

Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation: Dissecting “Grooming Gangs”



By

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QUILLIAM

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In addition to this, he has worked on and delivered a number of projects relating to the analysis of radicalisation, as well as the de-radicalisation of extremists, and has presented on a number of academic and political platforms, nationally and internationally.

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Muna read Philosophy at the University of St Andrews, and went on to pursue a Masters in Journalism at the University of Central Lancashire. She is fluent in five languages.

Follow her on Twitter @MunaZainab.

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Foreword

There has been extensive reporting on 'grooming gangs' within mainstream media over the last few years and the debate, or lack of debate, has been hijacked either by bigots who wish try to sow hatred within our society or by what we call the Politically Correct Brigade who have tried to stifle this debate. Meanwhile, victims have continued to suffer from the lack of informed action.

We believe that a report of this nature has been long overdue. The lack of a serious, research-based, academic report on the nature of these crimes has led to a void in the public dialogue that has been repeatedly exploited by groups who wish to demonise entire communities. We believe an analytic and objective approach to the issue at hand is imperative in order to move towards a solution.

Our aim with this report is to give academic and nuanced context to an issue that many are afraid to talk about for fear of being called racist and to prevent the hijacking of the issue by actual bigots and xenophobes. Both authors being of British Pakistani heritage, in light of recent events, deemed it necessary for a strong voice from within the community to add a balanced and evidence-based view to the discussion surrounding grooming gangs.

Haras Rafiq was born and raised in Rochdale, and has been immersed in the community all his life, while Muna was born in the United Arab Emirates and later moved to Northwest England. These backgrounds, combined with our deep links to the Pakistani and Muslim community, have given us an adequate understanding of cultural context and the framework of Pakistani society which has allowed us to provide an informed opinion on the potential cultural underpinnings of the data found in this report.

This issue of grooming gangs is something that has exploded in recent times and naturally piqued our curiosity. Yet we initially began this project predicting that we would find a misrepresentation of the facts in the media, and that CSE

crimes by Asian ethnicity individuals were simply being blown out of proportion. A commitment that both the authors made to each other was that we would ensure this report was evidence-based and that we would go wherever the data took us.

During our time researching for this report, the numbers that we have found are, frankly, alarming. The over-representation of Asian-ethnicity (predominantly British Pakistani origin) individuals in this specific crime profile is conclusively irrefutable, and when this data reaches the public, we hope that it will be an eye-opener for many and a point from which we can all move forward towards solutions.

This is crucial for this project to have any impact going forward. This report must not be treated as a singular, complete work in and of itself, and must instead be seen as a stepping stone which acts as a catalyst for real-world solutions.

It is our hope that this report sparks much-needed dialogue that is nuanced and evidence-based, and replaces the reactionary attitudes that currently plague the public sphere regarding any issues that directly or indirectly involve minorities.

Executive Summary

“It was better than being there and being alive, it was better than feeling.”

- A 13-year-old victim on why she began injecting herself with heroin after her 38-year-old abuser introduced her to the drug

The following report examines child sexual exploitation and specifically scrutinises cases in which a group of two or more individuals have employed typical grooming techniques to entice a child to engage in sexual activity – hereby referred to as ‘grooming gangs’. To do this, the authors have conducted a comprehensive data analysis of 58 cases of grooming gangs identified in the UK since 2005. Ten case studies from 2010-2017 are also analysed in depth to help determine any similarities and identify any patterns that exist across the cases.

The report recognises there to be a disproportionate representation of males with ‘Asian’ heritage who have been convicted in such cases, with the Asian male perpetrator/white female victim dynamic serving as the prominent feature of these grooming gangs. Most of these men are of Pakistani (Muslim) origin, and the majority of their victims are young, white girls. The report suggests that the background of these men has influenced their actions.

- The racial difference is highlighted through repeated reference to the ‘whiteness’ of the victims. One victim is crudely referred to as a “white slag”¹ and another is told by the defendant that as a white woman, the only thing she is good for is “for men like me to f*** and use like trash.”²

¹ Halliday, Josh (2016), ‘Rotherham: eight men jailed for sexually exploiting teenage girls’, The Guardian UK. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/04/rotherham-child-sexual-exploitation-eight-men-jailed> [Accessed 11th October 2017].

² Halliday, Josh (2017), ‘Newcastle grooming gang members jailed for up to 29 years’, The Guardian UK. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/sep/05/newcastle-grooming-gang-members-jailed-up-to-29-years> [Accessed 12th October 2017].

- The cultural disparity is also highlighted within the case studies. A woman from Bristol was persuaded to have sex with the friends of her groomer because it is “Somali culture and tradition” for men to have sex with each other’s girlfriends,³ whilst another defendant attempted to blame his actions on the short skirts that Western women are permitted to wear.⁴

Convictions spiked after 2012, the year when newly appointed Chief Crown Prosecutor for North West England Nazir Afzal, a first-generation British-Pakistani, decided to re-open the investigation into two complaints made by underage girls in 2008, and consequently in December 2009.⁵ The investigation had previously been shelved when the preceding lawyer had deemed that the victim would “not be viewed as a credible witness by a jury,” despite six hours of video testimony from the victim and the existence of DNA evidence.⁶

The 2016 Casey Review found that many grooming gang cases prior to 2012 had been shelved or shut down in order to protect “community cohesion”. Since 2012, convictions have been maintained at a steady rate.

A summary of the findings can be viewed as follows:

1. A report by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP) found that almost one in three of all child sexual exploitation offenders operated in groups. While most of these groups consisted of two or three individuals, one in ten included seven or more offenders. The CEOP identified that these groups were largely ethnically similar internally. The most common single ethnicity group was Asian, i.e. Asians were most likely to carry out CSE in groups.

³ Gallagher, Paul (2014), ‘Thirteen Somali men convicted of running Bristol sex ring that targeted vulnerable British girls as young as 13’, The Independent. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/thirteen-somali-men-convicted-of-running-bristol-sex-ring-that-targeted-vulnerable-british-girls-as-9887517.html> [Accessed 10th October 2017].

⁴ Halliday, J (2016), ‘Rotherham: eight men jailed for sexually exploiting teenage girls’.

⁵ Burnell, Paul (2012) ‘Rochdale child sex grooming case originally dropped’, BBC News, Manchester, Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-17853560> [Accessed 15th October 2017].

⁶ *Ibid.*

2. 'Grooming gangs' are distinctly divorced from individual CSE offenders in several important ways. While individual CSE offenders perpetrate their crimes alone and in secrecy, the very presence of an organised gang demonstrates the gang members' intentional and deliberate decision to partake in a crime that is based on a shared or common ideology. An organised criminal gang is, in effect, a group of individuals who have already decided upon the nature of the crime and have, consciously or unconsciously, collectively justified their behaviour.

3. The CEOP identifies two types of group-based CSE offenders. Type 1 offenders were those that targeted their victims based on their vulnerability. The focus of these offenders is the sexual abuse of "teenagers and young adults on the basis of their vulnerability, rather than as a result of a specific preferential sexual interest in children." In other words, these are the offenders that are likely to indoctrinate, coerce, and groom their victim into the abuse, rather than perpetrate a direct attack. Members of Type 1 groups are often linked to each other via some association, whether that be a loose acquaintance or a more formal network of a criminal or business nature.⁷ As is seen in many of the case studies contained in this report, members of gangs were often related by blood, profession, or community. With this type of offending behaviour, the abuse is carried out by more than one perpetrator and can involve multiple victims.

4. Type 2 group CSE offenders target children as a result of a specific sexual interest in children. In contrast to Type 1, Type 2 offenders have a longstanding sexual interest in children and are of a similar demographic to that of child pornography offenders. Real-world networking between Type 2 groups is rare, and the bulk of the communication, trafficking,

⁷ *Threat Assessment of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse* (2013) Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, p.19. Available at: https://www.norfolkscb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CEOP_Threat-Assessment_CSE_JUN2013.pdf [Accessed 25th October 2017].

sharing, etc. is done online.⁸ Type 2 offenders cannot be defined as 'grooming gangs' because there are no grooming tactics involved.

5. In the same study, the CEOP reports 57 cases of Type 1 group abuse in 2012, 52 of which included data on the ethnicity of the offenders, and seven recorded instances of Type 2 group abuse. The study reports "a disproportionate number of offenders were reported as Asian." Of the 52 groups for which usable ethnicity data was provided, 26 (50%) comprised all Asian offenders, 11 (21%) all white offenders, 9 (17%) groups comprised offenders from multiple ethnicities, 4 (8%) comprised all black offenders and there were 2 (4%) groups of exclusively Arab offenders.
6. Of the 306 offenders whose ethnicity was provided for Type 1 offending (in which exploiting the victim's vulnerability, or grooming, is involved), a total of 75% were categorised as Asian, 17% were categorised as white, and the remaining 8% were categorised as black (5%) or Arab (3%). This is in contrast to those identified in Type 2 group offending, who were reported as exclusively of white ethnicity. Thus, Asian ethnicity offenders represent 75% of Type 1 groups (rough equivalent of grooming gangs), while white offenders represent 100% of Type 2 groups (rough equivalent of paedophile rings).
7. Among other differences between the two types of groups, Type 1 groups tend to be bigger, having on average four members, while Type 2 abusers usually act in pairs. Thus, in term of raw figures of "group CSE offenders" (Type 1 and 2 combined), there are more Asian men perpetrating CSE in groups than white men (229 to 70).
8. Our own research identified 264 convictions for group-based CSE involving grooming tactics from 2005 to 2017. Due to the inaccessibility of official

⁸ See 'Case Studies', p.45, for further illustration of this distinction.

police records, this data cannot be treated as comprehensive, but it can go a long way in helping us identify emerging patterns in group-based CSE.

9. Out of the 264 grooming gang convictions, we identified 222 offenders as Asian (84%), 22 Black offenders (8%), 18 white offenders (7%), and 2 offenders with unknown ethnicity (1%). This pattern is replicated and corroborated by the CEOP's data, giving further credence to certain emerging patterns linking ethnicity to the specific crime profile of 'grooming gangs'.

10. Though the age of the offenders varied greatly, the youngest offender being 17 years old and the oldest 76, the 26-35 age group accounted for 40% of individuals in grooming gangs. Yet the 17-25 bracket also accounted for another 35% of CSE group offenders.

It is worth noting that, while indicative of larger patterns, this data is incomplete due to imprecise ethnicity descriptors and lack of publicly available official records. We should therefore be wary of making blanket statements and drawing too many conclusions, whilst at the same time, we must acknowledge that, while the data is limited, certain undeniable patterns surrounding group based CSE offenders have emerged.

The report goes on to explore the historical and cultural context which might shed light on the reasons behind the disproportionate representation of Asian ethnicity individuals in grooming gangs. The report concludes by suggesting the actions of these Asian men, a large majority of whom are British-Pakistani, have been influenced by the cultural conditions of their home country and a wider failure of British society to integrate these men into their adoptive culture.

The report finishes with a number of recommendations.

1. The creation of further research is required into exploring the specific reasons why Asian ethnicity men are more likely to appear in this crime

profile. This report touches on what those reasons might be, but much more focused, comprehensive research is needed to answer the 'why'.

2. The facilitation of greater support to increase the integration of British Pakistani individuals into British modern society and the provision of better education with regards to cultural expectations in order to minimise the gap between origin and adoptive cultures.
3. The establishment of a greater support network for victims of 'grooming gangs'. Many grooming victims do not realise that they have been targeted and groomed, and often believe that they are in 'normal' relationships. We must provide more information to our children so that they become aware of what grooming looks like. This may be easily done by introducing a section on grooming in sex education classes.
4. The construction of greater community awareness initiatives aimed at keeping children and young adults from becoming victims of grooming. Parents, teachers and doctors should receive greater education regarding early signs of CSE and how these signs may manifest. Often the victim will not openly acknowledge what is happening to them and the role of external individuals may prove crucial in stopping the abuse.
5. The establishment of a specialist task force to look into this growing phenomenon and build specific policy on actions that can be taken on the ground to deter grooming gangs, i.e. the implementation of harsher sentencing if elements of racial targeting are found.
6. The facilitation of open and honest debate about the very real pattern of stark over-representation of one particular ethnicity in offender profiles. Open dialogue will, in turn, help remove the stigma surrounding grooming gangs, and will enable more voices from within the community who wish to speak up, as these voices are most well-placed to enact real social change

from within. Furthermore, politicians, policy makers, and agencies must move away from political correctness in the name cultural authenticity. When the public debate is distorted by false assurances, we only allow the conversation to be hijacked by those who may wish to promote their own political agenda and malign entire communities based on the actions of a few.

Introduction

With this report, we aim to explore and analyse the various cases of “grooming gangs” that have fast become an epidemic in the United Kingdom and a regular feature in our news cycle. In particular, this report aims to further investigate the role that race, ethnicity, and religion may play in this particular crime profile.

