

“IT’S A HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE ... END OF!”:

A Study of Young People’s Attitudes to Forced Marriage
and its Gendered Dimensions

- 
- > It’s an **EASY OPTION** to say yes
 - > The **BOYS** get married and **STILL HAVE THEIR FREEDOM**
 - > **THE DISTINCTION IS CLEAR...** you know if you’re being forced or not, you know if you want to marry that person or not
 - > **WOMEN HAVE TO ACCEPT ABUSE** as part of their lot
 - > Arranged and forced - **ONE INVOLVES FREE CHOICE AND CONSENT, THE OTHER DOES NOT** - but this is not a clear distinction either to parents or to the young person...
 - > **MEN AREN’T SUPPOSED TO BE PUSHED AROUND** like that
 - > **IT’S A FAMILY THING**, you can’t interfere
- 

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Foreword

Forced marriage is a human rights violation. It is recognised as a gendered form of abuse both in terms of the prevalence of cases (82-86% of reported cases are female) and in terms of the proportionate gendered impact of the harms of forced marriage. Forced marriage can involve kidnapping, abduction, physical and emotional abuse for all victims, male or female. It also can involve rape, the abuse of sexual and reproductive rights and of personal and sexual autonomy.

Forced marriage brings with it lasting traumatic and deleterious effects for the individuals involved. This can include damage to an individual's ability (particularly women and girls) to fulfil their potential in education, employment, and social and personal lives and to gain personal financial independence. It can result in severe mental health issues and can trap individuals in abusive and violent marriages.

The effects are damaging for the wider community as well. The perpetuation of forced marriage contributes to a lack of understanding of the practising community and feeds racist stereotypes and prejudice. Where individuals from certain communities are caught up in forced marriage, this can have implications for their full contribution to the wider social and economic fabric of society.

Forced marriages continue to occur but the actual figures are difficult to establish definitively. In 2012, the FCO reported that they provide advice and support in some form to around 1485 queries relating to forced marriage from individuals and agencies a year. Of these some 300 may turn into full cases. Ages of victims vary hugely but the majority are young people between ages 17-25. The focus of this study is these young people, and their own views on addressing forced marriage and how it impacts on men and women.

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Foreword

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Executive summary

This study sought the views of young people on marriage today with specific reference to forced and arranged marriages and their gendered dimensions. The focus on gender is twofold. It arises from the simple observation that young men are also potentially at risk of a forced marriage, that there is little help aimed at men but that men may also find it more difficult to ask for help. The second, and perhaps less explored, focus on gender relates to whether, and to what extent, gender differentials are evident in help-seeking behaviour, harms, victims' coping strategies and perpetrators' strategies. If so, what implications may this have for policy-makers, practitioners and prevention? The study also addressed young people's understanding of the concept of "force" and their views on state responses, notably the proposal to criminalise forced marriage.

The report includes a literature review and involved an online survey which drew 101 partial or complete responses and eleven one to one interviews with young people aged 16-25 closely affected by forced marriage.

Findings

Participants to this research, when asked about gender differentials were commonly unsure of whether or not forced marriage was different for men and women. Similarities were stressed in particular with regard to damage to mental health and self-esteem. Some, mainly female participants, suggested it was harder for men precisely because their sense of masculinity would render such a loss of autonomy all the more crippling - as well as inhibiting their ability to ask for help. Men themselves recognised this:

"I mean you're not really going to say look I'm being forced into a marriage like not as a bloke I mean it's embarrassing really, isn't it?" (p25)

It soon emerged that participants could see significant differences even if they did not articulate them in a gendered framework. Key areas of difference related to:

Harms

Participants recognised that women may face more far-reaching and constraining harms. These may include rape, abuses of sexual and reproductive rights, potentially

domestic violence and a contraction or cessation of social life, personal autonomy, education and employment opportunities.

A smaller number of participants highlighted the cross-over with so-called honour based violence. They suggested that women running away from a forced marriage, attempting to seek a divorce or to maintain relations of their choice could attract severe retribution.

It was notable that despite being able to see the more far-reaching harms for women, participants still had the initial reaction that it was the same for men and women. Indeed, young women showed a high degree of empathy with male suffering: "Men aren't supposed to be pushed around like that" (p39) and a normalised tolerance of female suffering, "Women have to accept abuse as part of their lot." (p56)

Victims' evading and coping strategies

Men stressed that the best response when confronted with a possible forced marriage was to stand your ground, refuse and walk away, although recognised this may be less of an option for women. This also implied that men had low expectations of any third party interventions but placed the responsibility on the victim to avoid the marriage.

Participants recognised that men may be more likely to go through with the forced marriage and in some cases seek a divorce. Alternatively, he may try to live with the situation while continuing his life outside the marriage including a personal, social and sexual life with partner(s) of choice: "The boys get married and still have their freedom." (p36)

Participants felt that victims of forced marriage would respond differently according to gender. It was suggested that women were more likely to internalise their distress manifesting as depression, mental health issues and self harm. Men may also suffer mental health issues but may externalise this through violence or anti-social behaviour, including crime and substance abuse.

Parental strategies

While there was unanimity that in most cases the pressure brought to bear was predominantly emotional, participants did recognise that parents may replicate gender roles in the strategies they used to manipulate and persuade their children:

It's the same but what is used might be sometimes a bit different – to get men is like “you are the man of the family, you have to” – the sense of responsibility and grown-up adulthood so he feels older and responsible, whereas with women it's “You don't know how it will make us feel.” (p41)

Young women were more likely to identify with coercive parents' conduct as innocent, benign or well-intentioned. This may reflect female social conditioning and may also play a part in their susceptibility to emotional pressures. Young men were more likely to deny their parents could force them and to see it as standing one's ground.

Attitudes to criminalisation and the concept of force

There was near unanimous acceptance of the view that forced marriage is a human rights abuse and therefore that there was a powerful internal logic to the proposal to criminalise. However, views were split as to whether criminalisation was a useful practical response. There was some degree of gender split here too, with boys being more ambivalent or hostile to criminalisation: “It's a family thing, you can't interfere” (p31) and girls more in favour: “I'm totally in favour of criminalisation, it's fantastic.” (p32) In particular, participants felt uncertain about the implications of criminalisation and wanted to see research and monitoring to track outcomes and amend strategies accordingly.

The most intractable issue was the issue of “force”. There were high levels of awareness of the official, theoretical position that force implied a lack of free, full and informed consent and could include emotional pressure. However, in practice participants found it very difficult to identify when emotional pressure would amount to force.

Recommendations include (p59):

- Incorporating this gender analysis into shaping preventative and policy measures;
- Promoting better understanding of emotional pressure as force;

- Enhanced training and accountability of professionals, with specific reference to - funding the women's sector and to DFE proactively engaging with forced marriage;
- More innovative methods to engage those affected across the generations;
- Research and monitoring of the outcomes of criminalisation;
- A more nuanced and weighted policy approach that matches solutions to causes.

“It’s a human rights violation – end of!” A study of young people’s attitudes to forced marriage and its gendered dimensions

1. Background to this report

The research and development department at Eaves for Women received a small amount of funding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in 2012 for a project looking at young people’s attitudes to forced marriage and its gendered dimensions. The project aimed to identify young men and women’s differing gendered experiences of forced marriage and to empower them to express their views on the issue. The original concept was very much a project working with groups of young people but in fact it proved more practical to deliver it as a small action research project. Most studies to date on forced marriage have focussed on forced marriage as a concept and state responses to it, or on women’s experiences of forced marriage and barriers to help-seeking and support. Acknowledging this, Gangoli et al (2006) expressly called for further work on the gendered experiences of men and women in forced marriage. It is in this context that this study has been undertaken.

Eaves is a charity working on all forms of violence against women. In the course of supporting nearly 2000 women through the Sojourner¹ project, Eaves dealt with several women who were facing domestic violence in a marriage that sometimes initially had been arranged or forced² and who would otherwise have found it difficult to access refuge³. The research and development department at Eaves have published a wide range of research on violence against women and girls⁴ and were keen to undertake

¹ The Sojourner project was a pilot project between November 2009 and March 2012, initiated after much lobbying by Southall Black Sisters and women’s groups (No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Coalition) which provided temporary and exceptional support to women on spousal visas facing domestic violence but subject to the NRPF rule (explained below at footnote 4)

² The terms arranged and forced marriage are discussed below (see p6) the clear distinction made in official documentation, is often less clear in practice, (Gangoli et. al. *ibid*, Philips & Dustin, 2004)

³ The No Recourse to Public Funds rule is an immigration rule which means that the person entering the UK does so on the basis that they will not have recourse to public funds, which includes benefits, for a set period often called the Probation period (previously 2 years, now 5 years). They either have to have independent means or were sponsored by a third party. Women fleeing domestic violence who may need to go to a refuge would normally cover the cost of their refuge stay through their benefits being paid direct to the refuge. Consequently without access to benefits under the NRPF rule, women had either to stay in the violent relationship or potentially risk destitution.

⁴ Research has included, inter alia, *Just representation: Press Reporting the Reality of Rape* 2008, *Men who Buy Sex* 2009, *Breaking Down the Barriers: A study of how Women Exit Prostitution* forthcoming, *Lambeth Violence Against Women and Girls Customer Insight Project 2012*, *Just the Women: a 2 Week Media Monitoring Report on how the Press Report Violence Against Women 2012*

some gendered analysis of forced marriage. There have been growing concerns at the lack of focus on male experiences of forced marriage and support for them, but at the same time a proportionate gendered response requires a more nuanced gender analysis of forced marriage and how it plays out for men and for women.

1.1 Southall Black Sisters⁵ and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women's groups' campaigning on forced marriage

BME women's groups in the UK have long been concerned about forced marriages and have supported those young women who face it.

In 1998, Rukshana Naz from Derby was murdered by her brother and mother. She had had an "arranged" marriage at the age of 15 but had only seen her "husband" twice since that time. She was hoping to divorce this man and be with the man of her own choice by whom she was pregnant. Her brother and mother deemed this an affront to family honour and murdered her in front of her younger brother. They both received a life sentence for the offence in 1999 (Hall, 1999).

This case, and the campaigning of Southall Black Sisters (SBS) and other women's groups on forced marriage, propelled the subject onto the national policy and media agenda.

1.2 UK Governments' responses to forced marriage

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) had sporadically been dealing with forced marriage cases for several years. Young women fleeing forced marriage had presented to Consulates and Embassies asking for help, and friends, family members and NGOs occasionally contacted the FCO about such cases. In 1999, the FCO and the Home Office (HO) decided that, as cases became more and more common, they needed a more concerted response.

The Home Office convened a working group to look into forced marriage and produced the report, "A Choice by Right," (2000). Launching the report and announcing the intention to devote dedicated resources to the issue of forced marriage as a human

⁵ Southall Black Sisters is a not for profit organisation set up in 1979 to meet the needs of Black (Asian and African-Caribbean) and Minority Ethnic Women.

rights abuse, Mike O'Brien MP, then Home Office Minister (Immigration) said of forced marriage: "Multicultural sensitivity is no excuse for moral blindness." (BBC, 2000)

In addressing the issue, the working group sought to make a distinction between forced and arranged marriage. This distinction rests on consent with, forced marriage being described as a marriage in which one or both parties is subject to duress and does not give their full, free and informed consent (Home Office, 2000). Duress is assessed in a subjective context⁶ such that the pressure was enough to overcome the mind of that particular individual at that particular time in those particular circumstances: "whether the mind of the applicant has been overborne, howsoever that was caused⁷." An arranged marriage, however, is described as one in which no matter how the parties were introduced they gave their full, free and informed consent. Many practitioners and academics question how valid such a distinction is in practice and reality whilst retaining the utility of it in theoretical and legal terms (Anitha & Gill 2009; Gangoli et.al 2006).

The Home and Foreign Office established what was then termed the Community Liaison Unit in October 2000, based in the FCO consular human rights section and recruited specialist NGO secondees to help devise appropriate policies, responses and casework. Over the years the FCO continued to support, develop and mainstream this work and to develop specialist guidelines across government departments until Home Office, Department for Health and Department for Education and Skills (including social services responsibility at that time) took up the agenda.

In 2005, the unit became a joint Home and Foreign Office Forced Marriage Unit. By this time the unit was recording an average of 250 - 300 cases a year, in which 85% of victims were female and 15% were male (Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Home Office, 2005). They were handling some 50-75 repatriations a year. As of 2012, the FCO report that they provide advice and support in some form to around 1485 queries relating to forced marriage from individuals and agencies a year. Their statistics currently suggest 82% of referrals involve females and 18% involve males (Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Home Office, 2012).

⁶ Hirani v. Hirani (1982) Court of Appeal [1983] 4FLR 232

⁷ K. v. B. 2008 before Parker J. in the Royal Courts of Justice (Family Division FD07N00031) reported at <http://www.dawsoncornwell.com/en/documents/KvB.pdf>

The majority of cases recorded reflect the UK demographics of settled second and third generation immigrants with a heavy proportion being from families that originate from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. Cases were also reported, however, in some Arabic, Middle Eastern, African, South American and Eastern European contexts (Refuge 2008) and across a wide range of religions including Animist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh. The FCO statistics (Jan- Dec 2012) state that the age range of cases varied from as young as two years to an eldest of 71 years. According to their statistics, 13% of cases involve children below the age of 15 years, 22% are aged 16-17 and the majority are aged between 18 and 25. FCO also highlights that where this information was recorded, some 114 cases involved victims with disabilities and 22 involved victims who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT).

