces (Lewis, 2009). This resonates with Ali (2013) who finds that the mosque can be an exclusionary space.

Indeed, Muslim women's access to certain spaces depends principally on the nature of the space and the religious or cultural appropriateness of the organised activity within the space. For instance, Green and Singleton (2007) highlight that "mainstream" leisure activities tend to involve activities in which both men and women participate, compromising Muslim practices regarding modesty, for example swimming or fitness classes. As a result, some Muslim women are unable to access these opportunities for leisure. Similarly, Mohammad (2005) found that young British-Pakistani Muslim women most frequently take college courses related to "feminine" subjects, such as childcare, explained at least in part by the cultural appropriateness of such subjects. Equally, the provision of an onsite crèche at the local college ensured higher attendance among young Muslim women, who were more likely to have young children than other women their age (Mohammad, 2013). Evidently then, institutions providing social and educational services to Muslim women have to account for these religious and cultural considerations.

The appropriateness of services for Muslim women can also relate to the timing, for instance whether services are run during the day or in the evening. Evening-based activities are difficult for those women whose families prefer them not to be out in public at night time for either safety or propriety's sake (Green and Singleton, 2007; Mohammad, 2005). Also, the location of the activity is important. Getting to and from places can be subject to community-based surveillance. Green and Singleton (2007) examine young British-Pakistani women who are unable to take taxis because this compromises the expectation that women will not spend time with non-male relatives. Mohammad (2005, 2013) goes on to deliberate the temporal and spatial

constraints that restrict women's spatialities to appropriate spaces. Green and Singleton (2007) thus question whether the notion of an appropriate space implies the "enforced" nature of such spaces. These important considerations should be investigated further in analysing the role of community-based organisations in Muslim migrant women's lives.

Some institutions—schools, further education colleges and universities—are deemed "safe" because they are perceived as largely free from community-based surveillance and other cultural constraints on Muslim women's lives. For example, Dwyer (1999, 2000) finds that British-Pakistani Muslim schoolgirls use school as a third-space to experiment with "Western" styles of clothing or "hybrid" dress that incorporate both their religious or cultural dress and "Western" clothes. Likewise Dwyer (1999) draws attention to the girls' toilets in schools as an important site where young Muslim women can experiment with makeup or different ways of wearing their headscarves. Such spaces are thus understood as spaces of resistance to restrictive patriarchal practices and spaces in which young women can "experiment with alternative (and gendered) subjectivities" (Dwyer, 2000, p. 21). Speaking similarly to the notion of alternative subjectivities, Green and Singleton (2007, pp. 109-121) consider the way in which Muslim community centres allow Muslim women the chance to "be" or "become". These centres offer a "safe" or "appropriate" place for women to gather to learn, to socialize, and to advance a career, whilst also allowing them freedom from social constraints placed upon them in more "public" spaces. This stresses the importance of institutions as places for subject formation. However, this also raises questions about the role of *secular* community-based organisations in this capacity. Are such organisations deemed "safe" spaces in terms of both cultural and religious appropriateness or because they are free from surveillance?

The question also arises whether non-secular spaces foster a stronger sense of identity and subsequent "openness" to British culture, or whether multiculturalism through the provision of secular services is preferable (Dwyer and Meyer, 1996). Mills (2009) demonstrates the importance of mixed cultural institutions in her work with Muslims in Welsh Scout groups, underlining that (self) segregating behaviour can be over-emphasised in examinations around Muslims in the West. But Sardar (2009) suggests ethnic and religious groups have the right to have a space of their own. This discussion is relevant to this study as it raises questions as to the whether secular community-based

organisations reproduce marginalisation and “difference” or foster integration through multiculturalism (Sardar, 2009). This question also concerns the role of institutions that make up migrant civil society, which is the focus of section of 2.5.2 below.

This evaluation of the institutions that shape Muslim women’s lives calls attention to the division between masculine/public and feminine/private spaces, which shape the personal geographies of Muslim men, women and youth. The separation between men and women is a key tenet of Muslim social order (Lewis, 2009; Mohammad, 2013). Certain spaces are deemed inaccessible to Muslim women because of the expected division between men and women, and this social order is often preserved through community-based surveillance by either male kin or the older generation of women behind the “curtains”, particularly in South Asian Muslim communities (Ehrkamp, 2013, p 24; Dwyer, 2000; Mohammad, 2005). However, Mohammad (2013) highlights the permeable nature of the boundaries between public and private spaces, suggesting that they are being constantly reworked. Furthermore, in emphasising this public/private dichotomy in Muslim spatialities, the danger exists of over-emphasising patriarchy and the dominance of Muslim men. It is thus important to recognise that some women actively seek to reproduce this gendered social order, which is in keeping with both their religious beliefs and desire to maintain normative social practices (Freeman, 2005). This exposes not only the impermanence of public/private dichotomies but also the importance of attending to women’s subjective experiences of space and place.

This section has focused primarily on the literature that discusses why Muslim women are able to access certain spaces that are deemed “safe” in some form, be it religious, cultural or free from surveillance. However, as noted in the introduction to this section, 2.5, there is less known about secular spaces and the services and programmes they offer and their institutional frameworks. Conversely, in the context of welfare state restructuring, human geographers have examined the institutional frameworks and service delivery of third sector organisations in supporting marginalised social groups into work and providing welfare support in lieu of the state. The following section examines the potential of this body of work to augment understandings of the role of community-based organisations in working with Muslim migrant women.

2.5.2 Third sector organisations

Third sector organisations, which include non-profit or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith based organisations (FBOs), community, voluntary and grassroots groups, have had an increasingly important role in the provision of social and welfare services to vulnerable social groups in recent years of welfare state restructuring in both the US and UK (Martin, 2010). In particular, scholars concerned with the role of third sector organisations in supporting migrants have uncovered ambiguities and contradictions in service provision (Joassart-Marcelli, 2012; Martin, 2010; Theodore and Martin, 2007; Trudeau and Veronis, 2009). Such findings have resulted in calls for further research (Trudeau and Veronis, 2009) and were the subject of a paper session at the 2013 Association of American Geographers' (AAG) Annual Meeting, titled "Migrant civil society: shaping economic integration, citizenship and community" organised by Joassart-Marcelli. Through a discussion of this growing body of work, this section aims to provide an alternative conceptual lens through which to explore the role of a community-based organisation in shaping Muslim migrant women's everyday lives in Scotland.

Migrant civil society organisations form part of what is known as the third sector in the UK. The role of third sector organisations in supporting marginalised community groups has been of growing interest in geographic scholarship amid ongoing welfare state restructuring in the UK by both the New Labour government from 1997 until 2010 and the Conservative-Liberal Coalition government since 2010 until now (Fyfe, 2005; Larner, 2005; Peck and Tickell, 2002). The importance of third sector organisations in this policy context was emphasised in the late 1990s as a result of New Labour's "Third Way" (Giddens, 1998). The Third Way "repositioned" the third sector between the "market and state" as a vehicle for social cohesion and economic development (Fyfe, 2005, p. 537). Indeed, that the third sector should take such a role was a necessary result of neoliberal policy approaches throughout the 1990s that privileged a workfare approach to welfare state restructuring (Beaumont, 2008; Dean, 2007; Fyfe, 2005). Workfare is the expression used to describe the shift from the welfare state era to one in which pushing people into work is the only goal and human flourishing is marginalised (Dean, 2007; McDowell, 2004). Such an approach is part of the broader neo-liberal policy philosophy pursued since Thatcher's Conservative government in the 1980s. Neo-liberalism is based on the notion that human wellbeing can be met through the

operation of the free market, which resulted in “deregulation, privatization and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision” (Harvey, 2005, p. 3). Specifically, neo-liberalism privileges market exchange, competition and values of individualism and self-responsibility, whereas “mutual dependence, self-sacrifice and care for others are unvalued notions” within this policy approach (McDowell, 2004, p. 146).

The social failings and gender inequality arising from neoliberal policy approaches are well documented, and it is not the intention of this section to rehearse them (see Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2005; McDowell, 2004). Relevant here is that this policy approach has raised concerns, particularly among human geographers, about the role of the third sector in privileging government agendas based on the notion that any person can “work” his or her way out of poverty (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003; Lerner, 2005; Trudeau and Veronis, 2009). Indeed, third sector organisations have been shown to provide work-based training and vocational qualifications, support to find jobs, write job applications, and provide simulated working environments to help people get the experience of working (Mayer, 2007). As Mayer (2007, p. 100) comments, third sector organisations are “busy...inserting their clients into job programs [sic]”. Williams *et al.* (2012) discuss the role of faith-based organisations in training people for jobs, offering employment preparation courses and computer and literacy classes. Martin (2010) highlights third sector organisations as providing migrants with healthcare check-ups, support to find inexpensive housing and to access government welfare assistance.

In so doing, however, scholars have pointed out the contradictions in service provision (Trudeau and Veronis, 2009). For instance, Martin (2010, p. 132) illustrates the important work of third sector organizations in working with migrants to mitigate the effects of “economic restructuring and failed immigration policy”. In so doing, however, Martin (2010, p. 132) finds that third sector organizations “construct partial, temporary, and contradictory responses in order to mitigate these crises.” Thus, she suggests one such contradiction is the third sector’s role in the social reproduction of the migrant workforce. She argues that by helping new migrants to access shared housing or cheap childcare, which allows them to live on low wages, this process of social reproduction maintains the functioning of the informal economy that exploits workers

with low wages, poor or dangerous working conditions and no benefits or employee entitlements.

Accordingly, scholars have accused third sector organisations of being swept up in the “wider governmentalities of neoliberal politics” (Williams *et al.*, 2012, p. 1480) and acting as an “arm of the state apparatus” that reinforces the government’s workfare strategy in the everyday lives of the most vulnerable in society (Trudeau and Veronis, 2009 p. 1119; see also Peck and Tickell, 2002). In keeping with this Foucauldian approach to understanding the changing relationship between the third sector and government (see Larner, 2005), scholars have discussed the “technologies of government” used to achieve this goal: namely funding streams and reporting mechanisms (Williams *et al.*, 2012, p. 1483). Accordingly, the alignment of government and third sector goals has been attributed to the dependency of nongovernmental actors on state funding (Williams *et al.*, 2012). This funding dependency results in an “audit culture” within the third sector, with organisations primarily concerned to satisfy government indicators of progress and success rather than tailoring their services to the specific needs of the communities their organisations are set up to support (Bondi and Laurie, 2005; Fyfe and Milligan, 2003; Larner, 2005; Trudeau and Veronis, 2009).

The literature reviewed here provides a series of entry points for investigating the role of a community-based organisation in supporting Muslim migrant women, which is the third research objective of this thesis. Specifically, questions arise from this literature about whether such organisations privilege paid work and, if so, how successful such approaches are for Muslim migrant women who potentially face multiple barriers to accessing paid work. The insights discussed here also provide a lens through which to examine the ways in which community-based organisations are funded and how their services and programmes are designed according to funding streams and requirements. Finally, the key arguments made in this body of work suggest that community-based organisations have a critical role to play in supporting marginalised social groups in the absence of welfare assistance from the state. This is particularly relevant in a discussion of female family migrants, who may well lack access to welfare assistance as a result of their “dependent” visa status.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to explore the literatures in relation to the three research objectives outlined in chapter 1, section 1.2. The chapter outlines current debates around Muslim immigration to the West, the development of human geographic approaches to migration and in particular the reasons why people migrate. The literature on Muslim geographies has been critiqued, examining the insights in this body of work relating to gender relations and religion. Finally, the chapter turned to consider the role of institutions in supporting both Muslims and social groups marginalised by state welfare restructuring.

The examination of current debates around Muslim immigration to the West illuminated the dominant depiction of Muslim women as victims of forced migrations. In keeping with this, negative policy and media narratives position Muslim women as “backwards” and uneducated. Against these negative stereotypes, it became clear that further research is needed to illuminate the rich diversity among Muslim migrants in family-related migration to the UK.

Building on this, section 2.3 explored human geographic approaches to conceptualising migration. It was argued that theorisation of the increasing diversity of migration types and explanatory factors is hindered by the lack of willingness among migration scholars to go beyond their conceptual boundaries. After exploring dominant approaches to conceptualising migration, the chapter discussed the need to explore Muslim family-related migration through qualitative approaches that account for both the individual and the family. As such, a conceptual frame for research objective 1 was drawn from both the literatures on internal family-related migration and migrant subjectivities. I argued that drawing on these diverse approaches provided the necessary conceptual scope to examine the multiple influences on Muslim women’s “choices” to migrate.

Continuing to think about migration as a process, the next section, 2.4 explored the extant literature on Muslim geographies. Gender relations have been the predominant focus in this body of work, yet it was argued that despite this focus, the emphasis on young Muslims has resulted in a dearth of knowledge about the gender identities of older Muslims and the shifting nature of gender relations through the lifecourse. Further, I argued that there was a need to look explicitly at migrant women in order to

explore the ways in which both gender and religious identities are reworked through migration. To do this, I suggested firstly that research on gendered geographies of migration and, more specifically, feminist migration research may be useful in illuminating the ways in which gender relations are reworked through mobility. Secondly, I drew on recent calls from scholars to explore the emotions and deep spiritual meanings that emerge through migration.

The final section of this chapter reviewed the role of institutions in shaping Muslim women's lives. I argue that the dominant focus on non-secular institutions and schools has led to a neglect of secular community-based organisations despite observations of their importance in Muslim women's lives. In order to examine why these organisations are important, I explored existing studies that document the cultural, religious and gendered appropriateness of Muslim institutions that are deemed as "safe spaces". Following this, I suggested that drawing on the literature on third sector organisations could shed light on the ways in which secular community-based services work to support vulnerable community groups. In the following chapter, I discuss the methodological approach of this study.

Chapter III: Methodology and methods

Designing and undertaking research with Muslim migrant women

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological context of this study to address the research objectives and questions outlined in chapter 1, section 1.2. Section 3.2 discusses the theoretical foundations of the study, justifying the use of a qualitative research approach grounded in feminist methodology and drawing on ethnographic approaches. Section 3.3 discusses the research process, including selecting the research site, the ethical framework, recruitment process, choice of methods, data collection and data analysis. In section 3.4, I discuss the ways in which my positionality influenced the research process and follow this up in section 3.5 with a series of reflections on the methodological approach.

3.2 Methodological context of the study

Taken together, methodology, ontology and epistemology form the “trio of the philosophy of science” (Moses and Knutsen, 2012, p. 4). This “trio” constitutes the foundations from which a research study is developed and has consequences for the selection and use of methods, data analysis and overall success of the research in achieving its aims (Seale *et al.*, 2004). The overall aim of this study is to explore the subjective experiences of a small group of Muslim migrant women in Scotland and the role of a community-based organisation in shaping their everyday lives. In so doing, this thesis seeks to bring Muslim women’s voices into the migration literature, particularly the literature on family-related migration. To this end, this thesis follows a feminist methodological approach that “strives to ‘add’ in previously neglected areas [of research]” (McDowell, 1992, p. 403).

Feminist research seeks alternative ways of knowing, emphasising subjectivity and working to “understand the world through personal experience” (Kitchin and Tate, 2013). In so doing, feminist methodologies privilege methods and research questions that seek to include the voices of those who have been silenced in more “scientific” academic research, accounting for people’s own perceptions and emotions (Haraway, 1988, p. 575; Kitchin and Tate, 2013; McDowell, 1992). With a “substantive focus on

gender” (Staeheli and Lawson, 1995, p. 322), feminist approaches examine the everyday and unique experiences of women and men and the intersection of gender with other social differences, for example “race”, class, age or religion (Silvey, 2006). Such an approach thus lends itself to this study, which seeks to understand Muslim women’s lives.

Drawing on a feminist ontological position, this study is rooted in the belief that a person’s perception of the world or “reality” is socially constructed through “complex webs of power relations”, thus there is no objective fact out there to be measured (Staeheli and Lawson, 1995, p. 322; Burr, 2003). Furthermore, the study is partly influenced by poststructural approaches that suggest meaning is both constructed through and reflective of language and discourse (Escobar, 2012). Thus, whilst this study shares a concern with humanism in seeking to give “voice” to Muslim migrant women and focusing on individual experiences, the study differs from humanist approaches that overlook the power relations that work to *construct* this “voice” (Staeheli and Lawson, 1995). Accordingly, this study does not sit neatly within one school of thought, but instead maintains that whilst “voices” can be uncovered, this uncovering must be acknowledged as a process of construction, rather than as a process of “truth” discovery (see for example Clifford and Marcus, 1986).

In keeping with this ontological positioning, feminist epistemologies suggest that “scientific” knowledge cannot reveal the “truth”, but instead knowledge is partial, and relational; it is produced between the researcher and the research participants (Haraway, 1988). Thus, a feminist approach to research suggests that how we understand human beings and their lives and experiences is highly dependent on the research methods used, the place of meeting, the nature of the encounter, the social location of the researcher and power relations between the researcher and the “researched” (McDowell, 1992; Staeheli and Lawson, 1995). These are important considerations for this study, some of which will be considered in section 3.3, which discusses the research process. However, the issue of power relations and social location is particularly pertinent to this study with Muslim migrant women and is discussed in greater detail below.

Feminist methodologies seek to renegotiate the inherent power relations in research through more emancipatory or empowering research (an ambition that they share with

participatory action researchers) (Kesby, 2005; Kindon *et al.*, 2007; Kitchin and Tate, 2013; Pain, 2004). Seeking to address concerns over the power relations inherent in social research, feminist and participatory research praxis highlights the need to “minimalize the us and them between academic researcher and participants”, drawing on less hierarchical and more reciprocal relations with research “participants” (Pain, 2004, p. 656). However, as Pain (2004, p. 657) goes on to argue, “there is a tendency to assume that power can always be transferred, that academic researchers have this intention and that participants are willing to be empowered in this way.” Such criticisms highlight that power relations can never be eradicated from social research, regardless of intent. Nonetheless, researchers bear in mind that despite the omnipresence of power relations, power is neither unidirectional nor always in need of resistance (Cameron and Gibson, 2005; Escobar, 2012; Kesby, 2005).

In working to acknowledge the power relations in social research, feminist approaches to research call for researchers to reflect on their social location or positionality (Hopkins, 2009c; McDowell, 1992; Staeheli and Lawson, 1997). Positionality refers to the researcher’s social position, educational background, religious beliefs or more obvious markers such as appearance or accent. Positionality influences the research, the relations with the research participants and the “interpretation” of the findings (Hopkins, 2009c; McDowell, 1992; Rose, 1997). Whilst acknowledging that a researcher’s positionality is never “fully knowable” (Rose, 1997, p. 317), Hopkins and Gale (2009) highlight that in the current political climate surrounding Muslims in the West, the dangers of ignoring unequal power relations between researchers and Muslim research participants are particularly acute. As such, in section 3.4 I outline my positionality and feelings towards the research. I present this at the end of this chapter so that it remains fresh in readers’ minds as they approach the ensuing chapters, which contain the findings, analysis and discussion of this study.

This section has sought to outline the theoretical foundations of this study that draw on feminist approaches. The following section discusses the selection of a qualitative research approach to address the aims and objectives of this study.

3.2.1 A qualitative research approach

McDowell (1997, p. 391) refers to the “axiomatic” adoption of qualitative approaches in feminist research, although she notes that quantitative approaches should not be ruled out. Rather, McDowell (1997) suggests that researchers should adopt the most appropriate strategy to address the *feminist* research questions. Concerned then with the subjective experiences of Muslim migrant women, there is little doubt that this study is driven by *feminist* research questions. But what is the most appropriate research approach for uncovering the migration experiences of Muslim women?

As discussed in chapter 2, throughout the 1980s and 1990s a positivist research paradigm and quantitative methods were the basis for much of the migration scholarship within human geography (Bailey, 2005). This paradigm privileged statistical analysis of census and survey data based on the notion of an objective reality, meaning the world can be measured and that an observable truth exists (Findlay and Graham, 1991; Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; Halfacree, 2004a; Smith, 2011; White and Jackson, 1995). Such positivist research paradigms explain migratory processes and outcomes based on causal relationships, yet critics highlight that this approach is unable to capture the *lived experience* of migration, including nuances in migration behaviour and the role of agency and consciousness in migrant decision-making (King, 2012; McHugh, 2000).

Whilst still marginalised in much of the scholarship on family-related migration (Smith, 2011), qualitative research approaches have been used more widely in migration studies since the “cultural” turn in geography (Halfacree, 2004a; King, 2012). In so doing, scholars draw on qualitative research approaches to uncover the individual and lived experience of migration (Lawson, 2000; Silvey, 2013). Indeed, qualitative research approaches offer an opportunity to provide rich accounts of migration that quantitative approaches only obscure, because they are able to ask questions of “how” and “why” when exploring the meaning behind what people say and do (Halfacree, 2004a). Population geographers, in particular, emphasise a “biographical approach” to understand how both the decision to migrate and the effects of migration are deeply embedded in the lifecourse (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993). Seen in this way, the migration experience is understood to be inseparable from a person’s life history (Fielding, 1992) and is influenced by normative behaviours and practices, the so-called “common sense” understandings of social life, which are hidden in census and survey data (Smith, 2004).

Seeking an in-depth account of Muslim women's migration experiences, this study privileges a qualitative approach.

In privileging a qualitative approach, this study also draws on some key tenets of ethnographic approaches in order to not only gain a deeper insight into the lives of Muslim migrant women but also the role of a community-based organisation in shaping Muslim women's lives (research objective 3). Ethnography is the notion of "thick description" (Geertz, 1973), used to understand people in the context of their everyday lives (Crang and Cook, 1997). However, ethnography's expansive use in social sciences has led to different approaches to defining and using ethnography, as Gobo (2011, p. 16) notes, "for some scholars it refers to a philosophical paradigm to which one makes a total commitment, for others it designates an instrument that one uses as and when appropriate." It is important to say then, that whilst this study is founded primarily on a feminist philosophical paradigm, the study is also influenced by ethnography as a paradigm and as a research approach. As Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 116) suggest, paradigms need to be shifted and blurred to achieve the "dynamism" necessary for advancing the social impact of qualitative research.

The uptake of ethnographic methods by geographers has proliferated in recent years (Mahler and Pessar, 2006; Silverman, 2011), lending itself to an ethnographic focus that is closer to home than some of the earliest ethnography, which focused on "exotic" and distant "primitive races" (Malinowski, 1921, p. 1). Accordingly, the "field", which is integral to ethnography and refers to a "natural setting" (Hammersley, 1995), may encompass a Florida retirement village (McHugh, 2000), a virtual space (Markham, 1998) or a corporation (Ho, 2009). Indeed, drawing on this last point, "organisational ethnography" has been increasingly used to examine institutions such as corporations or non-profit organisations (Eberle and Maeder, 2011). Organisational ethnography is thus concerned with exploring social interaction and behaviours in organisational settings in order to gain "fuller, more grounded, practice-based understandings of organisational life" (Ybema *et al.*, 2009, p. 9, cited in Eberle and Maeder, 2011, p. 60).

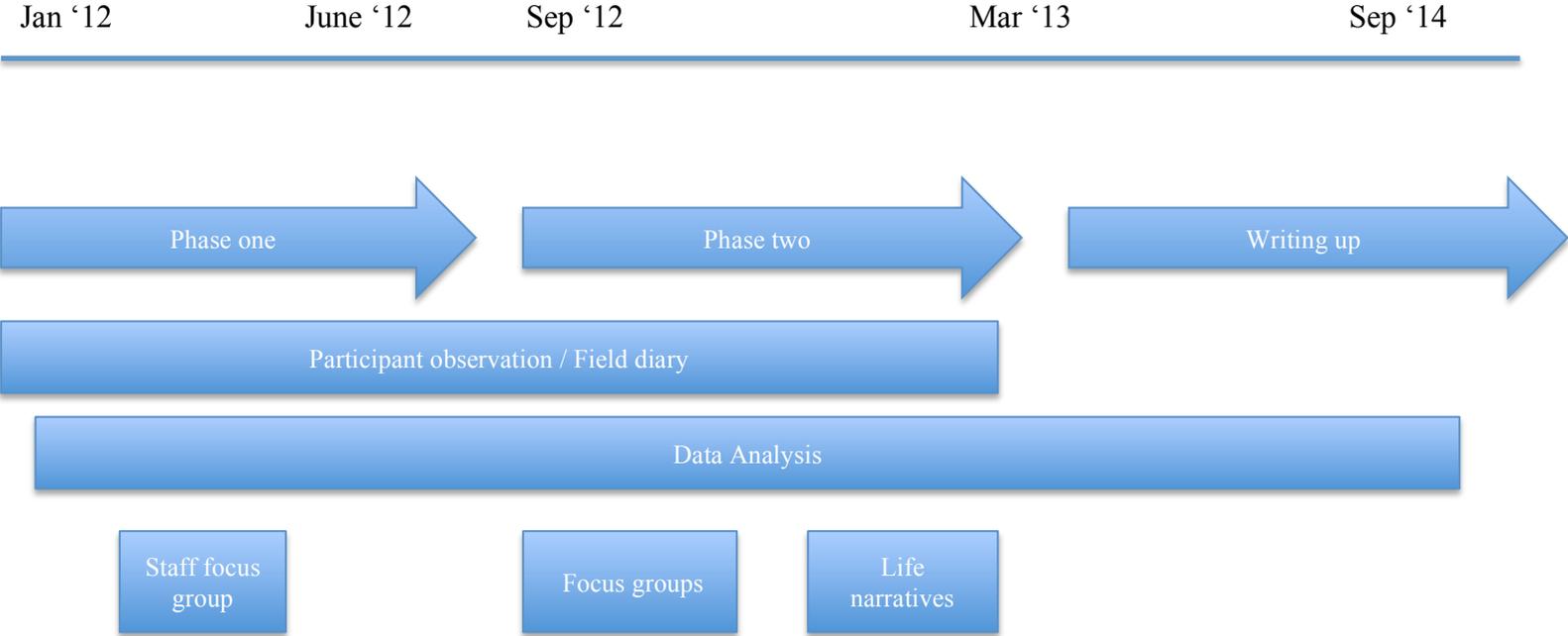
Immersion in "the field" for extensive periods of time, *i.e.* at least one year but more often two to three years (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), characterizes ethnography. However, the uptake of ethnography more widely involves a sporadic going back and

forth to the field for shorter periods of time or, as in the case of organisational ethnography, in keeping with “office hours” (Eberle and Maeder, 2011). Furthermore, the way in which the ethnographer immerses him or herself within the field has taken increasingly varied forms since the 1990s, with some ethnographers choosing to take on a participatory membership role, *i.e.* volunteering with the research population (Angrosino 2007), whereas others “adopt the social role under study” (Herbert, 2000, p. 552). Narayan (1993, p. 673) suggests that this uptake of more participatory social roles requires “a rethinking of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ anthropologists as stable categories.” This study incorporates 15 months of spending time in “the field”; the field in this study encompasses a non-profit community-based organisation working with migrant women in Scotland. This is explored further in the following section, 3.3.

3.3 Research process

In this section of the chapter, I break down the research process used to undertake this study into five sub-sections: (3.3.1) selecting and accessing a research site (3.3.2) establishing an ethical framework (3.3.3) recruitment of participants (3.3.4) data collection and (3.3.5) data analysis. However, the order of this section does not wholly reflect the chronology of the study because of the iterative approach adopted. Indeed, the chronology of this study is such that participant observation began upon entering the field, thus constituting an initial survey period during which I familiarised myself with the research site and recorded observations in my field diary. Only after this initial survey period and the preliminary data analysis (phase 1) were research questions refined, methods chosen and participants recruited to participate in phase 2 of the study. This iterative research process is shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Research process



3.3.1 Selecting and accessing the research site

The first step in the research process was to identify a community-based organisation that was willing to participate in the research study. This was critical to the study for two reasons:

- (1) To access Muslim migrant women and to spend time building relationships and learning from them (in keeping with a relational feminist approach to knowledge)
- (2) To provide a “field” setting to gain a deeper insight into:
 - (a) Women’s everyday lives
 - (b) The role of a community-based organisation in shaping women’s everyday lives

In addition, I wanted to volunteer at the organisation in order to offer my time in return for theirs, thus creating a reciprocal arrangement. This is in keeping with feminist geographers who criticise the appropriation of knowledge (McDowell, 1992), discussed further in the methodological reflections in section 3.5.

In seeking a research site, I undertook a preliminary internet-based search and then spoke with a contact I knew at Faith in the Community Scotland, a Scottish charity working with faith-based community groups to support local communities. My contact there told me about some of the different organisations working with migrant groups in Scotland, including Fountain Point. I contacted Fountain Point⁴ in September 2011 to express my volunteering and research interests. My first email was not returned and neither was my first phone call. I persisted and on my second attempt to reach someone over the phone, I was fortunate to speak to one of the management staff at Fountain Point. After I explained my interests, the staff member invited me to the organisation for a discussion of my research plans. My initial email to Fountain Point is shown below in figure 3.2.

Following the meeting, Fountain Point agreed to take part in the research and also offered me a volunteer position in the computing classes, subject to receiving an outline of my research intentions in writing (see appendix 1). We agreed that I would provide a written report of my findings to Fountain Point upon the completion of the thesis.

⁴ Fountain Point is a pseudonym.

Working both with and through Fountain Point raised a considerable number of ethical and methodological considerations, which I discuss in the methodological reflections in section 3.5. The following paragraph provides some background information about Fountain Point. However, I limit the information in order to protect as far as possible the anonymity of the organisation and the research participants. I discuss this protection further in relation to the ethical framework of the study in section 3.3.2.

Figure 3.2 Introductory email to Fountain Point



Fountain Point

Fountain Point has a long history in the local community and within the city more widely. Fountain Point aims to support the social, political and economic integration of women into the local community and Scottish society more generally, with a specific focus on education, language and social support to achieve this integration. Whilst they offer services to all women regardless of ethnicity, their mission statement emphasises their focus on Black and ethnic minority women. The centre is based on an educational

structure, offering a timetabled service of classes including cooking, cake decorating, art, sewing, job-seeker support, English language, citizenship and driving theory classes. In addition to these activities, members have the opportunity to apply their existing or newly developed skills as volunteers, as class teaching assistants, administrative support, befrienders or catering assistants. In addition, for those women who have undertaken their National Progression award in childcare training, Fountain Point offers work placements in their in-house childcare centre, which is designed and run as a social enterprise, *i.e.* all the profits are reinvested into Fountain Point. Fountain Point is contained within one building, accommodating directors, staff, volunteers and service users in one place, providing a naturally bounded, geographically located research population (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993).

3.3.2 Ethical framework

I sought and obtained approval from the University's Ethics Committee in January 2012 prior to the start of the study and before I began volunteering. The University Ethics Committee gave ethical approval for participant observation, interviews and focus groups. Further advice was sought from Fountain Point staff and latterly research participants about how to work in the best ethical interests of the research participants and Fountain Point as an organisation. Fountain Point staff suggested that the name of the organisation be changed and that data that may be easily attributable to the organisation and/or participants be anonymised to as great an extent as possible. Participants also requested that their names be changed. Accordingly, all study participants were advised that names would be changed, rules about confidentiality would be set at the start of each focus group, and the organisation would be given the pseudonym Fountain Point. However, study participants were advised that anonymity could not be guaranteed because of both the small nature of the organisation in the city and because the project involved group working.

The process of informed consent is a Western, bureaucratic process, less relevant in many research contexts (Angrosino and Rosenberg, 2011; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Researching non-Western women within a Scottish non-profit organisation thus necessitated an approach that met both bureaucratic and "local" needs. As such, I used both written and verbal communication to gain informed consent; I also carefully used language that these women, who did not speak English as their first language or had

limited literacy, could understand. Accordingly, consent forms were based on University regulations, but were adapted with the help of English language staff at Fountain Point. The wordiness of the forms was somewhat unavoidable because of University regulations and a number of the participants commented on the number of questions on the form. All research participants were given the forms to take home if they wanted more time to read them and think about them or discuss them with their families. The process of informed consent was an ongoing exercise of reiteration as research participants were unfamiliar with concepts of ethics and consent. As a result, on each occasion that we met in a research capacity, I explained again the process of informed consent, reminded them of the form they had signed and reminded them they could still withdraw or change the terms of consent. Specifically, it was necessary to remind research participants that I would be voice recording them and that I was unable to guarantee anonymity. Since as a volunteer I met and worked with many different women who attended Fountain Point and recorded my observations and conversations in my field diary, it was impossible to ensure that everyone with whom I came into contact had given informed consent. As a result, data recorded in the field diary that could be attributed to individuals was not used without their informed consent. The use of the field diary is discussed in further detail in section 3.3.4 that presents the data collection methods used in the study.

Fountain Point staff suggested that all research should take place at Fountain Point unless participants explicitly requested to meet elsewhere. Staff requested this because they felt that it provided a “safe” space where participants and their families were accustomed to them going. Whilst I was concerned that not giving women the choice might infantilise them, I followed the advice of Fountain Point staff that working within the physical building of Fountain Point was in the “best” interests of the research participants. In so doing, I privileged the “local” knowledge of staff members and their understanding of Muslim women’s lives.