A government report by Louise Casey CB on Child Sexual Exploitation defined ‘grooming’ as:

“the process whereby a child is wooed and courted by an older ‘boyfriend,’ initially through constant attention and affection, later developing into more coercive and often violent behaviour.”⁹

The report further states that

“A key part of the process is that the victim becomes isolated from friends and family and other important relationships. The process can take days, weeks or months but throughout, any notion of consent within this relationship is removed.”¹⁰

The Crown Prosecution Service has described grooming as

“the orchestrated ‘incremental steps’ by which any wish of the girls was squashed by the men through a progression of gifts and attention, getting physical for sex, pestering, threats, orders and “doing by force despite protestation – despite physically being incapable through drink, drugs, or despite an unwilling body and fatigued beyond endurance.”¹¹

⁹ Casey, Louise (2015) Reflections on child sexual exploitation. Department for Communities and Local Government. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418394/Louise_Casey_report_into_CSE_template_format_4_.pdf [Accessed 27th October 2017].

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

More recently, case after case of this horrendous crime has been splashed over the news, and it hasn't gone unnoticed that the vast majority of offenders have been of Asian ethnicity.

The report will therefore provide data analysis of group-based CSE offences committed in the United Kingdom over a period of 12 years in order to demonstrate whether one ethnic, racial, or religious group is disproportionately represented in such convictions, and if this is indeed the case, go on to explore why this might be the case. The report will conclude with recommendations on how to move towards solution-building.

Methodology

The data in this report has been collated using extensive data mining methods. Every attempt has been made to ensure the integrity of the information delivered in this report.

In order to maintain transparency, below we list all possible caveats relating to the accuracy of the data provided, while noting that the margin of error resulting from these limitations is minimal and negligible.

Because group-based Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is seen as a pattern of abuse, and is not defined by a specific criminal offence, it can include a wide range of offences such as conspiracy to incite prostitution, rape, supplying drugs to a victim, sexual activity with a child, and internal sex trafficking. We have therefore defined a “grooming gang” as a group of two or more individuals who employed typical grooming techniques to entice a child to engage in sexual activity.¹²

Due to the significant lack of public information available regarding court cases involving child sexual offences, the collated data within this report should not be seen as a comprehensive collection of all grooming gang cases in the UK. Further, many of the cases found were incomplete and had significant intelligence gaps. This was particularly apparent in information relating to offenders. In some cases, there is no information provided relating to the offenders, and only the fact that a child had been groomed and sexually exploited had been established.¹³

Considering this, we have only used cases in which the offenders have been clearly identified and convicted. Therefore, the data herein should be treated as such, and not as a complete database of grooming crimes in the UK.

¹² Brayley, Helen and Cockbain, Ella (2012), *Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)*, Available at: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/jdibrief/crime/child-sex-exploitation> [Accessed 20th September 2017].

¹³ Out of Mind, Out of Sight: Breaking down the barriers to understanding child sexual exploitation (2011) Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre. Available at: <https://www.norfolkscb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Executive-Summary-CEOP-Thematic-Assessment.pdf> [Accessed 25th October 2017].

Analytical data from other studies or organisations, such as the numbers from The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP), is representative of their own data collection.

Please note that 'Asian' is a reference to the ethnicity of the individual, and not an indication of nationality. According the Cambridge Dictionary, in the UK, 'Asian' implies "belonging to or relating to India, Pakistan, or countries near them." Further breakdowns are provided in the case studies of specific gangs.

Findings

Before we can begin to analyse and deconstruct this type of crime, it is important to first comprehend the distinguishing factors of this specific crime profile, namely, (i) the employment of grooming tactics as a means to introduce sexual activity, and (ii) the involvement of a group of two or more individuals.

Understanding Grooming

Essentially, grooming is the process of luring, convincing, or preparing a victim for sexual activity. Grooming, when used as a precursor to sexual abuse or rape, can leave the victim feeling helpless and often results in the victim returning to their abuser despite the exploitation.

According to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, sexual grooming is described as the instance when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or trafficking.¹⁴ It is the act of psychologically and emotionally preparing or training a child to engage in sexual activity. With this type of crime, the victim is coerced into the crime, engaging them in the abuse by merging the abuse with expressions of love and affection.¹⁵

Children and young people can be groomed online or in person, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional. A child cannot legally give consent to engage in sex acts because they cannot truly understand the power dynamics at play or the emotional, psychological, and physical control that the perpetrator has in these situations.

¹⁴ National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, *Grooming: What it is, signs and how to protect children*, Available at: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/grooming/> [Accessed 17th September 2017].

¹⁵ Pandora's Project (2009), *Child Sexual Abuse and the "Grooming" Process*, Available at: <http://www.pandys.org/articles/sexualabusegrooming.html> [Accessed 17th September 2017].

Many children and young people don't understand that they have been groomed or that what has happened is abuse, which is why a lot of grooming victims only share their experiences years after the fact.¹⁶

Offenders explicitly target and exploit their victims' vulnerabilities, so much so that the victim will often become reliant on the offender for care and comfort, keeping the child coming back to the offender despite the abuse.¹⁷ For example, as is seen in the case studies below, most of the victims were young girls who hailed from broken and underprivileged families, making them an easy target for groomers, who would shower them with affection and coerce them into sexual activity by bribing them with drugs, alcohol, and even food.

The recruitment process is a carefully planned progression that involves indoctrinating the victim with a false narrative that desensitises the child to the abusive behaviour. Once the victim is sufficiently groomed, the offender will often begin to employ threats and punishment as a consequence of non-compliance or disclosure of their 'secret'.¹⁸

Group Based Sexual Abuse

The second factor in this specific crime is the involvement of a group, i.e. two or more individuals. In order to fully investigate the phenomenon of 'grooming gangs,' we first need to note the difference between individual offenders and offenders that belong to an organised group.

'Grooming gangs' are distinctly divorced from individual CSE offenders in several important ways. While individual CSE offenders perpetrate their crimes alone and in secrecy, the very presence of an organised gang demonstrates the gang members' intentional and deliberate decision to partake in a crime that is based on a shared or common ideology. An organised criminal gang is,

¹⁶ National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, *Grooming: What it is, signs and how to protect children*, Available at: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/grooming/> [Accessed 17th September 2017].

¹⁷ Pandora's Project (2009), *Child Sexual Abuse and the "Grooming" Process*, Available at: <http://www.pandys.org/articles/sexualabusegrooming.html> [Accessed 17th September 2017].

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

in effect, a group of individuals who have already decided upon the nature of the crime and have, consciously or unconsciously, collectively justified their behaviour.

A report by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP) found that almost one in three of all child sexual exploitation offenders operated in groups. While most of these groups consisted of two or three individuals, one in ten included seven or more offenders. The CEOP identified that these groups were largely ethnically similar internally. The most common single ethnicity group was Asian, i.e. Asians were most likely to carry out CSE in groups.¹⁹

Data

It is worth noting that, while indicative of larger patterns, any data collected independently will always be incomplete due to imprecise ethnicity descriptors and lack of publicly available official records. We should therefore be wary of making blanket statements and drawing too many conclusions, whilst at the same time, we must acknowledge that, while the data is limited, certain undeniable patterns surrounding group-based CSE offenders have emerged.

In a 2013 study, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP) found that group CSE offenders could be divided into two main types.²⁰

Type 1 group CSE offenders were those that targeted their victims based on their vulnerability. The focus of this brand of offenders appears to be on the sexual abuse of “teenagers and young adults on the basis of their vulnerability, rather than as a result of a specific preferential sexual interest in children.”²¹

¹⁹ Brayley, Helen and Cockbain, Ella (2012), *Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)*. UCL Jill Dando Institute. Available at: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/jdibrief/crime/child-sex-exploitation> [Accessed 20th September 2017].

²⁰ *Threat Assessment of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse* (2013) Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre. Available at: https://www.norfolkscb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CEOP_Threat-Assessment_CSE_JUN2013.pdf [Accessed 25th October 2017].

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.19.

In other words, Type 1 offenders are unlikely to identify themselves as having a particular sexual interest in children, but rather molest children because they are naturally vulnerable to sexual exploitation and easy to manipulate.

Members of Type 1 groups are often linked to each other via some association, whether that be a loose acquaintance or a more formal network of a criminal or business nature. As we saw in many of the case studies, members of gangs were often related by blood or by community.

With this type of offending behaviour, the abuse is carried out by more than one perpetrator and can involve multiple victims.²²

Type 2 group CSE offenders target children as a result of a specific sexual interest in children. In contrast to Type 1, Type 2 offenders have a longstanding sexual interest in children and are of a similar demographic to that of child pornography offenders.

Type 2 groups can be described as paedophile 'rings'. Real-world networking between Type 2 groups is rare, and the bulk of the communication, trafficking, sharing, etc. is done online. Type 2 offenders cannot be defined as 'grooming gangs' because there are no grooming tactics involved.

In the same study, the CEOP reports 57 cases of Type 1 group abuse in 2012, 52 of which included data on the ethnicity of the offenders, and seven recorded instances of Type 2 group abuse. The study reports "a disproportionate number of offenders were reported as Asian."²³

It goes on to explain:

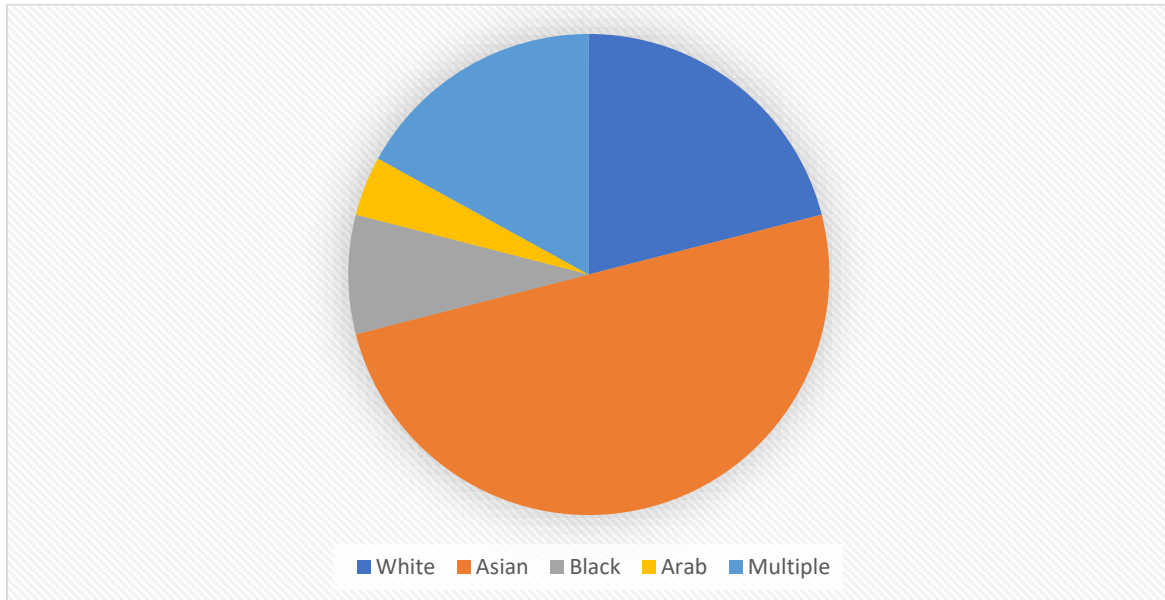
"Of the 52 groups for which usable ethnicity data was provided, 26 (50%) comprised all Asian offenders, 11 (21%) all white offenders, 9 (17%) groups

²² Neil Malamuth and Mark Huppert, *Drawing a Line on Virtual Child Pornography: Bringing the Law in Line with the Research Evidence*, 31 N.Y.U. REV. L & SOC. CHANGE 773, 823 (2007).

