

THE POWER OF BELIEF?

**REVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE ON RELIGION OR BELIEF
AND EQUALITIES IN GREAT BRITAIN**

prepared for the

XXXX

by

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THE PROVENANCE OF THIS REPORT

In December, 2007, the authors of this report were commissioned by a well-known equality and human rights organisation to conduct a review of the empirical research on disadvantage and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief. As well as being restricted to *empirical* research, the review was further limited to: (a) Great Britain, rather than the United Kingdom; (b) religion, rather than spirituality; (c) specific religions, and, (c) research carried out between 2000 and 2008. We were specifically told *not* to engage with theological debates and – part way through the process – *not* to pursue the cross-cutting issue of social class which we had raised. (Further details of the terms of reference to which we worked are provided in Chapter One).

We endeavoured throughout to produce a review that is written with due regard for sensitivities, but which remains true to the data, and which takes its lead from two sources:

- (a) The new legislative framework in Britain, which is expressly even-handed at the level of principle in its treatment of all religions and non-religious belief systems (as explained in Chapter One);
- (b) The evidence for the incidence of inequalities of various kinds relating to religion or belief, as revealed by the analysis of empirical sources (see especially Chapter Two).

Throughout the process, we worked closely with colleagues in the commissioning organisation, who subjected successive drafts of the report to a searching process of internal review. In June, 2008 we were informed that the report required only minor, stylistic, amendments prior to publication. Subsequently, however, a decision was taken – at a different level of the organisation – *not* to proceed with publication.

At this point, we were informed that we could publish the report elsewhere, so long as references to the commissioning organisation were withheld. Accordingly, the name of this has been replaced throughout with the symbols ‘XXXX’.

We do not feel that it is appropriate to comment further on what turned out to be a most unsatisfactory experience from a research point of view. Readers should note, however, that the time factor means that additional research will undoubtedly have been published in the sphere of religion and belief since we completed the main part of the research review in 2008, and this version of the report in early 2009.

Notwithstanding this, we have chosen to publish it via Bradford Scholars not only as a contribution to the historical record, but as an extensive resource for researchers, and because it contains some challenging analyses of work in the area which we believe should inform future thinking and research.¹

¹ Some of the more recent research, and a more detailed discussion of the challenges to which we refer, can be found in: Macey, M. (2009) *Multiculturalism, Religion and Women: Doing Harm by Doing Good?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, and Macey, M. and Carling, A.H. (2010) *Ethnic, Racial and Religious Inequalities: The Perils of Subjectivity*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan [forthcoming].

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

A new legal framework has been developed over the last ten years which protects individuals against unfair treatment on the grounds of their religion or belief. This framework regards all the major faith groups, secular belief systems (such as Humanism or Atheism), and non-belief on formally equal terms. There has also been a rapid growth of research interest in religion/belief in contemporary scholarship on equalities.

This report provides a critical overview of this extensive research base, which has been dispersed to date among a wide variety of sources.

Recurrent Themes

1. On the basis of the evidence available, it is often difficult to disentangle the social effects of religion/belief from the effects of other factors, such as ethnicity, race, gender or social class.
2. Perceptions about the level of social unfairness suffered by religious groups run at a higher level than the experience of unfairness reported by individual members of the groups concerned, in a number of significant cases.
3. Research and public debate is often concentrated on particular groups within the whole range of religion or belief, and on particular voices from within these groups.

Main Findings

Religious Identity, Belief and Practice

- More people identify with each of the main religious faiths than practise those faiths actively.
- Estimates of the number of practising Christians vary by a factor of ten, from the 6.5% of the population who attended any church in England on 8th May, 2005, to the 72% of the UK population who answered 'Christian' in the 2001 Census.
- About 4% of the population practise one of the minority (non-Christian) faiths.
- 'Christian' responses to the question on religion in the 2001 Census for England and Wales may be best understood as an acknowledgement by the respondent of a Christian background or heritage, with no necessary implications for current Christian practice or religious belief.
- Most of the British population are probably not adherents of one of the organised religious faiths, but may belong instead within an *alternative spectrum* of spiritual, agnostic or secular practice and belief.
- Assertions of religious identity sometimes carry ethnic, cultural or political meanings.

Inequality of Religion or Belief

- There is clear evidence of economic and social inequality between groups identified wholly or partly in religious terms, in relation to factors such as education, poverty, unemployment and housing conditions.
- It is often '*hyphen-groups*' of combined religion, race and/or ethnicity – such as Bangladeshi Muslims or Black African Christians – who share a common social and/or economic situation.
- Some (but not all) Muslim groups and – to a lesser extent – Sikh groups, are often found in the least favourable social positions.
- There is clear evidence of inequality *within* ethno-religious groups, related to factors such

as age, gender, social class and sexual orientation.

- Unjust treatment on the grounds of religion or belief (or on grounds of race or ethnicity) is a possible cause of these inequalities, but there are many other influences potentially involved.

Harms Directed Against Religious Individuals or Organisations

- In Scotland, it is believed that discrimination against Catholics is widespread; in England and Wales, it is also believed that discrimination against Muslims (and ‘Islamophobia’ more generally) is widespread.
- The effects on individuals of discrimination or hostility can be profoundly damaging, regardless of the general social level of such harms. A single case of unjust treatment on the grounds of religion or belief is one case too many.
- However, a careful analysis of the available evidence reveals a *significant gap between perception and reality*: the extent of anti-Catholic discrimination in Scotland appears to be very low and that against Muslims in England and Wales appears to be much lower than is commonly believed.
- The expression of unfounded hostility to Islam – ‘Islamophobia’ – in the mainstream media has only been subject to extensive and systematic investigation very recently, and even then not across the whole range of media. Recent findings for national newspapers suggest, however, that stories connected with Muslims frequently carry negative associations. This may contribute to wider processes of stereotyping in the public domain.

Religion or Belief, the Workplace and the Public Services

- A number of routine, taken-for-granted, aspects of customary workplace practice disadvantage adherents of minority religions, and may discriminate against them indirectly. These include the general adoption of the Christian calendar for the working year, the lack of time or facilities for observance of religion or belief, and the lack of suitable food provision, to meet *halal* or *kosher* requirements, for example.
- There are significant differences in the use made of public services by ethno-religious groups, and their experience of these. However, research does *not* support the suggestion that this is generally due to discrimination – or even lack of sensitivity – on the part of service providers.
- Cultural and religious beliefs and values sometimes prevent people from making use of **health services**, particularly those in spheres associated with stigma or shame (e.g. HIV/AIDS, mental health, and genetic counselling). Concerns about threats to religious requirements and cultural values can affect people’s decision not to use other healthcare services, such as facilities for deaf children and young people.
- **Education** is an area in which there is intense debate about religion on a range of dimensions. It is argued, for example, that secular beliefs are not taught in schools and non-religious belief organisations are under-represented on governing bodies. It is also argued that separate faith schools should not be publicly funded; that they are inappropriate in a secular society, and that separate faith based education contributes to social divisions in an already divided society.
- In fact, the evidence for faith schools impacting negatively on community cohesion is both equivocal and contested. For instance, the catchment area system of allocating school places results in faith schools often having a student body that is more ethnically and religiously diverse than in maintained schools. There is also some evidence that faith schools promote greater respect for religious diversity than do ‘secular’ schools, though this is likely to vary by religion and denomination. Overall, the debate about religion and community cohesion would benefit from adequate empirical research.

- Though there is generally little evidence of discrimination based on religion (or ethnicity) in public service provision as a whole, the *criminal justice system* – particularly the police and prison services – may constitute an exception to this. Although religious discrimination has not been proved, there is evidence of racism that may well include a religious component. There is also evidence of unfair treatment with respect to the provision of resources to enable the practice of religion, including relative lack of access to *imams* in the prison service.
- There is evidence of *hate crimes* based on religion, though the difficulty of separating out ethnicity and religion needs to be noted here. There was a relatively short-lived increase in attacks on Muslim people and property following 9/11 and 7/7, and some attacks on Sikhs, who seem to have been confused with Muslims at this time. And there is some evidence of religious hate crime directed against Muslim women. It seems, however, that it is Jewish people who are generally most at risk from hate crime, from property vandalism to physical assault.

Harms Practised By Religious Individuals and Organisations

- As well as being subject to discrimination and other harms, religiously motivated individuals and faith based organisations [FBOs] may also practice discrimination against those who do not share their beliefs.
- This can apply to both ‘outsiders’ and ‘insiders’ of their faith, in areas such as employment, recognition of branches of a faith, departure of individuals from a faith, or religious conversion.
- There are instances in which feelings of offence have led religious groups to try to impose censorship. This has sometimes been accompanied by threatened or actual violence.
- Inequalities related to gender, sexual orientation and age within ethno-religious groups are influenced by discrimination that is clearly rooted in some cases in both religious beliefs and cultural traditions.
- The law forbids expressions of religious hatred in any direction, and some published materials of religious groups (especially against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender [LGBT] individuals and secular society) appear to be against the spirit, if not the letter, of the law.

The Government, Social Policy, and Religion or Belief Organisations

- The Government has recently turned to FBOs to help achieve objectives of social cohesion, the prevention of extremism and service provision. There is evidence in this process of capacity issues in service provision, and tensions of policy between FBOs, the Government and secular agencies.
- A tension also exists between some religious beliefs and the equalities agenda.
- There are complaints of unfair treatment in relation to resource allocation between different religions, and between secular v. faith based organisations.
- Research calls into question the representative status of some minority religious leaders at local and national levels. Surveys suggest that the voices of women and young people in particular are neglected. And it appears that none of the national Islamic organisations are accepted widely as speaking for Muslims.
- ‘Political literacy’ is required to understand fully the objectives of some FBOs.
- Some minority religious groups may use Government funding to control their members and to reinforce the boundaries between themselves and wider society.

Religion or Belief and Minority Ethnic Communities

- Policy-makers and practitioners should bear in mind that all communities are heterogeneous, and that the needs of their members are different, and sometimes in conflict.
- Consultations with Muslim women suggest that it is often culture, rather than religion, that has most impact on their lives and those of other vulnerable categories, such as children and young people. The idea of ‘faith communities’ can be a misnomer in these circumstances.
- Lack of official knowledge and awareness about cultural, political and religious issues can combine with lack of gender awareness and ‘political correctness’ (which is in reality *incorrect*) to render invisible such human rights abuses as forced marriage, ‘honour’ based violence, and child abuse.

Religion, Gender and Sexual Orientation

- There is evidence that some minority religious women are disadvantaged in access to, and progression within, the labour market. Some of this is due to externally constructed barriers, but some is due to religious and cultural traditions that prioritise home and childcare.
- There are examples of LGBT people being excluded from certain sectors of employment, including FBOs and faith schools, and being harassed and bullied in the workplace.
- There is some evidence that minority religious women experience violence and hate crime, but most violence against women is perpetrated by partners and family members. LGBT people are also the victims of violence and hate crime, but – unlike women – this is mainly perpetrated by strangers.
- Religious ideology and doctrine are implicated in the inequality and oppression experienced by both women and LGBT people through patriarchy and heteronormativity. Surveys show that many LGBT believers also see religion as encouraging homophobia.
- Religions and some religious individuals are having considerable difficulty with the sexual orientation strand of the equalities legislation. There are instances of workplace conflict between Christian and LGBT individuals. There is also some suggestion of ‘far-right’ Christian groups mobilising against non-heterosexual people.

Research Coverage and Gaps in the Research Base

- Despite the large volume of published evidence relating to equality and religion or belief, the research coverage remains uneven on most dimensions of interest, including *topic area*, *organisational sector*, *geographical area* (within Britain) and *grouping of religion or belief*, as summarised in the following points.
- *Topic Area*. There is a particular need for investigation into:
 - The overall distribution of religion or belief in the British population, taking account of the distinct dimensions of identity, belief and practice;
 - Patterns of social and economic discrimination relating specifically to religion or belief, as opposed to other factors such as race or ethnicity.

The Census questions on religion or belief are in urgent need of revision for the 2011 Census, especially in England and Wales, in order to help establish the true extent of practice and belief for all the major religions and belief systems, including Christianity. The extent of discrimination relating to religion or belief is in urgent need of clarification,

especially by the use of direct methods of investigation, such as actor techniques. Investigation is also required into the incidence of social prejudice regarding religion or belief, as distinct from discrimination on the one hand and from unfavourable attitudes or views on the other.

- There is little research on the relationship between religion or belief and social class, or on questions of ‘mobility of religion or belief’ (from one faith or belief system to another). And very few studies were found that evaluate policy initiatives in relation to religion or belief, which the research brief specified as a field of interest. There is also a need for philosophical work on the ‘vision of justice’ that underlies the current legal framework on equalities, including the place of religion or belief within this framework.
- *Organisational Sector.* There is more research on religion or belief in relation to public sector organisations than private sector organisations, and even in the public sector the studies are often conducted on a small scale and/or focussed on highly specific ethnic or religious groups or detailed issues of service delivery.
- *Geographical Area.* (Intra-Christian) sectarianism remains a live issue for research in Scotland, whereas the specific issues for England tend to revolve around the (non-Christian) minority religions. Wales has less of these particular concerns, but a number of studies that are significant for the whole of Britain have been conducted or authored in Wales.
- *Grouping of Religion or Belief.* Most empirical studies on equality and religion or belief published in the period since 2000 refer either to Christianity or to Islam (in roughly equal numbers). There is a smaller number of studies concerning Judaism, and very few on Hinduism, Sikhism or Buddhism. There are likewise very few studies on agnostics, or on the adherents of secular belief systems or New Religious Movements (NRMs).

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ABBREVIATIONS USED THROUGHOUT THE REPORT

9/11: The terrorist attacks on the USA on 11th September, 2001.

7/7: The bombings in London on 7th July, 2005.

AC: Archbishops' Council.

ACAS: Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service.

ACPO: Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

ACUPA: Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas.

AHRC: Arts and Humanities Research Council.

AMSS: Association of Muslim Social Scientists.

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation.

BCS: British Crime Survey.

BHA: British Humanist Association.

BME: Black and Minority Ethnic.

CBCWEW: Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

CCETSW: Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work.

CIMEL: Centre for Islamic and Middle Eastern Law.

CIO: Confederation of Indian Organisations.

CIPD: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

CJS: Criminal Justice System.

CMPO: Centre for Market and Public Organisation.

CO: Cabinet Office.

CoE: Church of England.

CPA: Christian Police Association.

CPAG: Child Poverty Action Group.

CPS: Crown Prosecution Service.

CRE: Commission for Racial Equality.

CRER: Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations.

CSSS: Centre for the Study of Secular Society.

CST: Community Safety Trust.

CULF: Commission on Urban Life and Faith.

CVS: Community and Voluntary Sector.

DCA: Department of Constitutional Affairs.

DCLG: Department of Communities & Local Government.

DCSF: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

DETR: Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

DfEE: Department for Education and Employment.

DfES: Department for Education and Skills.

DoH/DH: Department of Health.

ECHR: European Convention on Human Rights

EER: The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

EHRC: Equality and Human Rights Commission.

EOC: Equal Opportunities Commission.

ESRC: Economic and Social Research Council.

EUMAP: European Union Monitoring and Advocacy Program.

EUMC: European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Islamophobia.

FAIR: Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism.

FBO: Faith Based Organisation.
FCO: Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
FMU: Forced Marriage Unit.
FORWARD: Foundation for Women’s Health, Research and Development.

GLAD: Greater London Association for Disabled People.
GPA: Gay Police Association.

HEA: Health Education Authority.
HESA: Higher Education Statistics Agency.
HO: Home Office.
HoC: House of Commons.
HoL: House of Lords.
HRA: The Human Rights Act 1998.
HuT: Hizb-ut-Tahrir.

ICoCo: Institute of Community Cohesion.
IHEU: International Humanist and Ethical Union.
IHRC: Islamic Human Rights Commission.
IES: Institute for Employment Studies.
IIS: Institute of Islamic Studies.
ILO: International Labour Organisation.
INSTED: Inservice Training and Educational Development.
INTERIGHTS: International Centre for the Legal Protection of Human Rights.
IPB: Islamic Party of Britain.
IPPC: Independent Police Complaints Commission.
IPPR: Institute for Public Policy Research.
IRR: Institute for Race Relations.

JPR: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
JRF: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
JRT: Joseph Rowntree Trust.

KDVF: Keighley Domestic Violence Forum.

LGA: Local Government Association.
LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People.

MAT: Muslim Arbitration Tribunal.
MCB: Muslim Council of Britain.
MPAC: Muslim Public Affairs Committee UK.
MPGB: Muslim Party of Great Britain.
MPS: Metropolitan Police Service.

NAWP: Newham Asian Women’s Project.
NCB: National Children’s Bureau.
NCVO: National Council of Voluntary Organisations.
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation.
NIMHE: National Institute for Mental Health Education.
NOMS: National Offender Management Service.
NRM: New Religious Movements.
ODPM: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

ONS: Office for National Statistics.

PSI: Policy Studies Institute.

RDD: Random Digital Dialing.

RRHA: The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006.

RWA: Refuge Women's Association.

SBS: Southall Black Sisters.

SE: Scottish Executive.

SGSR: Scottish Government Social Research.

UKACIA: United Kingdom Action Committee on Islamic Affairs.

UN: United Nations.

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme.

UNECA: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund.

UNHCR: United Nations Refugee Agency.

UNHRC: United Nations Human Rights Council.

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund.

UNIFEM: United Nations Development Fund for Women.

UNSGC: United Nations Secretary General's Campaign to End Violence Against Women.

VME: Visible Minority Ethnic.

WAF: Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales.

WCC: Women and Work Commission.

WEU: Women and Equality Unit.

WHO: World Health Organisation.

WLUML: Women Living Under Muslim Law.

WTF: William Temple Foundation.

YOI: Young Offender Institution.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.1 The Social Context of the Review

Britain is a liberal democracy, which operates on an ideology of equality of opportunity and respect for human rights. It is also a welfare state in which access to many education and health services are free at the point of delivery to provide a ‘safety net’ for people in need. Notwithstanding this, there is clear evidence of widespread and persistent inequality in relation to such aspects of ‘social wealth’ as education, employment, health and housing which is correlated with the social divisions of class, gender and race/ethnicity, as well as age and disability. There is also evidence of discrimination on these grounds, much of which is institutionalised. One of the principal aims of this review is to establish whether this also applies to the sphere of religion or belief.

1.2 The Legal Framework of the Review

There is a new framework of law relating to religion or belief (generally referred to as religion/belief in the report) established by:

- The Human Rights Act 1998 [HRA].
- The Terrorism Act 2000.²
- The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 (Great Britain) [EER].
- The Equality Act 2006 (Part 2).
- The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 (England and Wales) [RRHA].

In addition, the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 extended the racially aggravated offences contained in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to cover offences aggravated by religious hostility, including assault, harassment and public order offences. Some other recent legislation includes clauses that refer to religious issues,³ and the Race Equality Duty placed on public sector bodies has been extended to include duties of Gender Equality and Disability Equality (Ansari, 2002; Jahangir, 2008; Fredman, 2005). It has been confirmed recently by the Attorney General in a statement to Parliament that the new single Public Sector Equality Duty will include an Equality Duty in relation to Religion or Belief (Hansard, 10 March 2009). Both the Human Rights Act and the Employment Equality Regulations 2003 implemented European instruments in the UK context (the European Convention on Human Rights [ECHR], and the European Employment Directive 2000 respectively), and the UK has a number of other international obligations relating to equality of religion/belief.⁴

² Religion enters into the legal definition of terrorism via the stipulation that *‘the use or threat [of a terrorist act] is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause’* (Terrorism Act 2000, Part 1,1,1(c)).

³ These include the Education and Inspection Act 2006, which gives sixth form pupils at a community, foundation or voluntary school the right to be excused from attendance at religious worship and the Charities Act 2006 (for England and Wales only), which permits a body or trust to claim charitable status for the advancement of religion (if it is for the public benefit). In addition, the Common law has long recognised freedom of individuals to adopt, practise and change their religion.

⁴ These include The International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights, Articles 2,18,20,26, 27; The International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights, Article 13, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Article 2; The International Convention

The Labour Government has therefore expanded the reach of equalities legislation considerably in a variety of different areas (including religion/belief). It is now considering whether the current body of equalities legislation should be unified and simplified, and a new Single Equality Bill drawn up for Great Britain (Department of Communities and Local Government [DCLG], 2007b; Phillips, 2007). Since the Bill is only expected to be published in April or May 2009, it is beyond the scope of this review.

The legal framework on religion/belief (or the lack of such belief) gives new rights to *individuals*, protecting them in various circumstances against:

- Direct discrimination.
- Indirect discrimination.
- Harassment.
- Victimisation.
- The threat or commission of Terrorist violence, or
- Hate crime.

Direct discrimination involves treating members of a group less favourably than others, whereas indirect discrimination involves '*provisions, criteria or practices*' that put members of groups defined by religion/belief (or lack thereof) at a comparative disadvantage. A corresponding duty is placed on individuals to avoid discriminatory practices, in all circumstances regarding direct discrimination, and in cases of indirect discrimination where the discrimination is not considered to be '*a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim*' (EER 2003, Part 1, 3,1b; DCLG, 2007a).

The HRA applies directly to '*public authorities*' alone, which include national or local state organisations, and any other person or organisation that '*carries out some functions of a public nature*'. The main impact is on '*vertical proceedings*' between individuals and public authorities, but there can be a '*horizontal effect*' on disputes between private parties as a result of the obligation placed on all UK courts and tribunals to comply with the terms of the HRA (DCA, 2006: 37).

The RRHA protects individuals (and groups) against the expression of religious hatred in a variety of circumstances. But it also contains a robust defence of freedom of expression on matters of religion/belief, that:

nothing in this [amendment to the Public Order Act 1986] shall be read or given effect in a way which prohibits or restricts discussion, criticism or expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, insult or abuse of particular religions or the beliefs or practices of its adherents, or of any other belief system or the beliefs or practices of their adherents, or proselytising or urging adherents of a different religion or belief system to cease practising their religion or belief system. [RRHA 2006, Schedule, S.1, 29J]

The HRA further guarantees an individual's freedom of conscience, including the right to hold, '*manifest*', '*practise or demonstrate*' religious beliefs in public or in private, and to reject or to change religious allegiances (DCA, 2006: 22).

At the same time, it has been argued that the new framework '*recognises that religious groups and faiths have rights to order their lives and communities according to their beliefs and doctrines*' (Southwark, 2004: 3), so that in this sense it may confer some group rights. In addition there are a number of explicit exemptions that permit Faith Based Organisations [FBOs] to act in a manner that would otherwise amount to discrimination on

the grounds or religion/belief, or on one or other of the protected grounds, especially gender and sexual orientation. The Equality and Human Rights Commission [EHRC] describes these exemptions as follows:

*Certain organisations which exist to practise, advance or teach a religion or belief may, under certain circumstances, restrict membership to people of that religion or belief. They can similarly restrict participation in their activities; the way they provide goods, facilities and services as part of their activities; and the use of their premises.*⁵

On the one hand, this new framework serves to *distinguish* unfair treatment by reason of religion/belief from other sources of unfair treatment, especially those arising from race or ethnicity. It thus establishes religion in a new way as a distinct focus of legal action. This will almost certainly affect the legal treatment of religious individuals who already fall within the scope of the law as members of ethnic groups (currently as Sikhs or as Jews), as well as bringing other individuals within the scope of the law for the first time in respect of this aspect of their identity.⁶ This generates a new set of opportunities and incentives regarding the assertion of religious identity, and, indeed, ‘belief identity’. It will be interesting to see, for example, whether the new framework leads more people to identify themselves more explicitly as ‘Agnostics’ or ‘Atheists’.

On the other hand, the new legislation draws religious individuals/believers and their organisations into new *relationships* with each other, with the state and with civil society, in two respects especially:

First, any particular religion or ‘*similar philosophical belief*’ (EER 2003, Part 1, 2, 1) is regarded as one among many religions or belief systems, with none given any distinctive status under the new laws. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development [CIPD] (2003: 6) notes, for example, that the European Court of Human Rights protects the Church of Scientology, the Moon sect, Druids, Vegans, the Krishna Consciousness movement, Atheists and the Divine Light of Centrum. It is not clear whether religious groups – or indeed non-religious belief groups – will feel entirely comfortable within this new dispensation. Nevertheless, in historical perspective, this represents a constitutional revolution.

Secondly, the effect of all the new legislation – and the powerful message sent out by the establishment of the EHRC as a unified body – is to treat discrimination on the basis of religion/belief as just one dimension (or strand) within a broader concern for social equality. The other strands are race and ethnicity, gender, disability, age and sexual orientation, making six strands in all. There are a number of possible tensions between these strands, which are considered at several places in this report.

1.3 The XXXX Review Brief

Our brief from the XXXX was to examine recent research in England, Scotland and Wales in relation to how issues of religion/belief affect individuals in specific areas of their lives. The overall aim of the review is to enable the XXXX to develop its future research and policy agenda on the basis of the current state of knowledge (or lack of knowledge) in the sphere of religion/belief. The review is also intended to be of use to academics, policy-makers and practitioners so that we were asked to draw out the implications of the research

⁵ FBOs can also restrict membership and services on the grounds of sexual orientation in certain circumstances.

⁶ Courts and tribunals have ruled that Muslims, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Rastafarians are not covered by the Race Relations Act 1976, or subsequent amendments (Jahangir, 2008).

evidence for a range of key stakeholders, such as central, regional and local government, employers and trade unions, service providers and the voluntary sector. These conclusions are gathered together in summary form in Section 7.2 below.

In accordance with the XXXX's integrated approach to equalities, we were asked to adopt an approach to the review that took account of the intersection and interaction between various areas of equality and inequality, such as religion and ethnicity, religion and gender, religion and education, religion and employment, etc.

A recent Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service [ACAS] report commented that:

a significant challenge for any literature review of religion or belief in the workplace is the lack of a strong research base', that shows 'patterns of discrimination relating to religion or belief in isolation from race, ethnicity and culture' (Denvir et al., 2007: 26).⁷

Our work on this review confirms this finding – which explains some of the decisions we took in conducting it, and some of the conclusions and recommendations that come out of it. The outcome of our review process nevertheless qualifies this conclusion, in that more than 11,000 references were found, of which over 700 have been selected as the most relevant for inclusion in this report. There has undoubtedly been a 'turn to religion' in the contemporary literature on equality. It is also true, however, that this volume of research arises from a large variety of different types of source, and that the coverage of research on religion/belief remains *uneven*, in relation to criteria such as geographical area, topic of interest and the religion or belief system involved (for more details, see the synopsis in Chapter 7). It is hoped that the current report will provide a useful service by drawing together a substantial amount of information about this research base within a single publication.

