



Summary Report
Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities



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1 Executive Summary

- This report synthesises the findings of separate research and reports on thirteen Muslim ethnic communities in England undertaken for Communities and Local Government in 2008. The reports covered communities originating from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Turkey. It is intended as an overview and accompaniment to the thirteen community reports rather than a standalone document.
- Most research to date has focused on the largest Muslim ethnic communities originating from Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the findings of these studies have often been extrapolated and assumed to hold true for other Muslim communities. Recent journalism and literature has reinforced this tendency to homogenise or 'essentialise' Muslims and ignore the diversity of these communities in the UK. This report aims to reflect the diversity of their characteristics as well as identifying common experience and issues.
- Muslim ethnic communities remain concentrated in particular regions and locations in England, however, the specific characteristics of particular communities are closely related to the context in their country of origin, their pre-migration status, period of migration, settlement histories and legal, language, educational and employment issues that they face in the UK.
- While communities generally experience discrimination and disadvantage in employment there are wide variations in this experience dependent on legal status, class background, language skills, educational level, professional status, gender and race as well as faith. Some Muslim ethnic communities experience multiple discrimination based on place of origin, racial and national stereotypes. In an increasingly hostile public climate, women in particular, who may be more visible as Muslim due to dress, are finding it difficult to access employment opportunities. The lack of recognition of overseas qualifications is also a key issue of concern among respondents.
- Respondents in the study welcomed a drive for greater integration but are resentful of the nature and tone of the public debate that is occurring, and some see this as masking an underlying intent to absorb and assimilate minorities. Respondents feel it is important, particularly for younger people, to be confident in 'who they are' if they are to integrate effectively. Language was frequently cited as a barrier to integration and respondents felt the Government could do more to encourage and support English language tuition.

- The significance of ethnicity and faith in relation to identity in these communities is complex. For older generations in particular, affiliations relating to nation, clan, tribe, location of origin can all play as significant a part as faith identity and links with countries of origin remain strong. For younger respondents there are indications of a growing religiosity and a more pan-Muslim sense of identity that rejects other ethnic boundaries and practices seen as specific to a cultural group rather than to Islam, though this qualitative finding needs further substantive research. There are significant intergenerational tensions across most communities and these present challenges to young people, particularly given a perceived absence of mainstream youth provision.
- Civil society development in these communities generally reflects the length of settlement, though the Somali community, parts of which are one of the longest established communities in England, remains particularly marginalised. Faith-based activity and organisations across all communities are closely linked and while these organisations often provide useful services, they tend to be dominated by older males. Provision for women and young people, or those who are secular, is limited or non-existent.
- All communities feel more needs to be done by public authorities to enhance community engagement and participation, and that the staff profile of public organisations, and their lack of knowledge of local communities or relevant expertise and skills in relating to these communities, are major barriers to effectively meeting their specific needs.
- The report concludes with recommendations for enhanced data collection, analysis and dissemination; civil society, public authority and service provider development; and more effective engagement and participation structures and processes. It identifies specific areas that we were not able to explore further in the context of this research that merit further inquiry.

2 Introduction

The Change Institute (CI) was contracted in 2008 by Communities and Local Government to undertake the research project *Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities*. Communities and Local Government recognised that its understanding and knowledge of the Muslim population in England had been skewed towards the larger Muslim ethnic communities of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin or heritage. This left critical gaps in knowledge and understanding of smaller Muslim ethnic communities.

Thirteen ethnic Muslim communities were identified by Communities and Local Government as a priority for gathering more data, knowledge and insights. These communities originated from:

- Afghanistan
- Algeria
- Bangladesh
- Egypt
- India
- Iran
- Iraq
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- Turkey.

The aim of the research was to identify the key characteristics of these Muslim communities in England in order to guide Communities and Local Government's work and delivery of projects within England as well as informing its international engagement programme.

This report synthesises the findings of the detailed separate research reports in relation to these specific communities. The fieldwork for this project took place primarily between April and July of 2008, with qualitative data collection through 220 one-to-one interviews with community respondents and stakeholders and a series of 30 focus groups with participants from different communities. The full approach and methodology is detailed in a technical report available from Communities and Local Government.¹

The report sets out the context for migration and what is known about demographics. Respondent insights into the socio economic status of their communities are set out together with their views on integration and cohesion. The complexity of ethnic and religious identities and emerging dynamics are discussed as are intergenerational issues and challenges for young people. The wide range of continuing links with countries of origin are noted. This is followed by a broad overview of the nature and type of civil society development that has taken place and issues relating to public authority engagement and encouragement of participation by communities are highlighted. Overall conclusions are drawn followed by recommendations for the wide range of stakeholders with an interest in the issues.

¹ Technical Report: Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities, ISBN 978 1 4098 1320 0, Communities and Local Government April 2009. Available via Communities and Local Government website: www.communities.gov.uk

3 Context

Muslim ethnic communities in the UK were predominantly born in or have their heritage from countries that have had significant historic links with this country. While the UK has long been engaged with the Muslim world, relatively little was known until recently about these communities in England. The numerical dominance of Muslim communities from South Asia has meant that research has often masked differences between and within communities and there has been a tendency to homogenise and essentialise the characteristics of these communities rather than examine their diversity as well as their commonalities. This study aims to explore the richness of this diversity as well as common themes with a specific focus on populations in England.

The national census of 2001 recorded religion for the first time, providing a much more detailed profile of Muslims in the UK than had been previously available. Following a significant number of attempts to estimate the population,² the census established that there were 1.6 million people of the Muslim faith living in the UK, constituting 3 per cent of the national population.³ It confirmed the widely held assumption that the majority of the UK's Muslim population is from the Indian sub-continent, with nearly 68 per cent from Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani backgrounds, the remainder being predominantly groups from North Africa and the Middle East.⁴ Eight per cent of the UK Muslim population are also classified as 'Other white'. This category includes Turkish Cypriots and other Turks, Bosnians, Kosovans and smaller groups from the former Yugoslavia.

Most of the countries of heritage have had significant links with the UK through colonial occupation or major trade and commercial relationships. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Iraq, Pakistan and Somalia were once colonies or protectorates of Great Britain. The UK has long historical ties with Saudi Arabia and Iran, largely related to these countries' natural resources. The UK continues to enjoy good relationships with Saudi Arabia, though relationships with Iran have been difficult since the fall of the 'Western' supported Shah as a result of the Iranian Revolution in 1979.

Large scale Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi migration to Britain began in the post war years from the 1950s onward in response to the British Nationality Act 1948, labour shortages in the 1960s and active encouragement of immigration from the New Commonwealth countries. However, the push and pull factors of migration vary across different Muslim ethnic communities. For example, Moroccans have been present in significant numbers in England from the 1960s while large numbers of their

² For a good overview of estimates of Muslims prior to the census see Serena Hussain (2008), *Muslims on the Map: A National Survey of Social Trends in Britain*, London: Tauris Academic Studies, pp. 38 – 40.

³ Estimates of the Muslim population for 2008 based on the Labour Force Survey have been as high as 2.4 million. 'Muslim population 'rising ten times faster than rest of society'', *The Times*, 30.1.2009. www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article5621482.ece

⁴ Census of England 2001, S104.

neighbours from Algeria arrived more recently as refugees and asylum seekers following civil disruption and widespread terrorism in Algeria. The Nigerian community arrived in numbers from the 1950s and then again during the 1990s to pursue economic opportunities following economic failures in their country, while Turkish Cypriot communities in the main migrated during the early post-war period to take up employment opportunities. Egyptians and Saudi Arabians have been present in small numbers for many decades while the Iranian, Iraqi and Afghan presence includes established exiles, students and, in the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, more recent arrivals fleeing war and social breakdown.

Data on faith in England has only been available since 2001 which has meant that studies prior to the availability of this data mainly analysed the experiences and data of people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin to draw conclusions about Muslims in Britain. While these studies may capture the headline experiences of the major Muslim populations in the UK, they presume a homogeneity that does not reflect the diversity that exists among Muslim communities. This diversity includes important features such as the context for migration, different settlement histories, geographies and employment trends, so there are important caveats that need to be made in drawing conclusions about Muslim communities from these studies and accompanying data.

The tendency to homogenise the Muslim population in England has been recognised and challenged by prominent British academics and commentators. In *Young, British and Muslim* (2007), Philip Lewis states that:

Not only is Islam used to eclipse other identities, ethnic, class or professional, many of which Muslims share with their fellow-citizens, but Islam is in danger of being 'essentialised' – reduced to some unchanging essence and pathologised... All too often, journalistic and political commentary on Islam supposes that actual ethnic particularities are subordinate to the aspirational rhetoric of belonging to one, undivided, world-wide community – the umma. The reality is quite different.⁵

Similarly, Professor Steve Vertovec and Professor Ceri Peach note that:

Both images of Islam and Muslim people do gross injustice to the broad historical and geographical plasticity and creativity of Islamic writings, social forms, institutions and practices as found in numerous 'schools' of Islamic law, mystical brotherhoods, devotional and popular traditions, minority Muslim traditions, and regional variations of teachings and practices. Such images also mask contemporary variations in the manifestations of Islamic belief and practice throughout the world which reflect the nature of any local rural-continuum, class and status structures and levels of education, both religious and secular.⁶

⁵ Lewis, P. (2007), *Young, British and Muslim*, Continuum: London.

⁶ Vertovic, S. and Peach, C. eds.(1997), *Islam in Europe: The Politics of Religion and Community*, New York: St. Martin's Press.

The tendency to generalise has also generated adverse effects in public policy and engagement with Muslim communities in general, and has been particularly problematic in the current emotionally charged debates about multiculturalism, integration and cohesion. Prior to the 1980s religion was generally seen as a fixed and passive subject in policy terms,⁷ however, following the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the 'Salman Rushdie Affair'⁸ in 1988, a focus on Islam and Muslims as a political, economic and social grouping has superseded ethnic, regional, and, until relatively recently, class distinctions and analysis.⁹ This change has accelerated following terrorist attacks in London, Madrid and New York. This has led to the proliferation of journalism and books on Muslims and Islam in Britain, many of which fail to appreciate the diversity of Britain's Muslim population.

A limited amount of research has focused specifically on the diversity of the Muslim population and experience, particularly as a whole but also in relation to specific ethno-religious communities. Humayan Ansari's book *The Infidel Within* (2004) is an important and sophisticated work on the history of Muslims in Britain, and his shorter publication *Muslims in Britain* (2003) provides a good analysis of key issues and challenges facing various Muslim communities. Serena Hussain's book *Muslims on the Map: A National Survey of Social Trends in Britain* (2008) provides an in-depth analysis of Muslim communities in the UK largely based on data in the 2001 census. The chapters contained in *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure* (2005), edited by Tahir Abbas, also offer more subtlety in their analysis of Muslim communities in Britain than is often offered in contemporary works and the chapter by Ceri Peach 'Britain's Muslim Population: An Overview' is particularly helpful. Communities and Local Government has also contributed to the literature with its *Review of the Evidence Base on Faith Communities* (Beckford et al, 2006) which includes ethno-religious data on Muslim communities in addition to other faith groups, as does the Office for National Statistics publication *Focus on Ethnicity and Religion* (Dobbs, Green and Zealey, 2006). Works prior to the 2001 census include *Ethnicity in the 1991 Census* (Four volumes: Vol 1 Coleman and Salt, 1996; Vol 2, Peach, 1996; Vol 3, Ratcliffe, 1996; Vol 4, Karn 1997) and *Ethnic minorities in Britain: diversity and disadvantage* (Modood et al 1997).

There have also been a limited number of community specific studies. Serena Hussain's *An Annotated Bibliography of Recent Literature on 'Invisible' Muslim Communities and New Muslim Communities in Britain* (2008) provides a good overview and readers can refer to the bibliographies of the individual community reports in this series for additional sources.¹⁰ However, while there is some detailed research on Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Somali Muslim communities and some work on the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot communities, all the other communities that are the focus of this research remain largely unstudied and there continue to be large qualitative and quantitative

⁷ Spellman (2006), *Religion and National: Iranian Local and Transnational Networks in Britain*, London: Berghahn Books.

⁸ The 'Salman Rushdie Affair' refers to the reaction to the release of British author Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* in 1988. The book was deemed to be blasphemous by many Muslims and led to significant political mobilisation of Muslim communities in Britain. The incident was also notable for the *fatwa* issued by Ayatollah Khomeini, the former Supreme Leader of Iran, calling on Muslims to kill Rushdie and his publishers.