²³ *Threat Assessment of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse* (2013) Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, p.19. Available at: https://www.norfolkscb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CEOP_Threat-Assessment_CSE_JUN2013.pdf [Accessed 25th October 2017].

comprised offenders from multiple ethnicities, 4 (8%) comprised all black offenders and there were 2 (4%) groups of exclusively Arab offenders."²⁴

CSE groups divided by ethnicity



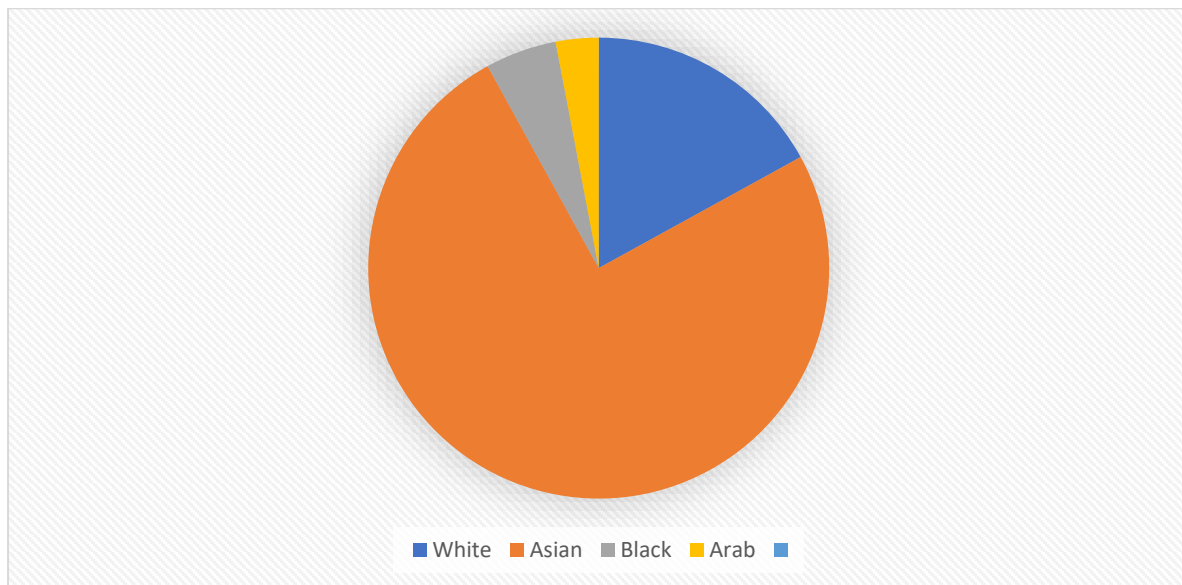
Breakdown: 21% white, 50% Asian, 8% black, 4% Arab, and 17% multiple ethnicity groups.

Of the 306 offenders whose ethnicity was provided for Type 1 offending (in which exploiting the victim's vulnerability, or grooming, is involved), a total of 75% were categorised as Asian, 17% were categorised as white, and the remaining 8% were categorised as black (5%) or Arab (3%). This is in contrast to those identified in Type 2 group offending, who were reported as exclusively of white ethnicity."²⁵

²⁴ *Threat Assessment of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse* (2013), p.19.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.19.

Type 1 offenders divided by ethnicity



Breakdown: 17% white, 75% Asian, 5% black, 3% Arab.

Thus, Asian ethnicity offenders represent 75% of Type 1 groups (roughly equivalent of grooming gangs), while white offenders represent 100% of Type 2 groups (roughly equivalent of paedophile rings).

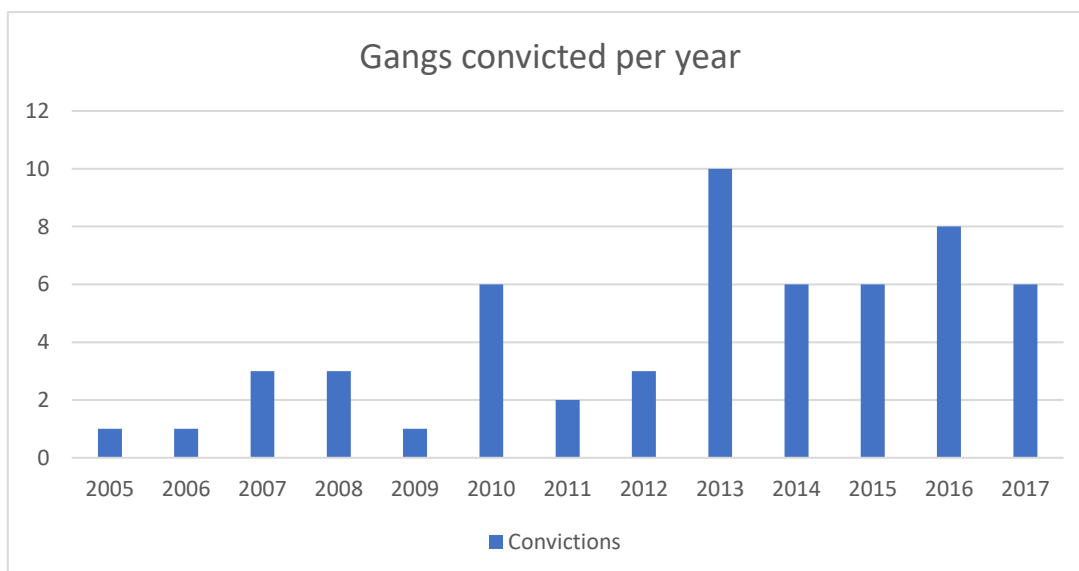
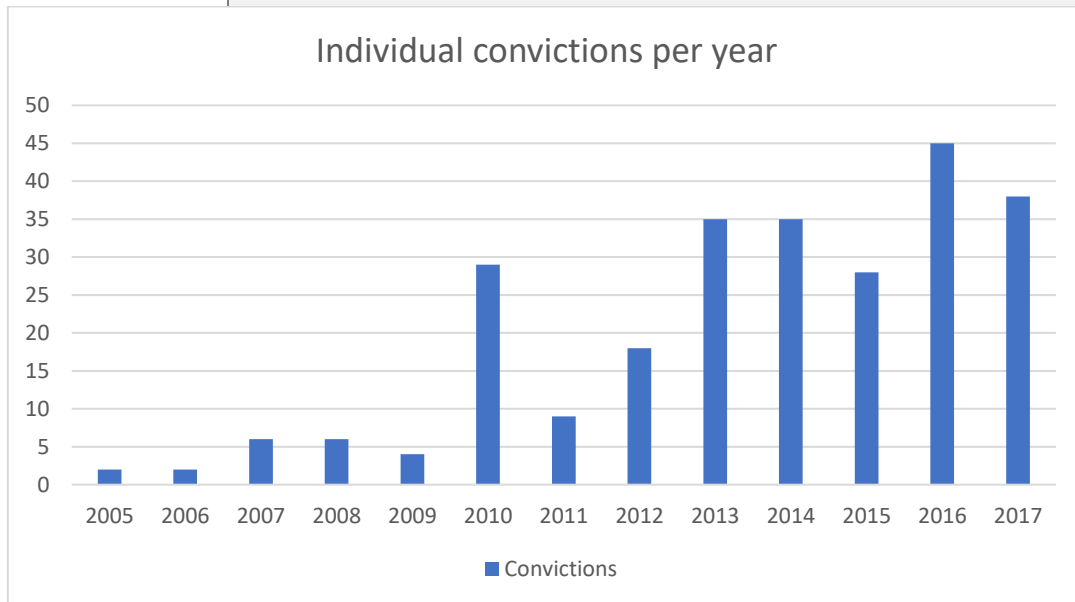
Among other differences between the two types of groups, Type 1 groups tend to be bigger, having on average four members, while Type 2 abusers usually act in pairs. Thus, in term of raw figures of “group CSE offenders” (Type 1 and 2 combined), there are more Asian men perpetrating CSE in groups than white men (229 to 70).

Therefore, the number of group CSE offenders who are of Asian ethnicity is around three times that of white offenders in the same category. However, we also know that group based CSE is not the most common type of child sexual abuse recorded in the UK, and that lone offenders far outnumber group offenders (around seven times more according to CEOP's data for 2012).

In our own research, we found a total of 58 cases of ‘grooming gangs’ from 2005 to 2017.

The following table and graphs show the number of cases and individuals convicted each year in incidents that we identified as ‘grooming gangs’:

Year	Cases	Individual Convictions
2005	1	2
2006	1	2
2007	3	6
2008	3	6
2009	1	4
2010	6	29
2011	2	9
2012	3	18
2013	12	42
2014	6	35
2015	6	28
2016	8	45
2017	6	38

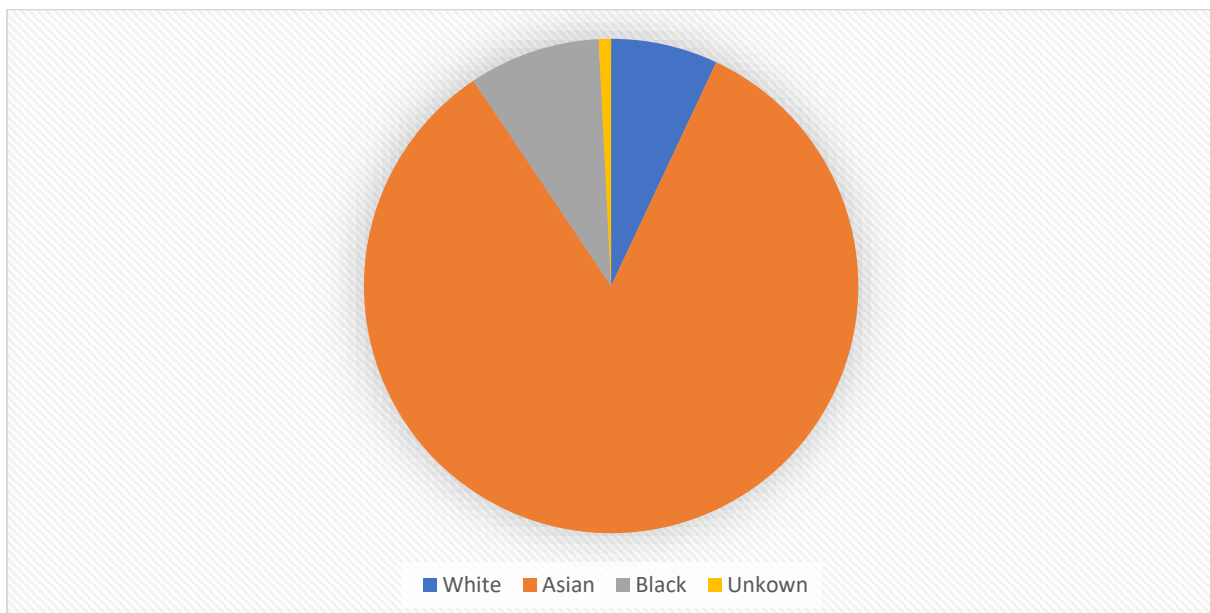


Convictions spiked after 2012, the year when newly appointed Chief Crown Prosecutor for North West England Nazir Afzal, a first-generation British-Pakistani, decided to re-open the investigation into two complaints made by underage girls in 2008, and consequently in December 2009.²⁶ The investigation had previously been shelved when the preceding lawyer had deemed that the victim would “not be viewed as a credible witness by a jury,” despite six hours of video testimony from the victim and the existence of DNA evidence.²⁷ Since 2012, convictions have been maintained at a steady rate.

We identified 264 convictions for group-based CSE involving grooming tactics from 2005 to 2017. Due to the inaccessibility of official police records, this data cannot be treated as comprehensive, but it can go a long way in helping us identify emerging patterns in group-based CSE.

Out of the 264 grooming gang convictions, we identified 222 offenders as Asian (84%), 22 Black offenders (8%), 18 white offenders (7%), and 2 offenders with unknown ethnicity (1%).

Grooming gang convictions divided by ethnicity



²⁶ Burnell, Paul (2012), ‘Rochdale child sex grooming case originally dropped’, BBC News, Manchester, Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-17853560> [Accessed 15th October 2017].

²⁷ *Ibid.*

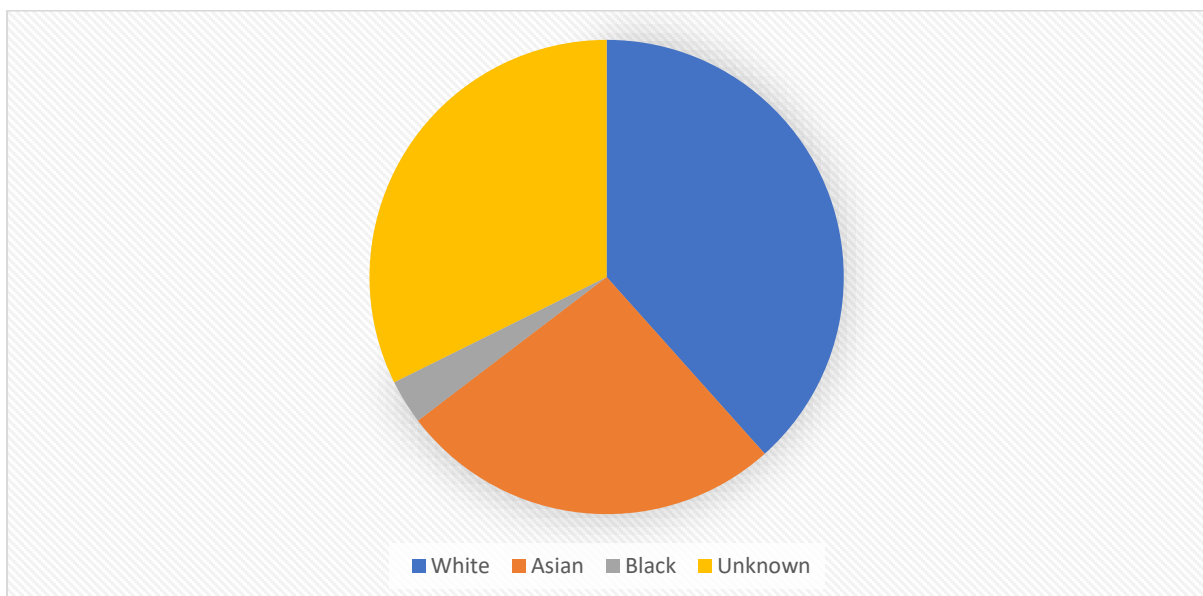
Breakdown: 7% White, 84% Asian, 8% Black, 1% Unknown.

