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# Muslims in the EU:

## Cities Report

**UNITED KINGDOM**

Preliminary research report
and literature survey

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## List of acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| FNSEM | Fourth National survey of National Minorities |
| FAIR | Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism |
| MCB | Muslim Council of Britain |
| MAB | Muslim Association of Britain |
| BMF | British Muslim Forum |
| PSA | Public Service Agreement |
| BNP | British National Party |
| YMO | Young Muslim Organisation |
| NHS | National Health Service |
| PSI | Policy Studies Institute |
| COMPAS | Centre on Migration Policy and Society, University of Oxford |

## Background

This research paper, focusing on the situation of Muslims in the United Kingdom (UK), was commissioned by the EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program (EUMAP)[1], of the Open Society Institute (OSI).[2] Similar reports have also been prepared for Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

The overall aim of this series of research papers is to provide a comprehensive review of available research on Muslims in each of these countries, including a bibliography covering the most recent relevant publications. Another aim is to facilitate the selection of a number of EU cities for inclusion in the new OSI monitoring project initiated in 2007 – 'Muslims in EU Cities' previously known as 'Muslims in the EU: Cities Reports.' This project will address policy on Muslims at the city, or municipal, level as opposed to the national level, which is the more usual level of analysis for cross-country monitoring. It follows on from previous EUMAP reports, addressing the situation of Muslims in Europe, in particular the 2004 report**, *Muslims in the UK: Policies for Engaged Citizens.*[3]**

Each of the research reports follows the same methodology, to provide comparative information, across the countries covered, according to a common methodology prepared by EUMAP.[4] Part I of the report evaluates the availability of data and other information on the situation of – specifically – Muslims in the United Kingdom, in the following areas: population, identity, education, employment, housing, health and social protection, policing and security, and participation and citizenship. Part II addresses the policy context in the United Kingdom, in particular with regard to the perception of Muslims, media portrayal and perception, and integration policies. Part III looks more specifically at the potential suitability of six cities and towns in the United Kingdom with significant Muslim populations for inclusion in the OSI 'Muslims in EU Cities' monitoring project.

[1] Full details on the EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program (EUMAP) can be found at http://www.eumap.org.
[2] Full details on the Open Society Institute (OSI) can be found at http://www.soros.org.
[3] The full report, as well as previous EUMAP reports on the situation of Muslims in France and Italy, can be found here: http://www.eumap.org/topics/minority/reports/britishmuslims.
[4] The methodology for the research papers is available on the EUMAP website (www.eumap.org).

## Executive Summary

While a Muslim presence in Britain can be traced back over 300 years to the sailors from the Indian subcontinent that were employed by the British East India Company, large scale migration of unskilled male workers from South Asia took place in the 1960s. Many of these men were later joined by their families. A significant number of Muslims were also among the East African Asians who began arriving in the late 1960s and early 1970s under pressure from the 'Africanisation' policies in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Since the 1980s, Muslims also began to arrive in the UK in significant numbers as refugees from the Balkans, East Africa, the Middle East, and Turkey.

Since the 1980s, research studies have tracked the growing salience of religion in the identity of Muslims. These studies provide a picture of the complex and diverse reasons for the foregrounding of religion in the identity of Muslims. These range from the impact of experiences of discrimination, prejudice, violence and disparagement of religion in creating in-group solidarity, through to the role of Muslim identity in the empowerment of young women and men.

The question in the 2001 Census on religious identity provides a rich source of data on Muslims. It shows that in 2001 there were 1.6 million Muslims in Great Britain. In terms of age structure, Muslims have the youngest demographic profile as a faith group in England and Wales. Over 60 per cent of all Muslims are under the age of 30. Approximately half of Muslims living in Britain were born in the UK. The Census data demonstrated that there are Muslims in every local authority in the UK except the Isle of Scilly. 75 per cent live in 24 cities or authorities, in the five major conurbations of Greater London, the West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, and the East Midlands. Birmingham is the local authority area with the largest number of Muslims in absolute terms. The five local authorities with the highest proportions of Muslims are Tower Hamlets, Newham, Blackburn, Bradford, and Waltham Forest. Muslims in the UK are disproportionately represented in the most deprived urban communities. One third of the Muslim population live in the 10 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods.

Most academic research on minorities in education has focused on ethnic groups rather than Muslims as a group. Muslims of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, who constitute 50 per cent of Britain's Muslim population, have been the main reference groups in research when looking at the educational attainment of Muslims. Research in education, on Muslims as a religious group, rather than ethnic groups, has focused largely on state-funded faith schools and the experiences of Muslim women in education. Literature on the latter has explored Muslim women's aspirations, the value placed on educational qualifications for women by Muslim communities and within Islam, single sex schools and obstacles faced by Muslim women within the education system. The Census does provide some baseline data on levels of education among the UK population which can be disaggregated by religion.

In education, Muslims have a higher than average rate of participation in post-compulsory education and at the same time have the highest rate of young people without qualifications. A large part of this, of course, reflects the lack of educational

qualifications among the first generation of migrants. The key debates surrounding differences in attainment seem to point towards socio-economic status, differential effects of cultural discrimination and social capital in the form of family encouragement and expectations as the main factors for the diversity in educational attainment.

Many Muslims feel that various key arguments against state-funded Muslim schools demonstrate the level of prejudice towards Muslims and Islam, and myths surrounding the goals Muslims have for their community's educational welfare. Key criticisms of Muslim schools are that they are monolithic and that children who attend such schools will not appreciate or understand diversity. Johnson and Castelli's (2002) research on Muslim schools in England described most as multiethnic schools, drawing children from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. They argued that although such schools are mono-faith they portray diverse interpretations of Islam. They point out that some establishments are increasingly gaining reputations for educational excellence.