⁹ Tufyal Choudhury and Serena Hussain (2007), *Muslims in the EU: Cities Report – United Kingdom*, Open Society Institute. www.eumap.org/topics/minority/reports/eumuslims/background_reports/download/uk/uk.pdf

¹⁰ www.compas.ox.ac.uk/publications/papers/Muslim%20Communities%20Annotate%20Bibliography%20090306.pdf.

knowledge gaps. Even more important, the knowledge that does exist appears to have made only a small impression on public policy and engagement by authorities with Muslim communities in England, let alone on the media and wider public understanding. Rather than duplicating the many reports on the overall situation of Muslims in the UK, this research study aims to begin the process of filling in the holes in our understanding of England's diverse Muslim communities and providing policy makers and practitioners with an accessible and solid starting point for further research and engagement.

3.1 'Ethnic communities'

It is widely understood that the term 'community' can take on many different meanings. Often it is used to describe a group bound by a common interest or identity. Definitions of 'community' may take a qualitative approach to the strength of linkages between different individuals or 'community' may be used to describe people living in a particular geographic location. Communities may overlap and individuals may belong to a range of different 'communities' depending on the definition. This series of thirteen reports uses the term 'community' to refer to the total population of a specific ethno-religious group. The use of the term 'ethnicity' is discussed in section 7.3 but it is worth noting that while the reports have grouped 'communities' by country of heritage it is recognised that this does not necessarily determine ethnic identities.

It is not assumed that these communities are discrete and homogenous; rather they are sub-sets and super-sets of other communities of interest and identity. Indeed it is critical to note that labelling should not be used in a restrictive sense and policy makers and practitioners should be mindful of using single identity frameworks to engage and work with communities. The dangers of this have been eloquently captured by Amartya Sen:

The insistence, if only implicitly, on a choiceless singularity of human identity not only diminishes us all, it also makes the world much more flammable. The alternative to the divisiveness of one pre-eminent categorisation is not any unreal claim that we are much the same. That we are not. Rather, the main hope of harmony in our troubled world lies in the plurality of our identities, which cut across each other and work against sharp divisions around one single hardened line of vehement divisions that allegedly cannot be resisted. Our shared humanity gets savagely challenged when our differences are narrowed into one devised system of uniquely powerful categorisation.¹¹

¹¹ Amartya Sen (2006), *Identity & Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, London: Penguin Books.

4 Migration

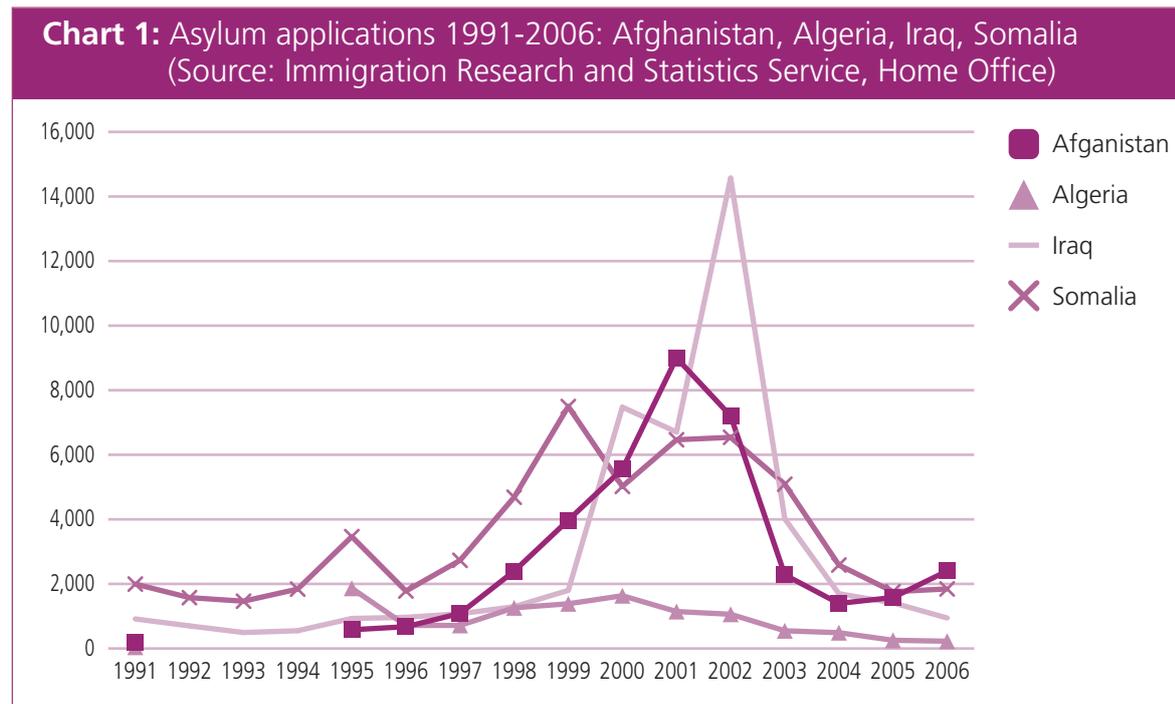
To understand Muslim ethnic communities in England it is necessary to understand their migration histories. This has influenced their areas of settlement, the demographic and socio economic profile and the internal dynamics of communities. The specific contingencies that have shaped the specific diaspora community include the period of migration, ethnic and religious tensions, the impact of war or civil unrest in the country of heritage and the cultural specifics of how 'being a Muslim' is exhibited. For this reason their population profile in England rarely reflects that of the country of origin; most migrant communities are often specific subsets of the population in the country of origin and even longer established communities continue to be concentrated in very specific regions and areas of England.

The early Muslim migrants in any numbers included sailors of Bangladeshi and Somali origin. The migrations of larger Muslim communities to the UK are linked to post Second World War labour needs met by the New Commonwealth nations. New patterns of settlement developed as migrant populations came to meet British labour demands, with South Asian populations, including the predominantly Muslim migrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh as well as smaller numbers of Indian Muslims, settling in areas where manufacturing and textiles were the key employers. Historically these communities settled in London, the West Midlands, the North West and Yorkshire, with smaller settlements in Scotland and Wales. While there is a growing geographical spread across the UK, three quarters of Muslims in Britain still live in twenty four local authority areas in Greater London, the West and East Midlands, West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester.¹²

A number of smaller Muslim communities from a wide variety of countries also settled in the UK over time, often as a result of war and conflicts in their countries of origin. There have been political exiles and students from Iraq, Iran, Egypt, while the majority of the Afghan, Algerian, Iraqi and Somali communities have arrived relatively recently, often seeking asylum as a direct or indirect result of conflicts. Excluding Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, 116,609 asylum applications were received between 2001 and 2006 from the thirteen countries covered in this research. This has significant implications for the current size and characteristics of these populations in England, and highlights one of the limitations of working with 2001 census data. Chart 1 shows asylum application levels from Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq and Somalia since 1991. The peak for Afghanistan coincides with the military action taken to topple the Taliban regime in 2001 and applications from Iraq peaked in 2002 in anticipation of military action by a US-led coalition in March 2003.

¹² Chowdury, T. and H. Jayaweera (2008), *Immigration, faith and cohesion: Evidence from local areas with significant Muslim populations*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Religious data on the Afghan, Iraqi and Iranian populations indicates that a significant number of individuals arrived as persecuted religious minorities. Newer ‘economic migrants’ include groups from Nigeria and skilled migrants from South Asian countries. There has also been a trend for migration from other European countries to the UK of some communities, notably communities of Somali, Moroccan and Algerian origin.



High levels of asylum applications are not confined to areas suffering from war and military action. Many applications for asylum may be driven by other factors including religious or political persecution as well as natural disasters. For example, Chart 2 shows significant numbers of applications from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. While unlikely to be the only driver for asylum applications, the Indian sub-continent is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters. A drought in Pakistan in 2000 affected over two million people and in 2005 an earthquake in Kashmir killed close to eighty thousand people. The geographical setting of Bangladesh makes it particularly vulnerable to natural disasters including floods, cyclones, droughts and tornados and the country has suffered from major flooding in 1987, 1988, 1998 and 2007.¹³ India has suffered floods in 2005 (in Gujarat) and 2008 as well as cyclones in 1999 (Cyclone Orissa) and 2000 ('Sri Lanka Cyclone'). Political instability is also likely to have contributed to the high numbers of applicants from Pakistan.

¹³ Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (2001), *Bangladesh State of the Environment Report 2001*. BCAS.

Chart 2: Asylum Applications 1989-2006: Bangladesh, India, Pakistan
(Source: Immigration Research and Statistics Service, Home Office)



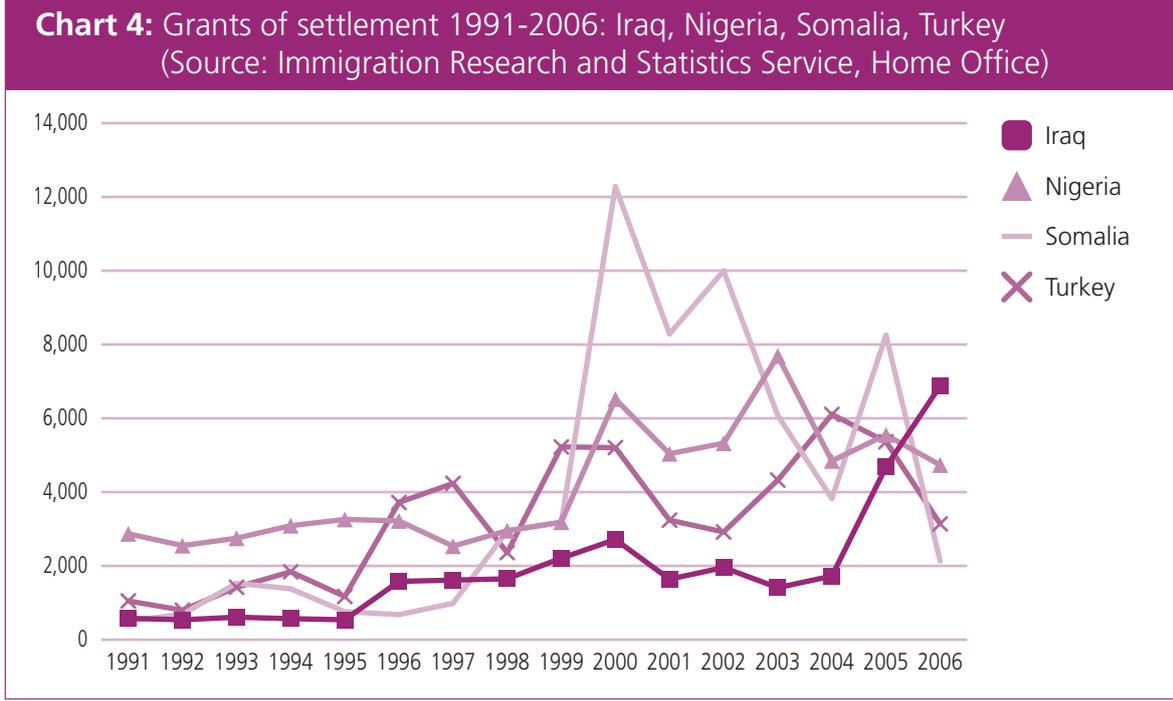
The original areas of settlement of the population have also continued to define the geographical spread of the migrant population through 'chain' migration and migrants needing to access social networks and goods from their country of origin. The continued pattern of concentration of these communities in specific regions and areas is due to a variety of complex factors including employment patterns, access to housing, cultural facilities and experiences of racism and discrimination.¹⁴

There is no evidence from the data available that there has been any significant emigration or repatriation of these populations since becoming established in England. In South Asian communities in particular, the trend has been the opposite, with family reunification taking place in addition to marriage and partners who join them in England. This has meant that some of these populations have expanded significantly; for example, it is likely that the Pakistani population will be over one million by the 2011 census. Chart 3 illustrates the continuing high number of Grants of Settlement given to nationals from Bangladesh, Indian and Pakistan

¹⁴ Hills, J. and K. Stewart (eds), *A More Equal Society? Ethnic Inequalities Under New Labour*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2005.



Data on Grants of Settlement also suggest that the 2011 census will show significantly different population numbers and profiles for communities in this study. For example Chart 4 shows Grants of Settlement between 1991 and 2006 for Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia and Turkey nationals.¹⁵ Prior to 1998, Grants of Settlement had stayed mainly below 4,000 per year for these countries but have since increased, dramatically in some cases. For example since 1999, 54,000 Grants of Settlement have been provided to Somali nationals.



¹⁵ Grants of Settlement refer to the number of people who have been granted the right to permanently remain in the UK.

