

# *Group localised child sexual exploitation offenders: who and why?*

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know who wouldn't want to do, be part of that in their role.' (Interviewee 2: head of a Liverpool voluntary agency 1). Human rights have great potential to progress the interests of kinship-care families and it is hoped that the framework can be harnessed to bring forward future programmes of work to improve the situation of kinship-care families.

*Aoife Daly is Reader in Law at the School of Law, University of Liverpool, and author of Children, Autonomy and the Courts: Beyond the Right to be Heard (Brill/Nijhoff, 2018). She would like to extend very warm thanks to the professionals who gave so generously of their time to take part in this research. She would also like to acknowledge the generous support of the Baring Foundation as well as the assistance of Kinship Carers Liverpool for this article.*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Equality and Human Rights Commission (Scotland). Undated. *The Human Rights of Children in Kinship Care*. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/legal-work-scotland/legal-work-scotland/scottish-legal-articles/human-rights-children-kinship-care> (referenced 17 May 2019).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, UN Population Fund. *The Human Rights-Based Approach*. <http://www.unfpa.org/human-rights-based-approach> (referenced 12 May 2019).

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# GROUP LOCALISED CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OFFENDERS: WHO AND WHY?

*Kish Bhatti-Sinclair, Department of Childhood, Social Work and Social Care, University of Chichester*

*Charles Sutcliffe, The ICMA Centre, University of Reading*

## Abstract

Since 2011, the prosecution of Asian men for group localised child sexual exploitation (GLCSE) in the UK has led to two opposing positions: (1) Asian men have been unfairly demonised; and (2) Asian men have a disproportionate propensity for GLCSE. We analysed the evidence in the public domain in different two ways. First, we collected newspaper reports of GLCSE cases, and completed a comprehensive review of the literature, government documents and official case reviews. Our data consists of 498 defendants in 73 prosecutions between 1997 and 2017. Using a technique that is widely accepted in medical research, we determined the heritage of these defendants. Second, using census data for 404 local authorities, we analysed the relationship between GLCSE prosecutions, and the religion and heritage of each local population. We conclude that Muslims, particularly Pakistanis, dominate GLCSE prosecutions, and consider the reasons for this and some possible policy responses.

## 1. Introduction

Countries have responded in various ways to the concern about the global increase in the number of children and adolescent girls vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Some concentrate on displaced and lost children; while others, such as many states in the USA, address such crimes under the umbrella of the commercial sexual exploitation of children (Hodge, 2008; Jones and Florek, 2015). There is particular unease about excessive risk-taking, the use of illegal substances and the long-term impacts on sexual, reproductive and mental health (WHO, 2017, p 7). There is evidence to suggest that the effects of abuse are long-lasting and can be exacerbated by poorly conceived safeguarding policies and procedures. For example, professional reliance on the victims to pursue a case (Newsam and Ridgway, 2019), or the expectation that, in order to be heard, victims have to self-portray as innocent virgins in court proceedings (Grewal, 2012; Jones and Florek, 2015).

In the UK, abuse has been historically understood as that perpetrated against younger children in home or institutional care. Definitions have changed to differentiate child sexual abuse (CSA) from other types of child abuse, such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), which is seen as a subcategory of CSA. This is in response to a better profiling of victims who tend to be older (aged mainly between 12–17) and sufficiently independent and mobile to make them susceptible to adult

attention. CSE offenders use distinctive approaches, such as street-based grooming and boyfriend-like behaviours, often in close collaboration with members of their own family (CEOP, 2011; Jones and Florek, 2015).<sup>1</sup>

The UK Government has commissioned many reports, including a desk review of international comparisons of CSE (Jones and Florek, 2015). This contains definitions of CSE from the European Union, Sweden, Ireland, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. It confirms the recognition of CSE by the United Nations and the Council of Europe, which monitors how member states implement the 2007 Lanzarote Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

Crimes where groups sexually exploit children in a neighbourhood setting have been labelled group localised child sexual exploitation (GLCSE), a subcategory of child sexual exploitation (CSE). The majority of government documents focus on victims rather than perpetrators, while the focus in the literature has tended towards the racialisation of GLCSE (Tufail, 2015; Britton, 2019). There is, therefore, an urgent need for the systematic gathering of authoritative data on GLCSE perpetrators similar to that collected by countries such as the USA on trafficking (Hodge, 2008; Colley, 2019). Details of perpetrator activities, routines and approaches (Coffey, 2017) would be invaluable in developing, for example, differentiated typologies of GLCSE offenders based on histories, behaviours and characteristics (Hargreaves-Cormany *et al.*, 2016).

The number of prosecutions for GLCSE in the UK is very small compared to the total number of convictions for CSA (Newsam and Ridgway, 2019). For example, in 2015 5,879 mostly white offenders were successfully prosecuted for CSA (HM Government, 2017); while the number prosecuted for GLCSE over 1997–2017 was only 498 (see Table 2 in section 4). The issue of race and religion has not been highlighted as an area of concern in CSA and CSE cases because the vast majority of those prosecuted for CSA and CSE are presumed to be white.

Various terms have been used to categorise the majority of GLCSE perpetrators – Asians, Muslims and Pakistanis. In order to avoid pinpointing particular groups, reports have described offenders as persons of interest or designated suspects (Newsam and Ridgway, 2019). In this context Asian refers to those of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. According to the 2011 census, of the 2,984,670 Asians in England and Wales, 1,124,511 are of Pakistani heritage (38 per cent); and 1,028,459 of the Pakistanis are Muslims, that is, 91.5 per cent; with a further 5 per cent of Pakistanis not stating their religion. The total number of Muslims is 2,706,065, leaving 1,677,606 Muslims who are not of Pakistani heritage, that is, 62.0 per cent (see Table 1). Therefore, while all Pakistanis are Asians, and almost all Pakistanis are Muslims, most Muslims and Asians are not Pakistanis (see Figure 1). When referring to the work of others we use their terminology, and when we wish to be non-specific we use the encompassing term Asian-Muslim.