According to the 2001 Census, Muslims demonstrate the highest levels of economic inactivity when compared with all other groups. Among young people aged 16–24, Muslim men reported the highest proportions of unemployment (three times greater than the national average). Muslim women in this age cohort have unemployment levels that are twice that of the national average. Muslims are concentrated in jobs such as cooks, sales assistants/retail cashiers/checkout operators, process plant and machine operatives, assemblers and routine operatives, sewing machinists, taxi/cab drivers, labourers in foundries, waiting staff and security guards. They are also concentrated in professions including restaurant and catering managers, software professionals, medical practitioners, chartered and certified accountants and civil service administrators and assistants.

Discrimination is one of the factors that are identified as impacting on the employment position of Muslims. Others include the unequal impact of the decline in certain industries in producing long-term unemployment. Many Muslim communities are concentrated in areas that faced the greatest decline of traditional industries. They were therefore among the most severely affected in terms of loss of jobs. This, coupled with the fact that the majority of these communities had no formal training or skills (human capital), meant that they were unable to find opportunities in other sectors.

Just as post war commonwealth migrants were at the bottom end of the labour market, they also found themselves at the poorest end of the private sector housing market. Chain migration led to clusters of communities on both regional and intra-urban levels. There is however, little evidence to support any claims of 'normative' self-segregation; of Muslims preferring to live in Muslim only areas. A study of census data shows that all Muslims in England live in wards with mixed populations.

The 2001 Census found that in respect of housing tenure, approximately half of Muslims reported owner occupation, compared with 68 per cent of the population as a whole. A practice of pooling together their limited resources mean that Pakistani Muslims report high levels of owner occupation although often in over-crowded housing in undesirable areas. In addition, Muslims reported the highest percentage

living in social rented accommodation, at just under a quarter of respondents, compared with one in five in the general population.

Some studies suggest that discrimination and Islamophobia 'contributes to health disparities – "difference in the incidence, prevalence, mortality and burden of diseases and other adverse health conditions that exist" - among Muslim minorities'. They argue that 'societal forces of marginalisation and "faith-blind" health policies challenge the health of Muslim families and their access to culturally appropriate care' (Laird *et. al* 2007: 924). The 1999 Health Survey for England includes data on religious affiliation and the 2001 National Census also included cross-tabulations of data on health by religion. When controlling for age, Muslims reported the highest proportion of males (13 per cent) and females (16 per cent) stating that their health was 'not good'. Females were more likely to report that their health was not good across all groups, however the groups with the largest gender gaps were Muslims, Sikhs and then Hindus. Muslims also have the highest rates of disability when controlling for age structure. Almost a quarter of females (24 per cent) reported having a disability, as did 21 per cent of males.

One key area of debate within the area of health and services is the low take-up of services by ethnic minorities. This is of particular relevance to Muslims as they demonstrate higher proportions of poor health and disability, suggesting greater need and support from outside formal services. Some research suggests that the low take up rate of family support services was not due to a lack of willingness to share the care of their children but because the services offered were either not fully articulated to the parents or were found to be inappropriate. Some service providers view the issue as being more related to group preferences than any other factor. Stereotypes of extended family life and minority communities feed the assumption among service planners and providers that South Asian people are more willing to look after their own than the White majority. This is an assumption that not only relies on the fact that those in need of support have extended families members at hand, but also that such families members are willing, if able, to provide support.

Research around issues such as policing, community and criminal justice and victimisation have focused on ethnic communities. British Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are more likely than other groups to be the victims of household crime and of racially motivated attacks. More recently there has been research focusing on the experience of Muslims in prison.

Studies that examine the impact of anti-terrorism laws on the actions, behaviours, perceptions and attitudes of Muslims contends that anti-terrorism measures construct Muslims as the 'enemy within' and are a form of anti-Muslim racism. Some suggest that measures to deal with the financing of terrorism negatively impact on opportunities for remittance payments by Muslim migrants, 'criminalise' the use of the *hawala* money transfer system and place Islamic charities under suspicion and thereby reduce the level of donations they receive. There is also concern about the impact of the increased use of stop and search powers in increasing a sense among Muslims of being 'under siege'.

Muslims have been politically active in the UK and have mobilised on the basis of religious identity to secure protection from religious discrimination and

accommodation of religious needs. Over time they have also developed a variety of umbrella advocacy and representative organisations. The discourse of participation in national bodies first shifted from participation from the good of the 'ethnic community' towards the good of the 'Muslim community' and is now shifting from the good of the Muslim community towards the 'common good' of wider society.

A survey exploring people's prejudices, carried out in early 2005 found that around 58 per cent of people did think it was important for society to respond the needs of Muslims. In that survey, the majority (66 per cent) of people were supportive to equal employment opportunity measures toward Muslims, while 19 per cent thought that such measures had gone too far. The majority expressed positive (38 per cent) or neutral (43 per cent) feelings towards Muslims, although one fifth expressed negative feelings about Muslims. A quarter of respondents said that they did sometimes feel prejudiced against Muslims but would not let it show, while nine per cent said they did not mind if they came across as prejudiced against Muslims. When asked whether particular groups were accepted as British, Arabs were the ethnic group and Muslims the religious group that people felt were least likely to be regarded as British. Around one third of respondents viewed Muslims as posing a cultural and physical threat to the UK.

The negative portrayal of Muslims in the media has been the subject of several studies and reports. A study by the Institute of Race Relations explores how press reporting around anti-terrorism arrests contributes towards an atmosphere of Islamophobia, they note that 'in numerous occasions there is great media fanfare as the police herald the arrest of a so-called terrorist cell, only for the cases to be quietly dropped days, weeks or months later.'

A key element of the government's integration strategy is to ensure protection from religious discrimination and violence. In relation to discrimination, the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1660) came into force on the 2nd December 2003. The regulations aim to implement the Employment Directive 2000/78/EC. The regulations prohibit direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation on grounds of religion and belief, in respect of employment and vocational training. They also apply to discrimination by institutions (including universities) which provide further or higher education. The Equality Act 2006 extends the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief to the provision of goods, services and facilities. In addition to this, the Equality Act 2006 creates a new Equality and Human Rights Commission, which is tasked with the responsibility of enforcing this legislation.