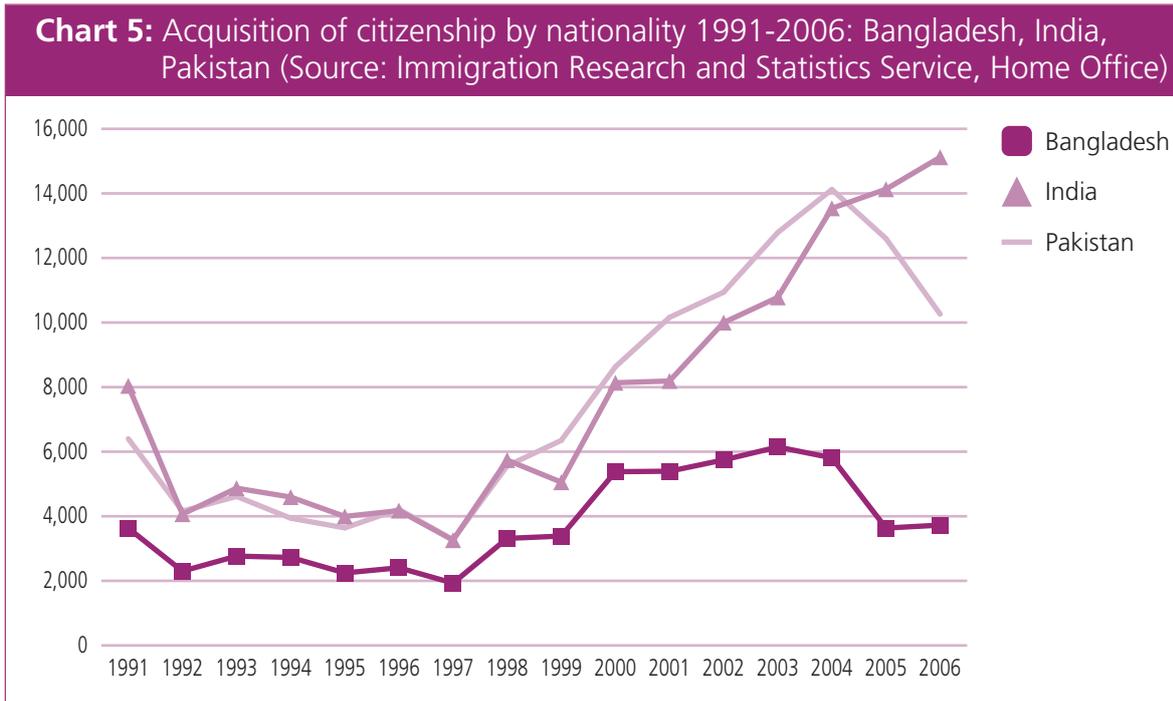
Although what is often described as the ‘myth of return’¹⁶ among older generations is still prevalent in many of these communities, commitments and ties to children and families established in England mean that there is little evidence or likelihood of this happening. Return on retirement appears to be a realistic option for only a few communities, for example the Turkish Cypriot, Turkish and Saudi Arabian communities. Acquisition of citizenship is a reasonable indicator of a migrant’s intention to stay in a country for a long term. Table 1 shows the acquisition of UK citizenship by nationality between 1980 and 2006 for the thirteen communities. For all communities apart from Saudi Arabia, levels of acquisition are significant.

**Table 1: Acquisition of citizenship by nationality between 1980 and 2006
(Source: Home Office)**

Country of Origin	Awarded UK Citizenship
Afghanistan	16,825
Algeria	10,020
Bangladesh	92,735
Egypt	11,625
India	215,890
Iran	41,905
Iraq	31,815
Morocco	19,735
Nigeria	66,825
Pakistan	198,670
Saudi Arabia	670
Somalia	58,685
Turkey	53,530

¹⁶ The phrase ‘Myth of return’ was coined by Badr Dahya, a social anthropologist, with reference to Pakistani migration and settlement in Birmingham and Bradford. Badr found that many migrants’ hopes for return to their country did not match the reality of their situation. The phrase is now widely used to refer to the experiences of other migrant populations and diaspora. (Badr Dahya (1974), ‘The nature of Pakistani ethnicity in industrial cities in Britain’ in A. Cohen (ed.) *Urban ethnicity* (pp. 77-118). London: Tavistock.)

Recent citizenship acquisition also appears to have been motivated by anticipated changes to legislation and citizenship requirements in 2002. Chart 5 illustrates the significant increases in citizenship acquisition among the South Asian population in the UK, particularly for the Indian and Pakistani population, since 2000. Given that these populations are thought to be relatively well established and Chart 3 does not show a similar upward trend in Grants of Settlement it is likely that these changes have influenced citizenship acquisition.



5 Population concentrations and centres of 'community'

With the exception of the Pakistani and Indian Muslim communities, the main location for the Muslim ethnic communities in this study is London. Approximately 50 per cent of England's Muslim community lives in London and makes up over 8 per cent of the population. Dr Ceri Peach's work on the distribution of Muslim communities highlights the tendency for most Muslim populations to cluster by country of origin and ethnicity with ethnically distinctive distributions.¹⁷ The contrast between the concentration of the Bangladeshi community in East London and the regional distribution of the Pakistani community clearly illustrates this distinctiveness. It is also evident from the available data that in London the largest ethnic Muslim populations tend to reside in a relatively small number of boroughs. These patterns are set out in the table below.

Community	Muslim population	Main government office regions	Key local authority locations
Afghan	10,829	London 72% West Midlands 8%	Ealing, Brent, Harrow, Hounslow, Barnet
Algerian	7,785	London 69% South East 9%	Waltham Forest, Brent, Haringey, Lambeth, Newham
Bangladeshi	254,704	London 52% West Midlands 11%	Tower Hamlets, Birmingham, Newham, Camden, Oldham
Egyptian	7,365	London 53% South East 10%	City of London and Westminster, Ealing, Kensington and Chelsea, Brent, Barnet
Indian	131,098	London 31% North West 27%	Leicester City, Blackburn with Darwen, Kirklees, Bolton, Lancashire
Iranian	24,384	London 51% South East 12%	Barnet, Ealing, City of London and Westminster, Brent, Kensington and Chelsea
Iraqi	20,351	London 58% North West 9%	City of London and Westminster, Ealing, Brent, Kensington and Chelsea, Birmingham
Moroccan	9,166	London 69% South East 11%	Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and City of London, Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham

¹⁷ Ceri Peach (2006), 'Islam, ethnicity and South Asian religions in the London 2001 census', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 31, 353-370.

Table 2: Distribution of Muslim Ethnic Communities in England (continued)

Community	Muslim population	Main government office regions	Key local authority locations
Nigerian	7,484	London 84% South East 4%	Southwark, Hackney, Lambeth, Newham, Lewisham, Greenwich
Pakistani	650,516	West Midlands 21% London 20% Yorkshire and the Humber 20% North West 16%	Birmingham, Bradford, Kirklees, Manchester, Newham
Saudi Arabian	5,026	London 44% South East 11%	Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, City of London and Westminster, Brent, Kensington and Chelsea
Somali	37,999	London 80% North West 5%	Brent, Ealing, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Leicester, Sheffield
Turkish Cypriot	17,915	London 89% East of England 4%	Enfield, Haringey, Hackney, Lewisham, Southwark
Turkish	39,247	London 76% South East 6%	Haringey, Hackney, Enfield, Islington, Waltham Forest

'Muslim population' and 'Main government office regions' refers to the number of Muslims in England born in the relevant country of origin. The figures for the Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani populations are based on ethnicity so include all individuals who identify with those ethnicities regardless of their country of birth.

Source: Census 2001, C0644, C1015.

It is worth noting that:

- Accurate estimates for many of the ethnic Muslim populations in this study do not exist. Accurate data is only available for the Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani populations that are recorded in the census and in other datasets
- For other ethnic Muslims, populations can only be estimated in relation to the Muslim population born in the country of origin. This presents a number of problems; the figure does not include British-born Muslims; it assumes that the person is from an ethnic Muslim group from that country; and it does not include individuals who may be born outside of the country but consider themselves as part of the group. This presents significant issues in estimating populations that have been in England for a number of generations
- Since there are not reliable estimates for these communities, estimates from community members, even those who 'know' the community, should be treated with caution
- There is a distinction between population spread and centres of 'community'. For example, while census data indicates that Morocco-born and Algeria-born Muslims are spread across London boroughs, both populations have what can be described as 'community hubs' in Kensington and Chelsea (the Moroccan community) and Finsbury Park (the Algerian community)
- Census data correlates to respondent perception about community locations, although there are some communities that are less visible in the data or have formed since census data collection eg the Somali community in Tower Hamlets and Leicester.

5.1 Key Characteristics of Muslim Ethnic Communities in England: Religion, Language and Ethnicity

The summary of relevant characteristics of these communities is set out in the table below. Further details on faith denominations are appended to this report and greater detail on religion, ethnicity and language can also be found in the individual community reports.

Community	% of total country-born population Muslim	Main religious denominations	Other religious denominations	Main Languages other than English	Main Ethnic Groups
Afghan	77%	Sunni (Hanafi, sub-groups incl. Deobandi)	Shi'a (particularly those from the Hazari ethnic group)	Pashto, Dari	Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, Turkmen, Aimaq, Baluchi, Nuristani, Farsiwan
Algerian	86%	Sunni (Maliki)	Sunni (Salafi)	Arabic, French, Berber languages (incl. Tamazight)	Arab, Berber
Bangladeshi	92%	Sunni (Hanafi, subgroups incl. Barelvi, Deobandi, Tabligh Jamaat)	Sunni (Shafi)	Bengali, Sylheti	Bengali
Egyptian	56%	Sunni (Hanafi)	Sunni (Shafi, Salafi)	Arabic	Arab, Copts
Indian	12%	Sunni (Hanafi subgroups incl. Deobandi, Barelvi)	Shi'a (Ismaili) Khalifa Jamat	Gujarati	Gujarati, Khalifa, Tamil, North Indian

Community	% of total country-born population Muslim	Main religious denominations	Other religious denominations	Main Languages other than English	Main Ethnic Groups
Iranian	68%	Shi'a (Twelver)		Farsi	Persian, Azeri, Kurdish, Lur, Arab, Baluchi, Turkmen, Qashqai, Armenian, Assyrian and Georgians
Iraqi	74%	Shi'a (Twelver)	Sunni (Hanafi, Maliki)	Arabic	Arab, Assyrian, Kurdish
Moroccan	77%	Sunni (Maliki)	Sunni (Shafi, Salafi, Sufi orders)	Arabic, French	Arab, Berber
Nigerian	9%	Sunni (Maliki)	Shi'a, Sufi orders (Tijaniyah, Qadriyah)	Yoruba, Hausa, English, Arabic, Isha, Edo, Efik, and Igbo	Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo
Pakistani	92%	Sunni (Hanafi – various sub-groups incl. Deobandi, Barelvi, Tabligh Jamaat)	Sunni (Ahl-e Hadith/Salafi)	Urdu, Punjabi	Kashmiri, Pathan, Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluchi
Saudi Arabian	64%	Sunni (Hanbali/ 'Wahabbi')		Arabic	Arab
Somali	89%	Sunni (Shafi)	Sunni (Salafi)	Somali, Chiwmini	Clans: Darod, Isaq, Hawiye, Dir, Digil, Mirifle, Bajuni, Benadiri and Bravanese
Turkish Cypriot	26% ¹⁸	Sunni (Hanafi) Shi'a (Alevi, Ismailis, Jafaris)	Various Sufi orders	Turkish	Turkish Cypriot
Turkish	83%	Sunni (Hanafi) Shi'a (Alevi, Ismailis, Jafaris)	Sunni (Shafi particularly Kurds), various Sufi orders.	Turkish	Turkish, Kurdish

'Percent of total country-born population Muslim' is based on religion and country-of-birth data from the 2001 census (Commissioned table, CO644, C1013). The % Muslim figures for Turkish Cypriot Muslims and Egyptian Muslims should be treated with care. The figure for Turkish Cypriots is for the Cyprus-born population in England not 'Turkish Cypriots' which is not recorded in the census. The figure for the Egyptian born population excludes 'White British'.

¹⁸ Percentage of Cyprus-born population in England of Muslim heritage.