1.4 Methods, Scope and Limitations of the Review

Methods: the review is grounded in an extensive computer search of social science and humanities databases, conducted by a professional consultant. This initial investigation was backed by an iterative process of further search, including a thorough review of a large range of websites (details of the search process are given in Appendix 1). Advice was also sought from key informants in the academic community, religious and secular organisations and NGOs.

Geographical Coverage: as noted above, this review does not deal with the whole of the UK, but is limited to England, Scotland and Wales (we were asked to pay particular attention to Scotland and Wales). Material from Northern Ireland, other parts of the European Union, the Indian sub-continent and North America has been included occasionally, however, where we felt that this was pertinent to the review.

Time Period and Materials Covered: the review is restricted mainly to material produced from the year 2000. As with the geographical coverage of the review, we have occasionally included material published prior to this date that we consider particularly pertinent, or that is the most up-to-date available.

The focus of the review was specified as empirical research and relevant policy documentation (including interventions and their evaluation). From the outset, however, we were aware that we would not be able to restrict the review narrowly to religion/belief, but would have to refer on occasion to the literature on ethnicity. This is especially the case

⁷ The research team is grateful to Beryl Spink for this reference.

in areas where the empirical research relating explicitly to religion is thin on the ground (a challenge noted also by Purdam et al., 2007: 156). In addition, we quickly discovered that whilst there is an extensive literature on a wide range of aspects of religion/belief, the majority of this falls within theoretical, philosophical and theological frameworks. Less research has been carried out on the empirical link between belief (whether religious or secular) and inequality or discrimination, and this sometimes requires very careful interpretation (see Chapter 2). We found very little on the evaluation of policy interventions.

We therefore took two significant decisions: first, to *expand* the review parameters to include non-empirical material that dealt with theoretical and conceptual aspects of religion/belief (other than in the theological domain). Secondly, to *restrict* the initial search parameters to articles, reports and policy documents in journals and on websites, with less emphasis on books. This decision arose from the judgement that significant empirical research is most likely to be published in academic journals or other sources before it reaches the pages of a book. The discovery of books in the research process was therefore ‘journal-led’.

The main sources of research include:

- Large-scale recurrent Government surveys, especially the Census and the derived ‘Focus’ publications (ONS, 2003; 2004; 2005a; 2006e) and the biennial Citizenship Surveys 2001-2005, which became continuous after 2007 (Attwood et al., 2003; O’Beirne, 2004; Attwood et al., 2004; Green et al., 2004; Kitchen et al., 2006; DCLG, 2007d; 2008a; 2008b).
- Synoptic reviews (Beckford et al., 2006; Purdam et al., 2007).
- Reports or responses arising from specific situations, incidents or events of concern (Allen and Barrett, 1996; Macpherson, 1999; Ouseley, 2001; Cattle, 2001; Laming, 2003; CRE, 2003; 2005a; 2005b).
- The investigation into freedom of religion/belief in the UK by the UN Special Rapporteur (Jahangir, 2008).
- Guides or reviews from professional organisations or other (non-religious) interest groups – ACAS, CIPD, Child Poverty Action Group [CPAG].
- Contributions from FBOs and belief organisations, including responses to Government consultations – Archbishops’ Council [AC], Archbishop of Canterbury’s Commission on Urban Priority Areas [ACUPA], British Humanist Association [BHA], Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales [CBCEW], Christian Research, Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism [FAIR], Hizb-ut-Tahrir [HuT], International Humanist and Ethical Union [IHEU], Islamic Human Rights Commission [IHRC], Institute of Islamic Studies [IIS], Jewish Policy Research [JPR], Muslim Council of Britain [MCB], William Temple Foundation [WTF].
- Publications from think-tanks and research foundations – Institute for Public Policy Research [IPPR], Institute for Race Relations [IRR], Joseph Rowntree Foundation [JRF], Joseph Rowntree Trust [JRT], Policy Exchange, Policy Studies Institute [PSI], Runnymede Trust.
- Reports from monitoring organisations, some of which now include a European dimension – Community Safety Trust [CST], European Union Monitoring and Advocacy Program [EUMAP], European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Islamophobia [EUMC].
- Specially commissioned opinion surveys (Appendix 2), and
- Consultations with specific groups, such as Muslim women (Appendix 3).

In addition, there are a large number of publications or policy initiatives from a wide (and sometimes bewildering) range of different Government Departments – Cabinet Office [CO], Commission for Racial Equality [CRE], Department of Constitutional Affairs [DCA], Department of Communities and Local Government [DCLG], Department for Children, Schools and Families [DCSF], Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions [DETR], Department for Education and Employment [DfEE], Department for Education and Skills [DfES], Department of Health [DoH], Equal Opportunities Commission [EOC], Foreign and Commonwealth Office [FCO], Home Office [HO], Office of the Deputy Prime Minister [ODPM], Scottish Executive [SE], Scottish Government Social Research [SGSR] – or official organisations (especially within the Criminal Justice System).

Ongoing academic research includes specific programmes sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council [ESRC] and/or the Arts and Humanities Research Council [AHRC] (Appendix 5).

A significant influence on this review is that the main research was concentrated within a four to five month time period during 2008, as explained above. Although we have endeavoured to be as thorough and comprehensive as possible, it would be wise to view this report as an introduction to the area, rather than a definitive guide to it.

Coverage of Religion or Belief: our brief from the XXXX was to limit the review to Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism (the major religions in Britain as defined by numbers of self-identified adherents in the 2001 Census), and to such non-religious beliefs as Humanism. We were also asked to be alert to ‘New Religious Movements’ [NRMs].

A striking feature of the unevenness of the research coverage is the concentration on certain religions. Although the comparative returns to the initial discovery process should not be relied on unduly (because, for example, they include US sources as well as British ones), they indicate, nevertheless, the high level of research interest in Islam among the minority religions (795 references), which actually exceeded the interest in Christianity by a small margin (792 references). There is a relatively high interest in Judaism (469 references), and much less in Hinduism (92 references), Buddhism (48 references) and Sikhism (31 references) (see Appendix 1).

Whilst it is true that self-identified Muslims are the largest of the minority religious groups in Britain, there are a number of other reasons for the level of interest in Islam. These are perhaps well enough known, but they bear repetition briefly here. They include the facts that:

- In recent years, pressures for Government responses (including legislative change) have come much more from organisations claiming to speak on behalf of Muslims than from other minority faiths.
- Issues of social cohesion have arisen more in connection with Muslim individuals and causes than with other faiths, including threatened or actual violence committed in the name of religion.
- ‘Islamophobia’ is widely regarded as the principal instigator of injustice of religion or belief in this country (although this concept requires careful analysis, and the perception of injustice exceeds the actual experience of injustice, according to the evidence currently available – see Chapter 2).
- Some – but by no means all – Muslim groups are among those most affected by social and economic deprivation (see Chapter 4).

- Some situations of contemporary international conflict are commonly interpreted in terms of ‘Islam v. The West’.

We found, by contrast, very few empirical studies concerned with individuals in the ‘alternative spectrum’ of belief (as defined in Chapter 3), who probably comprise a majority of the population in Britain. A similar finding relates to ‘New Religious Movements’ or ‘Religious Movements’, both of which terms are the subject of definitional debate and, indeed, contestation.⁸ Again, the literature search yielded very few references in this category that fulfilled all the other criteria for inclusion within the review; and though some individual Churches might be regarded as Religious Movements, we have chosen to refer to them below under their specific titles. We have, however, used generic religious categories to refer to the major faith groups, whilst recognising that diversities exist *within* them and – where appropriate – noting these (see also Beckford et al., 2006: 8-9; Purdam et al., 2007: 163; Baksh et al., 2008).

Throughout the review we have concentrated on how religion/belief is related to inequality, unfair treatment and discrimination. Some reference is made to the philosophical foundation of the new legal framework of equalities and human rights and to the theological underpinnings of inequality. But neither philosophy nor theology is the main focus of the review. We have not therefore covered the arguments for or against the existence of God, which have been the focus of a lively recent debate (Dawkins, 2006; Dennett, 2006; Hitchens, 2007).

Nor have ‘Spirituality’ or ‘New Age Spiritualities’ formed part of this review, for two interrelated reasons. First, there is little suggestion from the literature that people will experience discrimination because of their individual search for spiritual development, so that our focus on religion/belief and inequality would be less relevant to this field of interest. Secondly, inclusion of the burgeoning literature on spirituality across the theoretical, policy and practice arenas (see, for instance, Heelas, 2001; 2006a and b; Furness, 2003; Gilligan and Furness, 2005; Heelas and Woodhead, 2005; Aupers and Houtman, 2006) would have tended to divert us from the more central concerns with inequality, given the time available for the review. This decision was fully understood by prominent authors in this field who were consulted during the review process.

⁸ Interest in NRMs (particularly ‘cults’) is widespread in the USA, and is of lesser degree, though long-standing, in Europe and the UK. Eileen Barker, who is Chair and Honorary Director of the Information Network Focus on Religious Movements (INFORM), has written extensively in this field from the UK (See Barker, 2001; 2004; 2006 – the latter for a clear exposition of the debate on the distinction between ‘cults’ and NRMs).

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL APPROACH OF THE REVIEW

2.1 The Dimensions of Religious Experience

Purdam et al. (2007: 153-4) have emphasised the distinctions between:

- Identity
- Belief, and
- Practice

as distinct aspects of religious experience.⁹ These three dimensions of religion or belief do not always go together, which has significant implications for the way that individuals or groups – and indeed the whole of British society – is described from the point of view of religion or belief.¹⁰

The interpretation of research findings will also depend on which aspect(s) of religion or belief are the focus of the research design, and these distinctions have legal implications too. The CIPD has asked, for example, if:

a Christian is [legally] protected if he or she has been baptised but does not attend church and whether it is *'necessary to have made a conscious decision to be an Atheist, having considered the issues [in order to establish oneself as an Atheist]* (CIPD, 2003: 6; 2).

2.2 Religion, Culture and Ethnicity

The new legal concern with 'religion or belief' has emerged from an established context of concern for racial and ethnic equality, and there is often a close connection in practice between religion on the one hand and ethnicity or culture on the other on all three dimensions:

- Identities can be 'hyphenated' by religion, ethnicity and/or race – as 'white Christian' or 'Bangladeshi Muslim'.
- Religious and cultural beliefs can be difficult to disentangle from each other, depending in part on (varying) theological interpretations.
- Practices likewise may be capable of differing interpretations, as either essential or incidental to the observance of a particular faith.

On a more pragmatic level, it is only within the last few years, partly as a by-product of the same movement of opinion that led to changes in the law, that quantitative academic research has begun to pay attention more explicitly to religion as a variable (Brown, M., 2000a; Kotler-Berkowitz, 2001; Richardson, 2001; Lindley, 2002; Peach, 2006; Khattab, 2008). These are regarded below as the 'pioneer studies' of equality and religion/belief.

⁹ They also include 'Religious Orientation' as a fourth dimension, but this is omitted here because it is not very clearly defined.

¹⁰ Note that there is a systematic ambiguity in the reference of the word 'belief' in this field. On the one hand, 'belief' is coupled with 'religion' in the expression 'religion or belief' to signify any non-religious philosophical system or personal practice; on the other hand 'belief' refers to the cognitive (propositional) dimension of all such systems of religion or belief (as distinct from the dimensions of identity and/or practice). Since the usage has become entrenched for both meanings of 'belief', no attempt has been made to find an alternative terminology for the purposes of this report. The reader should bear this potential ambiguity in mind, and it will hopefully be clear in the context below which meaning of 'belief' is intended.

The close relationship between ethnicity and religion is explored at a number of points below. An emerging theme is that expressions of religious identity can be used to advance claims that are more accurately seen as either cultural or political.

2.3 Toleration, Prejudice and Islamophobia

Differences of religion or belief tend to involve philosophical or moral world-views that are both sharply distinct from each other (in many cases mutually contradictory) and deeply felt by their adherents. This point has two immediate consequences:

First, the law is placed in the unusual position of acting to protect at least some beliefs that must be false, since it protects a large range of beliefs that cannot all be true at the same time. As most will agree, the law therefore establishes the basic right to be wrong on fundamental matters. Persons of religious faith, for example, will look on the law as protecting the false belief of the Atheist; Atheists will look on the law as protecting the false belief in God. The legal process may have to go into the theological or philosophical background to belief – in order to determine, for example, whether an exemption from the Employment Equality Regulations claimed by a religious organisation relates to a genuine occupational requirement for the post in question – but it cannot go into the veracity of the beliefs themselves (DCA, 2006: 22).

Second, the facts noted above create the first two circumstances of toleration ('Difference' and 'Importance') outlined by McKinnon (2006: 14). But the second two of McKinnon's four circumstances also hold, since adherents of religion or belief typically *'disapprove and/or dislike'* opposing practices or views ('Opposition') and enjoy the political opportunity to *'alter or suppress'* these practises or views ('Power'). The full circumstances of toleration therefore apply to differences of religion or belief.

Toleration itself is not in these circumstances a passive resignation to difference – merely putting up with beliefs or practices of which we disapprove. It assumes a more active character, as a deliberate and principled forbearance, which refuses for a variety of possible reasons to use a power that is available in an attempt to change the opposing practices or beliefs (McKinnon 2006: 15). 'Toleration' in this social and/or political sense is not to be confused therefore with 'tolerance' in the psychological sense.

As will be seen in the following chapters, contemporary Britain contains a rich variety of religion or belief (including various forms of non-belief). The circumstances of toleration are therefore realised here, and disagreements are to be expected about religion or belief. As McKinnon's discussion implies, such disagreements may harden in some cases into disapproval; disapproval into dislike; dislike into hostility and hostility into hatred.

The targets of these unfavourable attitudes and/or emotions may likewise vary in particular cases, from beliefs (or non-beliefs) to practices; and from beliefs or practices to the adherents of those beliefs or practices. A scale of discord is thus established from disagreement about beliefs at one end, to hatred of persons at the other, and religion or belief operates within a social field that is prone to controversy at the least and conflict at the extreme.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the approach taken by the British state through the new equalities legislation is not to suppress this potential contestation of religion or belief, but to provide a framework within which the contest can be regulated. This framework seeks to be even-handed in principle in its treatment of all religious faiths and non-religious belief systems, and to keep the potential conflict between them within certain bounds. As we have seen, *'discussion, criticism, or expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, insult or abuse'* of beliefs or practices (but not of persons) are explicitly exempted from the scope of legal

regulation. And it is likewise legal (or, strictly speaking, not illegal) to *'proselytis[e] or urg[e] adherents of a different religion or belief system to cease practising their religion or belief system'*.

On the other hand, the law draws the line at the range of harms listed in Chapter 1 above, which include discrimination, harassment, victimisation, terrorist violence and hate crime. The focus here is on the actions that may or may not flow from the underlying attitudes and/or emotions, rather than the attitudes or emotions themselves. This distinction needs to be borne in mind below.¹¹

A further distinction relevant to this report is that between unfavourable attitudes in general, and prejudice in particular. As its derivation suggests, a prejudice involves an element of pre-judgement, that is, an attitude adopted before the facts, or in spite of the facts. A finding of prejudice thus requires the demonstration of bias: a specific departure from neutral description or impartial judgement. In a similar vein, the influential report on Islamophobia commissioned in the 1990s by the Runnymede Trust defined 'Islamophobia' as *'unfounded hostility towards Islam'* (Conway, 1997: 4, hereafter referred to as *'The Conway Report'*). Under this definition, it is not sufficient for a finding of Islamophobia to show that there is hostility towards Islam. The hostility must in addition be 'unfounded' – that is, it must go beyond a reasoned opposition to Islam (or a reasonable emotional response to Islam) in some context of application. As its name implies, Islamophobia thus requires not just an unfavourable attitude towards the religion, but an element of phobia – irrational dread.

These distinctions may be easy enough to state in principle, but they are more difficult (and controversial) to apply in practice. As *The Conway Report* asked: *'How...can one tell the difference between legitimate criticism and disagreement on the one hand, and Islamophobia on the other?'*¹² The distinctions are nevertheless emphasised here because they have not always been respected in the literature, which makes it correspondingly difficult to orient research and policy to the appropriate issues. Two brief examples will hopefully suffice to establish this point.

As a first example, *The Conway Report* cites (with apparent approval) the statement from one submission that *'Islamophobia is a classic demonstration of the formula that "prejudice + power = discrimination"'* (1997: 18). The question, though, is how this formula is to be interpreted. It may be intended to mean that whenever religious minorities (say, Muslims in Britain) face social prejudice, and also lack social power, then there is a danger that they will suffer discrimination (or other forms of social harm or injustice) on the basis of their religion. This is a useful way of describing the conditions of toleration, and of focussing investigation onto both prejudice and discrimination.

The statement is much less helpful, however, if it is taken to imply that discrimination (or injustice more generally) is inevitable in these circumstances, and that prejudice is tantamount to discrimination (granted that religious minorities lack social power). Such a conclusion fails to honour the distinction between the attitude ('prejudice') and the action ('discrimination'), which are distinct phenomena that require independent investigation,

¹¹ The Equality Act (2006, Chapter 3, Part 1, 10c) does, however, lay a general responsibility on the EHRC to *'work towards the elimination of prejudice against, hatred of and hostility towards members of groups'*.

¹² The Conway Report (1997: 4-5) attempts to answer its own question by developing a contrast between 'open' (unprejudiced) and 'closed' (prejudiced) views of Islam. The authors find some difficulty in pinning the contrast down, however, and it would be very difficult to operationalise in any case. So the definition of 'Islamophobia' remains elusive.

and may run at different levels in any society.¹³ To treat them as the same ('=') is to say, in effect, that toleration is an impossible goal, because those who both (i) possess social power over a particular religion (or its adherents) and (ii) feel prejudice towards it (or them) will never exercise the requisite forbearance. This seems to be unwise politically, since it closes off the principal means of achieving 'good relations' between groups of religion or belief, which is one of the main objectives of the equalities legislation, and part of the remit of the EHRC (www.equalityhumanrights.com).

The second example focuses on the distinction between a prejudice and an unfavourable (or negative) attitude. It is taken from an important survey conducted for the Cabinet Office Equalities Review, and published under the title *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain* (Abrams and Houston, 2006). This is a significant study because it was the first attempt (so far as we are aware) to gain comparative information across all six of the equalities strands, and to 'establish a baseline and evidence [for the work of the EHRC] against which it will be possible to evaluate the extent and forms of prejudice experienced by and expressed towards different groups in our society in the years ahead' (Abrams and Houston, 2006: 7).

This survey is, unfortunately, not as useful for the strand of religion or belief as might be hoped. Abrams and Houston (2006: 16-17) begin by commenting on the difficulty of asking people point blank about whether they are prejudiced. They therefore opt for a survey question that reads 'In general how negative or positive do you feel about the following groups in Britain?' in relation to named groups including 'people under 30', 'disabled people' and – the only group of religion or belief about which an opinion is sought – 'Muslims'. The answers to this question, which range from 'very negative' to 'very positive' therefore involve favourable or unfavourable attitudes rather than prejudice. But the answers are considered under the heading 'Overt Prejudice', and are used elsewhere in the report to provide 'a very basic measure of direct prejudice' (Abrams and Houston, 2006: 86, 33). The effect of this procedure is to elide the distinction between a negative attitude and a prejudice, which is particularly unfortunate in an arena of essentially contested opinions such as religion or belief. With these caveats in mind, it is interesting to note that 19% of the sample expressed negative feelings about Muslims, in comparison with 22% who expressed such feelings about gays/lesbians, as against 10% for Black people and 8% for people under 30 (Abrams and Houston, 2006: 34, Figure 5).

The Global Attitudes Project on religion conducted by the Pew Research Center in Washington DC is on safer ground conceptually, because the survey questions refer to 'favourable' and 'unfavourable' opinions, and the term 'prejudice' does not occur within the study. The survey also offers a broader comparative perspective than Abrams and Houston, not only through its international coverage, but because it includes more than one religion in relation to Britain. The headline findings are that between 14% and 23% of the British respondents expressed unfavourable opinions of Muslims in the four surveys conducted between 2004 and 2008, which is consistent with the evidence from Abrams and Houston. On the other hand, large majorities (of between 63% to 71%) expressed favourable opinions about Muslims (Pew, 2008: 53: Q10g). The proportions of

¹³ The Conway Report (1997: 1) overrides this distinction by extending the definition of Islamophobia to 'refer[] to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs'. A psychological term is thereby extended to embrace a social phenomenon, which is unfortunate, given that hostility is neither necessary nor sufficient for injustice.

unfavourable opinions expressed about Christians range between 5 and 7% over the four British surveys, and about Jews range between 6% and 9%.¹⁴

These figures for attitudes towards religious groups in Britain may be compared with those for countries such as France, where unfavourable opinions of Muslims, Christians and Jews were held by 38%, 17% and 20% of the sample respectively in the 2008 survey. The equivalent figures for the United States were 23%, 3% and 7%; for China they were 55%, 55% and 55%; for Turkey 9%, 74% and 76%; for Pakistan 1%, 60% and 76%, and for India 56%, 37% and 32% respectively (Pew, 2008: 49-53, Q10e-Q10g).¹⁵

Overall then, large majorities of the British population appear to hold favourable opinions of adherents of all the Abrahamic faith groups, with only very small minorities holding unfavourable opinions of either Christians or Jews. It is a concern that a sizeable minority (of around 20%) are found to hold an unfavourable opinion of Muslims, although this proportion is considerably lower than in many other countries, including France, China and India. This level of anti-Muslim opinion in Britain is also much lower than the proportions who are found to hold unfavourable opinions of Christians and Jews in China or India, or of the same groups in countries with predominantly Muslim populations such as Turkey or Pakistan. In other words, Britain comes out of these international comparisons quite well.

More work is evidently required to understand the basis for the unfavourable opinion of Muslims among a minority of the British sample, and in particular whether (and, if so, in what ways) this involves religious prejudice. The existence of this potential reservoir of anti-Muslim feeling forms a 'background of concern', but it is important to recognise that this evidence regarding attitudes does not in itself constitute evidence of religious injustice. Generally speaking, a number of injustices of religion or belief (such as discrimination, harassment or hate crime) can be reduced either by working to lower the level of prejudice (which reduces the motivation for injustice), or by working to increase the level of toleration (which reduces the activation of prejudice). This distinction is important because these two paths to justice may require different kinds of policy initiatives, as well as different strategies for research. Our brief from the XXXX (as well as the legal framework) emphasises inequality and injustice, as opposed to prejudice *per se*, which explains the relative priorities given to these topics below.

2.4 Identities as Multiple and Contextual

We have adopted the general view that personal identity always has a number of dimensions, and that the expression of its different aspects varies according to social context. This view is a staple of the theoretical literature, which has been emphasised recently in relation to religion by Sen (2006: 19) and emerges from a number of other studies, including Burris et al. (2000); Hopkins et al. 2004); Sellick (2004); Hopkins (2006) and Modood (2007).

Ansari (2002: 32) has said that *'There is no single, clearly defined perception of British Muslim identity; on the contrary, the notion is complex, diverse and equivocal'* and Peach (2006: 354) echoes the thought that *'Identity is nested and contingent'*. Focus group research has also emphasised: *'[the] need to recognise that people have 'multiple' identities – they are never just black or female or gay or disabled, for example. Those promoting fair treatment for all and tackling discrimination need to emphasise this.'* (EOC, 2003: 9). This view is already implicit in the formation of the EHRC as a unified

¹⁴ The differences in the results of the four surveys are broadly within the error margin of 4% quoted for the British sample, which included about 750 respondents in 2008 (Pew, 2008: 43). Similar points should be borne in mind regarding any international comparisons.

¹⁵ Appendix 2 provides additional detail from both the Pew research and the Abrams and Houston report.

body, and part of the case for such a body is that it can ‘*tackle issues of multiple discrimination*’ (Southwark, 2004: 2). This view stands opposed to an ‘essentialist’ theoretical alternative, which privileges one or more dimensions of identity over others as a matter of course, regardless of social context or the character of lived experience.¹⁶

This does not mean, however, that every dimension of identity is equally in play in every social context; it merely means that their relative priorities are the subject of investigation. In particular, a number of studies suggest that the Muslim religious identity has been increasingly prioritised by adherents in recent years (Macey 1999a; Dwyer, 2000; Archer, 2001; Mirza et al., 2007). This point is pursued in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.5 The Relevance of Social Class

We were asked specifically to identify gaps in the research base, and research on religion and social class is a case in point. Very little research refers explicitly to social class (or related expressions of social difference), despite the salience of social class to many issues covered by this report. Social class has aspects of identity, belief and practice; for example, it correlates highly with many measures of inequality; it has communal attributes in some cases, and members of some social classes suffer discrimination and/or stigmatisation in society and ridicule in the mass media. Social class enters into any personal decision that depends on the availability of material resources, which is nearly every personal decision. Just as it is possible that some religious inequalities turn out on closer inspection to have ethnic causes, it may be that others have roots in social class (Edwards and Hatch, 2004). And social class might contribute to social cohesion, since class identities and interests might unite individuals across boundaries of religion, race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation.

Killeen (2008) has emphasised the general importance of social class within a human rights framework, and we would underline its relevance to all the equality strands. Attention is drawn below to a number of cases where the findings of empirical research on religion/belief are weakened by the absence of a social class dimension. There is, indeed, a case for including social class as a ‘seventh strand’ within the new equalities framework, but this argument is not developed further here.

2.6 Inequality, Disadvantage and Discrimination

In this report, ‘religious inequality’ (or ‘inequality of religion or belief’) will be used as an ethically-neutral descriptive term to denote any variation in socio-economic conditions or other circumstances between members of religious (or belief) groups.

Following Weller et al. (2001: 8), the term ‘religious disadvantage’ (or ‘disadvantage of religion or belief’) will be used to denote the position of particular groups of religion (or belief) which are treated less favourably than other groups through lack of equal recognition in official or institutional contexts, including the law. The new legal framework in itself eliminates some aspects of previous religious disadvantage, by drawing all groups of religion or belief into the same framework on *formally* equal terms. The recent repeal of the Blasphemy Law has worked in the same direction, by removing an advantage previously enjoyed by the Christian, especially Anglican, Church. It should be emphasised that formal equality is neither necessary nor sufficient for substantive equality. It is not sufficient because equal recognition of groups of religion or belief does not

¹⁶ Modood (2007) adopts the perspective of ‘multiple identities’ and argues that it is still possible to talk about cultures as social realities within this perspective. This position leaves open the policy option of multiculturalism for advocates of ‘multiple identity’.

automatically translate into equal treatment of members of those groups; and it may not be necessary because ways may be found to address religious interests informally, in the absence of formal recognition (see, for example, CRE, 2005b).