1.3 Human rights, political and legislative context

Forced marriage is covered by a range of international human rights standards including United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989, UN Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages 1962. In addition, the UN considers forced marriage under certain circumstances to amount to a form of trafficking (United Nations, 2000) and a form of slavery (United Nations, 1956).

In June 2012 (Prime Minister's Office, 2012), Prime Minister David Cameron announced that forcing someone into a marriage would become a criminal offence in England and Wales. The announcement was reinforced when it was referenced in the Queen's Speech in May 2013 (BBC, 2013).

This announcement followed several rather inconclusive consultations and Select Committee Inquiries over a number of years (2005, 2008, 2011) as to whether or not forced marriage should be criminalised. It also reflected the then-declared intention (Prime Minister's Office, 2012b) of the Government at that time to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).⁸ The Convention intends that there should

⁸ Opened for signature on May, 2011. For full details of signatories, visit The Council of Europe's Treaty Office Website - <http://conventions.coe.int/>

be a specific offence for forced marriage as recommended by the Council of Europe comparative study of forced marriage (2005).

The pre-existing criminal legislation relevant to forced marriage includes a range of criminal provisions such as threatening behaviour, theft, assault, kidnap, abduction, sexual assault, rape, false imprisonment and murder. In addition, civil orders had been used in forced marriage cases including injunctions, non-molestation orders, Habeus Corpus writs (Hosseini, 2000) and, as of 2007, the Forced Marriage Civil Protection Act. The new proposals include both that breach of a Forced Marriage Civil Protection Order and forcing someone into a marriage become criminal offences.

While there has been support and some praise for successive governments responding to campaigning and addressing the issue as a human rights abuse there remain some concerns about the lens that is brought to bear on the problem (Philips & Dustin, 2004).

The initial response to the issue came from a Minister with responsibility for immigration and cases were addressed in the context of international marriages between UK and South Asian nationals. Lead responsibility initially sat with the FCO. This results in a continued tendency to view the problem as a foreign, international, immigration and enforcement issue (Gill & Anitha 2009). Consequently, there is a tendency to focus on crime and immigration related responses such as raising the age of international marriage sponsors (Hester et. al. 2008), increasing the length of the probation period, increasing visa costs, tightening provisions relating to family reunification, criminalising forced marriage etc. In fact, the FCO's own guidelines highlight a multiplicity of complex and diverse motivations and manifestations of forced marriage far more wide-ranging than simple migration. These include:

- Controlling unwanted behaviour and sexuality including perceived promiscuity or being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, particularly the behaviour and sexuality of women;
- Controlling unwanted behaviour e.g. alcohol and drug use, wearing make-up or behaving in a way that is perceived to be too "westernised";
- Preventing unsuitable relationships e.g. outside the ethnic, cultural, religious or caste group;

- Protection of perceived “family honour”;
- Long standing family commitments;
- Responding to peer group or family pressure;
- Attempting to strengthen family links;
- Ensuring land property and wealth remain within the family;
- Assisting claims for UK residence and citizenship;
- Protecting perceived cultural ideals;
- Protecting perceived religious ideals;
- Ensuring care for a child or adult with special needs.

The multiplicity of causes and motivations renders the development and application of effective measures to address forced marriage a delicate and complex task, and is revisited elsewhere in this report. (p45)

2. Literature review

The vast majority of literature on forced marriages has been conducted with specific reference to the South Asian (Pakistan, Bangladesh, India) Community (Refuge 2008). This may reflect the fact that this remains the profile of the majority of reported cases. This in turn may be due to the large and established South Asian population in the UK (FCO 2007) and the relatively high proportion of young people of marriageable age in these communities (Samad and Eade 2003).

Research on forced marriage seems to fall predominantly into three main categories:

- Research which discusses the phenomenon, looks at reasons for the practice and attempts to assess the prevalence and profile or pattern of cases (Gill & Sundhari Eds 2011, Iman & Eversley 2002, Eversley & Khanum 2002, Refuge 2008);
- Research and practice guidance related to supporting victims which looks predominantly at women's experiences of forced marriage and barriers to help seeking and supportive interventions (Khanum 2008, FCO guidelines various, Thiara 2005, Izzidien 2008, MOJ);
- A further growing body of work (Southall Black Sisters 2001, Hester et. al. 2008, Philips & Dustin 2004, Chantler et. al. 2009, Wilson 2007, Gill & Anitha 2009, McAlpine et. al. 2007) focuses on State responses and theoretical frameworks to forced marriage and discusses the merits and demerits of the various approaches and their impacts⁹.

2.1. Gender differentials

Research and statistics consistently find that anything from 82 – 86% of all reported cases involve women and girls (FCO inter alia). Forced marriage has immediate and long-term harmful effects on all victims, male or female (BMA, 2008). However, women and girls may face disproportionate harm, both in terms of the impact on life chances such as education, employment, financial and personal autonomy (HM Government, 2009) and in terms of gender specific harms relating to sexual and physical violence, sexual and reproductive rights and related mental health and self-harm (Howard et al

⁹ The full range of arguments for and against criminalisation of forced marriage is not rehearsed here but can be seen in the Summary of Responses to Government Consultation and is addressed through the interview findings below.

2010, Bhardwaj 2001, Husain et al 2006, Humphreys & Thiara. 2003). Consequently it is only to be expected that the vast majority of research focuses on women's experiences of forced marriage. Acknowledging this, Gangoli et al (2006) expressly called for further work on the gendered experiences of men and women in forced marriage.

A comprehensive literature review for this report found that some generic guidance publications or service providers, especially those aimed at male victims of domestic violence and gay men, highlighted that men may also be victims of forced marriage. However, only one UK study specifically focussed on the forced marriage experience of young men (Samad 2010). This study highlighted the very key role of perceptions and performances of masculinity among young men as a major barrier to help seeking behaviour among men.

Samad analysed the male cases that were handled by the FCO. There were often some core similarities in the motivations and methods in these cases as for women. For instance, emotional pressure backed up with the threat of or actual violence were key strategies used by parents when attempting to put a stop to behaviour that the family found wayward or unacceptable. This was particularly in terms of exercising an independent, and in the family's view, inappropriate choice of partner.

Motivations that were more specific to the male cohort focussed on sexuality, where the young man was known or suspected to be gay. Alternatively motivations may relate to attempts to make a young man settle down and 'mend his ways' through marriage, after criminal or other undesirable behaviour such as drugs involvement.

How young men responded to the pressure was a key area of difference. Many young men said they found it hard to even admit to themselves, let alone to others, that they were the victim of force. Samad ascribes this to young men's sense of male pride and masculinity, citing an interviewee to the earlier Samad and Eade (2003) study; "What kind of man are you to get forced into a marriage?" Many young men recognise that for them it may seem easier to go through with the marriage and keep the family happy, knowing that they will either be in a position to reject the woman later or to run a double life with an intimate partner of their choosing outside the marriage. However, Samad

suggests that this may underestimate the long-term emotional and mental health consequences for young men.

Samad's study quotes some young men interviewed for the 2003 study: "If someone's not happy within their marriage now, they will clearly state so and say: "That's it". Whether they've got kids or they haven't..." and "It's an easy option to say yes."

His findings also reflected that the more obvious associations and publicity of forced marriage as a problem faced solely by women is not only a hindrance to male help-seeking, but can result in professionals failing to identify male cases – or to take them seriously. Samad finds, however, that it will be necessary for men to have the courage to confront the perceived attack on their masculinity and to take responsibility to speak out, in order to organise a better response for young men and facilitate their reporting and help-seeking behaviour.

Given the relatively small number of cases involving young men and the proportionately less damaging, though still severe, impacts for young men, it is legitimate to question what may be the benefit of examining the issue specifically from a male perspective. It is suggested by the authors of this report that Samad's finding concerning masculinity is susceptible of development and broader application to the issue of forced marriage. It is not only relevant in so far as it affects male help-seeking behaviour, but forms part of the gendered construct of forced marriage. Addressing masculinity and forced marriage with young men may also help challenge the tolerance, normalisation and complicity involved in forced marriage for young women. This in turn would hopefully build a broader, more united resistance to forced marriage among all young people.

2.2. Young people's views

The majority of reported cases also involves young people aged 17-25 (FCO various). There are some suggestions that there may be increases in cases involving younger people (Lakhani, 2012). Some women's groups opposed to criminalisation of forced marriage have suggested that this may be a consequence of the more visible and punitive state response to forced marriage as perpetrators seek to isolate victims from help at a younger age. This is also reflected in some of the survey responses.

A number of studies, guidance documents and practical projects address Asian women and children together (Izzidien 2008) or address forced marriage as a potential child protection issue (FCO/DFE Guidelines for Education Professionals, Kazimirski et. al. 2009). However, there has again been relatively little research that very specifically addresses young people's perspectives.

More practical and peer exchange-based projects working with young people led by NGOs have tried to focus on young people's views specifically. In December 2013, FORWARD¹⁰ (Hemmings & Khalifa 2013) released their findings from an international EU Daphne funded¹¹ project on young people's views and experiences of female genital mutilation and forced marriage. Similarly the Changing Lives project (2006) developed very specific peer support projects with young people on forced marriage, and the Jan Trust and Karma Nirvana undertake talks and sessions in schools where possible.

Throughout these projects, young people expressed that they found it extremely hard to discuss the issue of forced marriage, or challenge their parents or other adults, due to the importance of respecting one's elders in their communities. Similarly, the tendency of elders to "know best" means that even should a young person attempt to raise the issue with elders; it is often difficult for them to be taken seriously or to influence outcomes. Therefore relying on young people to report and challenge the practice is unlikely to be effective, and places a great burden on young peoples' shoulders.

"Young people involved in the research also stated they needed more support to question the practices within their communities. This was because they respected the older generation and their values and practices make it difficult for them to question the views of the 'oldest and wisest'. "...*The older people have a crucial role, they are considered examples to the youngest, defenders of morality and good manners, and it is they who teach us to distinguish good from evil.*" (FORWAD, 2013)

¹⁰ FORWARD (Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development) is an African Diaspora women led UK-registered campaign and support charity dedicated to advancing and safeguarding the sexual and reproductive health and rights of African girls and women

¹¹ DAPHNE is an EU funding programme in support of EU Member States activities against Violence against Women.

Another common finding across such projects was that young people were more likely to confide in their peers if they were to discuss the issue at all - but it was uncertain whether peers would know how to help. This was not explored in huge detail in this research but did emerge through some of the interviews discussed here. Educational sessions in schools by organisations like Jan Trust, Karma Nirvana, Ashiana, Tender and others have been effective in supporting young people, but are not consistently rolled out and depend on the buy-in from educational establishments. Yet it is again apparent from projects working with young people that in many cases they feel teachers are well placed to identify and support people at risk and may be the one professional to whom they would consider turning.

Several women's sector organisations (EVAW 2011, Karma Nirvana) welcomed the 2005 FCO forced marriage guidelines for education professionals, but have highlighted that they are little known or publicised, and there seems to be a reluctance on the part of Department for Education (DFE) to engage effectively with either violence against women generally or a forced marriage specific agenda. This has been persistently reflected also in Home Affairs Committee (HAC) Inquiries into forced marriage (2008, 2011):

“We are extremely worried about the fact that many schools continue to refuse to engage in preventative activity with children at risk of forced marriage and have written to the Secretary of State for Education to express this view. We are disappointed by his response.”

“In the light of clear evidence that many schools are not fulfilling their statutory responsibilities with regard to forced marriage, the Department for Education must provide more active support to teachers to enable them to carry out a role which may risk upsetting cultural sensibilities but is nonetheless vital for child protection.

The relative paucity of material unearthed in this literature review that specifically addresses the gendered dimensions of forced marriage, and young peoples' perspectives on the issue, suggests considerably more research in these areas would be of value.

3. Methodology

Research questions: The research wanted to address the following questions:

- What are the views of 16 – 25 year olds on forced marriage, its prevalence and relevance for them?
- What are the views of 16-25 year olds on government responses to forced marriage and to what extent, if at all; do they feel measures respond to their own views and experiences?
- Do 16-25 year olds think that forced marriage is different or the same for men and women?
- Who or what do 16-25 year olds see as most culpable in enabling the perpetuation of forced marriage, how would they tackle these causes and perpetrators and what would they like to say to them?

3.1 Methodology and limitations

In the initial planning stages it had been the intention to undertake a series of workshop-style sessions with two groups (one of young men and one of young women) to explore these questions. In practice, this presented a range of difficulties. Practical difficulties included the coincidence of the target period with school holidays and with Ramadan, making recruitment very difficult indeed. Conceptual difficulties included the risks involved in bringing a group of individuals, unknown to each other and with unknown stories, connections and views on the subject, together to discuss these very sensitive issues. Consequently, the decision was taken to individualise the engagement with young people.

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods was used (Chase, 2011; Teddie and Tashakkori, 2011). Desk research was undertaken to highlight the context and evolution of forced marriage policy, to explore academic commentary of the issues and to identify what knowledge there was concerning the gendered differentials of forced marriage for young people.

An online survey ran for a 3 month period (July-October)¹². The survey was aimed at young people aged 16-25 with experience of the issue. In the survey, however, it was made clear that others who wished to respond and did not fall within the criteria were still welcome to share their views but were asked to declare that they were outside the target group. A total of 101 took part in the survey¹³.

