

SCOTTISH PAKISTANI MUSLIMS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ARMED FORCES

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INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on how Pakistani Muslims living in Scotland perceive the British Armed Services as a career. Later work will extend to other ethno-religious groups. The analysis draws on a survey of 300 people, whom we interviewed personally, in three languages: English, Punjabi and Urdu, using semi-structured, open-ended in-depth style interviews. Given the rise to prominence of the twin issues of racism and ethnic minority recruitment in the Armed Services in recent times, this topic is highly relevant. The MoD has made clear its intention to recruit more ethnic minorities into the Armed Forces. Within the 'Asian' category of minorities, the MoD has been particularly keen to enlist the recruitment of those of Indian sub-continent origin. However, since minorities from this part of the world represent three main religions, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism, it is not enough to simply survey a mixed sample of Indian sub-continent people. It has to be accepted that there may well be differing perceptions of the Services among different religious groupings.

Although racism is an important issue in the discussion of ethnic minority recruitment, it has to be emphasised that it does not form the central theme of

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this paper. Reference is only be made to the issue as and when it is deemed relevant.

The question of the low uptake of careers in the Services by ethnic minorities has not only dogged the Armed Forces but has infiltrated its way into the wider public policy debate in other uniformed services (Hussain and Ishaq 2001) - in the case of the Police, as a result of the McPherson report (1999). Increasing ethnic minority representation across some of the public services has become an important government policy objective under the direction of the Home Secretary Jack Straw (Home Office 2000). However, despite political pressure, there still remain significant barriers to ethnic minority recruitment in the uniformed services (see Hussain and Ishaq 2001).

Table 1 shows that ethnic minority representation in the uniformed services is considerably below 7%, the proportion of the UK population which is classed as ethnic minority.

Table 1
Ethnic Minority Representation in Selected Uniformed Services in the UK

Service	Current Ethnic Minority Representation %
Armed Forces	1.7
Prison	3.2
Police	3.0
Fire	1.2

Source: Home Office

Minorities of Indian sub-continent origin serving in the British Armed Forces is not a new phenomenon. At present the MoD is commemorating the contribution made by ethnic minorities to the British Armed Forces in an exhibition throughout the country (<http://www.mod.uk/2191.html>). The history of British rule in India reveals that Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus all served in the Army of the Raj, and made important contributions to the war effort during the First and Second World Wars (<http://armedforces.nic.in/arms/arhist1.htm>) There are many accounts of the heroism of

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the British-Indian Army during the period of British rule. The contribution made, in particular, by the Muslim Indians and Indian Sikhs during the Second World War was noted in one source which said: 'The Indian Army by the end of the war was thus rated as among the best in the world whose officers and men displayed the highest levels of motivation and gallantry in the field of battle' (<http://armedforces.nic.in/arms/arthist1.htm>).

For brevity the term Muslim instead of Pakistani Muslims is used throughout the remainder of this article. Given that Muslims are one of the largest religious minority groups in Britain, it is only sensible that we attempt to isolate Muslim attitudes towards the Forces. Furthermore, as noted by Saeed et al. (1999, p. 821):

During the 1990s interest in the whole Muslim community in the UK has increased significantly. Beginning with national issues such as the Rushdie affair and international matters such as the 1991 Gulf War, a series of events brought Muslims into the media spotlight and adversely affected the Muslim population in the UK.

Given this backdrop, and the MoD's involvement in employing initiatives to attract ethnic minority recruits, a survey of Muslim attitudes makes both academic and policy sense. By evaluating Muslim perceptions of the Services, we will be able to achieve two objectives: the results will indicate firstly the extent to which Muslims in Scotland support the Armed Forces, and secondly the degree to which the MoD's measures to attract minorities, including Muslims, have been successful. The core of this paper focuses on a comprehensive analysis of the responses to the survey questions. This is followed by a discussion, incorporating some of the possible policy implications of the paper's findings.

Latest Scottish Office figures reveal that Pakistani Muslims are the largest ethno-religious group in Scotland, with the majority of them living in Glasgow (Scottish Executive, Central Statistics Unit 2000). Because ethnic minorities make up only 1.6% of Scotland's population there has always been a danger that their views may become marginalised and therefore ignored. Indeed, far too often surveys in the past have unfairly neglected the opinions of Scotland's minorities. Today there is much more interest in Scottish affairs, especially since the inception of the new Scottish Parliament in 1999.