3.3.3 Recruiting research participants and building trust

As discussed in section 3.3.1, one of the goals of working *through* Fountain Point was to access Muslim migrant women. However, whilst this strategy made it possible at least to “encounter” women (see Cloke *et al.*, 2000), it did not guarantee that they would talk with me or engage in the study. Indeed, when I first began as a class

volunteer, unfamiliarity and trust were an issue; the women in the classes in which I volunteered would not speak to me other than to greet me at first, and three weeks passed before any of the women would ask me for help in the classroom. Time passed, however, and within two months class members regularly invited me to sit with them during the tea break, and they began to talk to me about their lives and ask me about mine. Nonetheless, progress was slow and five months passed before I was able to have regular in-depth discussions with Muslim migrant women about their lives. Within the institutional timeframe of a PhD, this approach was difficult to manage, as there was an increasing need as time passed to hurry the process along. Yet simultaneously, I was committed to ensuring the research was relevant and did not harm the Muslim women with whom I had begun to build a rapport. Indeed, rushing the process may have jeopardised this growing level of trust between us.

Having narrowed the focus of the research by the end of the summer of 2012, the time arrived to identify research participants for the focus groups and life narrative interviews. An approach commonly adopted in ethnography, Fetterman (1998, p. 32) notes, “most ethnographers use the big net approach...[then] as the study progresses, the focus narrows to specific portions of the populations under study.” Following Fetterman, I used ethnographic approaches to sampling that were small-scale, intensive and illustrative rather than representative in terms of scale. Such ethnographic approaches to sampling can provide rich and in-depth insights into people’s lives, as well as into the way research participants make sense of their own lives, in this case as “migrants” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). This small-scale approach to sampling has attracted criticism from researchers drawing on more “positivist” research paradigms, stemming in part from concerns that “ethnography cannot provide a solid foundation for rigorous scientific analysis” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 2).

However, the limited knowledge about Muslim *migrant* women and their *experiences* of migration highlighted in chapter 2 necessitated a research approach that would tease out some important areas for future research. The aim therefore was not to “collect” data from which generalisations could be made about Muslim migrant women. Rather, the study aimed to illustrate their subjective experiences of migration; this in itself is an essential foundation for future research to understand more about why Muslim men, women and children migrate and the implications of migration on their everyday lives.

In focusing on illustration rather than representation, however, I wanted to recruit women with diverse socio-demographic backgrounds in order to uncover the heterogeneity among women that I had observed at Fountain Point. I also wanted to ensure that the study incorporated not only Muslim women who attended classes at Fountain Point but also women who volunteered there, primarily because I had identified that these two subgroups within the organisation had important but potentially different perspectives on both the organisation and life as a migrant woman living in Scotland. In keeping with this, I used both purposive and convenience sampling to recruit participants. Advertisements were put up on the noticeboard and fliers were put into the volunteers' sign in book to raise awareness of the study. Over a period of three weeks, at the beginning of classes and in the communal area of Fountain Point, I spoke to women face-to-face about the research. I had anticipated that my presence at the centre would allow ease of access to research participants. However, in reality recruitment was highly problematic; some women said they were too busy with children, whereas others simply declined to take part. Thus, whilst some participants were recruited through purposive sampling, other participants were recruited through convenience sampling; they were women I knew and with whom I had built relationships. In total, nineteen women (including four staff members) took part in four focus group discussions, eight Muslim migrant women shared their life narratives, and three staff members were interviewed. Initially, twelve women agreed to take part in the life narratives, however four women later withdrew, citing family and work responsibilities.

3.3.4 Data collection

The data collection process in this study occurred in two stages, as shown in Figure 3.1. Each of the methods for data collection was chosen according to its ability to address the research objectives and questions, which I show in Table 3.1. The concerns of feminist methodologies outlined in section 3.2 are equally reflected in the choice of research methods, as will be discussed below. As highlighted in section 3.3.2 in relation to the ethical framework of the study, the study itself (with few exceptions) was undertaken at Fountain Point. Fountain Point provided a private classroom for the focus groups and a smaller meeting room for the life narratives, and the participants could make use of the onsite childcare at Fountain Point if needed (reimbursed by me).

This approach was thus in keeping with feminist research approaches that suggest *where* and *when* social research is undertaken is critical to ensuring that women in particular are not excluded from participation because of their lack of access to “public” space or childcare (Fonow and Cook, 1991).

Table 3.1 Linking research questions with data collection methods

Method	Purpose	Contribution to research questions (RQ)
Participant/ membership: Volunteering, field notes and staff focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarisation with Fountain Point, members & staff • Identification of context-bound/ local issues to refine research questions • Plan data collection methods • Identification of research participants 	
Participatory observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch, listen and learn about Fountain Point and Muslim women’s everyday lives • Explore deeper meanings behind service and programme delivery at Fountain Point • Observe use of space and interactions between members, members and staff, staff, members and volunteers 	<p>RQ3: How do Muslim women experience everyday life in Scotland?</p> <p>RQ6: What is the role of Fountain Point in shaping women’s everyday lives</p>
Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the socio-demographic profiles of participants • Explore the reasons for migration • Ask about family • Find out why they come to Fountain Point • Discuss hopes and dreams for the future 	<p>RQ1: Who are Muslim women?</p> <p>RQ2: Why do Muslim women migrate to Scotland?</p> <p>RQ3: How do Muslim women experience everyday life in Scotland?</p> <p>RQ4: How does migration rework gender relations in the home?</p> <p>RQ5: What is the effect of migration on Muslim women’s religious identities?</p> <p>RQ6: What is the role of Fountain Point in shaping women’s everyday lives</p>
In depth interviews/ life narratives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore participants’ personal histories and migration experiences • Explore issues that came to light in focus groups • Explore sensitive topics of gender, religion and family life • Debrief the participant and offer further support 	As above for focus groups
Field diary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record observations, conversations • Record methodological challenges • Use as journal to express feelings and emotions 	<p>RQ3: How do Muslim women experience everyday life in Scotland?</p> <p>RQ6: What is the role of Fountain Point in shaping women’s everyday lives</p>

3.3.4.1 Participant observation and field diary

As shown in Figure 3.1, the first stage of the data collection coincided with when I began volunteering at Fountain Point in January 2012. Initially, I volunteered once a week for two hours in a computing class, but as the study progressed I began to volunteer in an English language class and an additional computing class. Thus I regularly spent two days a week at Fountain Point during the first phase of the research (January - June 2012) and at least three days a week in the second phase (September - January 2013). In doing so, I observed the day-to-day running of the organisation, classroom rules and behaviours, attitudes, conversations and actions of staff, volunteers and the women who attended Fountain Point (its members). I read as much organisational literature as possible and took photos of advertisements and posters on the walls. I noted in my field diary as many details as possible whilst I was at Fountain Point, and the rest I recalled and wrote down on my bus journey home.

This period of observation and immersion is a common approach among ethnographers and researchers using in-depth qualitative research strategies, as it allows the researchers to familiarise themselves with the “field” (Fetterman, 1998). As a result, this approach is sometimes referred to as the survey period (Fetterman, 1998). Furthermore, in keeping with feminist concerns, this period of familiarisation offered the opportunity to build relationships with women at Fountain Point and let the refinement of research questions emerge from the field. Specifically, I used my observations in the field diary to refine research questions after the initial “survey period” between June and September 2012. Thus, by trying to avoid imposing my pre-conceptions on the research participants, I hoped to make my research less hierarchical.

In drawing on ethnographic research approaches in settings “closer to home”, scholars have highlighted the problems of the “field” as too familiar and lacking the “sufficient distance and strangeness to recognise regular and ordinary features of daily routines” (Eberle and Maeder, 2011, p. 57). Despite working in the field of community development both in the UK and overseas for ten years, I was struck by how much I felt like an outsider at Fountain Point, and I experienced a significant level of culture shock upon entering “the field”. Everything was new to me: the approach to teaching and methods, the prayer mats folded inside out on tables, the use of “*Inshallah*” (if Allah

wills) in seemingly every sentence, women wearing *headscarves*, women dressed in stunningly embroidered *abaya*, cooking smells and tastes, gestures and expressions. I felt as though I had arrived in a foreign land. From this initial experience, I realised that it would take a substantial period of familiarisation in “the field” in order to become acquainted with the culture of Fountain Point. Obviously, I could not rush this process.

However, I used participant observation not only for familiarisation and development of the research questions, but also as a data collection method to address the research questions, as shown in Table 3.1. As a method of data collection, participant observation involves “watching”, “listening” and “asking questions”, while participating in people’s everyday lives (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 2). In using participant observation, I listened to the stories women shared with me about their childhood or life “back home”. They also talked about everyday life in Scotland, and because I saw them so often, I asked questions about their husbands and children, how their week was going and if they had plans for the weekend. These sorts of conversations over cups of tea, lunch or in the classroom, enabled a deeper insight into the “ordinary” aspects of Muslim migrant women’s everyday lives.

In addition, participant observation was the principal method for addressing the third research objective of this study: to examine the role of a community-based organisation (Fountain Point) in shaping the everyday lives of Muslim migrant women. As discussed in section 3.2, participant observation enjoys current vogue in geography and in particular in relation to what many term “organisational ethnography” (Eberle and Maeder, 2011). Participant observation thus helped me to move beyond the “party line” of staff members and organisational publications and communication, to a more in-depth insight into Fountain Point’s work in shaping women’s everyday lives. In so doing, I recorded the ways in which Muslim women used the space, the relationships they built and drew upon and the unspoken, and unwritten codes of behaviour within the organisation and also among its staff, volunteers and members.

The use of a field diary throughout the research process was essential to record observations and thus was an important data collection tool. The field diary was also used as a form of personal journal to record my feelings and reflections throughout the research process. To differentiate between the two uses of the field diary, observations

(sometimes known as field notes) were recorded in one colour, and feelings and reflections were written in a different colour. The feelings and reflections recorded are drawn on in the methodological reflections in section 3.5. However, more than just reflections, the journal was also helpful as a way to process my emotions that arose through the course of the research. This is in keeping with recent literature on the use of field diaries in qualitative research as important tools for “coping” with some of the more emotionally difficult aspects of fieldwork (Punch, 2012).

3.3.4.2 Focus groups

The concluding part of phase one of this study was the design and running of a staff focus group. This focus group aimed to explore staff members’ experiences of working with Muslim migrant women at Fountain Point and to follow up on some of my observations over the preceding five months. Thus, this focus group was designed primarily as a scoping exercise to further inform the research questions and also to discuss the “best” ways to engage women in the study (for focus group schedule see appendix 4). Two of the participants in the staff focus groups were Muslim women who were previously members and then volunteers at Fountain Point, thus reflecting the approach within Fountain Point of appointing staff members from within the community. These staff members offered unique insights into the ways in which Fountain Point had evolved within recent years to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse group of women who accessed their services. They offered a unique insider/outsider perspective. At the end of phase one the data from the field diary and staff focus group was analysed using *NVivo*, and then that analysis was used to shape phase two of the research. For ease of reading, I discuss the data analysis in phase one and two together in section 3.3.5 and in this section continue to discuss the data collection methods used in phase two.

The first part of phase two of this study involved running the focus groups with Muslim migrant women. The purpose of the focus groups was to bring Muslim migrant women together to discuss and share their experiences of migrating to Scotland, living in Scotland and the role of Fountain Point in shaping their everyday lives. Three focus groups took place (four including the staff focus group), broken down into specific groups and dates shown in Table 3.2. The three focus groups comprised two groups made up of members, *i.e.* women who were active members of Fountain Point,

participating in educational and/or social classes within the organisation and one group comprised of Fountain Point volunteers, *i.e.* class tutors, catering assistants, childcare volunteers or befrienders. Women aged 30-42 comprised the first active member focus group. Women mainly over the age of 50 comprised the second active member focus group.

This focus group division revealed different perspectives of women who had migrated to Scotland either with or to join their families: the women over 50 reflected on what life *was* like in trying to raise children and with their husbands when they first migrated to the city, whereas the younger women spoke in the present tense, as with the exception of one participant, they all had young children and were recent migrants. How and why the participants were recruited is discussed in section 3.3.4.

Table 3.2 Focus group participants, dates and location

Focus group	# of participants	Date	Location
Staff members	4	June '12	Fountain Point
Members group 1	4	Sep '12	Fountain Point
Members group 2	6	Sep '12	Fountain Point
Volunteers	5	Sep '12	Fountain Point

Focus groups were selected as a method for three interrelated reasons. First, in the staff focus group, participants highlighted focus groups as a preferred way to engage Muslim women in the research. Staff felt that women would be more comfortable and willing to share their experiences in a group environment, particularly if they did not know me very well. Such sentiments are in keeping with Morgan (1996, p. 132) who suggests focus groups are able to “give a voice to marginalised social groups” and capture the “breadth” of experiences among a relatively wide range of people. The focus groups provided a series of insights that could be further “teased out” with participants in their life narrative interviews (Morgan, 1996).

I began to build a focus group schedule based on the preliminary analysis of the field diary and the staff focus group (see section 3.3.5 for an explanation of the data analysis and appendix 5 for the focus group schedule). I designed the schedule to direct (but not restrict) discussion towards participants’ priorities and aspirations for life in Scotland, as well as their approaches, strategies and struggles to fulfil their aspirations. The

discussion also sought to discover why the women accessed Fountain Point and what they hoped to gain from Fountain Point. Accordingly, I designed the focus groups to address all three of the research objectives.

Whilst the focus group schedule provided direction, a lively discussion flowed through each of them. This at points, however, had a counter productive effect, as women became more conversant, some women dominated the conversation more than others, making it difficult at times to keep the discussion on track. Nonetheless, for the most part, focus group participants seemed very relaxed in each other's company and stimulated the conversation amongst themselves. A translator, who was a staff member at Fountain Point, attended one of the focus groups, which included some women who spoke less English.

3.3.4.3 Life narratives

In keeping with the combined focus group and individual narrative approach advocated by Morgan (1996), eight Muslim migrant women who participated in the focus groups also shared their individual life narratives following the focus group discussions. As with focus group discussions, social researchers favour life narratives when working with marginalised social groups because a person is “encouraged to tell her own story and in her own terms, with minimal prompting by the researcher” (Angrosino, 2007, p. 8).

The purpose of the life narratives in this study is to encourage the research participants to share their stories of life both pre and post-migration, thus enabling an in-depth approach to conceptualising the participants' experiences of migration. Migration scholars advocate the use of narratives in this way, arguing for a biographical approach to the conceptualisation of migration (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; Halfacree, 2004a) as discussed in section 3.2.1.

In keeping with the wishes of Fountain Point, the life narrative “interviews” took place in one of the smaller meeting rooms at Fountain Point. The space was a quiet and comfortable, sometimes used for prayer. Thus, it provided privacy for participants to talk openly. However, two participants requested to meet in a café in the city centre, as it was closer to their houses. The lengths of the meetings varied between 1 to 3 hours

and were voice recorded. I developed a guide of potential topics to be discussed (see appendix 6). However, this guide was of limited use as the participants directed the conversation according to the account of their life that they chose to share with me. Whilst these pre-arranged and voice recorded sessions provided much of the data, our conversations extended beyond these one-to-one meetings and into our regular interactions within Fountain Point. Indeed, participants would seek me out to elaborate on their stories or tell me something they “forgot”.

As anticipated, the life narratives allow a deeper examination into the perspectives and experiences shared in the focus groups. The difference between the conversations in the focus groups and life narratives is particularly striking, however; the focus groups fulfilled their purpose of prompting social interaction and sharing of experiences and perspectives. Furthermore, the focus group atmosphere was largely positive, and the women laughed with one another as they talked about their migration experience and life in Scotland. Conversely, in their life narratives, participants recalled the more negative aspects of their migration experiences and the difficulties they have endured living in Scotland on a day-to-day basis. Indeed, with no other women in the room apart from me, the participants constructed a significantly different narrative of migration and displayed a wider range of emotions than they had in the focus groups. Such observations lend support to Hopkins (2007a) who highlights the need to think more critically about the use of focus groups in qualitative research and the sensitivity of topics discussed.

3.3.4.4 Staff interviews

The staff focus group revealed that staff members had significant experience working closely with recent Muslim migrants to the city. Thus one purpose of the staff interviews was to probe deeper into their experiences of working with recently arrived migrants to gather their insights into the unique challenges that Muslim women face in migrating and adjusting to everyday life in Scotland (see appendix 7 for interview schedule). The second reason for conducting staff interviews was to explore more about the work of Fountain Point in shaping the lived realities of Muslim migrant women who access their services. I interviewed three staff members in an “official” setting. However, over the course of the study, I had ongoing “unofficial” conversations with staff members. I also had a number of insightful conversations with staff members and

project leaders who came to Fountain Point from partner organisations in the city. These conversations, noted in my field diary, formed an integral part of the data collection process, as rather than the knowledge created in the interview setting in response to my questions, these conversations happened “on the ground” and “in the moment”.

3.3.5 Data analysis process

The focus groups, life narrative interviews and staff interviews were conducted and transcribed in English. The process of transcribing the data varied according to the data collection method. Field diary entries were written by hand either at the time or shortly after leaving Fountain Point for the day. As previously mentioned field diary entries were colour-coded to mark the difference between observation and feelings or reflections. Focus group discussions were voice recorded and transcribed into a Microsoft Word document. Whilst software is available to make transcribing easier, for example *ExpressScribe*, I chose not to use it as I found it easy to use the playback options on the voice recorder itself.

Where possible, I began transcribing the discussions on the day they took place when I could still easily recall the atmosphere in the room, participants’ body languages and emotions, for example tears or laughter. These recollections were then written into the transcripts. However, the second focus group with six participants was difficult to transcribe, as many of the women talked over one another, making it difficult to hear. As such, it took much longer to transcribe because I had to try to work out what was being said and distinguish between the voices. The process of transcribing the staff interviews was straightforward and followed the same format as the focus group discussions.

Transcription of the life narratives was less straightforward because of the emotions it elicited in me. By the time it came to the life narratives, I had known six of the participants for over eight months. Some of the stories that they told me were shocking and sad, and at first I did not want to re-live them by having to transcribe them. As such, the process of transcribing the life narrative voice recordings was drawn out over a few days for each one, allowing me to take breaks and distance myself from the negative feelings. This is discussed further in section 3.5. All of the transcripts and

PDF scans of the field diaries were uploaded to and stored in *NVivo*, a qualitative analysis software package.

As shown in Figure 3.1 the study comprises two phases. The separation between the phases reflects a natural break in the research caused by the summer school holidays and *Ramadan*, during which classes did not run at Fountain Point. Thus this natural break allowed me the opportunity to begin analysing in greater depth my field diary entries and the transcript of the staff focus group. The aim of this preliminary analysis was to refine the research questions and to develop guides for the focus groups, life narrative interviews and staff interviews (see appendices 4, 5, 6 and 7). However, I had already begun to explore some of the ideas in my field diary in relation to the academic literature within the first few months of spending time at Fountain Point. This is akin to ethnographic analysis, which is an ongoing iterative process that begins immediately upon entering the field (Fetterman, 1998). In this way, research is guided by a general research problem but it allows ideas and concepts to emerge from the field, requiring a process of going back and forth between the field and the academic literature (Fetterman, 1998). For this part of the process, I used a freehand method to draw out the ideas or concepts and drew conceptual “mind” maps. In between the two phases in the summer 2012, I uploaded my *sources*, the focus group transcript and a PDF of the field diary entries to *NVivo*, which is a computer tool for storing, organising and aiding the analysis of qualitative data. I then created a few preliminary *nodes*, which are used to contain concepts, topics or themes in *NVivo*, thus facilitating the process of coding the data.

This analysis involved going back to the academic scholarship on migration and also Muslim geographies in order to “ground” the research focus not only in the findings, but also in the existing literature (Fetterman, 1998). I then used this preliminary analysis to design a schedule for the three focus groups with Muslim migrant women conducted in September 2012. In keeping with the iterative approach, I uploaded the focus group transcripts as *sources* to *NVivo* and looked for further ideas and concepts that I could “tease out” in the life narratives. On completion of phase two of the study, I uploaded the last of the *sources* into *NVivo* and continued the data analysis process. The preliminary *nodes* identified at the end of phase one eventually became the *supernodes* under which the *nodes* identified through phase two were organised (see appendix 8).

Indeed, *NVivo* allows the hierarchical ordering of findings, thus *supernodes* refers to the bigger ideas and concepts within the data where *nodes*, which can likewise be organised into hierarchies, are assigned. These *supernodes* became the focus of the three findings and discussion chapters of this thesis. However, I am cautious here to avoid the word “themes”, and choose instead to use “concepts” or “ideas”. Indeed, in focusing on a small sample I did not seek to look for generalisable patterns or “themes”, but instead sought to offer an *illustrative* account of the research participants’ lives.

For this reason, whilst *NVivo* aided the analysis, I supplemented it with freehand analysis and conceptual “mind” mapping. I found it difficult to see the little but important details on a computer screen and preferred spreading out the transcripts in front of me and reading them through, making annotations on the side and highlighting different aspects. Triangulation is integral to ethnographic analysis, used to validate findings by comparing data from different sources (Fetterman, 1998). However, in this study, I chose to adopt the notion of the qualitative research as “bricoleur” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, 2011; Levi-Strauss, 1966). Drawing on Levi-Strauss (1966) the researcher as “bricoleur” uses all appropriate tools and techniques in order to interpret and represent a research problem as a crystal, the many facets of which illuminate multiple and perspectives, rather than a more straightforward triangulation of results (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

3.4 Positionality

The influence of the researcher’s positionality on the study is a key concern within feminist research paradigms, as discussed in section 3.2. The purpose of this section is to outline my positionality in relation to this research and the research participants. In so doing, I use some extracts from my field diary to further illuminate the influence of my positionality on the research study but also to show how my positionality shifted through the research. I follow this with a series of methodological reflections on the study in section 3.5, which include a discussion of the power relations between myself and the participants and issues of recruitment and ethics, as well as some of the things that went “wrong.”

How does a “White” English woman with a London accent and a Christian faith end up working with Muslim migrant women in Scotland? This is the kind of question (or a

culmination of questions) that I have been asked many times throughout this study. Perhaps on the surface the only common ground that I shared with the participants was that I was a “woman” (in the non-postmodern sense). In reflecting on my positionality, I follow Hopkins (2009c, p. 5) who suggests seeing the “researcher as never being completely the same nor entirely different from their participants. Levels of difference and similarity may vary throughout the research project.” This is in keeping with Narayan (1993), who discusses the way in which identities are in constant flux and whether the researcher is an insider or an outsider, an observer or an observed is constantly shifting in relation to the field. Through Narayan’s (1993, p. 672) lens of “multiplex identity”, it is possible to see that “essentialising tags” such as that of “Researcher” or “Volunteer” overlook the fact that I took on multiple identities during my time at Fountain Point, in both my own eyes and the eyes of others around me.

To begin, coming from the University of St Andrews, positioned me apart from staff, other volunteers and the women who attended Fountain Point. At the beginning of the fieldwork, it was evident that staff members made some assumptions about me based on their previous encounters and bad experiences of working with “academics”. One of the staff members explained that the organisation had been “burned” by researchers coming in and not caring about the women, but also not having a “clue” about the “real” issues because they were too removed. However, the staff member explained that when she later read my CV, which detailed my ten years of experience working with children with special needs and adults with mental ill health, she felt more comfortable working with me. It seemed other staff made assumptions about me based on my southern-English accent, as shown by the following entry in my field diary,

Becky said when they first told her she was going to have a PhD student from St Andrews in the class, she thought “oh God what have we got here?” She said she knew now that I might “talk posh” but that I wasn’t like those other “academic-y” types.

Field diary (May 2013)

I recorded this entry on my last day of volunteering at Fountain Point following a conversation with Becky as she hugged me goodbye. It illuminates not only her assumptions of me but also how they shifted over the time that I spent at Fountain Point.

Conscious that I was “different”, I made careful choices about other visual “markers” of my identity (Hopkins, 2009c). Specifically, I dressed professionally and modestly and avoided wearing clothes or accessories that looked expensive. In so doing I wanted to show respect for the Muslim women in dressing modestly, but also respect for some of the women who I knew were suffering financial hardships. However, there was no escaping the fact that I “looked” different to some women,

Today one of the ladies in class told me about a conversation between her and her sister-in-law. She told me they'd been wondering if I was Prince William's wife. She told me I looked like the Princess, and dressed like her too. We laughed and I told her sadly not.

Conversation with Sakeena, noted in my field notes during the first week of volunteering (January 2012)

As time passed however, I became less of a stranger to the research participants,

You know no one else knows my story, apart from one friend at my kids' school. But I said you know what? Let me share with Rebecca, because we have this bond, whenever we see you in the classroom we get so excited, that's what I'm saying we have this bond.

Sakeena, life narrative (October, 2012)

Over time, I found that I emphasised different aspects of my identity depending on with whom I was speaking. For example, in talking at length with Muslim women, I began emphasising my Christian faith more, and they seemed to get excited about this, telling me about the relationship between Islam and Christianity. When I got engaged, I found that conversations shifted more towards what it meant to get married and be a wife, as the women waited with baited breath to see pictures of the dress I chose. Then it came time to leave and not only did I have to leave Scotland, but I left the UK and migrated to the US with my now husband. Suddenly, I was a marriage migrant, 3000 miles away from home with no friends or extended family nearby; I felt more able to relate to my research participants than ever before and it helped me to “see” aspects of my data that I had barely noticed previously.

Over the time that I volunteered at Fountain Point, my role shifted back and forth between insider/outsider, volunteer/researcher, staff member/friend and co-student/ kin. Such findings are in keeping with Narayan (1993, p. 672) who suggests, “Education, gender, sexual orientation, class, race, or sheer duration of contacts may at different times outweigh the cultural identity we associate with insider or outsider status.” The following section explores the implications of my shifting position in relation to the

research participants, specifically reflecting on my dual role as a researcher and a volunteer in greater depth. In addition, the section explores the ethical and methodological challenges that arose in the study.

3.5 Methodological reflections

Hopkins (2009c, pp. 221-222), highlights the “lack of sustained engagement with methodological issues within geographic scholarship about contemporary Islam,” suggesting that critical debate and discussion of the ethical and methodological considerations in researching Muslim geographies will help to advance this important field of study. This section reflects and discusses both the ethical and methodological issues that arose through this research strategy. To some extent, what follows is an account of both the success and failures of this study; this thesis was an ongoing journey of reflection and adaptation and the following account seeks to highlight this.

As previously discussed, I undertook the role of a volunteer-researcher as an approach to “encounter” Muslim migrant women. This approach, however, had additional benefits to enabling me to meet Muslim migrant women; it also allowed me to “give back” something to the women in exchange for the time and effort that they put into the study. Participants in the staff focus group discussion referred to this volunteer-research approach favourably,

Leila: ...we were happy for you to come and do some research here because you wanted to volunteer. We would prefer to do it that way as then you get to know the women and you get to know us.

Adeela: One of the problems that we face is that the women we work with are constantly asked to take part in research, but where does all this research go and what's it for? They never end up seeing anything tangible from it, so it's hard to keep asking them to do it. You know?

Leila: But then when you're volunteering you're getting to know them but then they also see you as supporting them too...

Adeela: Yeah that's true.

Staff focus group, June 2012

This notion of “giving-back” made me more comfortable about asking women to take part in the research, and I felt less like a research “tourist” coming to “extract” data and then leave again. Such concerns are voiced among geographers undertaking in-depth social research on potentially sensitive subjects and with marginalised or vulnerable social groups (Bondi and Domosh, 1992; Cloke *et al.*, 2000). The praxis turn in human

geography highlights a moral obligation to reciprocal research, which moves beyond giving voice to marginalised social groups towards an avowed commitment to improving the lives of the people and communities with whom researchers engage (Cloke, 2002). Arguably marginal, I felt that my role as a volunteer at Fountain Point allowed me to at least reciprocate in some way by volunteering as a class tutor to migrant women learning English and computing skills.

In addition to volunteering, in working through Fountain Point, I agreed to provide the organisation with some outputs in the form of briefing papers in support of the work they do. However, this in itself raises a potential area for a conflict of interest: what if participants reported negative experiences at Fountain Point? I do not seek to solve this issue here; rather I raise it because it highlights the pitfalls and difficulties of a volunteer-researcher approach. Furthermore, in working with research participants primarily within the space of Fountain Point, greater potential existed for their accounts to reflect the discursive space in which we met, a space of employment possibilities, education and skills, which framed our conversations and their accounts (Dyck and McLaren, 2004). Would I have heard a different version of events if they had told their stories in their homes? As Cloke *et al.*, (2000, p. 137) note, “Far from uncovering ‘the truth’, the interview permits the telling of a particular story, or a discursive version of the interviewee’s experience, which would not necessarily be replicated at another time, or with another interviewer, or in another geographical space.”

I was also concerned that women would feel obliged to participate in the research because they knew me and wanted to help or felt that they owed me something for teaching them in class. One participant confirmed my fears when she told her husband she was meeting her “teacher” (me). Such feelings highlight issues of power in social research that feminist and participatory research approaches have sought to illuminate (Kindon *et al.*, 2007; Sharp, 2005). However, on reflection, I possibly over-emphasised *my* power without recognising the power that participants had to either decline to take part or resist some of my approaches to research, as was found by Chacko (2004). This was most evident in my initial recruitment efforts, when so few women agreed to take part in the research, which acted in itself as an exertion of resistance to my requests. Furthermore, having recruited some women to take part, when I asked them if they would like to participate in a photography project they politely declined. One woman

told me she was too busy with childcare to carry a camera around and take pictures; two others said they did not want the responsibility of taking photographs, as they did not know how to take them. Another two women explained that they could not take photographs for modesty reasons. Most recently, both Mohammad (2013) and Ehrkamp (2013) have used mental maps with Muslim migrant women to understand their use of space in the city. Perhaps then, this study may have been more successful in incorporating a PAR project based on drawings or artwork, rather than photography.

Participants further alleviated my concerns about unequal power relations when they alluded to the “positive” feelings from sharing their stories with me. Akia told me,

I really enjoyed that, I just feeling like I'm sitting with my sister and talking for all the last few years, it reminds me. I didn't have a chance to speak with my sisters when I go to visit Iraq 'cause they have a family as well and they came just a few hours with the kids, but I don't have the chance like that to sit for one hour and remember like that, talk about my dreams and what I am doing, yes, thank you very much.

Akia, life narrative (October, 2012)

However, I still struggled to justify why women should take part in the research and tried to explain the “end use” of the research. In their study with homeless people, Cloke *et al.*, (2000, p. 140) note, “Many of the homeless people we met were, in fact, far less troubled by the idea of a one-sided contract than we were.” In analysing my field diary, I reached similar conclusions. I found it difficult to explain to research participants that their stories may not effect any tangible changes in policy or public opinion. In their research with homeless people, Cloke *et al.*, (2000) raise the issue of explaining the point of your research to the “end user”. As the authors note (2000, p. 139), “When faced as individual researchers with the demystifying experience of explaining the validity of our research to those in need, considerable ethical turbulence occurred.”

Concerned about the “end use” of my research, I sought participants’ opinions about what they would like me to do with it. I wrote down their responses in my field diary. “A book,” was Shafeeqah’s response. “I don’t want my name in it but I would like my story there you know?” Sakeena told me she would like me to take my work to the Scottish government, “You could tell them about us, so they know, you know?” Other participants said they really did not mind what I did with it. Waajidah told me when I

asked her at the end of her life narrative: “*For me I just wanted to get out and have a coffee with you this morning, a break from the kids, Saturday mornings are hectic and this gave me the perfect excuse!*” As the findings here show, some research participants were unconcerned about research outputs. Rather, amidst their loneliness and homesickness, they expressed gratitude and enjoyment at the opportunity to just sit and talk about their hopes and dreams, to talk about themselves for an hour instead of dealing with children and the monotony and hardships of everyday life as a migrant woman living in Scotland.

In my field diary, I noted numerous instances of research participants’ tears, occasions when they physically and emotionally broke down as we spoke, trembling and muttering their fears. I detailed the way in which research participants tapped their hearts as they spoke of their husbands, hugged themselves as they spoke of distant family, whispered lost dreams, went silent having recalled periods of loneliness, cried as they spoke of their *Allah* or used angry tones in relation to terrorism. I noted my nightmares on the nights that followed the most distressing conversations with research participants. The psychological effects and emotion noted in my field diary show that the “body” is an important scale for geographical research as it can be revealing of the issues that women face in their everyday lives (Bacchi and Beasley, 2002; Dyck and McLaren, 2004; McDowell, 1992).

This embodied knowledge is not only an important source of evidence in working to conceptualise the participants’ migration but also to gather a sense of their everyday realities in Scotland. Thus, instead of seeing emotion just as a product of the research, it also provides an important methodological tool for unravelling the hidden, the unspoken and the embedded realities of the study participants. This supports Hubbard *et al.* (2001) who suggest emotion can also be seen as a way of “knowing”—an epistemology. However, this embodied knowledge is extremely personal and the production of this embodied knowledge in the discursive space of the interview was arguably a result of my relationship with the research participants and raises important ethical considerations of the observation of emotion and body language in research.