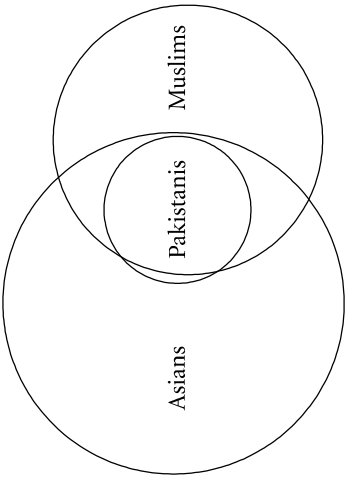


Figure 1: Overlapping groups of Asians, Pakistanis and Muslims

Racial Group	Number	Percentage
Pakistani	1,028,459	38.0
Bangladeshi	402,428	14.9
African	207,201	7.7
Indian	197,161	7.3
Other Asian	194,485	7.2
Arab	178,195	6.6
Other White	131,056	4.8
Others	112,094	4.1
White British	77,272	2.8
Other Black	57,468	2.1
White & Asian	49,689	1.8
Other Mixed Race	31,828	1.2
White & Black African	15,681	0.6
Chinese	8,027	0.3
Caribbean	7,345	0.3
White & Black	5,384	0.2
Irish	1,914	0.1
Gypsy	378	0
Total Muslims	2,706,065	100.0

Table 1: Muslims and their Heritage in England and Wales Based on the 2011 Census

The high-profile trials in the English towns of Rochdale and Rotherham of Asian-Muslim men for on-street grooming and sexual exploitation of predominantly white girls began in 2011 (HM Government, 2013; Casey, 2015). *The Times* newspaper

summarised 17 GLCSE trials between 1997 and 2011 in 13 towns which convicted 56 people (Norfolk, 2011). Three of these offenders were described as white and 53 were Asian, of which 50 appeared to be of Pakistani heritage. The debate on whether men of Asian, Muslim or Pakistani heritage are predisposed to commit this crime (Gilligan, 2011; Shafiq, 2011; Harker, 2012; Norfolk *et al.*, 2012; Siddique, 2012; Gill and Harrison, 2015) fuelled the simmering tension linking anti-Muslim racism and counter-terrorism (Tufail, 2015). Some suggested that the liberal elite are unable to address impartially the needs of female victims and the racism inherent in labelling Muslim men as sex offenders (Grewal, 2012; Klonowski, 2013; Jay, 2014; Casey, 2015; Bedford, 2015; Salter and Dagistanli, 2015).

One view is that the disproportionate number of Asian-Muslim offenders, illustrated by the Rochdale and Rotherham trials, is due to the careful selection of the cases, coupled with the small sample, leading to sampling error (Cockbain, 2013; Tufail, 2015). If this is correct, over time the Asian-Muslim proportion should decline as the sample size increases. This view is often associated with a confusion between GLCSE and CSE, as Asians-Muslims represent only a small proportion of CSE offenders, but are over-represented in GLCSE cases. The alternative view is that the Asian-Muslim dominance of GLCSE is a real phenomenon.

Some authors have argued that race and religion are insignificant in GLCSE cases, and the poor availability of verifiable statistics leads to the over-identification of Asian-Muslim men with GLCSE. The use of the term 'Asians' to describe the majority of the perpetrators of GLCSE has led the Sikh and Hindu communities to strongly express the view that the term Asians is misleading as it includes Hindus and Sikhs (Singh, 2012). This is supported by the evidence we present below which shows that Sikhs are no more likely than the general population to engage in GLCSE, and Hindus are less likely. We find that 83 per cent of those prosecuted for GLCSE are Muslims, with 1 in 2,200 of the male Muslim population of England and Wales over the age of 16 having been prosecuted for GLCSE. This is similar to the conclusion of Rafiq and Adil (2017) that 84 per cent of those convicted of GLCSE are of Asian heritage. We also conduct a regression analysis using census data which suggests that males of Pakistani heritage are more likely than Muslim males to be prosecuted for GLCSE. Offenders appear to be linked by a combination of opportunity (working in the night-time economy, such as restaurants) and culture (conservative Islamic traditions) (Newsam and Ridgway, 2019).

In Section 2 we define CSE and GLCSE, and in Section 3 we describe the previously available data on GLCSE offenders, our data and its possible biases. Section 4 has an analysis of the data, and Section 5 explores the relationship between the country of origin, religion and location of various groups. The results in Section 5 are used to justify the regression analysis in Section 6 of the relationship between GLCSE prosecutions and the country of origin and religion of the local population. Section 7 considers why one group is over-represented among GLCSE defendants, while Section 8 presents some policy responses. Finally, Section 9 contains our conclusions.

## 2. Definitions of CSE and GLCSE

In 2016, the British government consulted on the statutory definition of CSE, in response to the interchangeable use of CSA and CSE (HM Government, 2016). This was followed by the Working Together guidance (HM Government, 2018), which offers a list of definitions relating to the protection of children. This includes the age and power imbalance between perpetrators and victims and the new concept of a 'facilitator' of abuse, which suggests the involvement of a third person, such as a peer or friend who acts as a go-between. The guidance stipulates that child protection is everyone's responsibility and contextual, such as local environmental, factors are critical to professional understanding. These policy documents share some terminology, such as coercion and manipulation resulting in maltreatment or harm through physical, emotional and sexual contact with peers, men and women. This is based on prior work on pathways to exploitation (Pearce, 2009), highlighted by Barnardo's (2017) as street-based grooming leading to 'child prostitution'.