The reasons for accepting survey respondents from outside the core criteria were principally so as to have a larger pool of views, and to have a pool against which to compare the specific views of the target group. In addition, forced marriage has been very much in the public profile recently, with the criminalisation consultations. Many people work on the issue, live in an area where it is happening or have friends, acquaintances and partners who may have been directly or indirectly affected. Some may have very direct personal experience of the issue from a range of perspectives but be over 25. It therefore seemed appropriate to enable a wider pool to engage with the survey, if they wished.

In addition to the survey, a series of 12 one-to-one, semi-structured interviews¹⁴ were conducted, though in fact only 11 of these were analysed for this report as one interviewee was not sufficiently close to the issue to be able to address many of the questions. For the most part, interviews took place face-to-face in a location of the interviewee's choosing (their home, their workplace, a support organisation's office). In four cases, interviews were undertaken over the phone at the preference of the individual. Interviews were each around one hour's duration and were mostly recorded and transcribed, with participants' consent.¹⁵ In a few cases, notes were taken simultaneously and immediately written up. The interviews were then thematically analysed, highlighting key issues (Ritchie et. al. 2003). As a token of appreciation for participants' time, all participants received a voucher worth £10.00.

¹² See Appendix I for survey questions

¹³ Total of 101 participants took part in the survey but not all completed it

¹⁴ See Appendix II for copy of Interview prompts

¹⁵ See Appendices III and IV for copies of Information for Participants and consent protocols

3.2 Ethical considerations

This area of research raises potentially serious ethical considerations. The sample involved young people from 16-25 affected by forced marriage. This could raise issues of informed consent and of child protection. Prior to engaging with interviewees, they were sent information about the research and a consent form, and were able to speak to the researcher before agreeing to do an interview if there were concerns. Participants were recruited on the basis that they had knowledge of forced marriage in their peer group or extended family, and not on the basis that they themselves had experienced it or were at risk. However, it was not always possible for them or the researcher to know for certain the level of risk. It was suggested to participants that they should only take part if they felt safe to do so and that therefore, if under 18, they may wish to inform their parents and/or seek their consent. If they felt their parents may not like them to discuss this matter then they should mention this to the researcher, in case it raised issues of safety for the young person. It was also made clear to participants that they could withdraw at any time if they so wished.

Participants also received information on Eaves' policies concerning data storage (cleaned, anonymised, in locked cabinets with restricted access) and confidentiality, with the caveat that disclosures would be required if there was a risk to the safety of participants or third parties. The researcher has had child protection training, has an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check and is experienced in working on forced marriage cases. As such, when undertaking interviews, the researcher had a range of information about agencies that can help for those at risk and participants agreed for information to be shared with such partners in case of risk. At the start of the interview a recap of this information was undertaken and their consent renewed using clear and simple language.

3.3 Recruitment

One of the challenges faced in the research was reaching the young people themselves for interviews. Information about the research was distributed inviting interviewees and providing contact details. The information was clear that for one-to-one interviews, key criteria included being within the age bracket (16-25) and having been close enough to the issue to have some insight to bring. This did not necessarily mean being a survivor themselves of a forced marriage but would mean having had some exposure through

contact with family, friends and community. Material was distributed in emails, social media such as Facebook and Twitter and on fliers to a wide range of organisations. These included schools, community facilities like youth groups and some religious organisations and public libraries, and via partners working in NGOs and public sector with issues of youth, race and violence against women. The online survey was tweeted, emailed and promoted through similar routes.

The main networks available to Eaves are dominated by women's sector organisations including some BME organisations. As a result participants in the survey were quite heavily dominated by people who worked in the sector and referrals to interviews and surveys were mainly accessed through support projects. This may have given a sample which was more than averagely engaged and knowledgeable about the issue, and which had a particular focus on women's experiences.

It was also the intention that the samples should cover young people from a diverse range of backgrounds, in recognition of the fact that forced marriage is not isolated to one specific community. Within the interviewee sample South Asian cases remained prevalent despite attempts to draw a wider pool however this is consonant with reported cases. Notwithstanding, the sample did manage to interview one young woman of Somali origin and one young woman of Middle Eastern origin.

A limitation of an online survey is that there is no evidence as to who is completing it and so it is very difficult to assess the profile of the sample. Even where personal data is provided it is generic, not specific.

Finally, of course, this is a relatively small interviewee sample (11 interviews) and quite wide ranging. The survey sample of 101 partial or complete responses however, combined with the 11 detailed interviews, provides a reasonable insight and identifies some trends and patterns - many of which would benefit from further research and some of which could have practical applications.

3.4 Interview and survey sample profile

3.4.1 Interviewee Sample profile

Among the interviewee sample profile were five men and six women¹⁶ and ages were evenly spread through 17-24. They were drawn from across England with participants from Sheffield, Leeds, Luton and Derby as well as from London.

Interviewees described their marital status¹⁷ as single (8), single in a relationship (1) and married (2).

Interviewees described their dominant family heritage¹⁸ as Muslim Pakistani (5) Muslim Bangladeshi (2) Muslim Iraqi Kurdish (1) Muslim Somali (1) Indian Sikh (1) and Indian Hindu (1)

One interviewee declared a disability.

3.4.2 The Survey Sample Profile

There were 101 responses to the survey. Not all respondents completed every question, with a number of questions receiving between 60 and 90 responses.

Age

Seventy-four percent of the sample responding to this question (n = 65) stated that they were in the 21-25 age bracket, 19% (n= 17) were aged 18-21, 7% (n=6) were 16-18. A further 10 individuals completed it stating that they were outside the age limit with seven of these being just outside the bracket aged between 26 and 32 years, these are not included in the table below.

Age of survey sample within target group

| 21-25 | 18-21 | 16-18 |
|--------|--------|-------|
| 74% | 19% | 7% |
| (N=65) | (n=17) | (n=6) |

Gender

Twenty-one percent of the sample (n=21) were male and 78% female (n=76) and one person preferred not to say.

¹⁶ Options not selected included LGBT and prefer not to say.

¹⁷ Options not selected included divorced and prefer not to say.

¹⁸ Interviewees were asked to describe dominant parental ethnicity and religion

Gender of survey sample

| Male | Female | Other/prefer not to say |
|------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 21% (n=21) | 78% (n=76) | 1 |

Marital Status

Ninety-one percent (n=83) were single, 7% (n=6) were married, 2% (n = 2) were widowed. A further nine in the comments space described themselves as in a relationship (8) or preferring not to “be labelled” (1).

Marital status of survey sample

| Single | Married | Widowed |
|------------|----------|----------|
| 91% (n=83) | 7% (n=6) | 2% (n=2) |

Reason for interest in subject area

Respondents were asked to indicate in what way they felt this issue was relevant to them or people they cared about. Of the 66 who responded to this question 26% (n= 17) said it directly affected close friends, 6% (n=5) said it would affect family members and 80% (n=53) said it would affect people in their neighbourhood.

Reason for interest in completing survey¹⁹

| Close friends | family | neighbourhood |
|---------------|----------|---------------|
| 26% (n=17) | 6% (n=5) | 80% (n=53) |

There were several comments from respondents expressing their interest or concern in the issue of forced marriage generally or particularly as a young people’s or women’s issue.

“It feels like an important issue of principle.” (survey respondent)

“I am a youth worker with young women who could potentially be affected by this policy.” (survey respondent)

¹⁹ Percentages exceed 100% as respondents could have selected more than one category.

This possibly reflects the relatively high media profile at the time of the survey as it coincided with coverage of proposals to criminalise forced marriage. It may also reflect the fact that, as indicated above, the promotion of the survey through support service and women's sector channels may have attracted a very engaged respondent base.

4. Findings

1. What are the views of 16 – 25 year olds on forced marriage, its prevalence and relevance for them?
2. What are the views of 16-25 year olds on government responses to forced marriage and to what extent, if at all; do they feel measures respond to their own views and experiences?
3. Do 16-25 year olds think that forced marriage is different or the same for men and women?
4. Who or what do 16-25 year olds see as most culpable in enabling the perpetuation of forced marriage, how would they tackle these causes and perpetrators and what would they like to say to them?

4.1 What are the views of 16 – 25 year olds on forced marriage, its prevalence and relevance for them?

Prompts addressing this question in the interviews asked participants to consider the below points. The interview was semi-structured and quite free-flowing, meaning that participants ranged over all of these areas in their answers rather than addressing them on a point by point basis:

a) People get together in a range of different ways today - how useful or not are concepts like forced and arranged marriage today?

b) How would you define a forced marriage and how may that be distinguished from an arranged marriage?

c) To what extent, if at all, do you think there is a problem with forced marriage?

4.1.1 Marriage today

All interviewees stressed that young people get together in all kinds of ways nowadays and that it is too simplistic to speak of any particular trend or pattern.

Participants mentioned the role of internet dating, being set up by friends or family or developing one's own relationships with colleagues, fellow students etc.:

“Kids hook up, kids go out with each other, arrange stuff online and chat, meet people at college, meet friends of family, get set up by mates, get set up by family – all sorts. There’s no one size fits all. It’s changing with the generations”.
(008 male)

A recurrent theme, however, was that irrespective of how they meet up, they would want their parents to meet and approve of the person they wanted to settle down with. When talking of arranged marriage, several participants described different versions of this including allowing the young person to meet the individual suggested by parents, or indeed a few people selected by parents, and then make the choice. There was however recognition that this could easily elide into a highly-pressured situation where the young person may feel less free to turn down the option(s) proposed than they had anticipated (some described this as becoming forced, others stopped short of this). One young man described the inverse by which he brought a selection of possible girls home to meet his family and would take his parents’ view on which was most suitable.

Three interviewees described situations in which male acquaintances had suggested that they wanted their parents to arrange their marriage for them and they would agree or disagree on their own terms. In one case in particular, the young man described how his friend intended to go with his parents’ proposed option but maintain relationships of his own choosing outside the marriage:

“A few mates said they want parents to arrange something but they want to be the final decider. One of my mates - he said he wants someone quite traditional and that for the wife but that he’ll have his girlfriends.” (005 male).

During the course of the interviews however it became apparent that for such scenarios there could be a range of interpretations. It was not always clear whether the interviewee(s) knew that this was genuinely the choice of the young men they were describing or whether these young men felt under pressure to go through with the marriage, and this was their way of dealing with the situation so as not to appear to be a victim.

“I mean you’re not really going to say look I’m being forced into a marriage like not as a bloke, I mean it’s embarrassing really, isn’t it? ...I know a couple of guys and I don’t know if it was forced or not, but they went along with it and they’re not happy but they’d never stand up and say I was forced, you can’t really as a bloke can you?” (005 male)

This chimes with Samad’s (Samad and Eade 2003) findings concerning men’s sense of masculinity and male pride as a barrier to men’s help-seeking behaviour. However, it is not entirely clear how much this is to do with the difficulties for males of requesting and accessing help and how much to do with male attitudes to marriage and the roles and expectations of men and women in them. For instance, it is notable, that those in these interviews who were apparently more likely to go through with, or indeed actively seek, an arranged and avowedly, traditional marriage were males.

One interviewee was keen to participate as she wanted to highlight the heterogeneity of marriage practice, even within one family, and illustrate a genuine “arranged” marriage. She described how her parents had had no intention of arranging their marriages but that her elder brother had expressly requested them to arrange his. Again this took the form described, of parents finding a range of possible options and he then meeting them and choosing one. She described this as a very happy relationship that is working well for her brother and her family and for the young woman in question. She stressed that her parents worked hard to find someone compatible for her brother. They sought individuals who would be prepared to live a traditional marriage but who also had enough in common to be a partner, for instance selecting women who had a reasonable level of education and spoke English:

“They seem to be really happy but it’s quite a traditional marriage – I think that’s what he wanted and he thought it might be easier getting that with a girl back home – that’s a bit of a stereotype but I think that’s what he thought.” (0011 female)

Notwithstanding the apparent success of her brother’s arranged marriage she was clear that she had no intention of seeking the same service from her parents:

“I didn’t want that – it freaks me out, getting married to someone I hardly know even if they let me meet him and choose like he did, but it’s still weird to me. I want control of my life and that’s my choice.” (0011 female)

She continued by musing on why some people like arranged marriages and raised an issue that was to recur in a few of the interviews. She, and other interviewees, demonstrated quite high levels of trust in parents and felt that generally parents will try and do their best for you and may make a good decision. She, and others, mentioned that the involvement of the parents in setting up the marriage took a lot of the responsibility off the shoulders of the young person. This meant that when there were problems or difficulties there was more support for the young person. It would not just be their fault and up to them to sort it out. Relatives on both sides would try to help to solve the difficulties and keep the marriage going:

“I understand that one of the things for my brother is that if there are problems then, with the parents being involved in the choosing, then everyone works harder to help the marriage to work – I can sort of see that but that can work the wrong way too and ultimately I think it’s my responsibility and my marriage.” (0011 female)

“Pakistani families think it’s better to marry in the family; it’s a tighter network – if something is wrong they’re more likely to support and forgive as the layers of bonds are there. Layers and layers of bonds to keep everyone together and supportive and on the right track.” (001 female).

It is suggested that there may be fertile ground in further research into this sense of responsibility, blame and decision-making among young people affected by, or at risk of, forced marriage. In part, it may reflect traditions which place a high premium on respecting parents and elders and which in turn may not easily respect the views of young people. This may lead to young people not developing their own decision-making skills, personal responsibility or confidence in their own conviction, making it easier for them to be persuaded into a marriage they might not want.

