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Muslim - State Relations in Great Britain: An Evolving Story

Introduction

The concern of this chapter, as that of the book as a whole, is to explore contemporary relationships between Muslim minorities and the state, with a particular focus upon structural and cultural dynamics.[*] In this regard the case of Britain is illustrative. This is because an analysis of political and institutional responses to Muslim 'difference' in Britain details a pattern of engagement that has evolved over a period of time. This can be framed in terms of rising agendas of racial equality and multiculturalism to which Muslims have become central – even while they have challenged important aspects of these. This implies that these developments have neither been linear nor unproblematic, and have been characterised by various ongoing contestations and revisions.[1] According to some authors, what this engagement has accomplished presently looks to be in retreat and at best remains uncertain.[2] Indeed, Prime Minister Cameron in particular has, since his time in opposition, has characterized British multiculturalism as a 'barrier' dividing British society (30 January 2007). Subsequently, in office, he has argued that 'the doctrine of 'state multiculturalism' has encouraged culturally different people to live apart from one another and apart from the mainstream' (5 February 2011). Perhaps seeking to stake out a British *Leitkultur*, Cameron has also complained that multiculturalism has led to the minimization of Christianity as a guiding public ethos, and has 'allowed segregated communities to behave in ways that run completely counter to our values and has not contained that extremism but allowed it to grow and prosper'.[3]

It is our argument that these sentiments should not obscure several significant ways in which Muslim minorities and British citizenship have been cast in dynamic and mutually constitutive terms. Indeed, we suggest that contrary to a popular insistence following the 7/7 London bombings and other terrorist incidents involving British Muslim protagonists, multiculturalism in Britain has not been erased.[4] Indeed, while for a while scholars took the rhetorical failure demise of multiculturalism at face

value, this is now being empirically rebutted.[5] In this chapter we specifically contend that any discussion of Muslim minorities in 21st century Britain must not ignore the following developments for they too may affect the course of future state-Muslim engagement. In order to substantiate these assertions this chapter will begin with a discussion of the sociological and political character of British citizenship, before offering an account of the cultures and identities of contemporary British Muslim communities. It will then empirically elaborate cases of state-Muslim engagement within multiculturalist – including multi-faith – arenas, and trace the structural-cultural dynamics therein.

British Multiculturalism and its Muslims

While there has been a long-established Muslim presence in Britain, particularly comprising North African (especially Yemeni) and East Indian sea-faring migrants and 'lascars'[6], the major and most established part of Britain's Muslim presence is the outcome of post-war Commonwealth migration. This came from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, initially in the form of male labour from rural small farm owning backgrounds seeking to meet the demands of unskilled and semi-skilled labour, and was later joined by families and then more urban and professional South Asian Muslim political refugees from Kenya and Uganda. These migrants from former colonies and dependent territories entered a socio-political environment that would give specific emphasis to managing group relations. As such Britain borrowed something from the American experience, but went further in focusing upon how society could achieve fair treatment for different groups, something that reaches beyond how these groups could blend into society.[7] Without an official 'Multicultural Act' or 'Charter' in the way of Australia or Canada[8], Britain rejected the notion that the incorporation of migrants should be premised upon an uncompromising cultural 'assimilation'. It did so when the Labour Home Secretary Roy Jenkins[9] defined integration as "not a flattening process of assimilation but equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance." This sentiment tried to address the rights of distinct groups as well as their modes of interaction, and so was not merely concerned with the rights of individuals. This is how, at the level of Favell's 'philosophies of integration' at least, we might begin to characterize the specificity of 'British multiculturalism.'[10]

While it is not immediately clear what this actually entailed, it is perhaps easier to ascertain that Muslims did not feature explicitly in this early multiculturalist approach which treated post-war migrants who arrived as Citizens of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth (CUKC)[11], and subsequent British-born generations as *ethnic* and *racial* – but not as *religious* - minorities requiring state support and differential treatment to overcome distinctive barriers in their exercise of citizenship. Under the remit of several Race-Relations Acts, the state has sought to integrate minorities into the labour market and other key arenas of British society through an approach that promotes equal access as an example of equality of opportunity. Indeed, it is now over 30 years since the introduction of a third Race Relations Act (1976) which cemented a state sponsorship of Race Equality by consolidating earlier, weaker legislative instruments (RRA 1965 & 1968). Alongside its broad remit spanning public and private institutions, the recognition of *indirect* discrimination and the imposition of a statutory public duty to promote good 'race-relations', it also created the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) to assist individual complainants and monitor the implementation of the Act.[12] This is an example, according to Joppke[13], of a citizenship that has amounted to a "precarious balance between citizenship universalism and racial group particularism [that] stops short of giving special group rights to immigrants."[14] Alongside this state-centred and national focus, there is also a tradition of what we might characterize as 'municipal drift' where multiculturalist discourses and policies have been pursued though local councils and municipal authorities, making up a patchwork of British multicultural public policies in the way summarized by Singh.[15]

Historically, multiculturalism as a public policy in Britain has been heavily localised, often made voluntary, and linked essentially to issues of managing diversity in areas of immigrant settlement. The legislative framework on which this policy is based – for example, the Race Relations Acts (1965 and 1976) – recognised this contingency, giving additional resources to local authorities as well as new powers to better promote racial and ethnic equality. With these enabling powers, most local authorities with large ethnic minority populations have transformed themselves from initially being the bastions of official racism to being promoters of anti-racism and

multiculturalism, and with this change the strength of local ethnic communities and coalitions have been instrumental.

Perhaps the best example of Singh's assessment of local multiculturalism is captured by the programs of anti-racist education[16] and multicultural education (Swann Committee 1985) that have historically been enacted at the Local Education Authority (LEA) level. LEAs are responsible for education within the jurisdiction of county councils and metropolitan boroughs, and this includes responsibility for all state schools with the exception of those that apply and are afforded 'voluntary aided status' (and can therefore opt out) under the terms of the 1944 Education Act. As Singh's account implies, in many multi-ethnic urban areas LEAs have actively encouraged anti-racist and multicultural initiatives in the face of – and at the cost of – some vociferous opposition[17], and this has in turn informed the national picture. Indeed, it was through debates at the local level regarding multicultural education that one of the leading public policy documents on multiculturalism arose. Entitled *Education for All*, the Swann Report[18] characterised multiculturalism in Britain as enabling …all ethnic groups, both minority and majority, to participate in fully shaping society…whilst also allowing, and where necessary assisting the ethnic minority communities in maintaining their distinct ethnic identities within a framework of commonly accepted values.