The term ‘religious discrimination’ will be used in the legal sense(s) defined above, with the distinctions ‘direct’ or ‘indirect’ as appropriate. For clarity, the term ‘discrimination’ will be confined to inequalities that are regarded as unjust. The distinction between inequality and discrimination is required because *‘not all inequality stems from discrimination, and therefore not all inequality can be addressed by legal remedy.’* (Phillips, 2007: 37)

Although the coverage of religion by quantitative work is in its early stages, the pioneer studies mentioned above create an emerging picture of the relationship between inequality and religion/belief that has a number of common elements. At the risk of some oversimplification, these are that:

- Many inequalities of social condition exist for groups defined (in whole or in part) by religious self-ascription.
- The incidence of these inequalities is often differentiated by a combination of religion, race and/or ethnicity, creating distinct ‘hyphen-groups’ with a shared situation.
- The incidence of inequality varies (a) between the hyphen-groups, and (b) between contexts for each group.
- The inequalities are probably caused by a combination of (a) factors internal to a group and/or its members (including cultural values and economic factor endowments) and (b) factors in the external social environment of the group and/or its members (including religious, racial and/or ethnic discrimination).
- The balance between these two kinds of factors (and of the three kinds of discrimination) varies among the hyphen-groups, and between contexts for each group.

2.7 Perception and Experience of Religious Discrimination

The operative distinction here is between third-party opinions about discrimination (or other harms) suffered *by others* on the basis of the others’ religion or belief, and the first-person actuality of such discrimination (or harm), as suffered by individuals themselves. These will be termed the ‘perception’ and the ‘experience’ of religious discrimination (or other harms) respectively.

The distinction between the perception and the experience of inequality and/or injustice is relevant to a number of significant studies in the field, including Conway, 1997; Weller et al., 2001; Allen and Nielson, 2002; EOC, 2003; Walls and Williams, 2003; Ameli et al., 2004; EUMC, 2004; 2006; Bruce et al., 2005; Kitchen et al., 2006; Patterson and Iannelli, 2006; Abrams and Houston, 2007 and Jahangir, 2008.

A careful analysis of the evidence from these and other sources suggests two general conclusions:

First, it is widely perceived that religious discrimination is widespread;

Second, the (self-reported) experience of religious discrimination is less frequent than it is widely perceived to be (at least for most religious groups, including Muslims, in most contexts).

These conclusions apply independently to the (differing) situations in Scotland and in England and Wales, and this point is sufficiently significant for the whole review to

warrant a brief explication here.

The main concern with religious injustice in Scotland has centred historically on (Christian) sectarianism, so that '*many Scots believe religious discrimination [directed against Catholics] to be common*' (Bruce et al., 2005: 165, and see Walls and Williams, 2003; Adams and Burke, 2006; Bradley, 2006). Yet Bruce finds that there is '*a gulf between perception and experience*' illustrated by the fact that '*98.3 per cent of Catholics in [one] Glasgow survey declined the chance to claim to have been victims of discrimination*' (Bruce et al., 2005: 165, 162). Since there is also very little inequality in socio-economic terms between Catholics and others (in all but the oldest age cohorts), Bruce and his colleagues conclude that '*such patterns as we find are entirely consistent with an explanation in which discrimination plays no part*' (Bruce et al., 2005: 166). According to this evidence, then, contemporary Scotland presents a case in which there is (i) a widespread perception of widespread (intra-Christian) discrimination, but (ii) little (self-reported) experience of it, and (iii) low levels of religious (intra-Christian) inequality in social or economic terms.

The main concern in England and Wales lies not with Christian sectarianism, but with discrimination directed against members of the minority (non-Christian) faiths, especially Muslims (Weller, 2006: 309). One of the most influential recent studies of the question was entitled *Religious Discrimination in England and Wales* (Weller et al., 2001) (hereafter '*The Weller Report*'). The brief given to Weller and his colleagues by the Home Office was '*to assess the evidence of religious discrimination in England and Wales, both actual and perceived.*' (Weller et al., 2001: vi)

The principal research instrument chosen for the study was a survey question addressed to representatives of a wide range of religious organisations, as follows: '*do your members experience unfair treatment because of their religion in any of the following areas?*' (Weller et al., 2001: 136, Annex A). As the researchers comment, '*the representative from each organisation who completed the questionnaire was set the difficult task of trying to reflect the collective experience of his or her membership*'. (Weller et al., 2001: 5) This survey was backed by interviews with a very small sample of individuals (N=29) '*who claim to have experienced discrimination on the basis of religion*' (Weller et al., 2001: 161).

It follows that the evidence provided by *The Weller Report* is nearly all concerned with the third-party perception rather than the first-person experience of religious discrimination – 'perceived' rather than 'actual' discrimination, according to the terms set out in the Home Office brief to the Weller research team. And the element of the research design which comes closest to the first-person experience of discrimination (the 'biographical' interview process) involves a self-selected (non-random) sample, which cannot provide any independent evidence of the general social extent of discrimination. *The Weller Report* is nevertheless cited prominently in recent surveys as contributing significant evidence for the incidence of religious discrimination as it is actually experienced in England and Wales (see, for example, Purdam, et al., 2007: 148, 160; Denvir, et al., 2007).¹⁷

The main finding of *The Weller Report* is that religious discrimination is widely perceived by (representatives of) minority religious organisations to be a widespread problem affecting their members. A majority of Muslim organisations reported very frequent unfair

¹⁷ Denvir et al. (2007) in an ACAS review article that described *The Weller Report* as '*the main study documenting religion or belief discrimination in the workplace, and wider society*' and as '*a comprehensive and detailed empirical study of the **experience** of discrimination on grounds of religion or belief*'. (26-27, emphasis added)

treatment across every institutional domain, with Hindu and Sikh organisations reporting relatively high levels of unfair treatment. (Weller et al., 2001: vii-viii)

High levels of perceived unfairness were also found by the 2005 Citizenship Survey, which is the most recent large-scale enquiry into the current issue conducted with a general population sample (N>9,600). Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) believed that there was a considerable amount of religious prejudice, and a remarkable 93% named Muslims (without prompting) as a group against whom prejudice had recently increased. (Kitchen et al., 2006: 48-53, Tables 17-26).

The 2005 Citizenship Survey also asked, however, about respondents' first-person experience of religious discrimination, which allows perceptions and experience to be compared directly for the same large (and carefully-constructed) random sample. The main findings are that just 2% of respondents reported that they had been discriminated against because of their religion by any organisation, rising to 7% for Hindu respondents, 12% for Sikhs and 13% for Muslims. (Kitchen et al., 2006: 59, Table 34). A separate set of questions regarding the experience of discrimination in employment found that just 1% of the white respondents with adverse employment experiences specified religion as a reason for refusal of a job, and 2% specified religion as a reason for unfair treatment regarding promotion. The corresponding figures for black respondents were 2% and 4%, and for Asian respondents 10% and 16% respectively (Kitchen et al., 2006: 30, Figures 22 and 23).¹⁸

If the employment experience is analysed by the respondent's religion (as opposed to the respondent's ethnicity) a distinctive pattern emerges in which 26% of Muslims cite religion as a reason in relation to job refusal, and no less than 44% in relation to promotion – considerably higher than the comparable figures of 10% and 16% for the 'Asian' respondents. This compares with figures of 1% in both cases for Christians; 1% and 7% for Hindus, and 8% and 7% for Sikhs (Kitchen et al., 2006: 84, Tables 49-50). These figures relate, however, to a sub-sample containing the small minority of the population who report adverse employment experiences. The actual number of Muslim respondents who reported adverse treatment in employment by reason of religion can be calculated as just over 2.5% – that is just over one in forty – of the Muslim respondents in the relevant samples in each case. Thus the figures support the view that (self-reported) adverse treatment in employment is relatively rare for members of all religious groups, with the proviso that amongst the relatively small number of such cases, a relatively high proportion of Muslims believe that religion or belief is a reason for their adverse treatment.

Three other studies have recorded higher levels of self-reported discrimination against Muslims, but there are questions in all three cases about whether they provide a reliable indicator of the general level of discrimination against Muslims in society.

In the first case, it seems that the sample may not be random (Ameli, 2004: 42). In the second case, the results are obtained from non-random '*snowball sampling*' and the authors themselves volunteer that '*it is not possible to generalise the results of this research*' (Jayaweera and Choudhury, 2008: 15). The relevant sample size is also small

¹⁸ The aggregate figure for the whole sample is that just 2% of those with adverse employment experiences cited religion as a factor in the experience – the same figure for both refusal of a job and refusal of promotion. By comparison, the figures for job refusal on the grounds of age is 23%, race and/or colour is 10% and gender is 3%. The corresponding figures for refusal of promotion are age 27%, race and/or colour 19% and gender 22%. (Kitchen et al., 2006: 82, Table 46). In summary, religion is consistently the weakest of the specific social factors identified by this research regarding adverse employment experiences.

(N=155). A third case involves the report by Abrams and Houston (2006) discussed above in relation to prejudice. They asked respondents about their recent personal experiences of *either prejudice or unfair treatment*. 59% of the Muslim respondents reported such experiences, but this figure referred to all the possible bases of prejudice or unfair treatment, not just religion. The most frequent basis of prejudice or unfair treatment was ethnicity (56%), followed by religion (46%), gender (37%) and age (35%) (Abrams and Houston, 2006: 37, Figure 7; 42, Figure 11). The size of the Muslim sub-sample was also small (N=128), with a 95% confidence interval for the cited percentages of up to +/-10% (Abrams and Houston, 23; 21, n.3).

The figure for the experience of self-reported prejudice or unfair treatment against Muslims on grounds of religion thus lies in a large range between 36% to 56%, but it is not known how much of this is attributable to unfair treatment as opposed to prejudice, and unfair treatment does not necessarily involve discrimination in any case.¹⁹ There are also some grounds for doubting the approach that respondents took to the very general question – referring both to prejudice and unfair treatment – used by Abrams and Houston.²⁰ By contrast, the 2005 Citizenship survey used a much larger sample size, and asked specifically about discrimination in ways that directed respondents towards specific social contexts, such as employment, health care or criminal justice.

In terms of other studies, Marsh (2002: 4) found a very low total of less than 2% self-reported religious discrimination in a Europe-wide sample. And the most recent Citizenship Survey (which took place from April 2007 to March 2008) is much less useful for this report than its 2005 predecessor, since it does not deal with religious discrimination as a separate issue, asking instead *'whether racial or religious harassment is a problem in your local area'*, and does not report results separately for religious (as opposed to ethnic) groups (DCLG, 2008b: 16-17).

The two general conclusions reported above in relation to England and Wales thus rely on a combination of i) the evidence contained in both *The Weller Report* and the 2005 Citizenship Survey regarding the high levels of *perceived* unfairness (including discrimination) against religious minorities, ii) the evidence contained in the 2005 Citizenship Survey for the lower levels of discrimination *experienced* by these minorities, and iii) the absence of counter evidence on the experience of discrimination that asks the relevant questions in random samples of an adequate size. This is why the reported conclusions are offered as the most appropriate summary judgement on the basis of the evidence currently available.

In terms of the existence of Bruce et al.'s *'gulf between perception and experience'*, the situation with minority religions in England and Wales thus resembles the situation found with Christian sectarianism in Scotland. But the two cases differ in other respects, and the overall situation in England and Wales is characterised by (i) a widespread perception of widespread discrimination against religious minorities, especially Muslims, with (ii) less (self-reported) experience of it, accompanied by (iii) considerable evidence of religious inequality in social or economic terms (see Section 2.6 above).

¹⁹ Note that although Abrams and Houston (2006: 86) ask the question in terms of unfair treatment, they discuss the results of the survey in terms of 'discrimination', as if there is no difference between the two concepts. This difficulty is similar to that created by their interpretation of the results of a question about negative feelings in terms of 'prejudice', as noted above.

²⁰ For example, 9% of heterosexuals reported personal experience of prejudice or unfair treatment on the basis of their sexuality, and no less than 11% of non-disabled respondents reported such adverse experiences on the basis of their disability (which they do not possess). (Abrams and Houston, 2006: 40, Figure 9; 44, Figure 13).

It should be emphasised, however, that all these findings rely on respondents' self-reports to provide evidence for the experience of religious discrimination. This evidence is certainly 'closer to the action' than the evidence from third-party perceptions, but it is not by itself conclusive. On the one hand, self-reports may *underestimate* the extent of discrimination, because respondents may not be aware of the actions that affect them, or because the social climate discourages disclosure (Ameli, 2004: 23). On the other hand, self-reports may *overestimate* the extent of discrimination, because respondents mistake their own experiences as examples of discrimination, or the grounds on which it occurs – believing, for example, that the unfair treatment arises from religious discrimination, rather than from ethnic or racial discrimination. There is also the problem of whether respondents share the investigators' (or the legal) understanding of terms such as 'unfair treatment' or 'discrimination', since *'in [some] contexts, religious individuals can come close to claiming that others are discriminating against them because they do not happen to share the same values'*. (Weller et al., 2001: 116).²¹

It has been claimed in the past that *'clear proof of any form of discrimination is often hard to obtain since admissions by the perpetrators are rare'* (Conway et al., 1997: 58), and it is certainly true that *'proof of religious discrimination is difficult to establish in the absence of hard statistics'* (Brown, 2000b: 1037). But these verdicts should not be taken as a counsel of despair, since evidence amounting to 'clear proof' and/or 'hard statistics' can come from two sources especially:

First is the evidence from case law. This will evolve as the new legal framework takes effect, but some early indications are available from the ACAS analysis of claims brought under the legislation on religion or belief, which include cases of harassment, bullying and violence (Savage, 2007). The analysis of specific legal cases was beyond the remit given to the authors by the XXXX, but it is interesting to note that two-thirds of these claims cited race as a secondary jurisdiction to religion or belief.

Second, the evidence can come from discrimination testing, using actor techniques, for example. It was the use of such techniques that provided compelling evidence for the incidence of racial discrimination in Britain in the 1970s, by catching the perpetrators in the act (Smith, 1977: 124). These techniques have not been adapted to the case of religious discrimination in recent academic work, so far as we can establish – our search process has revealed just one report of such an exercise conducted in Britain, on behalf of *BBC Radio Five Live* with about fifty employers (EUMC, 2006: 44).²²

Our preference for hard evidence – 'reality' – does not imply that we treat the creation, collection and analysis of statistics as unproblematic. Statistical evidence is only valid if the correct questions are addressed appropriately to representative samples of adequate size, and interpreted correctly in the light of all the technical assumption involved. Nor should it be assumed that we dismiss the importance of 'perceptions'. Quite the reverse, for people's perceptions create/define reality for them and thus influence their attitudes and actions. Our concern here is with those instances where a distance is established between perceptions and reality, generating the impression of widespread discrimination against Catholics in Scotland, for example, or of discrimination against the members of minority religions in England and Wales. These misleading impressions can gain their own facticity

²¹ See also Jayaweera and Choudhury (2008) on this topic and on the relationship between religious and ethnic or racial discrimination.

²² The National Employment Panel has recently advocated a similar approach to the measurement of racial and ethnic discrimination, using the testing methodology of the International Labour Organisation (Pell, 2007: 22; ILO, 2004). We are grateful to Sukhvinder Singh for this reference.

by continuous repetition, so that ‘what everybody knows’ becomes a self-sustaining fallacy.

It is worth drawing out two interim conclusions of this analysis for stakeholders.

First, the emergence of hyphen-groups as the most appropriate focus of academic analysis reinforces the decision to treat religion, race and ethnicity within a single legal and organisational framework. Instances of discrimination are unlikely to be pure examples involving just one of these three factors – a point reinforced by the ACAS tabulation of cases mentioned above.

Second, there is only one component in the inequality experienced by religious groups that is caused by discrimination, and there is only one component of such discrimination that is religious discrimination. It follows that the best way to improve the situation of members of minority religious groups may be to focus on aspects of their situation other than religious discrimination, including discrimination by ethnicity or race (or on other protected grounds), and aspects of their situation that may not involve these kinds of unfair treatment in any way, such as poverty or educational attainment. That seems to be part of the lesson that can be learned in England and Wales from the history of religious sectarianism in Scotland – where improvements in educational attainment appear to have paved the way towards social equality (Paterson and Iannelli, 2006) – as well as the current findings of research (see especially Phillips, 2007; Clark and Drinkwater, 2008). These points will be amplified in the chapters below.

2.8 Philosophical and Normative Issues

a. The Individual and the Community

One of the main issues in the debate about ethnicity, religion and the state is the question of whether the rights of social groups should be recognised as well as the rights of individuals, and, if so, what the relationship should be between these two sets of rights (Kymlicka, 1995; Barry, 2001; Kelly, 2002).

The resolution of this issue will affect the character of the recognition that is given by the state to collective entities such as communities or religious organisations. This will reflect, in turn, on the nature or extent of the control which the community or organisation can exert over its own members. A key issue is whether the rights of the collective can ever over-ride (what would otherwise be) the rights of the individual. One factor to note here is that the relationship between the individual and the community may be seen in different ways in Western traditions, on the one hand, and in some African and South Asian traditions, on the other. Ballard (1994) has observed, for example, that: ‘*The ghar [family/household] is an institution governed by ideals of corporate loyalty which assert priority for family obligation over the personal self*’. (cited in Bhatti, 2007: 25)

The issues raised by these differences in perspective cannot be resolved here, except to note the following points:

Individuals who come together in a group bring with them all the rights they enjoy as individuals. Article 9.1 of the ECHR holds, for example, that freedom of conscience allows for the manifestation of religious life ‘*either alone or in community with others*’ (DCA, 2006: 43). These pooled rights create a very substantial scope for the operations of religious organisations, and of religiously based community, which is perfectly compatible with liberal individualism. And the idea of freedom of conscience, is in any case, a hard-won historical achievement of Western liberalism: ‘*this [liberal] model of citizenship was developed in response to the wars of religion that made much of Europe a living hell in the*

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' (Barry, 2001: 21).

Ansari (2002: 23) has commented on the way that Muslims in particular have been able to use the common law principle that *'everything is permitted except what is expressly forbidden'* (Poulter, 1992: 266) to develop Islamic practices within the UK context. Ramadan (2004: 77) has developed the concept of *dar al-shahada* ('area of testimony') to characterise the situation of Muslims in North America and Europe, where *'fundamental rights are guaranteed that allow [Muslims] to feel at home'* (2004: 70). Lewis places this development in a longer historical perspective, suggesting that:

In most tests of tolerance, Islam, both in theory and in practice, compares unfavourably with the Western democracies as they have developed during the last two or three centuries, but very favourably with most other Christian and post-Christian societies and regimes. (2004: 127)

And more recently, Jahangir has observed that:

almost all of the [UN] Special Rapporteur's interlocutors agreed that there was a very satisfactory amount of freedom of religion or belief in the United Kingdom. Many of them added that the situation of their respective communities was far better than in those countries where they had emigrated from. (2008: 8)

We are not seeking to deny that there may be value-based differences between religious or cultural traditions and secular moral or legal frameworks – the legal exemptions discussed in the next section offer a good example. The point is rather that it may be misleading to couch these differences in terms of a straightforward contrast between the rights of individuals and the rights of collectivities. The appropriate questions will always be:

- Which individual rights are subject to infringement?
- In what circumstances and in which respects?, and,
- In the name of which alternative religious, moral or legal principles?

b. Visions of Justice and Concepts of Equality

A number of authors have noted that a 'vision of justice' underlies (or should underlie) the recent development of equalities legislation (Fredman, 2002a and b; Bamforth, 2004), and Choudhury (2007: 100) speaks of *'a vision of religious equality'* in a similar context.

Recent candidates for the contents of this vision include *'a culture of fairness, participation and mutual respect'* from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales [CBCEW], 2007: 2). The Equalities Review concludes that *'an equal society:*

- *Protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish.*
- *Recognises people's different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be'* (Phillips, 2007: 14).

Fredman (2002b: iv) has argued that *'equality ought to encompass four central aims:*

- *To break the cycle of disadvantage associated with out-groups.*
- *To promote respect for the equal dignity and worth of all, redressing stigma, stereotyping, humiliation and violence because of membership of an out-group.*
- *To affirm community identities.*
- *To facilitate full participation in society'.*

There are, in addition, a number of discussions about whether the existing legal provisions go far enough: should the focus be changed from the protection of individuals against specific harms, in favour of an institutional commitment to promote substantive equality?

(Baker et al., 2004; Fredman, 2005; Choudhury, 2007). Questions of positive discrimination (which remains illegal in the UK) and affirmative action arise in this context, and the public sector Equality Duties mentioned above are related to this developing conception.

Once again the full evaluation of all these issues lies beyond the remit of this review, but two specific points are noteworthy:

First, there is a general need for further inquiry into the normative foundations of the current Government approach to equality. This includes the debate about the different concepts of equality (Jewson and Mason, 1986; Fredman, 2002a and b; Clayton and Williams, 2002; Baker et. al, 2004) and the balance of equality with diversity, which figures in all three conceptions cited above. Bamforth (2004: 710) also raises the point that the understandable concern with equality may arise from deeper values such as *'the recognition that the well-being of all human beings counts'* (Raz, 1986: 218, n.75, cited by Bamforth, 2004: 713; Westen, 1982).

Second, it is necessary to recognise frankly that the inclusion of religion or belief within a unified equalities framework is not without its tensions, precisely because of the 'circumstances of toleration' outlined above. The diversity of values and opinions may occur *between the practices and values of the religious traditions on the one hand and the normative foundations of the new laws on the other, including the vision of justice that they promote.*

Fredman has said, for example, that:

an individual's religious values cannot be overridden by a mere assertion of dominant values. However, religion cannot in itself be used to justify an infringement on the equal rights and dignity of others, in particular, in respect of women, children or gay, lesbian or bisexual people. (2002b: iv)

This suggests that the writ of the law runs wide.

As noted in Chapter 1, religious groups have, however, gained wide-ranging exemptions from the law in certain areas, which shield their activities from the full and/or immediate effects of equalities legislation. The terms in which the (Anglican) Archbishop's Council (AC, 2003) and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW, 2007) have sometimes conducted the argument implies a refusal moreover to accept that full *'equal rights and dignity'* apply to gays and lesbians in particular, and contains also (in the Anglican case) a wide-ranging claim for the non-interference by the state in the activities of *'Churches and other faith based organisations'* (see Crockett and Voas, 2003, and Hicks, 2003, for a fuller discussion of the issues relating to sexual orientation).

This outcome means that an area of society has been established that lies beyond the writ of the new legislation. It is not yet clear how far the exemptions will go, because this will depend on the evolution of case law, but the reserved area could be quite extensive, especially as (or if) the practice of subcontracting public services to FBOs develops (BHA, 2007). Although the UN Special Rapporteur concluded that the UK's anti-discrimination legislation *'seems to be quite balanced'* (Jahangir, 2008: 17), it remains a matter of some concern that prominent organisations in the field of religion or belief enter reservations about the vision of justice that underlies the new framework, and make efforts to exempt themselves from the claims of the law as it now applies to the rest of society.²³

²³ The Archbishops' Council does not *'challenge [] the principle that homosexuals should have full equality and protection before the law'*. (AC, 2003: 4) The argument seems to be that the legal protections are acceptable as long as they are not applied to the activities of religious organisations.

These circumstances underline the need to remain alert to two kinds of unfair treatment in the field of religion or belief:

- Discrimination or other harms suffered generally by individuals in the workplace, civil society and/or the public services on the basis of the sufferer's religion or belief.
- Discrimination or other harms suffered by individuals *at the hands of religious organisations or religiously motivated individuals*, either on the basis of the sufferer's religion or belief or on other protected grounds.²⁴

This dual perspective will be adopted throughout this report.

²⁴ Although the immediate concerns in this area relate to gender and sexual orientation, age is likely to become relevant as well, in relation to children and young people's rights to freedom of religion or belief, for example.

CHAPTER 3

BRITAIN'S LANDSCAPE OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

3.1 Religious Institutions as Welfare Providers

Historically, religious institutions played a central role in the direct provision of education, health and social welfare in Britain. This lessened over time, as the state assumed responsibility for these areas, but well into the twentieth century, the Anglican and Nonconformist churches continued to provide important welfare support at times of economic crisis. And in the present day, FBOs make a considerable contribution to the routine provision of a wide range of social welfare programmes and projects, as discussed below. Additionally, there is little doubt that the development of public social policy in Britain was significantly influenced by Christian social thought (Farnell et al., 1994), so that religion continued to play a role – albeit less overtly – in an apparently secular context.

3.2 Britain: Secular or Religious?

In the sociological literature, secularisation is linked to Enlightenment thinking and the process of modernisation. Secularisation is defined as a long-term process by which religious thinking, practice and institutions lose their significance, so that religion '*ceases to be significant in the working of the social system*' (Wilson, 1982: 150). Secularisation in the West is seen to be highly advanced and to operate at the socio-structural, cultural and individual levels (Berger, 1967). The view of Britain as a secular society is supported by reference to statistics on church attendance, which shows a steep, progressive decline (Brierley, 2000; 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2008; ONS, 2003; Bruce, 2002; Bruce, 2006; Voas and Bruce, 2006; Crockett and Voas, 2006), and the diminishing role of religion in law-making, education, culture, welfare service provision, and – perhaps – individual consciousness. One of the reports from the organisation 'Christian Research' on decreasing attendances is dramatically entitled *Pulling Out of the Nosedive* (Brierley, 2006a). The research shows that attendance declines with each successive age cohort and does not seem to be a response to the allegedly distinctive experience of WWII or the 1960s. There is some evidence of decline by generation among immigrant families of both Christian and non-Christian religion (Coleman et al., 2004; Crockett and Voas, 2006).

However, the view of Britain as a secular society is open to challenge on a number of fronts.

First, England has an established church which retains some influence over the legal system via its twenty-six seats in the House of Lords (The Lords Spiritual), and its general social presence.²⁵ Crockett and Voas suggest that organised religion '*acts as a brake on innovation, even if it cannot stand in the way of the new indefinitely*'. (2003: 1.2) Thus the Anglican presence in the House of Lords may have significant implications for human rights in such areas as gender and sexuality, or assisted dying. This influence is apparent in the progress of the legislation on religion/belief through Government and Parliament (see Chapter 1.2 above). The ruling monarch is also the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, which means that no heir to the throne can be a Catholic or married to a Catholic.

²⁵ In Scotland the (Presbyterian) Church of Scotland is the national church, whilst the Church in Wales, which is a member of the Anglican Communion, is disestablished.