CSE is a subset of CSA (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009) and involves the abuse of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a young person under 18 to participate in sexual acts in exchange for money or goods, such as mobile telephones. There is recognition of emotional involvement in the early stages of the grooming process and contact through social media. A subcategory of CSE is localised CSE (LCSE), or on-street grooming, conducted by one or more people and involving local facilities to ease access and to normalise perpetrator/victim contact. A familiar setting may lend an air of normality to a potentially dangerous situation, when young people are introduced to perpetrators and sexual experiences. The definition we use is LCSE conducted by groups of perpetrators, rather than solo perpetrators, that is, group LCSE or GLCSE.<sup>2</sup>

## 3. Data

CEOP (2011) gathered case data on LCSE cases from 46 police forces, 22 children's services and local safeguarding children boards, and 12 voluntary sector providers. However, the information on offenders was incomplete, and some of the data on the ethnicity of offenders was derived from witness statements by young, vulnerable victims. CEOP identified 940 cases with the full name or initials of possible solo offenders, and 277 cases with a first name or alias and no family name (Newsam and Ridgway, 2019). CEOP excluded 97 cases involving 'multiple nominals' (that is, GLCSE offenders) from further analysis (CEOP, 2011, p 38). The largest number of LCSE offenders were males aged 18–24, and of British, Pakistani and Iraqi heritage, suggesting that young perpetrators attract mainly white victims aged 12–16 through the romanticised boyfriend model.

Berelowitz *et al.* (2012) collected data, mainly from the police and local authorities (LAs) on 1,514 perpetrators. The estimated ethnicities of these suspects were: white – 36 per cent; Asian 27 per cent; black 16 per cent; mixed 3 per cent; others 1 per cent; and undisclosed 16 per cent. However, this data is for those suspected of CSE,



not those prosecuted, and includes suspects of on-line group CSE, in addition to those engaging in solo as well as group or gang CSE. It also does not include data for some areas and agencies.

Since 2011, and *The Times* newspaper summary of the 17 available trials, many more people have been prosecuted for GLCSE, considerably increasing the sample size; but no one has collected and analysed this data to resolve the controversy over the identity of offenders. So we collected data on all the UK prosecutions for GLCSE between 1997 and 2017 of which we are aware from over 2,000 local and national media reports.<sup>3</sup> We obtained reports of the same trial from a number of local and national newspapers, as well as from the news websites of the major TV channels (BBC, ITV, Sky). This produced an average of over 20 media reports per case and they exhibited almost complete agreement, often repeating the same quotes and phrases.

Our findings are conditional on the representativeness and possible biases in our data. For example, groups as opposed to individuals are more likely to be reported because there are many perpetrators and victims. However, this will only bias our sample if some types of perpetrator tend to offend in larger groups and exploit a larger number of victims. Less newsworthy trials, possibly those with white British perpetrators, may have been missed, while more sensational trials involving Asian-Muslim perpetrators may have been covered more prominently in the media. Finally, some cases of GLCSE may not have been prosecuted, for example those involving Asians-Muslims, due to fears of accusations of racial bias. The size of these potential biases is unknown and therefore our results may over- or understate the proportion of Asian-Muslim perpetrators of GLCSE.

Some local authorities with large Asian-Muslim communities do not have any prosecutions for GLCSE, such as some areas around London. Furthermore, all but two of the trials for GLCSE were in England, with none in Scotland or Northern Ireland. Other areas have a relatively high number of prosecutions, with Yorkshire and Lancashire accounting for over half of all those prosecuted. Such variations may reflect the level of resources devoted either to finding and prosecuting GLCSE perpetrators, and/or preventative work leading to early interventions. For example, Yorkshire and Lancashire launched large-scale investigations into GLCSE, while most areas have not.

We found 73 GLCSE trials covering 44 UK towns and 498 accused, of which 315 were subsequently convicted, with 75 awaiting a verdict. This data is summarised in Table 2. We studied the numbers put on trial, rather than those convicted of GLCSE because there were six GLCSE cases which had not been concluded and so no verdicts were currently available.

4. Data analysis

For those prosecuted for GLCSE, the average age at the time of being charged is 32 years; their median age is 30; only ten (2 per cent) are female (all non-Asian-Muslim); the average prison sentence of those convicted is 10 years; and the average size of a group of defendants is seven. The names, addresses and ages of almost all

those accused are available, but information on ethnicity, occupation and religion is partial. Occupation is available for 88 defendants, of which 14 worked in takeaways, and 16 were taxi drivers, that is, about one-third. We investigate the religion and ethnic identity of the defendants in two different ways. First, we analyse their names and this enables us to distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims, but not to identify those of Pakistani heritage. Second, we use regression analysis coupled with census data, which allows us to investigate both the religion and racial heritage of defendants without any reference to their names.