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This is even more so if we consider that the few studies on minorities in Scotland which have been carried out reveal that minorities suffer from racial discrimination and institutionalised racism (examples of such studies include: Miles 1989; Bowes, McCluskey and Sim 1990; Cant and Kelly 1995; Stronach 1995; Sheffield and Hussain 1999; Kelly 2000). Furthermore, studies have also revealed a distinct lack of awareness and knowledge among minorities about services that are available to them and these problems have been compounded by communication barriers. This has led minorities to miss out on their entitlement to health services, adequate housing and social work services (Bowes and MacDonald 1999; Sheffield and Hussain 1999). It is hoped that studies such as this will contribute towards facilitating the aim of the Scottish Executive to foster social inclusion (Scottish Executive 2000a). Moreover this paper builds on a workshop carried out in March 2000 on researching ethnic minorities in Scotland (Scottish Executive 2000b) which looked at areas of policy and service provision in relation to health, housing, social work and criminal justice. Our paper adds the Armed Forces' dimension to this important debate.

METHODS

To conduct the main survey, Muslim names of Pakistani origin were selected from electoral registers available at local libraries in Glasgow. The names were then checked against the telephone directory so that contact could be made, and the survey conducted by telephone (for details on telephone surveys see Groves and Kahn 1979). The response rate (82%) was very high, aided by the fact that the authors are tri-lingual. Many pollsters have had to settle for very low response rates in surveys of ethnic minorities that they have carried out (one such study was Evans and Norris 1999). We managed to persuade a lot of people about the benefits of taking part in the survey. If contact could not be made during the day we phoned them in the evening. The telephone method was notably more productive than carrying out a door to door survey, because the respondents represent a group which does suffer from a reluctance to talk directly to adult strangers. However, on the phone they feel less threatened and are more co-operative. Our high response rate is indicative of that. The interviewees were asked a mix of both closed and open-ended questions. In the closed or forced-choice questions in which a number of alternative answers were provided, multiple responses were not

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allowed and hence the first received response was accepted. The responses gathered were analysed using both univariate and bivariate analysis.

In addition to the responses of interviewees to the survey questions, use is also made of interviews and meetings conducted with senior officers and other tri-service officials in Scotland and England. Some of these officers wished to remain anonymous. As a result their identity is not divulged.

SURVEY ANALYSIS

At the start, interviewees were asked some basic questions about themselves in order to 'break the ice' and allow them to settle down and feel relaxed about the questions that would follow later. This was deemed necessary given that ethnic minorities of Indian sub-continent origin can get very nervous over a sensitive area such as the British Armed Forces, especially since the testing of nuclear bombs by Pakistan and India, which was heavily criticised by the West. Therefore, it was important that there was a gradual build up to the questions related to the main subject matter of this paper. So what might have been purely 'background' questions tucked away at the end of another survey, served a dual purpose in this one.

The sample comprised 161 males and 139 females. This division of males and females was ideal as it meant that there was no significant bias in favour of either sex and that responses to questions could be treated as a reasonable reflection of both sexes.

The age-group of the sample was quite dispersed with roughly equal numbers in the age groups 18-20, 21-24, and 25-29. Overall 56% of the sample was below 30. Those aged over 39 made up 24% of the sample. This provided an opportunity to make some comparisons between the responses generated by the various age-groups. It also meant that the views of both the first and second generation Muslims could be gauged. The reason why the sample was biased towards the younger generation was because it is those in these age-groups whom the Forces are targeting for recruitment.

Nevertheless, the views of the older generation cannot be completely overlooked. Although the Forces can recruit up to the age of 35, the question 'Would you ever consider a career in the British Armed Forces?' was put to all interviewees, even those above the recruiting age. The reason for this was

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because the research is not solely about minority perceptions for joining the Forces. It is also about general minority attitudes toward the Forces on other related issues such as equal opportunities, and the degree of awareness about the commitment of the Forces to recruit minorities. Furthermore, it is important to recognise that many of those above the recruiting age are parents, and, in the culture of the Indian sub-continent, parents have always known to have strong influences on the career path taken by their children (this is noted by Modood, Beishon and Virdee 1998). This point was made vividly by one senior officer who said:

We have had many cases of young Asians showing a real interest in the forces. But many often say that they will discuss it with their parents and the majority of these people are never seen again.
(interview with senior officer, British Army, London, August 2000)

Therefore getting the viewpoint of the middle and older age groups is very pertinent. The question was obviously put to those above the recruiting age in an hypothetical sense and reworded as 'If above the recruiting age, would you have considered a career in the British Armed Forces if you were younger'?