However, in inciting these different emotions, I felt guilty and sad about the research and worried I was doing more harm than good. As such, I noted my feelings about stopping the research prematurely,

I'm wondering whether to not do any more interviews with women who aren't volunteers or staff members. I'm worried that in speaking with them, they're dragging up all the things that upset them and worry them and then I just walk away. This doesn't feel right.

Field diary (November 2012)

Yet on reflection, excluding women from the research on such grounds diminishes their agency in *choosing* whether to take part. In the end, I pressed on, but I paid closer attention to talking participants through the potential emotional aspects of the research before we began.

In a similar vein, the sensitivity of the topics in the research concerned me as women talked freely about their lives with minimal prompting from me. The emotional strain on the women that took part in the study and the effect of them recalling stressful times of their life in our conversations also worried me, which I noted in my diary,

...her life narrative was upsetting, but it was more harrowing than I'd ever imagined possible. I felt exhausted by it and needed to sit down. When we left the room, it was obvious she'd been crying. One of the staff members grabbed me as I came out of the room and wanted to ask if I felt okay and if the woman had been okay.

Field diary (October, 2012)

As a volunteer, I was privy to sensitive and private information that I chose not to record in my diary, but which ultimately shaped my research even if only at a subconscious level. This created a feeling of discomfort in me. This feeling derived from my multiple roles, despite the fact I had told the women at Fountain Point that I was a volunteer *and* a researcher. Indeed, in having both of these roles, the boundaries had no doubt blurred for some of the women with whom I met regularly; in helping them in daily classes and becoming acquaintances, if not friends, perhaps they had forgotten that I was a researcher.

Throughout the research process, my own emotions also caused me significant turmoil and uncertainty, which I detailed through my field diary. My diary entries highlighted my confusion over how to progress with the research, whether to continue, to stop, whom to include, whom to leave out. I also experienced research paralysis and

exhaustion as a result of the emotional strain and stress that I felt during my fieldwork. Such paralysis is common in in-depth qualitative or ethnographic research (Fetterman, 1998). In addition, a growing body of work considers the role of emotion and psychological stress on the part of the researcher, referred to by Sharp (2005, p. 306) as the “embodied experience of the field.” In keeping with the findings of Punch (2012) keeping a diary helped to vent my stress, as I was unable to talk about the details in person with anyone because of confidentiality.

Finally, I worried about how I would leave “the field”. Narayan (1993) writes of the “hit and run” approach to anthropology, referring here to when anthropologists fleetingly spend time in a community then move on, taking their publications with them and severing all ties. In the last year of “writing up” this thesis, I have tried to maintain some ties with the field, mainly through email contact as I now live in the US. However, I returned to Fountain Point half way through my “write up year” to say “hello”, and to update the Chief Executive, Adeela, with my progress and discuss potential “outputs” that would benefit the organisation and the women with whom they work. Our conversation lasted for two hours—an eternity in the non-profit organisation culture of money-time-staff shortage. As we discussed what the initial findings might mean, Adeela provided me with further insight about Fountain Point’s work. In so doing, her commentary put some of my findings into a new light—to see aspects of the findings that I had not seen before. In keeping with Narayan (1993, p. 677), going back to the field made my work “better”. My discussion with Adeela also enabled me to ascertain what the Fountain Point staff felt I could “do” with the findings of the study that would be of use to the organisation and in the women’s lives. This conversation helped me to understand that the research be “of use” beyond the academy, an issue close to the heart of geographers concerned with getting academic research “onto the streets” and engaged in “solutions” to inequality (Fuller and Kitchin, 2004, p. 2; Cloke, 2002; Kindon *et al.*, 2007; Pain, 2004).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological context of this study, accounting for both the ontological and epistemological positioning of the study. The study is influenced and informed by a feminist research paradigm but also draws on insights from ethnography in pursuit of the research objectives and questions outlined in chapter 1,

section 1.3. As Sharp (2005, p. 304) suggests, feminist methodology is a political project; it is about “the way in which projects are conceptualized and how we as researchers act as people (ethically, politically, emotionally) while engaged in the process.” As such, this chapter has also aimed to illuminate the methodological and ethical challenges that arise from trying to uncover the lives of a particularly hidden and vulnerable social group, Muslim migrant women. In addition to providing a way to “encounter” Muslim migrant women, using a volunteer-research approach *felt* like the right thing to do, from an ethical standpoint. Indeed, this approach enabled me to “give back” rather than just take. However, as this chapter and the diary entries have shown, such an approach does not solve the many ethical and moral dilemmas inherent in such social research with marginalised social groups. Rather, this approach calls attention to the constant need to reflect on these dilemmas throughout the research process. As Cloke *et al.*, (2000, p. 143) note, there is considerable scope for discomfort and “ethical turbulence” in the “very grey space between research and volunteering”.

In working to capture the lives of the participants, emotion was not only an outcome but was an important epistemological tool. It enabled a deeper insight into the realities of the women. However, as has been discussed, this in itself raises another series of questions around the ethics of researching the “body”. As Rose (1997, p. 317) contends, “the research process is dangerous... the risks of research are impossible to know.” I agree with Rose, and in this section I have tried to illuminate the fractures in my research approach (Rose, 1997). I hope that as social researchers geographers will continue to reflect on their research in a way that acknowledges the messiness of research and our own “fallibilities” (Rose, 1997, p. 319). Such honesty, I argue here, is integral to the continued move towards more socially and ethically responsible approaches to research with “invisible” people.

Against the backdrop of the methodological and ethical issues that arose in the study, the following chapters turn to the evidence gathered. In the analysis and discussion of the evidence, I hope to capture adequately and justly the subjective experiences of migration for the research participants.

Chapter IV: Evidence and discussion part I

Exploring the reasons for Muslim women's migration to Scotland

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 discussed the negative policy and media discourses surrounding Muslim immigration, particularly as it relates to so-called “dependent” spouse and family reunification migration (Kofman *et al.*, 2013). Despite such discourses, chapter 2 highlighted the dearth of knowledge concerning the causes of migration and mobility processes of Muslim women in family-related migration. This neglect risks perpetuating stereotypes about Muslim women as disempowered victims of forced marriages and as uneducated, illiterate and “backwards” (Grillo, 2011; Kofman *et al.*, 2013). Scholars have called for further research with Muslim communities to counter hegemonic accounts of “Muslimness”, instead drawing attention to diversity and heterogeneity among Muslims (Falah and Nagel, 2005; Hopkins, 2009a). However, and as chapter 2 discussed, there has been little explicit engagement with recent conceptual approaches to migration research in order to fully explore the myriad reasons behind Muslim family-related migration. This chapter seeks to address this by examining the reasons for the recent migration of a small group of Muslim women to Scotland. In so doing, the chapter also aims to contribute to current debates within geographic scholarship around the conceptualisation of family-related migration.

To address these aims, this chapter draws primarily on the life narratives of eight Muslim migrant women who participated in the research. Focus group discussions and the field diary provided supplementary evidence. This chapter examines the research evidence together with existing conceptual approaches to migration, discussed in chapter 2. Accordingly, the chapter contributes to the first research objective, outlined in chapter 1, section 1.2: to explore the reasons for migration for a group of Muslim women in family-related migration. To this end, the chapter addresses research questions 1 and 2 also set out in chapter 1, section 1.2: (1) Who are Muslim migrant women? (2) Why did the participants migrate to Scotland?

The chapter is organised around these two research questions. The first section, 4.2, presents the socio-demographic profiles of the eight research participants in order to provide some explanations as to their personal migration history. Section 4.3 examines

the women's accounts in depth to explore why they migrated. In so doing, the section adopts a lifecourse or biographical approach to examine the influence of personal histories and lifecourse events on the decision to migrate (Bailey, 2009; Halfacree and Boyle, 1993).

4.2 Who are Muslim migrant women?

This section presents the socio-demographic profiles of the eight research participants who shared their life narratives. The aim of the section is to complicate simplistic understandings of Muslim women in family-related migration streams as “backwards” and “uneducated” (Kofman *et al.*, 2013). Of the research participants, seven were married and one was separated and living apart from her husband. Seven of the research participants had children, with six women having three or more dependent children, all of whom lived with them. The participants were from a range of sub-Saharan East and West African and West and South Asian countries. This geographical diversity is an important aspect of the research, as scholars have highlighted that much of the literature on British Muslim geographies has focused on women of South Asian descent, primarily from Pakistan (Hopkins and Gale, 2009). All eight of the women who shared their narratives consider themselves as practicing Islam and come from different socio-economic backgrounds with differing access to educational and employment opportunities over their lifecourse. Table 4.1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of each of the research participants and demonstrates their diverse socio-demographic backgrounds and range of modes of entry to the UK as migrants.

Table 4.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of research participants

Name	Age	Country of birth	Countries of domicile ⁵	# Years in UK	Mode of entry to the UK	Educational attainment	Marital status	# Children ⁶
Akia	36	Iraq	Iraq Scotland	9	Family visa ⁷ (spousal reunification)	Bachelors degree	Married	3
Asmara	32 ⁸	Iraq	Iraq Turkey Netherlands Scotland	5	EU passport holder (former asylum seeker)	Two years of primary school	Married	3
Haziqah	32	Nigeria	Nigeria Scotland	4	Family visa (student)	Primary school complete	Married	5
Nuzhat	29	Pakistan	Pakistan Scotland Pakistan England Scotland	6	Family visa (spousal reunification)	University diploma	Married	1
Rafeeqah	26	Pakistan	Pakistan Scotland	<1	Family visa (spousal reunification)	Bachelors degree	Married	0
Sakeena	37	Malawi	Malawi England Scotland	15	Ancestral visa ⁹	High school (incomplete)	Separated	4
Shafeeqah	43	Malawi	Malawi Scotland	2	Ancestral visa	High school (incomplete)	Married	5
Waajidah	34	France	France The Gambia Malaysia England Scotland	10	EU passport holder	Bachelors degree	Married	4

⁵ Listed in chronological order.

⁶ Number of children

⁷ Formally categorized as a “family of a settled person visa” (UKBA, 2014) but commonly discussed in the migration and policy-based literature as a “spousal” or “dependents” visa.

⁸ Asmara has no record of her birth because she was born when her parents were political refugees and her birth was not registered. She thinks she was born in 1980, making her 32 years old at the time of the study.

⁹ Available to Commonwealth citizens with a grandparent born in the UK (UKBA, 2014).

Table 4.1 demonstrates that half of the research participants entered the UK as a “dependent” family member, meaning they joined either a settled person¹⁰ or a family member who holds a temporary visa. None of the women were the “sponsor” of the migration in legal terms. Existing policy and media discourses, as well as some academics have highlighted the prevalence of Muslim women as “dependent” migrants (Kofman *et al.*, 2013; Merali, 2008; Securing our Borders, 2007). However, even within this small study diversity exists among the participants’ legal modes of entry to the UK: Asmara and Waajidah entered as EU passport holders, although Asmara obtained her passport by seeking asylum in the Netherlands; Sakeena and Shafeeqah entered the UK on an ancestral visa, enabled by Malawi’s status as a commonwealth country and because they both had grandparents with settled status in England; Akia, Nuzhat and Rafeeqah entered as new spouses (marriage migrants) to join their husbands in the UK; Haziqah entered as a “dependent” of her husband who has a temporary student (PhD) visa. Whilst transnational marriage allowed three of the participants to apply for visas to come to the UK, the other five participants entered the UK/Europe based on colonial ties, asylum, or because of their husbands’ career/education. As such, the diverse modes of family-related migration shown among this small sample supports scholars who suggest the classifications or categories of migrants “need to be problematized theoretically and blurred in practice” (King, 2012, pp. 136-137). In the ensuing discussion, it will be important to reflect on the extent to which the participants’ accounts work to blur the category of “family” migrant.

The fourth column in table 4.1 shows the countries where each of the participants lived prior to the study. As discussed in chapter 2, the concept of transnational, rather than international, migration has been widely adopted by migration scholars who emphasise the regularity with which people cross borders and the impermanency of international moves (Boyle, 2002; Vertovec, 2009). The evidence here supports this notion of the impermanency of migration by highlighting the transnational behaviour of some participants.

Column 7 shows the diverse educational backgrounds of the research participants. Four of the eight participants had attended university and at the time of the study, Waajidah

¹⁰ The UK Border Agency (2014) defines “settled” person as a person who is living permanently in the UK, *i.e.* granted indefinite leave to remain.

was studying for her postgraduate master's degree. Shafeeqah and Sakeena both reached high school but did not complete it. Haziqah only completed primary school. Asmara went to school for two years but had to leave when her Kurdish family fled Iraq. Such diversity among the women here tends to go against existing stereotypes of Muslim migrants as uneducated, as has been highlighted by Kofman *et al.* (2013) and support instead the contradictory position of family migration scholars, who highlight the tendency for family migrants to be highly educated (Castles, 2010; King, 2002).

The socio-demographic profiles of the research participants are illustrative of the heterogeneity among this group of Muslim “dependent” migrants. Indeed, this snapshot of their backgrounds and modes of entry to the UK complicates generalisations of Muslim women in family-related migration streams as “victims” of forced marriages, as discussed in chapter 2 (Grillo, 2011; Kofman *et al.*, 2013; Razack, 2004). Building on this glimpse of the participants’ diverse personal histories that preceded their migration to Scotland, the following section explores the participants’ narratives of migration together with conceptual approaches to understanding migration, which were outlined in chapter 2. Thus, the section seeks to offer conceptual insights to the migration of Muslim women and their families, bringing their accounts of migration to life, highlighting their emotions, the contradictions and the overall “messiness” of migration.

4.3 Why do Muslim women migrate?

Chapter 2 discusses the uptake of biographical approaches to studying migration determinants and behaviours in the mid-1990s, which sought to conceptualise migration not as a one-off “event”, but as rooted in a person’s biography (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; Halfacree, 2004a; Ni Laoire, 2000). Advocates of lifecourse or biographical approaches to understanding migration suggest that focusing purely on the reason for migration or the migration “act” fails to capture the “multiple currents” that feed into migration decision-making and mobility processes that are seldom acknowledged by the migrant when questioned about migration (Halfacree, 2004a, p. 241, see also Halfacree and Boyle, 1993). This approach continues to attract significant attention in geographic studies of migration that have more recently highlighted the sequencing and synchronization of lifecourse events that shape (or constrain) mobility (Bailey, 2009). Indeed, the widespread uptake of biographical and lifecourse approaches has allowed geographers to attend to the subjective experience of migration, working to uncover

migrant voices in migration research (Lawson, 2000; Silvey, 2013). However, the voices of Muslim migrant women remain relatively silent in this body of literature; this section aims to address this silence.

In so doing, I am conscious to avoid claims to generalizability and reductionism in presenting the participants' accounts; the reader should understand their experiences of migration as *illustrative* rather than *representative* of a small group of Muslim women's experiences of migration. Moreover, I am also conscious to again remind the reader that this research involved a specific group of Muslim migrant women: mostly unemployed and mostly mothers who migrated to Scotland with their families or to join their husbands in a city where they had no (or very few) existing social or family connections. The participants are thus not understood to be independent "professional" or "skilled" Muslim migrant women (although such essentialist categories are in themselves highly problematic as this chapter shows). Nor are the participants Muslim migrant women from communities where migration histories have directed them to other parts of the UK, for example British-Pakistani Muslims in Northern England. Additionally, the accounts are just one way in which each of the participants chose to tell me their story, on that particular day and at that particular juncture in their life. Seeking for their voices to be heard through the data, direct quotes are used where possible, however this was not possible for all accounts as one of the participants, Haziqah, did not want to be voice recorded and thus interview notes are used to illustrate her story. Some of the participants feature more prominently than others in the evidence below and this largely reflects the fact that some women spoke extensively about life before and during migration, whereas others spoke more about life after migration—the subject of chapter 5. Others, however, spoke less altogether.

4.3.1 The "decision" to migrate

When asked about the reason for migrating to Scotland in focus group discussions, participants did not enter into a detailed discussion but referenced the event that had led them to the UK. For example, three of the participants highlighted their marriage: Nuzhat stated, "*I had an arranged marriage to my husband, who was living in London, so after that I came to UK*"; similarly Rafeeqah explained, "*I came here [from Pakistan] three months after I married my husband; he is already living here six years.*" Akia too said, "*I came here because I married my husband...his family is from*

here.” Other participants explained their migration in terms of their husbands’ plans and did not offer any further explanation initially. For instance, Asmara remarked, “*My husband wanted to come here, so we moved here two years ago.*” Waajidah explained, “*My husband got a job in Wales, so that’s why he came and I followed*”; whereas Haziqah referenced her husband’s PhD scholarship at a Scottish university as the reason for her and her five children moving to Scotland from Nigeria. Thus in their initial responses in a focus group setting, these six participants did not explain their migration in terms of their own desires, but instead referenced their marriage to a co-ethnic spouse living in the UK, or their husbands’ career or desires as the reason they migrated to Scotland.

Seen in this way, a cursory reading of the findings seems to suggest that these six participants migrated to the UK either to join, or follow, their husbands. This reading of their responses is in keeping with much of the earliest scholarship on family mobility behaviours in which women were positioned as “trailing” or “tied” migrants, as discussed in chapter 2 (Bonney and Love, 1991; Mincer, 1978). Furthermore, the findings show that three of the eight participants migrated following their marriage to a UK-based spouse, which is in keeping with the literature that discusses the importance of marriage migration in Muslim migration from the global South to the global North (Grillo, 2011; Kraler *et al.*, 2011).

However, as participants elaborated on their migration in the focus groups and in particular through their life narratives, it emerged that for some of the participants their husbands’ career aspirations or their transnational marriages were simply the “event” that *actualised* the migration, which in itself was driven and shaped by diverse life experiences, feelings and imagination. Indeed, in beginning the life narrative sessions, participants answered questions relating to what life was like before they migrated to Scotland. The eight individual stories that followed this prompt illustrated the complexity and “messiness” of migration and the manifold feelings involved. At times, the participants’ stories were conflicted or confused, indicative of their efforts to interpret and to make sense of their own mobility within the wider context of their life experiences. The following section will present, analyse and discuss the participants’ stories of migration. In so doing, the conceptual frameworks identified and discussed in

chapter 2, section 2.3, will be drawn on as a lens through which to extend understandings of *why* this group of women migrated to Scotland.

4.3.2 Migration: the chance to become a “different” person

More than any of the other participants, Akia opened her heart and seemed to simply pour out her life story. At times tears rolled down her cheeks as she hugged herself. At other points, she broke into a fit of giggles or simply smiled. It was perhaps because of her diverse outpouring of emotion that I found her story most striking and memorable. However, such emotion was also revealing of why she chose to marry “her love” and leave all her family in Iraq to join her husband in Scotland. I first met Akia when she began a volunteer placement at Fountain Point. Akia has lived in Scotland for nine years with her husband. They have three sons, the youngest of which was about to start school full-time when we met. Akia was born in Iraq and lived there with her mother, father and siblings until she was 26 years old. As part of an educated family, she enjoyed a close relationship with her parents and siblings but had few friends, as her life was restricted to home and university for safety because of on-going conflict. When I asked Akia what life was like growing up she hugged herself and spoke in a hushed voice—almost whispering—and told me,

Growing up it was the government for Saddam Hussein. It was really terrible. I'm frightened for everything I just like to go out [of Iraq]...if someone offered to me to go to Africa I would go because it was really really hard, terrible and because my family is strong religion so he really hate that. He's Muslim but he hate you to be strong Muslim. Yeah, so it was difficult for my family; I lived with my mum, dad, two sisters, one brother, I'm not going out a lot because always my dad and mum frightened for me as I am young, um, I just go to university, I not having lots of friends.

Akia, life narrative (November, 2012)

As we sat in the stillness of the interview room and talked, Akia looked timid as she spoke of living in Iraq during the Saddam Hussein administration. Her fear was seemingly a driving force for her desire to “go out” and go to Africa; her childhood experiences of living through political unrest shaped, at least in part, her desire for mobility. In addition, Akia was motivated to migrate because of the economic implications of the conflict in Iraq; Akia explained that she was unable to find a job after completing her degree in agriculture because of the impact of the conflict on the agricultural industry, which strengthened her desire to move away from Iraq,

In this period it was not job for everybody who finish [degree] because agriculture in my country it was really bad because after, I don't know if you heard, Saddam Hussein used the chemical from helicopter to cull the trees...they all died...so then I am thinking it will be good to move, to find job because there is nothing here for me [in Iraq].

Akia, life narrative (November, 2012)

Akia then explained that she met her husband, the son of Iraqi-born parents living in Scotland, whilst on a family holiday and described instantly falling in love. Akia and her husband married six months later, and she moved to Scotland to live with her husband, his parents and his siblings. It was at this point in her narrative that Akia's tone changed to a more upbeat note and she began to giggle and put both hands over her heart as she described meeting her husband,

Oh, I see this man, this man is angel for me! And we are still in love!

Akia, life narrative (November, 2012)

Whilst evidently a marriage for love, earlier events in Akia's life shaped her inclination towards migrating for marriage and to "go out" from Iraq. Thus, it would seem that her transnational marriage facilitated her "escape" from Iraq. This supports migration scholars who suggest that in trying to understand *why* people migrate, the cited reason for migration, for example Akia's marriage, is more often that not just "the tip of the iceberg" (Benson, 2012, p. 1690). This became increasingly evident as Akia continued to talk. She reiterated, this time more explicitly, that it was her dream to leave Iraq but that the marriage had *actualised* her dream to migrate,

Rebecca: So you came to Scotland because you married your husband?

Akia: Yeah but this is my dream, this is not just because of my husband (Akia laughed as she spoke). It was always my dream...you know when I met my husband I loved him but I'm also thinking it's not just my heart, it will be good to come here. I will study, I will do lots of things, this is my dream...(taps heart). Because life is really difficult in Iraq, we sometimes heard [from] my uncle and my auntie and my grandma [in England] from 1990 what life is like. So when we see pictures from them, how they live, how they wear these clothes, how they eat, it's dream for me. But it's not for clothes or food, this is not important for me, to be honest the education I really love to do something, to do something I can read my name in newspaper or in the television and they [will] say this lady she do something for the world or her country or for her family. I always dream I'm feeling, it's not to be posh but to be doing something big...

Akia, life narrative (November, 2012)

Against the backdrop of growing up in conflict, accessing a good education but being robbed of the opportunity to use it, Akia explains that she wanted to do “something for the world or her country or for her family...something big.” But what did she mean by “something big”? Akia never elaborated on this during her narrative or in my subsequent and regular interactions with her. However, I would suggest from her words that Akia believed migration offered her a chance to *feel* differently about herself, perhaps to feel proud, patriotic, or even “free”. Viewing her narrative in this way lends support to the Conradson and Latham’s (2007, p. 237) claims that the opportunity to “cultivate new forms of selfhood...and subject positions”, are of equal importance as the economic factors that shape migration. Indeed, it would seem that Akia perceived migration as offering the chance to “become a different person”, or work on the “self” (Conradson and Latham, 2007, p. 247), a possibility that was not available to her in the political and economic climate of Iraq at the time. However, in referencing the pictures and stories from her aunt and uncle living in England, imaginative geographies seem to have played an important role in shaping Akia’s perceptions of the possibilities of life in the UK.

Born in France but having spent most of her childhood in the Gambia, Waajidah’s arranged marriage “interrupted” her studies at the age of 18 when she went to join her husband in Malaysia. Waajidah described her disappointment that her father had found her a husband so soon after she finished high school, as she had high hopes to continue her education,

The minute I finished my high school, at that time it was the O’ level so I had my O’ level then I wanted to do my sixth form and A’ levels; and at that time for the first daughter the priority was to get married. So unfortunately I had someone...if there was nobody who was asking for marriage then maybe I wouldn’t get married. I just continue my sixth form and everything but no there was straightaway somebody they say oh no marriage is priority so you have to get married. I got married and then I left the Gambia...I arrived in Malaysia and straight away I’m thinking I’ll enrol in college, but unfortunately that didn’t happen because I got pregnant so when I got pregnant I say, oh God! (Waajidah raised her voice and then sighed.) ‘Cause it means I can’t enter the college.

Waajidah, life narrative (November, 2012)

When Waajidah’s husband was offered a job in Wales, Waajidah saw this as her “chance” to get her degree at last. She left her daughter with her mother in France and moved to England to study for her degree,

He [husband] got the translation job from a friend in Wales and then in 2001 he came here...but in fact, that's what I wanted too; yeah 'cause at that time, I had contact with one of the distance learning college in London. I'd looked into this. And I just want to start university full stop. So I just thought let me stay here [in France] and have the baby, then I'll come straight and do the degree there.

Waajidah, life narrative (November, 2012)

Normative marriage practices clearly interrupted Waajidah's education. As the eldest daughter she had to marry before she finished her education and had to leave the Gambia to live with her husband in Malaysia. Seemingly, Waajidah had little or no influence in her initial marriage migration to Malaysia. Moreover, this interruption shows the gendered outcomes of such normative marriage practices that apparently affected Waajidah more than her husband, who, Waajidah told me, was able to continue with his career—obtaining his PhD and teaching. This supports findings from Riaño (2011), who discusses the gendered career and educational implications of transnational marriages. However, despite these setbacks, Waajidah has remained motivated to pursue her education and at the time that we met, she had obtained her degree and was studying for a post-graduate qualification, whilst raising four children. To me, her determination and tenacity were striking in both her narrative and in the on-going conversations we had whenever we met. In a study with Muslim migrants in Germany, Ehrkamp (2013, p. 25) discusses the way in which some women use migration as a tool to resist or “undo gendered generational relations of power.” This is helpful here, because it illuminates Waajidah's migration to England as a way to resist or “undo” her father's exertion of power when he arranged her marriage before she had the chance to study for her A' Levels.

I turn now to discuss the circumstances in which Sakeena migrated to the UK. Sakeena is from Malawi and arrived in England to visit her grandmother in 1997. Sakeena since married (and separated) from her husband and is now a single mother living with her four children in Scotland. Sakeena spoke little of her arranged marriage in 1997 to a co-ethnic spouse living in Scotland, which facilitated her internal migration from England to Scotland and ultimately made her “sojourn” to the UK from Malawi a permanent migration. This may reflect Sakeena's feelings about this period as a less happy time in her life, as in her narrative she openly spoke about the separation and the emotional hardships she had endured, or it may reflect that her marriage was less important to her

in her personal migration journey. Indeed, instead of talking about her marriage, Sakeena emphasised that she left Malawi and came to England to stay with her grandmother and join her uncle as he went on the *Hajj*.

So then I moved to England. I didn't move actually. I came to see my Granny for a visit; yeah I was coming for a visit, just a holiday because from here we were all going on pilgrimage to Mecca. My Granny and my dad's younger brother with his family they were all going on the pilgrimage for six weeks so I came here then went with them in October 1997. Yeah that was lovely. It was so (emphasis) good, so good, really really good yeah... pauses...(Sakeena shook her head and held her hand to her heart as she spoke).

Sakeena, life narrative (November, 2012)

Pilgrimage to *Mecca*, the religious centre of Islam located in Saudi Arabia, is required of all Muslim believers in their lifetime and is one of the Five Pillars of Islam (Rowley, 1989; Silvey, 2005). Pilgrimage during the month of *Dhul-Hijjah* is known as *Hajj* and takes place in the twelfth month of the Muslim lunar year (Rowley, 1989). Rowley (1989, p. 351) discusses the *Hajj* as “vital and [of] precise importance” for Muslims.

When you have something like that in your life it is so contentment seriously, peace of mind...

Sakeena, life narrative (November, 2012)

Sakeena placed great emphasis on the spiritual meaning of *Hajj*. It seems that for Sakeena, the spiritual meaning of the *Hajj* was central to her desire to visit her grandmother in England, thus prompting her initial “sojourn”. Such emphasis is in keeping with Silvey (2005) who found that the “deep spiritual meaning” of Pilgrimage to *Mecca* is a driving force behind the mobility process of Javanese domestic worker migrants. Likewise, it supports Hopkins (2009c, p. 10) who says that the *hajj* can arouse deep emotion in a person, including a “sense of personal fulfilment.” Seen in this light, Sakeena’s initial “sojourn” to England can be understood as driven by the possibility of transforming her *religious* selfhood and the opportunity to *feel* closer to *Allah*. This adds a different dimension to the literature on the possibilities for resubjectification through migration, discussed in chapter 2, which (with the exception of Silvey, 2005, 2007) does not account for deeper spiritual or religious meanings in shaping migration behaviour. It also highlights the importance of understanding events in the lifecourse in shaping migration, as Sakeena’s initial “sojourn” resulted in her eventual settlement in Scotland when her family arranged for her to marry a Scottish-Malawian man.

Rafeeqah's narrative illustrates the deeper religious and gendered meanings attached to migration. She told me that her divorce and subsequent marriage resulted in her migration to the UK. Rafeeqah discussed her divorce as a "mishap" in her life,

Because before, I had mishap in my life. I got err married once and because in our religion we have one thing which is contract that is Nikāh this is a paper marriage and then after that there is Rukhsati when you have relationship with your husband so I have Nikāh with a person but I got divorced before Rukhsati. Thankfully he [new husband] had no objection with my divorce and stuff like that because culturally in Pakistan it is almost impossible if a lady got divorced after that she finds a good husband but Alhamdulillah! Thanks to God!

Rafeeqah, life narrative (November, 2012)

Rafeeqah emphasised the impossibility of marriage after divorce in her "culture" and was thankful to *Allah* for her second husband's marriage proposal. It is possible to see then, that against the backdrop of normative beliefs around marriage and divorce, Rafeeqah perceived her marriage as a gift from *Allah* but was also grateful to her husband for his proposal. Thus, this "second chance" to marry was the reason Rafeeqah migrated to Scotland, despite her reservations,

He [Rafeeqah's husband] came over to Pakistan for 21 days and we were married. Then after that I was like please go, I want to live with my family [Rafeeqah laughed]. Yeah, I just wanted to live with my family, not because I did not love my husband, but once a baby always a baby!

Rafeeqah, life narrative (November, 2012)

Rafeeqah here explained that she was reluctant to leave her family. It seemed that she enjoyed life in Pakistan and wanted to stay living with her family, a desire strengthened by the fact that she was the "baby", *i.e.* the youngest family member. However, despite her reservations, I cannot neglect to recognise the agency that Rafeeqah exercised in accepting this transnational marriage proposal that would rid her of her "divorced label". In so doing, Rafeeqah prioritised her own desires to be married and to satisfy cultural norms over her desires to remain living with her parents in Pakistan. Rafeeqah's actions exhibit a more diverse reading of human agency that accounts for negotiation and compromise of individual aspirations in the context of cultural norms. This supports Freeman (2005, p. 157), who suggests that exercising agency does not always imply a "blanket rejection of...familial expectations and cultural norms." Such diverse displays of human agency complicate the dominant assumptions of marriage migrants as lacking agency or as "victims" as discussed in chapter 2.

Rafeeqah also explained that her husband is from Pakistan but has been studying for his master's degree and now PhD in the UK, and she later discussed that he was interested in marrying her because of her high level of education, particularly her Qur'an studies,

My husband says why he chose me for marriage since I have this divorced label with me (Rafeeqah emphasised the word divorced and laughed heartily) he was like because although you have studied sciences it is because you are expert, well I'm not an expert, but because you have read Qur'an with its explanation ...because when you read Qur'an Alhamdulillah! Thanks to God! This knowledge of more social sciences comes to your mind, it's about the society, about the people.

Rafeeqah, life narrative (November, 2012)

Rafeeqah described the knowledge of social sciences as important to her husband and I can infer here that a commonality in ways of thinking and understanding the world—a “social sciences” perspective—was a driving force behind his marriage proposal despite her “divorced label”. This seems to contradict some existing studies, which suggest co-ethnic transnational marriages are driven by the desire for a more pious and less “modern” woman from the “homeland” (Timmerman, 2008). However, there is some nuance here, as it is possible to infer that Rafeeqah's husband perceived her in-depth knowledge of the Qur'an as indicative of her religious piety and this supports Silvey (2007, p. 222) who discusses the “religiously inflected discourses of gendered propriety” that shape Muslim migration. Evidently, then, gendered social norms and religious discourses are important considerations in working to understand why Muslim women migrate.

Drawing on concepts and approaches to migration discussed in chapter 2, the findings here illustrate the importance attached to the possibilities to *become* or to *feel* different through migration, possibilities that were not available prior to migrating. Indeed, for Akia, such possibilities did not seem to exist for her in the political and economic climate in Iraq, whereas Waajidah felt robbed of the opportunity to finish her education because of normative marriage practices. Rafeeqah felt able to resist her “divorced label” and reinstate her status as a pious Muslim woman by accepting a transnational marriage proposal despite her reservations around leaving her family. Thus, the findings illustrate the agency of these three participants in using migration as a way to negotiate constraints on their ability to “be different”, or perhaps more pertinently, to be the person that they always hoped to be. Indeed, the findings here show that the importance

attached to resubjectification through migration is relational to lifecourse events and personal histories.