The use of names to identify ethnicity is widespread in the medical and demographic literatures. A number of studies with samples of the UK population have used first and last names to distinguish between Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and other groups (Nicoll *et al.*, 1986; Martineau and White, 1998; Harding, *et al.*, 1999; Nanchahal, *et al.*, 2001; Macfarlane, *et al.*, 2007; Nitsch, *et al.*, 2009; Lakha, *et al.*, 2011; Mateos, 2011; Petersen, *et al.*, 2011). Table 2 shows that, of the 498 accused, only 85 have non-Muslim names (that is, 17 per cent), which suggests that 83 per cent of those accused of this crime may be Muslim. However, the proportion of defendants of Pakistani heritage is hard to judge from the available data. There are considerable differences among local authorities in the number of male Muslims over the age of 16 per Muslim prosecuted for GLCSE. Assuming that half of the Muslim population is male, and the proportion over 16 is the same as for the nation, the right-hand column of Table 2 shows considerable variation among local authorities in the number of Muslim males over 16 per Muslim tried for GLCSE. This ranges from 59 for Banbury, 73 for Rotherham, 96 for Chelmsford, 126 for Telford, 162 for Oxford and 174 for Aylesbury; up to much higher numbers of 39,029 for Birmingham and 10,874 for Slough. The overall rate is roughly 1 in 2,200 for all Muslim males over the age of 16.

5. The Identity of those Prosecuted for Group Localised CSE

	Guilty	Pending	Tried	Muslims	Others	Trials	Muslims Per Head*
Accrington (Hyndburn)	0	1	7	7	0	1	397
Aylesbury	9	0	16	13	3	2	174
Banbury (Cherwell)	7	11	19	18	1	2	59
Barking	3	0	5	5	0	1	1,700
Birmingham	2	0	2	2	0	1	39,029
Blackburn	4	0	4	2	2	2	6,630
Blackpool	0	0	2	2	0	1	177
Bournemouth	4	0	4	0	4	1	–
Bradford	7	0	7	7	0	2	1,264
Brierfield (Pendle)	2	0	7	7	0	1	741
Bristol	14	0	17	17	0	1	431
Burton on Trent (East Staffordshire)	6	0	6	6	0	1	378
Chelmsford	5	0	7	7	0	1	96

Since we may have missed some trials with non-Muslim names, leading to an over-representation of those with Muslim names in our data, we conducted a robustness check and estimated how large this bias would need to be for Muslim names not to be a majority of GLCSE defendants. The 2011 census found the total population of England and Wales to be 56,075,912, of which 2,706,066 were Muslims. Based on our data, 83 per cent of those prosecuted for GLCSE have Muslim names. So, if GLCSE is committed and prosecuted at the same rate for both Muslims and non-Muslims, the number of offenders we would need to have missed for offending rates to be the same for both racial groups is  $(498 \times 0.83) / 2 = 206.066 = [x + (498 \times 0.17)] / (56,075,912 - 2,706,066)$ , and  $x = 8,067$  offenders. Therefore, it is very unlikely that the high proportion of Muslim names identified in our data is due to the exclusion of a large number of non-Muslim offenders.

Table 3 has the age distributions at the time of prosecution of those prosecuted for GLCSE, as well as the Muslim population of England and Wales in each age group. We use these figures to compute the number of Muslim males in each age group for every Muslim name prosecuted for GLCSE. The number of Muslim males is estimated to be half of the Muslim population, and the number of those tried who have a Muslim name is estimated at 83 per cent of those prosecuted for GLCSE. Due to prosecution lags, the numbers are lower for younger Muslims, with those in the 20–39 age range having a rate of about 1 in 1,700.

As an example, we assume the Pakistani population has the same age distribution as the Muslim population and, although 38% of the UK Muslim population is of Pakistani origin, we assume that half the defendants are of Pakistani origin (the choice of half of the defendants being of Pakistani heritage is informed by the analysis in section 6 below). The number of Pakistani males over 16 per Pakistani defendant are shown in Table 3. Given these assumptions, the rate for all Pakistani males over 16 is about 1 in 1,700, as opposed to the rate of 2,200 for all Muslims. It should be noted that these rates exclude Pakistanis prosecuted for other forms of CSA such as individual LCSE, online CSE, solo or group rape, trafficking and familial sexual abuse.

Age	No. Tried	Percentage of Those Tried	Muslim Population	Percentage of Muslim Population	Muslim Males Per Accused	Pakistani Males Per Accused
16–19	32	6.50%	176,204	9.73%	3,317	2,521
20–24	110	22.36%	238,041	13.14%	1,304	991
25–29	90	18.29%	273,505	15.10%	1,831	1,391
30–34	93	18.90%	270,278	14.92%	1,751	1,331
35–39	77	15.65%	227,166	12.54%	1,777	1,351
40–44	34	6.91%	179,128	9.89%	3,174	2,412
45–49	19	3.86%	119,992	6.63%	3,804	2,891

	Guilty	Pending	Tried	Muslims	Others	Trials	Muslims Per Head*
Chesham (Chiltern)	4	0	4	4	0	1	192
Cornwall	3	0	3	0	3	1	–
Coventry	10	0	15	13	2	2	606
Derby	9	0	11	10	1	1	633
Dewsbury (Kirklees)	4	0	4	4	0	1	658
Halifax (Calderdale)	18	0	23	22	1	1	224
High Wycombe (Wycombe)	0	0	10	10	0	1	500
Huddersfield (Kirklees)	0	29	29	27	2	1	658
Keighley (Bradford)	21	0	29	27	2	4	1,264
Kidwelly (Carmarthenshire)	5	0	6	0	6	1	–
Leeds	15	0	21	21	0	2	647
Leigh (Wigan)	2	0	2	0	2	1	–
Littlehampton (Arun)	2	0	2	0	2	1	–
Manchester	14	0	14	13	1	3	2,036
Middlesbrough	3	0	5	5	0	1	650
Newcastle	24	0	25	22	3	3	266
Oldham	4	0	6	5	1	1	2,656
Oswestry (Shropshire)	0	0	14	0	14	1	–
Oxford	11	19	33	32	1	4	162
Peterborough	9	0	14	6	8	3	957
Preston	5	0	5	2	3	2	2,626
Rochdale	34	0	38	35	3	5	280
Rotherham	26	15	46	44	2	6	73
Sheffield	7	0	11	5	6	2	2,851
Slough	2	0	2	1	1	1	10,874
Southend	2	0	2	0	2	1	–
Swindon	2	0	2	0	2	1	–
Telford	7	0	8	8	0	1	126
Wirral	2	0	2	2	0	1	301
Wrexham	5	0	7	0	7	1	–
Yeovil (South Somerset)	2	0	2	2	0	1	69
Totals	315	75	498	413	85	73	