These and related constitutional provisions give Anglicanism an ongoing religious advantage over all other religions and belief systems (in the terms defined in Chapter 2).²⁶

Second, the faith sector continues to make a huge contribution to welfare provision across all areas, including community development, health and social care, post-compulsory education, criminal justice, asylum and refugee services, welfare-to-work, job creation, the rural economy and the arts and cultural economy. In fact, the Church of England is the largest voluntary organisation in the UK. (Yorkshire Churches, 2002; Furbey et al., 2006; Annette and Creasy, 2007; Grieve et al., 2007; Jochum et al., 2007; Smith and Lowndes, 2007; Church of England, 2008; Davis, 2008).

Third, the secularisation thesis in its basic form fails to take account of the distinct dimensions of identifying with, believing in, and practising religion. There is little doubt, for instance, that the Anglican Church's high level of service provision and the widespread involvement of millions of volunteers in this is motivated and sustained by what CULF (2007) and Davis (2008) describe as spiritual capital.

Finally – and perhaps most importantly – the definition of Britain as a secular society fails to take account of the changing demography of Britain (and wider Europe) brought about by migration, particularly that from non-European countries (Allen and Macey, 1994) and that involving non-Christian religions.

The provision for the first time of questions on religion/belief in the Census of Scotland and the Census of England and Wales in 2001 (which were different in the two cases) took place after considerable debate (Southworth, 1998; Weller and Andrews, 1998; Aspinall, 2000; MCB, 2003; Weller, 2004). The Census data has transformed the quantity of information available about the social dimensions of religion in general (Beckford et al., 2006; Purdam et al., 2007), including the secularisation thesis, and in relation to specific fields such as housing (Sellick, 2004), areas of the country (Peach, 2006) and religious groups (Graham et al., 2007; Hussain, 2004).²⁷

Table 3.1 presents the distribution of self-identification by religion/belief in the UK from the 2001 Census, and Figure 3.1 adds detail on the Christian population for Scotland.

²⁶ Prime Minister Gordon Brown has announced a consultation over the issue of succession to the throne, although not on other aspects of Anglican constitutional advantage (www.guardian.co.uk, 27 March 2009). This initiative is in line with the general trend of recent equalities legislation.

²⁷ The fact that the Census treatment of religion (and ethnicity) varied between the England and Wales enquiry and the Scottish enquiry (which both differed from the N. Ireland enquiry) should be borne in mind when aggregate figures on religion and/or ethnicity are presented for either Great Britain or the UK. More detailed overviews of the Census data are available from the National Statistics website (www.statistics.gov.uk), and from the 'Focus' series of publications (ONS, 2004; 2005a; 2006e).

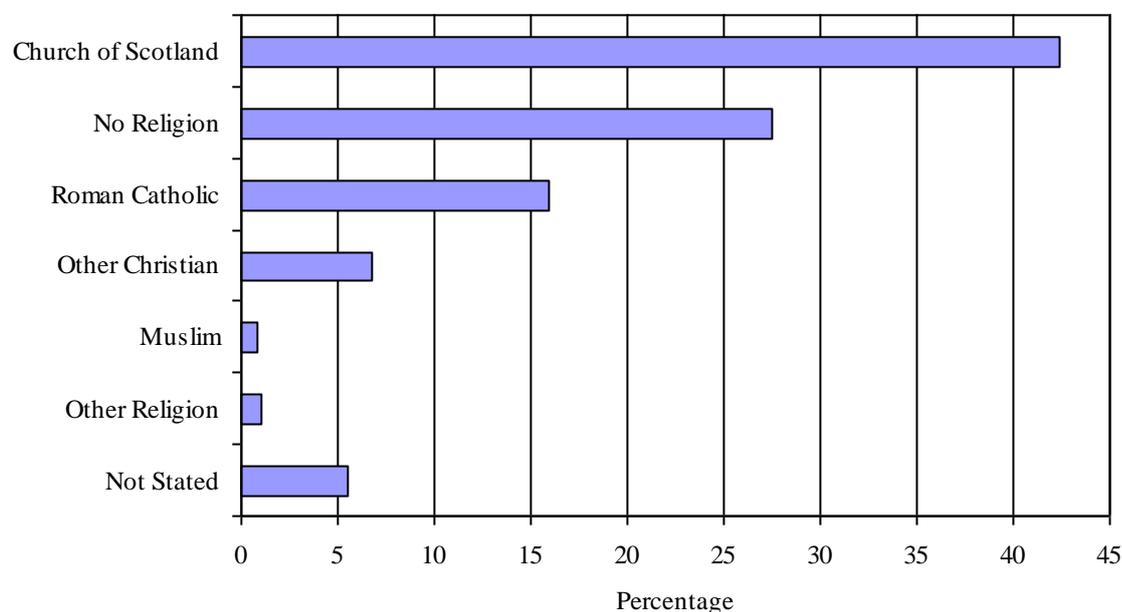
**Table 3.1 UK Population by Self-identified Religion or Belief
Census 2001.** Weller (2004: 4, Table 1)

Religion or Belief	<i>England</i>	<i>Scotland</i>	<i>Wales</i>	<i>N.Ireland</i>	UK Total	UK %
Christian	35,251,244	3,294,545	2,087,242	1,446,386	42,079,417	71.6
No Religion	7,171,332	1,394,460	537,935	*	9,103,727	15.5
Muslim	1,524,887	42,557	21,739	1,943	1,591,126	2.7
Hindu	546,982	5,564	5,439	825	558,810	1.0
Sikh	327,343	6,572	2,015	219	336,149	0.6
Jewish	257,671	6,448	2,256	365	266,740	0.5
Buddhist	139,046	6,830	5,407	533	151,816	0.3
Other Religion	143,811	26,974	6,909	1,143	178,837	0.3
Total Rel. or Belief	45,362,316	4,783,950	2,668,942	1,451,414	54,266,622	92.3
Not Stated*	3,776,515	278,061	234,143	233,853	4,522,572	7.7
Total	49,138,831	5,062,011	2,903,085	1,685,267	58,789,194	100.0

*'Not Stated' includes 'No religion' in N. Ireland

Christians form the largest category in every case, followed by 'No Religion', Muslims and Hindus, with smaller numbers of Sikhs, Jews and Buddhists. In Scotland, a similar pattern applies, with those of 'No Religion' outnumbering the Catholic population by some margin, but also showing considerably smaller numbers than those attached to the largest Christian denomination, the Church of Scotland.²⁸

Figure 3.1 Scottish Population by Self-identified Religion or Belief. Census 2001. SE, 2005.



²⁸ The equivalent information was not sought in England and Wales. The estimated Catholic population for England and Wales was 4,136,284 in 2001, which can, however, be added to the Census return for Scotland to yield an estimate for Great Britain of just over 4,940,000 (Catholic Church, 2003; McAspurren, 2005).

**Table 3.2 Followers of ‘Other Religions’ by Self-identified Religion.
England and Wales. Census 2001. ONS, 2004.**

Other Religions	<i>Number</i>
Spiritualists	32,000
Pagans	31,000
Jain	15,000
Wicca	7,000
Rastafarian	5,000
Bahá’í	5,000
Zoroastrian	4,000
Other	52,000
Total	151,000

Table 3.2 displays for interest the most frequent followings of ‘other religions’ in England and Wales.

The fact that 71.6% of the UK population defined themselves as ‘Christian’, and 76.8% identified themselves with one or other of the main religious traditions lends credence to Davie’s work (1994; 2001; 2002; 2004), which suggests that the secularisation thesis is over-stated, since it is perfectly possible to believe in God without being attached to an organised religion (‘believing without belonging’ or ‘praying alone’).

The issue is, nevertheless, a difficult one to assess on the information currently available. It has been suggested that the answer schedule supplied for the Census question in England and Wales (‘What is your religion?’) encouraged a ‘Christian’ response as a statement of a national (or ethnic) identity rather than a religious identity (Voas and Bruce, 2004: 28), or as a statement about religious upbringing rather than current allegiance (SE, 2005: fn. 2).²⁹ Indeed, it is noteworthy that the Census figure for England and Wales is much higher than that from the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey of the same year, which yielded a 54% ‘Christian’ response to the (somewhat different) question ‘*Do you regard yourself as belonging to a particular religion?*’ (Voas and Bruce, 2004: 24; ONS, 2006e: 4). Davie poses the key questions: ‘*What did the 72% who declared themselves to be Christian really mean []. Did they mean they were not secular? Or did they mean they were not Muslim (or indeed any other world faith)?*’ (2004: 58).

A good deal hangs on the answer to these questions, in terms of characterising Britain by religion, because small differences of interpretation can easily shift millions of individuals from the ‘religious’ to the ‘non-religious’ sides of the categorisation. If Christian engagement is measured for example by the returns from the latest (2005) English Church Census – which found 6.3% of the population in church on May 8, 2005 (Brierley, 2006a: 12) – then religion becomes an interest of a very small minority, with under 11% of the total population – that is, less than one-in-eight – probably involved.³⁰ If the (UK National) Census of 2001 is taken at face value, then the figure for the religious population is over three-quarters, as we have seen. Under the first interpretation, it would be difficult to

²⁹ The Scottish Census asked two questions: ‘What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?’ and ‘What religion, religious denomination or body were you brought up in?’ The N. Ireland Census used the same two questions, but began with a third: ‘Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion?’ (ONS, 2006e: 17).

³⁰ This figure comes from adding an estimate of 4% of the population practising non-Christian faiths to the Church Census total. This estimate derives from the conservative assumption (in terms of maximising religious allegiance) that 80% of those who identify with minority religions are practising members of their faiths. (See Kitchen et al., 2006: 49, Table 19).

describe Britain as either ‘a religious country’ or ‘a Christian country’; under the second it would not.

Yet another answer – intermediate between these two figures – can be derived from the 2005 Citizenship Survey which found that 79% of Muslims were ‘actively practising’, compared with 73% of Hindus, 74% of Sikhs, 54% of ‘Other Religions’ and just 38% of Christians (Kitchen, et al., 2006: 49, Table 19). On this basis, it can be estimated that just over a third of the population (34%) practises one of the major faiths, mostly Christian (29%).

This huge range in the estimates of the religious population – amounting to a factor of ten in the case of the Christian population of England – creates a corresponding uncertainty about the most basic feature of the landscape of religion or belief in Britain. This is perhaps the most striking of all the evidence gaps revealed by the current research project. The main difficulty with any of these estimates is the lack of precision (and lack of consensus among observers) about what it means to practise, or indeed to believe in, particular faiths. It has been noted in one official source that *‘the approach adopted for the 2001 Census was a deliberate decision to use a measure [for religion] based on identity rather than practice’* (ONS, 2006e: 2). But this decision left out of account everything that seems distinctive about religious allegiances, which are not just a matter of identity, but imply a commitment to certain propositions that serve to define a faith, to ritual observances, and to broader ways of life, typically including more or less detailed precepts of conduct. It is also true that these aspects of religious experience all vary by religion, and by branch of religion; that they are all subject in practice to interpretation over historical time, and are not infrequently subject to contestation, both from within and without each tradition. The difficulties these observations create for the statistical characterisation of religion or belief are captured nicely by a response from a western Buddhist cited in Weller (2004: 10): *‘To the question “Are you a Buddhist?” all less than Buddha must say ‘to some extent yes, to some extent no’.*

If the basic enumeration of the religious population is thus fraught with difficulties – which perhaps do not exist in the same way for the basic data relating to some other equality strands such as age or gender – it seems important, nevertheless, to attempt an estimate that narrows the range of uncertainty created by the differences between the two major sources in the field – the national Census of 2001 and the English Church Census of 2005.

First, the issue evidently turns on the findings for Christian practice and belief, given the numerical predominance of Christians according to the Census return (and the findings for England, given the numerical share of the English population within Britain).

Second, the Church Census figure of 6.5% underestimates Christian churchgoing in England, since it excludes those who happened to be absent on the appointed Sunday. Brierley (2005: 2.2) gives a figure of 8% for ‘regular churchgoers’ in 2000, representing a decline of over a quarter from the 1980 figure of 11%. The 2005 Church Census also recorded a figure of 8% for those attending church at least quarterly. This rises sharply, however, to 14.5% of the English population who attend church at least once a year – a rise caused mainly by those who attend just at Christmas (Brierley, 2006a: 151). If church attendance is made the litmus test of Christian practice, there is thus still a considerable range in the estimated proportion of practising Christians, between 8% and 14.5% of the

population, depending on the threshold chosen for ‘minimal Christian practice’: should this involve attendance at least four times a year or at least once a year? ³¹

These estimates leave a proportion of somewhere between 40% and 64% of the entire population who are ‘nominal’ or ‘notional’ Christians who rarely attend church, to use Brierley’s terms (2005: 2.2), depending on whether the BSA estimate or the UK Census return is chosen as more appropriate for the ‘Christian’ total. Davie (2004: 54) has suggested that ‘most British people (and indeed most Northern Europeans)’ are believers but not belongers, who ‘retain some sort of belief in God (or a life force), but rarely attend a place of worship’. This claim may be slightly overstated, but it is consistent with the range of uncertainty created by the major sources.

Third, the resolution of the general issue of secularisation depends on how the ‘nominal and notional Christians’ are characterised. This group can be subdivided into three distinct subgroups. First are the genuine ‘believers but not belongers’ who retain a faith in a recognisably Christian personal God. The second subgroup are spiritual believers (in, for example, Davie’s ‘life force’). In terms of the distinction between these two subgroups, there must come a point at which the attenuation of conventional religious belief moves the believer out of the sphere of organised religion (as properly understood) and into another, non-religious (yet ‘spiritual’) dimension of experience. The third subgroup is composed of ‘ethnic’ Christian identifiers who are neither ‘religious’ nor ‘spiritual’ in their practice or beliefs, but identify with Christianity (at least to some extent or on some occasions) solely by reason of upbringing or heritage.

Fourth, there is a convergence of findings from other inquiries which suggests that the Census question for England and Wales was indeed interpreted in many cases as a request for information about religious background rather than current religious affiliation. In particular, the ‘Christian’ results for England and Wales are very close to the results generated by the ‘religious background’ question in the Scottish Census (78% and 79% respectively of those who answered the question in each case). Both figures were also very close to the 80% of ‘Christian’ responses given to the Labour Force Survey question: ‘*what is your religion, even if you are not currently practising?*’ On the other hand, the figure returned to the Scottish question regarding religious belonging (as opposed to religious background) showed a lower figure of 69%.

These comparisons led to a significant decision by the ONS to aggregate the results for Great Britain by adding the figures for the Scottish ‘background’ question to those from the single question on religion in England and Wales. This decision confers a degree of official recognition on the assumption that the Census returns regarding the Christian religion in England and Wales refer to background or heritage rather than current affiliation or religious practice (ONS, 2006e: Table 1.5, 3-9). It follows that it may be more appropriate to use the BSA figure of 54% in relation to Christian affiliation than the Census figure of 72% (of the total population in each case), and the discrepancy between the two (18%) may give some indication of the number of people for whom the ‘Christian’

³¹ These estimates apply in the first instance to England alone, but will extend to Britain as a whole if it can be assumed that the patterns of Christian attendance in Scotland and Wales are sufficiently similar to those in England. No assumptions are made for estimation purposes about those who did not answer the Census question on religion. And there will be some (unknown) number of individuals who are practising Christians, but who are prevented from attending church by personal circumstances, such as illness or disability. A similar point will apply to any positive test for the practice of any other faith. Some might propose an even more relaxed test for Christian practice, such as ‘*praying or reading the Bible, but not going to church*’ (Brierley, 2006a: 152). This would include within the total of ‘practising Christians’ those believers who stay out of church by choice as well as circumstance.

answer in the Census was given for reasons other than current Christian affiliation. This figure thus supplies some indication at least of the size of the third subgroup of ‘ethnic’ Christian identifiers defined above (at least in England and Wales).³²

Fifth, there is some evidence that the spiritual believers (in the second subgroup) are more numerous than the religious ‘believers but not belongers’ who make up the first subgroup (Brierley, 2005, 2.3). One authority has claimed emphatically that ‘*other surveys ... show that something quite extraordinary is happening. In Britain, let alone other European countries (especially in the north), the number of people believing in a personal God [of Christian tradition] has become considerably smaller than the number of people believing in the God within or some sort of spirit or life force*’ (Heelas, in Brierley 2006b: 0.4).

If this is so, then a conservative assumption (that is, one designed to maximize the finding of religious affiliation) would be that at most half of those with a Christian background who believe in some form of God are Christian believers (in the sense of also believing in a recognisably Christian deity). Applying this assumption to the BSA figure of 54% suggests that at most 27% of the population is affiliated to organised Christian religion according to their fundamental beliefs. Even if the higher Census total (of 72%) were taken as the starting point for this calculation (which is equivalent to the assumption that no-one answered the Census question as an indication solely of a Christian background), the result would still be a Christian total of just 36%. If the estimate for those practising non-Christian religions (4%) is added in, the estimated figure for the population percentage affiliated to organised religion as a whole lies between 31% and 40%.

Granted that these estimates are all made on the basis of data that is far from satisfactory, it seems very unlikely that a majority of the population can be regarded as religious, even on the most relaxed definitions of what it means to practise or to believe in Christianity, and even after making the statistical assumptions most favourable to the total for organised religion.

The remainder of the population are ranged within an *alternative spectrum of spiritual, agnostic or secular practice and belief*, including individuals who:

- Adopt spiritual beliefs, leanings and/or practices which lie outside the organisational and theological frameworks of the major faith traditions (including here the individuals in the second subgroup defined above).
- Hold agnostic views of a kind that do not serve to align them with any specific system of religious, spiritual or secular practice or belief.
- Reject religious and spiritual belief systems, and may identify themselves explicitly with a secular belief system, such as Humanism or Atheism.
- Have no religious or spiritual views (or any comparable non-religious outlook).³³

According to the estimates above, it follows that *the occupants of the alternative spectrum probably form a majority of the population*. In order to underline this conclusion, it may be noted that 40% of the respondents to the BSA survey reported that they had no religion

³² For Scotland, the discrepancy is smaller, at just over 10% of the whole sample.

³³ The ‘No Religion’ category includes 390,000 adults (0.66% of the population) who defined themselves as Jedi Knights in the 2001 Census (ONS; Weiss, 2004). Notice that these figures make ‘Jedi Knights’ as numerous as all but the Muslims and the Hindus among the minority religious groups. If the definition of religion or belief is confined to identity, and the answers given to the Census question are regarded as sufficient to determine identity, then it would become very difficult to refuse consideration to the Jedi Knights as a substantial ‘group of religion or belief’ on this basis. This underlines the problem of relying as the Census does on identity alone for the ascription of religion or belief.

(ONS, 2006e: 4). The full spectrum includes, however, those with spiritual or agnostic views, who may be unwilling to assert that they have ‘no religion’, and yet are to be reckoned as part of the alternative majority. The most recent report from the Pew Global Attitudes Project (2008: 68, Q83) found that a majority of British respondents saw religion as being either ‘not at all important’ in their lives (34%), or ‘not too important’ (23%). Members of the alternative spectrum may still, however, identify themselves as ‘Christian’ (by heritage and/or upbringing) in various social contexts or for various social purposes (such as answering the Census question about religion).

The account has focused so far on the variations of Christian identity, practice and belief, but the same issues arise for all religions and belief systems. Ameli et al. (2004: 21) and Brown (2000a: 89) refer to ‘*cultural and secular*’ or to ‘*nominal*’ and ‘*sociological*’ Muslims respectively in this context and Graham (2003) distinguishes similarly between ‘*secular*’ and ‘*religious*’ Jews. Modood et al. (1997) found that 95% of Muslims, 89% of Hindus and 86% of Sikhs defined religion as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ important in their lives, relative to 46% of Anglicans and 69% of Catholics. The 2001 Citizenship Survey found a similar gradient for the importance of religion compared with other aspects of personal identity, with 67% of Muslim, 61% of Sikh, 51% of Hindu and just 21% of Christian respondents who ‘*said that their religion said something important about them*’ (ONS, 2006e: 4). However, the figures cited above from the 2005 Citizenship Survey suggest that the proportions who practise are lower in each case than are suggested by Modood’s figures for the minority religions, and Zubaida (2004: 417) puts the total for Muslims throughout Europe much lower (at around 30%, with 70% as ‘*secular or cultural Muslims*’). Mirza et al. (2007) note that their Muslim respondents vary in the extent to which they observe religious prohibitions on alcohol, for example, or interest-bearing mortgages. A survey conducted by Channel 4 Dispatches (2006) found that although 89% of Muslim respondents rated religion as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ important, 48% of the same sample never attended mosque (see Appendix 2). Again, it may be a matter of judgment (or a matter of doctrine) as to what constitutes ‘minimal practice’ for any religion, but the figures are nonetheless suggestive.

Turning to secular belief systems, a person can identify as a Humanist by, for example, becoming a member of the British Humanist Association. The 2005 Citizenship Survey perhaps suggested that there is no distinction between a practising and a non-practising Atheist by categorising all those of ‘No Religion’ as ‘not actively practising’ (Kitchen, 2006: 49, Table 19). Yet recent publications have raised interesting issues about Humanist or Atheistic identification, practice and belief (Belden and Grayling, 2005; Dennett, 2006, and Grayling, 2007), whilst Kemp (2003) discusses ‘New Age’ allegiances, and Brierley (2008: 10.6-10.7) provides a statistical digest of NRMs.³⁴

The remainder of this report will focus mainly on religious groups rather than occupants of the alternative spectrum, but it is important to emphasise here that this focus can create a misleading impression of Britain’s landscape of religion/belief taken as a whole: there is a good deal of religion in Britain, but there is probably more belief (and non-belief) than there is religion. And alternative belief (and non-belief) is now protected by the law, so that the alternative majority possess legal rights that compare fully with the rights of the religious minority – a point underlined by the UN Special Rapporteur (Jahangir, 2008: 18).

The specific recommendation that emerges from the analysis above is the urgent need to reformulate the Census for 2011 (especially in England and Wales) so that the question(s) on religion or belief provide clearer information relating to the dimensions of practice and

³⁴ Dennett proposes that Atheists should style themselves ‘*brights*’ (2006: 21), whereas Grayling prefers ‘*naturalists*’ (2007: 475).

belief, in addition to identity. For although the 2001 Census has transformed the *quantity* of data available on religion or belief, it has not brought about a comparable transformation in the *quality* of that information. Although this concern is prompted especially by the uncertainties surrounding the 'Christian' response to the Census question on religion, the recommendation applies to information obtained from the Census for all religions and belief systems.

A balanced appraisal of the currently available evidence thus bears out the secularisation thesis to a greater extent than appears to be the case from the Census data considered at face value. But it does not follow that the process of secularisation is bound to continue, because a number of counter-trends are also evident. Mirza et al. (2007) found that belief is systematically more intense among younger than older cohorts of Muslims, and the dramatic reduction in the number of observant Christians does not apply uniformly. A notable exception to the secular trend is the Pentecostal tradition generally and the more recent West African movements in particular (Hunt and Lightly 2001; Hunt 2002; Christian Research, 2005). Vulliamy (2006) noted that migration from Eastern Europe is helping to revive inner city Catholic churches in some areas. Smith (2000) records the growth of a number of new religious groups in Newham (East London) – Hindu, Muslim and Sikh, as well as Pentecostal Christian. Indeed, 94 out of the 171 religious groups studied (especially the Pentecostal churches) had been founded since 1971, which suggests that the secularisation process is far from consistent over time. Similarly, Hunt and Lightly (2001) and Hunt (2002) describe one Nigerian church, established in London in 1994 that had developed 50 congregations in England with a combined membership of approximately 170,000.

Davie has described the conservative evangelical church as '*the success story of late twentieth century churchgoing.*' (2006: 28) This success is reflected in the growing evangelical presence among Anglican ordinands (Gilliat-Ray, 2001) which has reversed earlier predictions of a trend towards a liberal ministry (Towler and Coxon, 1979). And Brierley estimates that 100,000 people started to attend church through Alpha courses in the years from 1998 to 2005 (2006a: 202).

Kaufmann (2007a and b) has contributed another element to the debate by linking secularisation with demographic factors. He investigated the three Abrahamic faiths in Europe, North America and Israel, and found consistently higher birth rates among religious than non-religious families, and among conservative families of each tradition than non-conservative families. Projecting these trends forward for Europe, he concludes that '*by 2045, the proportion of secular people will have peaked, and de-secularisation will begin, albeit gently*' (Kaufmann, 2007b: 7). The most recent issue of *Religious Trends* has also attempted to predict the future balance of numbers between different faith groups (Brierley, 2008).

Kaufmann's and Brierley's work raises the issue of the transmission of religion or belief, both within and between generations. These twin aspects of religious continuity-cum-change are comparable theoretically to intra- and inter-generational social mobility, and might be termed *mobility of religion or belief*. They are relevant to policy because of the freedom of conscience clauses of the European Convention of Human Rights. Although the credibility of Kaufmann's and Brierley's detailed predictions are dependent on more information becoming available about religious mobility (see the discussions in Kaufmann and Voas, 2007, and Moore et al., 2008), these contributions reinforce the argument that

there is nothing inevitable about secularisation.³⁵ A case in point is considered in the next section.

3.3 The (Re-) Sacralisation of Policy

There has been a long history of immigration into Britain, which has often included people of particular ethno-religious backgrounds, such as the Jewish migration of the early 20th. Century. Following WWII, Britain, along with other West European countries, found itself confronted by serious labour shortages which it met by calling on its colonies and former colonies. This resulted in the large-scale migration into Britain of people of non-European backgrounds and non-Christian faiths in a context that was singularly unwelcoming and intolerant of difference. This, in turn, led to the development of ideologies of adjustment that shifted and changed over time from assimilation to integration, from multiculturalism to anti-racism and back to (a slightly amended) multiculturalism (Macey, 2006; Ballard, 2007).

These developments were accompanied by changing conceptions of equality, first seeing equality as implying ‘sameness’, then moving to viewing ‘difference’ as a requirement for recognition of diverse attitudes and values. Nevertheless, the emphasis on racial equality was the dominant focus of both grassroots and Government thinking until the 1980s. The impetus for the subsequent ‘shift towards religion’ came from both above and below the level of the nation-state. The pressure from above came from the European Union, and that from below came largely from the minority religions themselves.

Ansari suggests that the ‘mushrooming’ of Muslim organisations and their increasing use of politics at both local and national levels from the 1980s onwards has had the greatest long-term impact on re-introducing religion into the social policy arena (2002: 18). Most of the calls put forward were (and are) based on ethno-religious requirements or consist of protests based on perceptions of religious offence. An example of the former is the demand for the provision of *halal* meat in schools (which, like *kosher* provision, required an exemption from the Slaughter of Poultry Act 1967 and the Slaughterhouses Act 1974). An example of the latter is the demand to withdraw Salman Rushdie’s novel, *The Satanic Verses*, from sale in the UK. Both demands were accompanied by some public disorder and the latter included a seriously intended threat of death against the author.