6 Socio economic status

6.1 Introduction

Existing statistics indicate that Muslims as a group are more likely to suffer socio economic disadvantage than the general population. Beckford *et al*'s review of evidence on faith communities finds that socio economic indicators from the Census reveal a consistent picture of the vulnerable position of the aggregate Muslim population compared to people from other minority faith groups.¹⁹ The report concludes that:

*[Muslims] are the largest of the 'emergent' religions in England. They have the youngest age structure of all the religious groups identified by the Census. They have large families, low participation rates in the formal labour market, where only 29 per cent of women are active. They have the highest male unemployment rate, the highest dependence on social housing, the highest degree of flat living and the highest degree of overcrowding. They also have a high degree of concentration in areas of economic difficulty (particularly in the North but also in deprived boroughs in London) and social deprivation. Educational levels are relatively low and the occupational structure skewed towards the blue-collar jobs.*²⁰

Local government stakeholders consulted for this research note that Muslim communities in areas of high deprivation face high levels of disadvantage and unmet needs in relation to a wide range of issues that include: educational underachievement, poor health, high unemployment, hate crime, poor housing conditions, and segregation in housing and education. One local government officer summarised the issues as follows:

I am not convinced that local government is meeting the needs of the community: for all that there is so much talk about it. I would see good housing, good education, especially language skills, good job opportunities, more positive empathetic and insightful media coverage, as essential, and as not being delivered adequately. (Local Government Officer, white, 50-59)

There is also good research evidence that in addition to generic racial discrimination there is an added dimension of anti-Muslim sentiment – Islamophobia – that cuts across the experience of all Muslim ethnic groups including those with postgraduate and professional level qualifications. Respondents feel that this particularly affects women whose faith may be more visible in their dress in seeking employment opportunities. However, it is also apparent that there are also significant variations in socio economic status within and across communities based on class background, educational levels and ethnicity. Multiple discrimination is evident in respondent descriptions of their experience, where class, ethnic, faith and national stereotypes can all come into play to deny access to mainstream employment opportunities.

¹⁹ Beckford *et al*, 2006.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

The introduction of faith categories in the 2001 census has allowed for a range of macro and micro statistical analyses of the socio economic profile of Muslims in the UK. Whereas studies had previously analysed data through ethnicity variables, usually using Bangladeshi and Pakistani statistics as a proxy for Muslim, more rigorous analysis is now emerging. This research shows that Muslims as a whole are by far the most disadvantaged faith group in the UK. For example:

- Muslims are disproportionately over-represented in the most deprived urban communities
- Almost one third of Muslims of working age have no qualifications, the highest proportion for any faith group²¹
- Muslims are most likely to have never worked or to experience long-term unemployment (17 per cent compared to 3 per cent of the overall population). Over half of Muslims are economically inactive, compared to a third of all other faith groups
- Muslim men are among the least likely to be in managerial or professional occupations and the most likely to be in low skilled jobs, with 40 per cent working in the distribution, hotel and restaurant industry²²
- Muslim young people aged 16-24 have the highest unemployment rate of all faith groups; 17.5 per cent are unemployed, compared to 7.9 per cent of Christians and 7.4 per cent of Hindus.²³

6.2 Socio economic diversity

Useful though these macro-level analyses are, there is a danger of Muslim identity and characteristics being further homogenised. Given the diversity within Muslim communities and the high number of South Asian Muslims in the UK, these statistics mask differences even between Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities and may have very limited relevance in understanding the characteristics of smaller ethnic Muslim communities. Beckford *et al's* report on faith communities concedes that:

*It is harder to draw as meaningful a set of generalisations [with respect to disadvantage and social cohesion] about the Muslim population than about Sikhs and Hindus. The Muslim population is more of a confederation of ethno-religious components. Data are good on large parts of these ethnic components, such as the Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, but poor, so far, on other groups such as Indian Muslims, Afghans, Kurds, Somalis, Bosnians, North Africans and Arabs for example.*²⁴

²¹ Dobbs, Green and Zealey, 2006.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Beckford *et al*, 2006.

Similarly, in her report on Muslim housing experiences, Patricia Sellick emphasises that averages calculated from census data obscure the experiences of the poorest sections of the Muslim population and recommends the development of sharper research tools to identify the poorest section of the Muslim population and to direct support to them.²⁵

There are large variations within communities on the basis of class and educational attainment and ethnicity. The varying obstacles in specific communities and groups to employment can include language, qualifications, relevant experience, lack of documentation among some migrants and asylum seekers. Some respondents (particularly female) suggest that cultural constraints within some families and communities also limit opportunities for further education and employment for women.

There are also structural issues relating to lack of recognition of overseas qualifications and downward social mobility for many qualified professionals when they arrive in the UK. This is a common pattern across most non-western migrant communities. Some populations also have a 'split' socio economic profile, for example first wave Afghan, Iranian, Iraqi migrants tended to have high education levels, though subsequent waves have largely been refugees and asylum seekers with lower level qualifications. Sarah Kyambi's report *Beyond Black and White*, which details country-of-birth socio economic profiles of Britain's population is particularly useful in highlighting these differences, although it does not incorporate religious data.

Within communities there are class divisions that affect opportunities and life chances, particularly for young people born and brought up in this country. For longer established communities there are now more affluent middle classes for whom higher education and professional careers are the norm, including for women. At the other end of the scale, educational under achievement is a growing problem in many communities and particularly acute amongst Somali communities where educational exclusion is reported to be a chronic problem. Longer established Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities, while making progress, on average still suffer from low levels of educational achievement.

6.3 A socio economic snapshot of Muslim ethnic communities

This research did not include a quantitative survey across communities. However, there are qualitative findings in terms of the diversity of what respondents see 'on the ground'. For example, Afghan respondents feel that males in their community are largely confined to service industries such as taxi services with long hours, with some fears of entering the formal labour market, and Afghan women generally remaining at home and are not earning. Algerian respondents see their recent arrivals as consisting of largely young males lacking employment opportunities, with little family support and often living in poverty.

²⁵ Patricia Sellick (2004), *Muslim housing experiences*, Oxford: Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies.

For Bangladeshi respondents, while older generations remain largely confined to the food and restaurant trade, there is some evidence that younger people are now achieving in the education system and moving into professional careers. Egyptian communities are seen as having a high proportion of people in higher socio economic groups and working as professionals, with working class Egyptians largely 'invisible' and working in providing services to families of other Egyptians or Gulf Arabs, where there are felt to be problems of low pay and exploitation.

Pakistani and Indian Muslim respondents indicate that young girls are doing particularly well in education and moving into professional careers. The position of Iranians was unclear from the data, though many professional males and females are here as exiles. Moroccan communities are seen as experiencing language and educational issues, with relatively few employment opportunities. Nigerian respondents talked about education and employment discrimination issues and there is some indication women may be compensating by trying to develop small businesses.

The Saudi community profile was also unclear, though respondents emphasise not all Saudis are billionaires – some are middle class professionals. Somali respondents feel that there are major employment, education exclusion and crime-related issues, particularly among young people. Turkish communities discussed particular problems for boys achieving in education, and indicated that girls may be achieving educationally but may be discouraged from professional careers to instead support family businesses.

Most stakeholder consultees highlight discrimination in public sector employment as a serious problem, and point to the lack of Muslims at senior officer and Director levels, or as significant budget holders, in public authorities as indicators of institutional discrimination. Stakeholder consultees also stress the lack of opportunities for graduates and high achievers outside London, who they feel are often forced to leave their communities and local areas to find suitable employment elsewhere and the challenges this presents to traditional family structures.

However, there are also other challenges facing communities that are not related to religious discrimination. English language ability is seen as a key barrier to accessing the job market and those without fluency may end up in jobs that have unsociable hours such as taxi services and the cleaning and the catering industry. Some respondents see government as on the one hand pushing for greater integration into mainstream society, and on the other hand cutting budgets for English language provision. There is also a widespread and deeply felt concern about the lack of recognition of overseas qualifications that is seen as causing huge frustration in seeking employment. Respondents feel that this can often lead to mental health issues as some migrants may find the loss of professional status and being pushed into poverty in the UK devastating:

One problem in terms of employment is that people's qualifications are not recognised. For example, I had a friend who once came to the UK as a keynote speaker at a medical conference. Two years later she came back as a refugee and they wouldn't recognise her qualifications and she ended up working as a fabric worker in a factory in Southall for £2.80 an hour. (Afghan, Female, 30-39).

It is also important to note the experience of multiple as well as faith discrimination and this is particularly evident in the experiences of the Nigerian and Somali communities. One interviewee captured the cluster of stereotypes and discrimination that can be directed at these groups as follows:

For Nigerians in London there is not a glass ceiling as we are not even able to get our foot into the door. We are discriminated against for the colour of our skin, our accents, our religion and our perceived status as fraudsters. Even the educated amongst us are doing menial jobs. (Nigerian, Male, 30-39).

There are also issues relating to those who are working illegally in the UK with no formal employment rights or protection. Respondents indicated that in the Afghan, Algerian and Iraqi communities many asylum seekers who have had their asylum claims rejected or are awaiting a decision are working in 'cash in hand' jobs below the minimum wage. Some respondents mentioned that they were aware of people who had been here illegally now for up to a decade.

At the same time the statistics also mask the number of Muslim professionals working in England as doctors, engineers, teachers, academics, accountants and in other professions. When asked about the strengths of the community the first thing mentioned in the majority of groups is the economic and professional contribution of the migrant community. Many community respondents emphasise the entrepreneurialism of their communities that has created hubs of activity in specific areas that are now attracting mainstream business interest.

The research communities place vital importance on the education of the second generation. Parents are keen that their children overcome the lack of opportunity faced by the first generation due to issues including the lack of qualification recognition, language barriers and discrimination. In many of the newer communities without higher educational and formal skill levels, educational underachievement of young people, particularly among boys, was felt by respondents to be a key issue. However, the educational achievements of the young who seek entry into professional careers does not in itself guarantee progress. Even first generation migrants with professional skills reported discrimination in employment, and this has encouraged self-employment as a route to progress.

For all communities the need to address youth unemployment is a serious concern as the alternative for growing numbers of young people is seen as involvement in drugs, gang culture, crime and vulnerability to radicalisation. The perceived lack of mainstream youth provision is seen as a key barrier to addressing these problems. In addition, respondents are concerned about the health status of new communities in particular. There has been little research on this to date, but findings from this study suggest that there is a significant problem under the radar of health service providers. Respondents feel that the mental health impacts of war, migration, exile, unemployment and poverty that affect many across most of the new communities are going largely undiagnosed.

7 Community Dynamics

7.1 Integration and cohesion

Public debates about the integration and cohesion of the UK's communities moved up the agenda following civil disorder in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in 2001. Following a commission of inquiry led by Ted Cante and a subsequent report, the concept of 'community cohesion' gained significant currency in public policy, particularly at the local level.²⁶ Following the London bombings in 2005, the government launched a Commission on Integration and Cohesion to understand how local areas can forge 'cohesive and resilient communities'.²⁷ The Commission's report *Our Shared Future* identifies a 'cohesive community' as being one with a "clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country" and one where "there are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods".²⁸

Despite the adoption of a new set of language and tools that local authorities have used to articulate and progress this agenda, there continue to be a range of understandings of what greater integration and cohesion means and what is required for this to happen both on the part of minority communities and the host society, as well as different perceptions of how integrated specific communities are. Some longer established communities still do not feel that they are accepted or valued as part of British society and consider that the rhetoric of integration is underpinned by pressures for minority communities to be assimilated and absorbed rather than integrated.

This poses a dilemma for many respondents who are keen on a two-way process that does not include absorption into what they see as negative features of mainstream 'British' culture, including individualism, sexual relations outside of marriage, and drug and alcohol abuse. It is also clear that with concentrations of communities in specific locations and limited public spaces where different groups can meet and interact, class and occupation play a significant part in the scope for interaction. Respondents are also particularly concerned about the young in that they felt they need to be self-aware and confident about who they are if they are to integrate effectively.

The principle of greater integration was welcomed by almost all respondents involved in the study. However, many respondents are resentful about the nature and tone of public and media debates about these issues. There are distinct differences in the experiences and expectations of different communities in relation to integration, particularly between older established and newer communities.

²⁶ Home Office (2001), *Community Cohesion: A report of the Independent Review Team – Chaired by Ted Cante*, London: Home Office.

²⁷ www.communities.gov.uk/archived/general-content/communities/commissionintegration/

²⁸ Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007), *Our Shared Future*, London: Communities and Local Government.

Older communities such as the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Turkish generally feel that they are well integrated, as do older exiles from countries such as Iraq and The Islamic Republic of Iran who arrived some decades ago. More recent arrivals are facing many of the same integration problems originally experienced by longer established communities, including language difficulties, lack of appropriate housing, unemployment, educational underachievement and access to health and welfare services, sometimes compounded by legal status issues. The Somali community is quite distinct, in that while parts of the community represent one of the oldest Muslim communities in Britain, it has remained largely excluded and marginalised throughout. There are also a few groups that appear not to have significant or active engagement with public authorities as a group for reasons of autonomy, historical suspicion of the 'state', or there being no felt need, including Algerian, Moroccan, Saudi Arabian and Egyptian communities.

Integration processes are organic; a combination of receptivity and change in both host societies and among migrant groups and the nature, speed and spheres of integration will vary widely. Some migrant groups, for example, will preserve and reinforce the cultural identities that they bring with them as a response to hostility, while others welcome any opportunity and possibility of creating new lives and identities in their adopted country. Lacking familiarity with the culture and mores of mainstream society when they arrive, new migrants will generally attempt to replicate the cultural patterns that they have left behind, and go through a process of discovering the scope and spheres of integration that may be possible, for example in the mainstream economy.