Table 2: Towns with GLCSE Trials and the Numbers Convicted, Verdict Pending, Tried, Muslims, Others, the Number of Trials and Local Muslims per Muslims Tried

\* Muslim males aged 16 plus in the local authority divided by the number of Muslims prosecuted. Huddersfield and Dewsbury are both in the Kirklees local authority, and Bradford and Keighley are both in the Bradford local authority; so the 44 towns become 42 local authorities.

from the other 62 per cent of Muslims, and, therefore, statistical analysis of the location of GLCSE defendants can be used to investigate the extent to which Muslim offenders are likely to be Pakistanis.

To investigate whether various religious and racial groups tend to live in the same local authorities, we used the 2011 census data on the total population of each of the 404 UK local authorities, to obtain the numbers of residents who are of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage, and who are members of the Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Buddhist religions. We computed the proportions of each racial and religious group in each local authorities, and the correlations between these proportions. Table 4 shows that there are high correlations between the proportions of Pakistanis and Muslims (80 per cent), and between the proportions of Indians and Hindus (90 per cent), showing that Muslims tend to live in the same local authorities as Pakistanis, and Hindus tend to live in the same local authorities as Indians. However, these correlations are not perfect, and so local authorities do not have exactly the same proportions of Pakistanis and Muslims, or Indians and Hindus. Table 4 also reveals fairly low correlations between the proportions of Pakistanis and those for Bangladeshis, Indians, Hindus and Sikhs, signalling that Pakistanis have a substantially different geographical distribution from these other Asian groups. Therefore, it may be possible to use the prosecution numbers for each local authority in Table 2 to compute the likelihood of the defendants being from a particular group.

	P	I	Ba	M	H	S	C	J	Bu
P	1								
I	0.435**	1							
Ba	0.260**	0.196**	1						
M	0.803**	0.613**	0.616**	1					
H	0.322**	0.897**	0.174**	0.518**	1				
S	0.374**	0.716**	0.105*	0.383**	0.484**	1			
C	-0.078	-0.137**	-0.125	-0.154**	-0.124	-0.066	1		
J	0.061	0.223**	0.089	0.225**	0.287**	0.034	-0.072	1	
Bu	0.140**	0.355**	0.238**	0.423	0.463**	0.187**	0.044	0.318**	1

**Table 4: Correlation Matrix of Racial and Religious Groups of the Population in UK Local Authorities in 2011**

P = Pakistani, I = Indian, Ba = Bangladeshi, M = Muslim, H = Hindu, S = Sikh, C = Christian, J = Jewish, Bu = Buddhist.  
\* or \*\* indicate that the correlation is significantly different from zero at the 5% or 1% levels, respectively.

Age	No. Tried	Percentage of Those Tried	Muslim Population	Percentage of Muslim Population	Muslim Males Per Accused	Pakistani Males Per Accused
50–54	9	1.83%	97,899	5.41%	6,553	4,980
55–59	15	3.05%	75,000	4.14%	3,012	2,289
60–64	6	1.22%	46,890	2.59%	4,708	3,578
65–69	2	0.41%	33,457	1.85%	10,077	7,659
70–74	3	0.61%	33,742	1.86%	6,776	5,149
75–79	2	0.41%	22,758	1.26%	6,855	5,210
80 +	0	0.00%	16,869	0.93%	–	–
Totals	492*	100.00%	1,810,929	100.00%	2,217	1,685

**Table 3: Age Distributions for Those Tried for GLCSE, the Muslim Population in England and Wales, and the Number of Muslim and Pakistani Males per Muslim and Pakistani Prosecuted for GLCSE**

\* The total number of defendants is 492 because no age is available for six of the accused.

**6. Relationship between heritage, religion and location**

If all Muslims, regardless of their heritage, are equally likely to commit GLCSE, we would expect only about 38 per cent of Muslim defendants to be of Pakistani heritage. No good data is available on this question, although anecdotal evidence suggests this proportion is substantially higher than 38 per cent. The country of origin is available for 99 of the 498 defendants, of which 37 were definitely of Pakistani heritage (37 per cent), and the true figure is probably double this figure.

The Pakistani, Muslim, Indian and Hindu populations are concentrated in a small number of local authorities, with 58 per cent of Pakistanis, 49 per cent of Muslims, 52 per cent of Indians and 54 per cent of Hindus each living in just 20 of the 404, possibly different, local authorities. Due to the uneven geographical distributions of the Pakistani, Muslim, Indian and Hindu populations, provided that the Muslims or Pakistanis are concentrated in different local authorities from Indians and Hindus, this can provide information on the likely national or religious heritage of the defendants. Although association does not prove causation, if those accused of GLCSE tend to live in local authorities where Pakistanis or Muslims are concentrated, and not where Indians or Hindus tend to live, this is consistent with Muslims or Pakistanis being more likely than Indians and Hindus to be responsible for such crimes. Since only 38 per cent of Muslims are of Pakistani origin, it is also possible that the Pakistani population tends to live in different local authorities



### 7. Regression evidence on the heritage and religion of those prosecuted for GLCSE

There is a lack of direct information on the country of origin for most defendants, but Section 5 has shown that we can use indirect evidence to explore the likely identity of the defendants. We do this by using regression to estimate the relationship between being prosecuted for GLCSE and being Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Bangladeshi, Pakistani or Indian.