Further, the findings show the importance of considering lifecourse events that feature less prominently in the migration literature, for example, divorce, as in Rafeeqah's case. This echoes recent calls from scholars of internal migration who argue that divorce can be an important driver of migration (Cooke, 2008; Smith, 2011). Additionally, Sakeena's narrative on pilgrimage to *Mecca* highlights the importance of lifecourse events that have religious meanings, as suggested by Hopkins (2009c) and McLoughlin (2009). Thus, the evidence examined here challenges the way in which lifecourse events are largely discussed with reference to pregnancy, raising children or retirement in the migration literature and highlight the importance of lifecourse events with deep spiritual meaning in shaping migration. Likewise, the findings here suggest that accounting for the impact of lifecourse events on migration requires careful attention of the cultural norms and practices that surround such lifecourse events, for example the stigma of divorce in South Asian culture. In so doing, the findings highlight the need to recognise the subjective meanings and importance attached to lifecourse events in working to understand their role in driving migration.

In the evidence examined in this section, participants all made references to the role of family members in influencing their migration. Accordingly, the following section examines in closer detail the ways in which participants explained their migration in relation to their immediate and extended family members. To do so, the section draws on the findings together with conceptual insights from the literature on internal family migration, discussed in chapter 2.

4.3.3 Family-related migration?

Three of the participants, Asmara, Haziqah and Shafeeqah, highlighted the wellbeing of the family and more specifically the children as prompting their migration to Scotland. When asked what life was like in Malawi before moving to Scotland, Shafeeqah instantly began recalling the time that carjackers held her at gunpoint,

The violence problem, you know I have had bad experience (Shafeeqah tutted and shook her head). I think I have told you they like showed me a gun and had me at gun point....So that was a very bad experience in my life and my husband was really all very scared and frustrated because what they

can do these days is they can just shoot you as well and you see this was a very bad experience and I had my daughter in the car at the time...but I shouldn't say that was the only reason I came here...I just didn't run away for that reason.

Shafeeqah, life narrative (November, 2012)

In highlighting this carjacking, it seemed that the fear it incited in Shafeeqah and her husband prompted them to start thinking about leaving Malawi. Shafeeqah's sister-in-law lived in the city (in Scotland) with her family, and Shafeeqah recalled how it made them start to consider the possibility of Scotland. This highlights the importance of extended family in shaping the migration destination, as family migration scholars highlight (Bailey, 2009; Bailey and Boyle, 2004). Shafeeqah went on to explain that educational benefits for their five children and access to reliable free healthcare were equally important reasons for migrating to the UK,

Coming to the UK another thing was education because it is better here yes? And the expense as well in the sense that we used to pay school fees down there, but here we do get the support from the council so just like education and medical wise like emergency you know something just happens, we do have hospitals and all the equipment and stuff but the doctors are sometimes not available and things like that.

Shafeeqah, life narrative (November, 2012)

It seems then that the cost of education and medical care in Malawi was a reason Shafeeqah and her husband wanted to come to the UK, thus reiterating the centrality of financial considerations in explaining family-related migration (Cooke, 2008). However, Shafeeqah explained on another occasion that because her husband had studied in England, they wanted their children to have the same opportunity. Over the time that I knew Shafeeqah, it was evident that her children's education played strongly on her mind. On a weekly basis when we met, she sought my help in looking through college brochures for her daughter and kept emphasising the need for her to get a good education. Further, Shafeeqah explained that the prioritisation of the children's education was so important to her husband that he persuaded her to leave Malawi ahead of him, so that they could enrol their daughter in sixth-form college. Initially, Shafeeqah told me that she had hoped her husband would join them after six months, but two years later (at the time of the study), her husband was still in Malawi and had not yet closed his business, thus leaving Shafeeqah with sole responsibility for looking after their five children and running the home,

Two years ago when I got here, everything was completely new for me. I came with my husband to settle me in the May...He stayed for three months

and then he left us, May, June, July, August—he is leaving again for Malawi.

Shafeeqah, focus group discussion (September, 2012)

In migrating alone with her children, Shafeeqah took on the role of lead migrant, thus disrupting existing understandings of the husband/father as the lead migrant in family-related migrations, as highlighted by family migration scholars (Green, 1997; Hardill *et al.*, 1997; Smith, 2004). In so doing, however, Shafeeqah retained the responsibility for staying at home with the children and ensuring their everyday wellbeing, whilst her husband remained the “breadwinner”, providing for his family from a distance. This supports Smith (2004), who suggests that “traditional” meanings of motherhood and fatherhood are “enmeshed within the decision to move.” Nonetheless, this raises questions over how the absence of Shafeeqah’s husband in Scotland has resulted in shifting gender relations between them. This will be examined in relation to the participants’ lived realities of migration in chapter 5.

Similarly, Asmara and her family migrated to Scotland from the Netherlands because her husband believed that it would benefit the children,

My husband coming here in 2007 for holiday. He has friend in city and after he coming back he say I want to go to UK because there is more nice than Netherlands and everybody speak English. That is better for my children as well, speaking English where just speak Dutch in Holland, nowhere else, but speak English for whole world. I say I won’t like [Scotland] because my whole family in Holland but my husband say no must you think about [moving to Scotland] but I say no, you go there! I no want [to go to Scotland] because there I [have] no family! (Asmara was laughing as she talked.)

Asmara, life narrative (October, 2012)

Asmara was very open with me about this conflict with her husband over his desires to move the family away from the Netherlands, where they had family and friends, to Scotland, where Asmara knew no one. Asmara talked about how difficult this was because she had spent her childhood “running” and “hiding” from Saddam Hussein. It seemed from her narrative that the thought of moving on again was difficult for Asmara to cope with. However, Asmara went on to reflect on how life had worked out for her and her children since moving to Scotland,

Now my life is better than there. I am more happy than there yeah because my husband now have job and my children speak English with Scottish accents and my children happy as well...For me is more better...

Asmara, life narrative (October, 2012)

Asmara's narrative shows that she prioritised the wellbeing of her family (and their future wellbeing) over her own concerns about moving away from her family and friends in the Netherlands. This supports existing literature that suggests amid intra-family conflict over migration decision-making, family members enact diverse forms of human agency, including negotiation and compromise (Hardill *et al.*, 1997; Smith, 2004).

Haziqah also talked about her migration in terms of the wider needs of her family. She revealed that her family (her husband and [then] four children) migrated to Scotland when a Scottish University offered her husband a full PhD scholarship. My interview notes presented below give insights into why the family took this opportunity according to Haziqah,

Haziqah talked about her husband's PhD that brought them to Scotland. She recalled when he was offered the PhD, and she said she was excited and so happy to go to Scotland. She said they Skype back to extended family in Nigeria and are feeling so proud to be in Scotland as a family. She said they are looking into ways that he and their daughter and maybe even Haziqah herself can stay on past the end of his PhD for two more years. Their eldest daughter is at a crucial part of her education (secondary school), and they want her to finish, believing it will benefit her to have this Scottish education back in Nigeria. Similarly, Haziqah would like to stay and send the younger children home to stay with her sister. If she stays, Haziqah says she can continue to learn her IT skills and English—she feels she is making good progress and does not want to stop prematurely.

Interview notes – conversation with Haziqah (October, 2012)

Whilst Haziqah's husband's career and education prompted the initial migration to Scotland, Haziqah said that after having been in Scotland for four years, her eldest daughter's and her own learning experiences there compel her to stay longer. Evidently then, the needs of the family and Haziqah's own desires are intertwined with the decision to migrate “for” her husband's PhD.

The above passages show that for Asmara, Haziqah and Shafeeqah, their children's education was an important reason for their migration to Scotland. Thus, the findings give credence to literature on *internal* migration that highlights access to better schools for children in prompting family mobility within the UK (Butler, 2003; Cooke, 2008; Smith, 2004). However, the privileging of children's education suggests that these participants' perceive the UK education system as superior to the education system in

their home countries. Furthermore, Asmara and her husband felt their children would benefit from learning English “because the whole world speaks English”. Seen through the lens of recent conceptual approaches to student mobility that were discussed in chapter 2, the findings here illustrate the power relations and imaginative geographies that shaped the participants’ migration based on their perception of the UK as “a powerful and colonising nation” (Beech, 2014, p. 173; Findlay *et al.*, 2012; Madge *et al.*, 2009).

In addition to education, the participants referred to the wellbeing and safety of the family in the decision to migrate. Thus the findings equally resonate with scholars of internal migration who suggest employment opportunities have been over-emphasised in explaining family migration (Halfacree, 2004a; Smith, 2011) and that quality of life can be equally important in explaining why these families migrated to the UK. This demonstrates the importance of going beyond the conceptual boundaries within human geographic scholarship on migration to generate future insights into Muslim family-related migration, as was argued in chapter 2.

The passages above also show that all three of these participants spoke of their migration in habitually relational terms, referring to the needs of their children and husbands. This supports the findings of Freeman (2005, p. 157) who found that Moroccan Muslim migrants commonly “expressed themselves in relation to their family or the community”. However, this does not necessarily suggest that Asmara, Haziqah or Shafeeqah lacked agency in the migration decision-making process. Indeed, Freeman (2005, p. 157) goes on to suggest that this notion of relational identities does not result in the rejection of individual desires, rather that “Moroccan women articulate a notion of relational freedom and identity that is different from Western liberal conceptions of subjectivity and freedom”. Such sentiments echo those of Adamson *et al.* (2011) who suggest that assumptions of gender inequality in Muslim families stems in part from Eurocentric readings of agency that privilege individualism. Seen through this lens, the participants relational accounts of migration complicate essentialist notions of Muslim female spouses as lacking agency in family-related migration to Europe, which was discussed in chapter 2 (Grillo, 2011; Kofman *et al.*, 2013), and lend further support to scholarship that has worked to counter the notion of the “trailing” *subordinate* wife in

family-related migration (Bailey and Boyle, 2004; Cooke, 2001, 2008; Halfacree, 2004a; Hardill *et al.*, 1997; Green, 1997).

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to examine the socio-demographic profiles and the reasons for migration of a small group of Muslim women who migrated to Scotland either with, or to join, their families. These two aims were identified because of the relative silence on Muslim families in the family migration literature, but also because some policy and media discourses tend to depict Muslim migrant women as passive participants in arranged marriages or as victims of forced marriages. Given the small nature of this study, this conclusion does not offer any generalisations from the analysis of the findings in this chapter. Rather, the conclusion seeks to highlight areas of shared experience among the women but also differences, and to point to areas where further research would benefit the literature.

Section 4.2 examined the socio-demographic profiles of the research participants. The participants' legal modes of entry to the UK and varying lengths of intended "stay" gives credence to scholars who have highlighted the abundance of migration "types" in an increasingly transnational world (Castles, 2010; King, 2002, 2012). Further, the findings reveal different forms of family-related migration including family-formation, family reunification and entire family migration, as highlighted by Kofman (2004). These diverse forms bring to light the possibility that whilst marriage migration is an important form of Muslim family-related migration, it is not the *only* form and thus these other types of migration are worthy of further investigation.

The findings also showed the educational diversity among these eight participants, three of whom had university degrees. The remaining five participants had varying amounts of formal education with Haziqah and Asmara having the least. The focus of these two women on prioritising their children's education and English language skills in the decision to migrate tends to contradict some policy discourses that blame uneducated and "backwards" Muslim mothers for the low educational achievements of their children, as highlighted by Kofman *et al.* (2013). Thus, great merit resides in further research to examine the relationship between the educational achievements of migrant parents and their children.

Section 4.3 explored the participants' reasons for migration using a biographical approach. As previous studies have argued, this qualitative approach enabled an in-depth insight into the personal motivations and meanings attached to migration by some participants (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; Halfacree, 2004a; Smith, 2004). Notwithstanding the limitations of excluding their husbands from the research that were outlined in chapter 1, focusing only on these women gave them an opportunity to tell *their* story, which perhaps would not have been told in the presence of their husbands. To analyse the participants' accounts, the study drew on conceptual insights from cultural geographies of migration concerned specifically with migrant subjectivity. In so doing, the findings revealed the ways in which some participants sought out possibilities to transform their sense of self through migration, seeing migration as an opportunity through which "the self can be worked upon" (Conradson and Latham, 2007, p. 232).

However, in adopting a lifecourse approach, the findings here advance current understandings of the role of subjectivity in shaping migration by highlighting the ways in which the desire to be someone different stems from earlier events in the lifecourse, for example war, divorce or marriage. Thus the chapter highlights the "religiously inflected discourses of gendered propriety" (Silvey, 2007, p. 222) and "gendered generational relations of power" (Ehrkamp, 2013, p. 25) that some participants have faced at earlier points in their lives. Seen in this way, however, the opportunity to migrate is perhaps an important opportunity to "resist" such exertions of power. As Ehrkamp (2013) suggests, acts of resistance do not necessarily occur at the same time as exertions of power. Such insights here thus lend support to Silvey (2005, p. 141) who suggests, "migration research can contribute to understanding specific gendered and religious meanings of particular departures from home."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, participants who migrated *with* their husbands and/or children emphasised their children in the decision to migrate. Specifically, participants emphasised their children's education, access to healthcare or English language as important factors that influenced their migration. The cultural turn in family migration scholarship has highlighted the priority given to children's wellbeing in deciding to migrate and thus the findings here show that such approaches to internal migration are

helpful for understanding international family migration (Halfacree, 2004a; Smith 2011).

Furthermore, the findings were discussed with reference to recent conceptual approaches to student mobility, which highlight enduring power relations and notions of Anglo-American education as superior in shaping this migration (Beech, 2014; Findlay *et al.*, 2012; Madge *et al.*, 2009). However, care should be taken not to over-emphasise postcolonial power relations and participants' imaginative geographies in working to understand this behaviour; their actions are perhaps comparable to the families who play the "postcode" lottery, seeking to access better schools through long-distance migration within the UK, as shown by Butler (2003). In this sense, the women here can be seen, like any parent, to simply want the best for their children.

This chapter has sought to privilege the research participants' voices in working to understand why they migrated. This is important, because as highlighted in chapters 1 and 2, the voices of Muslim women are relatively silent in the geographic literature on family-related migration. Privileging the participants' voices, however, leaves little room to explore the silences in the literature. Specifically, the absence of references to Scotland in the participants' recollections of making the decision to migrate was particularly striking to me. Instead, participants mainly spoke about their migration in relation to the "UK" or "England". This leaves unanswered questions about the importance and meaning attached to *Scotland* in shaping the participants' migrations.

The chapter lends support to existing scholarship on family-related migration that challenges the over-emphasis on economic factors in explaining migration (Castles, 2010; Halfacree, 2004a; Smith and King, 2012). Whilst some women came to the UK for their husbands' career or education, their reasons were far from "economic". It would be interesting however, to know how their husbands perceived the migration and if they would have put more emphasis on the economic motivations. Future research could focus on a comparison between husband and wives motivations for migration and the extent to which these reflect the "natural" gender divisions that some Islamic feminists have discussed (Poya, 1999). Indeed, the possibility exists that in speaking about the needs of the children, women's conversations reflected their "natural" roles as mothers to nurture and educate their children. Would there be any difference in the male

“breadwinners” account of why the family migrated? This is a potential avenue for further research.

Such considerations highlight the tensions and complexities that arise when grappling to understand the migration processes and experiences of the “Other Woman”, in this case Muslim migrant women. As this chapter has highlighted, distancing scholarship from Eurocentric readings of agency sheds important light on the diverse forms of agency exhibited by Muslim migrant women in family decision-making processes. In so doing, this chapter has aimed to provide a more nuanced account of these women’s agency in the decision to migrate.

This chapter has sought to blur the conceptual boundaries of migration research highlighted by geographers in order to explore Muslim family-related migration (Castles, 2007; Findlay and Graham, 1991; Graham, 2000; King, 2012; Smith and King, 2012). With this in mind, the chapter has drawn on theories from internal migration but also more recent cultural approaches to migration accounting for shifting subjectivities through migration. Whilst not without limits, in drawing on these conceptual approaches together with in-depth qualitative research, the thesis advances studies of family-related migration beyond its “epistemological strait jacket” and thus answers calls for more “elaborate accounts” of why families migrate (Smith, 2011, p. 663). Furthermore, drawing on the accounts of a small group of Muslim women, this chapter has begun to address the relative neglect of Muslim families in geographic scholarship on family-related migration. The following chapter moves on to extend these insights of Muslim women’s migration to consider the next stage of the process, that is, the effects of migration on their daily lives.

Chapter V: Evidence and discussion part II

Muslim women's lived realities of migration

5.1 Introduction

Having discussed the reasons participants migrated to Scotland in the previous chapter, this chapter explores participants' lived realities in Scotland, thus addressing the second research objective of this thesis. Taken together, these two chapters contribute to the overarching aim of this thesis, which is to provide an in-depth account of Muslim women's subjective experiences of migration to Scotland. Drawing on the qualitative evidence together with conceptual insights from chapter 2, this chapter aims to address research questions 3, 4 and 5, outlined in chapter 1, section 1.2: (3) How do Muslim women experience everyday life in Scotland? (4) How does migration rework gender relations in the home? (5) What is the effect of migration on Muslim women's religious identities?

In so doing, this chapter seeks to contribute to both geographic scholarship on the lived experience of migration, which to date has largely overlooked Muslim women in family-related migration, and to build on existing scholarship concerned with Muslims in the West. Section 5.2 draws on the evidence to examine research questions 3 and 4. The following section, 5.3, examines the effect of migration on participants' religious identities, thus addressing research question 5.

5.2 Muslim women's lived realities in Scotland

This section explores the issues around life in the home that participants highlighted in their accounts and in the focus group discussions. Supplementary evidence is drawn from the field diary. Indeed, some participants spoke extensively about how lifecourse events such as pregnancy and motherhood shaped their lived realities of migration, as well as the combined effect of these events and migration on life in the home. Chapter 2 highlighted calls from geographers for greater attention to the construction of gender relations within Muslim "homespaces" and to Muslim parenting (Hopkins, 2009a, p. 218). Further, it was suggested in chapter 2 that such research is particularly pertinent in light of some policy and media discourses that depict Muslim migrant families as "the main importers of the 'backward' practices and with 'doubtful' parenting practices" (Kofman *et al.*, 2013, p. 1). However, as noted by Steinmann (2005), the

methodological challenges associated with accessing this private space have meant that the negotiations of gender relations within Muslim homes largely remain hidden. Whilst the participants' accounts here are partial, offering only their perspectives of life in this shared private space, they are nonetheless significant to this discussion of the Muslim women's subjective experiences of migration. This section draws on the evidence together with current debates in Muslim geographies and migration studies that were introduced in chapter 2, section 2.4 to analyse and discuss the effect of migration on everyday life for the research participants.

5.2.1 Motherhood

As shown in chapter 4, section 4.2, seven of the eight women who shared their stories of migration were mothers with children ranging in age from 2 to 16 years old at the time of the study. Throughout my time in the field, all seven women at times referred to being a mother *and* a migrant as a significant burden because of the lack of social support networks. Akia explained the lack of help despite her parents-in-law living nearby,

I spent all the time with three babies three children one baby and other just one, two, one and a half between each other yeah yeah so it was really really hard. My mother-in-law does not help me, I don't know why she just leave me to it...after six years it was miserable for me. I'm feeling really really low and going to the doctor... it was really bad time.

Akia, life narrative (November, 2012)

Akia here talks about caring for her babies alone and feeling "miserable" for six years. She told me this on more than one occasion, reiterating to me that she had no friends for six years and just stayed at home. Sakeena likewise found herself alone with her three children and newborn son when her husband left. In the days after she left hospital, the only person she saw was an elderly Scottish neighbour, who came and helped in the house as Sakeena recovered from the birth,

When I had a C-section, he [Sakeena's husband] came to the hospital with me. My baby was born, he helped me, he brought the bed down. Then the night that I came home from hospital he said, "I'm sorry I have to go." My neighbour came. She helped me. I was breastfeeding; she helped me because my eldest was only nine and there was no one else. The next morning he [her husband] still wasn't there so that was that.

Sakeena, life narrative (October, 2012)

This “neighbour” was someone that Sakeena mentioned often in our conversations, and it was evident that she provided on-going support to Sakeena in coping with motherhood alone when she later separated from her husband. Sakeena’s perspective on the woman is interesting, however, “*She’s Scottish yeah, a ‘white’ lady.*”

Likewise, Haziqah told me that her neighbours, whom she described as an “*older Scottish couple*”, would often invite her to come down with her “*babies*” to their flat and have a cup of tea. She said this was nice for her, because otherwise she was alone with the “*babies*”. The support that both Sakeena and Haziqah received from their neighbours highlights that, bereft of nearby kin, relations with their neighbours were important for them to cope with the isolation of motherhood. This suggests that further research could explore the role of neighbours in culturally and ethnically diverse neighbourhoods in providing support to new migrants.

Waajidah compared normative childcare practices in the Gambia with Scotland as a way to explain how difficult she found motherhood in Scotland,

It’s just so hard here—life is so hard, there’s no one to help me with the kids. I mean, think about it, no family, no friends. If it was my own, if it’s my own community, I don’t mind. I would say actually tomorrow I’m going somewhere. Can I bring them for you this morning? Then I know my community will say, ah no problem just bring them. I don’t have anything today, just bring them. But it’s not the way it goes here. If it was my mum I wouldn’t mind, I just say I’m coming to drop my daughter. I call her and say are you going out today and I just take her. And that’s the reason why I miss my family but we are still here.

Waajidah, life narrative (November, 2012)

The passages above support the findings of Marranci (2007), who discovered that Muslim migrant women lost social networks through transnational arranged marriages and subsequently experienced significant social isolation in the host country. However, this consequence of migration is not necessarily prevalent only among transnational marriage migrants, as studies have shown that family migration within the UK or US also results in the loss of social networks and more specifically, inter-generational caring networks (Smith, 2011). Nonetheless, what is pertinent here is that having migrated from cultures in which female kin are the fundamental source of support in both childbirth and child raising, caring for children *alone* is very difficult for some women. Waajidah talked about missing her extended female family members and

community members to help her with children. Thus, Waajidah seems to long for the reinstatement of what may be conceived of as the traditional patriarchal ordering of society. This ordering of society is discussed in chapter 2, as the focus on South Asian Muslim families in the literature has emphasised the importance of women's personal geographies, *i.e.* living close to mothers or aunts, who can help with childcare (Mohammad, 2013; Phillips, 2009). The findings here provide evidence that for some participants, living away from female family members has meant that their experience of becoming a mother is marked by feelings of isolation and helplessness.

Nuzhat had her mother come and stay following the birth of her son. However, for Nuzhat this seemed to only delay the isolation and loneliness that she felt as a new mother when her own mother returned to Pakistan,

When my son was born, my mum was here at that time for one month that helped me a lot. When she was gone it was like misery. That's why I had depression, yes that's why I had depression. Now after these past 3 years, I'm out of the depression, doctors are saying you should stay on medication because when I leave it I seem like I'm going back, so I stay on a low dose all the time yeah. That's how I can work things out now and I don't sleep that much then otherwise I used to sleep a lot. I used to sleep because of the weather. I didn't used to go out.

Nuzhat, life narrative (November, 2012)

In one of the focus groups, Nuzhat compared life in Scotland and life "back home" in Pakistan,

This year I went back home, and I tell you I very much enjoyed and the family life [is] different there, here is just my husband and everybody is back home and you're more active there because of the sun, I think, because with the sun we are more active and more energetic there. When I came back here same thing happened again, same dark thing, same thing happened to me when I just had my son same thing yeah.

Nuzhat, life narrative (November, 2012)

The "same dark thing" is how Nuzhat refers to her depression. She emphasised the lack of family in Scotland as the cause of her depression but also seemed to suggest that the weather caused her to "sleep a lot" and to not leave the house. Comparatively, Nuzhat describes life in Pakistan as "more active" and "energetic", and she again attributes this to better weather in Pakistan and to "family life". This seems to suggest that the lack of family and the Scottish climate that stopped Nuzhat from wanting to go out from the house had affected her mental health in Scotland. Akia also talked about her feelings

of isolation and depression, and she said also that these feelings stopped her from getting out of the house and adjusting to her new life in Scotland,

Today I met a woman I'd never seen at the centre before, Akia. She's from Iraq and she's volunteering at the centre on a four-week placement. She was so open—as I set up the class materials on the desks she just started telling me how with three children she never left the house until the health visitor told her about the centre. Akia mentioned something about staying in the house for almost six years! I can't even imagine. She said she was terrified to take the bus or to speak the language. She said the first time she came, one of the staff members gave her a hug, and she just started to cry on her shoulder. Akia apparently worked at a university in Iraq and wants desperately to work here. She said she's doing the placement so that she can get her confidence back and some experience of working to put on her CV.

Field diary (August, 2012)

The passages above show that these women experienced significant feelings of social isolation as they cared for their children alone in Scotland, a way of life that they were unfamiliar with and which subsequently impacted their mental health. What can be inferred from these accounts is the importance of the *timing* of the migration as it occurs with other events in the lifecourse, for example marriage or becoming a mother. It is also possible to infer from their accounts that both Akia and Nuzhat suffered a form of post-natal depression following childbirth, which was potentially exacerbated by the social isolation that they experienced. Thus, for Akia and Nuzhat, having children shortly after migration had a long-lasting impact on their everyday lives in Scotland because the depression they experienced stopped them from *adjusting* to life in Scotland and *prolonged* their exclusion from participating in social life, education and work. The findings here thus support Suksumboom (2011) who found that Thai marriage migrants to the Netherlands endured prolonged socio-economic exclusion if they did not have the opportunity to acquire language skills and work experience within the first years of arriving in the Netherlands. The findings here also highlight the need to give further attention to the impact of health factors, such as post-natal depression, on life for new migrants.

5.2.2 Balancing childcare and paid work

Participant observation at Fountain Point also illustrated the ways in which caring responsibilities to children affected class attendance, thus preventing class participants from gaining English language and work oriented skills, improving their confidence and growing their self-esteem. A note in my field diary shows this,

Childcare seems to prohibit women from arriving on time for class, staying until the end or attending regularly. Five of the six women in the class have dependent children. They are either in school or are at nursery or they put them in the crèche at Fountain Point. The women frequently refer to the restrictions on their time due to childcare. The women generally arrive late for class, between 5 to 10 minutes late at every session. Many of the participants miss a class or two due to a child's sickness, which seems to interrupt their on-going development. With just a gap in attendance of two weeks, many of the class participants seem to take two steps back in terms of confidence and skill acquisition; they seem like they are back where they were at the beginning.

Field diary entry, (March 2012)

Some participants also spoke about the way their reproductive role and subsequent parental role affected their ability to pursue either employment or employment-related goals post-migration. Asmara told me,

I want go college to learn English so that I can get a job but when you go college must you go full time yeah...very difficult for me and I have small children and I cannot do this.

Asmara, life narrative (October, 2012)

Two of the women, Waajidah and Akia, reflected with frustration and disappointment on their inability to pursue their dreams. Akia told me,

I pregnant with the first child it was really good I thought I love my son really but because I am not doing my dreams I think the children it will be the stone in my road to get my PhD or to work...so I feeling very low after a few months... I love my son but still I feel why am I doing that [having a baby]?

Akia, life narrative (November, 2012)

For Waajidah, the lack of affordable or accessible childcare in the city meant that she could not pursue her teaching training qualification. Caring for a young family, Waajidah explained that her exhaustion affected her physical health and she gave up the training after six months. She describes this period of life as a great disappointment as she was certain this would help her to get a job in Scotland,

I couldn't do it, the placements were killing me, the placements were just so hard with the baby, so when I come in the house, think about it, I have to prepare something for the kids; its already three kids in the house, prepare food and everything and the time I sit down to do my lessons plans and everything that was like around 6 or maybe after 7 and then sometimes I'm just so tired but I have to prepare this lesson...in the morning I have to drop her at the child-minder 8 o'clock it means I wouldn't be able to be at school early so I put her behind my back in the night just try to do what I have to do...at that time I lose weight completely from size 16 to size 10 so I said

no, I'm going to die here, so there is no point continue so I said no... so that's how I stopped.

Waajidah, life narrative (November, 2012)

Chapter 4 discusses the ways that affective possibilities, that is, the ability to *feel* or *be* different following migration, was an important factor in shaping the mobility of some participants. It is not surprising therefore, that Akia and Waajidah both expressed disappointment that their childcare obligations prevented them from realising their dreams of self-transformation. Akia talked about how she felt after she had her first son, comparing her hopes for life in Scotland with the reality that she faced,

I shocked when you thought you go to heaven and you finding nothing because I don't think it is like this here.

Akia, life narrative (November, 2012)

Waajidah told me in her narrative that she had recently tried to volunteer with the hopes of improving her job prospects. However, managing the childcare was too difficult, as she had to go across the city first to take her daughters to an affordable child-minder.

Waajidah recalled the day she gave up,

My daughter was still in the pushchair. She was still a baby and then and cannot walk properly and I can't even push the pushchair through the snow, and that's when I just say, oh no. I lived far away and it can be two buses or it can be one but that means I have to walk at least ten minutes but if I'm with the child its about 15 minutes. I just tried once and then I was about to fall and then I say that day, okay I just finish and that's when I stopped volunteering.

Waajidah, life narrative (November, 2012)

One of the staff members at Fountain Point talked about access to childcare,

I think the biggest barrier for these women is the childcare; it's a barrier to everything—to participation in anything!

Adeela, staff interview (November, 2012)

Waajidah refers to the challenges she faced in trying to take her children to the child-minder before going on to work. Without use of a car, she relied upon public transport and could not manage. Later in our conversation, Waajidah explained the cost of childcare versus the volunteer stipend that she received, remarking that she could barely afford it. In existing literature on Muslim women, there has been a tendency to stress patriarchal cultural practices in placing both spatial and temporal constraints on Muslim women's access to paid work, particularly in studies with South Asian diaspora in

England (Mohammad, 2005). However, this approach undermines the effect of the patriarchal structuring of Scottish society and the job market on women's access to work, an issue that has been noted by Halfacree (1995) discussed in chapter 2. Waajidah told me that she had been looking for work ever since she arrived in Scotland in 2003,

Moving here I was feeling like okay when we first move I will get a job but I was already pregnant four months. So I start looking for a job constantly but nothing. I got one interview in the end but they didn't take me. It was just for administration all you need to do is scan when people send their stuff to you then enter it on the system, it's not difficult to do! They wanted a French speaker and I speak French – I have a degree in French!

Waajidah, life narrative (November, 2012)

Waajidah's account highlights that her pregnancy perhaps stopped her from getting a job for which she was more than qualified when she arrived in Scotland. If this was the case, then it highlights the persistence of gendered structural inequalities in shaping access to work, not just for migrant or Muslim women but for all women who balance pregnancy, childcare and paid work. This speaks to what Halfacree (1995, p. 177) refers to as "wider structures of patriarchal discrimination." Rafeeqah equally remarked that finding a job upon arrival in Scotland was not as straightforward as she had hoped,

I was head of my university department in Pakistan, but here I can't even get a job in Debenhams!... I think with the hijab there is a blockage in some places... I went to apply at Debenhams and I can see the reaction of the lady; she was like, no we don't want your CV and, but still I'm like, no please take it, please take it (laughs)...I think maybe my scarf is the reason because if I go to some store like Next or something, or as I told you for Debenhams, maybe they are right, because they want someone trendy for this kind of shop assistant I think. But that's fine, what can I say? (Rafeeqah shrugged). It's their country.

Rafeeqah, focus group discussion (September, 2012)

I note with interest that Rafeeqah refers to Scotland as "their country". This could be interpreted as Rafeeqah feeling as if she does not belong in Scotland, although the short time she had been in Scotland at the time of the study (six months) may also explain this terminology. However, in referring to her *headscarf* as the possible reason for the shop assistant refusing to take her CV, perhaps Rafeeqah feels she does not belong in Scotland because she believes she has been discriminated against as the "Other" Muslim woman. This lends support to Dwyer (2000) who discusses racialised discourses as a barrier to employment for Muslim women.

Rafeeqah also discussed her attempt to get help looking for work at the Job Centre in the city. They denied assistance because her husband sponsored her to come to the UK, thus she must “depend” on him and cannot use publically funded government services,

Since I’m dependent on my husband, we don’t have indefinite visa right now and we don’t have citizenship right now, so uh I went to this employment centre something and since it’s written on my passport no recourse to public fund, so no they cannot help me; and then I went to job centre and they were like no it says no recourse to public funds, we cannot help you; but you can use our computers only so I think that’s the rule, you cannot say anything about it.

Rafeeqah, life narrative (November, 2012)

Chapter 2 discusses the notion that the state reinforces patriarchy through family-migration policy. In particular, feminist scholars have emphasised that female spouses who migrate as “dependents” to join an existing family member in the host country must rely on their husband to provide for their material needs: they have little means to support themselves, primarily because they are denied access to healthcare, affordable housing and welfare support (i.e. benefits) (Kofman, 2004; Kofman *et al.*, 2013; Merali, 2008; Silvey, 2006). Rafeeqah’s dependent status possibly prevented her from accessing help to find a job. She told me, “*If I can’t find something soon then perhaps we’ll have a baby.*” Thus, I note here the recursive relationships among the lack of state support, the “choice” to have a baby, and not being able to work because of childcare. This highlights the multiple layers of patriarchy within society that act as barriers to work for migrant women. As discussed in chapter 2, patriarchy comes in many guises, but in relation to Muslim families has largely been discussed as a form of cultural control imposed by fathers and husbands, thus over-emphasising Muslim families as the source of problems (Dwyer, 1999). This view overlooks patriarchy within waged work and the patriarchal state in structuring Scottish society (Walby, 1989), which the passages above reveal as an important factor in preventing the participants from finding work.