A wide range of occupations was represented by the sample interviewed as shown in Table 2. The occupations are classified according to the model of the class structure developed by Heath, Jowell, and Curtice (1985, pp. 13-16). The largest group was students (26%) and the second largest was petty bourgeoisie (22%). The petty bourgeoisie covered the self-employed such as shopkeepers, and the salariat/intelligentsia: doctors, lecturers and chemists made up 13% of the sample. There were few that would be classified as 'working class' in the traditional sense. However, the range of occupations reflected the distinctive pattern of Pakistani employment (and non-employment).

Table 2
Percentage Representation of Interviewees by Occupation

Occupation	Representation %
Housewife	20
Student	26

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Petty Bourgeoisie	22
Salariat/Intelligentsia	13
Unemployed	6
Routine Office Worker	7
Routine Manual Worker	5
Retired	1

As well as providing some general data about interviewees, these questions serve a useful further purpose in succeeding sections as they will allow us to analyse the connection between gender and propensity to join the Services, the connection between occupation type and willingness to join the Services, and the degree of support for the Services among the various age-groups.

PAKISTANI MUSLIM PERCEPTIONS OF WHY ETHNIC MINORITIES DO NOT JOIN THE ARMED FORCES

Out of the 300 people interviewed, the two main reasons put forward as to why ethnic minorities, including Muslims, were not joining the Forces in large numbers (see Table 3), were racism (22%) and lack of knowledge about Armed Service' careers (21%).

The first reason, racism, cited by over a fifth of the sample, is plausible in view of the exposure that instances of racial discrimination in the Forces have had in the media over the last few years (von Zugbach and Ishaq 2000). Studies to date on other public sector jobs have shown the strong link between racism in those careers, and the ability to recruit ethnic minorities (Bradley 1991; Abbott 1997; Fielding 1999; Sheffield and Hussain 1999). One respondent summed this up: 'to be honest, it's the image and reputation that the Armed Services have in the UK. Racism stops people from joining, so it has to be removed'. Racism therefore continues to be the Forces' achilles heel. This is certainly not for want of trying, but could simply be the result of the usual time lag involved in altering perceptions. The view of another interviewee summed up the importance of institutional racism as a barrier to ethnic minority recruitment. 'The uniformed services are not for us. There is too much institutionalised racism. One never gets promotion. How many

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ethnic minorities reach Brigadier level in the Army'? This is an important point as there is no British equivalent of Colin Powell, the most celebrated former Black senior officer in the US Army, for the British Forces to parade as a role model for ethnic minorities.

The second of the reasons cited, lack of knowledge about Armed Service' careers, seems a bit surprising given that the MoD has spent millions of pounds on advertising campaigns. Several explanations may account for this apparent ignorance or lack of awareness of job opportunities in the Services. It could be that advertising campaigns have not used the most appropriate outlets; there has not been enough of a high profile presence of ethnic minority officers at jobs or recruitment fairs; and that ethnic minorities have found it difficult to comprehend the message being conveyed by Service' adverts and literature, perhaps because these have not gone into enough detail about the nature of the jobs involved and the opportunities available.

Interviewees cited a whole host of other reasons, including 6% who spontaneously pointed to a dislike of Britain's foreign policy. This could be related to the general unease Muslims feel in Britain about their country's use of force and opposition to Muslim nations with whom they sympathise, examples being the Gulf war against Iraq, the bombing of Afghanistan - in particular, concerns about civilian casualties as a result of this action - and criticism of Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapons. One interviewee made the following remark in this respect: 'I wouldn't like to fight against Muslim countries. Western countries like Britain tend to be always in conflict with Islamic countries'. However, there appears to be an element of bias in this perception given that Britain also criticised non-Muslim India for its proclamation as a nuclear power, aided the Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo, and in the Gulf war sided with traditional Muslim regimes such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait against a secular regime, Iraq.

Only 2% said minorities viewed the Armed Services as not being a respectable career. This small figure is hardly a shock given one of our later findings which reveal that nearly half the sample had a family member or relative in the Forces in their country of ethnic origin, Pakistan, where serving officers are held in high regard.

A FAMILY TRADITION?

We asked 'Do you have, or have you ever had, a family member or relative in the Armed Forces of your country of ethnic origin'? Overall almost half (49%) of those interviewed in this survey had a family member or relative in the Armed Services in their country of ethnic origin - the country of ethnic origin in this case being Pakistan - either at present or in the past. This indicates a fairly strong tradition of military ties among those interviewed. An analysis of the current ethnic composition of the British Armed Forces reveals that Muslims are actually the largest religious minority in the Forces (statistics provided by the Defence Analytical Services Agency).