But Muslims are by no means alone in campaigning politically for minority religious rights. Hindu organisations petitioned the Government strongly, but without success, over the compulsory slaughter of the sacred bull, Shambo, at a Welsh temple and the sacred cow, Gangotri, at an English one in 2007. Both Sikhs and Rastafarians have applied in the past for exemptions from requirements that are legally binding on other citizens. The Rastafarian claim for exemption from the law prohibiting cannabis use on the grounds that this was part of their religious practice was unsuccessful. However, Sikhs succeeded in bringing about changes to the law on wearing safety helmets when riding motorbikes or working on construction sites (the Motor-Cycle Helmets [Religious Exemptions] Act 1976 and the Employment Act 1989). They also gained exemption from the Criminal Justice Act 1988 which prohibits the carrying of knives and other dangerous weapons in public, but makes a specific exception for knives that are carried for religious reasons. A further

³⁵ We found very little research evidence on religious mobility, even though the religion questions in the 2001 Census enquiries for Scotland and for N.Ireland (though not for England and Wales) would allow comparisons of religious background with current allegiance. A related issue is how to treat the identity and allegiance of children and young people in relation to religion or belief. See, for example, Dawkins (2006: 337-340).

acknowledgement of religious differences is the fact that Jews and Muslims are allowed to trade on Sundays (Bellamy, 2000).

Nevertheless, it is only recently that the Government has become more overtly receptive to any faith-based initiative. During the 1980s, far from accepting that religion had a role to play in politics (broadly defined), the Government – in the shape of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher – reacted to the publication of the Church of England report *Faith in the City* (ACUPA, 1985) by stating vehemently that religion had no place in politics. Yet twenty years later, for reasons analysed in detail by Furbey and Macey (2005), the relationship has changed and Government is engaged in what appears to be little short of a ‘love affair’ with faith communities (HO, 2004). The intellectual background to this development includes New Labour’s ‘modernisation’ of social democracy (‘The Third Way’), a renewed emphasis on social integration, and the interest in communitarianism. Tony Blair made these links explicit in a speech that can be seen as a turning point for the new approach by Government:

Our major faith traditions – all of them more historic and deeply rooted than any political party or ideology – play a fundamental role in supporting and propagating values which bind us together as a nation (Blair, 2001).

In addition to the personal values (and indeed religious beliefs) of key individuals (Farnell et al., 2003), the wider social context of the Labour Government’s new-found focus on communities in general, and faith communities in particular, is linked to a number of factors. These include the social facts of continuing inequality and deprivation, particularly in inner city areas; the well-established fact that many black and minority ethnic [BME] groups are disproportionately disadvantaged (Modood et al., 1997), and the awareness of minority ethnic, notably Muslim, youth frustration expressed especially in the ‘Northern riots’ of 2001 (see Cantle, 2001, and Ballard, 2007, for general accounts; DCLG, 2006, for the 2001 disturbances in Burnley and Oldham; Allen, 2003; Carling et al., 2004, and Macey, 2005, for Bradford in 2001, and Allen and Barrett, 1996, and Macey, 1999a; 2005, for Bradford in 1995 and 2001).

The inquiries that followed these events, particularly that by Cantle (2001) threw into sharp focus the notion (and issue) of social exclusion and proposed community/social cohesion as the remedy for this (see Ballard, 2007, for a critical review of this process). In a sense, this was a logical development of the Government’s focus in the 1990s on the role of faith communities in accessing ‘hard to reach’ groups in order to involve them in local regeneration (DETR, 1997; 1998; 2001; LGA, 2002).

It should be noted, however, that the love affair between the Government and faith communities has not always proceeded smoothly. The follow-up report published twenty years after *Faith in the City* noted that the objectives, values and working styles of religious groups do not always mesh with those of Government. Christian religious groups resist attempts to co-opt them into a grand political scheme, and resent the myriad bureaucratic demands made upon them (CULF, 2007). Baker (2007) refers to ‘*blurred encounters*’ between faith groups and secular regeneration programmes where the former struggle to adapt to secular understandings that involve different conceptual frameworks. This can lead to the perception that religious values and language are ‘hijacked’ for the sake of ticking the right boxes, leaving people feeling exploited and excluded from the tables of power (Baker and Skinner, 2005).

Harris et al. (2003) make similar points about the Jewish voluntary sector. Leavey (2007) notes the tensions in the enlistment of FBOs in mental health provision in relation to therapeutic knowledge, competing values and capacity constraints. And Lewis (2006) discusses the difficulties in trying to enlist Muslim faith leaders as exponents of ‘bridging

capital' in supporting Government agendas related to extremism and cohesion.

It is perhaps not surprising that the new relationship between Government and FBOs has also created tensions and disputes *between* FBOs, which are sometimes competing against each other (and secular organisations) for attention and/or resources. A number of participants in Farnell et al.'s (2003) research were convinced about the uneven – indeed, discriminatory – distribution of funding and saw this as the result of the dominance of a strongly secular ideology, high levels of religious illiteracy and a focus on minority ethnic faiths, particularly Islam, at the expense of Christianity. Such findings are seconded (and indeed expanded considerably) in the recent report *'Moral But No Compass'*³⁶ (Davis et al., 2008). Interviews with over 300 leaders and activists in the faith and community sectors revealed similar views about unfair treatment of Christian organisations by Government (with an alleged bias towards Muslim organisations), with additional complaints about lack of interest in Church social programmes, anti-religious hostility in secular charities and local Government – with one county council equalities officer allegedly commenting that *'Churches are just not good for society'* (Davis et al., 2008, 17) – coupled with lack of understanding by the Charity Commissioners, incoherence of policy, and a struggle between political parties over the role of the state vis-à-vis the voluntary sector.

The question of religious bias has also been raised from another direction, in connection with a unanimous resolution from Hindu organisations that the *'Government has failed the British Hindu community'* over the deaths of the sacred animals noted above. Sudarshan Bhatia, President of the National Council of Hindu Temples, has claimed that:

This Government has no regard for the needs of communities that do not shout ... If this had been some other community, the Government would have rushed to find a solution. Just because Hindus are quiet, we are ignored, isolated and sidelined.
(Hindu Forum of Britain, 2008)

Our consultations have also revealed strongly expressed concerns in some quarters that the willingness of the Government to engage with FBOs will neglect the interests of the non-religious population, and jeopardise work on equality, by placing it in the hands of those who either do not understand or do not accept the equalities agenda taken as a whole.

It is evidently not an easy matter to adjudicate all the claims of religion/belief, once these are brought more fully into the public arena, or to establish the appropriate priorities for action and support. Hazel Blears, Minister of State for Communities and Local Government, denied the suggestion made by the *Moral but no Compass* report, for example, that the Government has shown bias towards Muslim organisations. She added, however, that: *'It's just common sense ... If you have a situation where you need to build the resilience of young Muslim men and women to be able to withstand an extremist message, then of course you do that kind of work, but it doesn't mean you do it exclusively.'* (Blears, cited by Pigott, 2008) The next section alludes briefly to a further dimension of these complex relationships.

3.4 The New Global Context of Religion or Belief

Relationships between religious groups, the Government and civil society are also shaped by a new global context. Briefly, globalisation can be seen to have exacerbated inequality and poverty in white and BME working class communities, particularly – but not only – in relation to the wholesale loss of the manufacturing sector in which these groups were often employed, with consequent unemployment of large numbers of unskilled workers. Poverty

³⁶ The title would appear to be a play on Gordon Brown's words on becoming Prime Minister when he emphasised the strength of his *'moral compass'*.

will always place pressure on communal relationships, and thereby affect the context in which religious activity occurs. The onset of economic recession in 2008 has added to these pressures.

New communications technology and ease of transport enter the equation by making it much easier for some minority ethnic groups to maintain ongoing relationships with their countries of origin through financial transfers, arranged marriages, education, religious relationships or simply the rapid transfer of information and knowledge about the country of origin to the new environment. Indeed the older connotations of ‘migration’ as a once-for-all movement of resettlement from a ‘country of origin’ to a new ‘host society’ no longer apply with the same force (see Samad, 1992; 1998; Ballard, 2003 and Carling, 2006; 2008).

These factors exert complicated effects on the lived experiences of ‘diasporic communities’ and their collective (or individual) strategies of adjustment – including the alternatives of separation, integration or accommodation – which have been central to the Government’s discourse on ‘social cohesion’.³⁷

The international context has a direct impact at the political and cultural levels, too, especially in the light of 9/11, and Government responses to that event (including foreign policy and domestic security), by individual citizens of all religious persuasions, and by institutions of civil society, especially the mass media. It seems clear that the decision to legislate in the area of religion/belief was taken well before 9/11, or indeed the Northern disturbances earlier in the year 2001. Nevertheless, 9/11 affected profoundly the circumstances in which the legislation was implemented and discussed, the corresponding pressures on Government and other interested parties, and the ways in which the question of religion/belief was seen. Relevant issues here include:

- The debates over multiculturalism – specifically whether it involves a divisive politics of identity (Mirza et al., 2007) or not (Modood, 2007).
- The tendency to emphasise integration and unity rather than difference and diversity, including the search for common values, and the issue of national identity (Blunkett, 2003; CRE, 2005a; Reid, 2006; Smith, 2008).
- The impact of the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.
- The balance between social cohesion and domestic security policy.
- The electoral calculations of the major political parties (see Anwar, 1994; Ansari, 2002).

The point is simply that the circumstances in which the EHRC now begins its work on religion/belief are very different – and considerably more fraught – than the circumstances in which this part of the equalities framework was first conceived.

3.5 Key Points

- The provision of questions on religion for the first time in the 2001 Censuses in Scotland and in England and Wales has transformed the quantity of information available on the topics of this review, but not always the quality of this information. There is a correspondingly urgent need to reformulate the religion questions in time for the 2011 Census to address the dimensions of religious practice and belief, in addition to religious identity.
- The available evidence suggests that there is a substantial religious (mainly Christian) presence in the population and in the main institutions of Britain, although

³⁷ For discussions of these issues as they apply to the specific situation in Bradford, see Ballard (2002), Carling (2008) and Macey (2007a).

the majority of the population probably belongs within an alternative spectrum of spiritual, agnostic or secular practice and belief.

- Arguably, the New Labour Government has moved to recognise religious identities and groups more than have former Governments in the recent past, but this process is not without its tensions and difficulties, especially regarding the enlistment of FBOs in service provision.
- The evolution of religion/belief in Britain is affected by its global context in a number of significant respects, and this context has become more fraught as a result of 9/11 and its manifold consequences.

It is worth recalling, nevertheless, that some of the basic issues covered in this review exist independently of the latter events. We found the following comment published in 2000 to be remarkably prescient about the most general issues raised by the inclusion of religion/belief in the new equalities framework:

The significant motifs in public discourse will be individual freedom of choice and human rights, the political representation of group identity based around religious affiliation, and equality of opportunity and social justice for all religious groups as they participate in civil society. A second concern will be the articulation and application in policy of values drawn explicitly or implicitly from the major faith traditions, as they encounter each other and secular enlightenment values, in the context of rapid technological and social transformations, globalised communications and information technology. (Smith, 2000: 36)

CHAPTER 4

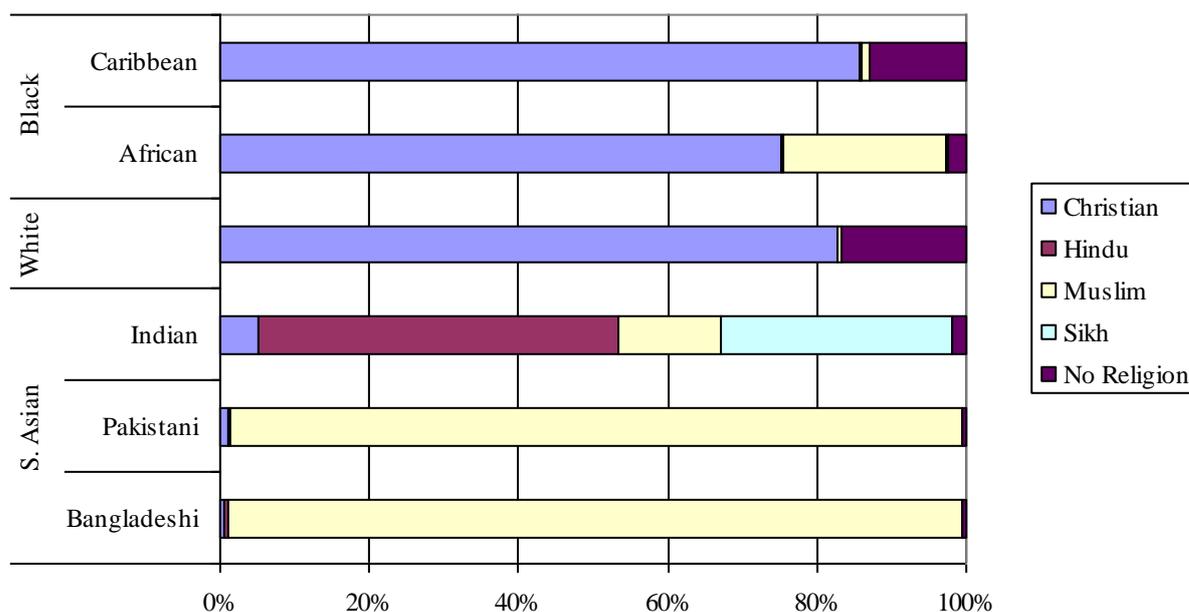
RELIGION AND ETHNICITY – COMMUNITY AND REPRESENTATION

4.1 Religion and Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a concept that has largely replaced ‘race’ in academic and popular discourses as ‘race’ came to be seen as not only lacking scientific or biological validity, but being associated with the deterministic (often negative) ascription of characteristics based on such phenotypical features as skin colour. Put at its simplest, ethnicity refers not to physical, but to cultural characteristics, i.e. to those shared aspects of social existence that characterise groups of human beings.³⁸ These can include language, religion, customs and, more problematically, a sense of shared history and community that Anderson (1991) suggests can be real or imagined.

While conceptually separable, there is often a close relationship between religion and ethnicity, which can be looked at from two aspects: either the religious composition of ethnic groups or the ethnic composition of religions. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 convey these two aspects of the relationship respectively for the population of England and Wales at the 2001 Census.³⁹

**Figure 4.1 Ethnicity by Religion. England and Wales.
Census 2001. ONS, 2003.**

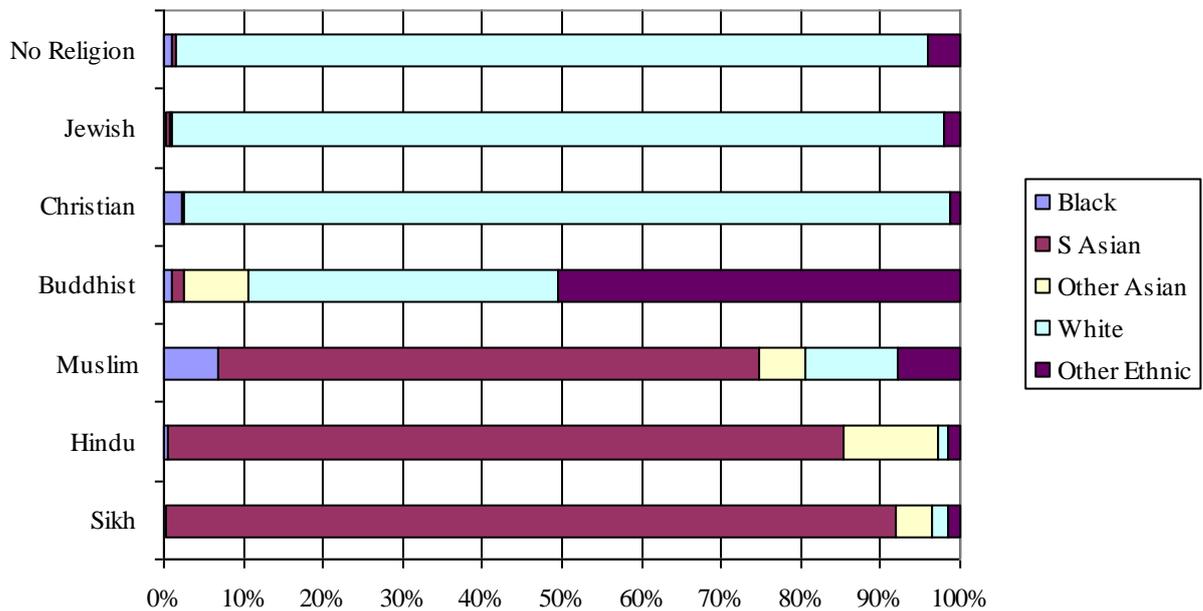


It can be seen from Figure 4.1 that the black Caribbean and white groupings have a similar religious composition, with largely Christian self-identifications, and similar proportions of ‘No Religion’. The black African group has a much lower proportion of ‘No Religion’ than the black Caribbean group, and a significant Muslim component (22%). The Indian group is the most mixed by religion, containing Hindus (47%), Sikhs (30%), Muslims (13%) and Christians (5%). By contrast, members of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups are almost exclusively Muslim (98% in both cases).

³⁸ Mason (2000) provides a clear exposition of the distinctions between race and ethnicity.

³⁹ The cross-classification of religion and ethnicity is not available from the standard tables of the Scottish Census.

**Figure 4.2 Religion by Ethnicity. England and Wales.
Census 2001. ONS, 2003.**



Turning to Figure 4.2, it can be seen that the ‘No Religion’, Christian and Jewish groups are almost entirely white (with proportions from 95% to 97% respectively). The Hindus and Sikhs in Britain are largely of South Asian origin and of Indian ethnicity (84% and 91% respectively), although some people of Indian heritage came to Britain from East Africa following mass expulsions (especially those orchestrated by Idi Amin in 1972). Such migrants brought with them levels of social capital that may help to account for some of their families’ subsequent attainment. The Muslims from the Indian sub-continent originate mainly in Bangladesh (17%) and Pakistan (43%), with India contributing 9%. Muslims as a whole in Britain are, however, more heterogeneous than other religious groups: although two-thirds are South Asian, 12% are white; 6% are ‘other Asian’; 7% are black; 4% are from ‘other’ ethnic groups, and 4% are of ‘mixed parentage’ (Beckford et al., 2006; ONS, 2006e: 72). For slightly different reasons, Buddhists are one of the most diverse groups, with 39% white and 51% ‘other ethnicity’ (which includes Chinese).

The variations in these relationships indicate the dangers of essentialising the characteristics of either ethnic or religious groups, and of using religious and ethnic descriptions as substitutes for one another. We saw in Chapter 3 that self-identification under a religious heading may imply a socio-political (secular) identification rather than allegiance to a faith. The issue here is rather the relationship between religious and ethnic self-identification. In some circumstances it may be reasonable to align the two, by treating Pakistani or Bangladeshi respondents as Muslim, for example. But it is, in general, less reasonable to treat South Asians as Muslims, or *vice versa*.

4.2 Religion and Residence

One of the main findings from the 2001 Census is the *extent to which the minority religious (non-Christian) population is localised in particular areas of the country*. These areas include England (in contrast with both Wales and Scotland); London (which is unique among major conurbations for the range and size of its minority religious population) and a number of other English urban areas outside London – but by no means always those with the largest populations (ONS, 2006e: 60-67). Table 4.1 presents data on

the numerical strength of the minority religious population for all those areas in which this exceeds 15% of the local population.⁴⁰

Table 4.1 Non-Christian Religious Population of Nations in the UK and Selected English Cities. Census 2001: Thousands. ONS, 2003.

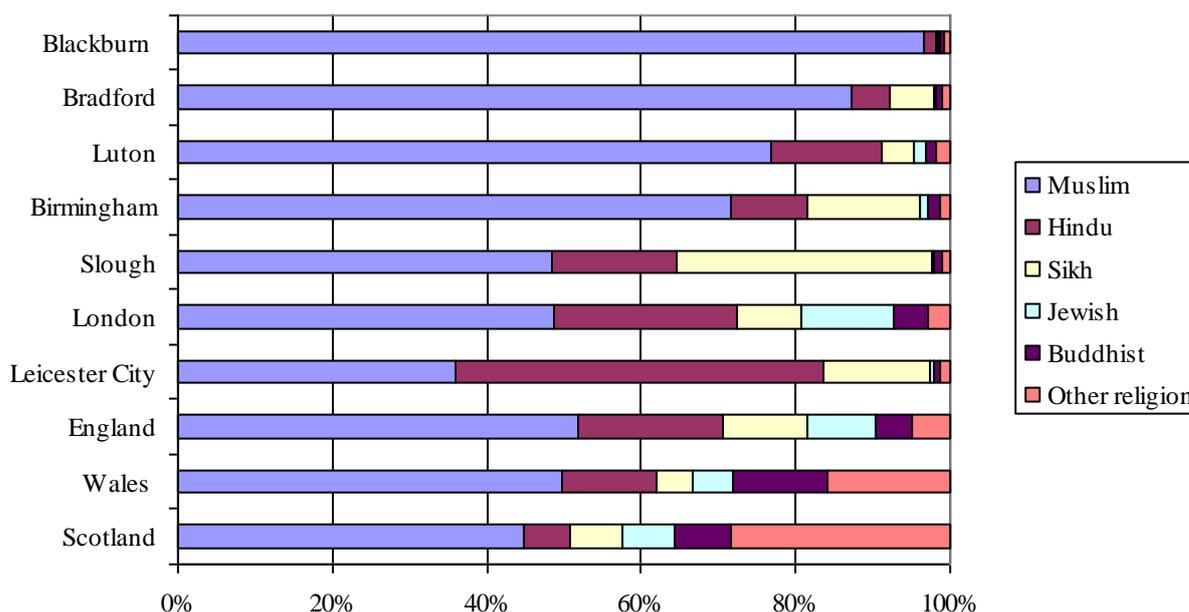
	Non-Christian Religious Population (Th.)		% of Total Local Population
London	1244		17%
Birmingham	196		20%
Bradford	86		18%
Leicester City	86		31%
Luton	35		19%
Slough	33		28%
Blackburn	28		20%
England		2940	6%
Wales		44	2%
Scotland		95	2%
N Ireland		5	<1%

It will be seen that the minority religious population of London – almost 1.25m – dwarves that of any other place, making up over 40% of the UK total, and over thirteen times that of Scotland. But Birmingham has over twice the Scottish total, and both Bradford and Leicester almost as many. No fewer than ten London Boroughs each have larger minority religious populations than the whole of Wales. Luton has seven times that of Northern Ireland. The eight English areas listed, including London, contain over 56% of the minority religious populations of the UK. *The issues raised by minority religions are (in numerical terms at least) issues primarily for London, and a rather small number of other local authorities in England.* This point has potentially far-reaching implications for policy in the field of religion or belief, but the issue will not be pursued at length here. To give just one example: Coles and Bonney (2003) consider the pressures imposed on the education system as a result of geographical concentration.

The religious composition of these populations is set out in Figure 4.3.

⁴⁰ The threshold proportion of 15% is chosen because it seems to be a natural ‘break point’ in the rank order distribution of Local Authority areas in England and Wales: there are no LA areas with proportions of either 15% or 16%.

Figure 4.3 Non-Christian Religious Population of Selected Areas by Religion. GB. Census 2001. ONS, 2003.



The non-Christian religious populations of Blackburn and Bradford are largely Muslim (over 85%). In both these cases, it is known that the Muslim population not only comes from one country – Pakistan – but one particular area of that country, linked to each other moreover by close ties of kinship.⁴¹

Scotland and Wales, London, Leicester and Slough are, by contrast, much more heterogeneous in their minority religious composition, although Muslims form the largest grouping in all cases (except in Leicester). Luton and Birmingham fall between these two poles. This difference in composition underlines the geographical concentrations of particular minority religions: there are more Muslims in Bradford (75,000) than in the whole of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland combined (66,000). And 56% of the Jewish population of the UK resides in London (ONS, 2006e: 66).

Turning to residential patterns within (rather than between) cities, Peach (2006) contains a detailed analysis of ethno-religious residential separation in London, based on Census data. This ‘pioneer study’ is, so far as we are aware, the first to make religion an explicit variable in the quantitative analysis of residential separation.⁴² Taking the main religious groups as a whole, it was found that Sikhs and Jews are highly separated residentially – that is, they tend to live in specific areas of London in which members of their own group are represented much more frequently than their average throughout the conurbation. Hindus are moderately separated; Muslims have low separation and Christians have very low separation.

However, the low Muslim result, which suggests that Muslims are dispersed relatively evenly throughout London, turns out to be a consequence of the fact that the various Muslim populations of different ethnicity are highly separated *from each other* (in different

⁴¹ For example, at least 70% of the ‘Pakistani Muslim’ population of Bradford originates from the Mirpur region of Azad Kashmir, and some sources put this closer to 90% (Moss, 2006). For further description of the society of this region, see Ballard (2003).

⁴² The study omits social class, however, which is the primary determinant of residential inclusion and exclusion, through the affordability of housing in different areas.

parts of London), as well as from the general population, and from other ethno-religious groups. *'Despite some strong linkages, such as [that between] the Indian and Pakistani Muslims...'* Peach (2006: 364) reports that: *'[the] residential pattern of Muslim groups in London is largely fragmented along ethnic lines'* and that *'the Ummah exists spiritually, but is not manifested in residential terms'*. He concludes that *'there is not a single Muslim community but a community of communities.'* (Peach, 2006: 368)

Both Peach's findings and the statistical distributions of ethnicity and religion summarised above reinforce the view that it may be more appropriate to speak of 'hyphenated' ethno-religious groups – that is, groups defined by the *intersection* of religion, ethnicity and/or race – than of either ethnic or religious groups considered by themselves (see also Chapter 2 above).

The established academic discussion on residential separation has focussed, like Peach, on separation within particular cities, and found it to exist at levels that are subject to much debate (see Simpson, 2002; 2004; 2005; Johnston et al., 2002; 2005; Poulsen, 2005; Carling, 2008). Unlike Peach, this literature has tended to deploy ethnic categories as a proxy for religion and/or race, although Phillips (2006) and her colleagues (Phillips et al., 2002; 2005) have provided some evidence of religious self-separation in West Yorkshire – that is, families or individuals choosing to live in certain areas in order to enjoy proximity to co-religionists.

4.3 Religion and Housing

The fact that minority religious populations tend to be concentrated in particular cities, and in particular areas of each city (see the previous section), already suggests that inequalities of housing situation by religion are likely to be found. Beckford et al. (2006: 62) provide a detailed account of these issues. As in other fields, the 'turn to religion' has been a recent development in research on housing, driven partly by Government concerns with managing diversity and neighbourhood renewal/regeneration (Sellick, 2004). Consequently, there is only limited data available on the quality of housing for the minority religions, with more attention paid to Muslims, however, who tend to live in poorer housing stock.