'Community cohesion' emerged as a central aspect of integration policy that has developed as part of the response to the disorder that occurred in several northern mill towns during the summer of 2001. Commissions of inquiry into the riots identified the lack of 'community cohesion' as underlying the breakdown in order. Following the London Bombings of July 2005, a Commission on Integration and Cohesion was created to consider how local areas can play a role in 'forging cohesive and resilient communities. A key proposal in the Commission's final report is for 'a new national campaign that promotes our shared future based on a number of key principles – those of rights and responsibilities, visible social justice, and the somewhat old fashioned sounding ethics of hospitality'. It also warns that the goals of building integration and

cohesion cannot be met if the discrimination experienced by some groups within society continues.

# PART I: RESEARCH AND LITERATURE ON MUSLIMS

## 1. POPULATION

### 1.1 Patterns of Muslim migration in Britain

A Muslim presence in Britain can be traced back over 300 years to the sailors from the Indian subcontinent that were employed by the British East India Company. More arrived following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the subsequent recruitment of sailors from Yemen into the merchant navy (Sherif 2002, Ansari 2004). Significant Muslim communities developed in port cities such as London, Cardiff, Liverpool, Hull and South Shields, the oldest of which is the Yemeni community (Halliday 1992). The British Nationality Act 1948 gave members of the Commonwealth the right to freely enter, work and settle with their families in the UK. Migration of Muslims to the UK increased significantly from 1960 onwards as a result of labour shortages in the post-World War II period. Britain invited citizens of the Commonwealth to fill vacancies, resulting in many of today's British Muslims having South Asian descent. A clear demonstration of the growth of British Muslims since the 1960s is the rise in the number of mosques. In 1963 there were only 13 mosques registered in Britain. The number grew to 49 in 1970 and doubled in the space of five years to 99 in 1975, and again to 203 in 1980 and almost doubling yet again to 338 in 1985 (Vertovec 2002).[5]

Ansari (2004) describes the large scale Muslim settlement to Britain as occurring in two broad phases: firstly 1945 to the early 1970s; and then the second phase from 1973 to the present. Lewis describes four phases, 'first the pioneers, then what is known as "chain migration" of generally unskilled male workers, followed by migration of wives and children and finally the emergence of a British born generation.' Hussain suggests that a three-fold division is more useful. First, the period from 1945 to approximately 1970, this is characterised by the arrival of young male migrant workers. Secondly, the period from around 1970 to approximately 1990 with family formation and the establishment of a generation born in Britain. A third section covers those who arrived from the 1990s as asylum seekers and refugees rather than economic migrants (Hussain 2005).

The first phase of migration was to fulfil the needs of Britain's post-war economy. The expansion of production relied upon large numbers of migrant workers, many of whom were Muslim, mainly from Pakistan. Muslim migrants were attracted by the opportunities for financial gain this otherwise undesirable employment offered. The pay in Britain for manual labour was up to 30 times greater than for equivalent jobs in some of the countries of origin (Shaw 1988). However, when considering events occurring prior to or during peaks of migration it is clear that poverty was not the main motivation for uprooting and settling overseas.

The building of the Mangla dam in 1960 had left some 250 villages submerged, displacing 100,000 *Mirpuris* who, although they might previously have been cautious

[5] Since 1854 there has been an official register of places of worship for England and Wales. However, registration is voluntary.

about migrating, took up the opportunity offered by the British Government to assist in rebuilding the UK economy. Similarly, the Bengali Muslims, who moved from Sylhet to Assam prior to partition did so to take up more advantageous land tenure. However, once Assam became a province in the new India, they returned to Sylhet (then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh) as refugees finding themselves with little or no other opportunity for economic betterment than migration. However, Lewis (2002) argues that migrants did not come from the poorest areas, but rather from prosperous farming areas and places with a tradition of emigration.

Many of those who arrived initially as pioneers were joined by members of their villages, and *biraderi* clans or kin networks, who often helped motivate prospective migrants to take the risks involved. This process is often described as ‘chain migration’. Ballard (2004) argues that the majority of migrants made their journeys to specific localities for settlement as a result of acquiring information about the opportunities within those towns and cities prior to migration. The knowledge of such opportunities was passed back to the villages left behind through channels of kinship, friendship and clientship. Ballard writes, ‘As a result what may seem at first sight to be mass migratory movements invariably turn out on closer inspection, to be grounded in a multitude of kin – and locality-specific processes of chain migration.’ (2004:1). It is therefore not uncommon to find communities who resided in the same villages re-established in neighbourhoods within the UK.

Not surprisingly, due to the availability of work in the industrial sectors, early pioneers headed for some of the main industrial conurbations and, when joined by other migrants, Muslim communities began to emerge in areas such as: Greater London, the South East, the West Midlands, West Yorkshire and Lancashire in England; in Scotland, central Clydeside; the ports of South Wales; and in Northern Ireland, the capital, Belfast.

In the early 1960s, immigration legislation, influenced by growing racial tensions, aimed to halt the inflow of migrants. However, this paradoxically led to an enormous rush to ‘beat the ban’. Migrants saw this as a crucial period in which to take the decision to migrate and to bring over their families, wives and children. Once the Immigration Act 1970 was in place, the stream of migrants decreased although this was far from the end of Muslim settlement in Britain.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, East African Asians began arriving under pressure from the ‘Africanisation’ policies in Kenya and Tanzania, and in the case of Uganda, as a result of forced expulsion (Hansen 2000, Twaddle 1990). The East African Asians were highly skilled urban middle-class professionals and entrepreneurs; they tended to settle in London and the Midlands. Their experience of living in urban centres combined with their business and professional background ensured faster integration into economic and social structures. It is estimated that 20,000 of the group of 150,000 East African Asians were Muslims, mainly Islamali Shias with family roots in Pakistan or the Indian state of Gujarat (The Runnymede Trust 1997).