4.1.2 Prevalence

On the question of forced marriages, all participants agreed that they do still happen, though they had differing views as to the prevalence and as to the nature of “force” (discussed below at 4.1.3.). Four female participants were involved in a voluntary capacity with relevant women’s organisations and so had come across high levels of cases including some of those involving physical violence as well as emotional violence. These participants felt that forced marriage was happening on quite a large scale that is still poorly understood:

“Forced marriage still happens – parents wanting complete control and thinking they know best. Often a sort of promise they have to keep. It is seen as a matter of honour....really horrible violence and beatings, being locked up, one girl was locked up starved and left a bottle of bleach – I mean they wanted her to kill herself so they didn’t have to do it but that’s still murder isn’t it?” (009 female)

“I feel strongly that there are many cases from my own experience and from my work here.” (004 female)

Other participants, particularly young male participants felt that it may not be all that common and that it was dying out naturally with the generations:

“I think it’ll stop – life’s not like that back home, times have moved on.” (0010 male)

Isn’t it stopping a bit now? Like with generations and time and stuff I think it’s dying out.” (005 male)

This was very much a view cited mainly by young men, it may be interesting for further research to test this assumption to see if this is indeed the trend or not.

4.1.3. Distinction between forced and arranged

The most intractable issue throughout all of these interviews was in defining “force.” All participants recognised that forced marriage happened on some scale. All participants were fully aware of the fact that the distinction, theoretically at least, was around free

and informed consent and valued this distinction. All participants were clear that the use of physical violence and tactics like deception, imprisonment, drugging, kidnapping and beating were clearly “force”. Some participants, however, felt that this was extreme and sensational and probably not that common:

“The media tells really sensational stories about kidnap and drugging and imprisonment and beatings, I don’t know how much that happens.” (0011 female)

“...really use force like violence and threats and beating and that’s quite extreme I don’t know that that happens all that much.” (008 male)

They all stressed that the pressure mostly brought to bear was emotional pressure and recognised that this should or could constitute force. As in the quote above, respondents commonly used terms like “really force“, “if it’s really forced.” Such qualifications were illustrative of the fact that, notwithstanding familiarity with the official distinction between forced and arranged, and the role of emotional pressure in force; all but one found it very difficult to separate out persuasion from overcoming someone’s will:

“Arranged and forced – one involves free choice and consent, the other does not – but this is not a clear distinction either to parents or to the young person themselves.” (001 female)

“Yeah that’s [*distinction between forced and arranged*] a bit mucked up really – it isn’t all that clear – like if force means violence and guns and that then yeah but parents, man they can give you a hard time.... it can be tough, like so tough that it’s easier just to go through with it and then find a way to live with it or get round it later, but I don’t know if you can call that force, it’s just like your Mum and Dad really persuading you”. (005 male)

“I think it’s happening quite a lot just you wouldn’t necessarily call it forced but it’s like getting pushed into stuff...If it’s you that can’t stand up to the nagging and begging and guilt then is it fair to blame the parents for that?” (006 male)

“It’s all degrees of persuasion and people have different breaking points.” (007 female)

“The distinction is clear... you know if you’re being forced or not, you know if you want to marry that person or not.” (0011 female)

It is perhaps relevant that this last quote is from the interviewee whose parents allowed her to make her own choice, but who arranged a successful marriage for her brother at his request. This may have given her a very clear picture of the application of consent and choice.

4.2. Young people’s level of legislative and policy awareness, views on criminalisation

This section could have covered a wide range of issues, as it asked what interviewees knew of the current legal and policy position of forced marriage. Inevitably this could have covered, inter alia, the immigration and integration focus of many forced marriage measures and discourses at government level (Gill & Anitha 2009, Chantler et. al. 2009). Indeed one respondent was particularly exercised by what he felt to be a racist and Islamophobic context to forced marriage discourses:

“Yeah I heard they want to make it a crime but I don’t think they are doing that because they care about forced marriage, I think it’s just another thing to have a got at Muslims and Asians for...it’s all about race and immigration and terrorism and all that – they’re obsessed.” (008 male)

“...seriously there’s racism everywhere and Islamophobia, that doesn’t help – you keep yourself to yourself in that environment – stick to your own kind – you aren’t welcome anywhere else – you want to stick with what you know and trust and understand.” (008 male)

However, most participants took the question to reference the proposals to criminalise forced marriage and in the interests of brevity and clarity, the interview prompts were predominantly around this development, as were the online survey questions. In particular, the prompts explored what interviewees felt were the advantages and

disadvantages to proposals to criminalise. In addition, interviewees were asked whether they took part in consultations about criminalisation, whether or not they felt they could advise someone on what help was available and whatever their views on criminalisation, what they expected the implications of criminalisation might be.

Again the discussion below takes these points together, which reflects the free-flowing nature of the discussion. Levels of knowledge differed considerably among participants on the detail but all of them had heard that there was a proposal to criminalise. The four young women who volunteered for women's groups working on these issues were the most well-informed and confident to discuss these points. Even amongst them, however, only one had taken part indirectly in a consultation via her organisation, a further three had participated in discussions in their workplace but had not themselves responded to the consultation. All three of them and one other female interviewee felt that they might have liked to respond if they had known about it. This is similar to the findings of the survey which found that of the 85 who responded to the consultation responses question, although 51% (n = 44) had known about the proposal, only 5% (n=4) had taken part in a consultation This suggests that there may be more to do in ensuring that the most affected young people hear about, and feel empowered to respond to, policy initiatives affecting them.

Similarly it was those young women most interested in the issue, whether studying it or doing voluntary work, who were most confident about being able to advise others who may be at risk. They were informed of some of the measures that can be taken to prevent a forced marriage and some of the safeguards that can be put in place to enhance prevention and rescue if a young person fears, but is not sure, that she may be at risk of a forced marriage.

All of the participants were aware that this is an area that the Foreign Office can help with, though they were not necessarily clear of the parameters and limits of that help. This may be a point for the Foreign Office to consider in terms both of promotion of their services and of managing expectations. All of them were aware that there were women's groups who could assist. None of the participants felt that there was adequate help for young men.

In the case of the young men, there was generally a very low expectation of intervention or help - and a significant expectation that it was down to the individual to “stand your ground.” This again chimes with Samad’s findings on masculinity. In most cases when asked about their ability to help or advise someone they could only say “just don’t do it”, “walk away” or felt they had no real idea and that it wasn’t their place. Several participants did suggest contacting a women’s group where it concerned females:

“It’s a family thing, you can’t interfere. Everyone’s got to find their way like.” (005 male)

“I’d just say don’t go along with it – walk away – leave it behind, you don’t want to get messed up in that, they can’t make you, not really, not if you stand your ground, just walk away.” (008 male)

“Not really, I mean people are different aren’t they, people got to do what’s right for them. I suppose I’d just say if you don’t want it, don’t do it - though I expect that’s easy said, don’t know till you’re in that situation.” (0010 male)

“Most of what you read about, it’s with the girls and there are quite a few organisations for them.” (006 male)

Concerning criminalisation, again there was some disparity in views. There was unanimity that forced marriage was wrong and consequently a good understanding of why there is an inherent logic to making it criminal. However, among the interviewees there was a great divergence, and rather a gendered one, of views as to whether or not this was the right approach. Five out of the six female interviewees - four of whom are either doing voluntary work with women’s groups in the field or are studying in related areas - were very confident that criminalisation was the right step.

They felt that this may help victims to come forward, it may help victims to feel that right is on their side and to challenge their parents and even to support parents who are themselves under pressure. They also felt it would build confidence and improve practice with professionals who sometimes are uncertain or anxious about interventions in this field. They felt that in some cases it may deter the parents though there was less

certainty about this. They felt strongly that it is a crime, a form of domestic violence, an abuse and a human rights issue and it was vital to send a clear and unequivocal message to that effect:

“I totally support criminalisation of forced marriage, it’s fantastic and will serve many purposes...Confidence to come forward and report – that is the key thing, criminalisation is the authority behind you and gives you the upper hand...sends a strong message that it is not acceptable...parents are often pressurised by community this can help them too to resist and professionals often lack confidence and this gives them the confidence to handle cases – the right framework to work by.” (002 female)

In the online survey, respondents were offered a range of arguments in favour of criminalisation. Sixty-five percent (n=55) of respondents to this question agreed that it sends a clear and strong message, 54% (n=46) that it was an additional argument for young people to use when at risk and 71% (n=60) that it holds everyone accountable to and protected by the same laws.

One female interviewee also suggested that criminalisation may be of particular benefit to young men at risk, encouraging them to come forward more, as she felt that a more heavy-handed, authoritarian approach is something that men respond better to and would rely on:

“I think criminalisation may help as it’s more masculine, gives authority.” (002 female)

Only one of the female interviewees expressed some ambivalence about criminalisation:

“I think it’s just too messy. Parents who are prepared to really force you will do it anyway and I don’t think this will stop it – there’s things already you can do to try to stop it so I’m not sure about it...I don’t really know – it doesn’t feel like the right way to me...”

“...I think it’s too messy and unclear, it’s not really criminal if the parents think they are doing the best for you and you end up going along with it but regret it – I don’t know...”

“...You’d just want to get a divorce or get out of the marriage somehow, it doesn’t mean you want to send your parents to prison or get them in trouble with the law.” (0011 female)

Interviewees were pressed on what they thought the practical implications would be of criminalisation. There was much less clarity and certainty about this. There was some recognition that it may deter young people from coming forward and some that parents might do it anyway or do it in a different way. In particular interviewees highlighted the concern expressed by some women’s groups that it may result in parents taking children out of school and abroad much earlier and for much longer. Notwithstanding, the young women holding positive views on criminalisation felt that the principle is still right. They stressed that these uncertainties highlight the need for closer monitoring of trends and patterns to see what the implications are in reality and better training for organisations to be able to identify risks and patterns and support people better:

“It may deter some from coming forward at first but it shouldn’t if you support people properly, reassure them, message it properly – here to help you and your parents not necessarily to bang them up in prison.” (002 female)

“Parents will keep trying different ways, they won’t stop but you need some prosecutions to show them and deter them – prosecution is important.” (004 female)

“I don’t think there are any disadvantages really, I mean I read the arguments on both sides but really I don’t think there is any argument against criminalisation that is of any real value compared to the merits of criminalisation... I think parents will be frightened, but I did read somewhere that it might mean they take girls abroad earlier and keep them there for longer so they can do it easier. I don’t know if that’s true but that is a risk – I think we should be monitoring for that

because then we'd need to do something – but that is partly about better training and support for teachers and professionals.” (009 female)

Comments in the survey reflected similar ambivalence with one comment very similar to the above interviewee; “I think all the arguments above [against criminalisation] may be valid, but are not sufficient to sway the argument.” But another comment in complete opposition: “Making forced marriage a crime may mean people go abroad when there is much better access to help and support here.”

The reference these interviewees make to concerns that young people may be taken abroad earlier, or that the marriages will still continue was in evidence in the survey responses. Respondents were offered some of the common reasons given in opposition to criminalisation. Of the 71 who responded to this question, 72% (n= 51) thought it may deter help seeking for fear of criminalising one's parents. Fifty-six percent (n= 40) of respondents indicated that they were concerned that it may cause families to take young people abroad earlier and for longer or would otherwise still happen but with families being more discreet about it making it harder to help victims. An additional point that the survey raised, though in small numbers, was that 28% (n=20) felt that it may lull young people into a false sense of security.

The views of the young men were significantly more ambivalent. Whilst still understanding that in principle forced marriage is wrong, they were unconvinced of criminalisation as a positive response. It should be noted, however, that as indicated above, in most cases the young men did not easily envisage any kind of intervention – either making one for others or receiving one themselves if they should be victims. They could only conceive of the issue as something an individual had to sort out for himself and evasive action being predominantly around the need to “stand your ground” or “walk away.”

Their ambivalence on criminalisation reflected this as in their responses they often ruminated on how fair it was to blame the parents when the individual had just “given in” to the pressure – clearly locating the blame with the potential victim. In addition the young men perhaps also identified with the more traditional and perhaps male view that

family matters are private and it would be shameful or inappropriate for them to be discussed or dealt with in the public or by outsiders:

“I don’t know – like it’s wrong, course it is but does it help making it criminal? And like I don’t think family business should be in the courts and all over the public. Families got to sort it out for themselves, it’s private isn’t it?” (005 male)

“If it’s force really then I think it’s fair enough – that is wrong. But if it’s you that can’t stand up to the nagging and begging and guilt then is it fair to blame the parents for that?” (006 male)

“It doesn’t sound right to me; like it doesn’t make sense you’re not going to want to chat all that in public or like get your parents in trouble... it’s not really the way.” (0010 male)

“I think that’s rubbish man – it’s just wrong – it’s just trying to make trouble for us – and anyway it won’t work – how do you prove force? Who is going to testify in court and send their parents to the lock-up, nah stupid idea.” (008 male).