Figure 4.4: Religion of Household Reference Person by Housing Tenure. GB. Census 2001. ONS 2006e.

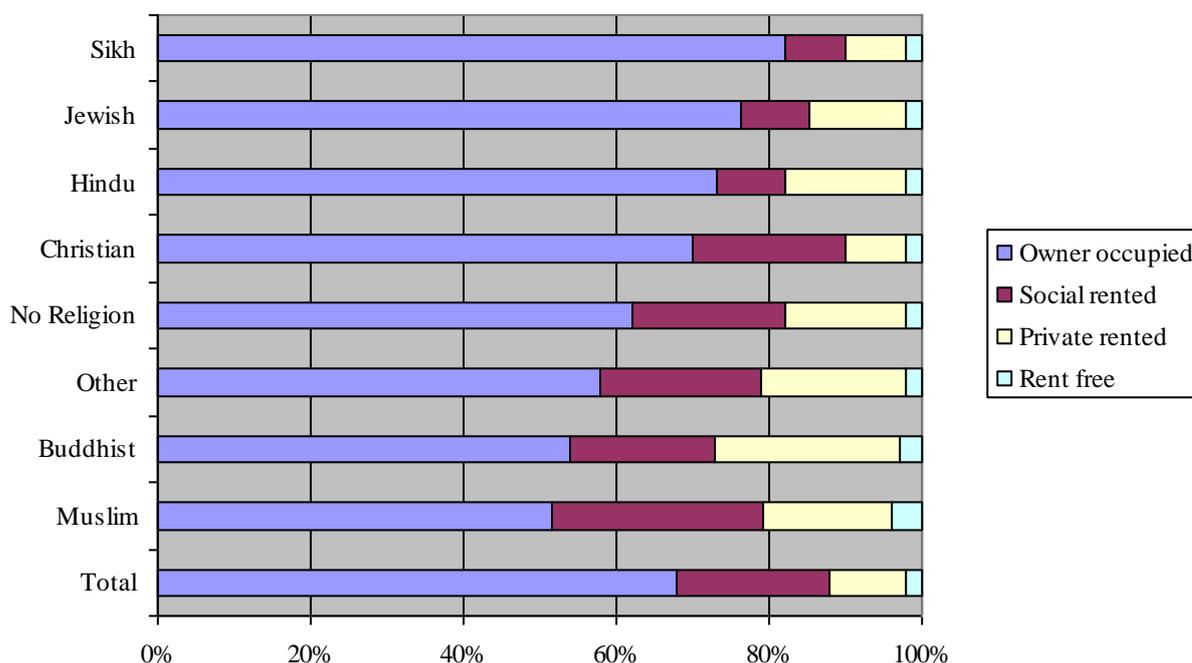


Figure 4.4 presents data on housing tenure from the 2001 Census. Sikhs, Jews and Hindus were most likely to own their own homes (82%, 77% and 74% respectively), followed by Muslims (52%) and Buddhists (54%) (ONS, 2004; Graham et al., 2007). Muslims were the most likely to be living in social rented accommodation that was rented from the council or a housing association. In 2001, 28 per cent of Muslim households were living in social rented accommodation compared to 8 and 9 per cent of Hindu, Sikh and Jewish households. Buddhists were the most likely to be living in private rented accommodation (24%). A very small percentage of all households lived rent-free (2%), but Muslim households were twice as likely as other households to do so (4%). This data as a whole runs counter to the stereotype of Muslim owner-occupation.

There is a broad correlation between ethno-religious groups and location with Hindus tending to live in more affluent locations; Sikhs are more likely to live in middle class areas and Muslims in poorer housing (Beckford et al., 2006). Muslims form 10.2% of the population resident in the most deprived decile of residential neighbourhoods (an over-representation of more than three times) and there is a tendency, though less pronounced, for Hindus and Sikhs to share this residential deprivation (ONS, 2003: Table S104). A similar variation of circumstances was found in a study of BME housing in Wales conducted by the Welsh Assembly (2005). The least disadvantaged were Indian and Chinese residents and the most disadvantaged were Black-Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents (who in the latter two cases can be assumed to be mostly Muslim).

The number of rooms in a house relative to the number of occupants is commonly used to determine housing deprivation. Of all households, 40% Muslim, 26% Hindu and 22% Sikh experience housing deprivation (Beckford et al., 2006: 38). In 2001, just 6 per cent of Christian households experienced overcrowding. The high proportions for Muslim, Sikh and Hindu households in these totals are to some extent a reflection of their larger sizes – their average numbers being 3.8, 3.6 and 3.2 people respectively, compared with 2.3 people among Christian, Buddhist and Jewish households (ONS, 2001; 2006e: 93).

Overcrowding can be seen, however, as a Eurocentric measure of deprivation, which does not take into account lifestyle preferences and other financial and familial advantages of living together as an extended family. The need for larger housing to accommodate extended and intergenerational families was raised by Hindu and Muslim respondents to the consultation for *The Weller Report* (Weller et al., 2001: 64). Beckford et al. (2006) also raise the issue of *shari'a* compliance in relation to the acquisition and management of properties as a directly religious factor in Muslim housing needs. At the same time, a careful study conducted by Sellick (2004: 5) for the Housing Corporation brought to light another dimension of the issue, that *'the 15% of Muslim one person households reflect not only the independent status of high achieving independent professionals, but also the marginality of ex-offenders and the mentally ill.'*

Some two-thirds of the Muslim organisations contacted by Weller reported the perception of frequent or occasional unfair treatment of Muslims by housing providers, and about half recorded a perception of unfair treatment by estate agents. Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and Bahá'í organisations were less likely to perceive unfair treatment in housing than Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. On the other hand, the 2005 Citizenship Survey found vanishing proportions of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim respondents who claimed to have been discriminated against either by a local authority housing department or housing association (0%, 1% and 2% respectively), or by a private landlord or letting agent (1% in all cases). This survey involved sample sizes of the three religious groups of N=706, 365 and 1,489 respectively (Kitchen et al., 2006: 59, Table 34). As argued in general terms in Chapter 2, the findings of *The Weller Report* should therefore be treated with extreme caution as a statement of the levels of discrimination in the housing market actually experienced by members of minority religions, and thus as a measure of the possible impact of discrimination on the housing inequalities noted above.

Overall, the Welsh Assembly report (2005) recommended that housing providers recognise the diversity of housing needs among minority groups, and Beckford et al. (2006) added a recommendation for further research into how best to meet the religious and cultural housing needs of specific communities, bearing in mind also the broader issues of social cohesion and residential separation. Sellick's considered view on the housing situation of Muslims can perhaps stand as a conclusion on the housing needs of the minority religions more generally: *'[this] report has ... highlighted the diversity within the [...] population and the need for sensitivity to the differences borne not only of religion but also of socio-economic position, age, gender, locality and transnational commitments.'* (Sellick, 2004:5)

4.4 Community

The concept of 'community' is frequently linked in the literature to both ethnicity and faith (as in the quotation from Peach above) and rests on notions of shared interests and/or values. A distinction is commonly made between geographical communities (place-based) and communities of interest or identification (Mayo, 2000). Furbey and Macey (2005) point to the difficulty of sustaining this distinction, and, indeed, a considerable amount of the literature on religion and community is focused around a definition of communities as both neighbourhood *and* faith based. This conception is reinforced for Britain by the geographical concentrations noted above, which owe much to patterns of residential settlement by the non-European migrants who came to Britain after the Second World

War,⁴³ for some of whom, religion was, and is, an important – if not central – part of identity.

This conception remains somewhat simplified, however, and caution needs to be exercised in placing religion, rather than ethnicity, at centre stage in so-called ‘faith communities’ (Mahoney and Taj, 2006; Peach, 2006; Raj, 2000). Equally, the tendency to regard communities as rooted in the locality ignores both the international (globalised) dimension of religion and ethnicity, particularly, perhaps, the *ummah* (see McRoy, 2006), as well as the transcendental orientation that is an inherent aspect of religious belief.

It is important to note, too, that no matter how homogeneous communities might appear from the ‘outside’, the reality is that they are all cross-cut by such divisions as age, gender, social class and migration-generation and that these factors intersect and interact in their impact on individuals’ lived experiences and opportunities, as Sellick (2004) underlines in relation to housing issues. And, of course, all cultures are, by definition, dynamic rather than static, so that change over time is inevitable. Thus, the experiences, attitudes and identities of a ‘third generation’, Bradford-born Muslim young man of Pakistani heritage will be significantly different from those of his immigrant grandfather. They will also be significantly different from those of his sister – which raises the issue of gender and generational differences and the possibility of inequality and oppression *within* communities.

This observation points to the fact that communities have both positive and negative features (Furbey and Macey, 2005). For although communities can provide their members with support and security, they can also impose pressures towards conformity, limit contact with others outside the community and thus restrict both choice and change. Communities, particularly minority ethnic/faith communities, can provide a means of resisting (or coping with) the impact of externally imposed inequalities, such as racism, discrimination and social exclusion. On the other hand, their internal dynamics can reinforce inequalities of gender, sexual orientation, age or generation. And the ordinary operations of a market economy over time will tend to create internal class differentiation as well.

In addition, all communities and religions are bounded and involve definitions of ‘us’ versus ‘them’. In situations where communities have become somewhat separated residentially and/or socially, this has implications for inter-ethnic interaction and identities (Wallman, 1986; Macey, 2007a). This will tend to be the case especially where there is a local or historical context of ethnic difference between two (or more) groups, each (or all) of which can draw on narratives containing the potential for mutual antagonism, and which are capable of feeding off each other. These are, roughly speaking, McKinnon’s ‘circumstances for toleration’ (2006: 14). But the *outcome* of toleration – that is, success in the search for acceptable ways to live with difference – may not always be achieved, because it is possible for ethnic differences to become politicised and conflictual in a process that can be described as ‘polarization’ (Modood et al., 1997; Carling, 2008) which carries with it a tendency to the reinforcement of community traditions (Parekh, 2000).

The dual character of community arises from the way in which internal solidarity, which can create many benefits for the in-group, may simultaneously provide a platform for external hostility directed towards some out-group. A number of commentaries emphasise the exceptional importance of communication and dialogue between groups in such circumstances (Smith, 2000; DCLG, 2006; Angoy, 2007; Ballard, 2007; Carling, 2008).

⁴³ Among these were black Christians from the Caribbean who were the first to settle in England in significant numbers in the late 1940s, followed by Hindus and Sikhs from India, then Muslims from Pakistan and Bangladesh in the 1950s and 1960s.

Many of these remarks apply to communities of all kinds. But it should be evident that (and why) religions can play a very important role in the maintenance of communities, including their dual aspects. Religion is historically a most effective source of identity, which contributes to the boundedness of any community that makes faith a membership condition, or (in effect) a condition of marriage. This is particularly relevant in the context of the European Convention right to change religion or belief, which is pursued further in Section 4.8. Religions involve ritual and other observance that simultaneously unite members and separate them from non-members (Raj, 2000; Hunt, 2002). They create value systems which can underwrite egalitarian practises – such as the ideals of Christian service that motivate so much effort in the voluntary sector, or the Muslim practise of *zakat*, which creates as a matter of justice an obligation to the poor *‘that the rich, those who have possessions, must never forget, for in their property, as the Qur’an says, is “the right of the beggar and the disinherited”’* (Ramadan, 2004: 179).

Yet the same value systems can also underwrite unequal treatment, as in the Anglican and Catholic approaches to sexual orientation, and the access of women to the priesthood, or the effective exclusion of Muslim women from many mosques, on which more will be said in the next chapter. And nearly all religious traditions contain resources of history and doctrine that can be drawn upon to sustain, and even legitimise, hostility to those defined as beyond the pale of faith – at the extreme, political Crusade and violent forms of *jihad*.

The point is simply that faith community, like community of all kinds, creates a double-edged sword, and this needs to be borne in mind by Government whenever the choice is made to work through faith communities to achieve policy goals.

4.5 Religious Identity and Political Representation

It was noted in the last chapter that there are tensions and contradictions in the attempt by Government to enlist FBOs in service delivery. Similar points apply here to the Government’s attempt to involve the leaders of faith communities in the more general aims of promoting social cohesion and preventing the growth of radicalism among young men. This section is mainly concerned with ‘community leadership’ at local or national levels, rather than the political representation of minority religious groups through the electoral process. As in so many other areas, there is more research on the latter issue in relation to minority ethnicity than minority religion (see Purdam et al., 2002; Maxwell, 2005), although there is one pioneer study in this field about the religious determinants of voting in the 1997 General Election (Kotler-Berkowitz, 2001), and some other discussions of local party politics, all involving Muslims (Purdam, 2000; Lewis, 2002: 220-22).

The first point about community leadership is that ‘community leaders’ may be self-styled, rather than drawn from a representative range of community members (Macey, 1999b; 2007a; Puri, 2005; Farnell et al., 2003; Baxter, 2006; McKerl, 2007). Alternative voices (often of young people or of women) may question the interpretation of community interests given by these ‘leaders’, who are (typically) older men (Ansari, 2002). This issue is sometimes expressed in the language of ‘*gate-keeping*’ (Johal, 2003; Phillips and Dustin, 2004; Baksh et al., 2008; Wollaston, 2008). It should be noted, however, that ‘gatekeeping’ is a feature of most social organisation, and can have positive as well as negative effects (Virdee et al., 2006 and Robinson et al., 2007 provide examples of the former).

Second, community leaders may or may not have their own political agendas, which can include the use of religious claims for (non-religious) political purposes. And the dynamics of identity politics – which now occur in a global arena for all the major faiths – are not easy for the Government to contain or to stage-manage. Raj (2008) has written, for

example, about the development of a nationalist version of religious identity among young Hindu men, which supports the findings of Mukta (2000) and Searle-Chatterjee (2000). His focus on young male activists and the influence of globalisation complements that of Hopkins and Khani-Hopkins (2004) in relation to young Muslim men. He criticises the '*ethnicization of religion*', which he traces back through Van der Veer (1995), Saifullah-Khan (1977) and Anwar (1976) to Desai (1963), and notes how Hindus are increasingly conscious of being part of a global 'Eternal' religion (Raj, 2008: 537, 540). Bright has emphasised the problems nationally and internationally of the Government (including the Foreign Office) working with the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), which in his judgement has a radical Islamist agenda '*with origins in the sectarian politics of Pakistan.*' (2006: 6)

The 2005 Citizenship Survey (Kitchen et al., 2006) has been cited already to the effect that minority religions have higher proportions of practising members than the Christian faiths. Other evidence suggests that for Muslims in particular religion has become *the* key signifier of identity, particularly among young people (Modood et al., 1997; Dwyer, 1999; 2000; Macey, 2005; 2007b; Alam and Husband, 2006; Hopkins, 2006; Billings and Holden, 2007; Mirza et al., 2007). Some of these authors also discuss the conflicting – and sometimes extreme – influences on young Western European/Muslim men (see also Kahani-Hopkins and Hopkins, 2002; Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins, 2004; Abbas, 2007; Hamid, 2007; Lewis, 2007; Marranci, 2007). As usual, however, care needs to be taken in making inferences from religious identity to religious practise, and, indeed, from religious identity to religious community. Billings and Holden, for example, suggest that in the North West of England, young people have little contact with their local mosques (2007: 18). Mahoney and Taj (2006) found that the Muslim women in their Welsh consultation challenged the common definition of communities on the basis of religion, suggesting that culture, rather than religion, is the key determinant of behaviour. This makes the point that the perception of community from within may depend on the respondent's position in the community. And Graham (2003: 39) reaches a similar conclusion about religion and culture, suggesting that the binding force or 'glue' that unites the highly complex and segmented Jewish community has a distinctively cultural flavour, and is not primarily religious.

Third, competition may occur between different groups within a faith community to catch the ear of Government, and so be given, in effect, a position of recognised community leadership.⁴⁴

Singh (2006: 159) has noted, for example, that Sikhism involves a number of independent branches and that there is no national body recognised as legitimately representing the interests of all Sikhs.

Regarding Muslim representation, Ansari mentions '*the tensions that persist within Muslim communities themselves*' in this context among others (2002: 387). Baksh et al. (2008) provide a useful survey of intra-Muslim political organisation. And Hopkins and Khani-Hopkins (2004) analyse the relationships among the MPGB; UKACIA; the MCB; the Imams' and Mosques' Council, and the IPB as competing exponents of 'the Muslim voice'.

These organisations have differing interpretations of their potentially divided loyalties to Britain on the one hand and the world-wide Muslim *ummah* on the other. As a result, they take correspondingly different positions on the issues of social integration versus

⁴⁴ Phillips (2003) discusses how the extension of the law (and exemptions to the law) to religion/belief can similarly strengthen the power of 'leaders' over other community members.

separation, and co-operation or confrontation with the Government. For the sake of completeness, it should be noted that the range of Muslim voices include those arguing strongly for accommodation (Ramadan, 2004) as well as a number of critical and dissenting voices (Warraq, 2003; Manji, 2004; Engineer, 2009).

Smith (2000) explores similar issues for a variety of faiths in East London. Mirza et al. say that:

there is clearly a conflict within British Islam between a moderate majority that accepts the norms of Western democracy and a growing minority that does not ... Islamist groups have gained influence at local and national level by playing the politics of identity and demanding for Muslims the "right to be different". (2007: 5-6)

Furbey et al. echo this concern over social and political separation:

The divisiveness of religion receives ultimate expression in violence. But faith communities can be characterised by other powerful forms of disconnection from other groups or wider society. Religious understanding that establishes a strong boundary with the rest of the world can produce passive retreat or a more active (and sometimes destructive) assertion of distinctiveness. (2006: 2)

Weller has made a similar point in connection with the new level of official recognition accorded to religions by the inclusion of the Census question, expressing the concern that:

it is possible that religion, as one part of the contemporary 'politics of identity' might all too easily be transmuted into the service of an 'identity politics' that turns religious identities into absolutes within competitive, conflictual, and potentially destructive 'communalist' projects. (2004: 18)

No outcome in this area should be regarded as a foregone conclusion. Kaufmann's views about the inevitable growth of religious conservatism (see Chapter 3) can be set alongside Casanova's thoughtful discussion (2001) of whether the Muslim tradition could (or will) experience a counterpart of 'Vatican II' in the history of Catholicism, so that it becomes more fully reconciled with liberal modernism. A good deal is evidently at stake over the question 'who speaks for faith communities?' as well as 'what shall they say?' And here it is a striking finding of the survey by Channel 4 Dispatches (2006) that only 9% of Muslim respondents named *any* of the national organisations mentioned above as representative of Islam in Britain (see Appendix 2).

4.6 Religion, Ethnicity and Relative Deprivation

In terms of relative deprivation, the statistics paint a clear and consistent picture showing minority ethnic groups as a whole being in more deprived positions than their white counterparts across such key areas as economic well-being, employment, health, housing and education. For example:

- Over half of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African children are growing up in poverty (Platt, 2002; 2007a,b,c).
- Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Africans and African-Caribbeans experience significantly higher levels of unemployment than white people, with Bangladeshi men having an unemployment rate of 20% – four times that of white men (ONS, 2002).
- Muslims have the most deprived socio-economic profile of the minority religious groups with an unemployment rate of just under 14% for all those aged 25 and over, compared with 6% for Sikhs, 5% for Hindus and 4% for the population as a whole (Beckford et al., 2006).

- Muslim unemployment is particularly significant in the context of extended family living and higher than average birth rates simply because one unemployed ‘breadwinner’ could impact on many people.
- Muslim vulnerability to poverty is further compounded by the very low participation of women in the labour market (Platt, 2007a), high levels of ill-health and disability (Health Education Authority [HEA], 2000), and low educational achievement (CRE, 2007).
- There are, however, some important variations by ethnic group within religious populations which support the hyphen-group perspective. Thus, unemployment rates among Muslim men of working age (between 16-64) range from nearly 30% for Black African Muslims to between 15% and 20% for Bangladeshi, Pakistani and White British Muslims, down to just over 10% for Indian Muslims. Unemployment rates for Muslim women show a similar range and pattern by ethnicity (ONS, 3006e: 123, Table 5.13).

As we emphasise throughout this report, the relative deprivation – that is, the sheer inequality that can be observed in the social conditions of different groups – does not by itself prove that the deprived groups have been subject to discrimination or any other form of unfair treatment. And the fact that the deprivation is suffered by a group that is given a religious label does not by itself establish that any religious factor has caused the deprivation. Just as statistical analysis can try to make ethnic categories speak for religion, so religious categories may actually be speaking for ethnicity or social class. And minority religious communities have all been established long enough in Britain for class differentiation to have taken place within them, so that there are issues of economic inequality *within* as well as *between* the communities and the rest of society. Ansari (2002), for example, reports that there are over 5,000 Muslim millionaires in Britain, with combined liquid assets above £3.6 billion.⁴⁵

Census data shows clearly that class differentiation exists within each of the religious groups, but also demonstrates the patterns of variation between the different religious groups, with associated variations by both gender and ethnicity. Thus, both men and women from Jewish and Buddhist groups have higher proportions of managerial and professional occupations than the population at large (68% and 57% for Jewish men and women respectively, and 53% and 47% for Buddhist men and women, compared with the population averages for men and women of 42% and 38% respectively). Jewish men and women have very low representation among semi-routine and routine occupations (6% and 11%, compared to population averages of 24% and 29% respectively). Buddhist men and women have higher representation among these routine occupations, at 17% and 24% respectively, but still below the corresponding averages (ONS, 2006e: 155, Table A5.7).

By contrast, Muslims and Sikhs have lower representation than the population average among managerial and professional occupations, and higher representation among semi-routine and routine occupations. This applies to both men and women of both groups.⁴⁶ Again, there is some variation by ethnicity within religion, with Indian Muslim men having a somewhat more ‘middle class’ employment profile than Pakistani Muslim men, who in

⁴⁵ See Bolognani (2007a) and Ballard (2003) on the trans-national dispersion of funds and the importance of a cash economy among Pakistani Muslims, both of which must be taken into account to estimate the true economic position of the community.

⁴⁶ The comparable class proportions (for managerial and routine occupations respectively) are 32% and 33% for Muslim men; 35% and 32% for Muslim women; 35% and 29% for Sikh men, and 31% and 36% for Sikh women (ONS, 2006e: 155, Table A5.7).

turn have a more middle class profile than Bangladeshi Muslim men. Interestingly, Muslim women's employment profiles show less ethnic variation than Muslim men's.⁴⁷

In line with the general 'turn to religion', it is only recently that academic research has begun to focus specifically on religion rather than ethnicity. We will concentrate in this section on three of these pioneer studies, whose findings are interesting in their own right, and serve to illustrate the general points about this field made in 2.6 above. Further information on employment-related inequalities will be given in the section on the workplace in Chapter 6.

Brown (2000b) reports the results of an analysis of the 1994 National Survey of Ethnic Minorities, with a large sample of men and women in Britain (N=3,795). His study is the most prominent early example in which religion is made explicit. The research design relates economic activity levels, grade of employment (in effect, social class), and earnings to religion as well as to ethnicity and gender. It is also important because it prefigures the 2001 Census data reported above.

Brown's findings show clear differences between Sikhs and Hindus among those with Indian backgrounds, with Hindus in the better position. There are also differences *among Muslims*, with Indian Muslims better placed than Pakistani or Bangladeshi Muslims. In other words, it looks as if both ethnic background and religion are independently significant for economic outcomes. This study therefore lends further support to the idea that 'hyphen-groups' of joint racial, ethnic and religious composition might form the most appropriate units of socio-economic analysis.

Brown comments: '*whilst it is relatively straightforward to demonstrate differences between religious groups in economic activity, it is harder to establish causality*' (2000b: 1058) and '*proof of religious discrimination is difficult to establish in the absence of hard statistics*' (Brown 2000b: 1037). This is because religion may either be acting as a proxy for other factors relating to culture of origin, or it might operate historically by contributing '*indirectly to differences in factor endowments of migrants entering Britain.*' (Brown 2000b: 1059) His conclusion on the issue of discrimination is worth quoting in full because of its broad relevance:

A more direct effect [of religious affiliation] may be at work in the form of religious discrimination. The relatively disadvantaged position of Muslims, in particular, may tie in with the view (discussed earlier) that Muslims (and Islam) are increasingly experiencing a negative profile within the British media and society at large. However, the revealing of a relatively advantaged Indian Muslim minority would seem to challenge this thesis (though there may be differences between Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims in the expression of their faith that might have a bearing on their identification as Muslim and exposure to discrimination). Finally, a direct effect may operate through attitudinal and aspirational differences between religious groups, that impinge on, and may affect the 'success' of, labour market participation. (Brown, 2000b: 1059)

⁴⁷ Among men, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims have 37%, 29% and 22% managerial occupations respectively. The corresponding figures for women are 33%, 33% and 31% (ONS, 2006e: 156, Table A5.8). The profile of Hindu groups in these analyses tends to lie between those of Jewish and Buddhist groups on the one hand, and Muslim and Sikh groups on the other. No analysis is given for 'Christian' groups because of the problems of interpreting Census data noted in the previous chapter.

Lindley (2002) conducted a similar analysis on the same data set, but using slightly different statistical techniques. Her conclusions, perhaps unsurprisingly, were in broad agreement with Brown's (Lindley, 2002: 438). She did, however, conduct a specific analysis on the position of Muslims, which concluded that: *'Muslims do experience some unexplainable employment penalty, relative to other non-white religions, over and above all other characteristics (including ethnic differences and language fluency)'*. This is consistent with the operation of direct or indirect discrimination in the employment relationship, but the results also suggest that *'Muslims appear to be less assimilated and/or have less transferable human capital than other non-whites'* (Lindley, 2002: 439).

A more recent study by Khattab (2009) focuses on the way that different ethno-religious groups convert their educational qualifications into occupational positions. The focus is thus on both the *outcomes* of education (whether or not groups gain higher than average qualifications – this is *'educational advantage'*) and the *use* of education (whether or not groups gain higher than average employment position, *given their level of qualifications*). If a group has employment status higher than their qualifications (i.e. if they are *underqualified* for the jobs they hold), this would suggest they have *'occupational advantage'*; conversely, if they are *overqualified* (which suggests that they are unable to find work commensurate with their qualifications), they suffer *'occupational disadvantage'*.