While Muslims from South Asia constitute 68 per cent of the Muslim population in the UK, there are other significant Muslim populations in Britain. However, there is more limited research and literature focused on these groups. There are for example, estimated to be around 120,000 Turkish Cypriots and 80,000 mainland Turkish and

Kurdish people in the UK (Enneli *et al.* 2005). These three groups, while connected, have very different migration histories. The earliest to settle in the UK were the Turkish Cypriots. Tensions between Turkish and Greek communities in Cyprus created pressure for migration in the early 1960s. Turkish migration from Turkey of largely male migrant workers started from the late 1960s and early 1970s and family reunions began in the late 1970s (Ali 2001). Finally, Kurds arrived mainly as political refugees in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Muslims from the Middle East in Britain appear to have a much more diverse profile, coming from various national and class backgrounds (El-Sohl 1992). There were Arabs who had taken advantage of their financial gain from the oil crisis of 1973–4 and invested in property and businesses in Britain seeing it as a safer option than their home countries, which were undergoing uncertain political developments and regime changes. In addition to this, Muslim professionals in states experiencing political unrest took advantage of employment opportunities in their fields in Britain to work and settle here. Ansari (2004:160) writes about this latter type of migrant:

> The needs that many of these migrants have striven to satisfy went beyond physical survival. Lack of material and intellectual fulfilment and a sense of alienation from the operations of newly emerging society were often more important in prompting these Muslims to migrate.

The number of refugees began to grow as a result of ethno-religious and communal conflict, famines and natural disasters. Refugees came from areas such as Somalia and East Africa as well as the Middle East. A more apparent arrival of asylum seeker communities began in the 1990s, which has resulted in a hostile culture towards asylum seekers in the UK (for a review of the evidence on attitudes on asylum and immigration see Crawley (2005)). These included large numbers of applications for asylum from Bosnia following the steady breakup of the former Republic of Yugoslavia. Of course, these Muslims differed significantly from previous Muslim communities. First, these were not economic migrants, and therefore taking up positions within the labour market was not their primary motivation for migrating, but rather it was to flee from persecution. Second, this group is European. There have been steady establishments of other Muslim communities who have arrived as asylum seekers, including Kurds, Afghans – for whom asylum applications steadily rose by over 1,000 per year from 1996 (675) to 2001 (8,920) and more recently Iraqis – for whom the number of asylum applicants rose from 930 during 1995 to 14,570 for 2002[6] (Heath *et al*. 2004).

As described above, Muslim settlement in Britain occurred periodically, in that different communities arrived in higher concentrations according to the pull-push factors facing them at any given time. This has resulted in communities being formed along ethnic lines that have come to be concentrated in different parts of Britain. Clearly, chain migration played a key role in the development of ‘pockets’ of communities and the reproduction of village and kin networks. These have further been strengthened by trans-national marriages where spouses are often from the area of original migration (Ballard 2004).

[6] These figures for asylum applications exclude dependent children.

Lewis (2002) argues that Muslim communities in Britain, whether from the Middle East or South Asian, were extremely successful in reproducing many of their traditional cultural and social norms. Religion initially had little impact on their decisions to settle, and the way they organised themselves in Britain.

## 1.2 Attempts at estimating Britain's Muslim population

The absence of an agreed figure for the number of Muslims in the UK was a key reason for Muslims campaigning for the inclusion of a question on religious affiliation in the 2001 Census (Hussain 2005). The Census statistics provide an important baseline of data on Muslims in the UK. It provides the most comprehensive data on the size, settlement pattern, demographics and some aspects of employment for Muslims in the UK. But important areas were outside the scope of the Census, for example, experiences of education, policing and criminal justice. While the Census provides a baseline of information from which data collection in these areas could be developed, for the moment, most data in these areas are disaggregated by ethnicity alone and do not cover religion.

There have been numerous attempts, using various methods of calculation and sources to estimate the figure of Muslims not only in Britain, but also in Europe (Anwar 1993, Peach 1990, Wahhab 1989, Kettani 1986). Muslims are often stated to be the largest 'minority religious group' in Britain and various sources have estimated the Muslim population to fall between 550,000 and 3 million. In the early 1990s, figures over 1.5 million were normally mentioned by Muslim organisations. However, the most common estimate of the Muslim population was 1 million.

The heterogeneous nature of British Muslims makes it particularly difficult to calculate their numbers. British Muslims, other than being Muslim had no other common denominator with regards to identifiers such as ethnicity or language. Despite this, the most common methods used to estimate the number of Muslims in Britain has been from minority groups' countries of birth and from data on ethnicity. Prior to 1991, when the Census introduced, for the first time, a question on ethnic identity, data from large surveys such as those conducted by the Policy Studies Institute and the Labour Force Survey, relied on country of origin data to provide data on British Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims (Brown 2000).

Hai (1999) conducted research on the size of the South Asian Muslim population in Britain, and inferred a figure by taking into account the percentage of Muslims in the country of origin, for each ethnic group. Hai acknowledged that 98 per cent of the population of Pakistan are Muslim, compared with 85 per cent of the population of Bangladesh and 11 per cent of that of India. However, he argued against using percentages of Muslims in the country of origin as the basis for estimations of Muslims within a particular ethnic group in the UK. As Brown (2000:97) points out:

> It may be inaccurate to presume that a population living in Europe will simply mirror the religious composition of the source country, even assuming the latter can be accurately ascertained.

When looking at specific geographical areas or regions from which migrants originated, Hai acknowledged this issue and took into consideration that the proportions of Muslims in such regions were higher than the national averages. Therefore, the area from which the majority of British Bangladeshis originate from, Sylhet, is likely to be closer to 90 per cent Muslim and, for Indians, Gujarat is estimated as having a Muslim population of around 20 per cent. Through understanding the cultural make up of South Asian Muslims, Hai was able to provide a more realistic calculation based on ethnic background.