Yet this limited multiculturalism explicitly precluded such things as state support of linguistic pluralism (in terms of teaching in "mother tongue" as opposed to a language like Urdu being an out-of-school subject) or the expansion of religious schools, seeking instead to make each matters of private concern. It has taken Muslim minorities decades of engagement to begin to expand such multiculturalist approaches in a way that also takes their particular needs into account, specifically by contesting its secular and narrowly racial focus. This is an example of the 'multi' in Modood's "multi family resemblances," in so far as different types of group claims, and different types of groups labels, may emerge under the purview of multicultural accommodations.[19] For Muslims in Britain this was perhaps symbolized by the way in which the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) developed and emerged as the main interlocutor in state-Muslim engagement, and how it achieved some success in establishing a Muslim voice in the corridors of power.[20] The creation of a religion

question on the national Census[21], the obtaining of state funding for the first Muslim schools[22], and more broadly the elicitation of socioeconomic policies targeted at severely deprived Muslim groups[23] are illustrative examples of these successes. Inaugurated in 1997, the MCB is an expanding umbrella organization of presently over 450 local, regional and national organizations which elects its secretary-general from a central committee. Its genesis lies in the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) which developed during the Salman Rushdie affair as the most effective means of raising mainstream Muslim voices.[24] The MCB's stated aims include the promotion of consensus and unity on Muslim affairs in the UK, giving a voice to issues of common concern, addressing discrimination and disadvantages faced by Muslims in Britain, encouraging "a more enlightened appreciation" of Islam and Muslims in the wider society, and working for "the common good."[25]

Backlash Politics

While initial reformulations of British multiculturalism are important – especially in projecting a symbolic meaning – they remain comparatively modest when compared to the race-equality components of British multiculturalism. It is curious then, given the longevity of its *ethnic* and *racial* focus, that the fate of multiculturalism in Britain should have come to be so intertwined with the political identity of Muslims. This intertwining corresponds with how the pre-eminence of the MCB waned in the mid-2000s as it grew critical of the Iraq War and the so-called War on Terror. It has also faced considerable public criticism from both government and civil society bodies (particularly of the centre-right) for allegedly failing to reject extremism clearly and decisively.[26] Indeed, Prime Minister David Cameron has previously likened the MCB to the far-right British National Party (BNP).[27] Allied to these complaints has been the issue of how 'representative' of British Muslims the organization actually is – a question that has plagued it since the early days but which has had a more damaging impact upon its credibility when joined by a handful of other complaints.[28] One outcome of this political critique has been the extension to a plethora of other, though much less representative, Muslim organizations (such as the Sufi Muslim Council (SMC) and the Al-Khoie Foundation) of the invitation to represent British Muslims in matters of consultation and stake-holders. At the same time, and as is further elaborated below, newer advisory groups (such as the Mosques and Imams National

Advisory Body (MINAB)) do not seek the same remit of representation as the MCB, while other older bodies such as the Islamic Sharia Council (ISC) continue to be an affiliate member of the 'MCB.

We argue that these developments are linked to at least two further issues. The first is that Muslim claims-making has been characterized as specifically ambitious and difficult to accommodate.[29] This is particularly the case when Muslims are perceived to be, often uniquely, in contravention of liberal discourses of individual rights and secularism that are made more permeable by concessions implied in multiculturalist approaches.[30] This is exemplified by the way in which visible Muslim practices such as veiling[31] have in public discourses been reduced to and conflated with alleged Muslim practices such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation, a rejection of positive law in favor of criminal Shar'ia law and so on. Each suggests a radical 'otherness' about Muslims and a non-liberality about multiculturalism, and, since the latter is alleged to license these practices, opposition to the practice, it is argued, necessarily invalidates the policy.[32]

The second reason derives from global events, and not necessarily from the acts of terrorism undertaken by protagonists proclaiming a Muslim agenda (which are routinely condemned by leading British-Muslim bodies), but from the subsequent conflation of a criminal minority with an assumed tendency inherent to the many. Indeed, in a post 9/11 and 7/7 climate, the explanatory purchase of Muslim cultural dysfunctionality has generated a profitable discursive economy in accounting for what has been described as 'Islamic terrorism'.[33] The net outcome of these two issues is a coupling of diversity and anti-terrorism agendas that has implicated contemporary British multiculturalism as the culprit of Britain's security woes. Gilles Kepel[34], for example, has insisted that the bombers "were the children of Britain's own multicultural society" and that the bombings have "smashed" the implicit social consensus and multiculturalism to "smithereens". More recently, Prins and Salisbury[35] have claimed that a misplaced deference to multiculturalism, which failed to lay down the line to immigrants, has contributed to a lack of national self-confidence and a fragmenting society that has been exploited by Islamist terrorists. As Modood has argued, however, "the simplistic linkage between home-grown terrorism and the multicultural project is unfair because it ends up blaming not just national

policies but specific communities for particular outcomes." In this case, Muslims as a whole are blamed for terrorism, for not standing up to extremism and for not integrating, which not only appears unfair "but also divisive and so not likely to achieve the much-sought-for integration."[36]