Therefore, the CEOP's findings were replicated and corroborated by our own data, giving further credence to certain emerging patterns linking ethnicity to the specific crime profile of 'grooming gangs'.

Even if we move away from group-based CSE and examine the CSE offenders holistically without making the distinction between group and solo offenders, Asian ethnicity individuals are still over-represented, though to a lesser extent.

The following chart shows child sexual exploitation offenders divided by ethnicity:

CSE Offenders Divided by Ethnicity



Breakdown: 38% white, 26% Asian, 3% Black, and 32% unknown.

The data above is from a 2011 report by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP), a command of the UK's National Crime Agency.²⁸ It includes all CSE offenders, not just those involved in group-based CSE.²⁹

²⁸ Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (2011), '*Out of Mind, Out of Sight*', Available at: <https://www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/CEOP.pdf> [Accessed 5th October 2017].

²⁹ It is critical to note that the ethnicity of 32% of CSE offenders is unknown, and this 32% could drastically skew the information in either direction, yet the 26% of known Asian CSE offenders is enough to indicate a pattern of over-representation.

A point to be noted here is that solo CSE offenders are much more common than group CSE offenders. According to the CEOP, out of the 31 police forces that responded to the data request, 25 police forces identified “a total of 2,120 lone perpetrators involved in either suspected or confirmed cases of non-familial contact child sexual abuse in 2012.” In contrast, “all 31 forces reported a cumulative total of 65 group and gang associated offences.”³⁰

However, the CEOP found that almost one in three of all offenders were operating in groups. While most of these groups consisted of two or three individuals, one in ten included seven or more offenders. In the same study, the CEOP identified 230 groups networks of offenders ranging in size from just two offenders to much larger groups. As with most crime, the groups were largely ethnically similar internally. The most common single ethnicity group was Asian,³¹ i.e. Asians were most likely to commit CSE offences in groups.

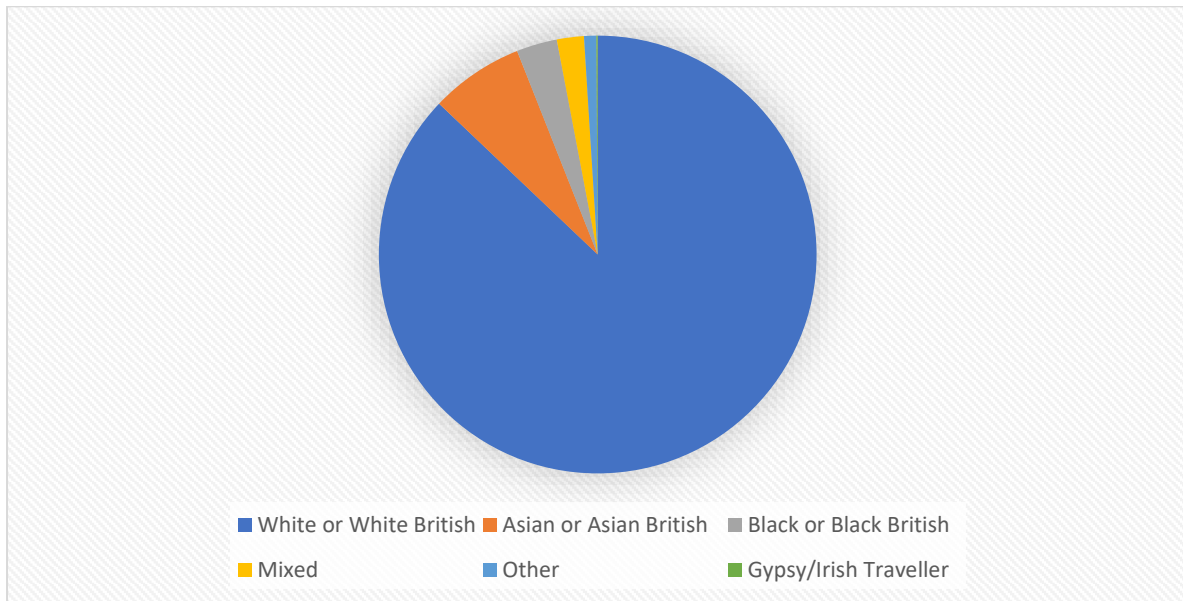
In order to understand the extent of the over-representation of Asian ethnicity individuals in CSE crimes, below is a chart that shows the UK's entire population divided by ethnicity, as per the data found in the 2011 Census:³²

³⁰ *Threat Assessment of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse* (2013), p.18.

³¹ Brayley, Helen and Cockbain, Ella (2012), *Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)*, Available at: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/jdibrief/crime/child-sex-exploitation> [Accessed 20th September 2017].

³² Office for National Statistics (2011), *2011 Census: Ethnic group, local authorities in the United Kingdom*, Table KS201UK, Available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160107125615/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcM%3A77-327143> [Accessed 21st September 2017].

UK Population Divided by Ethnicity



Breakdown: 87.10% White or White British, 6.90% Asian or Asian British, 3.00% Black or Black British, 2.00% Mixed, 0.90% Other, and 0.10% Gypsy/Irish Traveller.

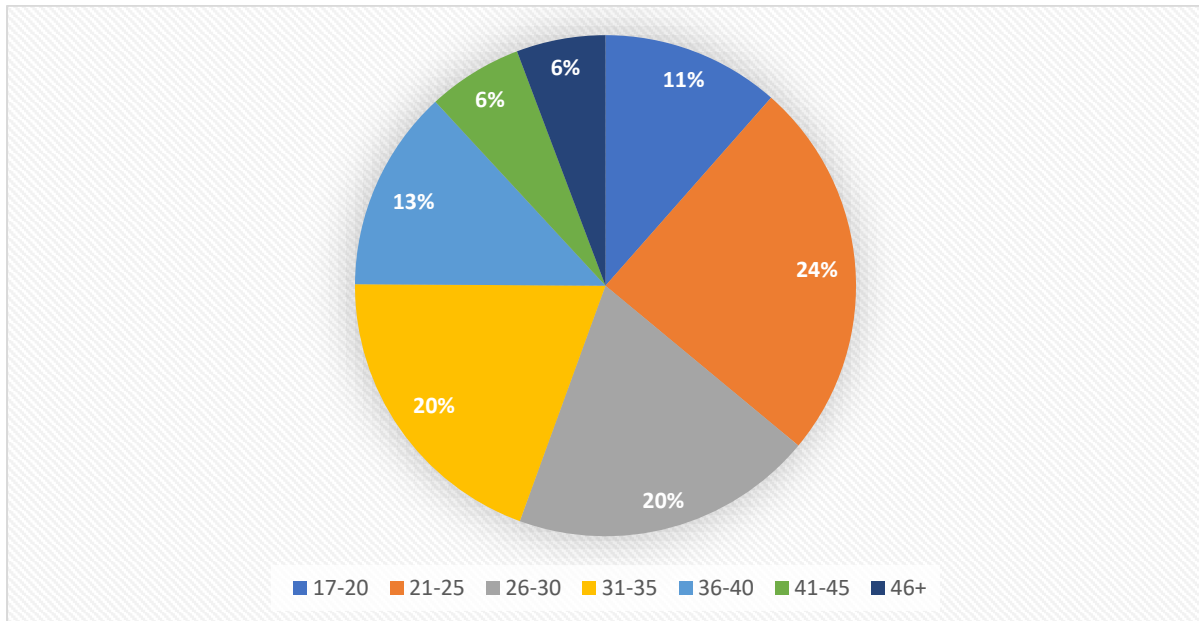
Aside from ethnicity, there are other patterns that emerge from the data. These are discussed below.

When it comes to age, CEOP's data (which again, includes both group and solo offenders) shows that offenders are "disproportionately skewed towards young adults within the 18-24 age range, with almost half of the offenders being under 25 where their age is known."

With the 264 individuals we identified in our own research, all of whom were part of gangs, this pattern was replicated. Though the age of the offenders varied greatly, the youngest offender being 17 years old and the oldest 76, the 26-35 age group accounted for 40% of individuals in grooming gangs. Yet the bracket of 17-25 year olds also accounted for another 35% of CSE group offenders.

The following chart provides further breakdowns in this area:

Offender Age Groups



Other patterns that recur in grooming gang cases are:

1. Offenders are predominantly male, ranging in age from late-teens to early-60s. Wherever female offenders are involved, they usually act as traffickers who 'supply' the victims, rather than directly taking part in the sexual abuse themselves.
2. Many grooming gang offenders have jobs which provide ready access to victims and easy grooming opportunities, such as in taxi firms and takeaways.³³
3. Groups may begin based on a shared interest or from pre-existing social networks, including relative, friends, or work colleagues.³⁴
4. Certain offenders play a pure facilitation role, providing flats for 'parties', driving victims around or supplying alcohol or drugs.³⁵

³³

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418394/Louise_Casey_report_into_CSE_template_format__4_.pdf

³⁴ This is an important distinction between group CSE offenders, which is discussed in depth in the previous section titled 'Group Based Sexual Abuse'.

³⁵ Brayley, Helen and Cockbain, Ella (2012), *Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)*, Available at: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/jdibrief/crime/child-sex-exploitation> [Accessed 20th September 2017].

Analysis

Race Dynamic

The Asian male/white female, perpetrator-victim dynamic is the undeniable prominent feature of these grooming gangs. Almost all of the men convicted for this type of sexual abuse are of Pakistani origin, and almost all of their victims are young, white girls.³⁶

A few notable voices from within legal circles have called for this type of crime where predominantly white girls have been targeted to be seen as “racial hostility”³⁷ and called for longer sentencing.

Robert Buckland QC, the Solicitor General, remarked:

“The law does not discriminate. When it talks about sentencing increases for racial aggravation it doesn’t cut one way, it cuts all ways. Where there is a racial element in sexual abuse cases, the law is clear that courts can apply a sentencing uplift. Racial aggravation should be front and centre in cases where there is evidence of racial hostility or motivation.”³⁸

Legal guidance issued by the Sentencing Council, sections of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 give judges the power to increase sentences if the “offender demonstrates hostility towards the victim based on his or her membership of a racial or religious group, or if the offence is racially or religiously motivated.”³⁹

In fact, in 2015, paedophile Jamal Muhammed Raheem Ul Nasir was given a harsher sentence than usual because his victims were Asian. Sally Cahill QC,

³⁶ It is important to note here that while all of the victims who have come forward so far and revealed their identity have been white, other potential victims, for example those of Asian ethnicity, may hesitate to recount similar experiences due to taboos around sex, family honour, and cultural shame; and their stories may therefore never come to light.

³⁷ Dearden, Lizzie (2017) ‘Solicitor General calls for longer sentences for grooming gangs who target white girls’, The Independent. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/grooming-gangs-solicitor-general-increase-sentences-race-asian-muslim-white-british-victims-a7889961.html> [Accessed 24th October 2017].

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

the judge in the case, had remarked that the fact that Nasir's victims were Asian resulted in a longer sentence because the abuse had "raised issues of cultural shame for the girls and their families."⁴⁰ Mr. Justice Walker, who reviewed the case in a Court of Appeal, echoed this sentiment: "The victims' fathers were concerned about the future marriage prospects for their daughters [...] harm was aggravated by the impact on the victims and their families within this particular community."⁴¹

Thus, there is precedent for longer sentencing in cases where there might be obvious or implied racial aggravation. The former Director of Public Prosecutions, Lord Macdonald, has strongly argued that grooming gangs that exclusively prey on white girls should be treated as "profoundly racist". He went on to say that there was "a major problem in particular communities" of perpetrators viewing white girls as "trash regarded as available for sex."⁴²

The 'whiteness' of the victims is something that has repeatedly come up in the court cases involving these gangs. In the September 2016 Rotherham case, the defendant Sageer Hussain called his 13-year-old victim a "white slag"⁴³ and in the recent August 2017 Newcastle case, defendant Badrul Hussain was noted to have said: "All white women are only good for one thing, for men like me to f*** and use like trash. That's all women like you are worth."⁴⁴

The cultural disparity and the perpetrators' lack of assimilation with British societal norms was clear to see in several of the court cases.

⁴⁰ Matharu, Hardeep (2015) '*Child sex abusers can be punished more severely when their victims are Asian, court rules*', The Independent. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/child-sex-abusers-can-be-punished-more-severely-when-their-victims-are-asian-court-rules-10507542.html> [Accessed 30th October 2017].

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Dearden, L. (2017) '*Solicitor General calls for longer sentences for grooming gangs who target white girls*', The Independent.

⁴³ Halliday, Josh (2016), '*Rotherham: eight men jailed for sexually exploiting teenage girls*', The Guardian UK, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/04/rotherham-child-sexual-exploitation-eight-men-jailed> [Accessed 11th October 2017].