Also, since the Muslims interviewed in this survey are of Pakistani origin, connections with the military are inevitable given that Pakistan's relatively short history has been dominated by military government. Though the country has had democratic governments, these have usually been short-lived. Only recently, the latest flirtation with democracy came to an end following a military coup. Pakistan's strong military culture is connected to the country's dependence on the military for its survival, given the perceived threat posed by its larger neighbour India and the rivalry between the two countries. The threat posed by India is also based on wars between the two countries over the last 50 years or so and the current hostilities over the disputed region of Kashmir (see Rizvi 2000). Therefore individuals serving in the Pakistani Forces are held in high esteem (Rizvi 2000).

Table 3
Reasons why Ethnic Minorities are not Joining the Services

Reason for not joining	%
Racism	22
Lack of knowledge about Armed Service' careers	21
Prefer further education	7
Parental opposition	6
Prefer family business	6
Dislike British foreign policy	6

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Away from home and family	5
Not patriotic about Britain	4
Lack of ethnic minority role models	4
Cannot practice faith/religion in the Forces	4
Dangerous profession	3
Heard of bullying	2
Training is tough	2
Prefer civilian careers	2
The Armed Forces are not a respectable profession	2
Dislike the military as a career	2
Asians lack confidence	1
Low status profession	1

Interviewees were asked 'Would you consider a career in the British Armed Forces'? Less than half (46%) said 'yes' and 54% said 'no'. Given that 46% is not far from half of the sample, this may appear a positive finding for the MoD which is very keen on encouraging minority recruits. However, the problem is whether those expressing an interest are willing to put this into practice. In interviews with Army officials this has been noticed as being a problem. One senior officer explained that he had received much interest from young Asians of Indian sub-continent origin but only a handful took steps to advance their interest to a level where they could be considered for a career in the Services. He stated 'Asians come forward in large numbers, make genuine enquiries, and are sent information packs. However, a very small number bother to submit applications or make follow up enquiries' (interview with senior officer, British Army, London, May 2000).

Is there a connection between willingness to join the British Armed Forces and the presence of a family member or relative in the Armed Forces of Pakistan? There appears to be a strong correlation between the willingness to join the British Armed Forces and the presence of a family member or relative in the Armed Forces of the interviewees' country of ethnic origin, Pakistan. Of those who said that they would consider joining the British

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Armed Forces (46%), 77% of them had a family member or relative in the Pakistani Armed Forces. Of those not keen on joining the British Armed Forces (54%), only 28% had a family member or relative in the Pakistani Armed Forces.

GENDER DIFFERENCES

Out of the 161 males surveyed, 57% professed no desire to join the Forces. This is similar to the response of the overall sample to this question. A total of 139 females were surveyed. Of these 52% said that they would not consider a career in the Armed Forces, a very similar response to their male counterparts. In Muslim societies the Army is among those professions that are viewed as masculine, a good example being the Army of Pakistan which is almost entirely male dominated (Rizvi 2000). Therefore, almost half of females indicating support is a little surprising. Perhaps this is a sign of the Western influence on today's generation of British Muslim women, typified by this female interviewee: 'If white women are in the army then why can't we join? After all we were born in Britain. We need to demonstrate our independent way of thinking!'

AGE AND GENERATION

An analysis of age-groups reveals that the Armed Forces are most popular with the 45-49 age group, with 55% of this age-group indicating willingness to join the Forces (see Table 4). Perhaps more worryingly for the MoD, support among the ideal age-groups for recruiting - 20 or younger, and 21-24 - was only 45% or less. The age-group which showed the lowest inclination to join was the 50 or over age-group where support was measured at only 30%. The low support among the older generation can be viewed in both a negative and positive light. On the positive side this is not the age-group that the MoD is targeting. On the other hand parental influence can sometimes encourage the younger generation whom the MoD does want to recruit. Admittedly, however, the connection between age-groups and willingness to join the Forces among the age-groups above 45 should be treated with caution as a much smaller percentage of the respondents surveyed were from these age-groups.