This interviewee (008 male) had broader concerns more generally about the state response to forced marriage, viewing it with suspicion for what he felt was its emphasis on immigration and on South Asian (specifically Muslim) communities. His interview referenced issues of racism quite heavily throughout. This was reflected also, though to a lesser extent, in the survey responses. Respondents were offered some of the reasons against criminalisation. Forty-one percent (n=29) of respondents to the criminalisation question selected the option that it would lead to increased racial stereotyping,

Pressed on the implications of criminalisation, again the young men largely found it quite difficult to comment but were doubtful of its effect. There was a widespread recognition that broadly speaking many of the parents concerned might be generally quite law abiding and keen to avoid getting in trouble with the law which speaks to a potential deterrent effect. However most of them went on to question this as they pointed out that for most of the parents, they did not necessarily think what they were doing was wrong or was forcing their child, so they would not feel it affected them:

“Might put some off, you know but like most they don’t think they’re doing anything wrong, they don’t think they’re forcing anyway so they wouldn’t think it applied to them. Probably won’t make a difference like, especially not when it’s the whole emotional set up...” (0010 male)

One interviewee questioned whether it was necessary given pre-existing measures:

“They’ve been doing stuff for ages, don’t know what that is but like taking cases to court and getting kids back from back home so not sure how different this is – not on really taking family business to courts and public and media and stuff.” (005 male).

A small proportion of survey respondents had also pointed this out with 20% (n=14) agreeing that a range of crimes involved in a forced marriage are already criminal offences.

This range of views on criminalisation reflects the findings of the various consultations that FCO have held on this matter. The survey sought a general view, pro or anti criminalisation, and 98% of respondents were in favour of criminalisation. This demonstrates, as the interviews and the earlier consultations do, that there is near universal condemnation of the practice of forced marriage in principle, as some of the survey quotes illustrate:

“It’s just wrong [to force someone to do something].” (survey respondent)

“It’s a human rights violation – end of!” (survey respondent)

“Choice of whom to marry must be a right for everyone...forced marriage is akin to legalised slavery.” (survey respondent)

More detailed questions offered respondents some of the common arguments for and some of the common arguments against forced marriage. Notwithstanding the strength of their views on the principle, respondents agreed in high numbers with both sets of

arguments when answering the individual questions. Again this is illustrative of the very convincing practical arguments both for and against criminalisation and a lack of confidence about the practical implications.

The authors of this report share the views expressed by some of our respondents that irrespective of one's position on this question, there is a need for some very effective monitoring of the implementation of criminalisation and an ability to respond accordingly.

4.3. Young people's views on gendered differentials of forced marriage

No interviewee had declared that they had been through a forced marriage themselves so this question required an imaginative leap to consider how they themselves or someone of the opposite gender might feel and react. In addition, for both male and female participants, there was considerably less familiarity with the stories of male victims of forced marriage making it difficult to imagine their experience. For the male participants it also appeared that it was not a subject they ever really talked about so again making it hard for them to imagine the experience. Nevertheless, the exercise was helpful and produced some relevant points that may be worth further investigation in future research.

There was recognition, among survey respondents, that it was different for men and women. Of the 69 respondents who answered this question, 57% felt it was different but a further 30% were not sure and 13% thought it was the same. However, in the space for commenting, several of the comments did highlight more serious and life-changing harms to women:

“They are not as pressurised as girls and they are not likely to be raped or assaulted when forced to marry.” (survey respondent)

“Women are forced to marry men that are much older who will proceed to sexually, physically and emotionally abuse them.” (survey respondent)

“The boys get married and still have their freedom.” (survey respondent)

“They tend to go ahead with the arrangements. Males also have a say often in which women they wish to marry, it’s mostly forced on the woman.” (survey respondent)

Ninety-four percent of survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that girls who refuse or runaway may have to live in hiding and that this is viewed particularly badly of women. Ninety-six percent either agreed or strongly agreed that forced marriage could likely result in rape and lack of control of sexual and reproductive rights.

During the course of the interviews, a number of the questions enabled gendered reflections to surface.

4.3.1. Women’s responses

A number of the young women, started out by saying it was the same or perhaps even harder for men. They explained this not only in terms of the lack of obvious help available for men:

“Hard to know where to turn because most services are aimed at women though of course this may reflect the majority of cases but still...” (001 female)

but with particular reference to issues of masculinity:

“It’s hard for them to ask for help as they are embarrassed... it’s hard because they might not expect to be taken seriously or understood as most people associate it with women.” (001 female)

Survey respondents also identified the difficulties for young men. Of the 65 who responded, 53% (n=34) agreed that it was hard for boys to ask for help and 47% (n=34) that there were less male specific services and help available:

“Men are affected though there are less cases but the problem is the male ego, like they’d be afraid they may laugh at me, not take me seriously.” (002 female)

“I think it’s harder for men as it’s so hard to betray that machismo, hiding emotions stuff.” (004 female)

“I haven’t really thought about men being forced into marriage, it would be just as bad, worse in a way – being a man and being forced it would be so hard to get help – men aren’t supposed to be pushed around like that – they wouldn’t want to admit something like that – it’d be embarrassing.” (007 female)

During the course of the interview and cross-referencing questions, the women did highlight differences in terms of the gendered harms, in terms of strategies parents would use to push a man into a marriage and in terms of how a man would deal with the aftermath of a forced marriage.

a) Harms

Young women repeatedly focussed on the mental health trauma of forced marriage which they felt was the same for men and for women or indeed sometimes worse for men. They discussed the annihilating effects of a complete loss of autonomy, losing your sense of self and who you are:

“You lose your own identity, lose what you are, you can never ever be the same again or find the person you were once, that is very, very hard.” (002 female)

On a more gendered note, the young women recognised that forced marriage for women might involve rape, domestic violence, honour based violence, the ties of children and an end to freedoms and choices. (Quite often neither they, nor the men, used the actual word rape but euphemisms for it or described it as “like rape” when in fact in many of the circumstances it would be rape):

“Sorry if I sound too much on the women’s side but I think it is different... men may be scared but there is less risk for them although there are less avenues for seeking help. ...With sex acts you may not want against your will or out of your will, women have to accept abuse as part of their lot, women lose their freedom. With men some of this is the same but there’s less harm.” (001 female).

“People think, and it is true, that the women in forced marriage are treated like slaves, not allowed out, everything stops for them and they are in the house and working and the men can carry on with the rest of their life and girlfriends etc. and this is true.” (004 female)

“Having to live like husband and wife with some man you don’t know and don’t like – it’s disgusting – it’s like rape. It’d drive you mad – you’d kill yourself you really would. Or I would.” (007 female)

“...But I do think though that for the men it’s easier, well not easier but they don’t have to stop everything – they can still do their studies or devote themselves to their career and I’m sure probably lots just have girlfriends outside – its not so fatal, well constricting.” (0011 female)

One interviewee was keen to stress the cross-over between forced marriage and honour based violence. She highlighted that young women and men need support often long before reaching the stage of a forced marriage. The very fact of being seen with a boy could elicit violence and abuse. She, and a number of other female interviewees, specifically referenced the Banaz Mahmud²⁰ case:

“But it’s not always about marriage or going overseas – there can be real problems here – especially in our community if a girl is seen with a boy even that can put her and him in real danger.” (009 female)

Survey respondents were offered a list of potential harms for women associated with forced marriage and here too there was very high identification with the gravity of the implications of a forced marriage. Of the 85 who answered these questions there was strong agreement (93% (n=79)) with the identification of key harms such as assault, rape, sexual and reproductive rights and negative impacts on education, career and financial autonomy. This again contrasts oddly with the fact that 43% of survey respondents initially responded either that they thought forced marriage was the same for men and women or were uncertain of the difference.

²⁰ Banaz Mahmud was a 20 year old Iraqi Kurdish woman murdered by family arrangement in 2006 for having a boyfriend of her own choice (BBC, 2010)

b) Coping strategies

The most striking difference was that many of the young women and indeed young men felt that the men who had gone through with a forced marriage would not be affected in the same way. He would not be nearly so restricted and would be able to continue with most areas of his life – studies, employment, a social life and love life outside the marriage. However, there was recognition that this could still have lasting mental health effects for men as they are living a double life, coming home to someone they do not love and who probably does not love them and that in some cases they might still have a breakdown or lash out:

“It’s still horrible to go back to a house to a person supposed to be your wife who doesn’t love you and you don’t love her and everyone knows.” (004 female)

“It would mess with anyone’s mind, it really would I suppose men might feel more able to try and get a divorce or they might try and just live with it but build an alternative life out of the marriage.” (007 female)

“I mean do you just try and live with it? Make the best of it? Go along as if nothing has happened but inside you’re dying? That would kill you – people can’t do that – we’re not made like that – it would break you...It’s not different [with men] at least not mentally, the way it eats away at your mind and who you are and that but I suppose some men try and have both worlds the wife at home like a good boy but girlfriends and things outside but that’s still not healthy, it would still break you in the end and it’s not fair either on anyone.” (009 female)

“I think men may go through with it but then they would sort of act out “go AWOL” or get in problems with drugs and alcohol.” (001 female)

The survey responses to a lesser degree also highlighted that men’s responses to forced marriage may involve “acting out”. Forty-four percent of respondents (n=28) partially agreed and 39% (n=25) agreed that he may express his distress with violence and criminality.

c) Parents' strategies

The young women felt that broadly speaking the strategies parents use to persuade men were similar to those used with women being mainly around guilt and emotional blackmail. However, they did highlight some subtle differences which again play directly to concepts of masculinity:

“It’s the same but what is used might be sometimes a bit different – to get men is like “you are the man of the family, you have to” – that sense of responsibility and grown-up adulthood so he feels older and responsible, whereas with women it’s “you don’t know how it will make us feel.” (002 female)

This interviewee added some personal anecdotes where she highlighted that her male cousins were always given more freedom but were always eager to be treated as an adult and given respect as this was bringing them closer to their status as a man and a man has respect and power. She felt, therefore, that parents will appeal to young men by playing on this eagerness for the power and respect of manhood by pressing the adult and responsible nature of the marriage with the young man:

“I think it’s probably a bit the same really maybe more about the honour and shame of him and of the father – the duty as a man – that sort of thing. Playing on that macho thing whereas with us girls I think it’s more about family and selfishness and letting people down.” (009 female)

“I think it’s the same mainly. They might be on a bit more about the honour and responsibility with the boys especially like the eldest brother to kind of handover the head of the family – sort of you know about duty and setting an example – maybe.” (0011 female).

4.3.2. Men’s responses

The men seemed to find it quite hard to imagine either a male or a female experience of forced marriage and clearly were not familiar with discussing it. Their responses were additionally hampered by finding it quite difficult to conceive of a man being forced or at least of a man admitting he had been forced:

“I know a couple of guys and I don’t know if it was force or not, but they went along with it and they’re not happy but they’d never stand up and say “I was forced”, you can’t really as a bloke can you? (005 male)

“But like for lads it’s a bit weird isn’t it? – Being forced into a marriage I mean – that’s quite hard to own up to, it’s more a girls thing really.” (006 male)

The survey offered respondents a list of possible factors that could be particularly relevant for boys/men forced into marriage. Among the options were three particular options that were not picked up by either the male or female interviewees but to which respondents did agree.

Fifty-eight percent (n=37) agreed that a young man may already have a partner of his own choice. Fifty percent either agreed or partially agreed that it may be a useful way to ensure there is someone to look after his parents. As many as 85% either partially agreed or agreed that he may be expected to be an enforcer for his siblings so it is difficult for him to refuse.

This last point would suggest that this is an important area in which to undertake more research. To some extent it is reflected, by inference at least, in some of the interviews such as where interviewees suggest that strategies to force a man into marriage may be linked to appealing to his sense of duty, honour and setting an example and specifically in interview 009 (female) where she addresses the role of gender discrimination in forced marriage (discussed below in section 5).

Male interviewees, like the female interviewees shared an initial response that it was the same for men and women particularly in terms of the mental health implications and the denial of autonomy. Once again though as the interview progressed some differences emerged around harms and coping strategies.

a) Harms

The men were able to envisage the potential mental health harms of forced marriage for men as well as for women:

“But it must mess with your mind a bit – like you’re trying to be all responsible happy families with wifey but really you hate her guts and you’re just trying to get by and have a good time and your own life.” (005 male)

“You have to try and live with this person you don’t like and doesn’t like you and everyone knows that and you’ve just got to pretend – that’s mental.” (006 male)

Like the women, some of the male respondents could envisage that harms for women may be more serious with participants citing domestic violence, constraints on women’s lives, rape and being trapped by childbirth as risks:

“Well like for the women, I don’t know but its’ a bad start isn’t it – I could imagine it might be a pretty rotten marriage like, maybe violent and that and like if you’re married and you hate the guy well, I mean sex and stuff, that - well suppose it’s a bit like rape isn’t it? And you end up with kids n’all, then you’re trapped.” (005 male)

This interviewee showed a good understanding of the risks women run in trying to avoid or flee a forced marriage and felt the urgency that women should not go through with it:

“Once you’re in it you’re stuck really and running away like it’s quite a big thing with the girls, that can be quite risky, like if your family has forced, actually really forced, you then they’re going to try and make it stick – they might take it bad if a girl tries to walk away from it. It’s tough, really you shouldn’t go through with it as a girl – too much to lose.” (005 male)

b) Coping strategies

Men’s responses showed some differences in coping strategies, with a common thread being the tendency for men to just live with it and try and build a life outside the marriage or trying to get a divorce being a realistic option. Their answers did recognise that this is

not the same for women who may be much more trapped and constrained by the marriage:

“And you’ve done it now and the family all happy and that so it’s easier to try and stick with it... Just get on with it and have their life, they wouldn’t let it stop them even if it’s crap like. And like divorce is getting lots easier now.” (005 male)

“I suppose the difference is that men can still have their own life... you just have to put up with it. But like everyone just gets divorced now.” (006 male)

“I suppose the girls get really caught up in it – babies and that and it’s kind of the end for them, I mean that’s it - you’re married you’re stuck with him, you’re at home, kids, relatives, that’s your life.” (008 male)

One interviewee recognised the potential for male participants to lash out in some way:

“It would make you angry, like really want to hit out at someone – I don’t mean actual violence - but I mean you’d feel all trapped and caged up and wanting to lash out. You got to live your own life on your own terms.” (008 male)

c) Parents’ strategies

The male interviewees had less comment to make in answer to questions around parents’ strategies to persuade males into marriage. Generally their responses suggested the method was the same being emotional blackmail but they implied that women were much more likely to “give in” to that than men:

“I reckon it’s the same sort of stuff really – all that emotional guilt-tripping stuff but girls give in to that more easily.” (005 male)

“Well I think it’s guilt tripping you and thing is as well that often they are under similar pressure themselves from back home and sometimes it’s heavy right because it’s like a promise and that’s serious.” (008 male)

One interviewee suggested parents may use a different approach with men by trying to almost cut a deal with them:

“Some of the parents though can be quite clever with the lads – they just want the marriage to happen to keep everyone happy and they might say, “look it doesn’t have to stop you doing anything you want just make it look ok”, but really they mean for you to settle down.” (005 male)

It is notable that the female interviewees seemed to be bringing a much deeper gender analysis and insight to these questions than the men even if they were not able to articulate it in a gender discrimination framework. This may be natural in view of the disproportionate harms that women face in forced marriage as acknowledged by both male and female participants. However, this would also suggest that there is more work to do with men on gender roles and expectations including their own sense of masculinity and how this is used to manipulate them.