⁴⁴ Halliday, Josh (2017), '*Newcastle grooming gang members jailed for up to 29 years*', The Guardian UK, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/sep/05/newcastle-grooming-gang-members-jailed-up-to-29-years> [Accessed 12th October 2017].

In the May 2012 Rochdale case, defendant Shabir Ahmed, the 59-year-old ringleader, was said to have told his victim that girls could have sex from the age of 11 "in my country."⁴⁵

In the May 2013 Telford case, the defence for one of the abusers urged the judge to be lenient, suggesting that the disparity in age was insignificant, because "this type of rape is not like other horrible types of rapes."⁴⁶

In the November 2014 Bristol case, the defendant was said to have persuaded his victim to have sex with his friends because it was "Somali culture and tradition" and that "men always have sex with each other's girlfriends."⁴⁷

In the September 2016 Rotherham case, defendant Sageer Hussain was reported to have said in a television interview two years prior to the court case: "The biggest problem you have these days is you have young girls, that are dressed up in miniskirts, stuff like that, they're going into the clubs and they're ending up going with blokes, stuff like that, and they're waking up the next morning and they scream rape."⁴⁸

All of this contextual data indicates that white girls are targeted because they are seen as easy targets that are open to sexual relationships with a little persuasion. This is further reinforced by divisive, unevolved cultural identities that psychologically pit ethnic communities against one another so that girls from within the Asian community are seen as commodities to be 'protected', whereas girls from outside of the community are seen as fair game.

Cultural notions of 'family honour' being linked to a girl's sexual behaviour still exist in large parts of South Asia, and therefore targeting a girl from within the diaspora community would be seen as an attack on the community itself.

This concept of a woman's sexuality being inextricably linked to vague notions of honour and shame is still prevalent in Pakistan today. Women are viewed as

⁴⁵ See 'Case Studies', p.50.

⁴⁶ See 'Case Studies', p.51.

⁴⁷ See 'Case Studies', p.53.

⁴⁸ See 'Case Studies', p.56.

commodities to be protected, given, and taken, and damage to a woman's sexual integrity is equivalent to damage to the entire family's moral character. In more public cases, such as that of gang rape survivor Mukhtaran Mai, even speaking about the occurrence of sexual activity, albeit to bring rapists to justice, has been seen as damaging to the country's reputation. See 'Cultural Norms', p. 36, for more on this.

Context

In 2011, a CEOP study had identified 1,217 offenders in relation to street grooming and child sexual exploitation. Out of these, around 341 were recorded as individuals of Asian ethnicity.⁴⁹ In the same year, the UK's Asian population was around 6.9% or 4,373,339 people. Asian CSE offenders therefore represent 0.01% of the UK's Asian population (and 0.03% of the UK's ethnically Pakistani population).⁵⁰

Thus, to say that the Asian population living in the UK has a CSE problem, or even that the British Pakistani community has a CSE problem is wholly inaccurate and a misrepresentation of the facts. It is more correct to say that there is strain of Asian men, mostly confined to towns and cities in the North of England, that have developed an unfortunately successful method of identifying and grooming young, vulnerable girls to engage in sexual activity with them, whilst their control over their victim's emotional and mental wellbeing ensures there is minimal risk of being reported on or caught.

With that being said, if we are to move towards finding solutions to this group based CSE epidemic, we must delve deeper into the small percentage of the British Pakistani population that appears to be dominating this crime profile.

⁴⁹ *Out of Mind, Out of Sight: Breaking down the barriers to understanding child sexual exploitation* (2011) Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, p.9. Available at: <https://www.norfolkscb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Executive-Summary-CEOP-Thematic-Assessment.pdf> [Accessed 25th October 2017].

⁵⁰ *Ethnic group, local authorities in the United Kingdom* (2011), Office for National Statistics, Table KS201UK. Available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160107125615/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/reference-tables.html?edition=tcM%3A77-327143> [Accessed 21st September 2017].

In order to begin to understand some of the vast cultural discrepancies, it is essential to recount a quick history of the Pakistani population in Britain.

Migration

Large scale immigration from Pakistan to Britain began in the 1950s, as Britain began to actively seek migration from former colonies in order to satisfy its post-war labour requirements. Most of the Pakistani migrants were from the regions of Northern Punjab and rural Mirpur District of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).⁵¹

Those that migrated initially were mostly single men, but in the 1960s, the introduction of the 'voucher system' enabled Pakistani migrants in Britain to arrange jobs and vouchers for their relatives, and thus the 1970s and 80s saw an influx of Pakistani families who migrated to join their kin in Britain.⁵²

Today, Pakistani migrants continue to arrive in the UK through marriages, or on student or work permit visas. According to the 2001 census, there were 706,539 Pakistanis in England, 650,516 of which identified as Muslim. The Office for National Statistics estimated that in 2005, the Pakistani population rose to 825,500.⁵³ The 2011 census found that the number has now reached 1,174,983, or 1.9% of the British population.⁵⁴

Among the South Asian diasporas, the British Pakistani community is the most evenly spread across the country, yet it is more concentrated in certain areas such as Lancashire, Yorkshire, West Midlands, and Greater London.

Though the Pakistani community consists of a number of regional groups, such as Pathans, Punjabis, Mirpuris, Sindhis, and Balochis, it is estimated that over

⁵¹ The Change Institute, Department for Communities and Local Government (2009), *The Pakistani Muslim Community in England: Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities*, p.6, Available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120920001118/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1170952.pdf> [Accessed 21st September 2017].

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁵⁴ *Ethnic group, local authorities in the United Kingdom*, Census 2011, Table KS201UK.

60% of the British Pakistani population is from the Mirpur District of Kashmir and is settled mainly in Birmingham, Bradford, Oldham, and surrounding towns.⁵⁵

Integration

In 2011, David Cameron made a speech at a security conference in Munich, where he infamously noted the failure of the “doctrine of state multiculturalism.”⁵⁶ Cameron was heavily criticised at the time, by Muslim groups and fellow politicians alike, yet questions have repeatedly been raised regarding the British Pakistani community and their integration, or lack therefore, into British society at large.

As is the case with most immigrant communities, each generation of the community identifies with different levels of attachment to their country of origin and their adoptive country. While each new generation identifies as significantly more British, the third generation of young people still has “deep personal and psychological association” with Pakistan.⁵⁷

Young Pakistanis balancing multiple identities of race, religion, nationality, class, etc., became particularly reclusive in their own diaspora. This is problematic considering that the vast majority of British Pakistanis fall under a very specific and narrow context, resulting in a stark lack of diversity within the community.

At present, British Muslims make up 4.4% of the total population, that translates to around 2.8 million people. Out of this, 2.3 million identify as Sunni, and almost half (44%) of these identify as Deobandi. According to the 2011 census, 91% of British Pakistanis identify as Muslim. Further, British Pakistanis are the single largest

⁵⁵ *The Pakistani Muslim Community in England: Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities* (2009) The Change Institute, Department for Communities and Local Government. Available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120920001118/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1170952.pdf> [Accessed 21st September 2017].

⁵⁶ ‘*State multiculturalism has failed, says David Cameron*’ (2011), BBC. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994> [Accessed 21st September 2017].

⁵⁷ *Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities*, p. 7

group of Muslims in the UK at 1.2 million, most of which have ethnic roots in two distinct areas of Pakistan: Mirpur District and Punjab.⁵⁸

All of this demographical information points to the fact that the vast majority of British Pakistanis all identify with, and are shaped by, a very specific history and worldview. This, in turn, leads to this particular subculture's disproportionate representation when we examine 'British Pakistanis' as a community. It also highlights the reactionary attitudes that are more likely to develop in the overall community when one specific ethnic group dominates the conversation.

Among British Muslims, the four prominent subgroups are the Deobandis and Tablighi Jamaat, Barevlis or Sunni Sufis, the Jamaat-e-Islami, and the Ahl-e-Hadith. Other groups with a more Arab influence are the Muslim Brotherhood, the Salafis, and Hizb ut-Tahrir.⁵⁹

Cultural Norms

In order to understand the psyche of these offenders, it is necessary to consider the cultural roots of their dysfunctional view of women, relationships, and sex.

An observable feature of these grooming gangs that can be traced back to cultural norms concerns the age of the victims. While the disparity between the ages of the abusers and the victims is extreme in the UK context, Pakistani law is still struggling with the court of public opinion when it comes to banning child marriage.

Only last year, a move to ban child marriages in Pakistan was withdrawn after it was met with robust resistance from religious outfits, in particular the CII, who dubbed the bill as "anti-Islamic" and "blasphemous", forcing the female

⁵⁸ *Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities*, p. 6

⁵⁹ *Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities*, p. 39

politician who introduced the bill to back down.⁶⁰ The proposed legislation recommended raising the minimum age of marriage for women to 18-years-old (currently 16) and advised harsher sentencing to those engaging in marriage with a minor.

The CII unanimously rejected the proposal on “purely religious grounds”. Chairman Mohammad Khan Sheerani said: “Parliament cannot create legislation that is against the teachings of the Holy Quran or Sunnah.” In May 2014, the council emphasised its ruling that girls as young as nine-years-old were eligible for marriage if “the signs of puberty are visible.”⁶¹

This acceptance of child marriage stems from the selective reading of hadith literature in which it is assumed that the Prophet Muhammad’s widow Aisha was just six years old when she was betrothed to the Prophet, and nine-years-old when the marriage was consummated. This belief is founded on a saying attributed to Aisha herself.⁶² Other Muslims cast doubt on the veracity of the hadith as it is in conflict with several other historical accounts suggesting that this report is inaccurate. But for those who wish to pursue their twisted perversions, this unconfirmed account is enough to justify their behaviour. Sadly, this understanding of the hadith has been preached so consistently that it is now prevalent among Sunni Muslims, and widely accepted as accurate.

Yet these fundamentalist approaches aren’t just being taught in Saudi Arabia or Pakistan, but right here on British soil. In January 2013, Nottingham Crown Court saw the disturbing case of Adil Rashid who was spared jail after he raped a 13-year-old girl because he claimed that his Islamic education had left him

⁶⁰ Ng, Kate (2016) ‘Pakistan bill aiming to ban child marriages shot down as ‘anti-Islamic’ and ‘blasphemous’’, The Independent. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/bill-aiming-to-ban-child-marriages-shot-down-in-pakistan-as-anti-islamic-and-blasphemous-a6815576.html> [Accessed 20th November 2017].

⁶¹ Ali, Kalbe (2014) ‘CII endorses underage marriage’, DAWN. Available at: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1107849> [Accessed 20th November 2017].

⁶² Found in *Sahih Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 58, Number 234*. Viewable at: https://www.sahih-bukhari.com/Pages/Bukhari_5_58.php [Accessed 20th November 2017].

“ignorant of British law”.⁶³ Rashid admitted he had sex with the girl, saying he had been “tempted by her” after they met online. The 18-year-old attended a taxpayer-funded madrassah in Birmingham, where boys and girls were taught in segregated classes. Rashid said he was taught that “women are no more worthy than a lollipop that has been dropped on the ground”. This is an argument that is often touted in favour of the veil, where preachers will ask whether you would prefer a wrapped lollipop or an unwrapped one, the suggestion being that an uncovered woman has already been soiled and is unworthy of respect.

Thus, those who take a fundamentalist approach to Islam, whether they live in Mirpur or Birmingham, may operate on a covert parallel legal system in which God's law, or their understanding thereof, will always take precedence before man-made law.

When it comes to the general treatment of women, it is undeniable that women's rights have, both formally and informally, been repeatedly violated in Pakistan. The June 2002 case of the gangrape of Mukhtaran Mai is perhaps a significant indicator of the treatment of women in Pakistan, and is therefore worth revisiting here.

In perhaps the most prolific rape case in Pakistan's history, gang-rape victim Mukhtaran Mai launched a fruitless nine-year court battle in order to bring her culprits to justice. Mukhtaran Mai's brother Shaqoor (then aged 12) had been accused of having an affair with a woman from the opposing Mastoi clan. The claim was later disproven, but Shaqoor was abducted and sodomised by three clansmen in retaliation of the accusation. As further 'honour revenge' Mukhtaran, for no crime of her own, was sentenced to be gang-raped by a

⁶³ Bentley, Paul (2013) *'Muslim abuser who 'didn't know' that sex with a girl of 13 was illegal is spared jail'*, The Daily Mail. Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2268395/Adil-Rashid-Paedophile-claimed-Muslim-upbringing-meant-didnt-know-illegal-sex-girl-13.html> [Accessed 1st November].

backward village council in the south of Punjab. Later, she was paraded naked in front of hundreds of onlookers.⁶⁴

The Supreme Court of Pakistan acquitted all but one of the accused, citing a lack of evidence. Mukhtaran received 500,000 rupees (\$8,200), a place on the Exit Control List, and virtual house arrest. Then Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf admitted he had blacklisted Mukhtaran because he did not “want to project a bad image of Pakistan” by allowing her to travel and share her story.