Table 4
Support for Joining the Armed Forces by Age-Group

Age-group	%
18-20	42
21-24	45
25-29	51
30-34	39
35-39	53
40-44	48
45-49	55
50 and over	30

OCCUPATION

A look at the connection between specific occupations and the desire to join the British Armed Forces reveals that most support for joining the Forces came from the routine manual workers, with 79% of them expressing an interest to join. Support was also high amongst the unemployed (58%). This is not unexpected, given that the traditional recruiting ground for the Forces has always been inner city areas with high levels of unemployment. The high figure among those unemployed could also be connected to the general difficulties in finding work in civilian life. As studies of minority groups consistently show, the rate of unemployment among Pakistanis and Bangladeshis is much higher than it is for whites (Modood and Berthoud et al 1998). More than half (52%) of the petty bourgeoisie were interested in joining. This opposes the argument put forward that Asians from the Indian sub-continent are business-minded people who would not consider a career in the Forces or who would prefer their children to continue in the business profession (**The Herald**, 23 July 1999). This can no longer be considered as a representative viewpoint. Indeed one respondent categorically stated that he would consider joining the Forces simply because: 'I hate shops. You never get any holidays. You end up working long hours and still don't make much

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money. There is no way I'm going to end up like my dad'. The least interest came from students, of whom only 37% expressed interest, and from the salariat of whom interest was recorded at 31%. This is hardly surprising given that the salariat category represents high status and well paid jobs, and so the incentive to join is expectedly low. Overall, there appears to be a high level of support among both those in work as well as those unemployed or performing the role of housewife.

IF NOT WHY NOT?

What was the underlying reason as to why 54% of the sample interviewed indicated that they would not consider a career in the British Armed Forces? Table 5 describes the reasons of the 54% who did not consider it as a career for themselves. A fifth cited lack of knowledge of the careers offered by the Services as to why they would not consider joining. Thirteen per cent had heard rumours of racism. Racism has been a significant challenge facing the Armed Services in recent times. Beevor (1990) mentions that the media has not done the Armed Services, particularly the Army, any favours in aiding ethnic minority recruitment. As one interviewee put it: 'People are scared of racism. Many say that the Army is a racist, hierarchical organisation, which does not like outsiders'.

Leslie et al (1999) in their research found that further education tended to play a key role in the lives of young ethnic minorities. Thus, not surprisingly, 13% of those unwilling to consider a career in the Forces mentioned college and university education rather than a career in the Armed Services. Dislike of Britain's foreign policy was mentioned by 6%. Four per cent felt it was too dangerous. Only 4% mentioned parents prevented them from joining the Services. And only 3% of the interviewees believed that they would not be allowed to practice their religion. This can be linked to the MoD having put in place culturally sensitive policies - e.g. halal and kosher food - and the ability for women to wear trousers, in order to accommodate individuals from different cultural and religious backgrounds (Ministry of Defence 1999).

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Table 5
Reasons why Respondents would not Join the Armed Forces

Reason for not joining	%
Lack of knowledge about Armed Service' careers	20
Racism	13
Prefer further education	13
Dislike the military as a career	9
Prefer family business	7
Not patriotic about Britain	6
Dislike British foreign policy	6
Dangerous	4
Parental opposition	4
Do not like war	3
Cannot practice faith/religion in the Forces	3
Training is tough	3
Not fit enough	3
Low status profession	2
Dislike commitment to contract	2
Do not want to leave home/family	1
Prefer civilian career	1

A CAREER FOR PAKISTANI MUSLIM FEMALES?

Fifty-eight per cent of the entire sample said the Armed Forces could be a career for Muslim females. Again, this response is another example of the change in Muslim thinking which has taken place over the last decade or so. It would not have been unreasonable to expect a much larger proportion of the sample to say 'no', given that in Indian-sub continent culture the Armed Forces are the type of occupation that only males normally enter (Rizvi

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2000). Recent work by Modood et al (1998) and Parekh (1999) also showed that a large number of women from the Indian sub-continent were traditionally housewives, with Pakistani women topping the list of housewives. However, their work also noted that this was slowly beginning to change, particularly among younger females.

When we look at the response from a gender perspective, it is noticeable that the results are very similar. Both females and males were overwhelmingly convinced that the Forces were a career for Muslim females to pursue. This is yet another illustration of the degree of independent thinking by Asian females who clearly believe that occupations which represented barriers to employment in the past are now a serious consideration. This could be related to a general air of confidence among females that equal opportunities are sufficiently advanced today and nothing is a barrier in today's labour market. To quote one female interviewee, who illuminated this assertiveness: 'If men can do it, why not women? After all we are no less superior than men'. Perhaps encouragingly for the cause of gender equality, 60% of males said that they considered the Armed Forces as a career for Muslim women. This was summed up by one interviewee: 'Women are now in every profession so why not the armed forces? It is all about equal rights and the same choice for everyone. As long as women can wear their Muslim dress then it is fine to join'. Evidence of this change can be seen in the work of Modood et al (1998) who highlight a greater number of Muslim females entering careers today than was the case only a few years ago.