The Christian White British (CWB) group is taken as the reference group. The database is a sub-sample of the Census for England and Wales (N=250,000), and the study is the first we have discovered to make 'No Religion' a category in quantitative work. The patterns of educational and educational 'advantage' and 'disadvantage' (compared with the CWB reference group) create an interesting and complex picture:

- (a) Groups with both educational and occupational advantage: Jewish White British; Non Religious White British and Other White British.⁴⁸
- (b) A group with educational advantage but neither occupational advantage nor disadvantage: Hindu Indians.
- (c) A group with educational disadvantage but neither occupational advantage nor disadvantage: Muslim Indians.⁴⁹
- (d) Groups with educational advantage and occupational disadvantage: Christian Black Caribbeans; Christian Black African.
- (e) Groups with both educational and occupational disadvantage: Muslim Bangladeshis; Muslim Pakistanis; Muslim Whites; Sikh Indians.⁵⁰

These findings suggest once again that it is a *combination* of race, ethnicity and religion that is important to the relative experiences of the different groups. They also suggest that these relative experiences vary between the two fields considered – the *outcome* of education and the *use* of the qualifications obtained.

It is not even clear that 'religion' as a whole plays a straightforward role, since there is at least one minority ethno-religious group – the Jewish White British – that is placed favourably on both dimensions, and the attribute of 'No Religion' (and 'Other' religion)

⁴⁸ These are groups whose members have higher qualifications than the CWB group, but who *also* have higher occupations *relative to their qualifications* than the CWB. Please note that the terms 'advantage' and 'disadvantage' are being used here in Khattab's sense, which is more general than elsewhere in this report.

⁴⁹ These two groups are about the same as the CWB group at converting qualifications into occupational position (at two different educational levels).

⁵⁰ These are groups who have lower qualifications, but do less well than CWBs occupationally, *even accounting for their lower qualifications*.

seems to create a similar situation for these other sub-groups of Christian White British ethnicity.⁵¹ Hindu Indians are also placed favourably vis-à-vis education, but are neutral occupationally. These findings compare with others which show Indian (or Chinese) minorities in a relatively favourable position educationally, sometimes, however, with much smaller sample sizes (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003; Skelton et al., 2007: 34).

Although Khattab does not couch a conclusion in quite these terms, the obvious interpretation, which corresponds to the findings of both Brown and Lindley, is that it is also a combination of external factors (including the possibility of racial, ethnic and religious discrimination and the effects of local labour market conditions) and internal factors (including Brown's *'attitudinal and aspirational differences'* and a range of cultural differences) that are responsible for the observed patterns.⁵² The whole pattern of findings involving the Black groups especially suggest that where discrimination is involved, it may consist of racial rather than religious discrimination.

In the remainder of this chapter, attention focuses on aspects of religious disadvantage (in the special sense used in this report), and on the discrimination practised by (rather than suffered by) members of religious groups. Reports of research into violence involving members of religious groups, and of religious 'hate crimes' more generally – which are important components of lived inequality – are reserved for the section on the Criminal Justice System in Chapter 6 below.

4.7 Religious Representation in the Public Realm

Position of the Christian Church: The privileged recognition of the Christian churches – and above all the Established Anglican Church – in the official life of the nation was noted in Chapter 2. Christianity has been prominent in Europe for at least 1,500 years (Billings and Holden, 2007); until the repeal of the law this year, it was the only religion to which the Blasphemy Law applied, and it still plays the major role in ceremonial state affairs (Weller, 2005), though more recently these have been opened up to other faiths. Although the British polity is perhaps moving step-by-step towards 'equal advantage of religion or belief', the process is by no means complete.

Religious Buildings: One aspect of the Christian heritage is its dominance of the British skyline. The question of discrimination against minority faiths in relation to planning permission for religious buildings has attracted considerable attention in recent years (Nye, 2001; Weller et al., 2001; Edge, 2002; Gayle and Naylor, 2002; Gale, 2004, 2005). Beckford et al., summarise the position by saying that planning processes surrounding the religious buildings of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs *'have frequently been problematic'* (2006: 54).

Nevertheless, Vertovek and Peach (1997) state that by the mid-1990s there were at least 839 mosques and a further 950 Muslim organisations in Britain, and McLoughlin refers to *'the pervasive Islamisation of the inner city'* in Bradford (2005: 1046), noting that the majority of Bradford's 75,000 Pakistani Muslims live within 5 square miles of the city centre, and that this area contains 44 mosques. There are currently 144 Hindu *mandirs* in

⁵¹ Any inference from this finding nevertheless needs to be made with great care, because of the uncertainty surrounding the 'Christian' response to the religion question in the 2001 Census in England and Wales (see Chapter 3 above).

⁵² Khattab says that *'it is probably not the colour of skin, although it is still important, but the meaning and values that the dominant group attaches to the skills and who possesses them [that makes the difference to occupational advantage]'* (2008:12). This comment seems to exclude the influence of the skills differentials themselves, as opposed to the perception of these differentials.

the UK –121 in England; 3 in Northern Ireland, 4 in Scotland and 15 in Wales (National Council of Hindu Temples [UK], 2008). Singh says that the modern *gurdwara* movement in Britain now embraces 250 Sikh institutions, including the £17 million building opened in Southall in 2003.⁵³ He calls this ‘*the premier symbol of Sikh presence in Britain, one of the new, emerging, “cathedrals” of multicultural Britain*’ (2006: 147). Singh also points to the changing role of *gurdwaras* over time, with social involvements including the provision of advice and learning centres, care for the elderly, ‘one stop shops’ for local agencies, and acting as centres of community development.

Planning processes in Britain may well have been ‘problematic’ in the past, but the significant number of religious buildings stand in stark contrast to the situation in France, for example, where it was not until the 1990s that any real change in attitudes towards minority religious buildings took place (de Galembert, 2005). This underlines the point that in addition to their important spiritual and social (or communal) functions (see, e.g. Singh, 2006), religious buildings symbolise the assertion by minority faiths of their right to representation in the public domain. This has far wider implications than the creation of sacred spaces, but can be seen to involve challenges to the secularisation process, Enlightenment thinking on the necessity of distinguishing the public and private domains, and, indeed, to the hegemonic Western definition of modernity itself (Eisenstadt, 2000).

The Media, Minority Religions and ‘Islamophobia’: On a different level, but one that is powerfully related to both religious recognition and representation, is the question of the way that minority faiths are treated in the media.

In this arena, it has been claimed that unacceptable anti-Islamic attitudes, or Islamophobia, are institutionalised, particularly in television. This might be seen as an aspect of religious disadvantage, since it involves unequal recognition or treatment in a public context, and there is said to be quite extensive research evidence for it (Conway, 1997; Allan, 1997; Ansari, 2002; The Media Diversity Institute, 2002; Poole, 2002; Allen, 2004 and 2007; Ameli et al., 2007; INSTED, 2007; Richardson, 2007).

The difficulty with this evidence is that it rarely derives from studies conducted with random samples of reasonable size in the given domain of interest, which also conform to the full requirements of quantitative and/or qualitative social science methodologies. As such, much of it is best described as ‘anecdotal’. It often consists of the reproduction of examples from the mainstream press that are regarded as displaying hostile stereotypes of Islam, with little analysis or commentary, as if the verdict of ‘Islamophobia’ were self-evident. There are a few studies of the reception of news coverage, especially of dramatic events such as 9/11, in (typically) small samples (Ahmad, 2006; Banaji et al., 2006; Harb and Bessaiso, 2006). And there are some recent studies of (Christian) sectarianism in the media in Scotland, including sports coverage of the proverbial contest between Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers (Adams and Burke, 2006; Bradley, 2006). There is also discussion of ‘Anglophobia’ in the Scottish sources, but this does not appear to have any religious dimensions (Bruce and Glendinning, 2003; McAspurren, 2005).

The problems in this area can be traced at least as far back as *The Conway Report – Islamophobia: a Challenge for us All*. This report probably did more to establish the currency of the term ‘Islamophobia’ in public life in Britain than any other single source.

As noted in Chapter 2, The Conway Report defines ‘Islamophobia’ in the first instance with reference to attitudes or emotions (*‘unfounded hostility’*) and then extends it as a

⁵³ In 2001, the figure was 202 in England and Wales, including 5 in Wales, 11 in Scotland and 1 in Northern Ireland (Weller, 2003).

concept to include their *'practical consequences'*, such as discrimination and exclusion. The main focus in this section will be on the direct expression of unfounded hostility in the media and elsewhere, but it is worth noting that the evidence provided by *The Conway Report* itself of adverse practical consequences suffered by Muslims is not extensive. There are descriptions of at most four specific incidents involving religious hostility or discrimination (Conway, 1997: 38, Box 16),⁵⁴ and the authors acknowledge that the analysis of the data available to them about social inequality and racist activity led to conclusions about a specifically religious component that were *'speculative'*. (Conway, 1997: 41) Nevertheless, the report claimed that 'Islamophobia' *'describes a real and growing phenomenon – an ugly word for an ugly reality'* (Conway, 1997: iii).

The Conway Report does, however, reproduce a number of examples of individuals identified in context as Muslim and represented in the media in an unsympathetic or unflattering light. As such, the examples constitute evidence of opposition, or even hostility to, Islam within the mainstream media. But this may not be sufficient by itself to constitute evidence of Islamophobia, for several reasons.

First, the definition of Islamophobia refers to *'unfounded hostility'*, so that it is not enough to show simply that hostility exists towards Muslims in order to demonstrate Islamophobia. It is necessary, in addition, to defend the judgement that the hostility is *'unfounded'* in the context of any given example; to show, in other words, that the description or the portrayal is an unreasonable one, given the specific individuals or events portrayed (see the discussion in 2.3 above).

Second, the genre of representation is a factor that must be taken into account in the analysis of meaning, in that cartoons, for example, involve caricature – that is, deliberate exaggeration or distortion.

Third, Islam will suffer a religious disadvantage (so that Islamophobia involves a specific virulence towards Islam) only if it is portrayed less favourably than other religions or belief systems (Is the portrayal of imams more hostile than the portrayal of bishops?). There is a need, in other words, to distinguish between general criticism of the way the media operates in Britain (which may be exemplified in some cases by its treatment of Islam or of Muslims), and an accusation of specific animosity. The reason for making the distinction is that the remedy differs between the two cases: either raise the general standards of media coverage on the one hand, or deal with anti-Muslim bias on the other.

Fourth, the guidance now offered by the law on religious hatred provides latitude for *'expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, insult or abuse of particular religions or the beliefs or practices of its adherents'* (RRHA 2006, Schedule, S.1, 29J). Is Islamophobia only involved when expressions of this type cross the line into incitements of hatred, or is it defined more narrowly, to include, say, every instance of dislike, ridicule or insult?

Fifth, it must be recognised that much of the British media coverage of Islam and of Muslims in the recent past has been related to armed conflicts between states that are sometimes seen to be defined in part in religious terms, or to social disorder involving the members of Muslim communities in Britain, or to specific terrorist acts aimed at civilian populations that are conducted – whether authentically or not – in the name of religion. It is not at all surprising that events of this kind will dominate the news. How often, then, does the presentation or the interpretation of events such as these amount to 'fair comment', and where, and if so how, does it cross the line into prejudice or discrimination aimed against Muslims? And in the absence of dramatic news events of these kinds, how

⁵⁴ The authors of the report say, however, that there are *'many other'* incidents known to them.

much coverage of religious or other issues relating to Islam or to Muslims might one expect to see in the mainstream media? What, therefore, are the benchmarks against which an allegation of Islamophobia is to be judged?

It is not argued here that it is an easy matter to draw any of these lines, or to make judgements about every individual case. The point, rather, is that *The Conway Report* did not dwell on the need to draw these lines, or the difficulties of judging cases, and in this it has been followed by much of the subsequent literature on Islamophobia, which now refers to Europe as well as the UK (EUMC, 2006a and b).⁵⁵ It is interesting to note that by 2004, Christopher Allen, whose work with both EUMC and FAIR has done much to popularise the idea of Islamophobia over the last decade, had reached a similar conclusion about this lack of empirical substantiation: *'the reality remains that very little research [on religion] has actually been undertaken that offers any concretised or grounded evidence'* (Allen, 2004: 11).

One exception to this general paucity of research is an article by Richardson (2001), which counts as the 'pioneer study' in this field. This paper analysed the coverage of Muslims in broadsheet newspapers in Britain over the period from October 1997 to January 1998. It found a tendency to associate Islam and Muslims only with negative news contexts (which may, of course, be the majority of news contexts), and to exclude Muslim voices from the coverage. The coverage was nearly all of non-British Muslims – nearly 90% of the reports (Richardson, 2001: 227) – reflecting the international situation of the time.

It is surprising that Richardson's approach was not pursued systematically until very recently, when a similar study appeared in July 2008 – after the literature review for this report had been completed. This is a study conducted by a team from the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies (Moore et al., 2008) of the coverage of Islam (and of Muslims) in the national UK press from 2000-2008. The findings show that the volume of news stories referring to Islam in Britain (or British Muslims) increased quite sharply in 2001-2 and 2005-6 – immediately following the 9/11 attack in the US and the 7/7 attack in London. These local peaks in coverage, however, combined with a steadily rising trend, which saw coverage increase almost tenfold over the review period, from 350 stories a year in 2000 to an estimate of nearly 3500 in 2008 (Mason et al., 2008: 9, Table 1). Richardson's coverage of international events had by now become thoroughly domesticated.

A sample of almost 1000 of these stories was chosen for further analysis (about 5% of all the news stories). The coverage in the sample was dominated by three 'news hooks': terrorism (or the war on terror), religious and cultural issues, and Muslim extremism, amounting to 36%, 22% and 11% of coverage respectively. The relative proportions of these stories, which together account for over two-thirds of coverage on British Muslims, were similar for the broadsheet and the tabloid press.

The most frequent discourses within this coverage linked Muslims to the threat of terrorism; viewed Islam as dangerous, backward or irrational; covered Islam in relation to multiculturalism, or spoke of Islam in terms of 'a clash of civilisations' or as a threat to the British way of life. As the authors comment *'four of the five most common discourses about Muslims in Britain in the British press associate Islam/Muslims with threats, problems or in opposition to British values'* (Mason et al., 2008: 15).

⁵⁵ As noted in Chapter 2 above, *The Conway Report* did at least attempt to explore the distinction between open and closed views of Islam. So far as we are aware, this initiative has not been followed up in the main empirical literature concerned with Islamophobia,

Further, an analysis of word associations found that a majority of the most commonly used nouns and adjectives held negative connotations – including ‘terrorist’, ‘extremist’, ‘cleric’, ‘Islamist’, ‘suicide bomber’, ‘convert’, and ‘militant’, ‘radical’, ‘fanatical’, ‘fundamentalist’, ‘extremist’, ‘militant’, ‘moderate’, and ‘evil’. The authors point out that:

this is not to say that these nouns were used inaccurately or indiscriminately: as our other findings suggest, if British Muslims are most likely to feature in news about terrorism, extremism or religious and cultural differences, then it is not surprising if the nouns used reflect these topics. What these findings do indicate, however, is the extent to which the dominant “news hooks” have implications on [sic] the way British Muslims are generally described (Mason et al., 2008: 15).

If the negative portrayal of Islam thus followed on from the newspapers’ choice of newsworthy topics, it was also compounded in some cases by ordinary kinds of journalistic faults, such as ‘*decontextualisation, exaggeration and misinformation*’ (Mason et al., 2008: 32). These problems are traced out in several stories that dominated headlines at various times in 2007-8, including the genetic dangers posed by first-cousin marriage, the analogy between Islamophobia and the situation in 1930s Germany, the Archbishop of Canterbury’s 2008 statement on *shar’ia* law, the existence of social separation in Britain along religious lines, and future demographic trends (Mason et al., 2008: 29-39).⁵⁶

An analysis of the sources quoted within the newspaper articles themselves creates a strong impression of the way in which Muslims are *talked about* – by politicians, other public figures, Criminal Justice professionals or campaign groups, for example – rather than *spoken with*. These four types of source account for over a half of all quotations about British Muslims, whereas The MCB accounts for 8% of quotations, radical Islamic groups 4% and Muslim religious leaders 3%. Although ‘the Muslim community’ is frequently the topic of debate, community sources were used in just 1% of quotations (fifteen in all), slightly ahead of the BNP’s nine quotations as a source of information about Muslims used by the mainstream national press! (Mason et al., 2008: 20, Table 4).

Overall, these studies add to the general sense that the public and official discourses surrounding Islam – in politics and the media, as well as sometimes in the academic world – take place in their own realm, which is established at some distance from the experience of participants closer to the ground. In the same way that Government policy-makers seek out (and in the process help to create) ‘community leaders’ to articulate a community view, so do newspapers – when they attend to Muslim voices at all – seek out community spokespeople to provide a Muslim reaction to the news of the day. It appears that the MCB fulfils this role for the national print media more than any other Muslim organisation, even though a very small fraction of Muslims name the organisation in surveys as representative of their interests or views.⁵⁷

It is possible that the focus on national media in these studies gives a slightly misleading view of press coverage in its totality, because local newspapers in areas with higher Muslim populations may cover a broader range of issues, with a more balanced representation of Muslim voices – this is our informal impression, for example, of the coverage in the *Bradford Telegraph and Argus*.

⁵⁶ We make no detailed assessment of whether Mason et al.’s strictures of the press are justified in all these cases. The analysis of demographic trends is a complex business, for example, and there are known to be concerns among health professionals about the incidence of genetic conditions among the children of first-cousin marriages (see Chapter 6 below). Whether or not particular press reports are well-founded, concern with these issues is by no means a ‘tabloid invention’.

⁵⁷ The fraction is 4% according to the Channel 4 Dispatches survey, and 6% according to the Policy Exchange survey by Mirza et al., 2008.

The tendency of the national press to promulgate partial descriptions of Islam and Muslims in negative news contexts nevertheless seems bound to generate broader effects, although it is not easy to establish exactly what these effects on general social relations are liable to be. There may well be a tendency to reinforce stereotypes among different sections of the national press readership. And, as has been mentioned, there is very little systematic research into television coverage.

Access to Alternative Media: When considering the question of the overall effects of media representation, it is important to remember that members of minority religions have access to a range of alternative media. For example, the Muslim population in Britain has widespread access to Arab television, such as *Al-Jazeera*, which provides them with alternative views of the world and enables them to judge British media representations and news reporting.

Harb and Bessaiso's research with British Arab Muslims in Wales notes both polarised 'East v. West' views and the spread of conspiracy theories with respect to the bombing of the twin towers. Their survey, which was carried out for Channel 4 *Dispatches* (2006), found that 45% of their respondents believed that 9/11 was a conspiracy, and 38% believed the same in respect to Princess Diana's death. Harb and Bessaiso link their findings to anti-Americanism and anti-semitism, tied to a strong religious identity and a sense of persecution. They observe that such views are notoriously difficult to shift, especially when reinforced by selective media viewing that supports, rather than challenges, them (Harb and Bessaiso, 2008: 1063).

Whatever the impact of the media on either Muslims or non-Muslims, modern communications technology can be used to propagate negative, conflictual views of the world and the stereotypical 'other'. Thus, the development of new means of communication can result, paradoxically, in the closure of dialogue between groups, rather than the opening out of new occasions for understanding.

Protests Against Cultural Representations of Religion: A different aspect of religion and cultural representation relates to protests by religious groups on the grounds of hurt, offence or 'blasphemy'. One of the first such objections was to the publication of Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* in 1988, protest against which involved a ritual burning of the book, public disorder, and the issuing of a *fatwa* by the Iranian Ayatollah Khomeini, sentencing the author to death (see Elst, 2001 for a general account, and M. Phillips, 2006a and b for the responses of the British Government). This incident can be said to have played a significant role in the political mobilisation of British Muslims (Samad, 1992) and to have thrown into sharp relief the conflicts that can occur between religious values and secular, democratic ones, such as freedom of speech and artistic expression, as well as what constitutes acceptable styles of protest.

More recent examples of religious protest in relation to the media are that by Christians against the televising of *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, which was first shown in London in 1993 and began touring the UK in 1995. And in 2004, Sikhs protested against the staging of the play *Behzti* in Birmingham, written by a Sikh woman, Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti. Protest against 'Jerry Springer' was led by the far-right organisation *Christian Voice* and was condemned by a number of Christian organisations/denominations; that against *Behzti* involved both local and national Sikh organisations, some of which, such as the Sikh Federation, were condemned by others as '*militants*' (Bassey, 2005).

Finally, the publication of twelve cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in a Danish newspaper in 2005 provoked another storm of protest by Muslims across the world, as well as leading to intensive argument in Britain about the apparently conflicting rights to

freedom of speech versus the right not to be exposed to religious offence (or racism). Despite – or perhaps because – the British Government discouraged publication of the cartoons, there was widespread debate about these issues, some of which were legally ‘solved’ by the passing of the Incitement to Religious Hatred Act in 2006 amongst widespread, and, indeed, ongoing, debate (see, for instance, Cohen, 2004; Baggini, 2004; Bleich, 2006; Carens, 2006; Hansen, 2006; Modood, 2006; O’Leary, 2006; Sivanandan, 2006; Goodell, 2007; Modood, 2007; Archbishop of Canterbury, 2008; British Humanist Association, 2008).

There are evidently some difficult issues involved in balancing the right to freedom of expression against the rights felt by the religious to protection from offence, although the repeal of the Blasphemy Law, and its replacement (in effect) by the Law on Religious Hatred have broadened the latitude of expression in recent years from the legal point of view.

The protests considered here raise some important sociological questions. For example, protest against religious offence has generally been dominated by Muslims, and it is a moot question as to whether other religious groups have been influenced by the apparent success of such action. Grillo reports: ‘*Only when protests turned violent, militants claimed, did anyone listen*’, citing a number of statements by young Sikhs that appear to support this view:

if some fool thinks he/she can mock our religion, mock our faith, use our faith as a joke and to humiliate us, then they got another think coming, mate. [Muslims] *hit hard anything that makes a mockery of them, so much so that people are afraid to tackle issues involving Islam.*

And: ‘[When they burned the Satanic Verses], *that soon put a stop to it*’ (cited in Grillo, 2007: 13). Nor is it only young Sikhs or Muslims who feel that it is only street level – often violent – protest that is effective (see the Hindu comments reported in Chapter 3). Casciani’s (2004) comment offers an apt conclusion to this section:

If you had to write a theatrical pitch for what Birmingham has just witnessed over the play Behzti, you could do it in seven words: play offends community, community protests, play cancelled. But that simple three act performance conceals a far more complex drama about how we all share the same space in a pluralistic society.

4.8 Disadvantage and Discrimination Practised by Religious Groups

Members of religious groups may be the main intended beneficiaries of the new legal framework, but they are also subject to it. A balanced presentation of the evidence must include examples where religious groups or individuals act to sustain inequality, unfair treatment or hostility.

Discrimination and Disadvantage in Employment or Service Provision: Savage (2007) refers to cases brought against Catholic schools by non-Catholics and Farnell et al. (2003) cite similar examples by FBOs in the community and voluntary sector. These are employment cases where it would be difficult to claim that religious exemptions applied.

Humanists claim that non-religious belief systems are not accorded equal weight to religious ones in schools. They also claim that they are inadequately represented on governing bodies and other consultative committees (BHA, 2005). The latter would fall under the heading of ‘belief disadvantage’ in the terminology of this report.

Additional issues are raised by Harris et al. (2003), who found that religious contributors to FBOs often expect their money to be spent on members of that religion. They also found

that older people expect to be cared for *'by their own'* in times of need. Is this an acceptable facet of multiculturalism or an instance of religious discrimination? There are clearly some difficult justice issues to be resolved in this area.

Denial of Religious Recognition: A very clear example of discrimination practised by religious groups involves the denial of legitimacy to denominations or branches of religions. One illustration of this is Judaism's refusal to accept Messianic Jews as part of the Jewish faith, despite their fulfilling all the biological and doctrinal criteria of 'Jewishness', other than that relating to the coming of the Messiah. Antagonism to Messianic Jews is reported to come not only from Jews, but from members of some Christian denominations (Kollontai, 2004). Another example is Islam's rejection of Ahmadis' claim to be Muslims.

Expressions of Religious Antagonism: Another dimension that falls broadly under this heading consists of expressions of antagonism by one faith towards another, or against people who hold non-religious views, or against particular categories of people, such as gay men and lesbians. An example of this is the use of both electronic and print media in ways that are frequently offensive and sometimes come close to incitement to religious hatred. A cursory reading of some Islamist websites illustrates this graphically, but so, too, do printed publications. *The Westphobia Report* (London Bible College, 1999) cites numerous examples of comments from a range of Muslim publications that can most charitably be described as unlikely to enhance inter-faith relationships. Publications by such groups as *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* (1995; 1997; 2000a and b; 2002) are even more extreme in their descriptions of Western society and Christianity. And some right wing Christian websites contain material on non-heterosexuality that expresses what many would regard as decidedly *un-Christian* views.

Religious Conversion: An important aspect of the legislation on religion or belief centres around the right to believe, or not to believe, in a God or a religion and the right to change one's religion. Under the heading of discrimination by religious groups in contemporary Britain, it is probably the issue of conversion which is most problematic for some organised religions.

In one sense, the treatment of the Messianic Jews by mainstream Judaism (above) illustrates this clearly, for as Kollontai points out, modern Judaism is happy to accept as Jews people who do not practise their religion. What it is *not* willing (or able) to do is accept Jews who takes on a new spiritual identity (2004: 198). She comments:

A Jew who professes a belief in Jesus as Messiah, recognises the importance of Torah and continues to live a Jewish life is proclaimed a non-Jew, while a Jew who has rejected belief in God, places little, if any, importance on the Torah and does not practice a Jewish life-style remains a Jew in the eyes of the Jewish authorities.
(Kollontai, 2004: 203)

Islamic attitudes to conversion are strictly one-way – that is, individuals can convert to Islam, but Muslims cannot convert to another religion. In some parts of the world apostasy still carries the death penalty, and even where this is not the case, apostates are subjected to gross human rights abuses (Meral, 2008). While this is not the case in Britain, there have been cases of harassment and violence practised against converts from Islam to Christianity, including death threats, vandalism and physical assaults (Meral, 2008; *Telegraph & Argus*, 2008).

Engineer (2008) says that this is a jurists' injunction, rather than a *Qur'anic* one. Writing of the current situation in India, he observes that Article 25 of the Constitution guarantees

individuals the right to convert to any religion, but that rumours of Christians attempting to convert Muslims are currently leading to extreme violence, including the murder of priests and doctors. He cites Heredia's writing on the issue of conversion: '*conversion can destabilize the life of a people, unsettle painfully balanced boundaries, scramble carefully constructed identities ...In situations of sharp and hostile religious boundaries between communities, conversion represents the ultimate betrayal.*' (Engineer, 2008) The situation in the UK differs significantly from that on the Indian sub-continent, of course, but the existence of transnational networks and associations means that the production and consumption of media, politics and religion in Britain are strongly affected by structures, relationships and events in India and Pakistan (Samad, 1992; 1998; Allen and Barrett, 1996).