According to leading women's rights organization in Pakistan, Aurat Foundation, out of a total of 8,000 cases of violence against women in 2010, 928 were rape cases.⁶⁵ The actual figure is projected to be much higher, as a large majority of cases go unreported due to socio-cultural norms regarding honour and family prestige. Out of the cases that do make it to court, only 3% land a conviction.⁶⁶

More recently, in 2016, a bill titled the ‘Women's Protection Act’ made a meagre attempt to help women who may be stuck in abusive relationships by proposing to provide them with legal protection from domestic, psychological, and sexual violence, setting up an emergency helpline, and pledging to establish more women's shelters. Although this seemingly uncontroversial bill had promised nothing but the bare minimum for these abuse victims, it still managed to attract a great deal of negative attention and criticism from official bodies and the general public alike.

The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), the official constitutional body that advises the government on all matters related to religious affairs in Pakistan,

⁶⁴ Tirmizi, Farooq (2011) ‘Mukhtaran Mai: A story of extraordinary courage’, The Express Tribune. Available at: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/154316/mukhtaran-mai-a-story-of-extraordinary-courage/> [Accessed 1st November 2017].

⁶⁵ Aurat Foundation (2011), *Incidents of Violence against Women in Pakistan during January-December 2010*, Available at: <http://www.af.org.pk/PDF/VAW%20Reports%20AND%20PR/PR/Press%20Release%20in%20English%20Jan-Dec%202010.pdf> [Accessed 5th October 2017].

⁶⁶ Khan, Ayesha (2011), ‘Rape in Pakistan: the real verdict’, Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/ayesha-khan/rape-in-pakistan-real-verdict> [Accessed 5th October 2017].

claimed the bill was “un-Islamic,” while Fazlur Rehman, the chief of one of Pakistan’s largest religious political parties, the Jamiat-i-Ulema Islam, claimed that this law “makes a man insecure” and that it “is an attempt to make Pakistan a Western colony again.”⁶⁷

While we do not have the capacity here to delve into even a primary understanding of the state of women’s rights in the region, these are prime examples of how both the formal and informal systems of justice in Pakistan create an oppressive, impenetrable structure in order to maintain social stability by silencing women and sustaining a misogynistic utopia which prefers to see women as commodities instead of human beings, whose sexuality and sexual behaviour is inextricably and necessarily linked to the honour of their family, community, and country.

Cultural Sensitivity

An important point to discuss here is the cultural sensitivity and the attitude of extreme political correctness of those in positions of authority who brushed this data under the rug for several years until it was no longer containable.

The Casey Review noted:

“The case of child sexual exploitation in Rotherham was a catastrophic example of authorities turning a blind eye to harm in order to avoid the need to confront a particular community. The town saw upwards of 1,400 children sexually exploited over more than a decade; groomed by predominantly Pakistani-heritage men offering drugs, alcohol and attention, followed by sexual abuse and mental and physical coercion.

Despite the widespread knowledge of this practice across the local authority, statutory partnerships and many local residents, those with the power to act chose to defend ‘community cohesion’ and political correctness over the

⁶⁷ Zahra-Malik, Mehreen (2016) ‘Top Pakistani religious body rules women’s protection law ‘un-Islamic’’, Reuters. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-women/top-pakistani-religious-body-rules-womens-protection-law-un-islamic-idUSKCN0W51O9> [Accessed 5th October 2017].

vulnerable children in their care. Destroying evidence of perpetrator ethnicity and shutting down services was preferable to confronting criminals from a minority ethnic community; such was their fear of offending local cultural sensitivities.”⁶⁸

Issues such as grooming gangs are complex and our solutions need to be equally sophisticated if we are to have any hope of alleviating the crisis. But downright denying that a crisis exists in the first place instantly aborts the process of problem-solving, compelling the vicious cycle of abuse, vulnerability, antagonism, and bigotry to persist unhindered.

The outrage that seems to erupt every time an attempt is made to initiate meaningful conversation in this sphere shows just how acutely a large section of Western society has fallen into the habit of covering up and side-lining critical information in the name of being politically correct. This section of society, that we label as the “Regressive Left,” in addition to denying that a problem exists, encourages other to do the same, and threatens to label those who oppose this blinkered vision as “racist” or “Islamophobic”.

This notion that certain cultures are out-of-bounds when it comes to criticism is not just misguided and misinformed, but often allows the most vulnerable individuals from society to continue to be victimised and abused. It is absurd that in today’s Britain, we have somehow come to accept the practice of shutting down of voices that try to take a stand for child sexual exploitation victims, such as those of MP Sarah Champion and Councillor Amina Lone. In attempts to protect the ‘sentiments’ of the British Pakistani community, we have failed the vulnerable young girls who have suffered years of irreversible damage. In the name of assumed cultural authenticity, these dissenting voices, who are perhaps the most well-positioned to bring about real change, are dismissed as trouble-makers or, worse, sell-outs.

⁶⁸ Casey, Louise (2016) *The Casey Review: A review into opportunity and integration*, Department for Communities and Local Government, p.160. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575973/The_Casey_Review_Report.pdf [Accessed 10th October 2017].

By refusing to take their views into account, we delegitimise the concerns of some of the most well-informed members of the concerned community and effectively dismiss what is probably our best shot to commit to significant, long-term solutions.

In more practical terms, the misplaced desire to be politically correct and maintain cultural authenticity has allowed disturbing practices, such as FGM and abhorrent attitudes towards homosexuals, to continue unhindered in the fear that any criticism could be misconstrued as racism or “Islamophobia”.

An apt example of how uncritical cultural authenticity can practically hinder societal progress is the 1993 measure by the London Borough of Brent which proposed a motion to make FGM legal. The motion called for FGM to be classed as a “right specifically for African families who want to carry on their tradition whilst living in this country.”⁶⁹

Ann John, a local Brent councillor at the time, successfully opposed this motion and tabled her own amendment in which she called FGM “barbaric” and said it was “no more a valid cultural tradition than is cannibalism.”

Subsequently, Ann suffered a tirade of abuse and threats. She was called a “colonialist missionary” who “thinks she knows what is best for Africans” and was even threatened with mutilation herself. It took until 2014 for Brent Council to finally teach FGM prevention in all its schools. Yet according to statistics cited by the government’s Department for International Development (DfID), over 20,000 girls under the age of 15 are still at risk of FGM in the UK every year.⁷⁰ In a 2014 interview, Ann John said that she “believes her treatment scared off other people from speaking out against FGM for years out of a fear of being called racist.”

⁶⁹ ‘Ann John: I was branded a colonialist for fighting against ‘barbaric’ FGM’ (2014) Evening Standard. Available at: <https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/london-life/ann-john-i-was-branded-a-colonialist-for-fighting-against-barbaric-fgm-9220777.html> [Accessed 11th October 2017].

⁷⁰ *A Statistical Study to Estimate the Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales* (2007) Foundation for Women’s Health Research and Development. Available at: https://www.city.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/266034/PREVALENCE-STUDY_FINAL.pdf [Accessed 11th October 2017].

At the time of writing, in 2017, Britain is yet to witness one successful conviction for this reprehensible practice. In fact, earlier this year the West Midlands police force stated that parents caught practising FGM on their children should not be prosecuted, and that the best course of action is to “educate parents.” The police force also said that they opposed “prosecuting/jailing” parents who had carried out FGM on the grounds that it would be “unlikely to benefit” children who fall victim to the crime.⁷¹

In 2016, a comprehensive poll that surveyed attitudes of British Muslims, found troubling results on the subject of gender and sexuality. Of those surveyed, 52% agreed that gay sex should be made illegal, while only 18% agreed with its current legal status, and 47% deemed it unacceptable for a gay person to hold a teaching position. When it comes to women, 39% said that a wife should always obey her husband, and nearly a third (31%) believed that a British Muslim man having more than one wife was acceptable.⁷²

Former head of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Trevor Phillips remarked:

“We are more nervous about Muslims because we feel people will be offended. But my view is that looking at the results of this survey, which have surprised me, that we have gone beyond the situation where we can say, ‘OK, don’t worry; they will come around in time,’ because that is not going to happen. We have to make things change now.”⁷³

When it comes to the over-representation of British Pakistani men in the specific crime profile of grooming gangs, it took a British Pakistani lawyer in 2012, Nazir Afzal, to finally prosecute the Rochdale child sex abuse ring. Afzal readily

⁷¹ Yorke, Harry (2017) ‘FGM should not be prosecuted, police force says as it claims best course of action is to ‘educate parents’’, The Telegraph. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/27/fgm-should-not-prosecuted-police-force-says-claims-best-course/> [Accessed 11th October 2017].

⁷² ‘C4 survey and documentary reveals What British Muslims Really Think’ (2016) Channel 4. Available at: <http://www.channel4.com/info/press/news/c4-survey-and-documentary-reveals-what-british-muslims-really-think> [Accessed 12th October 2017].

⁷³ Perraudin, Frances (2016) ‘Half of all British Muslims think homosexuality should be illegal, poll finds’, The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/apr/11/british-muslims-strong-sense-of-belonging-poll-homosexuality-sharia-law> [Accessed 12th October 2017].

admitted that “my Pakistani heritage helped cut through barriers within the black and minority ethnic communities.” He added that “white professionals’ oversensitivity to political correctness and fear of appearing racist may well have contributed to justice being stalled.”⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Wertheimer, Fay (2012) *‘Nazir Afzal: how the CPS plans to bring more child abusers to justice’*, The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2012/nov/21/nazir-afzal-cps-child-abuse> [Accessed 12th October 2017].

Case Studies

Below are ten case studies from 2010-2017 that show a pattern of systematic abuse of young, vulnerable girls by predominantly men of Asian heritage. Among the offenders are mostly those of Pakistani heritage, whether born in Britain or travelled to the country from the region later in life, for example, through marriage to a British citizen.

While a few of the cases below involve non-Asian offenders, usually as associates who facilitate the trafficking of the young girls, one of the cases of group CSE of this nature involved solely white offenders. This is the fairly recent case from Coventry that involved three white men who advertised a 14-year-old on an adult website and forced her to engage in sexual activity with over 20 men in exchange for drugs and money.

There are other cases of sex crimes perpetrated by networks and groups, such as the horrific case of the paedophile network reported on in 2015, which have not been included below since we are focusing on the specific crime of group-based localised street grooming of young girls for sexual activity.

In the case of the UK-wide paedophile network, seven white men were jailed for the gang rape and abuse of babies and young children, and for streaming the attacks online to fellow members.⁷⁵ The group used the internet to plan and stream abuse, as well as to groom pregnant women in order to find new victims.

The offenders in the case were **John Denham**, 49, from Wiltshire, **Matthew Stansfield**, 34, from Hampshire, **Robin Hollyson**, 30, from Bedfordshire, **Christopher Knight**, 35, from Manchester, **David Harsly**, 51, from Hull, **Matthew Lisk**, 32, from East Sussex, and **Adam Toms**, 33, from Somerset.

⁷⁵ BBC News (2015), '*Vile and depraved' UK gang raped and abused babies*', Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-32413502> [Accessed 9th October 2017].

While abhorrent, because this case does not fall under the specific crime profile under question in this report, we have not included it in the case studies, but mention it here to note that group based sexual abuse can take place in several different formats. In this report, we explore just one of those formats.

November 2010, Derby

Nine men convicted of a catalogue of offences against 26 vulnerable girls, the youngest of whom was 12, who were groomed and exploited by the group.⁷⁶ The convictions resulted after an undercover investigation by Derbyshire police, known as Operation Retriever

The men befriended the girls, plied them with alcohol, then took them to "parties" where they were often used for sex.

At the opening of the first trial, held at Nottingham Crown Court, Yvonne Coen QC, for the prosecution, said: "They preyed on young girls who were vulnerable, either because of their age and because of their own personal circumstances.

"They exploited these girls either for their own sexual satisfaction or for their friends."

In echoes of a similar case in Rotherham earlier this month, juries were told the victims were mostly schoolgirls, some estranged from their families and homes.

The court heard that victims were targeted predominantly by Saddique or Liaqat, who embarked on a "campaign of calls and texts", then plied them with cigarettes, alcohol, drugs and "sometimes a ride in a flash or sporty car". Once they met up, the girls were forced to have sex with, or perform sex acts on, various people, the court heard.

⁷⁶ The Guardian UK (2010), *'Nine men guilty of sexually abusing 'vulnerable' girls in Derby'*, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/nov/25/derby-men-guilty-sexually-abusing-girls> [Accessed 9th October 2017].

One of the girls told the court about a time she was raped in June 2008, when she was 16. She knew one of the men who called her asking to meet up and, after being taken to a petrol station to buy alcohol, she was driven to an isolated spot where one of the men raped her.

"It felt like it lasted for hours but it didn't, I know that it didn't," she said. "While I was lying there, he said 'Do you like it, do you like it?'. And I said yes.