Contemporary Muslim Identity Articulations

At the same time, and whilst Britain has undoubtedly witnessed some securitization of ethnic relations, it is not quite the case, as one commentator has suggested, that public policy solutions aimed at managing ethnic and religious diversity amount to being "tough on mosques, tough on the causes of mosques".[37] To elaborate our argument it is necessary to obtain a fuller understanding of the scope and nature of Muslim communities and their identifications in contemporary Britain. While Britain is certainly diverse, ethnic minority communities are not equally distributed but concentrated in England e.g. in 2001, 45% of ethnic minorities resided in Greater London (19% of all residents) and another 8% in region South East of London. 13% live in the West Midlands (conurbation of Birmingham), 8% in the North West (Liverpool, Lancashire), 7% in Yorkshire and Humberside (Newcastle) and 6.3% in the East Midlands, mainly Leicester, where they represent a third of the population (ONS 2003). While final, thematically organized, data from the 2011 census is yet to become available, we know that this will add to the picture of diversity detailed by the 2001 Census. For example, the 2011 census showed that the ethnic minorities in Britain grew from 6.6 million in 2001 to 9.1 million when the census was taken, nearly one in six, and that there are now a million 'mixed-race' people, and that almost 5% of the population in England and Wales self-define as Muslim (second after Christianity).[38] Based upon data from the earlier decennial census (2001), there are well over 1.6 million people in Britain who report an affiliation with Islam by voluntarily self-defining as 'Muslim'. This represents 2.9 percent of the entire population and makes Islam the most populous faith in Britain after Christianity (72 percent); more numerous than Hinduism (less than 1 percent, numbering 559,000), Sikhism (336,000), Judaism (267,000) and Buddhism (152,000). It is generally accepted, however, that the actual number of Muslims is higher because of initial undercounting, comparatively higher levels of fertility, and subsequent inward migration. Nevertheless, a breakdown of the census data on Muslim constituencies

according to ethnicity identifies 42.5 percent of Pakistani ethnic-origin, 16.8 percent Bangladeshi, 8.5 percent of Indian, and – most interestingly – 7.5 percent of White Other. This is largely taken to mean people of Turkish, Arabic and North-African ethnic origin who choose the White Other category on the census form. It also includes Eastern European Muslims from Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as white Muslims from other European countries and not an insignificant and growing convert community (estimated to be over ten thousand in number, see Anwar and Backsh, 2003). Black-African (6.2) and Other Asian (5.8) census categories dominate the remaining ethnic identification options. Even with this heterogeneity, it is still understandable – if a little misleading - that British-Muslims are associated first and foremost with a South-Asian background, especially since those with this background make up roughly 68 percent of the British Muslim population, have a greater longevity in residence, and have been more politically active to date.

Muslims in Britain, as in the world over, are pre-dominantly Sunni, while the majority of the single largest group (Pakistanis) are Barelvis; the majority of the remainder are Deobandis[39]. Both these Sunni sects have their origins in the reformist movement set in motion by Shah Walliuah that came into existence in post-1857 British India, after what is commonly termed the 'Indian mutiny' but is best seen as India's first war of independence. Both these groups were concerned with ways of maintaining Islam as a living social force in a non-Muslim polity and ruling culture. The Deobandis, taking their cue from a school founded in Deoband near Delhi, came to focus primarily on education and on keeping alive in the seminaries medieval Muslim theological and juristic doctrines. They saw politics as an unequal struggle and tried to be as independent as possible from the Indian-British state. Their anti-Britishness, however, took the form of withdrawal and non-cooperation, rather than of active confrontation, but they took great care to minimize not only British and Hindu influences, but also Shia. Nevertheless, and through active proselytization, they have built up a mass following as well as an international reputation in Islamic learning. This includes a global organization named Tabligh-i-Jamaat which is represented in Britain with headquarters in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, and which also has an active presence in Birmingham and London. The Barevis, in contrast, are more numerous across Britain and form the core, for example, of Bradford's Muslims, but are also part of a tradition of Sufi mysticism and Indian folk religion shared by a variety of British Muslim

communities. Deriving their name from Ahmed Riza Khan of Bareilly (1856-1921) theirs is an Islam of personalities; the Prophet Mohammed, for instance, is imbued with a metaphysical significance and devotional reverence that goes well beyond what some Muslims would regard as orthodox and which has been called the "the mystification of Islam".[40] Their religious heroes are not confined to the Prophet and the early Arab Muslims but include a galaxy of minor and major saints who, contrary to more reformist Islam, can intercede with God on behalf of petitioners. Additionally they hold dear many customs and superstitions that have no justification in the Qu'ran but have been acquired from other sources.

This heterogeneity of ethnic, national and theological cleavages has led Humuyan Ansari to insist that "presumptions of Muslim homogeneity and coherence which claim to override the differences…do not necessarily correspond to social reality.[41] A Sylheti from Bangladesh, apart from some tenets of faith, is likely to have little in common with a Mirpuri from Pakistan, let alone a Somali or Bosnian Muslim". This is supported by Fred Halliday's concern to focus analysis upon "the intersection of identities" since:

> [I]t is easy to…study an immigrant community and present all in terms of religion. But this is to miss other identities – of work, location, ethnicity - and, not least, the ways in which different Muslims relate to each other. Anyone with the slightest acquaintance of the inner life of the Arabs in Britain, or the Pakistani and Bengali communities, will know there is as much difference as commonality.[42]

Whilst these assessments are not without foundation, and should help counter an understanding of Muslims in Britain as a monolithic group, one of the arguments of this chapter is that certain concerns transcend Muslim difference – particularly since the (albeit slim) majority of British-Muslims have not migrated to Britain but have been born here. Shared concerns are likely to encompass the ways in which to combat anti-Muslim racism, or cultivate a positive public image (heterogeneous or otherwise), or a desire amongst some Muslim parents to school their children in Islamic traditions and so on. One particular issue that this raises is whether a discernable British Muslim identity has given rise to a discernable 'Muslim vote' in Britain, for it is clear that Muslim organizations in the last general election campaigned on a distinctive equality

agenda that drew attention to the ways Muslims have become victims of the anti-terrorism campaigns and related Islamophobia.[43] If we continue with this example, a number of implications can be drawn from these developments that include differences between Muslim and non-Muslim ethnic minority voting patterns, as well as the extent to which Muslim political electoral participation is "closely connected to the size of the local Muslim population [which] indicates that registration, like turnout, is affected by the forces of [Muslim] mobilisation".[44] One example of Muslim electoral mobilization was much in evidence when the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) issued a ten point check card to encourage Muslim voters to evaluate various politicians' positions on matters concerning both domestic and foreign policy.[45] The reception of such a strategy by a former leading Labour politician provides a lucid illustration of the electoral impact of attitudinal and social shifts amongst the contemporary Muslims of his former constituency:

> For more than 30 years, I took the votes of Birmingham Muslims for granted… if, at any time between 1964 and 1997 I heard of a Khan, Saleem or Iqbal who did not support Labour I was both outraged and astonished. […] The Muslim view of Labour has changed. […] Anxious immigrants who throw themselves on the mercy of their members of parliament are now a minority. Their children and grandchildren will only vote for politicians who explicitly meet their demands. […] In future they will pick and choose between the parties and ask: "What have you done for us?"[46]

The central narrative running through this account is that of a confident British Muslim democratic engagement that is further illustrated by Sher Khan of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB):

> Our position has always been that we see ourselves as part of this society. I do not think that you can be part of it if you are not willing to take part in electing your own representatives. So, engage with the process of governance or of your community as part of being a citizen of this community. We think it is imperative.[47]

This ethic of engagement has not been limited to electoral participation, however, for it is also observed in some key areas in which Muslims in Britain have secured forms of state recognition through processes of engagement and lobbying. This can include

the provision of mortgages compliant with Islamic approaches to saving and investing, and the operation of Shar'ia law in civil matters more broadly. For example, the Islamic teaching that *riba* (usury or interest) is *haram* (forbidden) is a guiding tenet for some observant Muslims, but is made implausible by systems of financial products which either generate or charge interest. One alternative system which has organically developed in Britain includes an arrangement where banks buy properties on a customer's behalf but then sell it back to the customer with an additional charge equivalent to the total amount of interest. For some time, however, this incurred two sets of stamp duty (a tax which is payable to the government on the purchase of a house). This was until 2003 when the then Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown abolished this double charge, and since then the Council of Mortgage Lenders and MCB have continued to liaise with various government departments on how to make Islamic home finance products more viable in the UK.[48]

This is one example of a successful accommodation of aspects of Shar'ia even while Shar'ia councils themselves continue to be the subject of intense controversy.[49] This was typified by the hysteria surrounding the present Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, whose public lecture on "What degree of accommodation the law of the land can and should give to minority communities with their own strongly entrenched legal and moral codes" was met with a media frenzy. The lecture included a developed and highly sensitive reflection on the reality and potential of 'plural jurisdiction', particularly in relation to the experience of and discussions about shar'ia courts, their capacity to rule on such matters as family disputes and claims, and their relationship to the "statutory law of the United Kingdom".[50] What the media reaction to his lecture ignored was how since the 1970s some marital and inheritance disputes have been judged in Muslim arbitration boards if both parties have freely consented to such adjudication, and this has taken place under the broader remit of English civil law. Where the application of Shar'ia has contravened English civil law it has been rejected by the courts, as Pearl and Menski's otherwise critical account of British traditions of positive law details:

> [T]he British legal system, with its positivist approach to what "law" is, and what it is not, remains purposely blind to social conventions and so-called "cultural practices" which are perceived to operate in the 'extra-legal' sphere. This fictitious, dismissive yet reluctantly tolerant attitude has in fact allowed

space for the unofficial development of new hybrid rules … At the same time, the official legal system can afford, from a position of superiority, to keep the legal position of British Muslims under negotiation… in effect they are following a path which *they* consider appropriate … a new hybrid form of Shar'ia, which avoids breaking the official law of their new home.[51]

The ambiguities of this scenario are perhaps most graphically illustrated in the machinations of the Islamic Shar'ia Council (ISC), an affiliate of the MCB, and one of the most prominent examples of the ways in which British Muslims are using the framework of the Shar'ia to resolve disputes while remaining within the bounds of British laws. This council was founded in 1982 and emerged from attempts by a group of London imams to resolve issues of conflict between British and Shar'ia law.[52] It consists of a bench of jurists who provide a conciliation service for disputing couples and authoritative religious legal opinions on a host of social and economic matters raised by individuals and organizations. According to Yilmaz, the council takes a pragmatic approach by allowing applicants to choose a particular school of law and are offered legal guidance and resolution of conflicts on the basis of its perspective.[53]

The Muslim Addition to British Multi-Faithism

It is argued that examples of such hybrid religious-civic engagement can be drawn from Britain's multi-faith history. For while the ISC is yet to receive official recognition on a par with that afforded to Jewish Beth Din courts, for example, it is already viewed by many British Muslims as a relevant means of reconciling their legal and spiritual needs. Indeed, what the Jewish example re-iterates is that British Muslim engagement with the state proceeds in a context that is characterized by an internal *religious* plurality which has been supplemented by the migration of different religious groups over the last two centuries.[54] To be sure, and in spite of maintaining a Protestant Established Church of England, the superior status of the dominant Anglican Church has consistently been challenged by other Christian denominations, not least in Scotland where the religious majority is not Anglican but Presbyterian, and which led to the creation of a Church of Scotland. Elsewhere in England and Wales, Protestant nonconformists have been vocal; and issues such as education have

in the past encouraged many of these groups to "stand out against the state for giving every opportunity to the Church of England to proselytize through the education system,".[55] The cycles of 19th century migration from Ireland to London, Glasgow, and the north of England have considerably expanded the Roman Catholic presence in Britain. The turn of the 20th century, meanwhile, witnessed the arrival of destitute Jewish migrants fleeing both the pogroms and the economic deprivation in Russia.[56] Both groups have suffered racial discrimination and civil disabilities on the basis of their religious affiliation but in due course have come to enjoy some of the benefits initially associated with 'establishment' (the identification of the Church of England with the British state). This includes allowing the Catholic Church to set up schools alongside the state and then, in the 1944 Education Act, to opt into the state sector and receive similar provisions to those enjoyed by members of the established Church; a provision which was soon extended to other religious groups, notably Jewish minorities.