4.4. Young people’s views on why the practice continues and how to address it

The most overwhelming response of the interviews to the questions relating to why it continues to happen and who is responsible was that the fault lay with the parents and with the extended family and community both here and “back home.” However, across both the interviews and the survey, respondents cited a very wide range of causes and motivations. This reflects Foreign Office’s own guidance and is perhaps a reminder that measures to address forced marriage need to tally with the multiplicity of causes and motivations.

In the survey, respondents were offered a list of causes that could be relevant to the perpetuation of forced marriage from the perspective of the perpetrators. Seventy-eight percent (n=53) of those responding felt that the view that tradition, religion, custom or honour require it was very relevant and 69% (n=47) felt that pressure from relatives in the parents’ home country was very relevant. A further 45% (n=19) agreed that it was quite relevant that parents had not realised times had moved on. The interviews reflected similar concerns.

A number of interviewees highlighted that part of the problem was the fact that their parents didn't have much of a social life outside the immediate family and Mosque and did not mix so they never had their ideas challenged. In two cases, interviewees felt this was in part due to the racism in the host community or fear and ignorance of the West but in most cases it was a sense that parents were stuck in the 50's and 60's and did not break out:

"I think they are frightened of the West and of losing control and they might not mean any harm, I mean they might think they are doing the right thing to look after their daughters but it's wrong – I think it's ignorance and it's fear and I think they aren't challenged enough." (007 female)

"I mean my parents live in the same street they came to in the 50s or whatever with all the same people – they know them – some of them are relatives, know the same people back home and go back every year so everyone has the same idea." (006 male)

"Thing is mine came over here, I don't know 50s 60s? And they judge everything by how it was then." (008 male)

"They all know each other, they all have these deals and ties and things so they're all tied into it one way or another, and everyone chatting your business so you can't do nothing." (0010 male)

"Problem is parents have no social life – religion, shopping, holiday with family, neighbours – so they never break out of it or see anything – if they had other things to do, a social life, courses, they might understand that this is what their kids want too and it's not a bad thing". (002 female)

Issues of integration and racism were also touched on in the online survey. Thirty-six percent (n=24) of respondents out of 67 selected partial agreement to racism which stops settled migrant communities mixing, and 34% (n=23) selected partial agreement to cultural relativism. Forty-seven percent (n=31) partially agreed to migrant communities who do not want to mix. A further 42% (n=28) strongly agreed that there was not enough

support to specialist agencies and the same proportion agreed that religious groups and community leaders were responsible. Forty percent (n=27) agreed that public services did not deal with the problem properly.

In the online survey, 68% (n = 46) of respondents agreed that the control of young people's, and particularly young women's, sexuality was very relevant. This was spelt out to respondents as an option. It is questionable if, otherwise, they would have named this of their own volition.

A smaller proportion of respondents, 45% (n=30), felt that the need to keep money or land in the family was very relevant and 48 % that it was quite relevant. Fifty-six percent (n=37) felt that the need to bring someone to the UK was quite relevant and 35% thought it very relevant. The interviews did not feature these issues as causes to any great degree. Only two interviewees expressly mentioned the role of forced marriage as a vehicle to bring someone to the UK and did so in the context of honouring promises or escaping poverty and lack of opportunity.

Fifty-eight percent (n=37) felt it quite relevant that there may be suspicions that a young person is gay. Respondents were fairly evenly spread over other motivations that were offered such as the young person "getting into trouble" (quite relevant 34% (n=22)) or the young person being disabled (quite relevant 29% n=19)). There were fewer comments offered in this question though one respondent stressed both learning disability and sexuality:

"I have had loads of experience of forced marriage on youngsters that do not have mental capacity due to a learning disability and on young men who are identifying themselves as gay." (survey respondent)

In the interviews, young men were more likely to add that there is a responsibility on the young people to stand up to the parents:

"But I think it's up to us as well – we've got to stand up to them and tell them it's not on, it's not going to work, there's no point trying, we're not going along with it, no matter what they say they can't force us not really." (006 male)

Young women were more likely to highlight the fact that for the parents this may be a benign act; that the parents might conceive of it as a duty and doing something good and right for their children. They were also more likely to cite the role of international marriage as a means of helping family to escape poverty or have new opportunities. It is possible that this higher degree of empathy and identification with the parents' perspective is part of what may render young women additionally vulnerable to the emotional pressure parents apply:

“They just came to the UK for a better life.... It's what they knew when they were young, elders did something for them and it was a weight off their shoulders and they must do the same.” (002 female)

“Aunties saying how hard life is and when you go back send us money - For parents its agreements like this and you have to honour them to your family for better life.” (002 female)

“You know life back home, it's very hard and so it's true that it can be a route out of poverty, provide opportunities for development or for a better life. And sometimes that's a promise or an agreement you have to honour... Pakistani families think it's better to marry in the family...” (001 female)

In terms of recommendations, participants both to the interviews (male and female) and to the survey highlighted two main areas that they thought were important one being the older generation/community and the other being the young people themselves. They called for more publicity and awareness-raising generally. In particular interviewees urged that government should spread a message to the parents and elders and target people and outlets that their parents listen to and respect. Participants commonly cited elders, the Mosque, Satellite TV channels, soaps and radio. Survey respondents were more likely to make general reference to the community rather than to parents specifically or to the overseas extended family even though they had cited these as the cause of the problem elsewhere:

“I think they could do more things like television soap story lines or radio features.” (007 female)

“Publicity is good – saying it’s not ok and maybe in Mosques and round the community – where our parents hang out, the people they listen to.” (006 male)

“They really need to speak to people like our parents – the community, the Mosque the people our parents listen to and respect...not lecturing them but really talking and listening.” (008 male)

An important issue arose through the survey responses on recommendations. Several comments mirrored these interviews in calling for closer working with the community but a number of comments warned against placing too much trust and responsibility with community institutions. In particular some comments called for a ban on Shari’a courts and warned against elders and religious leaders. This is a dilemma for policy makers trying to address the problem. There is clearly a need, as the young people say, to access the people their parents listen to and respect; but there are real difficulties in discerning who among such figures can genuinely be relied on to challenge conservative and traditional values.

Recent undercover documentaries have highlighted advice among supposedly reputable “community leaders” and in Mosques and Shari’a Courts that discourages women from going to the police when facing domestic violence and agree to perform early forced marriage on a 14 year old (Panorama, 2013; ITV Exposure, 2013). Expert commentators on women’s human rights (Patel 2008, 2012, Sahgal 2004) have repeatedly expressed serious concerns at the misguided tendency of the State to look to some of the most undemocratic, self-appointed and fundamentalist elements of “community” to prevent forced marriage.

Secondly interviewees and survey respondents routinely highlighted training of professionals generally but in particular schools and colleges as a key place for young people to learn more about their rights and about what help is available and felt that with proper training and support teachers could identify and support young people at risk:

“I think schools and colleges can do much more.” (007 female)

“I really think schools are a good place to talk about all this... you might spot people in trouble or they would know they could come to you for help.” (0011 female)

This chimes with many calls by women’s sector organisations and has been highlighted as a gap in the Home Affairs Committee inquiries into forced marriage.

Some participants struggled to come up with any recommendations, young men in particular felt that there was not much that could be done other than be braver about standing up to parents and wait for the practice to naturally peter out which they were sure was already happening:

“I just think you let it be, it’s dying out with time.” (005 male)

“I am not sure what you do, it’s with our parents and they’ve just got to stop it and it will die out. We just have to wait it out and we have to be a bit smarter about standing up to them.” (006 male)

“Not sure there’s much you can do...I think it’ll stop. Life’s not like that back home anymore.” (0010 male)

A number of participants highlighted the need for effective monitoring of the implementation of criminalisation proposals in order to ensure that trends, patterns and unintended consequences could be quickly identified and remedied.

Other recommendations from interviewees included an acknowledgement that criminalisation may be the right step, helping parents to develop social lives that take them out of their normal context and more funding to the specialist women’s sector working on these issues. There were also recommendations relating to the development of peer support networks, less of a focus on legislation, immigration and enforcement and more on simply helping victims and preventing the forced marriage. Interviewees expressed support for peer to peer programmes in recognition of the fact that it is easier

to talk to your peer group, this reflects Hemmings and Khalifa's recent (2013) study. Survey respondents also highlighted the need for public sector services to be better trained and more robust and courageous in tackling the issue and for better resourcing for specialist BME women's NGOs addressing the issue. Recommendations from the survey respondents reflected similar issues:

"Less political correctness bullshit and more practical measures. Less cultural sensitivity and more strict regulations." (Survey respondent)

"Ban Shari'a courts." (Survey respondent)

"Needs to be education in schools." (Survey respondent)

"Educate young people, fund women's support agencies." (Survey respondent)

"Education is vital. Making it a crime doesn't address the underlying reasons why forced marriage happens, it is just a deterrent which some people will ignore."
(survey respondent)

Only one interviewee (009 female) explicitly cited gender equality as an area for action, (this point is discussed below in section 5). Similarly, very few of the survey respondent recommendations tackled issues of gender inequality and discrimination. One comment did expand on this though:

"I think there needs to be a general shift in the public perception – shift from a rhetoric of women as victims to taking those women seriously who are affected by forced marriage and listening to them. It also doesn't help that the higher echelons of the police, social services, many schools, the government and courts is dominated by males." (survey respondent)

The recommendations from the interviewees were perhaps most closely matched to the perceived causes of the problem, whereas the recommendations in the survey were much more scattergun. There is some merit in closely examining how good a match the proposed measures to address forced marriage are to the actual causes of the problem.

4.5. Survey participant reflections

The survey asked respondents whether they had thought about anything differently as a result of this survey and to elaborate on this. Of the 67 who responded 37% (n=25) said yes and 63% (n=42) said no. There were a further 19 who then went on to highlight examples of how they had thought differently about the issues. The majority of these focussed on the fact that they had not previously given much thought to the situation for boys and young men or of the gender differential.

Some respondents said that it had caused them to think more deeply about the reasons for forced marriage. This made them realise it was not susceptible of a simple solution but that there could be a range of unintended and complex consequences from interventions such as criminalisation and a more holistic range of responses was needed:

“I realized of more way in how forced marriage can affect boys and girls [sic].”
(survey respondent)

“The issues that boys have also.” (survey respondent)

“Never thought about the male side of forced marriage.” (survey respondent)

“I have had to think about the reasons for forced marriage and how it isn't as simple as just banning it.” (survey respondent)

“Learned more about the reasons behind forced marriage.” (survey respondent)

“The potential problems that criminalising forced marriage may create for the victims. This has made me think that criminalising forced marriage can't be the complete solution and has to be implemented carefully to ensure it doesn't do more harm than good.” (survey respondent)

One interviewee also at the end of her interview when asked if she had anything to add, said she had enjoyed the process and it had given her more to think about. In designing the survey questions, the researcher did not expect to elicit much response to this

reflective question. In fact respondents clearly had found the exercise to be informative, engaging and thought-provoking. Their responses suggest that even though this may have been a relatively well informed sample there are still gaps in knowledge and awareness which might indicate further benefits to continued research of this type.

5. Gender implications

It is argued that the findings of this research highlight a range of gender specific implications to forced marriage. It is notable that both survey respondents and interviewees in their initial responses were not clear that forced marriage was different for men and women. Survey respondents in particular found their participation had challenged them to think through gendered differentials. Some female interviewees initially felt it was harder for males. However, both sets of participants in fact were able to highlight some very specific differences but clearly, with only one exception, did not conceive of this or articulate it in a conceptual framework of gender discrimination.