Clearly, any estimation on the number of Muslims in Britain derived by looking solely at South Asian Muslims will be flawed as it excludes Muslims from outside South Asia. Prior to the 2001 Census, estimates of the proportion of the Muslim population that was from South Asia ranged from 60–80 per cent. Ansari (2004) argues that in addition to the figures on South Asian Muslims, the 1991 Census found that the Turkish-born population of Britain was 26,600. Kucukcan (1996) estimated it to be as high as 125,000. Estimations of other ethnic groups, such as Somalis and Moroccans (El-Solh 1992) and Yemenis (Halliday 1992) are difficult to confirm using data on country of birth only. Furthermore, these groups did not constitute their own ethnic categories in large-scale surveys, including the 2001 Census.

Ansari (2004) argues that Muslims from the Middle East living in Britain pose further problems when estimating the total numbers of Muslims in Britain, as their resident statuses are often ambiguous. He provides one of the most comprehensive published reviews of estimations from previous studies, conducted by a number of researchers, on identifiable Muslim communities, mainly using data on country of birth for head of household and ethnicity data for South Asians. In doing so, he presents an approximate Muslim population of 2 million.

### 1.3 The 2001 Census

The 2001 Census provides the most comprehensive and accurate data source on Muslims to date. All the tables on religion to be released by the Office for National Statistics are now available. Hussain's (2003) introduction to *Muslims in the Census* provides an overview of the demographic profile of Muslims in England and Wales. According to the data, there are just over 1.5 million Muslims in England and Wales. In addition to this, the 2001 Census for Scotland found that there are 42,600 Muslim in Scotland. Muslims constitute 3 per cent of the total population of Great Britain (57.1 million). At 41 million, Christians are the largest faith groups. Muslims are the largest minority faith groups, they represent over half the non-Christian religious population. There are also 558,000 Hindus, 336,000 Sikhs, 267,000 Jews and 149,000 Buddhists. There are also 8.5 million that stated that they have no religion and a further 4.4 million that do not answer the question on religion.

The Census reveals that, in terms of age structure, Muslims have the youngest demographic profile as a faith group in England and Wales. Over 60 per cent of all Muslims are under the age of 30. At the opposite end of the scale, Muslims have the lowest proportion of elderly people when compared with all other groups.

Clearly, migration processes contribute to the age structures of groups, since the majority of migrants arrived as young adults and have only recently approached retirement ages. Although this migration pattern is true for Sikhs and Hindus, as Ansari (2004) has argued, for Muslims there has been a second and more recent phase of migration which has not been mirrored by these other communities.

Approximately half of Muslims living in England and Wales were born in the UK.[7] Despite their concentration in the younger age cohorts there are proportionately less Muslims born in the UK than Sikhs. This may be the consequence of later family reunion in the Bangladeshi community, combined with more recent arrival of Muslims as refugees from Eastern Europe and East Africa.

### 1.4 Settlement patterns

The Census data demonstrated that there are Muslims in every local authority in the UK except the Isle of Scilly; however, some local authorities have counts as low as 10 such as Berwick-upon-Tweed. The results showed some expected clusters in and around London, the West Midlands, Lancashire and West Yorkshire. They also reveal some unexpected clusters in the North East (for example, Middlesbrough and Newcastle) and at the opposite end of the country in the South West (Gloucester and Bristol). Areas such as these have remained largely outside the academic and public imagination when discussing Muslims in England and Wales.

The five local authorities with the highest proportions of Muslims are Tower Hamlets, Newham, Blackburn, Bradford, and Waltham Forest as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Local authorities with the highest counts and percentages of Muslims in England and Wales, taken from the 2001 National Census

| Local Authority | Muslim Count | Local Authority | Muslim Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Birmingham | 140,033 | Tower Hamlets | 36 |
| Bradford | 75,188 | Newham | 24 |
| Tower Hamlets | 71,389 | Blackburn | 19 |
| Newham | 59,293 | Bradford | 16 |
| Kirklees | 39,319 | Waltham forest | 15 |

In terms of concentrations and ‘pockets’, a quarter of all Muslims in England live in Inner London, and 22 per cent live in Outer London. 10 per cent live in Greater Manchester, 15 per cent in the West Midlands and 11 per cent in West Yorkshire. Such areas also provide insight into the ethnic diversity of Muslims.

London has the most ethnically diverse Muslim population; Bangladeshis are the largest group among Muslims in Inner London. In Outer London, however, Muslims of Pakistani origin make up around a third of the Muslim population, while only 8 per cent of Muslims are of Bangladeshi origin. The figures for White, other White and Black Africans remain similar to their respective figures for Inner London. Nearly 60

[7] This is also true for Scotland, see: Office of Chief Statistician, 2005.

per cent of Muslims in Greater Manchester are of Pakistani origin. 15 per cent are of Bangladeshi origin. The third largest Muslim ethnic group here is Indian (11 per cent). Muslims from other ethnic categories are less then 5 per cent of the Muslim population in Greater Manchester. There is a similar Muslim ethnic make up in the West Midlands, where the majority of Muslims are of Pakistani origin (nearly 70 per cent ) followed by those of Bangladeshi origin (14 per cent). Compared to Greater Manchester, those of Indian origin are a smaller proportion of the Muslim population in the West Midlands, at 5 per cent. All other ethnic categories each report 5 per cent or less for this area also. Three quarters of Muslims in West Yorkshire are of Pakistani origin, compared with only 5 per cent of Bangladeshi and 10 per cent Indian. Areas which demonstrated the highest concentrations of Muslims of Indian origin, when compared with all other Muslim ethnic groups, were Gloucestershire and Warwickshire, where over 40 per cent of Muslims in these counties were of Indian origin. In Scotland, two thirds of Muslims are of Pakistani origin (Office of Chief Statistician 2005). There were no counties in which Black Africans are the largest ethnic group among Muslims, however, Merseyside came close. Here 17 per cent of the Muslim community were from the White ethnic category, which was the largest, and 14 per cent were Black African.