"I tried to do everything I could to stop it so at that stage I just said yes. I just thought if I tell him what he wants to hear, it will be done quicker."

The offenders were **Abid Saddique**, 27, **Mohammed Liaqat**, 28, **Mohamed Imran Rehman**, 26, **Akshay Kumar**, 38, **Graham Blackham**, 26, **Farooq Ahmed**, 29, **Naweed Liaqat**, 33, **Faisal Mehmood**, 24, and **Ziafat Yasin**, 31.

June 2011, Rochdale

Three men convicted for "appalling" gang rape of a drunken teenage girl, and a further two men later convicted for their involvement in the crime.⁷⁷

The court heard that the trio took advantage of their young victim after she was "intoxicated and helpless." While they carried out the sexual assault, one of their friends took pictures on a mobile phone camera.

The 16-year-old victim's mother called the girl's mobile phone during the assault, only to hear the cries of her daughter on the other end of the line.⁷⁸

Detective Constable Charles Stewart, of Rochdale CID, said after the case: "These three animals have subjected the victim to the most appalling and demeaning crime. They took full advantage of a young, vulnerable girl with no considerations to the huge and devastating impact this has had on her. The

⁷⁷ BBC News (2010), 'Trio jailed for photographed rape', Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8488624.stm> [Accessed 9th October 2017].

⁷⁸ Manchester Evening News (2011), Three men jailed for 'appalling' gang rape of teenage girl', Available at: <http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/local-news/three-men-jailed-for-appalling-gang-881975> [Accessed 9th October 2017].

fact this vile attack was filmed by another person has made this all the more difficult for the victim and they have rightly been given long sentences for their crimes."

Passing sentence Judge William Morris said: "You each took advantage of her when she was intoxicated and helpless. This was spontaneous behaviour on the part of you all deciding as and when this opportunity arose. At the time of committing these offences neither one of you had reason to believe she was consenting to what you were doing to her. She was incapable of such consent."

A victim statement read by Virginia Hayton, prosecuting, said the teenager felt violated and her self-esteem was low after the attack. The girl had agreed to go to a house where she was given whisky and possibly sleeping medication before being raped several times by three members of gang, two of whom "used a whisky bottle to further degrade her." The victim later found wandering streets, dazed.⁷⁹

The offenders were **Ajmal Afridi**, 19, **Imtiaz Syed**, 20, **Tayab Hussain**, 19, **Mustafa Arshad**, 17, and **Mohammed Usman Raja**, 21.

May 2012, Rochdale

Nine men convicted of involvement in a child sexual exploitation gang that groomed vulnerable young girls in Rochdale, the youngest of which was 13.⁸⁰

The court heard the victims were plied with food, alcohol, drugs, and gifts so they could be passed around a group of men for sex.

⁷⁹ The Times (2011), *'The 17 cases identified by The Times which showed a pattern of exploitation'*, Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-17-cases-identified-by-the-times-which-showed-a-pattern-of-exploitation-rjqz6dbqhsq> [Accessed 9th October 2017].

⁸⁰ Carter, Helen and Siddique, Haroon (2012), *'Rochdale gang jailed for total of 77 years for sexually exploiting young girls'*, The Guardian UK, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/may/09/rochdale-gang-jailed-sexually-exploiting> [Accessed 10th October 2017].

Taxi driver Adil Khan, 42, of Oswald Street, Rochdale, was convicted of trafficking and conspiracy to engage in sexual activity with a child. He had come to Rochdale from Kashmir with his wife in 1997. Known as Billy by the girls, he went to the sex parties although he claimed only to be playing cards or watching cricket. He told the court: “They weren't girls – they were women.”

Taxi driver and Muslim preacher Abdul Rauf, 43, of Darley Road, Rochdale, was convicted of trafficking and conspiracy to engage in sexual activity with a child. In spite of his role as a Muslim leader, he opted to ‘affirm’ that he would tell the truth – rather than swear on the Quran in court.

The father-of five worked as a *qari*, reading the Quran for the congregation at Rochdale's Bilal mosque. He claimed to be deeply religious and insisted in court that he only left the post to earn a better wage for his growing family. He was, in fact, sacked by the mosque because of poor time-keeping. Mosque leaders denied he had been removed because of allegations he had abused children.

In court, he was constantly praying under his breath in the dock, to the annoyance of his co-defendants, one of whom punched him. He wept when he admitted having sex with a girl in his VW Sharan taxi. It had been a ‘big mistake’, he said, claiming the girl looked ‘maybe 30’. Another girl, the prosecution's main witness, told the jury she had sex with Rauf 20 or 30 times. Under cross-examination he appeared to feign a collapse.

More than once, the defendants attempted to use ‘racism’ as a defence mechanism.

Kabeer Hassan, 25, was the youngest member of the gang and worked at the Balti House in Heywood – where he raped a girl. In court, Hassan tried to paint himself as a shocked onlooker trying to cope with streams of abusive and drunken teenagers. Some of them, he said, were ‘aggressive and racist’. Some of the girls who visited the shop offered him sex for money, he told the court. He claimed to have been shocked at the pornographic DVDs other staff put on the upstairs TV for the stream of visiting girls.

And Shabir Ahmed, the 59-year-old ringleader, is currently serving a 22-year-old jail term. He led the early part of the grooming plot and raped the prosecution's main witness as she sobbed.

Ahmed, who encouraged his victim to call him Daddy, told her: "Please don't cry – I love you." He bought her alcohol and ferried her to sex parties for other men in return for cash, telling her girls could have sex from the age of 11 'in my country'.

He admitted a year-long sexual relationship with another young girl. He tried to dismiss the prosecution as 'white lies', even launching foul-mouthed tirades against the 'racist' judge and jury. He even left one of the jurors in tears after appearing to leer at her.⁸¹

In court, he dramatically removed his shirt and pulled out a handful of his own chest hair in a bizarre attempt to show the jury that he sheds so much hair he would have left some at the scene of his crime.

Before the sentencing, Martin Narey, former Barnardo's chief executive and government adviser on adoption, said in northern cities there is a "very significant over-representation of Asian men, Pakistani men, in these terrible crimes", although he added child abuse in general is perpetrated mostly by white men.

"For this particular sort of crime, the street grooming – the trafficking of girls in northern towns in Derby, Leeds, Blackpool, Blackburn, Oldham and Rochdale – there's very troubling evidence that Asians are overwhelmingly represented in prosecutions for such offences."

The offenders were **Shabir Ahmed**, 59, **Kabeer Hassan**, 25, **Hamid Safi**, 22, **Abdul Qayyum**, 44, **Mohammed Amin**, 45, **Adil Khan**, 42, **Mohammed Sajid**, 35, **Abdul Rauf**, 43, and **Abdul Aziz**, 41.

⁸¹ Scheerhout, John (2017), 'Who were the men in the Rochdale grooming gang and what happened to them?', Manchester Evening News, Available at: <http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/men-rochdale-grooming-tariq-jail-13035428> [Accessed 10th October 2017].

May 2013, Telford

Seven men were jailed after three-year police investigation Operation Chalice revealed details of a network of men who targeted young and vulnerable teenage girls.⁸²

Youth workers first raised the alarm when teenage girls in Wellington, some as young as 13, started telling them the same stories about men they were seeing.

The victims were four girls aged from 13 to 16 who were abused during a two-year period between 2007 and 2009.

The gang was led by two brothers, Ahdel Ali, 25, and Mubarek Ali, 29, who were jailed for 18 and 14 years after being convicted of controlling child prostitution and trafficking girls. Ahdel Ali was also convicted of raping a girl of 13.

In court, Judge Patrick Thomas QC said the brothers' motives were "squalid, demeaning, and selfish." He said they were "cold hearted and cynical" and that they had shown "no remorse of regret."

Tayyab Khan, the defence for Abdel Ali, urged the judge to be lenient in his sentencing because "this type of rape is not like other horrible types of rapes."⁸³

Mr. Khan told the court that the 13-year-old girl said in evidence that she had not been forced to do anything, had loved him and she described him in court as a "pleasant person".

The judge interjected, saying: "I'm sorry Mr. Khan, he's been convicted of rape."

Detective Chief Inspector Neil Jamieson, who was the senior investigating officer on Operation Chalice, said: "The girls who became the victims were

⁸² Shropshire Star (2013), 'Telford gang is jailed for sexually abusing girls', Available at: <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/crime/2013/05/10/horror-of-telford-girls-sex-abuse-ordeal/> [Accessed 10th October 2017].

⁸³ BBC News (2012), 'Telford brothers convicted of child sex offences jailed', Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-shropshire-19850954> [Accessed 10th October 2017].

targeted because of their vulnerability and were then systematically groomed in such a way that eventually they were able to be used for sexual gratification.

"After years of being exploited the girls then went through a huge amount during the course of this investigation and the trials themselves were then a real ordeal for those that gave evidence."

The offenders were **Ahdel Ali**, 25, **Mubarek Ali**, 29, **Mohammed Ali Sultan**, 26, **Tanveer Ahmed**, 40, **Mohammed Islam Choudhrey**, 53, **Mahroof Khan**, 35, and **Mohammed Younis**, 60.

November 2014, Bristol

Thirteen Somali origin men convicted of running an inner-city sex ring where vulnerable British girls as young as 13 were abused, raped, and forced into prostitution.⁸⁴

The victims had been groomed for so long they believed sexual abuse was simply part of a loving relationship they thought they had with their abusers.

Victims were passed around among the gang members for as little as £30, or "rewarded" with alcohol, drugs, or gift in order to coerce them into performing sex acts on the older men.

In one incident, a 13-year-old girl was raped four times by three different men, after being trafficked across the city to a Premier Inn by one of her abusers.

Police were alerted to her plight in 2012, but the girl refused to speak out for fear of her life. In May 2013, Operation Brooke was launched after a 14-year-old girl was found hiding in a cupboard under the sink in only her underwear at a flat in Easton. Operation Brooke eventually led to the conviction of thirteen

⁸⁴ Gallagher, Paul (2014), 'Thirteen Somali men convicted of running Bristol sex ring that targeted vulnerable British girls as young as 13', Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/thirteen-somali-men-convicted-of-running-bristol-sex-ring-that-targeted-vulnerable-british-girls-as-9887517.html> [Accessed 10th October 2017].

Somali men aged between 20 and 24 in two separate trials with charges including rape, sexual activity with a child, facilitating child prostitution, trafficking, paying for the sexual services of a child, and drug offences.

It was found that some of the victims had been persuaded to have sex with their so-called boyfriend's friends as it "Somali culture and tradition" and that "men always have sex with each other's girlfriends."

One of the victims relayed to detectives an occasion: "Sometimes I couldn't even be bothered to fight or argue for it because it's hard to tell them at the end of the day 'No I don't want to do it' but half the time I did."

"Half the time I didn't really want it for the money, I just wanted someone to be there. Even though I know they were using me for sex and that, sometimes it's just nice to be close to someone, do you know what I mean?"

The offenders were **Liban Abdi**, 21, **Mustapha Farah**, 20, **Arafat Osman**, 20, **Idleh Osman**, 21, **Abdulahi Aden**, 20, **Mustafa Deria**, 22, **Said Zakaria**, 22, **Mohamed Jumale**, 24, **Jusuf Abdirizak**, 20, **Sakariah Sheik**, 21, **Abdirashid Abdulahi**, 21, **Omar Jumale**, 20, and **Mohamed Dahir**, 22.

February 2016, Keighley

Twelve men jailed for a total of 130 years for the repeated rape and sexual abuse of a vulnerable schoolgirl they saw as "utterly worthless." Eleven were convicted of rape, while the twelfth was jailed for sexual activity with a child under 16.⁸⁵

The victim was aged 13 and 14 when she was repeatedly raped and sexually abused by the men. In one attack, she was raped five times by different men

⁸⁵ The Yorkshire Post (2016), 'Keighley grooming case: 'Arrogant' Asian gang of 12 jailed for 130 years', Available at: <http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/crime/keighley-grooming-case-arrogant-asian-gang-of-12-jailed-for-130-years-1-7722032> [Accessed 11th October 2017].

in succession. Some of the abuse took place in an underground car park where graffiti with the victim's name and the word "corner" was painted.

Most of the offences were facilitated by ringleader Ahmed Al-Choudhury, who fled the country and could not be convicted by British courts.

Judge Roger Thomas QC condemned the "insolent and disrespectful behaviour" of the accused in court, which he said reflected their treatment of the victim. He told them: "The attitudes of the majority of you have so clearly demonstrated to these proceedings has been contemptuous, disrespectful, and arrogant on a scale that I have hardly seen before in many years of practice in criminal law. Exactly the same attitude to the 13/14 year-old girl who you all sexually abused and exploited for your own selfish gratification."

He added: "None of these defendants had any concern for the victim. They were totally uninterested in her welfare and what damage they were causing her. The victim clearly demanded pity and understanding but their view of her was heartless and demeaning. They saw her as a pathetic figure who had no worth and who served no purpose than to be an object that they could sexually misuse and cast aside. They showed no shred of decency or humanity when as a vulnerable child she so needed care and understanding."