Often the scope for integration will itself be underpinned by stereotypes in the host society about particular communities and groups, including distinctions that may be made between ethnic and faith groups. One consequence is the emergence of a social hierarchy of stereotypes in relation to Muslim communities, where the place of origin or heritage – the Asian sub-continent, Europe, the Middle East, Africa – can become as important a factor in discrimination and exclusion as faith.

Maintenance of the social networks, political affiliations, clan and kinship groups, languages and cultural traditions of their countries of birth are important to most first generation migrants, and peer pressure within communities to conform to the social and cultural values of the region or country of origin is also a strong element in the preservation and maintenance of cultural identities. However, younger people born in this country and exposed to mainstream British society through the education system and beyond, in addition to the traditions and lifestyles of their parents, are inevitably more distant from the cultures and values of their parents and grandparents, and largely define themselves as British.

Despite the differences in circumstances, a number of common themes emerged in discussions across the different communities. Communities with second and third generations that generally see themselves as British and well integrated still feel that they are not accepted and acknowledged as such by mainstream society, and that

current policies in relation to migrants are intended to exert pressure on minorities to assimilate. Instead of a national British identity that accommodates their history and diversity and values or makes space for differences, communities feel that the young are under pressure to conform to specific aspects of the majority culture that they question or reject as being incompatible with their faith or cultural values.

In addition to cultural and social values, there are a number of structural issues that limit contact and interaction between the majority and minority communities; segregated schooling and housing are the most obvious ones highlighted by respondents. Occupational choices also impact on the levels of contact between communities. Highly educated and professional classes in all communities that may be self employed or employed in mainstream British institutions have more opportunities for mixing than those employed in community specific economies and institutions, for example working in their embassies, community specific schools, community centres, cultural associations and small businesses aiming to service their community. People with lower level skills and those who are not fluent in English are more likely to be employed in these enterprises and have limited occupational choices and opportunity to access mainstream economy and society.

Other barriers to integration are seen to stem from the majority society itself. Most respondents make the point that integration is a two-way process. All respondents feel that Islamophobia has increased markedly since 9/11 and the London bombings in July 2007, and that it is more difficult for minorities to integrate into a society that has increasingly made them feel less welcome. Anti-Muslim sentiment is believed to have had a particularly negative impact on Muslim women, as they are more easily identifiable and vulnerable to harassment and discrimination. The media is believed to have played a major role in the development of a heightened Islamophobia through stereotyped, biased and irresponsible reporting. In addition to media portrayal and reporting, political rhetoric and policy, both foreign and domestic, is also regarded by some as having contributed to what is seen as a demonisation of Muslims.

Respondents suggest that there needs to be a more sophisticated understanding and approach to integration, one that takes into account issues of identity, discrimination and belonging. While most migrants want to be an accepted and valued part of British society, many also wish to retain their language and religious and social values and to pass on the history and heritage of their countries of origin to younger generations. Mother tongue teaching and knowledge about their cultural heritage is seen as important by all migrant communities for young people growing up in Britain, and there is a strongly shared belief that a clear sense of self is critical in helping young people integrate into mainstream society with confidence. Without this, respondents feel many young people are liable to become alienated from both the culture of their parents and from a mainstream society that does not fully accept them as British. Being left in limbo with no sense of belonging or acceptance is thought to make the young turn primarily to their peer groups for validation and this can lead to further social problems.

7.2 Religion and identity

Religion and identity in Muslim communities are topics of significant research in the UK. For example the Policy Studies Institute's Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities highlighted the dynamics of self-identity within the Pakistani and Bangladeshi community,²⁹ while the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey indicated that after family, religion was the most important factor in self-description for Muslims. The shift from ethnic identity to religious identity is also well documented as is identity formation among young British-born Muslims.³⁰

The views and descriptions of respondents in this study supported much of the recent literature in this area, although there is a concern among some communities that Islam should no longer be seen as the sole domain of South Asian populations and that cultural practices from these populations should not necessarily be seen as 'Islamic'. There are a wide range of views among communities on questions of identity and its links to citizenship, religion, language, politics, socio economic status and ethnicity. There is also a strong perception across communities that when the media, public service providers and the public at large speak about the 'Muslim community', they are in fact referring to the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. Most respondents also believe that, in the UK, Pakistani and Bangladeshi cultures are seen as the 'norm' for Muslim culture, and are keen to stress that there are very different cultures and interpretations of Islam that exist across the Muslim world.

Within communities there are complex groupings based on language, geography, class, politics, tribe and kinship affiliations as well as faith, and this can lead to considerable fragmentation. Most of these divisions reflect the religious, political, ethnic and social divisions that communities have experienced in their countries of origin. For example, the ethnic factions and division amongst different groups in Afghanistan, or clan based divisions and affiliations in Somalia and the religious politics of different regimes in The Islamic Republic of Iran all continue to influence and inform dynamics within these communities in Britain.

However, while these differences often result in negative attitudes towards other groups, visible tensions and conflicts are generally quite low-key and are usually manifested in competition for resources, attendance at specific places of worship, or in the maintenance of separate community associations and networks. In the context of migration to Britain, for many respondents the presence of these other groups is an opportunity for dialogue and exchange across community divides, based on knowledge of a common homeland or shared status as minorities.

²⁹ Modood T, Berthoud R, Lakey J, Nazroo J, Smith P, Virdee S and Beishon S eds (1997) *Ethnic minorities in Britain: diversity and disadvantage*, London: Policy Studies Institute.

³⁰ See Roger Ballard (1996), 'The Pakistanis: Stability and Introspection', in Peach, C., (ed) *The Ethnic Minority Populations of Great Britain: Ethnicity in the 1991 Census*, Vol. 2, London: Central Statistical Office and Samad, Y (2004), *Muslim Youth in Britain: Ethnic and Religious Identity*, presented at the International Conference on Muslim Youth in Europe, Turin.

There is also great complexity in personal identities. While being Muslim is a key part of the self-identification of many people in all communities, nationhood, culture, ethnicity and language are equally if not more, important for some groups, particularly older generations. For example, being seen as Egyptian is more important for respondents from the community than being seen as an Egyptian Muslim. Some people choose to emphasise the national identity of their countries of origin even though they may hold British citizenship, while others define themselves primarily as British or British Muslim while at the same time retaining very strong attachments to their countries of origin.

Respondents from all communities highlighted the changes that people have had to make in order to integrate their religious, linguistic and ethnic characteristics alongside a British identity. A recognition of multiple identities is a norm in all these communities, and different aspects of identity may come to the fore depending on the contexts and environments individuals face on a day to day basis. This is particularly the case for young people who often adopt hybrid cultural identities such as 'British-Pakistani' or 'British-Algerian' to articulate this hybridity. Second and third generations often find themselves in conflict with parental ideals and specific religious and cultural practices and making sense of these tensions is central to their self development. In some cases this manifests as second or third generation respondents articulating a deep personal or psychological association with their country of heritage, though in reality this attachment does not form as strong or practical a bond as it does for parents or grandparents.

Religion plays an important role in identity formation, and this is perceived as having become more critical post 9/11 and the London bombings of July 2007. The increase in negative media coverage and perceived widespread Islamophobia are believed to be creating new dynamics within Muslim communities centred on an internal questioning of what these communities represent. For example, concerns about the Middle East are thought to have helped to bring about the coalescing of a wider Arab Muslim identity amongst people from different Middle Eastern countries.

Among younger generations that have begun to feel labelled as alien to British society, many are believed to be looking for support and validation elsewhere, including in Islamic revival movements. Across most communities there is a trend among young people towards exploring a 'pan-ethnic' identity that is informed through contact with the wide range of cultures that form the Muslim diaspora in the UK, as part of the process of exploring what it means to be Muslim and British. For example, one current is the emergence of a distinctly British Muslim identity that is attempting to establish a credible 'British Muslim' religious voice and expression in an attempt to counter uncompromising religious orthodoxy and specific cultural practices.

Alongside this trend towards a more pan-national Muslim identity formation and mobilisation on a range of social and political issues, there are many competing currents and ideologies vying for dominance and seeking to strengthen or create new constituencies. While allegiance to particular Muslim ethnicities based on ties to specific countries of origin continue to be shaped largely by older generations, there is also an emergence of new and younger religious authorities and leaders reaching out

to younger generations through new platforms that seek to reassess orthodoxy and classical Islamic beliefs and practices in light of the challenges and dilemmas of living in a modern society.

In all communities there is a broad spectrum of religious practice, ranging from the devout, to 'cultural' Muslims, to the secular. The latter feel strongly that 'Muslim communities' is itself a misnomer as the term encompasses many who do not choose to define themselves as Muslims. Many others, who feel that religion is a personal issue that informs their values and attitudes to life without playing an outwardly visible role, would also question the label as the primary marker of their identity.

Respondents also suggested that different religious schools that underpin religious practice among different Muslim communities have a bearing on the extent to which individual communities feel comfortable in negotiating new identities. Some Madhabs³¹ are thought to be more open to change and as having a stronger tradition of encouraging accommodation in religious adherence and practice in the face of new cultural immersions and interactions than others. This may go some way to explaining why some communities remain more insular and concerned about retaining specificities of cultural and religious expression and practice than others. However, this claim requires further research before it can be verified.

Despite the many variations and ethnic and denominational differences that exist, most respondents stress that mosques do not discourage any Muslim from attendance, irrespective of the school or current of Islam followed or ethnic origin. Most of the new communities that have not yet been able to set up their own mosques will often worship in mosques established by the longer settled communities. However, while there are no explicit barriers to attendance, there are undercurrents and stereotypes that mean particular groups are more likely to congregate in specific mosques, as well as different rituals and rites and forms of worship amongst different denominations that can often act as barriers for specific groups. The language used for sermons can also affect attendance, as can political interests and particular community concerns that are not shared by other communities.

A feature of religious practice among some Muslim communities is that sections of communities may coalesce around leading religious figures that are seen as having international authority and reach. For example, among the Turkish community a strong religious grouping, the Nurcus, has emerged as followers of Fetullah Gulen.³² The Nur Cemati (society) who follow Gulen's ideas and teachings have become active among the Turkish community nationally and internationally. Among Iraqi and Iranian communities Grand Ayatollah Sistani³³ is seen as the key influencer for the Shi'a community generally. Other significant influencers mentioned by respondents include Muqtada al-Sadr,³⁴ Ammar Nakshawani, and Saeed Fadhil-Al-Milany.

³¹ Madhab: a method of interpretation of religious material in the three major areas: belief, religious practice and law. The four sunni madhabs are: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali.

³² Recently named the world's top public intellectual in a reader's poll commissioned by Foreign Policy magazine.

³³ Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Husaini al-Sistani is the Iranian born Grand Ayatollah and Shi'a marja residing in Iraq. The Western mainstream media has called him the "most influential" figure in post-invasion Iraq.

³⁴ Muqtada al-Sadr, is the head of an independent militia known as the Mahdi army.

Many young people are questioning older generations justifying specific cultural practices by defining them as religious, and are seeking to disassociate themselves from specifically cultural forms of Islam in favour of religious conduct derived directly from study of the Koran itself. This confirms findings of existing research that has found that British-born Muslims increasingly self-identify as Muslim rather than by their ethnic heritage or group.³⁵ While there is a strong perception that young people are becoming more interested in religion, given the study is qualitative we cannot conclusively demonstrate that there is a growing level of religiosity among young people and this is an issue that would benefit from further specific research.

7.3 Ethnicity

While the use of the term ‘ethnic’ popularly denotes something as ‘other than western’, this study uses the more formal definition of the term: *An ethnic group is one whose members have common origins, a shared sense of history, a shared culture and a collective identity.*³⁶ On this basis ethnicity is not ‘fixed’ but organic and may change, and it is possible for new ethnicities to emerge. Some commentators often incorporate racial characteristics into their definition to attempt to give it more stability, but given the debate about the validity of ‘race’ as a biological construct, this only adds to the ambiguity of the term. Our main reports are framed by a definition of ethnicity that assumes that ethnicity is primarily derived from political boundaries.

The reality is that within individual communities there is huge complexity in the makeup of their populations. So while this project has notionally engaged with thirteen ‘ethnic communities’, it is possible to see two to three times that number contained within its scope. For example the Afghan Muslim ‘community’ alone consists of nine different ethnic groups. Table 4 sets out the different ethnic groups in each country, most of whom are present in England.

³⁵ Ballard, 1996; Samad, 2004.

³⁶ Parekh, B. (2000), *The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain: The Parekh Report*, Profile Books: London.