The dependent variable in the five regressions in Table 5 is the proportion of each local authority's population accused of GLCSE (*A*) (multiplied by 100,000). The explanatory variables are the percentages of the population living in each local authority following one of six religions, the percentages in each local authority with Pakistani, Indian or Bangladeshi heritage, the ratio of the local Pakistani population to the sum of the Indian and Bangladeshi populations ( $P/(In+B)$ ), and the ratio of the local Muslim population to the sum of the Hindu and Sikh populations ( $M/(H+S)$ ). There is no religious data for Northern Ireland and so the total number of local authorities included is reduced from 404 to 378 for regressions with a religious variable. Our dependent variable (*A*) cannot be negative, so this induces non-linear relationships between *A* and the explanatory variables. The non-negativity constraint also creates heteroskedasticity in the error terms. To allow for this non-linearity and heteroskedasticity we use negative binomial regression with robust standard errors.

	1. Religion	2. Heritage	3. Ratios	4. Combined	5. Combined
Constant	-3.215 (1.24)	-1.975 (6.42)***	-1.491 (4.66)***	-1.725 (5.49)***	-1.777 (5.73)***
Pakistani %	-----	73.728 (4.01)***	-----	86.492 (2.65)**	70.969 (3.97)***
Indian %	-----	-11.637 (1.61)	-----	-----	-----
Bangladeshi %	-----	-23.956 (0.76)	-----	-----	-----
Muslim %	39.183 (4.48)***	-----	-----	-2.743 (0.37)	-----
Hindu %	-97.750 (2.84)**	-----	-----	-56.485 (2.15)*	-48.872 (2.48)*
Sikh %	23.958 (0.85)	-----	-----	-----	-----
Christian %	2.110 (0.56)	-----	-----	-----	-----
Jewish %	-62.198 (1.37)	-----	-----	-----	-----
Buddhist %	118.893 (0.88)	-----	-----	-----	-----
$P/(In+B)$	-----	-----	0.392 (2.47)*	-0.0996 (0.58)	-----
$M/(H+S)$	-----	-----	0.022 (1.08)	-----	-----
Wald $\chi^2$	24.12***	16.17***	6.27*	16.78**	16.48***
No. of Observations	378	404	378	378	378

**Table 5: Regression Equations to Explain the Proportion of Each Local Authority's Population Accused of GLCSE**

The dependent variable is the proportion of each LA's population accused of GLCSE, multiplied by 100,000. Negative binomial regression with robust standard errors was used. The figures in brackets are *t* statistics. Using a two-tailed test, the symbols \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* indicate whether the regression coefficients and Wald  $\chi^2$  statistics are significantly different from zero at the 5%, 1% or 0.1% level respectively.

Since there are strong correlations between Pakistanis and Muslims, and between Indians and Hindus, distinguishing between the effects of these correlated variables is difficult. In the first two regressions we examine the effects of religion and heritage separately, avoiding these strong correlations. Equation (1) is concerned with religion and indicates that the Muslim percentage has a significant positive effect on *A*, while the Hindu percentage has a significant negative effect. The percentages who follow the Sikh, Christian, Jewish and Buddhist religions do not have a significant effect on GLCSE prosecutions (*A*). Equation (2) finds that the Pakistani percentage has a significant positive effect on *A*, while the Indian and Bangladeshi percentages do not have a significant effect. So, without knowing anything about those accused of GLCSE, such as their names, these results indicate that GLCSE tends to happen in areas with a higher proportion of Pakistanis or Muslims, and a lower proportion of Hindus.

To distinguish between the effects of religion and heritage, equations (3) and (4) include both types of variable. Equation (3) examines the effects of ( $P/(In+B)$ ) and ( $M/(H+S)$ ). The Pakistani ratio ( $P/(In+B)$ ) has a significant positive effect on *A*, which may be because in local authorities where  $P/(In+B)$  is small, Pakistanis have competition for work in the occupations linked to GLCSE, for example taxi drivers and takeaway workers (Casey, 2015). The Muslim ratio ( $M/(H+S)$ ) does not have a negative effect on *A*.

Equation (4) includes the four statistically significant religious, heritage and ratio variables from equations (1), (2) and (3). The Pakistani percentage has a significant positive effect on *A*, and the Hindu percentage has a significant negative effect. The Muslim percentage and  $P/(In+B)$  do not have a significant effect on *A*. Finally, in equation (5) we include just the significant variables in equation (4), which confirms the conclusions from equation (4). This suggests it is Pakistani heritage, rather than the Muslim religion, that is more closely linked with GLCSE prosecutions.

These regression equations also indicate that being a Hindu has a negative effect on prosecutions, while Indian or Bangladeshi heritage and the Sikh, Christian, Jewish and Buddhist religions have no effect on GLCSE prosecutions. This provides circumstantial evidence, independent of their names, that most of the GLCSE defendants are of Pakistani heritage, particularly when Pakistanis are a larger proportion of the local South Asian population. These regressions explain only a small proportion of the variation in *A*, and so many other factors besides Pakistani heritage also affect *A*.