Similarly, only two of the female interviewees referenced feminism. One of them identified that working in a voluntary capacity on these issues had developed a slightly more feminist analysis but both appeared to either explicitly or implicitly apologise for it:

“I wasn’t a feminist, I saw males as superior really but I have increasingly become feminist...“But sorry if I sound too much on the women’s side but I think it’s different.” [harms for men and for women] (001 female)

“...And this is going to sound a bit feminist...” (009 female)

To the extent that forced marriage is recognised as a form of gender based violence from which women suffer disproportionately and is precisely about gender roles, there is perhaps capacity to develop a more gendered analysis in framing the issue and responses to it.

A key area of difference was that there is less help available for men and that services and media coverage are aimed at women’s experiences. To the extent that women felt it may be harder for men, their views focussed on how difficult it may be for men to ask for help. They stressed the challenge to men’s masculinity, that they may feel embarrassed to admit to being victims and to seek help and afraid they would not be taken seriously. As mentioned elsewhere, this echoes Samad’s findings (Samad and Eade 2003). At the more extreme end, indeed, as one interviewee said, “Men aren’t supposed to be pushed around like that.” (007 female) Men’s own responses also highlighted that they were less likely to ask for help. This was due in part to their sense of embarrassment at being

forced as a man. However, a more general view expressed, almost uniquely by the males, was that there was an obligation on young people to withstand the pressure and “just say no.” Similarly they appeared to have little expectation or wish for state intervention stressing that it’s “family business” and not a matter for the courts.

It rapidly became clear that there was an understanding that a shared harm related to the mental health implications of forced marriage, the loss of the sense of self and autonomy. As the interviews and surveys progressed however, participants began to differentiate between the extent of the harms suffered by men and by women and to see women at greater risk. Harms for women included rape, abuses of sexual and reproductive rights, potential lasting domestic violence and a retraction or complete cessation of social life, personal autonomy and of education and employment opportunities.

Men and boys, it was recognised by all participants, would not face the same loss of freedoms and opportunities and may be able to build an alternative life outside the marriage, notwithstanding the mental strain this may entail. As Samad also found for men it may be “It’s an easier option just to say yes.”

The high level of empathy for, and outrage about, male suffering; notwithstanding the recognition that in fact the harms were greater for women, may suggest a much more normalised tolerance for female suffering. Indeed this was captured by one of the young women’s interviews in which she said, “Women have to accept abuse as part of their lot.” (001 female)

Some other areas of difference were suggested if less marked. These included that men may be particularly at risk of being forced into marriage if their sexuality is in question or if they are getting into trouble with drugs or other criminality. The converse of this was also true; that it was felt that where men had been forced into marriage, there may be a tendency for them to respond to this by “acting out”, perhaps developing criminal or violent behavioural problems or issues with drugs/alcohol. There was a consensus that the female equivalent of this is more likely to be internally focussed in the form of self-harming.

A particularly interesting area of difference was around the differing, and probably largely unconsciously, gendered parental strategies in persuading men and women into a marriage. Tactics with women were identified as playing on the socially approved and learned roles of women to be peacemakers and bind the family together, to appease, to seek approval, to be selfless and to self-sacrifice. Tactics with males played to males' desire for the power, respect and status that comes with male adulthood.

This finding leads to the other side of the coin with males and forced marriage whereby similar trappings of masculinity are integral to men and boys' role in perpetrating or facilitating forced marriage. Eighty-five percent of survey respondents felt that men may find it hard to resist their own forced marriage given men's role as a potential "enforcer with his siblings." There was, however, remarkably low identification of young males or indeed gender discrimination as part of the problem throughout either survey or interviews.

The main exception being 009 female citing gender inequality as a key underlying cause of forced marriage. In her case, this may have arisen from her personal experience in that she described how her father had died of cancer when she was about 14 and that it was only then that she realised how controlling he had been. She went on to describe how she, her little sister and her mother had fights with her older brother because he had tried to step into the father's shoes thinking he should look after them, "be the big man" but "I wouldn't let him bully us and he has sort of given up on us."

In addressing the question of why it still happens, this interviewee said:

"I think it's also it's a bigger problem – it, and this is going to sound a bit feminist and maybe I am more now since I worked here, but I do think it's about how we think about women and roles and status in society, especially in traditional communities like mine. Like men seeing women as their property or something they are entitled to and control and do as they like with - like they don't see the woman in herself they only see her in relation to themselves." (009 female)

She continued this theme when addressing the follow up question concerning recommendations for action:

“The only other thing is boys – educating the boys too – not just that they can be at risk too but that they have to support their sisters to stand up to this. Like quite often the brothers are involved – I mean the cases we deal with the brother is the last person the girl would turn to – it’s the brother they’re most afraid of....it’s them that do the beatings and that spy on the girls and carry tales – they need to stop that. They need to know it’s not ok – they’ve got no right.” (009 female)

This is both an important reminder and a dilemma for policy makers and practitioners who, on the one hand wish to support and empower young men as potential victims, but also cannot shy away from this dual role for men as both victims and perpetrators.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Gender

This research has found that there are gender differentials not only in the harms experienced but in the strategies parents use to coerce children into marriage and in the victims' own help-seeking, evasive and coping strategies.

It is recommended that this gender analysis is brought to bear when framing possible prevention and protection interventions and in publicity and materials targeting young men and young women.

Highlight to young men:

- That men may be victims too and through no fault of their own;
- That help is available for them and it is safe to seek help;
- That it is not all down to the individual to resist emotional pressure and that emotional pressure is force;
- That going through with a forced marriage may seem like an easier option but can entail mental health consequences for young men, is unfair on wives and girlfriends and is likely to still result in unhappiness and strife further down the line;
- That forced marriage is wrong and they should try to support efforts to resist it when their friends and families are at risk;
- That attempts to persuade them into marriages themselves or into facilitating a relative's marriage by appealing to their sense of manhood, honour and responsibility is manipulation and misguided.

Highlight to young women:

- That men may be victims too but may find it hard to talk about it or ask for help so if they are worried about a male friend or relative, maybe they should take the initiative in raising the issue and the help available if it is safe to do so;
- That while parents' motives may on one level be benign, nonetheless it is appropriate to refuse to go through with it;

- That attempts to persuade them into marriages by accusing them of being selfish and uncaring is merely a strategy and not a character assessment and one they must resist;
- That the consequences are extreme for young women and can include rape, forced childbirth and a constriction or cessation of personal and professional life.

6.2. Forced/arranged distinction

This research has found that the consent-based distinction between forced and arranged marriage is well known as is the role of emotional pressure in achieving a forced marriage. However, the distinction is not well understood in practice particularly where it is a question of emotional pressure.

- Maintain the analysis of the distinction between forced and arranged as being based in consent;
- Develop more materials for diverse audiences (parents, young people, practitioners) that highlight the role of emotional pressure as force;
- Highlight that being susceptible to emotional pressures is natural and is not a weakness or fault of the victim but is an abuse of power by the perpetrator.

This research also found that young people are getting together in relationships and marriages in a wide variety of ways but that they still face unhelpful stereotypes and assumptions.

- Consider developing materials and publicity that can attest to the heterogeneity of marriage/relationships and can thereby also highlight the subtleties of pressure and consent.

Several participants in this research, particularly the young men, appeared to suggest that forced marriage may be dying out naturally over time.

- Undertake more detailed research to test this assumption. If erroneous, there is a danger that this could lead to a dangerous complacency, if true this may change the emphasis of interventions and would be very welcome.

6.3. Inter-generational dialogue

This research suggested that young people from certain communities may find it difficult to take full responsibility for their marriage due to cultural and traditional attitudes in their families. Being desirous of parental approval and harmonious relations around a choice of marriage partner is of course both laudable and near universal. However, the fact that for many young people a key factor in arranged marriage, and where this elides into forced marriage, is in feeling that this lessens or removes the burden of responsibility for the marriage.

- Explore with young people at risk of forced marriage, their attitudes towards responsibility and decision making in marriage and how this may affect their vulnerability to a forced marriage.

This research agreed with the findings of other studies (Hemmings & Khalifa 2013) that it is very difficult for young people to confront and challenge the views of their elders or for their elders to take them seriously due to the culture of respect for elders.

- Develop opportunities to have this dialogue with the elders without placing the whole burden for challenging the practice on the young people;
- Develop more sustained, innovative and sophisticated means of targetting and engaging with those most affected by the issues both young and old;
- Engage them as spokespeople and emissaries for the issue;
- Create safe spaces for intergenerational dialogue building in mechanisms to counter the more conservative trend that gives little voice and little influence to young people;
- Consider the development of storylines and features in mainstream and satellite TV and radio broadcasts;

- With the advice and input of specialist organisations, identify if there are reliable spokespeople from within the ranks of elders and religious leaders who may be able to reach parents but avoid over-reliance or complacency in so doing.

6.4. Training and accountability of practitioners and professionals in particular education and funding and joint working with specialist organisations

As with most research studies there is always a call for improved training, implementation and accountability of best standards. This report is no exception. Respondents frequently referenced the various forced marriage guidelines aimed at different sectors (social services, education, health, police) and the Banaz Mahmood training in the context of honour based violence. There was widespread praise for these initiatives but a lack of awareness that the guidance was on a statutory footing. There was also concern that good as these initiatives are, they are not consistently applied or known about, and do not always figure in actual practice on a day to day basis.

- DFE engagement

The most commonly repeated refrain was for education in particular to take a much more proactive role on forced marriage. The capacity for teachers to be able to inform young people of their rights, identify people at risk and provide appropriate support and advice was repeatedly stressed. However, respondents reflected wider concerns of the women's sector and of the Home Affairs Committee as to the lack of adequate engagement from DFE. It was felt a strong message from the top could help to ensure good practice and prevention all the way through the tiers of education.

- Respect and funding for the specialist women's and BME sector organisations

Participants recognised the vital role of specialist women's organisations working on this issue. A recommendation of this report is for continued and improved funding to these organisations which are at risk especially in the current financial climate.²¹ In addition, a further recommendation is for enhanced working relationships between statutory sector and these organisations such that their expertise is recognised, valued and acted on and this would be reflected in commissioning frameworks and practice.

²¹ A Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO) study in 2010 found that 45% of 173 BME organisations surveyed had suffered cuts (Voice4Change, 2013)

6.5. Criminalisation – research and monitoring

This research found unanimous condemnation of forced marriage as a human rights abuse and a form of domestic violence and a majority of views in support of criminalisation in principle. However, there were quite finely balanced arguments on both sides as to whether criminalisation was the most appropriate measure in terms of helping victims.

- Undertake independent research to monitor outcomes of criminalisation for all parties;
- Establish a working group including specialist women's organisations to consider outcomes and to advise on reviewing or amending policy and practice accordingly.

6.6. Match the cause to the solution

This research concurs with FCO guidance that there is a huge multiplicity and complexity of factors that motivate and perpetuate forced marriage. To date, as indicated by a number of academics and some of the respondents to this report, the responses to forced marriage have played heavily on immigration and enforcement. Policy makers may be advised to review this as such an approach can hinder the buy-in of the target community, indeed actively alienate them; but moreover is of limited use given the complexity of other relevant factors.

Measures aimed at reducing forced marriage must:

- Have regard to the interplay between these factors;
- Be proportionate according to the most significant drivers;
- Be holistic.

As outlined elsewhere, this report not only finds that there is this multiplicity of factors but also that marriages and relationships in the affected communities are heterogeneous with constantly evolving and changing patterns and trends.

- Undertake regular research to identify changing patterns and to provide a more nuanced and honest weighting of the drivers in order to help shape more targeted, effective and relevant solutions.

Common threads throughout these recommendations are working through a gender discrimination and equalities framework, further investigation with continued independent research and the need for excellent data, monitoring and accountability.

This research highlights young people's attitudes to forced marriage and their particular challenges in attending to confront and withstand the practice. It has identified both gender differences and similarities. The final words go to our participants, male or female pointing up the damaging effects:

“You have to try and live with this person you don't like and doesn't like you and everyone knows that and you're just to got pretend – that's mental. “ (006 male)

“I mean do you just try and live with it? Make the best of it? Go along as if nothing has happened but inside you're dying? That would kill you – people can't do that – we're not made like that – it would break you...” (009 female)

Appendices and Bibliography

Appendix I: Online public survey

Forced marriage: young people's views.

Issue

On 8 June 2012 David Cameron announced that “forcing someone to marry” was to become a crime in England and Wales after several consultations and a wide range of mixed views.

Introduction

Thank you for completing this survey, it should only take about 15 minutes. It is anonymous but please confirm your age and gender and that this project potentially has direct relevance to you. This project is intended for 16-25 year olds for whom such policy change may impact on themselves or their friends and family.

(If you are keen to share your views and are not the intended participants, please do so but please indicate this).

Further engagement: we are also running two discussion groups and/or one-to-one interviews (for young men and for young women) over the summer to culminate in a visit to policy and decision makers to present young people's opinions and recommendations. If you would like to take part or find out more please contact: fmproject@eavesforwomen.org.uk

About the survey

This survey is being conducted as part of a wider project that seeks the views of young men and young women aged 16-25 on the criminalisation of forced marriage. The project is independent but is part funded by the Government's joint forced marriage unit.

About Eaves

Eaves is a charity that works against all forms of violence against women. Our services include frontline service delivery to victims of violence as well advocacy, research and campaigning.