However, I do not wish to over-emphasise structural explanations of the participants’ exclusion from paid work. Sakeena spoke about wanting to wait until her son was school-aged before finding work, so that she could prioritise his needs and give him a good start in life,

If I do too much I won’t be able to concentrate on the kids and this is their age to learn and to study and I need to be there for them yeah.

Sakeena, focus group discussion (October, 2012)

In choosing to prioritise her children until they reached school age, the findings here also support Halfacree (2004a), who suggests that the underemployment of female spouses following family-based migration can be explained by the *choice* to privilege childcare over employment. All of the research participants with children discussed their role as a mother and their caring responsibilities to their children. Two of the participants referred to their Islamic obligation to nurture and educate their children,

It's very very important as a mother you are like in Islam we believe that the mother is the university; that's where the child's university starts, the learning starts from the mother, and it's very important so I was very strong in that I said no I was dedicated to my family, my children, and I taught my daughter alphabet in three different languages even before she started school! I think I did go a bit too crazy: let's do the Arabic, let's do the English...I wanted to educate my children so I did all that.

Nasra, Staff focus group (June, 2012)

See you know with me with the kids—Islam says men are here to work; men are the breadwinners [and] mothers are to do the education and caring, so I want to help them.... I just pray every day and I ask Allah to help me, to guide me, to keep my kids on steadfast and the right path...Inshallah when my youngest son starts school I will find a job maybe admin or something.

Takeena, life narrative (October, 2012)

However, whilst Takeena emphasised her Islamic beliefs that she should prioritise caring for her children until they reached school age, this does not necessarily imply that as a *Muslim* mother she faces different challenges to *non-Muslim* Scottish mothers, who are also trying to balance the competing demands of motherhood or single parenting, providing financially for the family and searching at the same time for some level of personal fulfilment. Indeed, in trying to balance working and the demands or desire to care for and nurture their children, the participants' experiences are not necessarily unique to them as *Muslim* migrant women. Rather, in this case, it is perhaps more to do with the fact that they are women, facing the difficult decision between the prioritisation of the need or desire to have a job, the important role of mothering and managing these conflicting priorities with limited access to childcare and social support networks. I mention this here because as Nagel (2005, p. 13) suggests, it is important to identify “commonalities” between Muslims and non-Muslims, “rather than only difference and otherness.”

The literature on tied migration has consistently emphasised the negative effect of migration on female spouses' careers. As discussed in chapter 2, Cooke (2001, p. 419) suggests that the term "trailing mother" may be more apt to describe female migrant spouses' unemployment than "trailing wife." The findings here lend support to Cooke's assertions and further, the literature on gendered tied migration offers a helpful lens for understanding Muslim women's high levels of economic inactivity. In so doing, the discussion here complicates existing policy approaches to understanding Muslim women's high unemployment as being explicable solely through patriarchal cultural practices (see chapter 2), thus lending support to Bowlby and Lloyd-Evans (2009) and Mohammad (2005). As well, the discussion highlights the need to attend to wider structural inequalities relating not only to childcare provision and employment opportunities, but also to the inherently patriarchal nature of both the state (Kofman, 2004) and the capitalist economy (Halfacree, 1995; 2004).

5.2.3 Migration and the reworking of gender relations in the home

All of the participants discussed in some way the effect of migration on the roles that their husbands took on in the homespace, not just in relation to physical tasks but also emotional labour. Akia and Asmara talked about childbirth and drew comparisons between normative practices around childbirth in their home country and in Scotland,

I tried to get my mum to come when I was pregnant with my child but it's really difficult because of money and visas, so I say I give up! So my husband decided to have one month off to stay with me as my mum couldn't come. This is very different to my country where we are only women at this time [childbirth].

Akia, life narrative (November, 2012)

I was pregnant seven months when we come here in the April and my baby was born in June, just two months [after arriving]. It was very difficult for me, I not have any friend. I was six-seven day in hospital and not anybody yeah just me and my husband and my husband friend...my husband helped me so much. When my first baby was born I was not in hospital, just family, my aunties, and he was at work!

Asmara, life narrative (October, 2012)

Akia and Asmara infer that the changing gender relations in their marriage resulted from the loss of extended family and friends to support them with raising children and taking care of the home, a source of support to which they were accustomed prior to

migrating to Scotland. One of the focus group participants, to whom I have given the pseudonym Mrs S, further illustrates,

Mrs S: When my sister passed away I had to take care of her children too. So I had eight children and that's a lot of work. So I would just build the clothes up, and at the weekend my husband and I would sit there and wash all the clothes, but that's a nice time because that's what makes you grow closer. It's more romantic; you grow strong and you're helping each other and you are seeing how you go through.

Rebecca: Do you think he would have helped if you had not moved here?

Mrs S: No, (laughter and women talking)... they say the women here got the men under the thumb! I came new to the country and I didn't know how to make things work like how to get the water warm and how to do things and because doing the housework here is different to housework in Pakistan. In Pakistan they would maybe wash clothes in rivers. So washing clothes was very different here. There was no nappies so we had the terry towels so at night time me and my husband would wash the nappies so we could dry them because if you had no nappy dry you had no nappy to put on the child. The men in Pakistan, they don't help because I think there is a perception that there is extended family there and the women will help each other, and men tend to do more of the breadwinning outside of the home in Pakistan.

Mrs S, focus group participant (December, 2012)

The participants explained that their husbands' ability to take on more responsibilities for looking after the children or domestic chores was a result of the kinds of jobs they had and the hours they worked in Scotland. For example, Asmara's husband worked in a takeaway restaurant in the evenings, which she said meant he had free time in the morning to help with the school run,

Yeah my husband take him [son to school] every morning and then every afternoon I go by bus to pick him up.

Asmara, life narrative (November, 2012)

Asmara and I were chatting about what time we go to bed. She told me her husband works at a takeaway restaurant, and he doesn't get home until 1 o'clock in the morning most days. But she misses him, and she likes him to eat healthily, so she stays up to spend time with him and make sure he eats a good dinner when he gets home. They then both get up after only about five or six hours of sleep to get the children ready and take them to school.

Field diary, (May 2012)

In a similar vein, Haziqah and Waajidah's husbands, who are academics, had flexible schedules from time to time, which meant their husbands helped more with the children,

Haziqah's husband takes the eldest boys to school sometimes. Then when she has a college class he works from home so that he can look after their youngest daughters.

Notes from Haziqah's life narrative (November, 2012)

On the days that I am busy my husband will drop the other one, she's four years and she goes to nursery, and then in the evening my husband collect them all from the child-minder.

Waajidah, life narrative (November, 2012)

Haziqah spoke about her husband helping her because she was accustomed to hired help in Nigeria. In Scotland, they cannot afford this help,

Haziqah clicked her tongue and laughed, then told me, "My husband is never helping in Nigeria." Haziqah explained that "back home" she had neighbours and kin to help with childcare and running the home, but also that if she needed it her husband would hire her some help from time to time. In Scotland, it's just her, her husband and their five children and they can't afford help. Haziqah said therefore that her husband has had to help her because there is no one else.

Notes from Haziqah's life narrative (November, 2012)

The findings here show therefore that the role of these husbands in the homespace is relational to the kind of jobs that they have but also in Haziqah's case, the family finances. Accordingly, the findings support notions of the performative nature of gender (Butler, 1990). Further, the findings here resonate with other scholars (Datta *et al.*, 2009; Hopkins and Noble, 2009; Nayak, 2003) who suggest the "strategic" nature of performances of gender or other aspects of a person's identity, deployed only in certain situations—in this case migration. In so doing, the findings provide some important preliminary evidence of the ways in which migration disrupts masculinities and femininities within the family. On the one hand, the participants' husbands have sole responsibility for providing for the family (breadwinning), but on the other hand, the loss of social networks means that they have had to share in the provision of care and household labour. This role change proves important, as the literature review highlights the lack of research that examines the effect of migration on relations between family members (Kraler *et al.*, 2011) and also the lack of information on Muslim homespaces and Muslim parenting (Hopkins, 2009a). Further, scholars have raised concerns over the stereotyping of Muslim masculinities, which depict Muslim men as controlling and oppressive (Hopkins, 2006, 2007b). The evidence here thus lends support to Hopkins (2009c, p. 3) who highlights that "young Muslim men's masculine identities are constructed and contested in different places and times." In so doing, the findings here

begin to call attention to the way in which masculinities and femininities can shift through migration.

In paying close attention to the participants' words but also their body language as they recalled these performances of gender, it would seem that such transformations incited feelings of "togetherness" and fondness towards their husbands. As Mrs S said, "You grow closer...you grow strong." Similarly, Asmara spoke of her husband as "not like other men" and as a "kind" and "good husband", thus Asmara seemed grateful to her husband for his behaviour towards her. Similarly, Nuzhat described herself as "lucky" because her husband was not like her brother-in-law, who would not let his wife out to work,

In our family values, a woman doesn't go out after marriage, we can't work and stuff, but my husband allowed me. If the husband allows you can go out; the main thing is if the husband gives permission, you can go out but if the husband doesn't give permission, then you're not allowed to go. Even my sister-in-law, she has studied her MBA, and her in-laws said you're not allowed to work now. Her husband said no you don't need to work. She got her house then to herself, she thinks it's very hard and now she has two sons and she still wants to go out to work. I say you come here with me, come here and you will see what life is like here! I am very lucky, very lucky yeah, [my husband] is an open-minded man, very open-minded.

Nuzhat, life narrative (November, 2012)

Similarly, both Akia and Rafeeqah talked about their husbands as supportive and encouraging,

He don't say to me ever stop now you are wife and mum that's it. No he always like you can do it; this is why I love him, still love him. Lots of men I know in Muslims they after married they say to wife no now you are a wife and mum, that's it, this is your life. The wife as well say yeah this is my life. But my husband no, because I think it's because they came to this country when he was just 13 years old so this make him not like all the men in Arabic.

Akia, life narrative (November, 2012)

Rafeeqah spoke about her nerves prior to migrating to Scotland to live with her new "bossy" husband but that her husband behaved differently once she had migrated to Scotland,

After we were married in Pakistan, he came back to Scotland and I stayed there with my family to wait for the visa processing. At that time I was nervous, I just thought let's see what happens because during those four months he was on the phone quite bossy, and I was always, oh god (laughs)! But then now it's good, totally different to that past four months; he's

Alhamdulillah—thanks to God, he’s very very nice and supporting, very understanding and he really pushes me all the time to do different stuff. “You must do that, you should try that” and he encourages me all the time. I am now the one deciding where we will live because I have told him it is important for me to have friends around me. He is joking in Urdu in our language, “I am totally in control of you” (laughing). So yeah that’s good.

Rafeeqah, life narrative (November, 2012)

Rafeeqah’s account here shows her lived reality is different to that which she expected prior to migrating. Perhaps her status as a recent migrant has shaped her husband’s behaviour towards her, as she describes his support and encouragement to try new things. The fact that she has taken over decisions about where to live because she is new to the city also provides insight into changing roles. Joking together about issues of control suggests that both Rafeeqah and her husband are cognisant of normative patriarchal practices, yet she does not perceive them to be dominant in her married life.

The participants’ descriptions and accounts of married life portray an image of their husbands as kind, supportive and “open-minded” men. Such a portrayal is important in light of concerns raised in the academic literature that Muslim men are stigmatized as controlling and oppressive (Hopkins, 2007b). However, the findings here, whilst showing the way in which the performance of gender relations is transformed for some of the participants, equally highlight the subtle reproductions of patriarchy as a discourse and practice. Indeed, it is important here to reflect on whether such expressions of gratitude for their husbands’ support suggest that Mrs S, Asmara and Nuzhat perceive this support as a “gift”, which extends their patriarchal dependency on their husbands. Such a consideration highlights the subtle differences in meaning around gender relations and patriarchy that make the study of “Other” women highly problematic.

Nonetheless, Asmara talked about her husband never helping her in Holland (where they had extensive kin support) and never wanting to return to Kurdistan for fear of her husband going back to his old ways of not helping her in the home,

When I go holiday my family my husband family everybody see how he changed so much! Yeah because in Holland he never help me, in Kurdistan men don’t help as well. That’s why I tell my husband we never go Kurdistan with my family, I want stay here just here for me yeah, I say I no go back like this (laughing). Here is my life and here my husband is very good.

Asmara, life narrative (November, 2012)

Some of the earliest feminist geographic scholarship on migration celebrated the empowering potential of migration, highlighting substantial gains in gender equality and freedom from patriarchal constraints (Tacoli, 1999). However, more recently and in keeping with Kesby (2005, 1996), scholars have questioned the assumption of empowerment as always linear. Bastia (2011), for example, has shown that on return to Bolivia female domestic worker migrants gave their earnings to their husbands for them to buy taxis, thus reinstating their husbands' role as the primary breadwinner and elucidating what Pratt and Yeoh (2003, p. 161) refer to as the "impermanence" of shifting gender relations through migration. The passage above lends support to such feminist concerns, as Asmara highlighted the *temporary* suspension of normative gender relations through *space*. From her quote, I discern that Asmara feels that "going back" to Kurdistan would re-instate normative gender relations, which is not her preference.

Shafeeqah also experienced this *temporary* suspension of normative gender relations by becoming the de-facto household head through her migration to Scotland; Shafeeqah migrated alone with the children whilst her husband remained in Malawi for an additional two years to close the family business. She spoke often of missing her husband, and she longs for them to be together again. Moreover, Shafeeqah talked about wanting her husband to take back the control of household matters; she does not seem to want the de-facto role of household head that she has had to take on as a result of their migration,

It would be easier if he were here, because it's like he would take us out somewhere or take a little responsibility of the children, like especially like I've got one son and he's really lacking the father being there and sometimes I don't know what's affecting him as well. Because this year I'm on my own they don't want to share out, they just keep to themselves, they don't want to worry their mother, because sometimes with my health as well I can't help them all the time. I try but I've got to take like medicines and stuff so my temper gets bad and my pressure goes high and I don't feel right just shouting at them. I try to be calm at times but it would be more easier for me if my husband would be here, you know like at least I can share out something like... because you know everything was new for me here when I came here, the environment, the whole place, everything. I left all my like brothers and sisters.

Shafeeqah, life narrative (November, 2012)

Consequently, Shafeeqah worked to moderate this temporary suspension of normative gender and patriarchal relations by remaining in almost hourly contact with her husband via “What’s App”—an instant messaging smart phone technology,

We are family you see and now a big gap in our life and he you know, he phones me each and every day we talk on Skype. I chat to him on you know “What’s App” all day now I know how to use that. You see, rather than checking with somebody I would rather check with my husband, do you understand? And he is so understanding he will teach me things, and it would be easier if he was here. I wouldn’t need any neighbours’ help or any help, do you understand? ‘Cause sometimes I am so frustrated when something happens and he says yeah if I would have been there you wouldn’t have got bad neighbour relations. I said yeah if you were here I wouldn’t have asked other neighbours to help me; you would have sorted out my problem.

Shafeeqah, life narrative (October, 2012)

Yet to what extent did Shafeeqah’s use of “What’s App” in this context implicate her in the reproduction of patriarchy? Her denial of the de-facto role of household-head and the maintenance of almost hourly contact with her husband could be seen as adopting an infantilised position in which she does not have to make decisions for the family. The findings here thus offer an interesting insight into the time-space distantiation of patriarchy. Transnational approaches to migration have emphasised the use of emerging technologies in maintain transnational social ties and relationships, as discussed in chapter 2 (Ryan *et al.*, 2009). Within this body of work, scholars have only recently begun to explore the use of internet-based and smartphone technology to monitor and control the social conduct of migrants (Collins, 2009). This provides a possible lens for examining the behaviour of Shafeeqah’s husband, and Shafeeqah herself, in maintaining such regular contact. Likewise, the findings here extend the insights of Pain *et al.*, (2005, p. 826) research with young people, which showed how adults use mobile phones as a form of surveillance over young people. However, equally I interpret Shafeeqah’s reluctance to be the de-facto household head because she felt overburdened. Indeed, her words but also her emotions as she spoke suggested that she found providing for both her children’s physical and emotional needs exhausting and stressful. Seen in this way, Shafeeqah’s narrative calls attention to common assumptions around the empowering potential of moving “beyond” gendered roles such as “mother” or “wife” through migration. As well, her narrative highlights, to the contrary, the often-disempowering effects of shifting gender relations that occur through migration.

This section has considered the findings in relation to participants' accounts of their relationships with their husbands, highlighting the important *geographies* inherent in the performance of gender and patriarchal relations among the research participants. The findings show that such performances are not only made in and through space but can also be temporarily suspended, suggesting that empowerment/disempowerment is not always linear. The findings also call attention to the way in which some husbands become an important emotional source of support to their wives. The findings here thus show the importance of understanding the context and motivations for women's behaviours, rather than simply drawing assumptions about the persistence of patriarchy and powerlessness of Muslim migrant women. In so doing, the evidence also highlights the importance of self-perceptions and meanings of apparently patriarchal practices in both the "public" and "private" realms.

5.3 Religion and migration

This section examines the evidence to explore the way in which participants' religious identities were reworked through migration. Some participants spoke extensively about their religious beliefs and the centrality of their Islamic faith in their everyday lives. Recent scholarship has discussed the way in which their experiences of higher education shape young Muslim women's religious subjectivities (Dwyer and Shah, 2009). Yet as highlighted in chapter 2, the relationship between religion and migration has garnered less attention in the literature on Muslim geographies (Silvey, 2005). Thus the question that this section seeks to address is: How does the *experience* of migration shape and change the religious identities of this small group of Muslim migrant women? To answer this question, this section analyses the evidence together with insights from the literature on Muslim geographies discussed in chapter 2.

5.3.1 "Becoming" religious through migration?

With the exception of Shafeeqah, all of the research participants wore some form of veil (Islamic dress); some women wore the *headscarf* and others also wore *abaya* (full length sleeved black dress). None of the participants wore a full-face covering. Interestingly, both Sakeena and Nuzhat told me that they did not veil prior to migrating to Scotland or when they first lived in Scotland. Nuzhat explained to me,

I wasn't that religious before. I didn't even used to do the scarf [Nuzhat sounded incredulous as she said this] then since I came in UK then I saw that people do the scarf even a student of mine told me why don't you wear your scarf and I said why and she said it's very important in our religion and I did some research through the Qur'an and it says you have to do. I didn't know that, no no... I'm telling you the truth! [Nuzhat laughed as she spoke.] I didn't used to [wear the headscarf] because I didn't know because people in our country even we don't know about our religion in you know the young age you don't know anything about religion but religion is very important...

Nuzhat, life narrative (November, 2012)

Nuzhat here associated wearing the *headscarf* with “becoming” religious since migrating to Scotland, saying, “*I wasn't that religious before.*” She attributes her lack of knowledge about Islamic dress to a general lack of knowledge about Islam in her home country (Pakistan) and has evidently been influenced by the “*student*” who questioned her about her faith. In response, Nuzhat turned to the Qur'an to “*research*” whether she should wear the *headscarf*. This exemplifies the way in which Nuzhat's religious identity has strengthened because of the social relations that Nuzhat has been exposed to post-migration in Scotland and that has pushed Nuzhat to read the Qur'an. This is in keeping with Ehrkamp (2013) who points to the influence of older Muslim women in enforcing religious conservatism among younger Muslim migrant women to Germany.

One of the staff members at Fountain Point discussed that reading the Qur'an is uncommon in some of the countries from which the women migrate,

The Qur'an is written in Arabic; they wouldn't understand the Arabic so for a lot of people, they were reliant on someone else telling them what they were reading so there was an element of power there and you see the big difference between them and those who come from eastern and middle eastern countries [where] the Qur'an is something that has been read and people are reading it and have their own understanding... But young people now and especially women are very much encouraged to have a full understanding of what the Qur'an says.

Sarah, Staff focus group discussion (June, 2012)

One way in which some women have the opportunity to read the Qur'an is through local study groups in the city. For instance, Sakeena spoke about knowing more about Islam since migrating to Scotland; much of this knowledge came from a study group she joined in the city,

Sakeena: I study Qur'an as a group of women...there's two tutors and they help us read pronunciation and, they also, there's two books half an hour we do the Qur'an for the pronunciation in Arabic then there's a book that teaches us the way of absolution...

Shafeeqah: She has learnt quite a bit...

Sakeena: I was very naïve before because Malawi upbringing it's very, um, girls are naïve...I didn't know all this before.

Focus group discussion (September 2012)

In one of the focus groups, the participants went on to discuss the particulars of the reading group,

Asmara: When is it?

Sakeena: um, Monday afternoon at the mosque 1 o'clock to 2 o'clock.

Asmara: Who goes there?

Sakeena: Haziqah comes there, with another group of girls, so there's about one, two, three Nigerians and including me; we are four so there are about ten of us and ... it's behind Pound Stretcher in town.

Asmara: You are lucky to have these friends.

Sakeena: You can come! You come there...we are all family here you know?

Shafeeqah: Yeah we are all one.

Focus group discussion (September, 2012)

In highlighting the diversity of her reading group, Sakeena said that Muslim women are “all family” regardless of their ethnicity. This is in keeping with Levitt (2003) who found that faith is critical in shaping new social ties for migrants. This seemed to be the case for Rafeeqah, who knew no one when she first arrived in the city from Pakistan in April 2012. Rafeeqah's nearest family lived in southern England, and she felt extremely isolated at first. As a result, Rafeeqah drew on her extensive knowledge of the Qur'an to teach a small group of Muslim women in the city every weekend. Together, the women prepared and ate food whilst learning the teachings of their holy book. Rafeeqah explained how this had instilled a sense of feeling more integrated into “society”,

I am much more interested in Qur'an, yeah I want to improve that study. Because I did a course in Qur'an understanding and that's helped [me] to integrate into this society seriously! Not my science education because I teach ladies [Qur'an] on Saturdays...we go to each other houses and share food and study. Sometimes my husband is like you completely forgot about your science, you don't even know this, sometimes he just to tease me and I used to tell him it's the Qur'an that gives me this exposure, this integration into society, not the science degree!

Rafeeqah, life narrative (November, 2012)

The above passages show that for those participants who have come to the city with no friends or family, as was highlighted in chapter 4, reading the Qur'an together became

an important way to “bond” socially and in Rafeeqah’s case above, to feel more “integrated” into Scotland. Furthermore, the passages demonstrate that women from diverse countries with different personal histories, languages and cultures have come together to read and study the Qur’an. Thus despite their individual differences, these women drew on the one thing that they had in common: their Islamic faith. This finding is in keeping with Levitt (2003, p. 27), who discusses the “alternative places of belonging that religious ideas...make possible.”

The findings here also highlight the importance of religious spatialities in shaping everyday life post-migration for these women. Indeed, for Sakeena, the mosque provided an importance place to meet other women to study the Qur’an, whereas Rafeeqah’s informal reading circle highlights the equal importance of private spaces of worship in migrant women’s lives. The findings here support Ehrkamp (2007, p. 13), who in her study with Turkish immigrants in Germany found that “religious practice...varies greatly, not only in the actual practices local immigrants engage in but also in the sites and spaces where worship takes place.” However, in highlighting that some participants found commonality and a sense of belonging among other migrant women because of their faith, it must be acknowledged that even within this small sample, participants’ religious beliefs and practices varied considerably.

5.3.2 Embodying Islam

Sakeena, Nuzhat and Rafeeqah all spoke about the inner feelings of peace, contentment and confidence that they felt because of wearing their *headscarf*. This corresponds with understandings of *headscarf* as practicing *hijab*, as discussed by Ali (2013). Nuzhat explained to me,

But this made me very happy and since I’ve done the scarf I’ve been more confident, yes because your hair shouldn’t be shown to the other men persons, only your husband and this will make you good a pious woman or something like that yeah. You know it’s seems like you’re secure, you are feeling more securer with the scarf, yeah like here people sometimes here Muslim girls don’t do it and people say that when you are wearing the scarf we can’t do this we can’t do that And I think we can do everything; it’s only the scarf. But like in France I didn’t like it, they didn’t want any girl to wear scarf to school, I didn’t like that... it’s the media the way they portray Islam.
Nuzhat, life narrative (November, 2012)

The other day I was feeling weird. I went to the [shopping mall], I said nobody is wearing a scarf and I am the only one and everybody is looking at

me. Like, it was at night time because I don't usually go out at night time. So he [Nuzhat's husband] said you should feel confident!

Nuzhat, life narrative (November, 2012)

Nuzhat obviously had mixed emotions concerning the scarf. On the one hand, she felt “happy” and “more confident” and “secure” because of her *headscarf*. Nuzhat related this to feeling pious, which is indicative of the spiritual meaning she ascribed to the *headscarf*. On the other hand, Nuzhat described feeling “weird” in the local shopping mall because of her *headscarf*. In referring to the “headscarf affair” and talking about the way that Muslim women “can do everything”, Nuzhat was cognisant of the global events that shape stereotypes of Muslim women as oppressed. It may be that Nuzhat’s mixed emotions are a result of the contradiction between her own religious beliefs and wider societal perceptions of the *headscarf* and Islam in the West.

Rafeeqah also spoke about her *headscarf* as giving her a sense of contentment, and laughed as she explained that her husband does not particularly like her *headscarf*,

Now my husband is why are you wearing this? Why the scarf? And he is like don't tie it so tight! [Rafeeqah laughed and tugged at the bottom of her headscarf] he is like you are looking like auntie! So that's how so it's totally my decision, and I love this [she touched her headscarf]. Some people think our husbands force us to take the scarf but it's not like that, not in my case. My husband is like, take it off [laughing again], no one is looking at you; and I say my God is looking at me, Allah is looking. But this [touched headscarf] is just such feeling of contentment, honestly.

Rafeeqah, life narrative (November, 2012)

Nuzhat and Rafeeqah associate their *headscarf* with a way of both *feeling* and *being* in Scotland. Nuzhat positioned this feeling against the backdrop of negative stereotypes around Islam and the *headscarf*. In a similar vein, Rafeeqah positioned her feelings against her husband’s dislike for her *headscarf*, and in so doing seemed to highlight that her husband does not oppress or control her. In her study with Muslim schoolgirls in England, Dwyer (1999, p. 13) found that “one way in which individuals sought to define their own identities was to resist the meaning attached to their dress by others”. Seen in this way, the women’s accounts here, particularly Rafeeqah’s, suggest that their decision to wear the *headscarf* is in some ways an act of resistance to negative stereotypes of Muslim women as disempowered and oppressed.

Sakeena also spoke about her choice to wear Islamic dress since migrating to Scotland. Sakeena dresses in *abaya* and wears the *headscarf*. Sakeena explained that she did not dress this way in Malawi and has only adopted Islamic dress since moving to Scotland,

I never used to dress up the way I am just now. I always be normal, I just used to be normal, but time has changed, it just made me realise Islam and identity and all that kind of stuff.

Sakeena, life narrative (October, 2012)

In class one day, Sakeena recalled the moment that she decided to begin wearing religious dress in Scotland and I noted it in my field diary,

Sakeena was telling me today that when she first arrived in Scotland she didn't dress like she does now. She felt like she wanted to but wasn't sure if she should. Then apparently one day at the bus stop she saw this couple wearing all black with leather boots, black hair, black lipstick and piercings. She said to me, "I don't know what you call it, gothic? Yeah, gothic." And Sakeena told me that when she saw those two people she just thought that they're dressing how they want—and that maybe she could too.

Conversation with Sakeena, field diary entry (January, 2013)

Sakeena's use of the word "*normal*" suggests she saw herself as different, as "not normal", because of her Islamic identity. Yet, she actively chose her Islamic identity over a more "normal" or Scottish identity and even adapted this identity post-migration. Of particular interest, Sakeena seemed to be liberated by the diversity in her neighbourhood and took her inspiration to dress as she pleased (in her case to veil) from seeing a "gothic" couple at the bus stop. This offers a different perspective to current literature that highlights community-based pressure on Muslim migrant women to veil (Ehrkamp, 2007), or the freedom to "unveil" in the anonymity of new places (Freeman, 2005).

From conversations with Sakeena, it seemed that her religious identity provided a sense of wellbeing and spiritual strength to cope with life in Scotland. In the context of Sakeena's life narrative, Sakeena's Islamic identity seems to have become more important than feeling the "same" as Scottish people since migrating. It has been central to her ability to cope with the way life has unfolded since migrating. As a now single parent of four children with no help from her estranged husband or his parents, she has found herself struggling to cope alone in Scotland. She described one of her "darkest" moments to me,

And who was there to help when he left? No one, just me in those four walls crying, day after day alone and crying.

Sakeena, life narrative (October, 2012)

Sakeena became quiet and still in the interview room, and it was only after some time that I interrupted the silence and asked her how she coped. For the first time throughout the interview her voice broke and tears rolled down her face,

What can I say, Rebecca, if I didn't have my Qur'an I would have been lost, I would have been lost... you know Allah has helped me so much... Honestly if I didn't have my faith today I would have been... I would have been destroyed, I would have.

Sakeena, life narrative (October, 2012)

Islam appears to be a significant source of spiritual strength to Sakeena, which she draws upon to cope with the emotional challenges of her personal life. In her study with Javanese migrant domestic workers, Silvey (2005, 2007) likewise discusses the spiritual strength that religion provides in coping with the realities of migration. In a similar vein, the findings here support Ley and Tse (2013, p. 163), who suggest, “in the liminal experience of immigrant dispossession, conditions exist for an estrangement from worldly habits and desires and an efflorescence of religious practice.”

However, I am conscious here not to over-emphasise migration in shaping participants' religious identities, because other events in Sakeena's lifecourse seem to have influenced the construction of her religious identity, in particular, separation from her husband. In referencing how “*time has changed*”, it could be that juxtaposed against her failed marriage, Sakeena has drawn on more of an Islamic identity to position herself as a pious, modest woman in order to emphasise her religiosity and morality. Dwyer (1999, p. 18) says that in Islam, the notion of veiling is undertaken to avert a man's gaze and to “signify the moral and sexual propriety of the wearer.” In a similar way, Rafeeqah talked about her “religious transformation” after her divorce in Pakistan,

After this [divorce] I'm trying to follow the orders of Islam as much as I can; it was very difficult for me when I left university, I was quite hip-hop kind of girl, seriously I loved to dance. Hip-hop means very trendy kind of girl and I love to dance and everything which I shouldn't do I did. So but when I read Qur'an I came to know I shouldn't do that and I transform myself like this.

Rafeeqah, life narrative (November, 2012)

These findings echo those of Mohammad (2013) who suggests that Islam affords people the opportunity to transform their selfhood. I suggest that both Rafeeqah and Sakeena's accounts of their religious transformation can be explained through their desire to be seen as having "moral and sexual propriety" in response to their failed marriages (Dwyer, 1999, p. 18). Furthermore, returning to Nuzhat's narrative at the beginning of this section, she cites "*the young age*" as a reason for not "*know[ing] anything about religion.*" Nuzhat clearly sees her religious identity as relational to *age*. These different interpretations of the reasons for Sakeena, Rafeeqah and Nuzhat's decisions to take on a more Islamic identity reveal that whilst migration has had a significant impact on their positions around religion, other key lifecourse events, such as divorce and age, are perhaps equally important. I suggest, therefore, that these passages reveal the highly relational nature of identities, as has been suggested by Hopkins and Noble (2009), and that they are always in flux (Dwyer, 1999, 2000). Moreover, the findings here again point to the influence of wider discourses of religious gendered propriety that was highlighted in chapter 4 (Silvey, 2007) and the wider global events surrounding Muslims and Islam in the construction of religious identities (Hopkins, 2006; 2009c; Nagel, 2002)

5.3.3 Navigating Scotland through Islam

For Sakeena, our on-going conversations revealed that Islam provided her with a code of practice of sorts—a guide for the choices she *should* make as a Muslim woman living in Scotland, what was acceptable and unacceptable in the eyes of *Allah*. For example, Sakeena drew on the teachings of the Qur'an to identify available work opportunities that fell within the boundaries of the *Shari'a* (moral and religious code/law of Islam). Thus for Sakeena, it seems that rather than religion being a constraint on her choice to work outside of the home, her Islamic faith guided her to make choices with which she felt comfortable. Sakeena explained this excitedly, an almost incredulous expression in her voice,

I did speak to one of the head educational teachers, and she goes to me you can go to work! Look at something that's within the boundaries of Shari'a; see for example the women's centre, or say admin you'll be in the office, you won't be on the till all that kind of stuff...