Table 4: Community ethnicities	
Community	Main Ethnicities
Afghan	Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, Turkmen, Aimaq, Baluchi, Nuristani, Farsiwan
Algerian	Arab, Berber
Bangladesh	Bengali, tribal groups (assumed to be of Burmese ethnicity)
Egyptian	Arab, Nubian, Copt
Indian	A multiplicity of regional, faith and ethnic identities
Iranian	Persian, Azeri, Kurdish, Lur, Arab, Baluchi, Turkmen, Qashqai, Armenian, Assyrian and Georgians
Iraqi	Arab, Assyrian, Kurdish
Moroccan	Arab, Berber
Nigerian	Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo
Pakistani	Kashmiri, Pathan, Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluchi
Saudi Arabian	Arab with regional/geographic and tribal/clan sub-groupings
Somali	Clan based affiliations: Darod, Isaq, Hawiye, Dir, Digil, Mirifle, Bajuni, Benadiri and Bravanese
Turkish	Turkish, Kurdish, Turkish Cypriot

This ethnic diversity can often contribute to geographical and social segregation within these communities, as well as denoting differing religious and cultural practices. For example communities from Afghanistan are often separated by ethnicity, as well as by differences in place of origin and time of migration. Nigerian Hausa and Yoruba communities are distinct and often segregated by language. Within the Turkish speaking community there are distinct Kurdish, mainland and Turkish Cypriot communities, although their common language does allow for some interaction.

There are communities in this study that are more ethnically homogenous. Most of the Bangladeshi community is from a single district in Bangladesh, namely Sylhet, and 43 per cent of the community is concentrated in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and surrounding boroughs. Many of the Pakistani community in the UK are from the Mirpur region in Pakistan, and the Pakistani community in Bradford is almost entirely from this region. However, the Pakistani community is also the most geographically distributed of the three Asian communities, so ethnic homogeneity does not necessarily equate with geographical concentration, as employment opportunities have often dictated regional distribution for some groups.

It is also important to note that ethnicity dynamics can develop in ways that run contrary to what is happening in the country of origin. For example there has been a lessening of the perceived importance of clan affiliation in the Somali community in favour of identities based on local connections in the UK,³⁷ partly as a result of being perceived as a homogenous group by the wider society and in recognition of the commonality of their experience in the UK. A similar sentiment was expressed by young Afghans who emphasise their Afghan-ness rather than more parochial identities that they see among their parents' generation.

Our research found it commonplace for communities to coalesce around their ethnic as well as faith identity, and respondents are keen to preserve their shared culture, language and heritage. Many respondents identify themselves, for example, not only as Muslim but as Nigerian or Afghan or Iranian, while others, for example some Iraqis, emphasise their national identity as primary and see their faith as a private matter. While there is a coming together of many Muslims of differing ethnicities during Eid and Jumma, the day-to-day interaction of first generation migrants predominantly takes place within ethnic boundaries. The interaction among young Muslims in the UK is more complex and suggests a gradual shifting away from ethnic divisions towards a more pan-Muslim identity and bonds.

7.4 Young people and intergenerational issues

Intergenerational conflict is a common theme highlighted by all respondents. First generations are anxious to preserve and pass on their languages and cultures, which many of the younger generation, particularly young women, experience as pressures and cultural constraints. In the view of many older people, without a strong personal identity and sense of belonging, young people are more vulnerable to negative cultural influences, as well as to extremist ideologies.

The anxieties of older generations arise to a large extent from fears about cultural and social 'contamination' and they may criticise young people for becoming either 'too westernised' or alternatively 'too religious' (usually referring to those people who practice a more deculturalised/Salafist form of Islam). In relation to becoming Westernised, many first generation migrants acknowledge that their children have different experiences and pressures to contend with, however the common perception across respondents is that young people are absorbing what are perceived to be the worst cultural traits of mainstream 'British' society including strong individualism and indifference to collective and extended family welfare.

³⁷ Home Office (2007) Country of Origin Information Service, Country Reports – Somalia www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html#countries

The majority of young people involved in the study stress that they have to negotiate the often conflicting demands of their dual cultural contexts and multiple identities. Most feel that they have successfully adapted to these differing environments and expressed feeling comfortable with their British identities. These hybrid influences may manifest in all their day to day interactions, the way they dress at different times, the music they listen to and broader lifestyle choices. A few however expressed a real sense of confusion and feeling of lack of belonging to any group or nationality.

None of the respondents in the study deny the existence of extremism and radicalism among some young Muslims, and most feel there is a need for greater vigilance and prevention. Parents in particular expressed anxieties about young people being exposed to ideologies and propaganda from abroad. At the same time all stress that extremists are a minority in Muslim communities and that the more important issues needing to be tackled are socio economic deprivation and youth disaffection as this makes young people vulnerable. Most respondents also highlighted differences between communities and the need for preventative approaches to be more specifically targeted rather than the adoption of broad general strategies.

Provision to address the needs of disadvantaged young people is seen as almost non-existent. There are attempts being made across all communities to work with young people to tackle some of the problems that exist. Many individuals and civil society organisations are conscious of the need to build community capacity to offer more support to young people, particularly around educational achievement, employment and career opportunities. The role of peers and peer social networks is thought to be critical in addressing youth issues, as well as in generating civic and political engagement and developing new leadership among the young.

7.5 Women

All the communities involved in the study remain largely male dominated with constraints on women justified by cultural traditions and 'religion'. They remain significantly less economically active than men, and face greater challenges in accessing employment. This is partly due to lower English language skills and educational qualifications to date, discrimination in employment, and internal family and community constraints that limit women's participation in wider society. However, respondents see young women in all the communities as beginning to perform better at school than their male counterparts, and growing numbers going into higher education and professional jobs.

There are also other issues that specifically or disproportionately impact on women, such as domestic violence and abuse, forced marriage, forced dependence, immigration status and single parenthood, and there is little support or provision by mainstream service providers or community organisations to help women deal with these issues. Language difficulties, cultural sensitivities and family pressures prevent many from seeking mainstream help. With most community based organisations being run by men, most women are reluctant to seek help on issues such as marital breakdown and domestic violence in such environments.

Despite these problems, women are seen as central to community strengths, regeneration and potential in all communities, and there are many women actively engaged in civic participation and welfare activities, as well as attempting to re-orientate religious traditions to deal with repressive cultural practices. More women are becoming active in articulating the leading role that women have played in Islamic religious history in order to deal with cultural practices that impede women. However, very few are in positions of power and influence in male dominated civil society organisations and, despite progress being made by women on a whole range of fronts, their influencing roles and achievements remain largely invisible.

A key finding of the study common to all communities is the lack of women led civil society organisations, and the need for organisations and service provision managed directly by women for women. An issue highlighted repeatedly by respondents was the need for public authorities to directly support, consult and work with women and women's groups, rather than focusing on or limiting themselves to working with established, predominantly male, organisations and (often self proclaimed) 'community leaders'.

8 Media

The tendency for Muslims and Islam to be portrayed homogenously and in a largely negatively way has been well established through research. This is not unique to the United Kingdom nor is it a recent phenomenon.³⁸ A study of press coverage from 1994 – 1996 in the UK found that Islam was generally presented as a threat to British society and Muslims were portrayed as deviant, irrational, different and generally incompatible with British society.³⁹ In 2008, a study by the Institute of Race Relations concluded that the media, particularly its coverage of terrorism arrests, contributed to Islamophobia in Europe.⁴⁰

There is a collective anger across all respondents at the mass media portrayal of Muslims and Muslim issues, which most feel is fuelling the rise in Islamophobia in the UK and borders on incitement to religious hatred. Respondents feel that the mass media has no interest in their communities except in relation to their religion. Most respondents also perceive government as relatively passive in raising concerns about stereotyping of a whole group, or in calling for a more temperate and balanced approach. Some respondents also feel that the mainstream British media has been censoring or sanitising reporting of events that are taking place in conflict zones in the Muslim world.

The BBC World Service and website are generally held in high regard by most respondents, but the domestic output of the BBC is strongly criticised for ‘weak’ reporting and for not reflecting the changing nature of British society more generally. They see this as evident in the lack of inclusion of people from the broad range of communities that make up Britain in BBC content and programming.

Most communities are well served by alternative media from their country of origin or by media channels established in Britain. All had community specific websites, papers and satellite channels that are said to be popular. Much of this media is based abroad, but for communities that have been established for some time, such as the Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Somali and Turkish speaking communities, there are community specific papers and radio stations based in the UK. Research by Ahmed in 2006 found that the perceived Eurocentric bias in Western media has led to significant increase in seeking alternative media sources among Muslims from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.⁴¹

³⁸ For example, Edward Said’s *Covering Islam* details how the ‘Islam as a threat’ and ‘Muslims as the other’ narrative pervades Western media and how this exploded during the coverage of the Iranian Hostage Crisis. Edward Said (1997), *Covering Islam: How the Media and Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, New York: Vintage.

³⁹ Poole, E. (2002) *Reporting Islam*, London: I.B. Tauris.

⁴⁰ Liz Feteke (2008), *Integration, Islamophobia and civil rights in Europe*, London: Institute of Race Relations.

⁴¹ Ahmed, F. (2006), ‘British Muslim Perceptions and Opinions on News Coverage of September 11’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 32.

In addition, channels such as *Al Jazeera* have a large audience in most Muslim communities in the UK and are seen as offering different perspectives on news and current affairs. The proliferation of alternative internet based news media and social networking platforms such as Facebook and YouTube increasingly have salience for Muslim communities and are seen as better for accuracy and less biased media reporting and coverage. These platforms also assist diaspora communities to link across borders as well as offering a space for the community to 'see itself', voice concerns and respond to issues.

Individual community reports contain a detailed list of specific media consumed by specific communities in England.

9 Links with country of origin

All the communities retain close links with their countries of origins. These links include returning to maintain homes, visiting family and friends or going on holiday; sending remittances to family and friends, undertaking charity work, developing businesses and sometimes political links. Respondents feel that first generation immigrants often cling to a 'myth of return', which is reinforced by these continuing links, and place great importance on ensuring children are aware of their country of heritage, wherever possible taking them for visits.

The sending of remittances was mentioned by all respondents as important, although there was variation between communities on the amounts, purpose and regularity of these transfers. The effects of these remittances are substantial, and they constitute the second largest financial inflow to developing countries, currently exceeding international aid.⁴² While there is some data on formal remittances flowing out of the UK it is by no means complete. Critically it does not include remittances sent through informal methods such as the popular hawaladar system and this makes estimates largely unreliable.

⁴² *Sending Money Home: A survey of remittance products and services in the UK*, DfID, 2005.

10 Civil society development

The specific form and level of development of civil society structure and organisation varies and is influenced by lengths of settlement and community histories in the UK as well as state and civil society development in the countries of heritage. The civil society structures of Pakistani, Indian Muslim and Bangladeshi communities are more developed than those of newer and smaller communities. The Somali community is an exception in that, while it is one of the oldest and larger communities, civil society has remained fragmented, localised, poorly funded and without strong representation or links with public authorities.

The civil societies of each community are initially a response to religious, welfare, social and cultural needs. Organisations in newer communities are focussed more on direct service delivery to cater for the day to day needs of new migrants such as housing, education, employment advice and guidance, immigration and other legal issues and in enabling access to mainstream service providers. Those in established communities have developed into influencing and advocacy roles, alongside maintaining services where gaps in provision continue. The latter are more involved in consultation and local decision making forums and tend to have a greater knowledge of voluntary sector funding and networks.

Newer communities often feel disadvantaged in competing for funding, resources and representation with longer established communities and this can sometimes lead to conflicts between different migrant groups. For example, the Somali community in Tower Hamlets is working in a context of longer established associations and representation among the Bangladeshi community. Within communities there can also be distinct needs. For example, in Leicester there is a significant Somali community which includes a large number of Somalis born in European countries that have a very specific set of needs compared to Somalis who migrated to the UK directly from Somalia.

Faith-based organisations are often inseparable from civil society in many of the communities as, in the absence of mainstream services, mosques play a central role as community hubs and venues for communication about community issues and delivery of support services. Mosques are critical in meeting needs relating to marriage, funeral and burial arrangements. With longer established communities mosques have expanded their provision to Arabic and Koranic teaching for children and offering advice and counselling on issues relating to family law and personal matters. As issues and challenges facing young people become evident, some faith-based organisations have tried to respond with appropriate educational, sports and other projects aimed at involving young people. However, girls and young women in general are not as well catered for by faith-based organisations, nor are those young people that are not interested in religion.