### 8. Why are some groups over-represented among GLCSE defendants?

Much of the literature challenges the racialisation of child exploitation (Britton, 2019). However, the imperative is to inform the assessment, decision-making and intervention processes, alongside the use of evidence to improve services for female child victims (Hargreaves-Cormany, *et al.*, 2016). There is also an urgent need to examine how victims and perpetrators use their age, gender and race to relate to one another, and how professionals understand the impact of feminism and racism on the way they perform their duties (Grewal, 2012).

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009) has reported that an estimated 60%–70% of those of Pakistani heritage in the UK are from Mirpur, a rural and largely conservative region in Kashmir. Pakistanis are members of a caste and biradari which are patrilineal. The main castes are Ashraf, Zamindar and Kammi, and within each of these are roughly five sub-castes. A person's biradari is their extended kinship group, which is a flexible concept that can denote: their closest relatives; all their relatives in Pakistan and the UK; or all members of their caste (Shaw, 2000). Membership of the same caste or biradari may help to bond those seen as relatives and explain why GLCSE is shared with brothers, cousins and uncles. Research evidence (such as evaluation of perpetrator programmes) suggests that the motive to commit a communal crime can be perpetuated by like-minded alliances such as the biradari system (Pearce, 2009), and social groups cannot be excluded from responsibility on the grounds that they may be stigmatised or stereotyped (Beckett *et al.*, 2017).

GLCSE requires a motive for perpetrators to offend, accessible victims and opportunity (Salter and Dagistanli, 2015). Motivating drivers, such as misogyny, power and control, rooted in ideas around childhood, adolescence, sexual behaviour and age of consent, are thought to vary according to place of residence and cultural disposition (Vandiver *et al.*, 2017). Court reports suggest that GLCSE perpetrators appear to take little legal or moral responsibility for underage sex, demonstrate contempt for the judicial process, express feelings of entitlement, minimally conceal their crimes and often plead not guilty.

The accessibility of victims is critical to understanding the behaviour of the perpetrators. Victims of GLCSE are often young white girls in state care, homeless or leading chaotic lives in unstable or mobile family situations with little parental supervision. They may be socially excluded, bullied and not always in education or employment, and may be vulnerable in other ways as a result of poor mental health, low self-esteem and/or confusion about their sexual orientation. They may experience loss or grief, and may be lost or missing for periods (Home Office, 2011; Ofsted, 2013; and Ofsted, 2016). These factors mean that they are more likely to be in the places used by perpetrators to groom, coerce and pressurise them into sexual activity. Media reports suggest that offenders recognise such vulnerabilities and use disinhibitors, such as alcohol and drugs, to counter defensive responses and to reduce capacity.

The background of perpetrators is likely to include a home environment which involves sexual moderation and/or abstinence in line with Islamic and related religious teachings. In contrast, their jobs are often street-based, public facing and camouflaged by the world of night-time working. This offers opportunities for sexual interactions which lie outside the influence of partners and children, allowing perpetrators who lead respectable family lives at home to have greater sexual freedom on the streets. The psychological and social clash created by such differences in internal–external identities has been considered by Imam Alvasi Karmani, who argues that Pakistanis who live in such divergent worlds, where religious and cultural values conflict with emotional and sexual desires, are likely to face cognitive dissonance (Valley, 2012). An inability to face facts, known in the sex-offender literature as cognitive distortions (Vandiver *et al.*, 2017, p 30), may account for defendants’ lack of responsibility and callous dismissal of victim testimony in court proceedings.

Our data on the occupations of 88 of the GLCSE defendants indicate that about a third were working as taxi drivers or in takeaways/restaurants (Newsam and Ridgway, 2019), that is, occupations which brought them into contact with young girls behaving in a manner which the perpetrators perceive as promiscuous. UK child protection laws prohibit sexual contact with children, but underage sex can be seen differently by other cultures. The Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation found that five girls aged between nine and 11 were forced into Islamic marriages in Islington (Amara, 2012). In 2016, over two-thirds of those to whom the UK Forced Marriage Unit gave advice or support involved Muslim countries (mostly Pakistan), and 220 (15 per cent) of their cases involved children under 16 (Home Office, 2017).

The evidence above that suggests Pakistanis are over-represented among the GLCSE defendants, leading to the question of why they are more likely to face prosecution for this crime. First, it is possible that they are linked to GLCSE through media reporting, and this may explain why more police resources are used to target the areas where they live. Second, media reports may have systematically ignored GLCSE cases not involving Pakistanis. Third, those originating from traditional cultures (for example, the Mirpur region of Pakistan) may be particularly attracted to GLCSE. Fourth, the formation of groups of like-minded Pakistani offenders is more likely than for other Muslims because there are two and a half times more Pakistanis than the next largest Muslim group (Bangladeshis), making it easier to generate a critical mass. The process of group formation and solidarity may be assisted by the caste and biradari systems practised by some Pakistanis. Finally, it is possible that Pakistanis are more likely to work in the night-time economy with its opportunities for GLCSE. This is consistent with the evidence in Section 6 that the smaller the number of Pakistanis in the local Asian population, the lower is the chance of their involvement in GLCSE.

### 9. Examples of good practice

The policy and guidance on CSE is comprehensive, but a great deal is repetitive and focused on organisational failure (Casey, 2015; Newsam and Ridgway, 2019), rather than the characteristics of the perpetrators and victims. The age of the children suggests that the victims are able to engage in autonomous activity until they require advice and support, which they often seek from open-door agencies such as the police or health clinics. Children's social workers are not always accessible to them, and so targeted initiatives such as outreach youth work may be one way forward. Perpetrator programmes and follow-up evaluations are also needed to evidence approaches likely to result in behavioural change amongst men who normalise sex crimes against female children (Pearce, 2009; Vandiver *et al.*, 2017).