Sakeena, life narrative (October, 2012)

The literature has highlighted the importance of the immigrant church in acting to mentor new migrants coping with the practicalities of their everyday life in the host country (Ley and Tse, 2013). The same can be said for Sakeena, who as a recent migrant to Scotland used the Qur'an as a way to help her to identify how she could work whilst preserving her religious beliefs. This also resonates with Ryan and Vacchelli (2013a, pp. 93-94), who discuss the way in which Islam acts as a "guide" or "framework" through which migrant women can negotiate living between their "traditional and British culture". Yet the findings here differ from Ryan and Vacchelli (2013a) in that Sakeena did not use the Qur'an so much as a guide for motherhood. Instead, Sakeena explained that she drew extensively on prayer to guide her in her parenting practices. Indeed, every time I talked with Sakeena, she seemed to be juggling so many competing subject positions; she wanted to be a good mother and fulfil her Islamic obligation to educate her children, yet she also needed to get a job to pay the rent and provide for the material needs of her children. She told me,

You know when I can't cope I am just Alhamdulillah, I just pray every day and I ask Allah to help me, to guide me, to keep my kids on steadfast and the right path, and I just pray to Allah.

Sakeena, life narrative (October, 2012)

Seemingly, Sakeena places her trust in *Allah* that life will turn out okay, thus illustrating that Islam for Sakeena is a "lived religion". This supports Sheringham (2010, p. 1688) who suggests, "religion cannot be separated from other everyday practices...and offers a sense of meaning and hope in what is an otherwise negative or challenging experience."

This notion of "lived religion" could also be seen in Sakeena's and Shafeeqah's discussion of wanting to "fit in" with the local community, during which both women drew on theology in describing their desires to be a "good neighbour",

I know if you're good to people then people are good back, it's give and take because in Islam, err, Islam nowadays has become bad very bad for people; in their minds people who don't know about Islam that much, they will believe media yeah because media and there's so much going on in Gaza and Syria, so much going on there and it affects people when they see you in scarves and such like, but you know for me it doesn't bother me now. I am who I am; religion does not stop me to say hello to my neighbours, they have the first right in Islam, your neighbour is your first relative.

Sakeena, life narrative (October, 2012)

In talking about being a “good neighbour”, Sakeena is referring to Islamic teachings of “neighbours” as both family members and the wider community and not only the Islamic community (Islam Awareness, 2014). Shafeeqah also talked about this in one of the focus group discussions,

Sometimes things that come up in the media regarding Islam affect me, it does affect me...Islam is a peaceful religion; it says we are all one but nowadays Muslims are killing Muslims, but the media forgets this and what is happening has got nothing to do with me because I'm just a Muslim, and I've been told the neighbour is your first relative, be good, treat them well, the way you want to be treated; teach your kids the same thing; do not lie, do not steal, no abusing whether you're a Christian or Hindu or Muslim. We are all one.

Shafeeqah, focus group discussion (September 2012)

Both Sakeena and Shafeeqah positioned their faith as a way to be a good member of Scottish society. They did this against the backdrop of wider global events and the media's negative portrayal of Islam. I see their accounts and actions as a way of resisting negative stereotypes of Muslims (Dwyer, 1999). It also provides evidence of the way in which global events shape local lives, an issue that Hopkins (2009a) highlights as important in the study of Muslim geographies. Furthermore, Levitt (2003) found that migrants emphasise religion in shaping their exemplary moral conduct, which makes them better “citizens” than some people who were born in the host country. In referring to Islamic teachings to emphasise their moral conduct as exemplary, inference can be made that both Sakeena and Shafeeqah used this to conjure up feelings of belonging in Scotland, despite growing adversity towards Muslim communities in the West. Thus, we can see the important intersection between migration and religion here and the way in which migrants might use religious discourses of morality to navigate life in Scotland.

5.3.4 Summary

This section has explored the ways in which participants' religious identities are reworked through migration. Through the facilitation of new encounters, or the loss of social support networks, migration as a key lifecourse event has pushed some women to draw more strongly on their faith to cope with everyday life, but also as a way to navigate the unfamiliar environment and assert belonging in Scotland. Participants' religious identities seemed to be constructed in relation to both the local and global context. However, some women's religious identities were renegotiated over the lifecourse and not just in relation to migration. This highlights the importance of not only

looking at the construction of identities in relation to place but also to time, as some women seemed to “become” more religious because of age or maturity.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to examine the participants’ accounts of everyday life in Scotland, specifically, the effect of migration with respect to motherhood, gender identities in the home, and religion. In so doing, the chapter provides an illustrative account of the outcomes of migration for this group of Muslim women.

Given the emphasis in Muslim geographies on younger British-Pakistani Muslims, the scarcity of discussion of the social isolation experienced by Muslim women within these communities is perhaps unsurprising. However, the findings of this study highlight that two of the participants, Akia and Nuzhat, experienced prolonged mental ill health that seemed to derive from a lack of post-natal social support. Family migration scholars have begun to pay attention to the ordering of lifecourse events in relation to migration and in particular have highlighted that migration can instigate key lifecourse events, such as pregnancy (Cooke, 2008). The findings support this, but they also show that the timing of these events can have a significant impact on migrant women’s ability to adjust to life in Scotland. Certainly, as the findings in this chapter show, significant scope for increased isolation and “baby blues”, if not clinically diagnosed post-natal depression, is possible, perhaps even probable, when migration shortly precedes childbirth, especially in the absence of extended kin or friends. This group of Muslim migrant women, who all migrated from communities with extended social support networks, experienced this isolation poignantly as it contrasted with normative approaches to motherhood. Caring alone for their children in Scotland was a considerable struggle and an isolating experience. Future studies may wish to examine more closely the delicate issue of family planning and the reasons behind the timing of childbirth in relation to migration and its effects on mental health.

Motherhood also resulted in some participants feeling frustrated that they could not act on their desires to work or pursue further education in Scotland. By bringing conceptual insights from the literature on gendered “tied” migration together with findings, this chapter has illuminated the recursive relationships among the lack of state support for migrant “dependents”, the “choice” to have a baby and not being able to work because

of lack of or difficulty in managing childcare. In so doing, the findings are illustrative of the ways in which women's experiences of "tied" migration are inherently linked to the patriarchal structuring of society (Halfacree, 1995). Thus, this chapter highlights the relevance of migration theories to extending understandings of Muslim women's experiences of migration.

Whilst the findings support existing studies that discuss gendered religious discourses in shaping women's subjectivities around motherhood and their "nurturing role", the extent to which there was anything necessarily *Muslim* about their experiences was questioned. Some of the challenges that participants face in their daily lives in Scotland are not necessarily unique to them as *Muslim* women, but rather as *women* who struggle to balance running the home, caring for children and paid work.

As a result of the loss of social networks that coincided with childbirth for some women, some participants discussed the changing nature of their marriages. Some women talked about their husbands showing more love and affection than they had in the home country, whereas others talked about their husbands taking on additional roles in the home that may be "traditionally" perceived as "feminine" roles, such as washing clothes or being present at the hospital for the birth of a child. Despite this support, Asmara suggested that such support could be withdrawn if they returned to their home country, thus highlighting the *temporary* suspension of traditional gender relations through migration. In a similar vein, Shafeeqah, as de-facto household head, reverted the control back to her husband using smartphone messaging. This not only implicates Shafeeqah in the reproduction of patriarchal performances, but also raises an important area of future research regarding the time-distantiation of patriarchy through emerging mobile phone technology.

In examining the affect of migration on family life within the homespace, this chapter does not consider the perspective of the husband. This is a significant limitation of the study and further research is warranted to address this because as Grillo (2011, p. 91) notes, "it is sometimes hard not to sympathise with immigrant and minority ethnic men whose identities as husbands and fathers – their sense of masculinity – is constantly challenged, even denigrated." An important body of work has sought to explore Muslim masculinities (Hopkins, 2004, 2006, 2007b, 2009), and it may be useful to bring these

insights together with empirical studies with (a) men who migrate with their families, (b) men who migrate for marriage and (c) men who sponsor their wives or families to join them in the UK. This may provide insight to men's experiences of everyday post-migration/reunification life.

This chapter highlights the important influence of migration on participants' religious identities. Migration affirmed Nuzhat and Sakeena's religious identity as Muslim women. For Nuzhat, this was shaped by wider subjectivities, that is to say wider social relations caused her to reflect on her faith and motivated her to want to know more about Islam. This supports scholars who emphasise the importance of local ties in shaping migrant identities (Ehrkamp, 2007). Sakeena's faith changed largely because of the sadness and worry she experienced after migrating to Scotland and subsequently separating from her husband. She drew on her faith for emotional strength to cope with being a single mother but also as a moral compass (Levitt, 2003) or "frame" of reference (Ryan and Vacchelli, 2013a, p. 91) for how to raise her children and act as a woman living in an unfamiliar country. Equally however, the findings show that both Rafeeqah's and Nuzhat's shifting sense of religious identity was formed in relation to age and also Rafeeqah's divorce, thus highlighting the ways in which religious identities fluctuate through the lifecourse.

Further, the increasingly negative stereotypes surrounding Islam and Muslims prompted Rafeeqah, Sakeena and Shafeeqah to assert their religious identity as a mode of resistance. In discussing her choice to veil against her husband's wishes, Rafeeqah used the interview space to counter dominant stereotypes of the "victimised Muslim woman". However, it is apparent that such negative depictions of Muslims and Islam as a religion is a struggle that the women encountered and dealt with in their everyday lives, and both Sakeena and Shafeeqah discussed the ways in which their Islamic faith made them good citizens in Scotland.

The discussion of religion and identity is restricted to evidence from those participants who made specific references to their Islamic faith. However, it is important to note here that in my encounters with Muslim women throughout the study, many of the women discussed everyday life—the ordinary and mundane—using religious expressions such as *Inshallah* (if Allah wills) and *Alhamdulillah* (thanks to God). For

some of the women who took part in the study and other Muslim women I encountered during my fieldwork, Islam was, as Rowley puts it, “a complete way of life” (1989, p. 359). This was not the case for all the women, however, and I am conscious not to homogenize the religious beliefs and practices of the Muslim women I encountered. However, I highlight this here in order to neither overemphasise but perhaps more importantly not understate the importance of Islam in the participants’ everyday lives.

In drawing on concepts from feminist geographic migration research and gendered “tied” migration together with findings, this chapter highlights the relevance of migration theories to exploring the effects of migration on Muslim women’s everyday lives. This chapter also contributes to the literature on Muslim geographies by explicitly focusing on women in their late twenties to early forties and working to uncover the ways in which migration and other key lifecourse events, in particular motherhood, shaped their subjective experiences of migration. Finally, in drawing on women’s biographical accounts of migration, this chapter contributes new insights into the fluctuation of “lived religion” throughout the lifecourse. It would perhaps be interesting to undertake research with migrants who express ambivalence towards their faith to further augment these insights.

Chapter VI: Evidence and discussion part III

The role of a community-based organisation in shaping Muslim migrant women's everyday lives in Scotland

6.1 Introduction

Chapters 4 and 5 were concerned primarily with women's subjective experiences of migration. Shifting the focus, this final evidence and discussion chapter explores the role of institutions in shaping the everyday lives of Muslim migrant women in Scotland. As discussed in chapter 2, existing empirical studies concerned with Muslim geographies have examined the role of religious institutions, including the mosque (Ali, 2013; Ehrkamp 2007; Gale, 2007) and *madrasahs* (Islamic education centres) (Ehrkamp, 2007; Kong, 2005) in shaping the everyday lives of Muslim men, women and youth. Some scholars have extended their focus to non-secular leisure spaces, secular schools and further education colleges (Dwyer, 1999, 2000; Ehrkamp, 2013; Green and Singleton, 2007; Mohammad, 2013). However, despite recognition of the importance of community-based or "neighbourhood" institutions in Muslim women's lives (Ehrkamp, 2013 p. 24; Green and Singleton, 2007; Hopkins, 2006), such spaces have garnered relatively little attention in the literature on Muslim geographies. Drawing on insights from the literature on third sector organisations, together with research on Muslim spaces discussed in chapter 2, this chapter examines the evidence to explore the role of Fountain Point—the field site for this study—in shaping the post-migration lived realities of Muslim women, thus addressing research objective 3. To this end, the chapter draws primarily on the evidence from staff interviews and notes in the field diary made during the 15 months spent in the field. This is supported by material from the focus groups and life narratives.

Section 6.2 discusses the significance that some women attach to Fountain Point and its centrality in participants' everyday lives. Section 6.3 examines the ways in which Fountain Point creates a "safe space" for Muslim migrant women. Following this, section 6.4 analyses Fountain Point's service provision to Muslim migrant women. To begin, I present an ethnographic description of Fountain Point. This is done to provide the reader with my interpretation of Fountain Point as a "space in-between", where religious and cultural identities from both "home" and Scotland come together. I draw out aspects of this description throughout the chapter, seeking to illuminate the

importance of this use of space for addressing the diverse needs of Muslim migrant women.

Fountain Point

On entering the main area of the Fountain Point, you feel a sense of community: the space is organised in a way that reflects familiarity and comfort, but also continues to create a feeling of opportunity and possibility. For instance, the doors to the art and sewing classes are left ajar so that those who are feeling lonely can see the classes aimed at providing social support; you can hear the conversations in both fluent and broken English, laughter, or see a reassuring hand on another person's shoulder. From outside the classroom it looks like participants are making friends and that everyone is welcome. The smell of both exotic and familiar food hits you when a cooking class is running, the shutter to the kitchen raised slightly as women in hair nets and aprons work together to prepare a new dish, a familiar dish or some cookies and cakes. In the educational classes, the doors are shut to reflect the more serious learning environment, but all classrooms have windows that you can look through and see women dressed in headscarves and abaya learning alongside one another to improve their English or pass their driving theory test. All of the classrooms are positioned around a large open-plan room with sofas and easy chairs, tables with plants and flowers and a music stereo in the corner. On a day-to-day basis this open living space is occupied by women stopping for a rest to sip on tea or eat some lunch. On Tuesday afternoons the elders' leisure group uses the central space, making it feel like auntie's sitting room. Whatever the use of the space, cake and biscuits are a daily occurrence, shared over conversations between new acquaintances and old friends alike. The central space is also a place of exchange and reciprocity; gifts, shopping, sought after food and spices, clothing and books are frequently exchanged between people, and it starts to feel as though you're in a village square. The area changes into a dining room for cultural and religious events such as Diwali, Iranian and Chinese New Year, Eid, Christmas and Burn's night, with low lighting and decorations. There is a prayer room available to all and prayer mats are folded inside out on tables in the prayer room with the occasional one left in the classrooms.

6.2 The significance of Fountain Point in women's lives

Hopkins (2006, p. 342) found that young Muslim men suggested Muslim women were "privileged" in being able to access a number of "community facilities." In keeping with the young Muslim men in Hopkins' study (2006), I noted the significance and centrality of Fountain Point in some women's lives. This was particularly the case for those Muslim women who had no existing family or friends in Scotland upon arrival. Sakeena told me,

"This is pretty much the only place I come" Sakeena said. Sakeena said she goes to the mosque on Tuesdays to learn the Qur'an, but she doesn't go anywhere else except Fountain Point. Sakeena is a conservative Muslim woman; she told me she doesn't go to the cinema or socialise – "that kind of thing". She says she takes the children to swimming lessons and a friend takes them to madrasah. That's it. Sometimes, Sakeena takes the train down

to England to see her family but she says it's difficult to manage on her own with the children, plus it's expensive.

Field diary notes (November, 2012)

In the focus group discussion, Sakeena said when she first arrived in Scotland everyone was English, although I infer from her use of words that she meant to say Scottish or “White”. She recalled her happiness when she walked into Fountain Point and met an “Asian” woman,

Moving up here everyone was English so the first person I met was Adeela [Fountain Point staff member] and I was so happy (Sakeena emphasised this) that at least there was an Asian person I could see. 'Cause I went to Tesco and Asda and there was nobody, there was only the Scottish. I was like “Allah!” I used to feel so isolated, nobody I knew, but coming here I met these women and then slowly...

Sakeena, focus group discussion (September, 2012)

One of the focus group participants, Akia, talked about her isolation before finding out about Fountain Point from her health visitor,

The health visitor I think or midwife told me about it [Fountain Point] because um she came she see I just got the three kids crying the home, it's really messy. I'm just crying [Akia impersonates crying]. I just don't know what to do! I was miserable and the staff here I remember the first time I just need a shoulder to cry and Nadia it was really lovely...because I spent all the time with three babies, three children one baby, and [sigh] I am sad I am not going out and not going shopping with anyone; this is really sad so I hope when I come here I maybe find one friend [Akia laughs nervously].

Akia, focus group discussion (September, 2012)

Having been in the city for six years with no friends to speak of and only her husband's family nearby, Akia told me her feelings of isolation and depression were overwhelming until she first went to Fountain Point. In recalling the hug of a staff member and crying, it seemed that this was an important memory for Akia. Sadly, Akia's story was not uncommon among women who accessed Fountain Point, I noted the first day a new member joined the computing class, a Muslim migrant woman from Pakistan,

We have a new class member today. She lives in the city with her husband and son and migrated from Pakistan. She said she doesn't know anyone here apart from her husband and his family. But she's been here three years! I can't imagine how lonely that must feel. She only spoke a little, but we talked about her son and what she hoped to learn in class. After class she fetched her son from the childcare and brought him back over to the classroom to see me, she stood there smiling and said “this is my son”. She

told me he likes “Thomas” indicating the Thomas the Tank Engine train in his hand. Then she stood there, just smiling, and it seemed like she was waiting for me to continue the conversation. I tried to think of things to say and to ask her but in the end I had to go, as I had to talk to a staff member. She looked a little disappointed and I felt bad in cutting her off and excusing myself.

Field diary entry (October, 2012)

Talking to Akia and the class member noted in the field diary entry above, it became clear that for these women, Fountain Point provided their first significant source of social interaction beyond their family, following their arrival in the city. More pertinently however, this first point of contact took place when these two women had lived in the city for six and three years respectively. The social isolation that some women faced before accessing Fountain Point was also evident in their recollections of how they first found out about Fountain Point,

(Nasra was laughing as she tried to translate the focus group above the noise of all the participants talking at once). Auntie said that when she started coming to Fountain Point it was near where she lived so she used to see everybody going, these women in hijab walking past her window and she says I wonder where they are all going? I want to go to that place where everybody is going. So she goes [says] one day I plucked up the courage and got my coat ready and when I saw a lady walk past I took up my coat and I followed her.

Focus group discussion with Mrs T and Nasra (Fountain Point staff member) (December, 2012)

Similarly, Nuzhat also said that she found out about Fountain Point because she saw women walking past her house and so she asked her husband to find out for her where they were going,

I used to see women because I lived on [name removed] street and I used to see women coming here and I am asking my husband and my husband is asking his boss and his boss told us there is a community organisation here.

Nuzhat, life narrative (November, 2012)

These passages highlight the importance of *place* in the provision of community-based services, as both Nuzhat and Mrs T saw other women walking to Fountain Point. This not only made them both question where the women were walking but also made it easy to follow them to find Fountain Point. The organisation’s location near the city centre and on the major bus routes throughout the city made it easily accessible to these women who either did not drive or did not have access to a car. However, Fountain Point is not located in close proximity to what other scholars have referred to as

“traditional [Muslim] spaces”, such as the mosque, *halal* food produce or tearooms (Aitchison *et al.*, 2007, p. 3; Ehrkamp, 2013). Thus the findings here challenge the notion that “Muslim identities are often assumed to be connected to traditional spaces” and highlight instead the importance of secular “non-traditional” spaces in the participants’ lives (Aitchison *et al.*, 2007, p. 3). It was unsurprising then, that in the staff focus group, participants referred to the organisation as providing the “*net below the safety net*” for migrant women who had few or no extended family members in the city and did not work.

As a result of the experiences of estrangement and isolation that some women experienced in migrating to Scotland, they spoke about enjoying the space at Fountain Point that was a relaxed environment where they could make friends. Akia said,

For me a big part is the social, we can do the painting together or sewing and we are talking as women together.

Akia, focus group discussion (September, 2012)

In one of the pilot interviews, a volunteer at Fountain Point expressed the difference between Fountain Point and a similar organisation for migrant women in the city,

I think Fountain Point compared to the other organisation in the city, well Fountain Point are more community so you have a lot more going on apart from the classes, they have the art class, they have the conversation, they have lunch. So its quite different and more informal...if you want to meet your friends, if you want to broaden your social life, I would say go to [Fountain Point].

Pilot interview with Mae, Volunteer at Fountain Point (August, 2012)

Staff members expressed a sense of pride over the use of space. Having relocated to a bigger building in 2007, the amount of space enabled the organisation to expand their membership and thus support more women,

I was speaking with Nasra and she was saying when they moved from the other building it was a great thing, because this building is much bigger and can accommodate more women and they can run more services etc. But she said that it was difficult to create the sense of homeliness that the other place had because it was smaller, there, it felt like you were walking into auntie’s living room and she missed that feeling.

Field diary, (June 2012)

Shafeeqah said she preferred Fountain Point over other services, community organisations, and educational opportunities available in the city,

I was talking to Shafeeqah and she said she's been told she can take some classes at the local college. But she says she's not going to do it because she doesn't have the confidence and she just feels more secure and more confident coming to Fountain Point because she knows the staff and some of the women.

Conversation with Shafeeqah, field diary (June 2012)

The findings here show the importance that these participants placed on accessing and experiencing Fountain Point, giving credence to those scholars who highlight the centrality of community-based organisations in Muslim women's everyday lives (Green and Singleton, 2007; Hopkins, 2006). However, as a female-only environment, this raises the question of why such community provision is in place for *women* specifically. The passages above highlight that Fountain Point makes some women feel more secure or confident in the space of Fountain Point. This will be explored further in the next section.

6.3 Creating a “safe” space

Over the 15 months that I volunteered and “hung out” at Fountain Point, I noted the word “safe” in my field diary and picked up on the way it was often used in focus group and staff interviews. For instance, in the focus group with staff members at Fountain Point, participants discussed the organisation as a “safe space”,

Laila: I think that's another thing that the women we work with—one of the reasons they come here to access support is because they feel comfortable and they feel safe. That's the words we constantly get back on feedback: comfort and safe.

Adeela: And I think that's what Laila is saying...is that for a lot of other support agencies there's a complete lack of understanding, not in a purposeful malicious way, it's just there. I think the damaging thing is that people believe they understand and they think they have a very good understanding of culture, particularly the professionals you know when they come up and you really get to talk to them you think, you don't have a clue...you really really don't have a clue...

Staff focus group discussion (June 2012)

Using the words “*comfortable*” and “*safe*” in the context of offering Muslim women support, the staff members here discussed that such feelings come from their ability to provide culturally appropriate support to women in the city. Comparing the organisation to other “professionals”, Adeela suggested that such cultural sensitivity is essential to supporting the women who access their services. Another participant, Sarah, told me,

I think one of our strengths is that we manage to do a lot of things under this umbrella of a safe community, ethnic minority communities trust us to do things appropriately and to do it sensitively and to do it the way it should be done. Again that whole idea of normality and umm so we're in a very lucky position where we can then address issues and needs in a much more powerful way because we can rock the boat without people seeing us rock the boat. Does that make sense? 'Cause we're in this kind of under the safe umbrella that umm maybe people, the community, who don't want women to have grander ideas than they should, don't feel threatened by us but really what we're all about is rocking that boat [laughs]. We just do it in a really sneaky way. Does that make any sense? But we just have to do it in a very careful way; it's almost like whispering in someone's ear the secret to life [whispers] but don't tell anyone.

Sarah, staff interview (October, 2012)

Sarah here discussed further the notion of “safe”, which was first discussed in the staff focus group. In so doing, Sarah elaborates on what she meant by “safe”. She suggested that “safe” refers to being under a “safe umbrella”, referring this time to perceptions within the wider community of the culturally appropriate provision of their services. Sarah said that this wider community does not “want women to have grander ideas”, highlighting her interpretation of the patriarchal cultural constraints placed on women, as discussed by other scholars outlined in chapter 2 (Mohammad, 2005). Thus, the notion of “safe” here is perhaps less about preventing harm for women but instead working “sensitively” to support women whilst preserving or respecting normative practices and ideologies. Evidently, however, Sarah did not agree with some of these normative practices as she discussed “whispering in people's ears”. I infer from this that whilst the community perceived Fountain Point to be working within the boundaries of normative practices and ideologies, some Fountain Point staff aimed to challenge patriarchal constraints placed on some of the women with whom they worked.

Another staff member, Nasra, discussed the ways in which women were able to “prosper” in the “safe environment” at Fountain Point,

The two main biggest barriers that women face is childcare and language, and I feel we're able to support them with those two barriers. For example the crèche that we have is provided on premises so the women come in they put their child there they know their child is safe. They know that they're only across the community area if the child cries so it gives the mum that reassurance. Then they can learn English or we provide the other classes. So women are prospering. They're doing so well because the barriers you know it's accessible for them, and also I think a lot of the women from the middle east and south Asian culture. We don't ordinarily mix with a lot of

men, we don't do mixing. This feels very safe environment, they have their hijab, they can take off their hijab, there's all women and they can speak and talk in a friendly environment. They know they feel safe so that is a big impact on them as well.

Nasra, staff interview (December, 2012)

Nasra believed that women accessing Fountain Point were able to “prosper” because Fountain Point provided them the opportunity to learn whilst accessing childcare. This supports Mohammad (2005) who found that placing childcare facilities on-site at the local college overcame childcare constraints placed on young British-Pakistani Muslim women’s education. Furthermore, Nasra discussed the “safe environment” where women do not have to mix with men and can “*take off their hijab*”. I suggest then, that Nasra deemed Fountain Point a “safe environment” because it is a semi-private space with only women, rather than a public “masculine” space. This may explain their large membership of Muslim women, and this way of separating men and women can be understood as preserving Muslim social order. This resonates with Green and Singleton (2007) and Mohammad (2005), who find that Muslim young women’s spatialities are restricted and based on a separation between men and women.

Further, looking around the space, it is seemingly a crossover of both a secular and non-secular space in which religion plays an important part. Fountain Point provides prayer mats folded inside out on tables in each classroom, a prayer room facing east (towards *Mecca*) and prepares *halal* food in the kitchen. In so doing, Fountain Point provides a space that allows the interaction of religious, cultural and gendered practices, thus providing a space that does not require women to compromise on any of these. The literature review chapter discusses the way in which some Muslim spaces are deemed “safe” because they are perceived by wider Muslim communities as “appropriate”, in other words they uphold cultural or religious values (Green and Singleton, 2007). Rafeeqah spoke about her husband “helpfully” finding Fountain Point as a support group for her when she arrived in Scotland, but this raises the question of whether he too deemed this to be an “appropriate” space for her,

My husband told me about Fountain Point and I searched this on the internet and then I was quite excited, thinking at least I have some place to go. Then again my husband pushed me, call them, call them every morning call them, call them, that's all he says! I was not nervous but I just didn't get around to it; and then eventually he brought me here [Rafeeqah

emphasised the word 'he']. He was sitting outside, and I talked to one of the staff members and that was it. He was so happy because he was like, you have to integrate into the society as soon as possible, so go there.

Rafeeqah, life narrative (November, 2012)

Rafeeqah did not talk about her husband encouraging her to try new activities, such as join a gym, for example. He specified Fountain Point. The staff discussed the way in which husbands brought their wives to Fountain Point as an expression of patriarchal power relations,

This was always a classic, the husband comes in and he's standing in front of her, and kind of you're asking her a question, and you know you're trying to look at her and saying, "What's your name?" And the husband answers for her, and you're like, can I ask your wife this question, and you know getting round the husband, and I just want to whack them around the head and say, this is a women's centre, let her do her own talking!

Adeela, staff focus group (June, 2012)

Seeing Fountain Point through the lens of a “safe” and “appropriate” space where husbands “bring” their wives, suggests that for some women, Fountain Point may be an “enforced space”, which Green and Singleton (2007) discuss in relation to “appropriate” leisure spaces for Muslim women. However, it is important to remember that Fountain Point was not founded specifically for Muslim migrant women and Fountain Point works to support women from many different ethnic groups, as discussed in chapter 3. Indeed, whilst the provision of services *only* to women maintains Muslim gendered social order, the decision to exclude women is based on a variety of factors but primarily because the organisation has a long history of supporting *all* women, regardless of ethnicity or religion, and sometimes around issues such as domestic violence and spousal abuse. As such, the organisation perceives itself as having an important role in advocating women’s rights. This was made evident by my field notes that recorded Fountain Point’s participation in events such as International Women’s Week and the organisation’s involvement in conferences and exhibitions throughout the city to raise awareness of so-called “women’s issues”. To date, the literature on Muslim spaces tends to emphasise the maintenance of public/masculine and private/female spatialities that certain institutions enforce (Ali, 2013; Green and Singleton, 2007; Mohammad, 2005, 2013). In extending this focus to a “secular” space, the findings, whilst providing some support for this, equally illuminate the importance of looking

beyond the maintenance of Muslim gendered social order in explaining why some institutions cater only to men or to women.

Nonetheless, the findings here raise important questions that warrant further examination. For instance, in providing this semi-private “safe space”, does Fountain Point reproduce “difference” or “otherness” of Muslim migrant women? Nagar (1997, 2000) discusses the contradictory nature of spaces and places that empower some whilst oppressing others (see also Ehrkamp, 2007). Does this “safe space” perpetuate the exclusion of women from the “mainstream” and thus their eventual integration into Scottish society? I examine these questions in the following section.

6.4 Services and programmes at Fountain Point

The class timetable shown in table 6.1 shows the diversity of classes available to women at Fountain Point. Classes coincide with children’s school days and term dates; classes begin at 10am and finish by 3pm, as shown on the timetable (table 6.1) and do not run in school half terms, winter, spring or summer breaks. This timetabling enables women with childcare commitments to attend class. Mohammad (2005) discusses the temporal constraints placed on young British-Pakistani women seeking work, who are expected by their family to work only during certain “respectable” hours so that they are not in masculine “public” spaces at inappropriate times of the day and can fulfil their household and caring responsibilities.

However, there is a danger of over-emphasising patriarchal cultural practices here. Indeed, whilst volunteering at Fountain Point, I joined a class for six weeks with a different group of women. The women were learning English and the class comprised 3 Chinese women, 1 German woman, 2 Polish women and 1 woman from Azerbaijan. None of the women were Muslim women. Four of the women had school-aged children and over the six weeks that I worked with them, each of them on occasion had to leave class early or arrived late, citing childcare commitments.

Table 6.1 Timetable of classes at Fountain Point

	10 a.m. – 12 noon	12 noon – 1 p.m.	1 p.m. – 3pm	3 p.m. – 5 p.m.	5 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Monday	English Conversation Class (Pre-Intermediate) ***** Computing IC3 Training (Intermediate Level)		English Conversation Group (Beginners) ***** Driving Theory Test Preparation	Citizen’s Advice Bureau (Advice and Information)	
Tuesday	English – College Class (Upper Beginner Level 3) ***** Childcare Training (National Progression Award) ***** Cake Decorating Class ***** Pilates Exercise Class		Over 50s Social Group ***** Computing class Introduction to Computing and the Internet	English for Polish Speakers	English for Polish Speakers
Wednesday	English Conversation Group (Beginners) ***** Computing Class (Introduction to Computing and the Internet) ***** Art Class	Lunch Club	English College Class (Level 4 SQA units Access 2) ***** English College Class (Level 5 SQA units Access 2) ***** Job seeking and CV skills	Cooking Class	
Thursday	English College Class (Complete Beginners, Level 1) ***** English College Class (Beginner, Level 2)		Sewing Class (Beginners)	UK Citizenship Study Group (Test Preparation Class) ***** Basic Arts and Craft	Youth Group
Friday	Mother and Toddler (Group)		No classes	No classes	

The classroom windows mentioned in the description of Fountain Point at the beginning of this chapter allow women to look into classes and see what other women are learning. This is important for showcasing to women who come to the centre to drop off their children at the childcare centre or come to a cooking or sewing class that there are other, more formal classes available to them should they wish to take that path. Staff members discussed some classes as “springboard” classes and others as “educational” classes,

We have a series of springboard classes, such as sewing classes or cooking classes, and its very much aimed at women who come in and say oh no I couldn't do an educational class. I don't know how to read in my own language, but oh cooking I can do cooking, I do that everyday. So they come in and they join the class, make friends build confidence build self esteem see other women doing other things and they say I know that woman – maybe I know that woman and I'm friends with her maybe I can join that; so its about this whole holistic thing where you're providing people with lots of options and its just their own pathway, we talk about that quite a lot – their pathway to change, whether that's just social or education, employment.

Laila, staff focus group (June, 2012)

Sakeena recalled that sewing classes helped her to get out of the house and meet other women at a particularly bad time in her life. On returning home, she would think about the women she had met to make herself feel happier,

I used to just drop in for sewing lessons. I used to come for sewing although I'm not interested for sewing because it's too much time consuming and you need the time; but I thought let me just get out of the house, excuse myself and let me just go maybe and then when I used to meet mums here speak to other women and go back home I used to have them in my mind, thinking about their life imagining their life imagining their living it, used to make me feel better, otherwise I felt sad most of the time and I used to feel low low low.