There is also a distinction, reinforced by funding arrangements, between faith-based organisations and civil society organisations that target homogenous faith communities. This distinction is not lost on many of those working with Muslim communities in the voluntary sector. For example, an Indian Muslim interviewee contrasted the ability of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Somali groups to get core funding on ethnic grounds with the difficult situation of Indian Muslim organisations to get any core funding for their activities because they are seen as having a faith orientation. The implications of these funding policies were recognised in an Office for the Deputy Prime Minister report in 2005:

Lack of funding for faith-based organisations is particularly acute for the minority faiths, which lack even the limited institutional funding to which the mainstream faiths might have some recourse. Faith groups reported trying to operate their community activities on a shoe-string, at times using inadequate accommodation in, and or linked to, the mosques, gurdwaras, temples and churches.⁴³

The role of faith-based organisations differs across the communities. For example, Afghans see community support and religion as largely independent spheres, with most community needs being catered for by refugee or other secular cultural organisations, while many Turkish or Iranian associations are religiously informed and funded. Religious affiliation can often affect the ability of community organisations to receive funding from charitable and government sources due to discomfort with funding to faith-based organisations irrespective of the functions that these organisations or associations may carry out.

Most communities also have secular political organisations, many of which started off reflecting the political interests and concerns of their countries of origin. In communities that have been in the UK for some time, such organisations have progressed to becoming active on issues such as challenging racism and discrimination, and later still to encouraging and promoting formal political participation in mainstream British politics. It is too early to say whether this is a pattern that will be followed by the newer communities.

Cultural associations also proliferate in most communities. These are often loose associations that focus on social and cultural activities, networking and fundraising, rather than on direct service provision to meet community welfare and development needs. There are also many professional networks such as medical associations, business associations and student groups within individual communities, although autonomous women's organisations of any kind are few and far between. In addition to community specific organisations, there are a number of pan-national Muslim umbrella organisations aiming to represent the needs of Muslims as a whole, but, according to respondents, these remain largely dominated by Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian Muslim representatives and interests to date.

⁴³ The Angoy Consultancy (2005), *New Deal for Faith Communities Pilot Project*, London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=1317

Civil society organisations in all these communities have significant capacity building needs. The majority find it difficult to raise core funds from statutory and charitable sources and survive largely on short-term funding or voluntary donations from the communities. Respondents also report a considerable degree of fragmentation and duplication of services in some communities (particularly Afghan and Somali). Those working across local authority boundaries find it harder to access local authority funds and are reliant largely on charitable funding. Most organisations also rely solely on volunteers and often operate out of volunteer's homes. This has significant implications for the quality and effectiveness of service delivery, as noted in a 2005 ODPM report:

Lack of funding and the consequential financial constraints oblige many faith communities to rely heavily on volunteers both to develop and run their community activities. This necessarily makes it more difficult for them always to have those with the most appropriate skills and experiences to conduct the activities. It also means that they are less likely to have dedicated staff able to monitor and evaluate the often excellent performance of their community initiatives, thus creating a seemingly circular problem when faced with the requirement by potential funders for a record of outputs and outcomes before funding will be considered.⁴⁴

Most civil society organisations are reported to be anxious to develop closer partnerships with local and central government but are constrained by a wide range of factors. These include a lack of organisation and skills within communities themselves in creating representative bodies for consultation and a lack of trust in some communities of state institutions, including the police and other agencies. There are also frustrations concerning the lack of genuine reciprocal partnerships with public authorities and a sense of being used solely to plug gaps in mainstream service provision. There is a broader concern that community development is being hampered by agendas and funding regimes imposed by local and central government rather than responding to the actual needs and issues facing communities.

⁴⁴ ODPM, 2005

10.1 Community engagement and participation

Relations between faith communities and public bodies at all levels have become more routine since the late 1990s⁴⁵ and initiatives such as Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) have sought to develop a more responsive relationship between government departments, local authorities and their partners, including faith communities. However, in practice the experience of faith communities, including Muslim communities, in their relationships with public authorities remains mixed. For example, in 2001 46 per cent of LSPs included faith communities as partners despite the recommendations of the National Strategy Action Plan for neighbourhood renewal to work with faith communities.⁴⁶ Communities and Local Government's review of faith-based communities also recommended an audit of the extent and nature of the arrangements for the participation of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in the work of LSPs.⁴⁷

Community participation and engagement with public authorities, including in key areas such as policymaking and service delivery, is currently limited and there is a broad consensus among respondents that most communities would welcome more effective engagement. The channels of communication and structures are generally felt to be ad-hoc, with the purposes of consultation and the desired outcomes often unclear.

Respondents see relatively few existing 'community leaders' as necessarily representative of communities and feel that there is a tendency for public institutions to deal with individuals who proclaim themselves to be representative, but who in reality may have a limited or no mandate to represent their communities in a dialogue with public authorities. However, some respondents, particularly those from South Asian communities did highlight the increasing number of Muslim councillors. It is estimated that there were 208 Muslim Councillors in 2004 (1.1 per cent of the total).⁴⁸

There is internal fragmentation within Muslim communities and a lack of representative umbrella bodies that can engage with public authorities on the wide range of issues of concern to individual communities. Given the diversity and specific affiliations that exist within these communities such broadly representative bodies may be impossible, nevertheless the current structures are seen as particularly parochial and limited. While there are broader forums and organisations aiming, or claiming, to be representative of all Muslims of a particular school, there is nevertheless a perceived dominance of Asian representation that respondents feel cannot claim to speak on behalf of all groups all of the time.

The widespread criticism of UK foreign policy, including involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq and perceived lack of action on Palestine, and of domestic policy on immigration and counter terrorism that are perceived as stigmatising whole population groups, have had a significant impact in reducing trust among communities and this needs to be rebuilt if public authorities are to engage more effectively with these communities.

⁴⁵ Beckford *et al*, 2006.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

⁴⁸ Beckford *et al*, 2006.

10.2 Relations with public authorities

Despite the requirements for an equality impact assessment and consultation on the Race Relation (Amendment) Act 2000, as well as the duty to promote good relations between different groups, and the mapping tools available such as the Audit Commission toolkit,⁴⁹ respondents do not feel that their communities are well understood or consulted. In relation to developing service delivery that is appropriate to meet the needs of these groups this is seen as a significant shortcoming and area of real concern.

Respondents highlighted a wholesale lack of public authority knowledge about some communities that they feel are 'invisible' to public authorities and are not thought to have any specific or particular needs. For example, respondents feel Turkish speaking communities are regarded by public authorities as little different from their white counterparts given skin colour, and that there is a general lack of awareness and knowledge of significant sub-divisions within the communities, for example between Turkish, Turkish Cypriot and Kurdish groups.

More generally, respondents feel that public authority officials often assume that organisations emerging from within communities can safely be ignored, or may at best be used for limited service delivery. At worst they may be seen as a problem rather than as assets or potential partners in understanding and responding to real needs – particularly if they are active advocates.

⁴⁹ www.userfocus.audit-commission.gov.uk/KycHome.aspx

11 Conclusions

The series of reports presents a significant move forward in developing Communities and Local Government's understanding of Muslim ethnic communities in England. Given limitations of time and resources they are necessarily broad in scope and should be seen as a starting point for more localised and policy specific work with diverse Muslim communities.

In addition to the remarkable diversity of ethnic groupings, languages and religious practices across these groups that emerges from these reports, it is clear that they are evolving and dynamic communities. For example, in many communities, early concerns that related to settlement and social welfare issues are being replaced by growing anxieties about the issues and problems confronting the second and sometimes third generations. Newer Muslim ethnic communities are often facing a different set of challenges altogether.

The role and experiences of Muslim women in these communities should be highlighted and demands increased attention. Most communities pointed to specific challenges for women related to language and employment difficulties, social isolation and a lack of support within male dominated communities and organisations. There is also a lack of representation of women's voices at community, local, regional and national levels.

Public authority engagement and access to services is another key area requiring policy attention. This includes unmet health needs, language and translation needs and lack of knowledge of how the system operates or of services on offer. There is little evidence of systematic training and the development of expertise among public authority professionals to work effectively, or deal, with the specific issues of these communities. There is a need for public authorities to be more proactive in understanding and mapping needs, particularly of newer communities, and to avoid assuming that this can be done simply through the appointment or co-option of (mainly male) nonexecutive members from these communities into governance structures as has historically tended to happen with longer established communities.

Given the diversity that exists within communities related to intergenerational differences, gender, tribe, clan, religious or secular beliefs, the development of broadly representative bodies may be impossible, however the current structures for engagement are particularly limited and in some cases nonexistent for some communities. Mosques are a community hub and often provide useful additional services that make them an obvious port of call for public authorities. However, many remain dominated by older males and therefore there are limits to how much they can cater for the wider range of community needs, particularly those of women, young and secular people who are rarely represented in management, decision making and running of these organisations.

There is a need for more meaningful partnerships and projects with public authority partners. The nature and development of local civil society organisations and their provision offers vital soft intelligence on current and emerging community needs and gaps in state provision. At present, respondents see funding criteria and broader government agendas as hindering community development rather than meeting specific community and capacity needs.

In focusing on engagement processes and capacity building issues in these communities, public authorities need to be mindful not to leave non-Muslim communities out of their processes of consultation and capacity building, leaving them feeling further marginalised and ignored. For example, the black Caribbean community has also experienced pressing youth-related problems over a long period of time and neglecting these could cause long-term problems for public authorities. It is recommended that public authorities ensure that policies and approaches towards these specific communities are set in the context of a holistic understanding of the needs of all the communities that they serve. This conclusion is supported by a study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights on addressing the needs of Muslim communities:

Mainstreaming certainly does not mean a one size fits all model of service provision; rather the awareness of different needs and consequently of different models of service provision becomes central to the operational priority of the local authority. In addition, mainstreaming equalities means primarily consulting people about how to meet their needs in order to be inclusive. The local authorities should take the lead in developing an equality strategy that is aimed at combating racism and discrimination, with the active involvement of all ethnic communities concerned, including Muslim communities, civil society, and other relevant key partners. The basis for such a strategy should be a strong commitment to non-discrimination, equality and social cohesion and to ensuring that all are able to participate in the social economic, cultural and political life of the city.⁵⁰

This raises broader issues relating to the approach to developing the third sector as a whole as a partner in meeting the needs of minority communities across the board. There is widespread anecdotal evidence that what is often referred to as the black and minority ethnic voluntary sector has over time been decimated, with little effective alignment to national initiatives or local strategies developed by Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). The voluntary sector Compact is widely regarded as having had little impact in strengthening black and minority ethnic voluntary sector development.⁵¹ There is a need to look again at the scope for government at national and local levels to stimulate and partner with civil society organisations to meet the pressing needs of these and other minority communities if it is to achieve on its integration agenda.

⁵⁰ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2008), *Community cohesion at local level: addressing the needs of Muslim Communities – Examples of local initiatives*, Austria: FRA. www.fra.europa.eu

⁵¹ Established in 1998, the Compact is an agreement between Government and the voluntary and community sector in England. The Compact Code of Good Practice on Relations with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Voluntary and Community Organisations – forms one of the five Codes of Good Practice which underpin the Compact. A review of the compact is currently underway. www.thecompact.org.uk

It is evident that there are both common as well as unique challenges faced by the majority of these communities, many of which require immediate attention. Disadvantage and discrimination in education, employment, poor health outcomes and lack of access to public services are all problems that were raised during interviews and the substantive nature of these issues are generally supported by the existing literature and statistical evidence. Muslims are also on the whole experiencing widespread media and public hostility, adding anxiety and fear to the experience of disadvantage as minority groups.⁵² The thirteen community reports highlight the complexity of these issues and the need for enhanced understanding of community commonalities and diversity and its implication for policy development and community engagement as well as developing a better evidence and knowledge base for action. It is hoped that these reports will provide a spur and a starting point in developing this critical knowledge for policy makers.

⁵² Miranda Lewis (2005), *Asylum: Understanding Public Attitudes*, London: Institute of Public Policy Research.

12 Recommendations

While this research has been framed as a ‘starting point’ for developing understanding of Muslim ethnic communities in England, there are a number of areas which warrant immediate policy attention. The community reports offer recommendations for specific ethnic communities so the following recommendations are formulated as a response to common issues that are evident across the majority of communities:

Local and national data collection and analysis of needs

It is recommended that local authorities undertake mapping and engagement exercises to understand the profile and needs of local Muslim communities. Migration patterns in recent years and the transience of some communities has created more fluid populations that make census data less useful in informing service delivery on the ground. It is recommended that interim and local data collection should map changes between the census.

It is recommended that national, regional and local processes are designed to collate, analyse and disseminate data relating to population size and characteristics of ethnic Muslim communities from the wide variety of official sources, as well as specific research and community audits by public authorities.