WHY NOT SUITABLE FOR MUSLIM WOMEN?

Of those in the overall sample who said it was not a suitable career for Muslim females, 28% simply viewed the Armed Services as a masculine profession. The reasons they gave are in Table 6. As one female respondent said: 'it is violent and tough and should be for men only. After all, men like guns and fighting'. A male respondent was even more blunt: 'females should not be relied upon to make critical decisions'. Twenty-five per cent perceived sexism and sexual harassment as a problem. One female interviewee summed this up: 'A Muslim women would not fit in and there are not enough women in the forces to start with. It would be hard to join because British men are sexist and they flirt'. Clearly the interviewee is concerned at the difficulties females would face if they pursued a career in the Forces.

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Other factors cited included: religion does not allow mixing of sexes (16%) and that Asian parents do not like their daughters joining (15%).

Table 6
Reasons why Females should not Join the Armed Services

Reasons why females should not join	%
Masculine profession	28
Sexism and sexual harassment	25
Religion does not allow mixing of sexes	16
Asian Parent's do not like their daughters joining	15
Females should stay at home	5
Not allowed to practice religion/faith in the Forces	3
Not patriotic about Britain	2
Dislike British foreign policy	2
Racism	2
Females should have civilian jobs	1
Women should not make critical decisions	1

PAKISTANI MUSLIM AWARENESS OF ATTEMPTS TO INCREASE ETHNIC RECRUITMENT

Out of the people interviewed, 47% said they had seen advertisements specifically for ethnic minority recruits (Table 7). Therefore over half were unaware about the existence of such adverts. This represents a large proportion whom the MoD no doubt would want to be aware of such adverts. Given that a large proportion of the population watches television, and reads newspapers, one would have expected the number answering in the affirmative to be higher. Out of the 47% who had noticed advertisements by the Armed Forces for ethnic minorities, most of them saw these on Asian

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television (30%). The second most popular place was National (British) television (28%) followed by Asian newspapers (15%). Sixteen per cent saw adverts in either English-language newspapers or in Asian newspapers in English. Billboard posters were mentioned by 4%. Community radio and places of worship were together mentioned by only 2%, revealing the insignificant part that community and religious institutions appear to be playing in the process of attracting ethnic minorities into the Forces. Television therefore appears to be the most successful medium for advertising since a much smaller percentage had noticed adverts in the tabloids.

Table 7
Places where adverts for the Armed Services have been viewed

Places where adverts viewed	%
Asian television	30
British television	28
Asian tabloids	15
Asian tabloids in English	10
English tabloids	6
Bill posters	4
Religious/community festivals	3
Places of worship	1
Further education institutions	1
Community radio (Asian)	1

From the 300 people interviewed, 40% said they knew the Armed Forces were trying to improve race relations. This will be a disappointing finding for the MoD in view of the great deal of effort the organisation has put into tackling racism and promoting equal opportunities. A large amount of public finance has gone into advertising campaigns. The MoD has also employed consultants. However, given that the pace of change in removing institutional and attitudinal barriers has been slow in other uniformed services (Hussain

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and Ishaq 2001) it is maybe not surprising to see these results. There is no doubt that ethnic minorities remain largely unconvinced that racism is no longer a problem in the Forces.

SOLUTIONS TO THE ETHNIC MINORITY SHORTFALL: WHAT PAKISTANI MUSLIMS PROPOSE

When interviewees were asked about suggestions for mechanisms that the Services could deploy in order to improve their chances of recruiting ethnic minorities, 14% of the sample believed that the best way to recruit for the Armed Services was to try and remove the racism and bullying that is believed to exist (Table 8). It is clear from this that either minorities are not aware of the steps that the MoD has taken in recent years to tackle racism (measures to combat racism in the forces are examined in Zugbach and Ishaq 2000) or are not as yet convinced that these measures are credible. The following statements by respondents sum this up: 'British and army culture has to improve and eradicate racism'; 'Racism still exists. More has to be done'; 'Racism has to be taken more seriously'.

Fourteen per cent also said that the Forces should be concentrating on advertising in the British media such as newspapers and television. Not surprisingly, given that a large proportion of Asians from the Indian sub-continent watch British television and read British newspapers, only 4% said that Asian media should be used. Another reason for this could be that not many have access to Asian television which is only available on satellite, while only a handful of Asian newspapers are available in this country.