Sakeena, life narrative (October, 2012)

As a volunteer at the centre, Rafeeqah echoed Sakeena's feelings and reflected on the cooking and cake decorating classes as a way to involve everyone who needed some support,

Well I don't know even the abc of philosophy but I think in simple words Fountain Point is good, they are very helpful and they help everyone and at least they provide some fresh breath of air for everyone. Seriously seriously people come here and they can share their worries with staff and stuff like that. I think it's a really very good place, it's indeed a very good community centre, because we have cooking class, what's that?! Everyone can cook!

But still just to communicate and just to I mean just to feel good. And cake decoration class! Ha!

Rafeeqah, life narrative (November, 2012)

As previous literature suggests, some Muslim spaces, for example schools or leisure spaces can provide women with the opportunity to “be”, “become” or “resist” (Green and Singleton, 2007, p. 109-121). The passages above show that the women can “be”—can “feel good” in Fountain Point, like “*a breath of fresh air*” as Rafeeqah says, even if it is through doing an activity that “everyone” can already do. Laila shows how these “traditional” feminine pursuits such as cooking or sewing are used to build women’s self esteem in the hope that they act as a “springboard” to the more “educational classes”. Yet the process goes deeper, because Sakeena spoke about taking away the feeling of being with other women in sewing class and “*imagining their living*”. For Sakeena, *imagining* “being” is perhaps as important as actually “being”. In a similar vein, Sarah talked about “leaving the door ajar” metaphorically, so that women could see the opportunities available to them, not only tangible opportunities but opportunities that offered a different “normality”,

It’s that idea of normality; just because something is normal to you it does not mean its normal to someone else, and I think that the vast majority of the women we work with are kind of if you want negotiating between two very complex cultures and that negotiation is very often about normalities it’s about what’s normal for me what’s normal for that person and there’s elements of fear involved you know. And I think everyone who works here is on a learning curve because you come in with your own your own ideas and normality and you’re challenged not in a kind of aggressive in your face way but just in an everyday osmosis all around, you kind of suck it, in you learn through looking hearing seeing feeling asking questions, which is hugely encouraged.

Sarah, staff interview, (November 2012)

Nasra elaborated on this and explained,

I think it’s such a good ideal place for breaking down barriers and concepts you have of others – religions, cultures, countries, so it brings everything together and I think that’s the beauty of this place and people who speak and we have women who speak obviously they speak over 60 different languages and that is so diverse and I think it’s such a good learning for these women it gives them such a great opportunity because they are being exposed to different cultures, religions, languages and you know you do become accepting and tolerant as well and I think that’s very very big here.

Nasra, staff interview, (November 2012)

Much of the literature that exists on Muslim spaces has centred on institutions that cater only for Muslims and thus there is no discussion on the way in which women’s

subjectivities are shaped through interaction with people from different cultures, ethnicities and religions. An exception to this is the work of Dwyer (1999, 2000) however, who discusses the “East meets West” fashion show produced by Muslim young women in an English school. Dwyer (1999, p. 19) draws on Hall’s (1992) notion of third space to show how the fashion show allowed the Muslim schoolgirls to try “alternative subjectivities”, part Pakistani, part British, part Muslim. Together with the passages above, Dwyer’s work provides a lens through which to see Fountain Point as a kind of “third space” which exposes Muslim migrant women to different normalities shaped by culture, ethnicity and religion. In this way, by working to provide both educational and “springboard” classes in a “safe space” with access to childcare and surrounded by women of diverse ethnicities, religions and cultures, Fountain Point provides women with the opportunity to “become” something, whether physical or metaphorical. The following section explores this in further detail by examining the role of Fountain Point in shaping Muslim women’s access to work.

6.4.1 Shaping access to work?

Chapter 2 discussed the burgeoning literature on migrant non-profit community-based organisations. This literature has highlighted the important role of community-based organisations in supporting migrants to both integrate socially and economically, *i.e.* to find paid work. However, chapter 2 also highlighted the ambiguities and contradictions in services offered by community-based organisations, with some scholars suggesting that community organisations are co-opted into the government’s neoliberal agenda (Martin, 2010; Trudeau and Veronis, 2009; Williams *et al.*, 2012). This section is therefore concerned to understand the role of Fountain Point in shaping Muslim migrant women’s access to work. As highlighted in chapter 2, Muslim women have the highest rates of economic inactivity across all religious groups. The 2011 census reported that 51% of Muslims are employed versus 77% for Christians in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2014a). Further, Muslim women’s high unemployment has been an ongoing discussion in the literature (Bowlby and Lloyd-Evans, 2009; Hopkins and Gale, 2009).

Table 6.1 also shows that Fountain Point offers a childcare course through which women can obtain a National Progression Award in childcare practice. This class, as well as computing classes were over-subscribed with long waiting lists. Staff confirmed

that the long waiting lists for these classes were because many women were looking for work and hoped that computing skills or their National Progression Award in childcare practice would make it easier to find a job. Akia discussed taking the childcare course was not her “dream” but she saw it as a way to get a job,

But it's not my dream the childcare but it's okay cause now I am 7 months looking for a job and all the jobs I apply for - I just hear nothing back.

Akia, life narrative (November, 2012)

In addition to the provision of training, Fountain Point also offers newly qualified women the opportunity of a work placement in the onsite crèche and a mobile crèche out in the community. This system was put in place when Fountain Point staff found that newly qualified women were not getting jobs because they lacked experience, but a staff member explained the importance of women getting experience outside of Fountain Point in the mobile crèche,

We've also got the mobile crèche where they actually go out as an organisation and deliver a mobile crèche at a venue of other people's choice so from that they're getting a lot of experience outside of the organisation experience outwith [Fountain Point] so it's not in the safety of Fountain Point. They're in a strange environment and that's worked really well.

Adeela, staff interview (November, 2012)

From the passage above, it is evident that Adeela understands the importance of women moving beyond the “safe space” of Fountain Point if they are to be able to find work. However, in providing work-based training in childcare, this also raises considerations of the way in which Fountain Point is providing women with the kind of work training that will enable them to work in a sector of the economy characterised by low wages. Furthermore, in training to work in childcare, women are continuing to work within the cultural expectations of some Muslim communities that expect women to undertake feminine-types of work, as has been shown by both Mohammad (2005) and Dwyer (2000). However, it is important not to over-emphasise cultural practices whilst overlooking the structural constraints in shaping access to paid work, as these were discussed extensively by staff members at Fountain Point and also by Muslim migrant women themselves. For example, Adeela, one of the staff members at Fountain Point discussed the lack of job-seeking support for recent migrants as a result of their immigration status. To address this gap in service provision, Fountain Point offers a careers/job seeking service to its membership of women,

We get that a lot, people coming in and saying they're desperate for work but they can't get help to find it, so we've had Gill doing the careers advice and information and she's ran employment and workshops and so forth.

Adeela, staff interview, (November 2012)

Furthermore, Adeela explained that the financial crisis since 2008 has meant that many of the Muslim women they work with have had to start looking for work because their husbands' businesses have closed or husbands have lost their jobs,

At the moment we're seeing women coming forward who we haven't seen historically coming forward with financial issues whether the husband's business isn't doing well or he's been made redundant whatever it may be. There's a financial crisis going on at home which pushes them that little bit more into employment.

Adeela, staff interview, (November 2012)

To help women in their search for a job, Fountain Point also runs classes from time to time to support women who want to learn how to find work, interview skills and how to write their CV for potential employers. However, despite this provision, I noticed that such classes were not well attended and for the most part the classroom sat empty. This may be however, because experienced and educated women did not necessarily need help to write their CVs, but could not get jobs because their experience and qualifications were not recognised in Scotland,

I went to get help at the careers place in the city, I told them I had pharmacy degree, but they told me it wouldn't translate here, so I have had to start all over again.

Pilot interview with Mae, Volunteer at Fountain Point (August, 2012)

We had a woman who was a surgeon from Iraq but she worked specifically with women and children and she was no longer in Iraq because of political reasons but she was a highly qualified highly intelligent completely fluent in English very skilled woman who desperately wanted to be of use to the world and could not be because she wasn't qualified she didn't have the right visas you know all this type of stuff so...

Sarah, staff interview, (November 2012)

Evidently then, the lack of support in seeking work but also the loss of skills due to the inability to transfer qualifications and professional certifications acts as a barrier to some migrant women finding work. For some of the women that Fountain Point support however, matching their skills to the expectations of UK-based employers is a challenge,

I was speaking to a girl who had just come from Pakistan so the lives that they come from are completely different you know? It's a polarised view completely polarised like coming from the South Pole to the North Pole completely different lives. For example the girl I met with this morning she

said well my life was that I came from a village where I went to the school and came back. But now she's come here [Scotland] and she has to make a CV for the job centre [Nasra laughed]. Speaking about her experiences, we thought what can we draw from that to make a CV? You know? How do we put it into the box of the UK? Ha! I said you have got skills! You were able to be responsible as an adult and take care of your sister, you cooked and you also studied at the same time, you can manage responsibilities and priorities. You know?

Nasra, staff interview, (November 2012)

Referring to the “box of the UK”, Nasra highlights that the local Job Centre expects this woman to have a CV that reflects the skills that potential employers want. She talks about drawing out transferable skills from the young woman’s work in the home to fit her experiences into the “box of the UK.” This is illustrative of the barriers to work that this woman has faced because her skills are unrecognised, possibly because of the construction of work occurring outside of the home in the public “economic” realm. Feminist anthropologists have analysed the ways in which the economic and the domestic realm are deeply entwined and that the meanings people give to work and home are highly cultural (Wolf, 1992). Feminist economic anthropologists argue that this separation of the economy from all other aspects of life is a cultural and historical *production*, rather than an “objective” fact or representation of reality and that this production reverberates through all aspects of “Western” culture (Carrier and Miller, 1998; Wilk and Cliggett, 1996). Interestingly, Sarah noted how this affects the ability of Fountain Point to get funding to support women into work,

It's quite interesting, going back to one of our experiences, we try to get a piece of funding aimed at helping women into employment, the Scottish government were very excited about working with us. This is brilliant we really want to get migrant women into employment they said. They were excited and we were excited and then suddenly they said are the women you work with registered unemployed? We were like, well no because culturally it's not seen as an appropriate thing to do to register unemployed, because if you're unemployed you're working in the home and that's not unemployed, that's just life. So there was almost this kind of idea, which was like, oh well in that case if the women you work with aren't registered unemployed we can't give you money to get them employed. For them it's like that number doesn't exist – it's not a problem. It doesn't fit in any box of theirs – it's a hidden problem. It doesn't exist. They then can't say to someone above them well we've reduced unemployment by this much as that number didn't exist.

Sarah, staff interview, (November 2012)

One of the roles of Fountain Point therefore, is to bridge these cultural and social constructions in order to support women into work. A key way that they do this is through providing opportunities for women to volunteer in order to get ‘Scottish’ work experience on their CV. Volunteers work in the classrooms as assistant tutors, in the crèche as childcare volunteers (once they have their National Progression Award in childcare) and as general volunteers in the office or for events held at Fountain Point. Upon entering Fountain Point, the photographs of volunteers are on the wall next to the staff members. All volunteers are given workplace training involving health and safety, confidentiality and classroom rules and are trained in working to support women in the class who display signs of mental ill health. Each volunteer is expected to arrive ten minutes before the class or session begins, dress ‘professionally’, *i.e.* no jeans or short skirts or trainers, and wear their volunteer name badge at all times.

However, to what extent does this notion of volunteering encourage the performance of identities shaped by neoliberal discourses of paid-work, self-responsibility and individuality? Rose (1997, p. 316) draws on Butler’s writings on performativity (1990) to suggest, “our identities do not pre-exist our performance of them.” Seen in this way, it is possible that by taking on the role of a volunteer, women begin to embody neoliberal ideals of self-responsibility and expectations of women to do ‘good’ and ‘gendered’ work. This supports findings in the literature of the contradictions and ambiguities in the work of community-based organisations in fighting for social justice while at the same time privileging neo-liberal policies that can cause significant socio-economic disparity (Larner, 2005). Further, volunteerism is an important part of this policy approach, as it is perceived as a “bridge” into work for the unemployed (Williams *et al.*, 2001). Seen in this light, volunteering is understood to show a commitment to wanting to work and a willingness to hold down a job with set hours, expectations around workplace conduct or personal appearance. In 2009, the UK government discussed intentions to fast track citizenship applications for migrants who volunteered in their “mainstream organisations” (Migrants’ Rights Network, 2010). Although such plans have now been abandoned, the staff at Fountain Point talked about the way in which this undermined all of the other benefits that volunteering provides a person, rather than simply as a way into work,

Leila was asking me if I had heard about the government’s plans to make migrants have volunteering experience before they were eligible to apply for

their indefinite leave to remain. Leila sighed and said 'it's just so frustrating you know?' She explained her frustrations that the government thinks it's just so easy for these women [migrant women] to volunteer. She said this way of seeing volunteering doesn't take into account the huge amount of resources that organisations such as Fountain Point put into offering volunteering opportunities and it's not easy to provide volunteer placements. Plus the environment has to be right, you can't just 'bung' in a woman from another country with another language and no awareness of working life in Scotland and hope they survive. She said it was such a big deal for some women to begin volunteering and sometimes it takes years of them coming to the centre before they're ready to do it. She said this way of seeing it totally undermined the 'added value' from volunteering, meaning the extra benefits people get from it and what it adds to the community.

Field diary (January, 2013)

My conversation with Leila highlighted that positioning volunteering as a way into paid work, or 'proper' work, de-values the contribution that volunteering offers as an end in itself, not only for volunteers but for the local community too. Furthermore, as Leila discussed, this positioning of volunteering as a way into work presents volunteering as an easy option and assumes that people enjoy equal access to volunteering opportunities. In speaking with the volunteers in the focus group discussion, it was evident that whilst some hoped to get a paid job at some point in the future, volunteering provided a wealth of benefits. For example, for Waajidah, volunteering was a way to get out of the house and provided her with a sense of satisfaction that she was able to help other women to learn,

I can't sit in the house, so I started volunteering in the IT class I was happy and they have crèche as well so obviously I come with my daughter she was still a baby I come with her go to the volunteering and then take her to crèche and then enjoy my volunteering IT class...Now when I do the lunch club few people come and ask me are they paying for you I say no it's just volunteer they say oh good for you good so people are just surprised they are surprised I feel happy to volunteer at least I go out from the house that day I know I'm going to a particular place. But the most things I was interested in was the IT beginner class when I started the class I see some people coming in from the IT class up to the end and you can see that the person has learnt so much in that period and you just feel so happy like oh God! I've made somebody know something! So I think that's where in the English class it's difficult to say you've helped somebody still you've helped somebody but you won't see the effect unless they go out and you see them speaking to somebody else but the IT class you see that one right in front of you like oh I'm making a change.

Waajidah, volunteers' focus group discussion, (September 2012)

In a similar vein, Sarah again referred to the surgeon from Iraq who was ineligible to work in the UK. She spoke of the fulfilment that this woman had got from volunteering, likening it to her job as a surgeon,

...she came here as a way of feeling like she was of use and she volunteered and she got satisfaction from that feeling that she was actually supporting and helping women who maybe don't have the same confidence and the same self esteem and the same skills as her and in essence that's what she was doing in Iraq but in a completely different way but that is what she was doing, so you know it's just a different way of looking at that.

Sarah, staff interview, (November 2012)

Evidently for the woman that Sarah is discussing, volunteering has been a way to get around some of the negative feelings and sense of loss over being unable to work in the UK. This also highlights the high value that people give to work, not just for money but also for a sense of purpose and fulfilment in daily life. As Akia said in her life narrative, *“Before volunteering I am thinking, I am feeling I am just wife and mother but now I am feeling I am back, yes Akia is back!* Similarly, Adeela talked about the myriad benefits of volunteering,

Some of them [women] have come back and volunteered and are now actually teaching less confident women so that's a huge confidence boost for them to be able to do that but umm for others it's opening up other doors because they're able to see other things they can join in outwith [Fountain Point] other organisations that some have gone to because they feel right if I do this here I can also do it in a different setting and in a different place so I'd say its opening up a lot of doors for them. And in that sense the volunteer placements within Fountain Point seem to be really important. It's opened the door for jobs as well women who have never worked before even if it's just a part time or a volunteering placement experience and then we've had some who have gone off to university or college to get a qualification and we've got one woman who's now studying community education and to me that's fantastic it's such an achievement [Adeela emphasised such and smiled] with all those children and prior to her coming here I don't think she would have gone down that route and she came here she volunteered she saw what we were doing and how we were doing it and kind of had conversations with staff about their skill and then said you know what I think I want to do this and to me that's just incredible!

Adeela, staff interview, (November 2012)

In talking about the multiple and diverse benefits of volunteering, it is interesting that Adeela does not privilege paid work in her description. Instead, in addition to part time work, she emphasises the confidence boost that women get (in addition to the benefits that less confident women receive from their help), that women are volunteering or joining other organisations outside of Fountain Point and that one woman in particular

has gone on to university. These latter two benefits are linked to the notion of women going beyond the “safe space” of Fountain Point and it seems that Adeela sees this as being an important step for some of the women they work with. In this way, the opportunity to volunteer at Fountain Point can be seen as being transformative of how women see themselves. Nuzhat began volunteering at Fountain Point two years ago. She explained that before coming to Fountain Point, she did not realise her potential because of “family values”,

Now I have become clever since I'm coming to [Fountain Point]. I didn't know what potentials I had [before]...now I can do anything! I'm not afraid of men [Nuzhat laughed] I'm going to make a movie about men, what do men want [laughing] so I am going to write a book! But yeah because of [Fountain Point] I have come to know what our values are, our religions...

Nuzhat, life narrative, (November 2012)

Nuzhat was animated and laughed loudly as she talked. She feels that the time she has spent at Fountain Point has helped her to realise her potential but she does not explicitly state what it was that helped her to realise this change. Talking about coming “to know what our values are, our religions”...“because of Fountain Point” suggests that she may have been influenced by other women around her at Fountain Point -the kind of osmosis that Sarah discussed earlier. It also highlights the way in which the migrant self is shaped by new relations in Fountain Point, thus supporting Conradson and McKay (2007), who suggest “mobility...provides opportunities for new forms of subjectivity to emerge.” In a similar vein, Haziqah seemed to experience a shift in her sense of self that I observed over the 15 months at Fountain Point. As discussed in chapter 4, Haziqah was born in a rural village in Nigeria and married at an early age, thus she did not have the opportunity to finish schooling. Before coming to Fountain Point, Haziqah was unable to read or speak more than a basic level of English and had never worked outside of the home. When I first met Haziqah (January 2012), she was attending both English language and IT classes at Fountain Point. Nine months later (September 2012) Haziqah began working as a volunteer in the IT class, supporting other women to learn the skills she had learnt in Fountain Point's classes. I noted in my field diary the first day that Haziqah started volunteering in class,

Haziqah walked into class ten minutes early, wearing her volunteer ID badge around her neck. I don't think I'll ever forget the smile on her face. She hugged me and clasped her hands together. I asked if she was excited, 'yes' she replied, drawing out the word and giggling. As the class members began to arrive they made a big deal of Haziqah, congratulating her. It was all smiles in class today. What a great day!

In her life narrative, Haziqah told me that she wanted to teach women IT in Nigeria when she and her family eventually returned there. This is a big change for Haziqah and it would seem that attending Fountain Point has provided Haziqah the opportunity to draw on an alternative subjectivity.

The findings showed that volunteering at Fountain Point also resulted in changes in the homespace. In the focus group discussion, participants laughingly discussed their husbands' behaviours.

Nuzhat: Our men don't help like English men. [My husband] will come and sit down and he will need a glass of water in front of him, my husband is like that.

Akia: oh!

Rafeeqah: that's the mentality of Pakistani men to be honest

Nuzhat: I say to him everything is in the fridge you have to go and pick it up you come you are going to do it I say no way

Rafeeqah: yeah this is your house you can go!

[Laughter]

Nuzhat: but since I am volunteering in the classes he has just changed, I say that's better now

Akia: it's not change for just us, for our husbands as well because when you come here you need some shopping so you say I'm going to work [Fountain Point] can you do the shopping err for us say yeah okay I will do it because he knows I will be busy here and I think the change is not just for women, for men as well

Nuzhat: yeah they cooperate now.

Volunteers' focus group, (September 2012)

This is an important example of how volunteering is described as 'working' and the importance of this role has shifted the distribution of labour within the homespace between them and their husbands. This resonates with the findings of Dwyer and Shah (2009), which show that Muslim women's access to education and employment can result in more egalitarian gender relations in the home. It is also important to consider how the reconstitution of gender identities effects the next generation of children, as Nasra talked about when she used to volunteer at Fountain Point and being a role model for her children,

I think for my daughters I became a good role model for them cause they were looking at mum managing working, studying and you know that made them know they can do it as well, so I think [Fountain Point] provided great opportunities and that was my opportunity and I think it's about

encouraging and it's about giving women the confidence to be able to believe in themselves and to be able to do things.

Nasra, staff interview, (November 2012)

The findings here suggest that the intergenerational effects of shifting gender identities may be an important area for future research, as scholars have highlighted concerns that Muslim migrant women are ill-equipped to support the socio-economic integration of their children into “Western” nations (Kofman *et al.*, 2013).

The literature on migrant civil society has questioned the emphasis of community-based organisations in supporting migrants into paid work (Martin, 2010). Critics suggest that in privileging employment, community organisations and the voluntary sector as a whole “translate” neoliberal policy approaches into the everyday lives of marginalised social groups (Trudeau and Veronis, 2009). The findings here suggest that whilst on the surface community-based initiatives such as volunteering opportunities might *seem* to be set up to support migrants into work, there is another, equally important, dimension of volunteering that relates to the opportunities it provides to “feel” or “be”, to “try alternative subjectivities” (Dwyer, 1999, p. 19; Green and Singleton, 2007), which this chapter has shown to be important for some Muslim migrant women. In this way, Fountain Point strives to value women for all the different things that they offer other than simply seeing it as their “job” to get them into paid work. Sarah spoke about the women Fountain Point works with,

It's that kind of idea you know, that they're not identified as either being unemployed or contributing to society, they're nothing, they're kind of in this box of...unidentified box and it doesn't matter whether they're volunteers or fantastic community members or active or whether they're fantastic mothers or whatever...none of that. They're not anywhere, they don't exist according to official figures and facts and statistics.

Sarah, staff focus group discussion (June, 2012)

This way of seeing the women speaks to scholars who have challenged the way in which paid work is privileged in the neo-liberal development paradigm (Dean, 2007). Poststructural writers on the economy suggest instead that what counts as “work” and “contribution” needs to be problematised in order to build more resilient communities based on reciprocity and values that privilege human wellbeing and prosperity rather than economic growth (Gibson-Graham, 2006). The findings suggest here then that further research could consider whether community-based organisations *should*

prioritise supporting people into paid work? Seemingly, Fountain Point privileges both paid work but also the overall wellbeing of the women with whom it works. However, funding restrictions are making this increasingly difficult. Indeed, as my time at Fountain Point came to an end the organisation had to close one of its social enterprises due to funding shortfalls. The loss of this enterprise was a huge disappointment for its paid staff, volunteers and the local community. The social enterprise provided women not only with work experience, but with the kind of benefits from volunteering outlined above. Yet Fountain Point did not have the funds to keep it running. As one staff member commented,

It's just money! (Exclaims) I mean I think that money is the enemy of all good causes but it is cause in the end all good causes all social aims are about reactions to social needs so but unfortunately the vast majority of social needs need to be addressed by putting more money into something... money is the reason why we do our good work but money also prevents us from not doing as much as we could...but as an organisation we're very very careful not to be one of these organisations and there are other organisations out there that do this (laughs) who make projects based on what funding they can get oh look here's a pot of money that fixes cars I know we'll do a car fixing project yes do you know what I mean?

Sarah, staff interview, (November 2012)

Sarah's comments here tend to go against the literature discussed in chapter 2 that suggests community organisations adapt their services to access funding pools. Furthermore, a particularly interesting insight that emerged from the study was the shortfall of funding that Fountain Point have experienced in recent years reflects the way in which the UK government is now using community organisations to address growing 'Muslim' problems, such as extremism, forced marriages, alcoholism and drug abuse.

I met with Adeela and Leila today and we spoke at length about funding for Fountain Point and potential future research projects. Nadia explained that funding is short. Adeela then discussed that funding pots are increasingly set aside for tackling alcoholism or drug abuse in Muslim communities, forced marriage or using Muslim women in counter-extremism measures. But she said these weren't the kind of issues that they're seeing up here too much yet. This means that there's very little money for the kind of projects they need to run, that relate more to helping women into work or supporting women with mental ill health.

Conversation with Adeela and Leila, field diary (January, 2013)

On another occasion, Adeela said that such ‘Muslim issues’ had historically been problems south of the border in England, although she later acknowledged this was beginning to change as the city became more diverse,

Last year we had the conference on forced marriage and childhood sexual abuse and that was the right time to do it whereas down south that information was down there maybe five or ten years ago its already been raised and so forth so in some ways [this city] is backward in terms of the issues that have been happening.

Adeela, staff interview, (November 2012)

Going back to the literature then, it seems that there is some validity in the claims of scholars that funding streams to community organisations are used as “technologies of government” (Williams *et al.*, 2012, p. 1482). However, and in keeping with Williams *et al.* (2012), the findings show that Fountain Point has resisted such policies and more importantly perhaps, such policies are misguided because they are informed by policy research conducted in England. This is perhaps an interesting potential area of further research given the current debates around Scottish independence.

6.5 Conclusion

The role of community-based organisations in shaping Muslim migrant women’s lives has been largely overlooked in research on both Muslim spaces and literature on third sector organisations. The overarching aim of this chapter was to bring concepts and approaches from these two bodies of research together to extend existing understandings of the role of institutions in shaping everyday life for Muslims in the West. Drawing on insights from the literature on Muslim spaces, this chapter illustrates Fountain Point’s important role in supporting Muslim migrant women in both culturally and religiously sensitive ways. Indeed, despite the lack of extended family in the city, staff members at Fountain Point discussed the way in which women “feel safe” at Fountain Point because it is deemed appropriate in both cultural and religious terms. This tends to contradict the fact that some women do not live in communities with extended kin who have expectations for gendered propriety, but perhaps highlights the way in which women’s everyday lives continue to be shaped by normative expectations in the home country, highlighting the moral geographies inherent in shaping Muslim women’s access to public and private spaces (see Freeman, 2005). However, this feeling of safety within Fountain Point also seems to derive from feelings of this space as an extension of the Muslim homespace, which Ehrkamp (2013) highlights as an important

gendered space for female socialising. Accordingly, the findings complicate existing distinctions between the home as “private” and everything else as “public”. Instead, Fountain Point seems to extend the notion of private space beyond the home, creating a hybrid private-public space.

Fountain Point was equally shown to be appropriate in terms of its access to childcare and the timing of classes, which coincide with childcare responsibilities of all women who had children, regardless of their ethnicity or religion. This raises questions over the extent to which existing research on Muslim spaces overemphasises the provision of services to women because they are *Muslim*, rather than because they are *women*. Indeed, the findings show that such spaces are not always gendered to preserve religious social orders, but are perhaps vital sites of refuge for women suffering from extreme issues such as domestic violence, or important spaces where women can negotiate the patriarchal structuring of the labour market, which was discussed in chapter 5. Geographers concerned with Muslim spaces could examine this in closer detail through comparative research with institutions that cater to only men, or only women, and both secular and non-secular. This would also enhance understanding of how third sector organisations serve migrants from diverse cultures and with diverse religious beliefs and practices.

In providing “female” orientated “springboard classes”, educational-based classes and opportunities to volunteer, Fountain Point offers women an important space in which to try on “alternative subjectivities” as found by Dwyer in relation to Muslim young women in state schools (1999, p. 19). Despite concerns that migrant community organisations privilege paid work and neoliberal ideals in supporting migrants, the findings show here that the reality is far more nuanced; for some women paid work is a priority, for others, the opportunity to “be” or “become” is enough. For some, taking on work at Fountain Point has given them the opportunity to assert themselves in relation to their husbands and has shifted the distribution of labour in the home. However, questions have been raised in this chapter of whether or not by encouraging certain conduct of volunteers, Fountain Point’s volunteers are pushed to embody neoliberal ideals and are fulfilling expectations to do “good” “gendered” work. Likewise, the opportunity to “work” at Fountain Point arguably allows women to preserve Muslim social ordering in which men and women are expected to work separately. This raises

questions of whether Fountain Point further marginalises women by keeping them away from “reality.” Yet these questions are in themselves problematic, because the findings illuminate that the bigger “problem” perhaps lies in the dominant notion of what is “work” and what is “valuable”. Indeed, in keeping with Sarah’s assertions on page 167, arguably if anything should change or be challenged it is not necessarily women’s traditional roles in the home, but the pervasive social construction of these roles as not important or as less important than men’s. Future research may wish to examine such considerations in relation to both secular and non-secular institutions.

Finally, drawing on insights from the migrant civil society literature, this chapter has examined the ways in which Fountain Point’s service provision reflects the wider UK government agendas. At first glance, the provision of services aimed to support migrant women into work could be understood as reflecting a neoliberal workfare agenda that was discussed in chapter 2. However, somewhat ironically the findings showed that Fountain Point are struggling to get funding for some projects that help women into work because state funding is being re-directed to tackle so-called “Muslim problems”, for example engaging mothers in preventing their sons from joining Islamic extremist groups, or working to counter forced marriage or domestic violence. The evidence here thus supports those scholars who argue that migrant civil society and other third sector organisations are used to translate government policy into the everyday lives of the populace (Trudeau and Veronis, 2009), however it offers new insights as to the effects that the redirection of policy can have on funding opportunities and the financial sustainability of community-based organisations. Furthermore, the findings here show that Fountain Point has resisted this exertion of power by the UK government by not applying for funding for projects that are less relevant in the lives of the women they work with. This highlights the practical implications of “National” funding streams based on social problems south of the border. Further, the findings demonstrate the need to consider in future research how community-based organisations develop their services in relation to the local, national and transnational contexts.

Chapter VII: Conclusions

The subjective migration experiences of Muslim women

7.1 Introduction

Family-related migration is understood to be the primary mode of legal entry into Europe for Muslim men, women and children (Kofman, 2004; Kofman *et al.*, 2013). Yet despite this, geographic research on family-related migration has largely overlooked Muslim migration. Likewise, research and literature on Muslims in Britain has tended to focus on British-born Muslims in England. Resultantly, less is “known” about what being a *migrant* and a *Muslim* living in the UK is like. This is problematic, as chapters 1 and 2 underscore. The dominant policy and media narratives in the “West” depict Muslim migrant women as “victims” of forced or arranged marriages and as the bearers of illiberal values and poor parenting practices. Accordingly, this thesis seeks to provide an illustrative account of the migration experiences of a small group of Muslim migrant women in Scotland. In so doing, the thesis also aims to examine the role of a secular community organisation in shaping everyday life for this group of Muslim migrant women.

To address the overarching aims of the thesis, chapter 1, section 1.2, outlines three research objectives and six research questions. Thus, the aim of this, the final chapter, is to assess the extent to which this thesis has met its aims and has addressed each of the research objectives and questions. In so doing, the chapter discusses the contribution of this thesis to scholarly knowledge and also outlines some potential policy implications and areas for future research. In the following sections, I provide a brief summary of the findings for each of the three research objectives.

7.2 Research objective 1: Examine the migration processes of Muslim women in family-related migration

Chapter 2, the literature review, outlines the increasing politicisation of Muslim immigration and highlights dominant policy and media narratives that associate Muslim migration with arranged or forced marriages and regularly conflate the two (Grillo, 2004, 2011). I argue that such narratives position Muslim women as “victims” in migration processes, failing to account for their role and indeed agency in “choosing” to migrate. I also suggest that the neglect of Muslim families in the “mainstream”

migration literature does little to challenge negative depictions of Muslim migrant women. Having set the context for research objective 1, the following section discusses the development of migration research within human geography. Drawing on the literature, I argue that increasingly diverse forms of migration necessitate equally diverse conceptual approaches to extend understandings of why people migrate. I propose a conceptual frame for this study, drawing on research on internal family migration and migrant subjectivities, thus accounting for both the *family* and the *individual* in working to illustrate why Muslim women migrate.

Drawing on the life narratives of eight Muslim migrant women, as well as supplementary evidence gathered in focus groups and through participant observation, chapter 4 analyses the migration processes of the research participants. To begin, I examine the socio-demographic profiles of these participants, addressing research question 1, which asks, who are Muslim migrant women? The analysis highlights the diverse socio-demographic profiles of the participants, who have varying levels of education. Equally, the analysis shows the diverse forms of migration and legal modes of entry. Thus, I suggest that even within this small sample the findings illustrate the heterogeneity among Muslim migrant women and therefore the findings challenge negative stereotypes of Muslim women as uneducated migrants who migrate *only* for marriage.