# 2. IDENTITY

### 2.1 Religion and identity

The Policy Studies Institute's Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (FNSEM), conducted in 1994, interviewed almost 8,000 individuals (Modood *et al.* 1997). Its sample included 1,200 Pakistanis and 600 Bangladeshis.[8] In relation to religion and identity, the survey found that minorities have been viewing themselves in much more defined ways than was previously thought. Discourse on race had been increasingly criticised for being too simplistic since the 1980s and it was acknowledged that many minority communities did not view themselves as falling under the umbrella term of 'Black' but asserted more specific ethnic labels. Many commentators have used the shift in language on race and identity to support the argument that identity is constantly under construction. The identity asserted by members of a group at any given time is dependent on what is most functional in promoting the empowerment of that group as a minority in a majority setting. As Saeed *et al.* (1999:826) describes it, this is a 'mechanism which allows the minority group to increase inter-group differentiation and to maintain its self-esteem.'

Several other studies have demonstrated this. Self-identification surveys in particular have been useful in ascertaining how minorities view themselves. Hutnik (1985) pioneered this type of self-reported identity among British Muslims. It was found that Muslim identity was listed by 80 per cent of the South Asian Muslims as an important identity item. Here, 83 per cent of Pakistanis mention religion as an important self-attribute. The study also indicated that 74 per cent of the sample asserted that religion was an important aspect of their lives.

[8] For a discussion of the methodology of the survey see P. Smith and G. Prior,*The Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities: technical report*, National Centre for Social Research, London, 1997.

Saeed *et al*. (1999:831) conducted self-identification surveys in Glasgow amongst 63 second and third generation Pakistani Muslims. Their findings were consistent with the previous studies. The 'Muslim' and 'Pakistani' identities were the top two categories mentioned, with 'Muslim' (85 per cent) being chosen nearly three times as often as 'Pakistani' (30 per cent). This strengthens the argument that these young respondents were, indeed, identifying with their Muslim background (in the sense of belonging) rather than merely superficially labelling themselves in terms of 'identification of'. Saeed *et al.* went on to write:

> Through our inclusion within some categories and exclusion from others (which involves both self-definition and definition by others), together with the values and emotional significance of these memberships, we define our social identity. A person emphasising his/her Muslim identity wishes to share common ground with other Muslims, and also acknowledges (not necessarily willingly) that certain characteristics will be ascribed to him/her by non-Muslims.

The 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey indicated that, for Muslims, religion was the most important factor in describing themselves after their family. For Christians, religion ranked seventh (O'Beirne 2004). However, a study of 250 young Kurds and Turks in London found that 68 per cent did not subscribe to any religious identity at all. The authors suggest that this low figure, compared to other studies, may partly be because for some of these young people 'being Turkish, or Kurdish or Turkish Cypriot already included a sense of religious belonging' (Enneli *et al*. 2005: 40).

### 2.2 The shift towards a religious identity

The Rushdie affair was a key moment in the development of Muslim identity in the UK. Khan (2000) and Ballard (1996b) describe how the reactions to *The Satanic Verses* by Muslims reinforced the public view of Muslims and Islam as anti-Western and anti-democratic. It is argued by Ballard that far from holding an 'orthodox' stance on Islam, most Muslims who came from South Asia practised a much more 'Sufi' Islam, with most of these Muslims belonging to the Berlavi tradition. Here, the Prophet Mohammed is held as a figure of devotional reverence. Ballard argued that *The Satanic Verses* was extremely hurtful to this community particularly due to the way it portrayed the Prophet. Ballard argues that the demonstrations were not about the 'fundamentalism' associated with Iran and Khomeini, as the media so often portrays the reaction.

Khan finds that the Muslim reaction was interpreted as reflecting an ideological negation of the freedom of speech, and contributed to the construction of 'Muslims' as 'an alien minority, with social and cultural values and belief systems diametrically opposed to those in the West' (2000:30). He argues that such perceptions may have the effect of encouraging the majority of Muslims to remain more insular, resulting in the wider society having to face greater challenges in its relations with this community.

It is important to understand the complex and diverse reasons for the foregrounding of religious identity by some Muslims. Ballard (1996a) describes the increasing self-

identification of second and subsequent generations as Muslim, rather than Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Turkish or Somali, as a reaction to the external rejection, which they face from the White majority. First, because it is the Muslim aspect of their identity that they feel is under attack, and second, as described further below, that Islam is a more useful vehicle for political mobilisation. Similarly, Gardener and Shuker (1994: 164) find that 'Islam provides both a positive identity, in which solidarity can be found, together with an escape from the oppressive tedium of being constantly identified in negative term.' Samad (2004) suggests that the loss of linguistic skills, the fluency of the second generation to speak the language of their parents, has a role to play. He argues that, 'as South Asian linguistic skills are lost, identification with Pakistan and Bangladesh – countries that young people may only briefly visit – becomes less significant and Muslim as an identity becomes more important' (Samad 2004: 17). Samad goes on to argue that the 'emergence of Muslim identification is not related to an increase in religiosity or to the rise of 'Islamic Fundamentalism' but becomes prominent, paradoxically, as people become 'British'. This appears to be supported in part by research on young Turks and Kurds in London, which found that 'two-thirds of the young people who pray and fast do not identify in religious terms; yet, on the other hand, a quarter of those who do not fast do use a religious identity'(Enneli *et al.* 2005: 41). Modood (2003) views Muslim political activism as part of the 'politics of 'catching-up' with racial equality and feminism'. Archer's (2003) study of young Muslim men suggests that a strong Muslim identity is a way in which they are able to resist stereotypes of 'weak passive Asians'; it can provide a positive role model as an alternative identity that they can have pride in, in contrast to their parents (who are seen as economically weak and disempowered) and as an alternative to the gang and drug cultures of the 'street'.