To encourage recruitment, Armed Service' recruiters have been known to liaise with religious and community leaders (this was revealed during an interview with a Chief Petty Officer, Royal Navy, Glasgow, June 2000). This is not perceived as an effective method of recruitment by Indian sub-continent youth (this was a common view expressed at the uniformed services conference, Glasgow, 1999). It was revealed that leaders have their own personal views on the Services and can try to prevent young minority people from joining. Indeed in the response to this question no one cited religious or community leaders as mediums for recruitment. This is very significant because many senior Army officers in interviews have often cited contact with religious and community leaders as being a possible method by

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which minorities could be persuaded to join. It seems therefore that this might not after all be a very productive option.

Table 9
Methods the Armed Forces should use to Recruit more Ethnic Minorities

Method	%
Advertise in British media	14
Remove racism and bullying	14
Visit higher education institutions	8
Educate Service' personnel on race relations	8
Attend schools	8
Inform Asians about Armed Service' careers	7
Have Asian officers in national TV ads	6
Advertise in Asian media	4
Careers' information on Armed Forces should emphasise equal opportunities	4
Spend time with different communities	4
Persuade parents	4
More ethnic minority role models in the Armed Services are needed	3
Allow practice of faith/religion	3
More ethnic minority officers should meet with the ethnic minority public	3
Tougher anti-racism laws	3
Follow the ethnic minority' recruiting strategy of the police	2
No more can be done to attract Asians	2
Attend and advertise at religious and community events	1
Change foreign policy	1
Bill posters	1

In our earlier analysis we saw over a fifth of interviewees indicate limited knowledge of the careers offered by the Armed Services as a major reason as to why ethnic minorities were not joining. Therefore it was not surprising that 7% of the sample mentioned that more information on the careers should be made available. The view of one respondent was: 'there is simply not enough information about Service careers. How are we supposed to know what it is like serving in the Army?'. Four per cent said that where the Armed Service' recruiters are trying to promote the career to potential recruits, they must concentrate on emphasising that the Forces were an equal opportunities employer. 'I think that they are already doing enough. If people want to join they will. Perhaps a more sustained and intense advertising campaign highlighting equality in the Forces would be useful', was the view of one interviewee. This is very important, particularly in relation to what has been analysed above about 14% of the sample claiming that removal of racism may help in enticing minorities to join. The Forces should take the opportunity to promote their equal opportunities agenda, given that it is now fairly comprehensive and contains initiatives that are likely to satisfy minorities including Muslims (Ministry of Defence 1999).

DISCUSSION

This paper has attempted to gauge Scottish Pakistani Muslims' perceptions of the British Armed Forces. The purpose of this final section is two-fold. Firstly, it reflects on some of the main findings of this paper. And secondly, it offers recommendations for tackling the key points raised in this paper.

The survey reveals some interesting facts about how Scottish Muslims of Pakistani origin perceive the Armed Forces. It is quite interesting to note that the Muslims interviewed are reasonably well aware of the negative aspects of the Forces, such as the existence of racism, but largely oblivious to the positive things that the Armed Forces, in conjunction with the MoD, have been doing in order to improve race relations and recruit more ethnic minorities. This is vindicated by the response to the question, 'Did you know that the Armed Forces have been trying to improve race relations?'. Only 40% of interviewees were aware that the Armed Forces had been trying to improve race relations.

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The Muslims interviewed are divided on the question of whether they would consider a career in the British Armed Forces. There was a small majority in favour of those not willing to join.

It was noticeable that almost half of the interviewees (49%) had a direct link with the Armed Forces of their country of ethnic origin, Pakistan, through either a family member or relative. This strong connection appears to have a direct bearing on the attitude of Pakistani Muslim interviewees when it comes to considering a career in the British Armed Forces. Of those keen to consider a career with the Forces, 77% had a family member or relative in the Armed Forces in their country of ethnic origin.

Gender analysis reveals that females were more inclined towards a career in the Forces, with 48% support, than males (43%). Forty-eight per cent of females expressing an interest is a very significant proportion given the conventional tendency of not only Muslim, but Asian females in general, not to join the Forces in their country of ethnic origin. The presence of a small minority of females in the Armies of both India and Pakistan is testimony to this.

An analysis of occupations displays a widely dispersed level of support among the different occupations. There is significant support among those unemployed as well those in work. The level of support was lower among students and the salariat. In the case of the latter this could be because this group are in secure, relatively well-paid and respected professions.