Civil society development

There is a widespread lack of knowledge among communities about where and how to access funding, as well as about restrictions placed on specific funding streams such as Preventing Violent Extremism. As a result newer communities can often see themselves as being in competition with more established communities for very limited resources. It is recommended that there is:

- A review of voluntary sector funding, focusing on how much mainstream public funding is reaching minority and faith-related community organisations and through what channels
- Guidance to communities about what is available from what sources and more transparency in funding allocations and grant making processes. Public authorities can look at the scope for pooling resources to meet a variety of needs, and how public spaces and facilities might be better used to meet communities’ needs that are often reflected in the demand for ‘community centres’
- A review of the role and effectiveness of Local Strategic Partnerships in engaging with Muslim organisations and communities and more widely with minority communities, specifically in relation to levels of knowledge, representation and ability to meet their needs
- Holistic approaches and engagement in relation to the whole voluntary sector, for example there is scope to involve a wider range of groups and organisations – including non-Muslim – that have an interest in promoting good relations between different groups and countering radicalisation.

Training and development of public authority officials and service providers

It is recommended that enhanced training and development of public authority officials and service providers should be undertaken in order to enable them to respond effectively to these communities. Training and development approaches should aim to ensure:

- Better understanding of Muslim communities and needs
- More effective educational support and services for specific groups with particular needs such as refugee children
- Inter-cultural competence for all public service professionals
- Leadership and management development approaches that make responding effectively to the wide range of community needs central to effectiveness
- Broader governance requirements and standards are put in place for public authorities in responding to the diversity of community needs.

Training and development for communities and organisations

The research indicates that there are a wide range of training and development needs if communities' capacities, skills and resilience are to be enhanced. These include:

- Enhanced English language skills provision
- Skills for employment, particularly for women
- Skills for enterprise and business development
- Skills and knowledge for imams to assist mosque members in engaging with public authorities
- Leadership skills for women and young people
- Generic capacity building for civil society organisations and staff.

Socio economic development

While this study was not a comprehensive analysis of the socio economic position of these communities, it is evident that there are challenges across many of the communities with the recognition of overseas qualifications. This appears to significantly affect opportunities to integrate economically and has secondary effects on mental health due to the loss of economic and social status from the country of origin.

It is recommended that:

- There is a review of how the qualifications of migrants, particularly those arriving as refugees and asylum seekers, may be recognised or be given parity with UK qualifications
- Guidance is provided to new migrants on the validity of overseas qualifications and access to advice on how to have their qualifications recognised, including signposting to additional qualifications that may be required.

Community engagement and participation

The recommendations for public authorities to enhance community engagement and participation are:

- A review of national and local structures for engaging with Muslim and other minority communities
- Deeper and wider consultation and engagement with communities, particularly women and young people, as well as through already known individuals and organisations
- Targeted strategies to develop organisations, projects and services with women and young people in these communities
- Development of genuine partnership approaches to policy development, meeting service needs and addressing broader needs and concerns of these communities.

Areas for further research

The study highlighted a number of areas that merit further research, as little is known about these except anecdotally. These include:

- Whether there are significant health needs that are not being met, for example mental health issues in communities with high levels of unemployment and large numbers of refugees/asylum seekers
- The role of the education system, including a review of citizenship teaching, pastoral care provision, educational attainment and experiences and whether the education system is meeting the needs of specific new migrants such as refugees
- In relation to young people: the rise of religiosity and shifts in the practice of religion and its impact
- In relation to women: immigration status related problems, domestic violence and forced marriage, education and training needs for employment, and the needs of single parent families
- Whether Race Equality Impact Assessments and Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) consultation requirements are being met
- How ethnic Muslim communities based outside of significant metropolitan concentrations access and experience public services as well as refugee support services for those for whom this is applicable.

13 Full glossary for the UMEC reports

Ahl-e-Hadith: Islamic reform movement originating in the Indian sub-continent. With similarities to the *Hanbali Madhab*, followers adhere to the Shariah based strictly on the *hadith* and *sunnah*.

Ahlus-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah': Ahlus-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah are defined as those who adhere to the Sunnah and who unite upon it, not turning to anything else, whether that be in matters of belief or matters of actions which are subject to Islamic rulings.

Alevism: In *Alevism*, men and women are regarded as equals, and pray side by side. Some consider Alevism a type of Shi'a Islam (and specifically, of Twelvers), since Alevis accept some Shi'a beliefs, however they are uncomfortable describing themselves as Shi'a, since there are major differences in philosophy, customs, and rituals from the prevailing form of Shi'ism in modern Iran. In addition to its religious aspect, Alevism is also closely associated with Anatolian folk culture. The Kurdish and Turkish languages (not Arabic) are generally used in Alevi rituals. During the 1960s, many younger Alevis came to conceive of Alevism in non-religious terms, with some even relating it to Marxism. The 1990s brought a new emphasis on Alevism as an ethnic or cultural identity. Alevi communities in Turkey today generally support secularism, after the Kemalist model, partly out of mistrust of majoritarian religiosity. (Esposito, 2008).

Barelvi/Barelwi: Founded in northern India in 1880s, based on the writings of Mawlana Ahmad Reza Khan Barelvi. Barelvis believe themselves to be South Asia's heirs and representatives of the earliest Muslim community. The movement was triggered by the failure of the Indian revolt of 1857 and the subsequent formal colonisation of India by the British, which led to the final dissolution of the Mughal Empire. (Esposito, 2008).

Berber: Ethnic group from North Africa.

Biradaris: Kinship groups encompassing immediate and extended family bloodlines.

CI: The Change Institute.

CVO: Community Voluntary Organisation.

Dawat-e Islami: A non-political, purely religious, international propagational movement.

Deobandi: Associated with the Indo/Pakistani reformist movement centered in the Darul Uloom of Deoband are known by the name Deobandis. The school at Deoband, a country town some ninety miles northeast of Delhi, was founded in 1867. The goal of the school was to preserve the teachings of the faith in a period of non-Muslim rule and considerable social change by holding Muslims to a standard of correct practice; central to that goal was the creation of a class of formally trained and popularly supported *ulama*. (Esposito, 2008).

Hadith: Reports of Prophet Muhammad's deeds and sayings, an authoritative source of guidance for Muslims.

Hawaladar: A semi-formal method of international money transfer.

Hanafi: Major Sunni Islamic school of law which emphasises analogous reasoning of jurists over literal interpretation of *had'ith*. Predominate in the Arab world and South Asia. It is the oldest of the four schools of thought (jurisprudence or Fiqh) within Sunni Islam. Named after its founder, Abu Hanifa an Nu'man ibn Thäbit (699 – 767), the Hanafi school is the oldest, but it is generally regarded as the most liberal and as the one which puts the most emphasis on human reason. The Hanafi school also has the most followers among the four major Sunni and is predominant among the Sunnis of Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the most of the Indian Subcontinent, China as well as in Iraq, Turkey, Albania, the Balkans and the Caucasus. (Esposito, 2008).

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HBT): HBT is an Islamist political party founded in 1953 by Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani, an Islamic jurist of Palestinian origin. Its main goal is the rebirth of the caliphate as the only political structure able to apply Islamic law and to restore glory and prosperity to the *ummah* (community of the believers). HBT has an active presence in the UK. www.hizb.org.uk

Izzat: At one level it stands for the honour and reputation of an individual and family, and maintaining Izzat involves not bringing shame to the family or oneself. To have Izzat for someone also means to show respect, as in the injunction that one must have Izzat for one's elders.

Jamaat-e Islami (JI): Pakistani Islamic revivalist party founded by Mawlana Abu al-Ala Mawdudi in 1941 in pre-partition India. The party encourages the reformation of society through education and conversion rather than by coercion. Its political agenda was premised on a program of training the vanguard "Islamic elite" to oversee the revival of Islam on the national level and mobilise the masses using religious symbols and ideals. (Esposito, 2008).

Madhab: Literally "school" or "orientation," usually meaning one of the schools of Islamic law.

Maliki judicial school: School of law attributed to Malik ibn Anas al-Asbahi in the eighth century in the Arabian Peninsula. Predominant in North Africa, with significant presence in Upper Egypt, Sudan, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait. It is the third-largest of the four schools, followed by Muslims mostly in North Africa and West Africa. The Maliki school derives from the work of Imam Malik, and differs from the three other schools of law most notably in the sources it uses for derivation of rulings. All four schools use the Qur'an as the primary source, followed by the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad transmitted as hadiths (sayings), ijma (consensus of the scholars) and Qiyas (analogy). The Maliki school, in addition, uses the practice of the people of Medina as a source. This source, according to Malik, sometimes supersedes hadith because the practice of the people of Medina was considered "living sunnah," in as much as the Prophet Muhammad migrated there, lived there and died there, and most of his companions lived there during his life and after his death. The result is a much more limited reliance upon hadith than is found in other schools. Imam Malik was particularly scrupulous about authenticating his sources when he did appeal to them, however, and his comparatively small collection of hadith, known as Al-Mutwatta ('The Approved'), is highly regarded. (Esposito, 2008).

RCO: Refugee Community Organisation.

Salafism: Salafism is a current aligned to Sunni Islam that takes the pious ancestors (Salaf) of the patristic period of early Islam as exemplary models. Early usage of the term appears in the book Al-Ansab by Abu Sa'd Abd al-Kareem al-Sama'ni, who died in the year 1166 (562 of the Islamic calendar). Salafis view the first three generations of Muslims, who are Muhammad's companions, and the two succeeding generations after them, the Tabi'in and the Taba' at Tabi'in as examples of how Islam should be practiced. The principal tenet of Salafism is that Islam was perfect and complete during the days of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, but that undesirable innovations have been added over the later centuries due to materialist and cultural influences. Salafis, similar to adherents of orthodox denominations of Islam, place great emphasis on ritual not only in prayer but in every activity in daily life. Salafism is often used interchangeably with 'Wahhabism' but adherents usually reject this term and use terms like 'Muwahidoon', 'Ahle Hadith' or 'Ahl at-Tawheed'. (Esposito, 2008).

Shafi judicial school: School of Islamic law founded by Muhammad ibn Idris ibn al-Abbas ibn Uthman ibn Shafii in the eighth century. Prominent in Egypt, Palestine, and Jordan with a significant number of followers in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Hejaz, Pakistan, India, and Indonesia and among Sunnis in Iran and Yemen. The Shafi school also refers to the opinions of Muhammad's companions (primarily Al-Khulafa ar-Rashidun). The school, based on Shafi's books *ar-Risala fi Usul al-Fiqh* and *Kitab al-Umm*, emphasises proper *istinbaat* (derivation of laws) through the rigorous application of legal principles as opposed to speculation or conjecture. It is considered one of the more conservative of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence. (Esposito, 2008).

Shariah: ‘Shariah’ literally means the path that leads to the well of water. It is the path to Islam – including Islamic theology, ethics, law and spirituality. It is often considered to be God’s will for humanity, especially as presented in the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet, providing the basis for Islamic law as defined by Muslim scholars over the centuries.

Shi’a: Muslims who believe that succession to the political and religious leadership of the Muslim community should be hereditary through Muhammad’s daughter Fatimah and her husband, Muhammad’s cousin Ali. Although Shi’as do not believe that these successors (imams) are prophets, they do believe that they are divinely inspired and infallible. Approximately 15 per cent of all Muslims are Shi’as. (Esposito, 2008).

Sufi/Sufism: Spiritual aspect of Islam. Sufi has a range of meanings deriving different interpretations of the word’s etymology but generally refers to those who are interested in inner knowledge and practice towards spiritual awakening and enlightenment. There are a number of Sufi orders or ‘paths’ (*tariqas*), including the *Tijaniyah* and *Qadiriyyah*, many which developed between the 9th and 12th centuries.

Sunnah: Customary practice or way of life. “*al-Sunnah*” refers to the approved standard of practice established by Muhammad and early Muslims.

Sunni: Muslims who emphasise the importance of the actions and customs of Muhammad and the first generations of Muslims, viewing as legitimate the establishment of the caliphate, in contrast to Shi’a beliefs. About 85% of all Muslims are Sunnis. (Esposito, 2008).

Tabligh Jamaat: Indian reform movement founded by Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas in 1927 in Delhi. Popular with villagers and peasants. Called for reform of personal religious practices and defence of Islam and Muslim minority populations. Focused on religious, rather than political, aspects of Islam. (Esposito, 2008).

Wahhabi: Wahhabism is the conservative 18th century reformist call of Sunni Islam attributed to Muhammad ibn Abd-al Wahhab, an Islamic scholar from present day Saudi Arabia, who became known for advocating a return to the practices of the first three generations of Islamic history. Wahhabism is the dominant form of Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia and Qatar and is practiced in Kuwait, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania. It is often referred to as a ‘sect’ or ‘branch’ of Islam, though its supporters reject such designations. The primary doctrine of Wahhabism is Tawhid, or the uniqueness and unity of God and a reliance on the Qur’an and Hadith. (Esposito, 2008).

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