The 1994 Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (FNSEM) found that all ethnic groups under study believed that the most prejudice is directed at Asians and/or Muslims (Modood *et al.* 1997). The events of 11 September 2001 and, more recently, 7 July 2005 clearly further aggravated the relationship between the wider society and British Muslims. An opinion poll in *The Guardian* newspaper demonstrated the isolation that Muslims believe they are facing, with nearly 70 per cent stating that they felt 'the rest of society does not regard them as an integral part of life in Britain' (Kelso and Vasagar 2002). This is reinforced by results from the 2005 Home Office Citizenship Survey, which reveal that Muslims were the most likely to feel that there was 'a lot' of religious prejudice in Britain today, with 33 per cent of Muslims stating this view, compared to 24 per cent of Christians. 57 per cent of Muslims in the survey said they felt there was more religious prejudice in the UK today compared to five years ago. 13 per cent of Muslims said that they had experienced discrimination because of their religion from public bodies, with six percent reporting experiencing discrimination by the police. 22 per cent of Muslims said they feared being attacked because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion. Among Muslims who had experienced unfair treatment in the labour market with regard to promotion or progression, 44 per cent said this treatment was on the grounds of their religion (Kitchen *et al*. 2006). The 2004 Home Office Citizenship Survey (103) found that the ethnic group most likely to report facing religious discrimination in gaining employment were Bangladeshis (13 per cent) and Pakistanis (9 per cent). 27 per cent of Pakistanis, 12 per cent of Indians and 7 per cent of Africans cited religion as a reason for being refused a promotion in the past five years (Green *et al*. 2004: 104). In a national survey of prejudice in the UK, carried out for the Cabinet Office in early

2005, 46 per cent of Muslims reported experiencing discrimination on the grounds of religion. Among other non-Christian faiths, 31 per cent reported experiences of discrimination (Abrams and Houston 2005:42). Blick *et al*. (2006) in their analysis of 10 opinion polls since 2002, found that where Muslims have been asked if they have experienced hostility and discrimination, around 30 per cent of Muslims consistently report experiencing some form of hostility directed at them (the actual figures range from 20–38 per cent). A poll in July 2005 asked Muslims about the kinds of adverse treatment they might experience:

- 14 per cent said they had experienced verbal abuse
- 3 per cent reported physical violence
- 5 per cent said they had been stopped and searched by police
- 32 per cent felt they had been the object of hostility
- 42 per cent felt they had been the object of suspicion.

The need for protection from religious discrimination has been a key demand of Muslim communities for over 20 years. The 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey indicates that one third of Muslims feel the government is doing too little to protect the rights of people belonging to different faith groups in Britain (O'Beirne 2004).[9] Levels of dissatisfaction were higher among young Muslims (16-24 year olds), of whom 37 per cent felt that the government was doing 'too little.'[10] In Sheridan and Gillett's (2005) study of the impact of international events on discrimination experienced by seven ethnic groups in the UK, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis reported the greatest increase of post-event discrimination. They concluded that the bombing of the Twin Towers in New York and the activities of al-Qaeda had resulted in the greatest increase of group discrimination against Muslims in the UK. For further discussion of the research literature on identity and discrimination see Modood 2003, Ahmed 2006, and Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins 2006.

## 2.3 Internal empowerment

As well as constructing identities in response to external factors, identity is also constructed to suit the position of those who adopt it at any given time. European Muslims, who find themselves in the position of a minority, can opt for an 'interscholastic eclecticism' that consists of choosing the opinion of legal schools that appear to be the most appropriate to their own set of social issues and questions. An example of this is Ballard's argument that amongst British Muslims there has been shift from the more 'Sufi' Islam, which was the Islam the majority of first generation Muslims practised to a neo-orthodox Islam, which has been adopted increasingly by the second and subsequent generations, and has also been an important factor in the development of a 'religious' identity rather than a 'cultural' identity. This is for two reasons. First, this form of Islam places greater emphasis on a universal Islam and

[9] Five per cent of Muslims said the government was doing 'too much' and 62 per cent 'the right amount'. However, this overall figure masks significant differences by gender and age: Muslim women (37 per cent) were more likely than Muslim men (30 per cent) to feel the government was doing 'too little'. This gender difference is also found in the Christian, Hindu and Sikh groups. Among all respondents the response was: 'too much' (20 per cent); 'right amount' (54 per cent); and 'too little' (27 per cent). See O'Beirne, 2004, p. 25.
[10] However, this is lower than for others in this age group. See O'Beirne, 2004, p. 26.

downplays cultural differences. In this view, for many Muslims, Islam provides a solution:

> Given that Islam is manifestly a sophisticated world religion which is at the very least a match for Christianity, and better still its long historical role as Christianity's 'bête noire', it provides a wonderfully effective alternative with which to identify in response to White, European post-Christian denigration. (Ballard 1996b:124)

Second, it served as a means of distancing the second and subsequent generations of British-born Muslims from the perceived 'backwardness' of the first generation, in turn equipping them with the necessary ammunition to 'fight their corner' on the domestic front (Ansari 2002).

The research literature suggests that there are important gender differences in relation to Muslim identity. The impact of education and class on the religious identity of women has been examined by Bhopal (1998), Ahmed (2001) and Abbas (2003). Bhopal (1998) explores religion and identity among Hindu, Sikh and Muslim women in East London. The study, based on interviews with women aged 25-30 of varying educational qualification, of whom 20 were Muslim, as well as on participant observation of living with a South Asian community for a period of six months, suggests a difference between the experience of Muslim women who were married and those who were single. It found that among married women and those with low levels of education there was a strong commitment and identification with religion. By contrast, Bhopal argues, single women and those with higher levels of education did not participate in religious life and rejected any faith identity. Bhopal's conclusion, that education and upward social mobility lead to the rejection of religion and religious identity, has been challenged by Ahmed (2001) and Abbas (2003). Ahmed's (2001) study is based on interviews with 15 South Asian Muslim women aged 19–30 who are, or had recently participated in university education in London. The women were from predominately working class backgrounds. She found that their '"Muslimness" was a deeply embedded sense of both conscious and unconsciousness, governing and prevailing upon their thoughts, behaviours and choices'.