A variety of factors were cited by those who were not interested in joining the Armed Forces. The three most frequent ones were: lack of knowledge about Service' careers; racism, a highly topical issue in recent times; and preference for education. This is in line with studies which have shown that ethnic groups such as Asians of Indian sub-continent origin pursue education with considerably more vigour than the indigenous population (Leslie et al 1999). Therefore it was hardly surprising that the two main reasons touted by interviewees which they felt would aid the Forces to improve minority recruitment were: remove racism and advertise in the British media. Despite the fact that careful advertising techniques have been deployed to target minorities, only 47% recognised such adverts. Clearly therefore the advertising message is not being conveyed to the target audience in the manner and on the scale required.

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Furthermore there is no indication that Pakistani Muslim females are 'under the thumb' of their parents or husbands. Many of the females interviewed appear to represent an independent school of thought, with almost half of them expressing an interest in joining the Forces. Here our very low refusal rate is important since this finding cannot be attributed to the refusal of diffident females.

From this it follows that MoD policymakers might do well to consider:

- There is a military culture among Pakistani Muslims, which should be exploited. Indeed latest figures show that Muslims are the largest minority religious group in the British Armed Forces (statistics provided by the Defence Analytical Services Agency). This proves once again that they can be recruited.
- The MoD can target females as well as males, and has therefore a larger recruitment base to select from. In view of this, promotion of equal opportunities should also stress gender as well as racial equality.
- Providing detailed information to minorities about what a Service career entails should not be totally neglected in favour of over-zealousness to recruit by simply emphasising equality of opportunity.
- Another possible area that needs to be assessed, in the light of 60% of interviewees indicating that they were unaware that the Armed Forces had been trying to improve race relations, is to reassess how those involved in recruiting for the Armed Services are chosen. How dedicated are they to recruit people and more specifically ethnic minorities? What approach do they adopt and can they accentuate to ethnic minorities the equal opportunities policy avidly fostered by the MoD? What is the recruiters' education about equal opportunities issues? Can they explain in depth the equality issue and cultural sensitivity adopted by the Services to young ethnic minorities? These are areas policy-makers may review and monitor.
- More media exposure for the Forces' adverts may eventually pay dividends. Sometimes it takes time for the message intended by adverts to filter through into changing attitudes. There should be more use of British media, particularly television, for advertising for

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ethnic minority recruits, as British television is a good advertising medium and is a place where the interviewees are likely to notice 'Armed Service' adverts. Many young people prefer to watch English-language programmes rather than Asian television. A lot of young British Asians of Indian sub-continent origin cannot read in their mother tongue, although they can speak it fluently. Therefore English newspapers would also be more effective. Adverts that include 'Asian' faces are more likely to catch the attention of young 'Asians' (this was a view strongly touted at the uniformed services conference, Glasgow, 1999). Faces of only black Caribbean or black African people will do nothing to promote the Services to Asians of Indian sub-continent origin who perceive themselves as a separate group distinct from blacks (uniformed services conference, Glasgow, 1999).

- Parents were not considered as a major obstacle deterring people from joining. Hence, recruiters need not spend as much time as they do in persuading 'Asian' parents but concentrate on individuals.

This was a small survey in one location, albeit a location which has the largest Pakistani Muslim community in Scotland. Nonetheless it probably does give reasonable insight into Pakistani Muslims' thinking. But it should not be taken as representative of all Asians of Indian sub-continent origin. Further surveys concentrating on Hindu and Sikh perceptions will determine the extent of the variance of views among the different minority groups on aspects of the Armed Forces.

In considering the Scottish context, there are clearly lessons that need to be taken on board by policymakers and politicians if the desire of the Scottish Executive to achieve social inclusion is to be realised (Scottish Executive 2000a). Our survey analysis shows that racism is still a strong perception which Scottish Pakistani Muslims have of the British Armed Forces and there is also a lack of knowledge about the Forces as a career. These findings concur with the existing limited literature on Scottish minorities which has painted a similar picture in other sectors such as health, housing and social work (examples of such studies include Bowes and MacDonald 1999; Sheffield and Hussain 1999).

To conclude, there is no doubt the Armed Forces have done well on introducing equal opportunities. As Dandekar (1999) points out, there has to

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be a continued and concerted effort to recruit ethnic minorities into the Armed Forces. In line with this, the Ministry of Defence has implemented many initiatives to attract ethnic minorities into the Armed Forces. These include: ethnic minority recruiting goals; monitoring of personnel; better complaint procedures; and educating officers at the Royal Military College of Science on 'racial and gender equality policies' (Ministry of Defence and Commission for Racial Equality 2000). However, to gain across-the-board confidence of ethnic minorities, the Ministry of Defence must maintain its support for a top-down action plan committed to abolishing any form of discrimination, based on race, colour or creed, and always value diversity.

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