Copy of online survey

On 8 June 2012, David Cameron announced that "forcing someone to marry" would be made a crime in England and Wales after several consultations and a wide range of mixed views.

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About you

1. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Trans M-F
- Trans F-M
- Prefer not to say

2. Age

- 16 -18
- 18 -21
- 21 -25

Other (please specify)

3. Marital Status

- Single
- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced

Other (please specify)

4. Relevance - This policy could have a direct impact on:

- Close friends of mine
- Some of my family members
- People in my neighbourhood

This policy is unlikely to have a direct impact on me or those close to me but I am interested in commenting upon it because

The crime of "Forcing someone to marry"

Definition of terms

A forced marriage is defined as one in which one or both parties does not give their full, free and informed consent and where duress (pressure) is a factor. Pressure may take physical, emotional and psychological or financial form. This is not the same as arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage the families take a leading role in choosing the marriage partner but the choice of whether or not to enter the marriage is left to both people.

5. Were you aware that last year the government announced that "forcing someone to marry" would be made a crime?

- Yes
 No

6. Did you take part in any of the consultations carried out before the decision to criminalise?

- Yes
 No

7. Did you think previously that "forcing someone to marry" should be a crime?

- Yes
 No

8. Has your view changed since it was announced that it would be made a crime in June 2012?

- Yes
 No

9. Some of the common arguments in favour of making forced marriage criminal are – please tick any you agree with:

- It can involve assault, rape and in some cases forced childbirth.
- It may also lead to a violent marriage and have long term impacts on mental health.
- It can disrupt education, career and financial autonomy
- It sends a clear and strong message.
- It is an additional argument for young people to use when at risk
- It holds everyone accountable to and protected by the same laws

Other (Feel free to add any others of your own)

10. Some of the common arguments against making forced marriage a criminal offence are – please tick any you agree with:

- Young people may not seek help because they don't want parents to be 'criminals'
- The crimes involved in a forced marriage are already criminal offences
- Families may take young people abroad earlier and for longer
- Forced marriage will still happen but perpetrators will be more careful making it even harder to identify and help those at risk.
- Young people may have a false sense of security wrongly assuming that the fact that that it is a crime means it won't happen.
- It may lead to increased racial stereotyping

Other (Feel free to add any others of your own)

Forced Marriage

11. What do you think are the reasons that some people commit a forced marriage ? (Some of the common reasons cited are below, please indicate which you think are - not relevant, quite relevant, very relevant)

| | Not relevant | Quite relevant | Very relevant |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| It is the best thing for the young person and for a lasting marriage | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Tradition, religion, custom or 'honour' require it | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Pressure from relatives in the parents' home country | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Parents have not realised that times have moved on | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To control young people and particularly young women's sexuality | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To keep money or land in the family | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To bring someone to the UK | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To control who the young person marries and prevent other relationships | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because the young person is "getting into trouble" drink, drugs, relationships, petty crime | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because the young person is disabled and needs someone to look after her/him | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because there is a suspicion that the young person may be gay | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| It doesn't really happen it's just that people assume it's forced when it isn't | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Other (feel free to add others that you feel relevant)

12. Who/what do you feel is most responsible for the fact that forced marriage continues to happen in the UK today? Disagree strongly, disagree, partial agreement, agree, strongly agree

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Partially Agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Young people who are badly behaved | <input type="radio"/> |
| Young people for not standing up for themselves | <input type="radio"/> |
| Western culture that is immoral and unhealthy | <input type="radio"/> |
| Racism which stops settled migrant communities mixing | <input type="radio"/> |
| Cultural relativism - UK authorities are too afraid to intervene | <input type="radio"/> |
| Migrant communities do not want to mix | <input type="radio"/> |
| Older generations in the UK and in parents' home countries | <input type="radio"/> |
| Government agencies like police, social services, schools, health services who do not deal with the problem properly | <input type="radio"/> |
| Not enough women's/young people's specialist support agencies | <input type="radio"/> |
| Religious groups and members of the various communities | <input type="radio"/> |

Other (Feel free to add others that you feel relevant please specify)

13. Do you think forced marriage is different for boys (young men) and for girls (young women)?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If you answered Yes, please explain why

14. Some of the issues that may apply for boys (young men)

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Partially Agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Hard for boys to ask for help | <input type="radio"/> |
| Less male specific services and help available | <input type="radio"/> |
| He may already have a partner of his own choice | <input type="radio"/> |
| It may be a useful way to ensure there is someone to look after his parents | <input type="radio"/> |
| He may be expected to be an "enforcer" for his siblings so it is difficult for him to refuse. | <input type="radio"/> |
| He may express his distress with violence and criminality | <input type="radio"/> |

Other (please (Feel free to add others you feel are relevant)

15. Some of the issues that may apply for girls (young women)

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Partially Agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Some girls who refuse or runaway may have to live in hiding. | <input type="radio"/> |
| To refuse or runaway is viewed particularly badly of women | <input type="radio"/> |
| It is likely that the forced marriage will be consummated – this is rape. | <input type="radio"/> |
| She may have no say over the use of contraception and be forced into childbirth | <input type="radio"/> |
| If she has to bring him to the UK, he may often be violent and controlling. | <input type="radio"/> |
| The marriage usually means the end of her education, career or financial autonomy. | <input type="radio"/> |
| It is particularly hard for a woman in these cases to initiate divorce. | <input type="radio"/> |
| She may become tied into the marriage by further children | <input type="radio"/> |

Other (please (Feel free to add others that you feel relevant)

Suggestions

16. Please use the space below to make some suggestions you think would help in addressing the problem. This could be recommendations for police, social services, schools, health staff, women's support agencies, central government, courts, young people themselves, parents and elders etc.

17. In answering this survey, have you had any change of views or thought about something differently?

Yes

No

If you answered yes, please explain

18. Would you be interested in participating in a short interview to discuss your views on this subject?

If so please enter your contact details in the box below. (All your details and responses will be kept strictly confidential and any details that could identify you will be removed before publication.)

Appendix II: Interview prompts

Introduction

Recapping about the research, likely length of interview, voucher for participation, issues of consent, withdrawal, details about data storage and confidentiality and disclosures

1) About you

Name and contact details for safe contact: (anonymous and confidential)

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|---------|-------|--------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Age: | 16-18 | 18-21 | 21-25 | | |
| Gender: | M | F | Trans M-F | Trans F-M | Prefer not to say |
| Marital status: | Married | | Single | | Divorced |
| | Widowed | | Relationship | | Prefer not to say |

Your reason for wishing to participate

- Something to do/voucher
- Issue that is very close to me/people I care about
- Issue that I think is important and interesting
- Rarely get a chance to express views on gvt policy

Optional

Background: race/religious background of self/parents, how long since arrived or how long been settled in UK, extended family background overseas, siblings, relations with parents.

UK location: first half of post code (will be kept confidential) – current or former when with family

2) About marriage/relationships today

- a) People get together in a range of different ways today - how useful or not are concepts like forced and arranged marriage today?
 - b) How define a forced marriage and how distinguish that from an arranged marriage?
 - c) To what extent, if at all, do you think there is a problem with forced marriage?
-

3) Legal and policy context

- a) What do you know and understand the current legal and policy position to be?
 - b) Were you aware of proposals to make it criminal or not?
 - c) Did you think it was already criminal or not?
 - d) Did you take part in any consultations? Were you aware of any consultations? Would you have taken part had you known of any?
 - e) If you or a friend/family were at risk, to whom would you turn (if anyone), where would you seek help, what advice would you give?
-

4) About forced marriage

- a) To the extent that forced marriage does occur – what do you think are the main harms associated with it?
- b) Do you think men and women victims are affected in the same way?

N.B. Push respondents to think about this if not immediately identifying differences – in particular focus on harms, help seeking, coping strategies and parental strategies

5) Criminalisation

- a) What do you think are advantages to criminalisation?

 - b) What do you think are disadvantages to criminalisation?

 - c) Overall what is your view – what are the practical and philosophical implications of criminalisation – criminal or not and have your views changed or not – if so how?
-

6) Responsibility

- a) To the extent that forced marriage does occur what do you think are the reasons for it?

 - b) To the extent that forced marriage does occur who is responsible for it?
-

7) Recommendations

- a) What do you think are appropriate measures to deal with the issue and how do we go about them - recommendations?

NB: consider what the interviewee has posed as main reasons/responsibility and challenge how their solutions address that and detail of how to reach them.

- b) Peer support - in view of fact so often young people say they would speak to their peers, how might a peer support network look and how would it be safe?

End:

Appendix III: Information for participants

About the Project (and see online survey)

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/72CK38S>

In June 2012, the Government said they intended to make “forcing someone to marry” a criminal offence in England and Wales. Eaves has received a small amount of funding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to undertake a short research project. It will look into the views and experiences of young people on forced marriage with particular reference to their views on government policies in addressing the issue and how effective or not they may be.

The project aims to:

- Capture young people’s views about dating and marriage and relevant cultural, age based or gender factors
- Capture young people’s views about forced marriage and government responses to it
- Capture young people’s views, recommendations and suggestions about alternative or more effective ways to tackle the problem
- Empower young people to help shape policy and practice on forced marriage

How we will work with you

We would like to talk to 16-25 year olds, male and female, for whom such policy changes as this [criminalisation of forced marriage] have an impact on themselves, their family or their immediate neighbourhoods.

You do not have to be involved in this research if you do not want to and can withdraw from being involved in the research at any time without any consequences. If you agree to being involved you don’t have to answer every question and you can tell us if you answered something which you wish you hadn’t and we will delete that information. If you aren’t comfortable with any element of the research you do not have to do it and we can take a break if you would like some time out. You also have the right to refuse to let us record any of our discussions.

Anything you say to us will be kept completely confidential and anonymous. We won't tell *anyone* what you have said and you won't be able to be identified by being involved.

As we are not able to provide formal support to you we might want to refer you for support from someone else. This may mean we need to talk to someone else about you but the only time we might need to do this is in very serious circumstances if we think you or someone else may be at risk of serious harm. Should it happen we will discuss this with you before we take any action.

How we will keep any information we discuss with you

Only the researchers you meet on the project and their direct supervisors will have access to any information you provide during the research. We will take out anything which may identify you personally and will store anything with personal details separate from other information.

We will also store all information securely in locked filing cabinets or computers in locked rooms to which only we have access. Any information you provide to us will be stored in this way for the duration of the research and for a period of two years following the publication of any findings. Your written consent to be involved will also be kept on record and you can withdraw this at any point during the research. We will ensure you will not be able to be identified from any findings we publish.

Who we are

Eaves has provided specialist services for over 30 years including:

- support and accommodation for women fleeing domestic violence;
- support and advocacy for women affected by all forms of male violence;
- peer-to-peer mentoring for women survivors of sexual violence;
- specialist projects working with young men and attitudes to a range of
- a young women's service;
- a resettlement service;
- an advice centre for women experiencing all forms of violence (including women seeking to exit prostitution);

- Support and housing for women who have been trafficked into the UK for prostitution and domestic servitude;
- Policy development, training and research on a range of violence against women issues.

Researcher

Heather Harvey, experience includes 3 years at FCO forced marriage unit and 4 years on Stop violence against women campaign at Amnesty International UK

Contact Us

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Email: Heather.harvey@eavesforwomen.co.uk
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Appendix IV: Project Consent Form

Participants will receive some information about the project, how we will keep and use data and who the researchers are, participants are welcome to ask for any clarifications or further information and can withdraw at any time.

Please read the following information carefully.

I..... have been invited by Eaves to take part in a research project looking at the views of young men and women on forced marriage.

I have been given information about the research and how documentation will be kept and used.

By signing below I give consent to take part in this research. At times during the research, opportunities may arise where support is needed from other agencies. In these circumstances, if a referral is appropriate then, with my permission, information can be shared with the agencies with a relevant agency.

Key support agencies with expertise on forced marriage:

- Foreign and commonwealth office forced marriage unit
- Karma nirvana project
- Panahgar refuge
- Ashiana Sheffield
- Ashiana London
- Southall Black Sisters
- Imkaan
- Iraqi Kurdish women's rights organisations
- Imece
- Forward
- Men's advice line
- Broken rainbow

a) I understand that my details may be passed onto one or more of the agencies listed above in order to support me with my permission. I understand the reasons for this.

b) I understand that in extreme cases of serious risk to myself or others there may be a legal requirement to disclose information to relevant authorities even without my consent (police, social services, health – only in cases where this is a legal requirement or mandatory for immediate safety reasons).

Sign and print Participant _____ Date _____

Sign and print Researcher _____ Date _____

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END

Dec 2013

“IT’S A HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE ... END OF!”:

A Study of Young People’s Attitudes to Forced Marriage
and its Gendered Dimensions

- 
- > **I TOTALLY SUPPORT CRIMINALISATION OF FORCED MARRIAGE,** it’s fantastic
 - > It’s all degrees of persuasion and **PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT BREAKING POINTS**
 - > Like quite often the brothers are involved... **IT’S THE BROTHER THEY’RE (THE GIRLS) MOST AFRAID OF...** It’s them that do the beatings and that spy on the girls and carry tales
 - > **ISN’T IT STOPPING A BIT NOW?** Like with generations and time and stuff...?
 - > I mean **YOU’RE NOT REALLY GOING TO SAY LOOK I’M BEING FORCED INTO A MARRIAGE** like not as a bloke. I mean it’s embarrassing really, isn’t it?
- 

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