The offenders were **Khalid Raja Mahmood**, 34, **Tauqeer Hussain**, 23, **Yasser Kabir**, 25, **Sufyan Ziarab**, 23, **Bilal Ziarab**, 21, **Israr Ali**, 19, **Nasir Khan**, 24, **Saqib Younis**, 29, **Hussain Sardar**, 19, **Zain Ali**, 20, **Faisal Khan**, 27, and **Mohammed Akram**, 63.

September 2016, Rotherham

Thirteen members of a Rotherham grooming ring convicted for sexually exploiting and causing “immeasurable and far-reaching harm” to a teenage girl.⁸⁶

The eight men had been found guilty of 19 charges, including rape, indecent assault, and false imprisonment of girls as young as 13 between 1999 and 2003.

A Sheffield crown court trial, which ended in October, heard how the men “sexually degraded” their victims, subjecting them “to acts of a degrading and violent nature.”

The judge, Sarah Wright, said they had caused “severe psychological harm” to their three victims.

The main complainant, now 27 and a campaigner against child sexual exploitation, told the Guardian she felt vindicated after the men were convicted.

The woman, who uses the pseudonym Emma Jackson, said her abusers threatened to “gang rape” her mother if she did not submit to their sexual abuse, which took place largely in an alley behind a branch of Boots in Rotherham town centre, in a park and in bushes near a museum.

Her family were so afraid they moved to Spain after complaining to the police, social services, their MP and the then home secretary, David Blunkett, the court was told.

The woman told jurors that Sageer Hussain – who is of British-Pakistani origin, along with all but one of the other men in the dock – first raped her behind Boots when she was 13 and later called her a “white slag” when she tried and failed to stop him.

⁸⁶ Halliday, Josh (2016), ‘Rotherham: eight men jailed for sexually exploiting teenage girls’, The Guardian UK, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/04/rotherham-child-sexual-exploitation-eight-men-jailed> [Accessed 11th October 2017].

She told police that the first and second time he raped her, between 1 January and 4 April 2003, he told her to scream so that his friends, waiting nearby, would know to come and watch.

The abusers showed no emotion as they were jailed. Sageer Hussain appeared to smirk as he was led away.

The Guardian also reported that Sageer Hussain blamed the Rotherham abuse scandal on young girls wearing miniskirts who were “screaming rape”, in a television interview two years prior to the court case.

“The biggest problem you have these days is you have young girls, that are dressed up in miniskirts, stuff like that, they’re going into the clubs and they’re ending up going with blokes, stuff like that, and they’re waking up the next morning and they scream rape,” he claimed in a Channel 4 News interview in 2014.

The court heard that the Hussain brothers “ruled Rotherham” with their drugs and guns operation.

Arshid Hussain, 40, had been planning fertility treatment with his wife as he raped girls and fathered children with his victims, later forcing them to have abortions.

Speaking for the prosecution, Michelle Colborne QC told the court that Banaras Hussain abused one victim in a car park next to Rotherham Police Station. Colborne said: “(The girl) performed oral sex on Banaras Hussain. When, shortly afterwards, a police car pulled up alongside them and asked what was going on, Banaras Hussain shouted 'She's just sucking my cock, mate'. The police car drove off.”⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Dearden, Lizzie (2016), ‘*Rotherham grooming gang sentenced to combined 103 years in prison for rape and sex abuse of girls*’, The Independent, Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/rotherham-grooming-gang-sentenced-to-combined-103-years-in-prison-for-rape-and-sex-abuse-of-girls-a6897731.html> [Accessed 11th October 2017].

Ms Colborne said the sister of one victim described her sister as a "broken human being" and another girl described the Hussain brothers as "a pack of animals", claiming they urinated on her.

The offenders were **Arshid Hussain**, 40, **Banaras Hussain**, 36, **Sageer Hussain**, 30, **Basharat Hussain**, 40, **Masoued Malik**, 32, **Waleed Ali**, 34, **Asif Ali**, 30, **Naeem Rafiq**, 33, **Mohammed Whied**, 32, **Ishtiaq Khaliq**, 33, **Qurban Ali**, 53, **Karen MacGregor**, 58, and **Shelly Davies**, 40.

January 2017, Rotherham

Six men, including three brothers, jailed for "systematically grooming" two pre-teen victims. The men were convicted of crimes including rape, indecent assault, and false imprisonment.⁸⁸

One 12-year-old victim who was plied with cannabis before being raped by two brothers could not discern who had fathered her child when she gave birth. The court heard how the girl was "so scared" that she let the brothers "do what they wanted", "submitting" to them after they fed her drugs and alcohol. On one occasion, the victim was locked for several hours overnight in their flat, without heating or water, and had to be rescued by her mother.

Prosecutor Sophie Drake said: "The brothers were aware she was under 16 and knew she was at school. They supplied her with alcohol and cannabis so that they could do what they wanted to. The teenager told police Basharat would 'wear her down' by giving her drugs. She did not have the freedom to choose."

The court heard Basharat took her to a flat in Sheffield where she was plied with drugs and alcohol and woke up naked in bed. "She knew she had had sex but could not have consented because she was asleep," said Ms Drake.

⁸⁸ Cockroft, Steph (2017), 'Girl, 12, who was 'plied with cannabis and alcohol then raped by two brothers did not know who the father was when she gave birth'', The Daily Mail, Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4088084/Girl-12-plied-cannabis-alcohol-raped-two-brothers-did-not-know-father-gave-birth.html> [Accessed 12th October 2017].

The abusers shouted “Allahu Akbar” (God is Great) as they were sentenced to a total of 81 years.⁸⁹

The offenders were **Basharat Dad**, 32, **Nasser Dad**, 36, **Tayab Dad**, 34, **Mohammed Sadiq**, 41, **Matloob Hussain**, 42, and **Amjad Ali**, 36.

August 2017, Newcastle

Seventeen men and one woman convicted of sexually abusing vulnerable girls in Newcastle upon Tyne after plying them with drugs.⁹⁰

These convictions came under Operation Shelter, which was a splinter investigation falling under Operation Sanctuary, in which a convicted rapist was paid £10,000 to act as an informer on the gang.

The gang's victims were aged between 13 and 25, and were given alcohol and the class B drug mephedrone (m-cat) before being sexually assaulted at “sessions” in the west end of the city.

Among those convicted, Jahanger Zaman, a 43-year-old heroin dealer, was jailed for 29 years for raping a vulnerable girl, conspiracy to incite prostitution and a string of drugs offences. While being interviewed by police, Zaman denied the offences and said the complainants were “full of shit.”

One member, Badrul Hussain, had called white women “trash” during a rant at a female ticket inspector who found him travelling on public transport without a ticket in 2014.

“All white women are only good for one thing,” he shouted. “For men like me to f*** and use like trash. That's all women like you are worth.”

⁸⁹ Bond, Anthony (2017), ‘*Rotherham sex abusers shout 'Allahu Akbar' as gang is jailed for 81 years after 'vile' abuse of girls*’, The Mirror, Available at: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/rotherham-sex-abusers-shout-allahu-9744074> [Accessed 12th October 2017].

⁹⁰ Halliday, Josh (2017), ‘*Newcastle grooming gang members jailed for up to 29 years*’, The Guardian UK, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/sep/05/newcastle-grooming-gang-members-jailed-up-to-29-years> [Accessed 12th October 2017].

In court statements, the victims described how they had been left emotionally scarred. One victim said she missed out on a university place as a result of the abuse, and that she was left to “feel like I was just a piece of meat” by her abusers. “I had to hear them laughing as they went about telling others what they had done to me,” she said.

“They spread all kinds of rumours about me. I got put down by them so regularly I was left with no confidence in myself.”

One victim said she did not eat for a week after suffering a come-down from mephedrone, known on Tyneside as “bubbles”, supplied to her by members of the gang.

Newcastle crown court heard that the defendants in the Operation Shelter trial, a splinter investigation falling under Operation Sanctuary, were all of “Asian extraction” and largely British-born, although some were born abroad.

While all the victims who gave evidence in court were “white British”, the ethnicity of other potential targets was not known, and prosecutor John Elvidge said that one vulnerable girl who did not engage with police was black, while an Asian girl was seen at a party.

The offenders were **Mohammed Azram**, 35, **Jahangir Zaman**, 43, **Nashir Uddin**, 35, **Saiful Islam**, 34, **Mohammed Hassan Ali**, 33, **Yasser Hussain**, 27, **Abdul Sabe**, 40, **Habibur Rahim**, 34, **Badrul Hussain**, 37, **Mohibur Rahman**, 44, **Abdulhamid Minoyee**, 33, **Monjour Choudhary**, 33, **Prabhat Nelli**, 33, **Eisa Mousavi**, 41, **Taherul Alam**, 32, **Nadeem Aslam**, 43, **Redwan Siddique**, 32, and **Carolann Gallon**, 22.

November 2017, Coventry

Three white men from the West Midlands convicted after they held a schoolgirl captive and forced her into prostitution.⁹¹

The perpetrators plied the 14-year-old with drugs and held her at an address for five days.

The sick trio advertised her as an 18-year-old on an escort site and were found guilty of child sexual exploitation following a West Midlands Police investigation.

One of the offenders took explicit photos of her and posted them on adult contact site Viva Street – and it's believed she was made to have sex with around 20 'clients' before West Midlands Police rescued her on 13 June 2015.

Officers launched a missing person enquiry after the girl disappeared from a relative's home in Coventry on 8 June.

Information led them to the address in Somerset Road, Coventry, where they found the teenager, dressed only in her underwear, trying to climb out of a first-floor bathroom window to escape her abusers.

DNA evidence discovered on a duvet in a room, where she was forced to entertain visitors, was shown to have come from five different sources, including Cairns.

Investigating officer, Detective Constable Jon Barker, said: "These three men were involved with the shocking exploitation of a young girl – they took advantage of her drug dependency and made money out of forcing her to have sex with strangers."

The offenders were **Jake Cairns**, 21, **Brandon Sharples**, 20, and **Jack McNally**, 21.

⁹¹ Rodger, James (2017) 'Sick trio kept schoolgirl, 14, captive and forced her into sex with 20 men', The Mirror. Available at: <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/sick-trio-kept-schoolgirl-14-13909373> [Accessed 17th November 2017].

Conclusion

In light of all this context, it is not difficult to see how some British Pakistani men may have carried over some of the cultural baggage of their home country to a modern Britain that failed to integrate this new body of immigrants. A body of immigrants that it willingly and eagerly called to its shores when their labour was needed, and then failed to provide with the tools necessary for them to assimilate into their adoptive country. The stark over-representation of this community in grooming gang statistics is but a symptom of this failure.

The scale and severity of the crimes discussed in this report has clearly established the need for action. For too long, we have favoured comfort over truth and inoffensiveness over empathy. But our silence has come at a cost. Not only have we failed to adequately address a child sex abuse scandal the likes of which Britain has never seen before, but we have created a vacuum that has allowed extreme political elements to hijack the dialogue and carry out their agenda of demonising entire communities with broad labels and generalisations.

We conclude the report in the hope that this document has provided enough incentive for politicians, policy makers, and civil society alike to give this issue the due diligence it deserves.

We suggest the following recommendations as a starting point:

1. The creation of further research is required into exploring the specific reasons why Asian ethnicity men are more likely to appear in this crime profile. This report touches on what those reasons might be, but much more focused, comprehensive research is needed to answer the 'why'.
2. The facilitation of greater support to increase the integration of British Pakistani individuals into British modern society and the provision of better education with regards to cultural expectations in order to minimise the gap between origin and adoptive cultures.

3. The establishment of a greater support network for victims of 'grooming gangs'. Many grooming victims do not realise that they have been targeted and groomed, and often believe that they are in 'normal' relationships. We must provide more information to our children so that they become aware of what grooming looks like. This may be easily done by introducing a section on grooming in sex education classes.
4. The construction of greater community awareness initiatives aimed at keeping children and young adults from becoming victims of grooming. Parents, teachers and doctors should receive greater education regarding early signs of CSE and how these signs may manifest. Often the victim will not openly acknowledge what is happening to them and the role of external individuals may prove crucial in stopping the abuse.
5. The establishment of a specialist task force to look into this growing phenomenon and build specific policy on actions that can be taken on the ground to deter grooming gangs, i.e. the implementation of harsher sentencing if elements of racial targeting are found.
6. The facilitation of open and honest debate about the very real pattern of stark over-representation of one particular ethnicity in offender profiles. Open dialogue will, in turn, help remove the stigma surrounding grooming gangs, and will enable more voices from within the community who wish to speak up, as these voices are most well-placed to enact real social change from within. Furthermore, politicians, policy makers, and agencies must move away from political correctness in the name cultural authenticity. When the public debate is distorted by false assurances, we only allow the conversation to be hijacked by those who may wish to promote their own political agenda and malign entire communities based on the actions of a few.

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