Muslims then, like Hindus and Sikhs, are the most recent and numerically significant addition to this plurality to have established themselves, with varying degrees of success, as part of the "new cultural landscape" of Britain.[57] This is evidenced is several spheres but is made strikingly visible in what Peach and Gale describe as the "new 'cathedrals' of the English cultural landscape".[58] By this they refer to the creation of Muslim *masjids,* alongside Hindu *mandirs* and Sikh *gurdwaras*, that have emerged though a process of dialogue between minority faith groups and British city planning authorities. One of several points of interest in the creation of these places of worship, is that out of the thousand or so that exist, the majority are in fact conversions of disused chapels, churches, and other such premises.[59] In this context it is not surprising to learn mosque building less controversial in Britain as it may be elsewhere on the continent, since Muslims frequently use the 1852 and 1855 Places of Worship Registration Acts, though securing planning permission to function as a place of worship or education (or both) under the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 is never straightforward (while registration is not a legal requirement, planning permission is). Similar historical settlements explain religious burial accommodations. For example, the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 empowers burial authorities to set aside any part of a cemetery that has not been consecrated for use by a religious denomination. As Ansari (forthcoming) elaborates:

Many local authorities have responded to the expressed needs and wishes of Muslims to be able to carry out burials soon after death, and so changes have been made to registry office opening hours and weekend burials are carried out on request in some areas. […] Coventry City Council has made provisions for Muslims to carry out the actual burial themselves if it is required at a weekend or on a Bank Holiday. Some burial grounds have ensured that there are specific sections for Muslims to be buried, and that the grounds are appropriately laid out. Accommodation has been made by some to comply with Muslim requirements to bury the body without a coffin.

An example of the latter includes Slough Borough Council which promises to carry out burials within hours of receipt of the necessary completed paperwork. Similar such accommodations may be found in the provision of Halal meat - for while it has long been a legal requirement for animals to be 'stunned' or partially unconscious prior to slaughter, exemptions have been made for the Jewish practice of Shechita, and these were extended to the Muslim practice of Dhabh, through the Slaughter of Poultry Act 1967 and Slaughterhouses Act 1974. One of the most prominent examples of Muslim-state engagement across both multiculturalist and religious pluralist traditions is to be found in the Muslim mobilizations for Muslim schools.[60] In this area Muslim groups achieved a watershed in 1998 when, after eighteen years of a Conservative administration, a 'New Labour' government delivered on a promise in its election manifesto and co-opted two Muslim schools, *Islamia School* (in Brent, London) and *Al-Furqan School* (in Birmingham), into the state sector by awarding each Voluntary Aided (VA) status. This status prescribed an allocation of public money to cover teacher salaries and the running costs of the school. It arrived "fourteen years and five Secretaries of State after the first naive approach", when Muslim parents and educators had only begun to get to grips with the convoluted application process to achieve state funding, and were dealing with a Conservative government that was hostile to the idea of state funded Muslim schools.[61] Eleven years and another five Secretaries of State later, the number of state-funded Muslim faith schools has risen to eight. In addition to those above, this figure includes *Al-Hijrah* (a secondary school in Birmingham), *Feversham College* (a secondary school in Bradford), *Gatton Primary School* (in Wandsworth, South London), *Tauheedul*

Islam Girls High School (Blackburn, Lancashire) and *The Avenue School* (another primary school in Brent, London).

Overarching Structural and Cultural Factors

One salient structural factor shaping the experiences of Muslim minorities in contemporary Britain surrounds their over-concentration in particular localities where they constitute the main minorities i.e. particular regions of Northern towns. These areas of early Muslim settlements were focused around older, industrial towns where the initial wave of male labourers had arrived to take up work. Outside London, other areas of settlement comprise both the east and west Midlands (Blackburn, Leicester, Birmingham); South and West Yorkshire (Sheffield, Leeds, Dewsbury and Bradford), and Greater Manchester (including Oldham and Burnley). It has been argued that a contemporary concentration in such settlement patterns has given rise to dualistic and polarizing interactions. For example, while chair of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), Trevor Phillips (later chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)) insisted that Britain was 'sleepwalking' into a U.S.-style 'hard segregation', in claiming that: "Residentially, some districts are on their way to becoming fully fledged ghettos — black holes into which no one goes without fear and trepidation, and from which no one ever escapes undamaged."[62]

In promoting this view Phillips has not gone unchallenged. Amongst others the demographers Finney and Simpson have shown that the number of mixed neighbourhoods (measured in electoral wards) has actually increased rather than decreased in recent times (from 964 to 1,070) in the period between the most recent and second most recent decennial census.[63] In shaping a broader pattern of dispersal rather than concentration, Finney and Simpson insist that there will be at least 1,300 mixed neighbourhoods by the next census in 2011 (one in five throughout England and Wales).[64] On Phillips' more specific charge, they remind us that there is not a single ward in Britain in which the population is 100 percent ethnic minority, and that the proportion of ethnic minorities amounting to as much as 50 percent of the population of a neighbourhood was around 22 percent. They have shown that there are only 14 out of over 8,850 electoral wards in England and Wales in which an ethnic minority group makes up over half the population, and that in none does a

single ethnic minority account for over three quarters of the population. In contrast there are about 5,000 wards that are 98 percent white. Contrary to Phillips, it could be argued that where there are concentrations of ethnic minorities this is a result of population growth, rather than increasing segregation, particularly since Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups have younger age profiles. Moreover, it is of course common amongst many experiences of migration that people establish themselves in localities that allow for the sharing of resources and a general feeling of security, before social mobility facilitates a move outward.[65] The important structural component that is too frequently absent from this discussion is the change that takes place *around* such minorities, and which is no more reducible to minority cultural features than the structural elements that invited initial settlement.

A particularly stark structural component shaping the lives of Britain's Muslim minorities is their socioeconomic profile which is significantly lower than their counterparts. For example, Abrams and Houston found that Muslims have disproportionately lower incomes and higher rates of unemployment, and that they have comparatively lower skills both in education and in vocational training.[66] Muslim minorities are also more likely to reside in deprived housing and disproportionately suffer from bad health.[67] This is illustrated by the finding that 68 percent of Bangladeshi households live below the poverty line and about 40 percent of Muslim children in London live in poverty.[68] It has, however, been argued that these features are in truth an ethnic phenomenon rather than a religious one since non-Pakistani and non-Bangladeshi Muslims such as Indians and African-Asians fair much better according to these indices. What this ignores is that while ethnic origin analyses shows significant variations across Muslim groups, and demonstrate that not all Muslim ethnic groups are equally disadvantaged, the most disadvantaged groups mainly consist of Muslim ethnic groups e.g., Muslims with an Indian background will perform less well than Hindus with an Indian background.[69] The outcome as a whole is that Muslims minorities represent a much weaker group in the labour market and Muslims as a whole have an increased reliance on state benefits, and so forth.