In the second part of chapter 4, I analyse participants' narratives of migration using a biographical approach to migration. This approach affords a deeper insight into why participants migrated to Scotland, complicating participants' initial explanations of why they migrated. The findings illuminate the layered motivations for migration as participants explained their migration in relation to key lifecourse events and personal histories; war, marriage and divorce are significant, as is pilgrimage to *hajj*. Some participants, regardless of their mode of legal entry, perceive migration as providing the opportunity to *be* or to *feel* different, and such perceptions are entangled with religious and gendered meanings. Children's education and health and safety are also prioritised in the decision to move, which illustrates the imaginative geographies in shaping family-related migration. Overall, participants' accounts are shown as habitually relational, but I argue this does not discount their agency or imply the subordination of their own desires and needs in the migration. To the contrary, I suggest that participants

exercised diverse forms of human agency in the decision to migrate, and for those participants who migrated with their families, prioritising their children reflects the “natural” inclination of any loving parent.

In providing this in-depth account of a group of Muslim women’s migration to Scotland, this thesis has addressed research questions 1 and 2. I discuss the contributions of these findings to scholarly knowledge in section 7.5.

7.3 Research objective 2: Examine the lived realities of Muslim migrant women in Scotland

Chapter 2 discusses claims in policy and media narratives that Muslim migrant women are “backwards” with “doubtful parenting practices” (Kofman *et al.*, 2013, p. 9). I acknowledge that such depictions have gone largely unchallenged because scholarship on Muslims in Britain has primarily focused on young Muslims and British-born Muslims. Seeking to explore this further, section 2.4 of the literature review chapter critiques existing research on Muslim geographies. The insights from this important body of work provides a series of entry points for examining the ways in which gender relations and religious identities are reworked through migration. In so doing and following Hopkins (2009a), I argue that a need exists to focus more carefully on life in the home and issues of Muslim parenting. To address this need, I set out a conceptual framework to examine Muslim women’s lived realities of migration drawn from feminist migration research and the geographies of gender and migration. Further, I explore recent developments in religious geographies that stress the relationship between religion and place and the potential links between migration and a deeper spiritual experience.

The second evidence and discussion chapter (chapter 5) also draws predominantly on the life narratives of the eight women who are the focus of chapter 4. I analyse further evidence gathered through focus groups and recorded in the field diary. Participants spoke extensively of the impact of migration on their experiences of motherhood, religion and marriage. I argue that for some women, gender relations in the home are reworked through migration, largely because women struggled with motherhood bereft of wider female kin support networks. In contrast to normative parenting practices in their home countries, some participants spoke of the changing role their husbands took

on in the home. Husbands offered not only practical support but also provided emotional support to their wives. Consequently, participants reflect positively on the role migration had on their marriages. Some participants described this support from husbands as a gift; interestingly, one woman perceived that her husband would not continue to provide such support if they returned “home.” I infer from this that the reworking of gender relations through migration occurs as a result of the loss of social support but may only be temporary.

Social isolation, rising from the lack of access to childcare, is a barrier to accessing paid employment as well. Additionally, participants spoke about being unable to find work, and their accounts suggest that religious intolerance and gender discrimination on the part of employers shaped the cause. However, I also submit that the difficulties some women experience in balancing childcare and the desire to work is not necessarily unique to them as Muslim women, but is instead a challenge for all women who seek to balance childcare and working.

Three participants spoke extensively about the effect that the lived experience of migration had on their religious practices and beliefs. Qur’an studies with other women provided a sense of “family” and belonging, but for some women this contrasted with negative stereotypes about Islam. I show how participants used Islamic theology to assert themselves as good citizens in Scotland and to resist stereotypes of veiled women as gender subordinate. Faith provided comfort and solace, meaning and hope in otherwise desperate circumstances. However, in drawing on a lifecourse approach, I argue that the findings show women’s religious experiences shifted not only in relation to migration but also in relation to other events or stages of the lifecourse.

7.4 Research objective 3: Assess the role of a community-based organisation in shaping Muslim migrant women’s lived realities in Scotland

The literature review, chapter 2, outlines the literature on Muslim institutions and third sector organisations. I argue that there has been a relative neglect of the specific ways in which secular community-based organisations support Muslim women in their everyday lives. Thus drawing on insights from the geographic literature on third sector organisations and migrant civil society, I seek to deepen insights of how and why Muslim women access community-based organisations, and the ways in which the amenities

and programmes of such services shape women's everyday lives and subject positions. I examine how third sector organisations often privilege government agendas and suggest the need to examine the influence of such agendas on services for Muslim migrant women.

Chapter 6 explores the questions raised in the literature review, drawing predominantly on evidence gathered through participant observation and staff interviews at Fountain Point—the field site for this study. Also included are participants' discussions in focus groups about their use of this space. The findings illuminate the significance and centrality of Fountain Point in some women's lives. For some women, Fountain Point forms their primary source of social contact and I link this observation to their experiences of social isolation, documented in chapter 5. I suggest that the use of the space at Fountain Point allows the interaction of cultural, religious and gendered practices without forcing women to compromise on any and argue for that reason that the wider Muslim community perceives Fountain Point as an “appropriate” space. However, I suggest it is the diversity among women in this space that allows them to try on “alternative subjectivities.”

Helping women to overcome barriers to employment is a key objective for Fountain Point, although staff did not stress this over other aspects of their services. Drawing on insights from staff, I suggest that the bigger problem is not how to support women into work, but how to challenge and modify societal views that work in the home and community-based volunteering do not “count” as work and are somehow less valued than paid employment. Finally, the chapter illuminates the recent shifts in government priorities to fund projects to address “Muslim problems”. This shift, as well as the difference between the needs and thus the services of migrant women in Scotland and those south of the Border in England, threatens Fountain Point with a funding shortfall. This draws attention to the complexity and the challenges of funding for third sector organisations based on the English context.

7.5 Overall theoretical contributions

In this section, I explore the key conceptual contributions of this thesis. Again, I organise this section according to each of the research objectives, the findings for which, when taken together, offer an in-depth insight into the experiences of a group of

Muslim migrant women in Scotland. In so doing, I suggest that the primary conceptual contribution of this thesis stems from its provision of an “elaborate” account of Muslim women’s migration (Smith, 2011). Indeed, examining the reasons for migration, the lived realities of migration and the role of a community-based organisation in shaping everyday life and the future prospects of Muslim women, this thesis accounts for migration as a “life-long process” (King, 2002).

In examining the socio-demographic profiles of Muslim women in chapter 4, the participants’ accounts illustrate the abundance of migration “types” that scholars have highlighted in recent years (Castles, 2010; King, 2002, 2012). These women’s accounts provide a challenge to the common misconception in media and policy discourses that Muslim women *only* migrate for marriage, as discussed in chapter 2. Indeed, in keeping with Kofman (2004), the socio-demographic profiles of these eight participants illustrate diverse forms of family-related migration, including marriage, but also temporary sojourns and whole family migration. The women’s accounts also highlight the diversity between them in terms of country of birth, ethnicity and educational achievements, thus contributing to existing scholarship that has sought to destabilise essentialist depictions of Muslim women (Aitchison *et al.*, 2007; Falah and Nagel, 2005; Hopkins and Gale, 2009).

Adopting a biographical approach to migration (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993), the second part of chapter 4 seeks a deeper insight into *why* the research participants migrated to Scotland by examining their migration in relation to the lifecourse. Together with this lifecourse approach, I “borrowed” conceptual approaches from both the literature on internal family migration and cultural geographies of migration concerned with migrant subjectivity. Drawing these insights together with the findings illuminates the possibility to *become* or to *feel* different as a key driver of migration for some participants (Conradson and Latham, 2007; Fielding, 1992). Adding to this, I use insights from Ehrkamp (2013) to suggest that for some participants, migration is a way to resist or “undo” gendered power relations, whereas others, in keeping with Silvey (2005), afford significant religious meaning to their migration to Scotland. In so doing, I suggest that the findings of this study illustrate that the desire “to be different” is enmeshed with wider gendered and religious meanings and personal histories.

The findings also give credence to scholars who have stressed family well-being and children's education as important factors in family-related migration. The findings also support literature that suggests economic factors are rarely the only reason families migrate (Bailey and Boyle, 2004; Cooke, 2008; Halfacree, 2004a). However, I also maintain the importance of not overlooking the power relations and imagined geographies that shape this international family-related migration, as families seek a "first-world" education for their children. To show this, I draw on recent conceptual approaches to student mobility (Beech *et al.*, 2014; Findlay *et al.*, 2012; Madge *et al.*, 2009). I argue that these approaches are helpful in providing an alternative perspective on family-related migration.

By bridging insights from the family-migration literature with the findings of this study, this thesis addresses a relative neglect of Muslim migration in more "mainstream" geographic migration research. Furthermore, by drawing on approaches that account for the deep meanings attached to migration (Conradson and Latham, 2007; Conradson and McKay, 2007), the thesis extends understandings of the motivations behind family-related migration. These insights are important, as chapter 2 emphasises that advancements in theorising family-related migration have been constrained by positivist research approaches, which are unable to capture the deeper meanings of migration and tend to deal with migration decision-making at the household level (Bailey and Boyle, 2004; Smith, 2011). In drawing on diverse conceptual approaches to examining the family-related migration of Muslim women, this thesis answers (and illuminates the merits of) calls from migration scholars to transcend conceptual boundaries in order to advance understandings of migration processes (Castles, 2010; Smith and King, 2012).

A key conceptual contribution of this thesis is its examination of the effect of migration on women's everyday lives and gender relations in the household. Participants' emotional recollections of life bereft of extended family members and friends call attention to the problem of social isolation in Muslim women's lives. As discussed in chapter 2, the focus on young British-born Muslims in cities and towns with dense Muslim social networks does not account for this social isolation (but see Marranci, 2007) and it is only recently that scholars have given attention to social isolation among Muslims (Platt, 2012). Interestingly, participants say that their loss of social support results in the uptake of more "feminine" roles by their husbands, giving further

credence to scholars who suggest identities are constructed in gendered ways in relation to contexts and situations (Aitchison *et al.*, 2007; Dwyer, 1999, 2000; Hopkins, 2006; 2009c). Drawing on insights from the literatures on gendered geographies of migration and feminist migration research together with the findings further illuminates how gender relations are reworked through migration. I argue that normative gendered practices are, in some situations, only temporarily suspended through migration, drawing on insights from Bastia (2011) and Kesby (2005). One participant's role of "lead" migrant and de-facto household head meant she had to take on more of a masculine "provider" role for the family. This resonates with family migration scholars who suggest that the organisation of family roles is renegotiated through migration (Smith, 2004). However, rather than empowering, the participant discussed the emotional burden this placed on her and thus she used smartphone technology to give control back to her husband. The study therefore supports migration scholars who highlight the importance of ICT in maintaining family relations through time and space (Boyle, 2002; Mahler and Pessar, 2004; Parreñas, 2005). However, the findings here also raise some interesting questions over the use of technology in the reproduction of patriarchy, in which men and women are equally implicated. The findings here thus offer an important contribution to scholarly knowledge about the organisation of life in the Muslim household. As Hopkins (2009a, p. 218) suggests, further scholarship is needed that interrogates the "traditional Muslim family model."

Chapter 5 also offers contributions to existing research on Muslim women's exclusion from the labour market discussed in chapter 2 (for example Bowlby-Evans, 2009). I use Halfacree's (1995) writings on the patriarchal nature of the state and also feminist insights of migrant spouse dependency discussed in chapter 2 (Raghuram, 2004; Merali, 2008) to highlight the recursive relationships among the lack of state support, the "choice" to have a baby, and not being able to work because of childcare. However, whilst some women emphasise their "natural" mothering role as *Muslim* mothers, I argue that there is nothing necessarily *Muslim* about the participants' experiences. Rather, I suggest their struggles are more to do with the fact that they are women striving to juggle reproductive and productive roles. Thus, I infer that the participants' experiences are perhaps no different from any mother trying to balance these competing demands of childcare and work. This important perspective speaks to Nagel's (2002,

2005) calls to emphasise commonality and not only difference in research with Muslim women.

This study advanced understandings of the relationship between migration and religion. Ley and Tse (2013) suggest that further research could explore the relationship between migration and religion and the ways in which the lived experience of migration results in a deeper spiritual experience. Thus, in uncovering the Muslim women's changing relationship with their faith through migration, this thesis contributes to the scholarship on Muslim and more generally religious geographies. The findings support Ley and Tse (2013) who suggest that the "dispossession" of migration results in migrants engaging in a closer relationship with God. Likewise, the findings also illuminate the ways in which some participants draw on their faith for comfort and solace in the uncertainty of migration, resonating with Hopkins (2009c) and Ryan and Vacchelli (2013a), who suggest that religious experiences incite emotion. In addition, by drawing on a lifecourse approach, this study shows how religion fluctuates through the lifecourse, in relation not only to major lifecourse events such as migration or divorce, but also in relation to age and maturity. As other scholars have shown, local social relations are equally important in shaping women's religious identities (Dwyer, 2000; Ehrkamp, 2007; 2013). However, I found it interesting that one of the participants, who describes living in a "White" neighbourhood, felt empowered to veil through her observation of difference. This tends to go against those scholars who maintain that older generations of Muslim women enforce veiling (Ehrkamp, 2013), and that in new anonymous environments, Muslim women can and will unveil (Freeman, 2005). However, the migrant women in my study, rather than seeking to blend as much as possible into Scottish society, found comfort, security or identity in veiling. These insights thus continue to add more layers to current debates and efforts to de-homogenise Muslim women.

Finally, this thesis has sought to contribute to the scholarship on Muslim geographies as well as research on the role of third sector organisations in supporting migrants. In this regard, this thesis contributes to the literature by bridging insights from these diverse literatures. Specifically, in focusing on a secular space, the findings lend support to Brace *et al.* (2006), who suggest that the distinction between the sacred and non-sacred are artificial and that religion spills into all realms of life. I draw on the insights of

Dwyer (1999, 2000) and Green and Singleton (2007) to discuss Fountain Point as a culturally and religiously appropriate place that preserves Muslim gendered social order. However, in examining this “secular” space that caters to only women, I suggest that this notion of Muslim social order may have been over-emphasised by some scholars in discussing the public/private delineation of space in Muslim geographies. Indeed, the findings show that Fountain Point provides a space for women according to the unique challenges they face as *women* and not necessarily *Muslim* women. This highlights the need for careful and considered examinations of how and why spaces are ordered in certain ways.

Drawing specifically on concepts from the literature on the third sector, the findings lend support to scholars who argue that third sector organisations are drawn into neoliberal projects (Trudeau and Veronis, 2009). However, Fountain Point’s refusal to apply for funding for inappropriate projects resonates with Williams *et al.* (2012), who argue that third sector organisations at times resist government agendas that do not meet their specific local needs. However, in using this conceptual lens, the findings also show that the government’s push to use third sector organisations to tackle “Muslim problems” further undermines service provision because staff do not perceive these governmental objectives as locally appropriate.

I suggest that a rudimentary glance at Fountain Point’s services may indeed support those scholars who accuse third sector organisations of privileging paid work and as acting as “little platoons of the state” (Peck and Tickell, 2002, p. 390). However, in talking with staff, it seems that volunteering is used not only as a way for women to gain work experience, but also as a way to improve their mental health, language skills and confidence in everyday life in Scotland. Furthermore, women reported that going out to work (volunteer) at Fountain Point had also resulted in more egalitarian gender relations in the home, thus lending support to Dwyer and Shah (2009) but equally showing that it is not the nature of the work, for example paid labour, that makes a difference to these relations, but the “simple” act of leaving the house with purpose.

Having summarised the findings and argued the conceptual contributions of the thesis, in the sections that follow I highlight some potential policy implications of this study

and areas for future research. However, I first provide a backdrop to these sections by outlining the limitations of the research.

7.6 Limitations of the research

Firstly, this study is limited in its exclusive focus on women. I acknowledge that the study of gender does not mean only women, and that men and children are gendered too (Mahler and Pessar, 2006). Scholars have expressed concern that efforts to challenge the androcentric nature of migration research in the late 1990s has swung the pendulum in the other direction, and thus far less is now known about men's experiences of migration (King, 2012). However, as suggested in chapter 1, I maintain that the exclusive focus on women in this study has enabled me to gain a deeper insight into *their* subjective experiences of migration, which they may not have expressed so freely in the company of their husbands. In keeping with participants' accounts, I have extended the focus of this thesis to examine religion as an important social "difference" but am aware that this research does not discuss "race" and class.

Furthermore, the small number of women who shared their life narratives and took part in the focus groups prevents any generalisations being made from this body of work. In presenting this small sample, I am cognisant of concerns among human geographers for over-representation and that some geographers partial to positivist approaches suggest small-scale qualitative research hinders the development of migration theorising (for a discussion see King, 2012 and Smith, 2004). However, and as I have argued throughout the thesis, the relative silence on Muslim women in family-related migration research necessitates research that can provide potential departure points for further research, be that using qualitative, mixed or quantitative research approaches. Keeping these limitations in mind, I explore aspects of this study that raise policy considerations before going on to outline areas for further research.

7.7 Policy implications

In keeping with the concerns of feminists, findings show that state restrictions on migrants' recourse to public funds means that they are unable to access vital support in seeking work. Thus, these restrictions perhaps should be discussed and addressed in line with welfare reforms in the UK that continue to privilege paid work. In a similar vein, funding for community-based organisations needs to account for communities of *place*

rather than *interest*, *ethnicity* or *religion*. Indeed, scholars have argued that the phrase “Muslim community” undermines the heterogeneity among Muslims (Ali, 2013; Kong, 2009). Yet the findings here show that funding pools for community-based organisations tend to be based on the notion of a homogenous “Muslim community” and most recently funding has been redirected towards so-called “Muslim problems” of domestic violence, alcoholism, counter-extremism and forced marriage. The result for Fountain Point is a shortfall in funding, because the staff at Fountain Point does not perceive these issues to be as relevant in the lives of the women they serve or in the Scottish context more generally. Thus, funding for non-profit organisations working to support the socio-economic integration of Muslims in the UK needs to privilege local knowledge and revisit the criteria of their funding pools.

Fountain Point staff also draws attention to concerns over government plans to add “volunteering experience” as a criteria for migrants to apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK (UK citizenship). Whilst these plans have since been abandoned by the government, the staff’s concern over the resources required to support volunteers nonetheless calls attention to the danger of the government’s continued privileging of volunteering as a route into work. This is evidenced by recent government approaches that seek to support people back into work through unpaid community work placements (Department for Work and Pensions, 2014). Such policy approaches risk overburdening the third sector under the guise of “benefitting the community”, as they fail to account for the significant resources needed to support volunteers, thus compromising the ability of community-based organisations to address the wider needs of the people they seek to support.

7.8 Further research

In this section, I consider some of the areas for future research that arose from the study. As a result of this study, further research could examine more closely the use of mobile phones and emerging information and communications technology (ICT) in the time-space distantiation of patriarchy. Specifically, research could look closely at how these technologies are used, the regularity with which they are used and if this changes over time. Moreover, research could be undertaken to explore the use of such technology between children and absentee parents, but in particular fathers. Transnational scholarship has tended to focus on mothering across time and space (Parreñas, 2005),

but more could be done to understand how men father from a distance using ICT. This would be particularly interesting given the dominant construction of Muslim men as the heads of households.

In a similar vein, attention to the ways Muslim men experience migration would be particularly interesting in light of scholarship that examines Muslim masculinities (Hopkins, 2006, 2009a) and the recognition of increasing numbers of Muslim men who migrate for marriage (Mohammad, 2005). How do Muslim men experience family-related migration? How do these men perceive the decision-making process and the way in which the migration is related to events in their lifecourse? Further, how do men experience life in the home post-migration or post-family reunification? As mentioned above, a limitation of this research is its focus on women. It could prove enlightening to study how Muslim men's gender identities are reworked as a result of migration processes.

Further research may also be conducted with both husbands and wives to *compare* their explanations of the reasons for migration and also to incorporate children. Comparative research using both joint/family and individual interviews could help to illuminate further the tensions and negotiations inherent in family migration decision-making. This may afford further insights into how families draw on prescribed Muslim gender roles of the nurturer/ breadwinner (Dwyer and Shah, 2009; Nagel, 2005) in explaining the decision to migrate.

In this thesis I have argued that the predominant focus in existing literature on Muslims living in residentially clustered areas masks the experiences of those Muslim migrant women who are living far away from family and friends and who suffer the devastating consequences of social isolation. For some women, the help of Scottish "White" neighbours was all that they could depend on. This raises further questions about the importance of living arrangements and housing tenures among Muslim families, an issue that has been highlighted by Datta (2009) and Phillips (2009). It would be interesting to explore further the neighbourly relationships between Muslim migrant women and the "Other woman" to shed light on the personal geographies of Muslim migrant women who live far away from family and friends. Likewise, in chapter 4, I highlighted the absence of references to Scotland in participants' accounts. Future

studies could consider more closely the importance of place in shaping the migrants' imaginary, as highlighted by Beech (2014).

7.9 Closing thoughts

This thesis has met its overall aim; it has gained an in depth understanding of the migration experiences of Muslim women in Scotland, accounting for pre- and post-migration life and thus accounting for migration as a life-long process (King, 2002). Gaining this in-depth understanding has not been easy, as discussed in the methodological reflections at the end of chapter 3. Thus, this study emphasises the need for more open dialogue among scholars about the messiness of social research and the moral and ethical terrain covered in seeking to understand people's lives. Social research requires time spent getting to know people and building relationships whilst seeking an invitation into their private worlds, but we have to balance this relationship professionally, keeping people safe and doing more good than harm. This study has highlighted the important role of working with community and grassroots groups to achieving this, while acknowledging the limitations of working with "gatekeepers". Yet quite simply, this study could not have been done without the help of the staff and volunteers at Fountain Point. In closing then, I turn to my final conversation with the Chief Executive of Fountain Point in which I asked about her hopes for the future of Fountain Point. She told me she hoped that Fountain Point will one day close its doors for good, because the world would be such that these women did not need their support anymore, that they would be okay by themselves.

—Inshallah.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter of intent to Fountain Point

Appendix 2: Focus group information sheet for research participants

Appendix 3: Consent form

Appendix 4: Staff focus group schedule

Appendix 5: Focus group schedule with migrant women

Appendix 6: Life narrative schedule

Appendix 7: Staff interview schedule

Appendix 8: Coding scheme

Appendix 1: Letter of intent to Fountain Point



University of St Andrews
School of Geography and Geosciences

Irvine Building
University of St Andrews
North Street
Fife
KY16 9AL

-- --

9th January 2012

Dear --

Research Outline

Further to our meeting at the -- on Monday 21st November 2011, I am writing to provide an outline of my research project, providing specific details about the research activities we discussed.

The general aim of my research is to find out what the goals and priorities are of the women who attend the --, and how attending -- helps women to live a more fulfilled life, independently or perhaps semi-independently of the paid employment. Following our discussion however, I have also widened my research to consider the ways in which being part of the -- transforms the motivations/ goals/ priorities of women over time.

As we discussed, I hope that I can start volunteering in the centre as of January. This will a) allow me to give something back to the centre in exchange for the time to undertake research, and b) help me get to know the women better before I ask them to take part in any research, thus hopefully making them feel more comfortable around me and removing some potential barriers.

I have outlined the research format and timescale below, which I hope suits the centre and is similar to what we have already discussed verbally. Please do let me know if there is any aspect that you are unsure of or would like to change. It is important for me to mention that as this research is exploratory, it will possibly change direction as different pieces of information emerge. I will make sure that I discuss any significant changes in direction with yourself and --. Also, I hope that my findings will be useful to the --, and therefore would welcome both requests and suggestions from staff and members regarding research questions etc. As we talked about, I am conscious of preserving both the good reputation of the -- and the

University of St Andrews. To this end, I will discuss my findings with the -- before I publish anything and will not publish anything that is detrimental to the reputation of the --.

Format of research:

After volunteering for a month and getting to know the women, I hope to identify women for interviews and sessions in which I observe conversations and behaviours. To recruit participants, it would be helpful if I could put up posters explaining what I'm doing, why and when. I will be giving information sheets and consent forms to all the participants to ensure they fully understand what they are agreeing to. I anticipate the interviews will last anything up to 2 hours, and ideally I would observe people in timetabled sessions (where all participants give consent and it is not disruptive to the session). If this wouldn't work for any reason, it would be great to explore the possibility of arranging/ leading one-off craft sessions and ask women if they wish to join in.

After the interviews and observation sessions, I would like to run focus groups for approximately 5 women, in which the topic is steered according to predetermined questions/ areas of interest. For both the interviews and focus groups, it would be helpful to run through the questions with the staff at the --, to ensure you are happy with them and if you feel they could be improved in any way.

Timescale:

I anticipate that the bulk of the research would take place between January and June 2012 but would appreciate any opportunities to stay on with the centre as a volunteer beyond this.

My supervisor within the University of St Andrews is Dr Emilia Ferraro and she can be contacted at any time should you need on the address/ telephone number above. I will be reporting to her on a fortnightly basis. I have also submitted the relevant information to the School of Geography and Geosciences Ethics Committee.

I hope that you are happy with this outline, please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss it further or clarify any points.

Finally, I just wanted to thank you again for agreeing to take me on as a volunteer and as a researcher. I'm so looking forward to spending time at the centre and at last getting back into community-based work.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Folly

Appendix 2: Focus group information sheet for research participants



Discussion group about your life in Scotland

What will you do in the discussion group?

The group discussion will involve talking about your life in Scotland, your goals and ambitions, and the services on offer within your local community and at the --.

Who is running the study?

My name is Rebecca Folly. Some of you may recognise my photo, as I am a volunteer in the IT classes. This study is being conducted as part of my PhD at the University of St Andrews.



Why?

We want to find out about the things that make life easier for you, the classes and services you enjoy, and what could be improved.

What will happen after the discussion group?

The discussion will be tape-recorded. The information will be shared with the centre and be used in my written study. However, your name will be changed and kept a secret but it people might still know who you are.

Do I have to take part?

No, and even if you agree now you can change your mind later if you find that you do not like it - just let me know. You can ask questions at any time.

Who can I talk to about the study?

You can contact me, Rebecca Folly, through Reception or speak to any of the staff at the --.



University of
St Andrews

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
-OBSERVATION, GROUP DISCUSSION
AND INTERVIEW-
Attributable Data

Project Title

A study about women's lives in --

Will people know who I am if I take part?

For this project, I will need to tape record the group discussion and the interviews. The tapes will be kept by me and not shared with anyone. Your name will be changed and kept a secret. The name of the centre will also be kept secret. However, I cannot promise that no one will find out that you took part in the study, as this community-based project involves group working and trust. To minimise the risk we will set up rules about confidentiality at the start of the group meeting.

Consent

Even if you sign this form you can still change your mind. If you want to leave the study please tell me before the end of the study (December 2012).

Please circle yes or no:

I have read and understood the information sheet.

Yes No

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

Yes No

I have had my questions answered.

Yes No

I understand that I can ask to leave the study at any time without having to give an explanation.

Yes No

I agree to that my name will be changed but it is not possible to guarantee that no one will know who I am.

Yes No

I agree to my data (in line with conditions outlined above) being kept by the researcher and being used for further research projects.

Yes No

I agree to take part in the interview.

Yes No

I agree to take part in the group discussion.

Yes No

I agree to participant observation.

Yes No

Part of my research involves taking photographs or tape recordings / videos. These images / recordings will be kept secure.

Photographs and recorded data can be valuable resources for future studies therefore we ask for your additional consent to maintain data and images for this purpose.

I agree to being tape recorded.

Yes No

I agree to being photographed.

Yes No

I agree for my photo, tape recorded material to be published as part of this research.

Yes No

I agree for my photos, tape recorded material to be used in future studies.

Yes No

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and your consent is required before you can participate in this research. If you decide at a later date to leave the study I will let you know that this has happened in writing. The University of St Andrews sees the ethical conduct of research as very important. Your signature tells us that you are happy to take part in this study.

Name in Block Capitals _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher

Rebecca Folly,

Email: rf337@st-andrews.ac.uk

Phone: 07703 629043/ 01334 463930

Project Supervisor Name

Dr Emilia Ferraro

Email: ef21@st-andrews.ac.uk/ Phone: 01334 463923

Appendix 4: Staff focus group schedule

Explain aim of research and consent forms

Explain aims of session:

1. Gather some more background information about Fountain Point
2. Scope out some areas for research of mutual benefit
3. Discuss potential methods and timeframe
4. Discuss methodological considerations for working with MMW

Key areas for focus:

1. What do you think are the most common issues women deal with on a day to day basis?
2. In what ways do you think Fountain Point is well placed to support women?
3. What research have you done before?
4. What research would you like to do now?
5. What research approaches have worked in the past?
6. What's the best way/ preferred approach to working with women to keep them safe/ happy?

If time – gather feedback on usability of consent forms – language etc.

Appendix 5: Focus group schedule with migrant women

Explain aim of research and consent forms

Explain aim of session

What is life like in --?

What are the positive and negative aspects of your life here?

Focussing on the way that you live your life here.

Ice-breaker:

What is the name of the person sitting next to you?

How long have they lived in --?

Where do they come from?

For how long have they been coming to the centre?

Questions:

1.) What was the reason for first coming to the centre?

Why do you come to the centre?

2.) How has the centre helped you? In what ways?

3.) Has what you have learnt at the centre helped in other parts of your life? Has family life changed?

4.) What are your main goals and your priorities and needs?

Today?

Tomorrow?

Next Week?

Next year?

In 5 years time?

5.) Rank most important

6.) What are the positive and negative things in your life that stop you from reaching your goals?

Additional questions:

Do you have caring responsibilities?

How do you get around town?

Do you have family and friends in town – who do you rely on?

Appendix 6: Life narrative schedule

Interview guide: Topic areas

Prior to the interview:

1. Describe the nature of the research:

I am trying to find out about what it feels like to move to a new country, what has been hard and what has been okay.

2. Explain nature of interview:

I am going to ask you some questions. If there are things that you don't want to talk about, that's okay, it is your decision to talk or not.

3. Assurances of confidentiality and introduce tape recorder:

I am going to record the interview, but only I will listen to the tape, no one else. I will change your name in the study but it might be possible for people to know who you are.

PART A: You and your family

1. Where do you come from?
2. How long have you been in --?
3. Which area of -- do you live in?
4. Are you married?
5. Which family members do you live with?
6. Do you have other family in --?
7. Do you have other family in the UK?
8. Do your children go to school here?
9. Did you go to school in your home country?
10. Have you ever had a paid job?

PART B: Migration

11. What was your reason for moving here?
12. Do you remember how you felt when you found out you were going to come to Scotland?
13. How did you feel when you got here? Was it the same or was it different to how you thought you would feel?
14. How has moving to Scotland changed the organisation of the family?
15. What do you miss about home?
16. What do you like about your life here?
17. What do you not like about your life here?

PART C: Fountain Point

18. How did you hear about the centre?
19. How long have you been going?
20. Why did you want to go there?
21. What did your family think about you going to the centre?
22. Do you go to any other community centres?
23. Where else do you go in -- and why?
24. What classes did you attend at the centre?
25. What did you learn at the centre?
26. Do you think the centre helped you and your family?
27. How, why?
28. How does it feel when you are at the centre?
29. Do you feel like that after you leave and when you get home?
30. Are you able to use the skills and things that you have learnt at the centre outside of the centre?
31. In what way?

PART C: Work and the community

1. Does anyone in your household work?
2. Have you ever had a paid job?
3. Would you like one?
4. What would it take for you to get one do you think?
5. What are your hopes and dreams?

PART D: The future

1. What are your hopes and dreams?
2. What are the main things that you think stop you from reaching your hopes and dreams?

Appendix 7: Staff interview schedule

Potential interview questions with staff members at the -- (semi-structured flexible approach).

1. Icebreaker question – what do you like most about working here?
2. What do you dislike?
3. What do you feel is the purpose of the --?
4. What do you think are the aims or goals of the women who come to the --?
5. What is the most important thing to the women?
6. What barriers do women face to achieving these goals?
7. How does the -- help women to achieve these goals/ aims?
8. What other sources of support do these women have in the daily lives?
9. What does your funding depend on? Do you have a strategic plan/ aims/ objectives that funding depends on?

Appendix 8: Coding scheme

- Migration
 - Childhood
 - Lifecourse events
 - Family
 - Immediate
 - Extended
 - Motivations
 - Religion
 - Gender
 - Entry modes
 - Educational background
- Marriage
 - Gender roles
 - Emotions
 - Divorce
 - Normative practices
- Husbands
 - Emotions
 - Childcare
 - Home support
 - Employment
- Motherhood
 - Family planning/pregnancy
 - Childcare
 - Schooling
 - Fatherhood
- Communication technology
- Education
 - Hopes
 - Disappointments
 - Previous qualifications
- Social networks

- Neighbours
- Family
- Friends
- Local area
 - Housing
- Health
 - Mental health
- Religion
 - Mosque
 - Dress
 - Support
 - Intolerance
- Employment
 - Aspirations
 - Barriers
 - Skills
- Fountain Point
 - Attendance
 - Social networks
 - Life skills
 - Education
 - Well-being
 - Funding
 - Benefits
 - Location
 - Safety
 - Volunteering
 - Benefits
 - Challenges
 - Culture
 - Religion
- Global Events
 - War
 - Media

- Public perception
- Methodology
 - Challenges
 - Emotions
 - Participation
 - Reasons
 - Power
 - Collaboration