Community-based work, such as that led by Together Against Grooming and the Muslim Council of Britain in 2013 in roughly 500 mosques, can provide information directly to those who use cultural practices such as the biradari system. This can be coupled with interagency responses such as Project Phoenix in Manchester. Another initiative, Operation Makesafe, provides training for taxi drivers, door staff and workers in fast-food outlets, pubs and bars in spotting GLCSE, and is a good example of collective action by police forces in London, Surrey, South Wales, West Sussex and Hampshire (Drew, 2016). Punitive action is another possibility. Since taxi drivers have been heavily involved in GLCSE, Rotherham (47), Newcastle (25) and Rochdale (6) have revoked the licences of taxi drivers thought to be unsafe, and require all taxi drivers to undergo compulsory training on safeguarding children or lose their licence (Norfolk, 2016). Some councils have mandated CCTV in cabs.

Attempts to collect comprehensive data on GLCSE have been limited, and an obvious source of information on the identity of defendants and victims is the criminal justice system. Police and court data would be invaluable to researchers seeking to understand the context and outcomes of exploitation.

### 10. Conclusions

Child abuse does not have any geographic, cultural or religious boundaries and more research is required on GLCSE across the world on national responses, and policy and practice. Jones and Florek (2015) confirm that countries may see GLCSE differently, but similar offences have triggered law and policy in the European Union, Australia and the USA. Authoritative data on the age, gender, occupation, ethnicity and religion of offenders needs to be collected for the UK from court records as a matter of urgency. The controversy related to GLCSE can be resolved through the availability of authoritative data on the identity of the offenders. In order to argue for this we examined over 2,000 press reports on GLCSE prosecutions between 1997–2017. We conclude that 83 per cent of those charged have recognisably Muslim names, and roughly 1 in 2,200 Muslim males over the age of 16 in England and Wales have been prosecuted for this offence.

A regression analysis found that both the Muslim and the Pakistani proportions of the local population are powerful variables in explaining the level of GLCSE in an area. The proportion of the local population of Pakistani origin is more powerful in explaining the level of GLCSE than the Muslim proportion, suggesting that, irrespective of their names, most of the defendants are of Pakistani origin. We also found that the proportion of Hindus in a local authority has a negative effect on local GLCSE prosecutions; while the proportions of Sikhs, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Indians and Bangladeshis have no effect. Although other explanations are possible, the dominance of Muslims, particularly Pakistanis, appears to intersect with access to young girls seen by the perpetrators as 'available'. GLCSE is not a religiously motivated or racist crime – it is partly motivated by the perpetrators' acceptance of underage sex and the pragmatic expectation of child-care workers that children should 'manage their own behaviour' (Newsam and Ridgway, 2019, p 107).

Finally, we recommend that future research is focused on the following areas: media targeting of sexual predators (Cockbain, 2013); stereotyping and labelling of social groups (Beckett *et al.*, 2017); justifiable behaviour (Walker *et al.*, 2018); and teenage sexuality (Drew, 2016). The first and second areas are of particular concern to those responsible for policy-making and avoiding unnecessary blame; while the third and fourth areas are relevant to understanding the behaviour of perpetrators and victims. Such research would highlight the ethical dilemmas and practice challenges facing professionals from a range of disciplinary and methodological perspectives, including health, psychology, criminal justice and child protection. The focus should be on how culturally bound social groups, regardless of their colour, race and religion, use misogyny, power and control to abuse children.

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### Notes

- 1 Dietz (2018) provides a graph showing the increasing use of the term 'grooming' since 1984.
- 2 GLCSE excludes on-line grooming and grooming in sports clubs, schools, churches, youth groups and so on.
- 3 We conducted an unstructured search using a wide variety of search terms to try to locate as many cases as possible. We also followed up links and clues, such as mention of another defendant or case elsewhere. Since almost all of our cases are the subject of many press reports, they can be located using a range of different search words.

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## COURSES & CONFERENCES

### Nagallo Training

**Covid-19 restrictions.** During the current health emergency, we are unable to stage face-to-face training events and conferences. Events which were in the diary when the restrictions were brought in have been left in the diary. They are being kept under review and may be subject to postponement or cancellation if they cannot proceed. We are also now actively arranging for training to take place remotely via Zoom.

### ALIENATION, HOSTILITY AND HIGH CONFLICT - LOOKING PAST THE LABELS TO FIND REAL, WORKABLE SOLUTIONS

*Date: Online on Monday, 2 November 2020, 2pm - 4pm*

*Trainer: Matthew Richardson, Barrister, Coram Chambers*

This course aims to consider 'what works' in relation to achieving agreements and finding solutions for parents in conflict over the care of their child/ren. A frequent aim of a family law professional is to help or persuade someone to think in a different way, to enable them to re-frame the problem, see it from another perspective and from someone else's point of view.

Matthew Richardson is using applied psychology in his work with parents in conflict. In his experience, once someone takes up the 'baton of litigation' the position necessarily becomes adversarial. The professional person involved sometimes has to be brave enough to confront the parent they are dealing with.

### ASSESSING FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO SUPPORT CONTACT

*Date: Online via Zoom on Thursday, 19 November 2020*

*Trainer: David Pitcher*

This seminar will explore the questions that arise when family members or close friends are asked to act as supervisors and supporters for contact. This need can arise in both public and private law cases, and gives rise to complex issues. These issues have never been systematically looked at before, and this seminar will combine research findings with the ideas and experiences of those attending. This will result in the production of an assessment tool which will be of practical use to all professionals working in this field. Given the centrality of issues of contact to so much of our work, it is also hoped that this seminar will lay the foundation for future events for the discussion of child contact in all its aspects.