Khokher (1993) found that many young South Asian Muslim women are conceptually establishing a firm distinction between 'religion' and 'culture', which were largely indistinguishable realms for their parents. Further, they are rejecting their parents' conformity to ethnic traditions, which are considered as emblematic of religiosity (such as manner of dress) while wholly embracing a Muslim identity in and of itself. Among these young women, Khokher argues, is a necessary self-conscious exploration of religion which was not relevant to their parents' generation.

Jacobson (1997) has also commented on how this gives second and subsequent generations greater bargaining power within their families and communities. Many young women who adopted the *hijab* and other Islamic symbols argued that parents found it increasingly difficult to refuse their daughter's requests of pursuing their education and deferring marriage, as Islamically they had every right to do so (see also Dywer 1999a, 1999b and 1997)

Saint-Blancat (2002:142) also supports this view. She argues:

> The descendants of immigrants of Muslim origin are witnesses par excellence of an active form of subjectivity, of autonomy that they do not always risk acquiring. In evaluating their family and community past, they are helping to create a memory that will also forge their own identity. They distance themselves from the stereotypes of host cultures that demand from them a social and cultural conformity to the principle of individual and sexual emancipation, but also from fidelity to a family genealogy, which they criticise even though they will not tolerate its being disparaged.

## 2.4 The identification with a Muslim diaspora

As well as the recognition of a growing preference to be identified in terms of religion amongst South Asian Muslims in Britain, it has been argued that Muslim minorities in the West, whatever their ethnic origin, are increasingly presenting themselves as being part of a Muslim diaspora, as well as, and some in cases instead of, an ethnic or national diaspora. The concept of a united Muslim community within Islam, known as 'the Ummah', has been discussed as being a contributing factor in the mindset of many Muslims who identify themselves as being part of a Muslim diaspora (Werbner 2003).

Saint-Blancat (2002) has written about this identification of European Muslims with a Muslim diaspora, arguing that the creation of such a diaspora is one which various Muslim minority groups are striving to adopt as a result of the recognition that as minorities in present day Europe they all share increasing hostility on the grounds of one common denominator – Islam. It is argued however that the Muslim diaspora is not a result of the natural state of being, or a concept which is easily applied without complications. Shuval (2000:43) describes common definitions of diasporic communities as sharing some of the following elements:

> A history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return (which can be ambivalent, eschatological or utopian), ongoing support of the homeland, and a collective identity defined by the above relationship.

Clearly, Muslims in Europe do not share a common homeland; they have origins in numerous countries, resulting in cultural heterogeneity. The association with a shared 'homeland' is not, however, problematic for Vertovec (1999). When discussing approaches to diaspora, he argues that an alternative definition is through common experience, such as discrimination and exclusion, and a shared common denominator, such as historical heritage or a contemporary world culture.

Saint-Blancat, however, argues that:

> the instrumental use of the morphological configuration of settlements in migration and the inter-polarity of relationships do not mean that a Birmingham Pakistani and a Strasbourg Turk feel they belong to the same diaspora. Only self-definition and interaction with the gaze of the other, in its turn creates a model for their identity. (2002:141)

Therefore, in this view a single Muslim diaspora in Europe is reactionary and a result of the initial grouping together of communities by the discriminator and that these communities would perhaps not have otherwise viewed themselves as a unit or community in this way.

Strength in numbers is, of course, an important motivation for minority groups in attempting to unify with other minority groups, as demonstrated by minorities in Britain attempting to mobilise by uniting themselves under their common feature of 'non-Whiteness' in the 1980s. The attractiveness for Muslims, then, in uniting themselves with other Muslims by asserting this element of their identity, is that it serves to empower them due to the possibility of their minority status being transformed into a global counter-force (Khan 2000).

# 3. EDUCATION

### 3.1 Educational attainment

Most academic research on minorities in education has focused on ethnic groups rather than Muslims as a group. Muslims of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, who constitute 50 per cent of Britain's Muslim population have been the main reference groups in research when looking at the educational attainment of Muslims. Research in education, on Muslims as a religious group, rather than ethnic groups, has focused largely on state-funded faith schools and the experiences of Muslim women in education. Literature on the latter has explored Muslim women's aspirations, the value placed on educational qualifications for women by Muslim communities and within Islam, single sex schools and obstacles faced by Muslim women within the education system. The Census does provide some baseline data on levels of education among the UK population which can be disaggregated by religion.

The 2001 Census data shows that almost one third of Muslims of working age have no qualifications, the highest proportion for any faith group. When the number of Muslims without qualifications is compared to that of Hindus and Sikhs we see differences among the different age cohorts. For 35–49 years olds, Muslims are 10 per cent more likely than Sikhs, and over 20 per cent more likely than Hindus, to be without a qualification. This gap widens even further for the 25–34 year olds. Here, the percentage of Muslims with no qualifications is over double that of Sikhs and over three times that of Hindus. The gap closes for the 16–24 year olds, but only marginally. Therefore, although all three groups have made progress, and this is no doubt related to the availability of free state education in Britain, the rates of progress are far from similar. The data shows that Muslims, like other minority faith groups, have a higher percentage of people with higher level qualifications, compared with the national average (Hussain 2003). This, coupled with the higher rates in participation in post compulsory education, supports the argument that for Muslims, family educational expectations and determination is high. In 2001, 52 per cent of Muslims aged 16–24 were participating in post-compulsory education. The rate of participation in higher education is above the national figure (41 per cent), but below that of the other minority faith groups. Furthermore, the gender gap in rates of participation in post-compulsory education for Muslims, at 10 per cent, is the greatest