One important factor related to this could be deemed cultural and has to do with the greater levels of non-participation of Muslim women in the labour market. For example, according to the last Census only around 28 percent of Pakistani women and

22 percent percent of Bangladeshi women are in employment.[70] One of the most frequent explanations of this trend is to attribute it to a lack of suitable qualifications and educational training. It is significant then to note a counter-cyclical trend which reports that over the last decade Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls have become more likely than boys to achieve 5 G.C.S.E's at grades A*-C.[71] This is not something limited to tertiary education for, according to Bagguley and Hussein, while the past two decades has seen a general expansion of participation in higher education, "the increasing participation of South Asian women, especially those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, has surpassed all expectations".[72] This includes a leap in the percentages of women entering university between 1979 to 2000 with Pakistani ethnicities from 1.7 to 14.5 percent, and for the same period for women of Bangladeshi ethnicity from 1.6 to 12.5 percent.[73] In broad terms, this might be explained by migrant attitudes toward success in which ethnic minority cultural dynamics serve a positive function. This includes how "parents, other significant relatives and community members share some general, but durable, ambitions to achieve upward mobility for themselves and especially for their children and believe that (higher) education is important in achieving those ambitions, and so prioritize the acquisition of (higher) education,".[74]

State - Muslim Engagement Around Terrorism

Perhaps the most novel and least charted present area of state-Muslim engagement, however, surrounds issues concerning the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism. Following the London bombings in July 2005, the government created seven working groups[75] comprised of representatives of Muslim communities under the terms 'Preventing Extremism Together' (PET). Though initiated by the Home Office, this would later fall under the remit of the subsequently created Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

These working groups devised a series of proposals to develop practical means of tackling violent extremism. Sixty-four recommendations were put forward in a report published in November 2005, with a particular emphasis on three that could act as central planks of unfolding government strategies concerned with preventing violent extremism. These constituted, firstly, the development of a 'Scholars Roadshow' led

by British Muslim organizations where 'influential mainstream' Muslim thinkers would speak to audiences of young British Muslims. The rationale behind this was that these speakers would distil effective arguments against extremist justification for terrorism in denouncing it as un-Islamic, so as to "counter the ideological and theological underpinnings of the terrorist narrative".[76] This included a variety of international figures, and two high-profile Muslim intellectuals to take part and remain committed to this strategy were the Swiss-born Francophone scholar, Tariq Ramadan, and the American convert Hamza Yusuf Hanson.

A second proposed plank concerned the creation of Muslim forums against extremism and Islamophobia. These could be led by key individuals and bring together members of local Muslim communities, law enforcement and public service agencies to discuss how to tackle extremism and Islamophobia in their area. The third and perhaps most longstanding recommendation, in terms of proposed structural capacity building within British Muslim communities, promoted the formation of a Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB). To this end, a steering group of Muslim leaders has undertaken an extensive national consultation on matters such as the accreditation of imams, better governance of mosques, and interfaith activity.[77] Alongside this professional development programme or "up-skilling" of imams and mosque officials, recommendations were also made for a national campaign and coalition to increase the visibility of Muslim women, and to specifically empower and equip them in the course of becoming active citizens.

The provenance of these working groups and their recommendations rests in a broader strategy which the British government had been cumulatively developing since the events of 9/11. Known as CONTEST, this broad-ranging counter-terrorism strategy was launched in 2003 and comprised of four components concerned with meeting the objectives of *Pursuit* (to stop terrorist attacks); *Preparedness* (to mitigate their impact where they cannot be stopped); *Protection* (to strengthen overall protection against terrorist attacks), and *Prevention* (to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremists). It is this last objective that was given added impetus upon the news that British Muslims had planned and carried out the London bombings, and it is the objective that has most overtly sought the interactive involvement of British Muslim communities at large. It is therefore unsurprising to

learn that a strategy premised upon entering, and to some extent reformulating, the life worlds of British Muslim communities has been the subject of critical debate in the study of ethnic relations more broadly.[78] That this intention was salient could be gleaned from the fact that immediately after the London bombing, the Home Office signalled that it would establish The Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC) "to advise on how, consistent with their own religion and culture, there is better integration of those parts of the community inadequately integrated".[79]

In this way the *Prevent* strategy signals some diffusion of formal responsibilities for policy implementation and service delivery in a way that some perceive as indicative of broader development in 'governance' practices whereby "responsibility and accountability for a wide range of social issues is increasingly focused towards local levels, whilst at the same time centralised control in terms of resources and target-setting is maintained".[80] While not immediately apparent in the earlier quotation, the incorporation too of faith-based groups from within the third sector is potentially part of a novel approach of engaging with religious minorities through the practices and models of representation, stakeholders, and advocacy in the consultative arena.[81] What this discussion is trying to elaborate on is the manner in which the *Prevent* agenda, in constituting part of the broad counter-terrorism strategy, appears to be simultaneously subject to at least two broader prevailing dynamics comprising:

> …the implementation of anti-terrorist laws that can be used disproportionately against Muslims leading to the potential for their increased surveillance and control and thereby serving to reduce Muslims' trust of state institutions, while at the same time pursuing approaches that acknowledge, and stress the importance of, the involvement of British…Muslim communities in helping to combat extremism.[82]

Indeed, Spalek and Imoual frame these dynamics relationally in terms of "harder" and "softer" strategies of engagement, whereby the former may be understood as consisting of various means of surveillance, policing and intelligence gathering, and so on.[83] The latter, meanwhile, would include the development of dialogue, participation and community feedback between Muslim communities, state agencies and voluntary organizations in a way that may serve to increase trust in "the battle for hearts and minds". For example, the *Prevent* strategy emphasises, and seeks to extend

to Muslims long-established equality traditions historically orientated toward ethnic and racial minorities:

The Prevent strategy requires a specific response, but we must also make the most of the links with wider community work to reduce inequalities, tackle racism and other forms of extremism (e.g. extreme far right), build cohesion and empower communities […] Likewise, it is recognised that the arguments of violent extremists, which rely on creating a 'them' and an 'us', are less likely to find traction in cohesive communities.[84]

This builds upon recognition within government policies and legislation of Muslim religious difference that has been manifested in other ways, including measures against religious discrimination as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The tensions, then, surround the extent to which the prevailing British citizenship being extended to Muslims—through social and community cohesion agendas—are twinned with or placed within the same register as anti/counter-terrorism strategies that import or rely upon certain securitized 'hard' aspects of this dimension of state-Muslim engagement. The risk is that Muslim active citizenship is to some extent framed in terms of demonstrable counter-terrorism activities, in a way which assumes that Muslim communities at large remain the "locus of the issue of extremism".[85] The most recent report from the *Prime Minister's Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism* (2013) continues to reflects many of these same tensions in surmising that violent extremism 'is a distinct ideology which should not be confused with traditional religious practice' (p. 2), and that 'extremism is less likely to be tolerated by communities which come together to challenge it. Britain is stronger because of its open, multi-faith and multi- racial communities, which can tackle extremists together and challenge the view that it is not possible to be a true Muslim and be integrated in British society' (p. 4).

British Muslim Citizenship and the Re-Balancing of Multiculturalism

What these examples begin to illustrate is that the state of multiculturalism in Britain does not mirror the "drastic break with multiculturalism" recently made by the Dutch.[86] This has seen the Netherlands discontinue some emblematic multiculturalist

policies while introducing others specifically tailored to ignore ethnic minority differences. This includes the large-scale abandonment of dual-citizenship programmes; a withdrawal of national-level funding for minority group organizations and activities supporting cultural difference; reallocating the small percentage of public broadcasting time dedicated to multicultural issues; a proposed banning of the wearing of the burka in public places through an act of parliament; and a cessation of ethnic monitoring of labour market participation.[87] Neither does it confirm Favell's insistence that:

> [O]ur tried-and-tested narratives and models of postwar immigration in Europe—the standard discussions of immigration, integration and citizenship, based on post-colonial, guestworker and asylum models, and historical distinctions between pre- and post-1973 trends—are finished.[88]

In contrast, what has been taking place in Britain is more like a movement from a perceived *neglect* to *affirmation* of 'Britishness' presented as a meta-membership with which all, including Muslim minorities and non-Muslim majorities, should engage. For example, the government-endorsed report entitled 'A Journey to Citizenship' chaired by the late Sir Bernard Crick has characterized Britishness as denoting

> …respect [for] the laws, the elected parliamentary and democratic political structures, traditional values of mutual tolerance, respect for equal rights and mutual concern... To be British is to respect those over-arching specific institutions, values, beliefs and traditions that bind us all, the different nations and cultures together in peace and in a legal order. [...] So to be British does not mean assimilation into a common culture so that original identities are lost.[89]

As his report recommending the introduction of citizenship education put it, part of the groundswell for its recent emergence is undoubtedly a sense of "civic deficit" epitomized by voter apathy amongst young people which the report claims "is inexcusably bad and should and could be remedied".[90] To this end the QCA, under the commission chaired by Crick, recommended the implementation of a co-ordinated national strategy for the statutory requirement for schools to spend around 5 percent of their curriculum time teaching three interdependent elements of citizenship education. These would comprise (i) social and moral responsibility, (ii) community involvement, and (iii) political literacy.

While these reiterate elements of the Swann Commission, they perhaps also constitute a modification of earlier approaches. Though the QCA insisted upon respect for "the plurality of nations, cultures, ethnic identities, and religions long established in the UK", there is no explicit reference to anti-racism which confirmed to some that citizenship education represents a disengagement from these issues.[91] Osler and Starkey[92], for example, charge the QCA report with "institutional racism" for demanding that "minorities must learn to respect the laws, codes and conventions as much as the majority".[93] This they take as evidence of a "colonial approach…that runs throughout the report" and which "falls into the trap of treating certain ethnicities as 'Other' when it discusses cultural diversity".[94] Sir Bernard Crick repudiates the view that his committee singled out minorities, saying that

> Were not willing to give the public the view that the major thrust of citizenship was race relations. We said damn it, it's about the whole population including the majority…pupils should learn, respect and have knowledge of national, regional ethnic and religious differences. We were simply taking a broader view. We thought that…all our nations' children should receive an education that would help them to become active citizens: *all* our nations' children.[95]

This need not be evidence of an assimilatory "retreat" from anti-racism or multiculturalism, however, but something that might be characterized as a "re-balancing" of broader discourses of anti-racism and multiculturalism. Indeed, the entire idea of "citizenship education" is in itself surely evidence of this. While the latter point is welcomed by some commentators who had previously formed part of the pluralistic or anti-racist left identified earlier, the bringing of previously marginalized groups into the societal mainstream is, at best, greeted more ambivalently.[96] It is difficult, however, not to view this as a knee-jerk reaction that condemns religious identities per se, rather than examining them on a case-by-case basis, while at the same time assuming that ethnic identities are free of illiberal goals. This is empirically problematic given that clitoridectomy, for instance, is an example of a *cultural practice* among various ethnic groups and yet has little support from any religion. So to favour ethnicity and problematize religion is a reflection of a secularist bias that has alienated many religionists, especially Muslims, from multiculturalism.

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It is much better to acknowledge that the 'multi' in multiculturalism will encompass different kinds of groups and does not itself privilege any one kind, but that 'recognition' should be given to the identities that marginalized groups themselves value and find strength in, whether these be racial, religious or ethnic.[97]

Conclusion

This chapter has charted the contemporary structural and cultural dynamics informing relationships between British Muslim identity articulations and the state. Traversing areas of political participation, observance of aspects of Shar'ia in personal and civil matters, spatial settlement and educational social mobility, and community consultation in preventing violent extremism, the chapter has elaborated how responses to Muslim 'difference' in Britain detail a pattern of engagement that has evolved over a period of time through both race-equality and multi-faith opportunity structures. In a cumulative way, developments in each have come to characterize a British multiculturalism that has, contrary to popular insistence following the London bombings, not been erased. As such we contend that any discussion of Muslim minorities in 21st century Britain must not ignore these developments for they too may affect the course of future state-Muslim engagement – a point worth stressing as we stand on the threshold of new era of Conservative electoral dominance in British politics.

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[8] Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*. London: Profile Books, 2000

[9] R. Jenkins, *Address Given by the Home Secretary to a Meeting of Voluntary Liaison Committees*, 23 May. London: NCCI, 1966

[10] A. Favell, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain.* Hampshire: Palgrave-Macmillan, 1998.

[11] The 1948 British Nationality Act granted freedom of movement to all formerly or presently dependent, and now Commonwealth, territories (regardless of whether their passports were issued by independent or colonial states) by creating the status of 'Citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies' (CUKC). Until they acquired one or other of the national citizenships in these post-colonial countries, these formerly British subjects continued to retain their British status. This is one of the reasons why Kymlicka's distinction between national minority rights and ethno-cultural minority rights is not easily transposed on to Britain (see Modood, *Multiculturalism, a civic idea*. London: Polity Press, 2007).

[12] See R. S. Dhami, J. Squires and T. Modood, *Developing Positive Action Policies: Learning from the Experiences of Europe and North America*. Department for Work and Pensions Research Report no. 406, 2006, pp. 19-25

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[14] It is important to bear in mind that the Race Relations Act does not allow positive discrimination or affirmative action. This means that an employer cannot try to change the balance of the workforce by selecting someone mainly because they are from a particular racial group. This would be discrimination on racial grounds, and therefore unlawful (see Karim, 2004/5). What in the U.S. is called 'affirmative action' goes well beyond what is lawful in Britain.

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Society, 2001; D. Abrams and D. M. Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain*. London: HMSO, 2006

[24] See Modood, "The Multicultural State We're In: Muslims, 'Multiculture' and the 'Civic Re-balancing' of British Multiculturalism", 2009, p. 492) for a discussion of the development of the MCB.

[25] See www.mcb.org.uk.

[26] Such charges are largely circumstantial owing to the links between the MCB members and the Islamist organisation Jamat-e-Islami which was founded in northern India in the 1930s by Abu A'la Mawdudi.

[27] D. Cameron "Address to Handsworth Mosque", *Birmingham*, 30 January 2007.

[28] Though interestingly it's regional affiliates such as the Muslim Council of Wales (MCW) has not faced such criticism.

[29] C. Joppke "Limits of Integration Policy: Britain and her Muslims", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35 (3), 2009, 2004; Policy Exchange *Living Apart Together: British Muslims and the Paradox of Multiculturalism*. London: Policy Exchange, 2007; Pew 2006; C. Moore, "How Cromwell Gave Us Joan Collins and Other Luminaries", *Daily Telegraph*, 17 June 2006.

[30] W. Hutton, "Why the West must Stay True to Itself", *The Observer*, 17 June 2007; R. Hansen, "The Danish Cartoon Controversy: A Defence of Liberal Freedom", *International Migration*, 44 (5), 2006; P. Toynbee, "My Right to Offend a Fool: Race and Religion are Different – which is why Islamophobia is a Nonsense and Religious Hatred must Not be Outlawed", *The Guardian*, 10 June 2005.

[31] Including the headscarf or *hijab*, full face veil or *niqab*, or full body garments such as the *jilbab*.

[32] Evidenced not only in public and media but also by academics and intellectuals including Christian Joppke. Writing in the *British Journal of Sociology* he states: 'Certain minority practices, on which, so far, no one had dared to comment, have now become subjected to public scrutiny as never before. The notorious example is that of arranged marriage which, to an alarming degree, *seems to be* forced marriage' (2004, p. 251 emphasis added). Whilst this is an important issue that must never be ignored, on what evidence Joppke bases his assumptions remain undisclosed in the rest of the article. Whilst the conflation between 'forced' and 'arranged' marriages is unfortunate and misleading, the suggestion that no one has dared to comment on either betrays a surprising unfamiliarity with a British case in which pressure groups and organisations such as Southall Black Sisters and Women Against Fundamentalism (WAF) have led high profile national campaigns. The Government, moreover, has established transnational strategies such as the Working Group on Forced Marriage which has seen the creation of the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU), as well as the introduction of the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007.

[33] M. Phillips, *Londonistan: How Britain Created a Terror State Within*. London: Gibson Square Books. 2006; Gove 2006; N. Cohen, *What's Left? How Liberals Lost Their Way*. London: HarperPerennial, 2007.

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[36] T. Modood, "Multiculturalism after 7/7: A Scapegoat or a Hope for the Future? ", RUSI, 153 (2), 2008, p. 17.

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[38] S. Jivraj, "Muslims in England and Wales: Evidence from the 2011 Census". In: C. Alexander, V. Redclift and A. Hussain, eds. *The New Muslims*. London: Runneymede Trust, 2013.

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[58] *ibid*, p. 469.

[59] *ibid.* p. 482.

[60] See N. Meer, *Race, Ethnicity and Education*. 2009.

[61] I. Hewitt, Final report. Report: The magazine from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, April, 10–25. 1998, p. 22.

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[64] *ibid*.

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[67] See also Performance Innovation Unit (PIU) 2001; T. Modood et al, *The Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Disadvantage*. London: Policy Studies Institute. 1997.

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[75] Clustered as follows: 1) Engaging with young people; 2) Providing a full range of education services, in the UK, that meet the needs of the Muslim community; 3) Engaging with Muslim women; 4) Supporting regional and local initiatives and community actions; 5) Imam Training and accreditation and the role of Mosques as a resource for the whole community; 6) Security – Islamophobia, protecting Muslims from extremism, and community confidence in policing, and 7) Tackling extremism and radicalisation.

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[95] Personal communication, 27 June, 2007

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[97] T. Modood, *Multiculturalism, a civic idea*, 2007.