It may be, too, that these observations go some way towards explaining the reluctance of some Muslim communities to mix, or allow their children to mix, with non-Muslims in certain contexts and the pressure they put on their young adults to marry kin (often from specific areas of the Indian sub-continent). This brings us back to ethno-religious communities in Britain and raises issues for the religion or belief strand of the equalities agenda.

4.9 Key Points

- There is considerable *ethnic* variation within minority (non-Christian) religious groups in Britain, and *religious* variation within black and Asian minority ethnic groups.
- The minority religious population of the UK is heavily concentrated geographically, in London and a small number of other urban centres in England.
- Groups defined by religious self-ascription suffer a range of socio-economic inequalities in relation to fields such as housing, education, employment and economic participation, but it is more difficult to show that religious identity plays an independent role in creating the inequality.
- Minority religious groups suffer from religious disadvantage in a number of respects.
- There is a widespread belief in the prevalence of both religious discrimination and Islamophobia in the media, but much less systematic evidence to support either belief. There is, however, some work on the national print media that shows how the selection of news topics, possibly exacerbated by other journalistic techniques, works to create a generally unfavourable media image of Islam (and Muslims) in Britain.
- Faith communities:
 - Have a dual aspect, promoting equality in some respects and sustaining inequality in other respects.
 - Are cross cut by social divisions of age, gender, social class and other factors.
 - May be based on common culture as much as shared religion.
 - Can sustain both internal solidarity and external hostility.
- (Ostensibly) religious organisation and leadership can be used to promote non-religious political agendas, and it is not always clear who speaks for minority religious communities.
- There is some evidence of minority religious groups perpetrating disadvantage, discrimination and hostility against non-members, and in some cases against ex-members or would-be members.

CHAPTER 5

RELIGION: GENDER AND SEXUALITY

5.1 Introduction

We have allocated a separate chapter to gender and sexuality because (a) both are central to religious reproduction and thus assume a high profile with respect to the religion/belief legislation; (b) they highlight a number of potential tensions between different equality spheres (see Appendix 4), and (c) the Government emphasis on FBOs is accompanied by a new-found interest in women, particularly Muslims, as is illustrated by the large number of documents, speeches, reviews and consultations now circulating (e.g. Blunkett, 2003; Home Office, 2004; Mahoney and Taj, 2006; Raj, 2006; WEU, 2006; DCLG, 2007).

We feel it is important to contextualise our discussion on religion, gender and sexuality against a backdrop of the inequality, oppression and violence experienced by women and LGBT people more generally. This chapter, then, is divided into four sections. The first focuses on disadvantage and discrimination on the basis of gender; the second analyses the role of religion in relation to women's inequality and oppression; the third looks at discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and the fourth analyses the role of religion in the oppression of non-heterosexual people.

There are five important points to keep in mind throughout the chapter:

1. The literature frequently fails to distinguish between ethnicity and religion, and sometimes uses the former as a proxy for the latter.
2. Cultural practices are sometimes confused with religious requirements.
3. There is an important distinction between theology/doctrine and its interpretation/ use.
4. The interpretation of theology/doctrine varies by both strand (or branch) of religion, as well as by individuals.
5. Religious self-definitions can conceal secular and/or political orientations and actions.

SECTION 1: DISADVANTAGE AND DISCRIMINATION – GENDER

5.2 Gender Inequality, Disadvantage or Discrimination: The Wider Context

The term 'gender' is a relational concept applying to both men and women, though much of the literature uses the term as if it applies only to women. This is not, perhaps, surprising, since women are systematically disadvantaged relative to men in virtually all spheres of the public and private arenas.⁵⁸ They are generally poorer than men, not least because much of their work is in the home, which is unpaid (Skinner, 2006; Moullin, 2007). They have less power than men because they are less likely to hold decision-making roles (EOC, 2007b and c).⁵⁹ They also suffer high levels of physical and mental violence, from forced marriage, through domestic violence, to murder (Home Affairs Select Committee, 2008).

There is a vast literature on gender inequality in Britain that can only be touched on here, but which clearly demonstrates women's inequality relative to men, and it is within this

⁵⁸ Two exceptions here are that young men's experience of violent, stranger, crime is 80% higher than young women's (Walker et al., 2006) and that women live longer than men – albeit in relative poverty since their retirement income is 40% less than men's (WEU, 2006).

⁵⁹ Only 20% of MPs are women (EOC, 2007a; UK Parliament, 2007); only 10% of FTSE 100 Directorships are held by women (EOC, 2007a and b), and only 9% of High Court and more senior judges are women (EOC, 2007b).

broader context that the potential additional disadvantage/discrimination on the basis of religion and ethnicity needs to be assessed. The material below is a brief summary of a wide range of material from the WEU (2005), the EOC (2006b; 2007a and b) and Sigle-Rushton and Perrons (2006). Perhaps the most striking document in this sphere is the EOC's *Gender Equality Index* (2007c). This not only produces a raft of statistics on women's inequality in contemporary Britain, but projects the (shocking) number of years – on present progress – that it will take women to 'catch up' with men. The EOC acknowledges considerable progress in some spheres, but comments: '*progress has often been painfully slow ... [in some areas] the index suggests that the agenda has stalled or worse yet we're actually going backwards. Unless further action is taken, nothing will ever change.*' (2007c: 1).

Education: though girls are out-performing boys educationally (DfES, 2006), gendered subject choices (at 'A' level and in post-compulsory education/training) have long-term consequences for jobs and salaries. Boys' choices prepare them for well-paid jobs involving science and technology, whilst girls' choices lead to low paid 'caring' and administrative roles (DfES, 2005; HESA, 2005; Learning and Skills Council, 2005). Partly as a consequence of this, 65% of jobs are gender segregated (ONS, 2006b; EOC, 2007c).

Employment Sectors and Pay: (See Chapter 6) there is an overall pay gap between men and women of 17% [15% in the EU] (EC, 2008). Women in full-time work are paid on average 17% less per hour than men, and 38% less when part-time pay is compared (ONS, 2006; EOC, 2007c). Women's family responsibilities mean that they are more likely than men to be in part-time work. Women are significantly under-represented in managerial/executive posts (EOC, 2007c) and in the political arena (EOC, 2007b).

Labour Market Participation, Families and Care: domestic and childcare responsibilities result in women moving in and out of the labour market over the life cycle which has significant consequences for pay, promotion and pensions (Sigle-Rushton and Perrons, 2006). This varies by religion: Muslim women have the highest economic inactivity rate of all faith groups – 68% compared with 28% for Christians and around 35% for Hindus and Sikhs (Open Society Institute, 2005a). Religion is also associated with labour market re-entry and there are particularly low rates of return to work for Muslims and Sikhs.

An EOC survey looked specifically at barriers to employment and promotion for VME women in Scotland (EOC, 2006a). However: (1) this research is almost entirely about *perceptions*; (2) the examples of 'discrimination' provided are not entirely convincing; (3) many of the 'barriers' identified as impacting adversely on minority women apply equally to majority ones, and (4) many barriers that are specific to minority ethnic women relate to personal/community issues, rather than discrimination – lack of language skills, overseas qualifications, lack of support for family and childcare responsibilities. Nevertheless, it was found that:

- Attitudes to Muslim women wearing the *hijab* are seen to be associated with post 9/11 reactions.
- The examples of discrimination given relate more strongly to racism than to age, class or gender.

The EOC's (2007a) statutory investigation into Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black Caribbean women and work in England, Scotland and Wales represents an important

breakthrough in attempting to overcome the failure of statistics to combine gender and ethnicity.⁶⁰ It identifies five ‘employment gaps’:

1. Low participation rates (Buckner et al., 2007; EOC, 2007a).
2. Unemployment (EOC, 2007a).
3. Progression at senior levels (EOC, 2006b).
4. The pay gap (Platt 2007a).
5. Occupational segregation (Platt, 2007a; Buckner et al., 2007; EOC, 2007a).

However, caution needs to be exercised against too ready an acceptance of discrimination as responsible for the differences identified. First, the EOC’s enquiry rests heavily on *perceptions*, rather than *evidence*, of discrimination. And such instances of ‘discrimination’ as are provided are at least partially explicable in terms of individual characteristics and employment histories – both of which are related to ethnicity and religion.

This highlights a second major difficulty with the investigation, which is the researchers’ determination to ‘*move away*’ from cultural, ethnic or religious influences to focus on labour market discrimination. For whilst it is right to examine work-based barriers to access and progression, a partial and distorted picture is presented if ethno-religious influences are not also considered. These include: large families; extended caring responsibilities; definitions of women’s roles as home centred; the limitation of higher education to local universities (see Bolliver, 2005, who highlights late and fewer applications by minority ethnic students and their intention to live at home while studying); constraints on participation in CV enhancing activities, and the inability or unwillingness to travel for work.

5.3 Violence Against Women

Whilst some of the evidence of women’s inequality in various arenas is striking (see Chapter 6), nowhere is it more graphically illustrated than in the sphere of violence – which takes place across the world:⁶¹

Violence against women continues unabated in every continent, country and culture. It takes a devastating toll on women’s lives, on their families and on society as a whole. Most societies prohibit such violence – yet the reality is that too often, it is covered up or tacitly condoned. (Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary, 2008)

The extent and severity of violence against women on a global scale should not be underestimated: the World Bank found that domestic violence against women of reproductive age caused as many deaths as cancer and more deaths than road traffic accidents and malaria combined (World Bank, 1993. See also Pickup, et al., 2001; House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2008). In the UK, the vast majority of violence against women (other than trafficking for sexual purposes) is carried out by known perpetrators, such as partners or former partners. This includes rape, domestic abuse and murder.

The British Crime Survey [BCS] reported that in 1999, 61,000 women in England and Wales were raped and that 754,000 women had been raped on at least one occasion

⁶⁰ Though there are some questionable elements to the investigation, not least the fact that discrimination (rather than disadvantage) was *assumed* from the outset when it should have been a research question.

⁶¹ See, for instance: Grewel and Kishore (2004) and Shuzhuo et al. (2004) on the abortion of female foetuses, now increasingly taking place in the UK, and linked to ethno-religious boy preference; Waldby (2003), Heisse et al. (1999) and Ki-moon (2008) on domestic violence; UNFPA (2000) and Thapar-Björkert (2007) on ‘honour’ killings; UNFPA (2000) on trafficking; UNICEF (2006) on FGM, and IPAS (2008) on unsafe abortion.

since the age of sixteen. It is estimated that only 20% of rapes (and 18% of incidents of sexual victimisation) are reported to the police. Of those rapes that *are* recorded, 45% were carried out by current partners with only 8% constituting stranger rape (Myhill and Allen, 2002). Rape convictions have been decreasing over time and currently stand at only 5% of the number of offences recorded (Walker et al., 2006; EOC, 2007c). This, together with the way that they are treated in court (Clare, 2008) is unlikely to encourage women to report rape.

Domestic violence is the largest single category of violence against women in the UK and has the highest repeat rate of any crime, at over 25% of all reported crime in the BCS in 2000 (Walby and Allen, 2004; HO, 2007a). As with other forms of violence against women, the available statistics are a significant under-estimation of the actuality of crime, since (a) it is estimated that only 1 in 10 incidents of domestic violence are reported to the police; (b) recorded statistics refer only to severe, recognisable, reported abuse (Mirlees-Black, 1999, cited in HO (2007b); (c) the BCS data exclude sexual violence; (d) domestic violence is not a legally defined offence, so it not identified separately in police statistics, and (e) domestic violence applies only to ‘adults’, so that young people under the age of 18 are not included in statistics collected.

Summers and Hoffman (2002) found that 1 in 4 women experience domestic violence in their lifetime by current or former partners.⁶² Stanko (2000) carried out a national reporting exercise on one day in the year which revealed that formal agencies received the equivalent of one report of domestic violence *for every minute of the day*. 16% of all violent incidents recorded by the police consist of domestic violence.

The vast majority of violence against women is carried out by men, but Donovan and Hester (2007a) found that 40.1% of women in same-sex relationships had also experienced domestic abuse. Warrington’s (2001) research shows that 50,000 abused women and their children are forced to flee their homes every year. The Women’s Aid Federation carries out an annual survey of refuges to provide a snapshot of various aspects of their use on one day in the year. The 2004-05 statistics indicate that 19,836 women and 24,347 children were in refuges across England, with an additional 19,060 women and 23,445 children in emergency accommodation and 776 women and 902 children in second stage properties (Williams, 2006). A particularly disturbing finding from this survey is that the number of disabled women using domestic violence safe housing is increasing yearly – between 2004-05, numbers increased by 140% (Williams, 2006: 5). A particularly disturbing finding from this survey is that the number of disabled women using domestic violence safe housing is increasing yearly – between 2004-05, numbers rose by 140% (Williams, 2006: 5). All these figures represent the ‘tip of the iceberg’ of women who flee domestic violence, given the lack of refuge and other safe provision and the fact that most women are not eligible for refuge places.

In the UK, the cost of violence against women in both individual and societal terms is massive, including its psychological and psychiatric effects – depression, anxiety, despair, post traumatic stress and suicide attempts (Pickup, 2001, cited in HO, 2007a). In purely economic terms, Walby (2004) estimated the overall cost of domestic violence in England and Wales as £25.3 billion annually [updated for 2005-06 to reflect population numbers and prices] (HO Select Committee, 2008).

⁶² According to the BCS, 1 in 6 men also suffer domestic violence (Home Office, 2007); Hester and Westmarland (2007) found that GBT men accounted for 0.4% of domestic violence incidents recorded by the Northumberland police between 2007-07, and 35.2% of respondents in Donovan and Hester’s (2007) national survey said that they had experienced domestic violence in same-sex relationships.

The scale of the problem is illustrated by the fact that one (London based) women's advice centre alone – Southall Black Sisters [SBS] – receives over 1,000 cases of violence against women every year, including not only domestic violence, assaults, forced marriage,⁶³ the abduction of girls and women, female genital mutilation, acid attacks, violence related to dowry demands, and murder (cited in Centre for Islamic and Middle Eastern Law [CIMEL/INTERIGHTS], 2001).

Around two women a week are killed by their partners and former partners, a figure that accounts for 1/3 of all female murder victims (Home Office, 2008; HoC Select Committee, 2008). 25% of all murders in the UK are of women (Refuge Women's Association [RWA], 2003) and 50% of all female murder victims are killed by their current or former partners (Flood-Page and Taylor, 2003). These statistics might give us pause for thought in assuming that 'honour' killings are restricted to minority ethnicities and religions, though it is true that it is only within minorities that culture/ religion constitutes a justificatory ideology that is sometimes used as a defence in court (Okin, 1999; Phillips, 2003; Raz, 2006; Meeto and Mirza, 2007).

5.4 Discrimination against Women on the Basis of Religion or Belief?

In addition to the difficulties already flagged up in terms of both defining and measuring discrimination, there is a further problematic issue. This concerns the question of whether actions are theologically or culturally defined, which could be relevant to individuals' rights under the law. We touched on this in Chapter 3 in discussing the demands made by religious groups for special provision and/or exemption from British law (e.g. the provision of *halal* meat in schools and the right not to wear motor cycle helmets). But of particular relevance to this chapter are religious/cultural requirements with respect to female dress, i.e. the wearing of items of clothing or other symbols signifying a particular religious identity.

Though there have recently been cases of conflict between employees and employers about wearing crosses or crucifixes (see Chapter 6), it is in terms of Islamic dress that the majority of issues have arisen, notably the *hijab* (headscarf), *niqab* (face veil) and *jilbab* (full-length gown). The concern with Muslim women's dress has long been politicised in Muslim societies across the world, but it has only recently become an issue in Western Europe. The banning of the *hijab* in French schools brought accusations of Islamophobia from across the continent, despite the fact that Jewish *yamoulka* (skullcaps) and Christian crosses of any significant size are also banned. It is also despite the fact that this is illustrative of French society's commitment to *laïcité* (see Fekete, 2004; Lyon and Spini, 2004; Laborde, 2006; Thomas, 2006; Choudhury, 2007).

In Britain, too, there have been a number of cases regarding Islamic dress, some of which have merely 'hit the headlines', whilst others have involved legal challenges. An example of the former is the furore that greeted the former Home and Foreign Secretary's announcement of his intention to ask women to remove *niqabs* when they came to consult him because these interfered with communication and relationships (Straw, 2006). Another example is the Bishop of Rochester's call to ban the veil in public on security grounds. The Bishop, who is the most senior Asian Anglican and expert on the *Qur'an*, added that he saw nothing in the *Qur'an* that required the wearing

⁶³ Throughout this report, we use the term 'forced' to indicate any marriage that is undertaken without the full consent of both parties (see the Muslim Arbitration Tribunal [MAT] for a detailed definition of five categories of marriage, 2008: 6-9).

of face veils. Subsequently, senior Muslim peer, Lord Ahmed, also spoke out against the *niqab* as ‘a barrier to integration in the West’ (Herbert, 2007), and the MCB said that religious scholars were divided over veiling as being Islamically required (Abdulla, cited in BBC, 200).

All the cases relating to religious dress that went to tribunal and/or court involved schools (Gies, 2006). In 2005, a fourteen year old girl was refused permission to wear the *jilbab* in school. The Appeal court ruled in her favour, but the House of Lords overturned this on the grounds that the school’s uniform policy did not breach the girl’s right to manifest her religious beliefs under article 9 of the ECHR because it allowed the *hijab* and *shalwar kameez* [trousers and long-sleeved knee-length overshirt] (House of Lords, 2006). Another case in 2006 involved a school refusing permission to wear the *niqab*, a decision that was subsequently supported by the High Court on the grounds of (a) security, and (b) teachers’ need to ‘read’ students’ faces as part of the teaching:learning process.⁶⁴

A high profile case which reached the House of Lords was that of a Muslim primary school teaching assistant who was suspended and later dismissed for insisting on wearing the *niqab* in class on the grounds that this interfered with her ability to do her job (of helping children to learn English). The courts ruled against her on the basis of the requirements of the teaching:learning process. These cases raise different issues for the equalities legislation, including questions relating to definitions of religious requirement and the age at which an individual is deemed able to make decisions on these.

SECTION TWO: THE ROLE OF RELIGION – GENDER

5.5 Religion, Ideology and Gender Oppression

Religion is implicated in women’s inequality and oppression, as well as violence against them in a number of ways, though it may be worth reiterating the point made in sections 5.1 to 5.3 above, that in this it does not differ from secular society. It is also worth noting Phillips’ (2007) concern that secular feminism can be used to attack religion and religious women. Dobash and Dobash suggest that the seeds of the subordination of women and their subjection to male authority and control are institutionalised in the patriarchal family and supported by economic, political and religious belief systems that make this seem ‘*natural, morally just and sacred*’. (1980: 33) Jasinski and Williams (1998) observe that in many cultures, religion is used to support the contention that it is men’s duty to discipline their families. Both Young (1993) and Corrin (1996) implicate religious values (particularly on sexual purity) in violence against women, and Pickup (2001) refers to the Christian concept of forgiveness, and prayer for change, as influencing attitudes to violent abusers. Muslims link marriage with the maintenance of *izzat* (honour) and its breakdown with *sharam* (shame), both of which are the responsibility of women, who are thus under immense pressure to remain in abusive relationships (Beckett and Macey, 2001; Meeto and Mirza, 2007).

⁶⁴ The security argument is in line with the limitations on religious rights specified in Article 9 (2) of Human Rights legislation. Additionally, covering heads and faces in ways that prevent recognition is prohibited by British law and the police can require removal of such covering. We know of no instances of this happening to Muslim women, but do know of young men being asked to remove ‘hoodies’.

5.6 Religion and Patriarchy; Men and Masculinities

Turner (1991) states that all the Abrahamic traditions [Christianity, Islam and Judaism] are patriarchal and that this permeates their theologies and practices. De Ferrari points to the '*persistence of an anthropology that assigns a 'special nature' to women*' (2000: 25/6) and Lerner observes that a basic gender assumption of patriarchal society is that:

Men and women are essentially different creatures, not only in their biological equipment, but in their needs, capacities and functions. Men and women also differ in the way they were created and in the social function assigned to them by God. (1993: 4)

This is not the place to analyse the theological justifications for treating women as subordinate to men, though it is worth noting both their existence *and* their influence on women as well as men. This also raises the difficulty of separating culture and religion since, by definition, religion is created and sustained within a cultural context.

The links between religion and masculine identities have been highlighted by Archer (2001), Macey (2005) and Hopkins (2006) to show how young men use a religious identity to construct a particular form of masculinity in relation to Muslim women and 'the West'. In all cases, 'Muslim' identity was categorically male (*'the brothers'*); Islam was seen to enhance male bonding and strength (*'Muslims are all one'; 'you got brothers all over the world'*), and a 'religious' identity was related to politics, power and the domination of both women and non-Muslim groups. These studies indicate the *primacy* of an Islamic identity, but raise questions about the meaning of this, since the young men concerned were not necessarily religious.

5.7 A Special Role for Women?

Brown observes that the concept of 'complementarity' is central to an Islamic understanding of the relations between the sexes as operating in harmony with the skills and natural attributes of men and women. 'Complementarity' asserts that biological differences determine how to be a good Muslim, and that society should be ordered for the fulfilment of men's '*regency on earth*' (2006: 424). Brown notes that this leads to women's roles always being defined *in relation to* men – as daughters, sisters, wives and mothers. Nevertheless, she suggests that global Islam could provide a platform from which British women might attain their rights, citing Dwyer's (1999) finding that educated women can use the *Qur'an* to invoke religious rights. This view proposes that Islam can provide a framework to open pathways towards feminism (Afshar, 2007: 419). A fundamental challenge to this approach is articulated by Moghissi (2000), Manji (2005) and Hirsi Ali (2006) who state that it is the *Qur'an* itself – not cultural misinterpretations of it – that discriminates against women:

No amount of twisting and bending can reconcile the Qur'anic injunctions and instructions about women's rights and obligations with the idea of gender equality. Regardless of the interpretation of the Qur'an and the Shari'a, if the Qur'anic instructions are taken literally, Islamic individuals or societies cannot favour equal rights for women in the family or in certain areas of social life ... If the principles of the Shar'ia are to be maintained ... women cannot enjoy equality before the law and in law. The Shar'ia is not compatible with the principles of equality of human beings (Moghissi, 2000: 140-41)

A 'middle' way between these views of Islam as promoting versus preventing the attainment of women's rights came from a roundtable on 'honour' crimes (CIMEL/INTERIGHTS, 2001). This suggests working through both religious and secular channels

(religious leaders *and* UN committees). Woodhead, too, adopts a pragmatic perspective in suggesting that Muslim women are more likely to achieve equality by working *within* their own religious culture than by rejecting it (2008: 56).

Whatever the theological rights and wrongs of these views,⁶⁵ it is probably wise to evaluate their pragmatic utility against the backdrop of the fact that all religions hold clear conceptions of gender roles that result in prescriptions for behaviour. These are commonly articulated as ‘equal but different’⁶⁶ – a phrase that tends to ring warning bells for Western feminists who are only too aware that this is normally an acronym for male power. So it is with women and religion.

One reason for religions having a particular focus on women is their intimate involvement in biological, cultural and religious reproduction as the bearers and principal socialisers of children. Women’s reproductive capacity and social location mean that men exhibit concerns around women’s sexual purity. At a personal/individual level, this relates to paternity, but in cultures that emphasise ‘purity’, it determines *structured* relationships and status (see Bhatti, 1988; Moghissi, 2005). All this underpins attitudes to sexuality, definitions of what is considered ‘normal’ and ‘appropriate’, and how to control this – which, in religious terms, is through marriage.

This can lead to extreme attempts to control women, described by Afshar (1989; 1994) as ‘policing’ and involving not only parents, but other male relatives and the wider community (Scott, 2003). It is linked to both family honour and masculinities (Jacobsen, 1998; Macey, 199b; Dwyer, 1999, 2000; Beckett and Macey, 2001; Archer, 2003) and is justified in the name of religion.

Efforts to control sexuality are not, however, restricted to Islam. Aune and Sharma’s (2008) research into a conservative Evangelical Christian community illustrates how discourses of purity impact on young women’s dress and behaviour – as well as instilling a deep sense of guilt in those who transgress religious norms. It also shows how a heteronormative definition of sexuality is maintained through dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity.

Confirmation of Aune and Sharma’s finding of the emphasis on purity within Christianity comes from research on an African Pentecostal church (Hunt and Lightly, 2001; Hunt, 2002). Two aspects of this church are relevant to other parts of this review: first, its rapid expansion, and second its emphasis on the maintenance of boundaries between itself and wider society. The latter illustrates the part played by religion in enabling migrant communities to maintain the cultural and religious traditions of the homeland. But this raises the question of whether Government funding of minority religious communities could exacerbate tendencies towards separatism, rather than social cohesion. Mukta (2000) and Searle-Chatterjee (2000) highlight a different, but related issue through their finding that some Government funded Hindu projects are politically, rather than religiously motivated and are promoting Hindu nationalism. And Samaroo’s (2005) research found examples of Muslim domestic violence refuges being run by imams’ wives who tried to persuade women to return to violent partners. On a different level, the growth of Pentecostal Christianity in Britain needs to be examined in the context of the shift towards Evangelical Christianity among Anglican ordinands (Gilliat-Ray, 2001). Both carry potential implications for the equalities agenda in the field of religion/belief because of their tendency towards conservatism, particularly in relation to gender and sexuality.

⁶⁵ Although it is worth noting that there is a difference between the *Qur’an* and the *Hadith* in terms of the ‘space’ that they afford for interpretation.

⁶⁶ The ‘different but equal’ argument underpins not only gender, but racial discrimination.

We will return to these questions later. Meanwhile, it is worth referring briefly to some diverse examples of gender discrimination that are rooted in religion and its construction of gender roles. For example, the Catholic Church prohibits women from becoming priests and treats women religious [nuns] in a deeply unequal way (Utti, 2006). The Anglican Church admits women to the priesthood, but has only just agreed (2008) that they may become bishops and the issue of women priests remains a source of conflict within the wider Anglican Communion, particularly outside the UK. Sani and Reicher talk of the danger of schism (2000: 95); Crockett and Voas (2003) and Yip and Keenan (2004) make similar points with reference to homosexuality. There could be far-reaching implications here in relation to Christianity's response to the religion and belief legislation.

Another area in which gender inequality is clear is that of women's position in FBOs, where, despite being over-represented in voluntary work, they are rarely found in positions of leadership or decision-making. In addition to this 'glass ceiling' a number of illustrations of gender inequality are provided by Farnell et al's research, summarised by the senior national community development professional who said: *'The activity that is faith based is also in our view misogynist'*. In a different way, the operation of *'benevolent sexism'* (Glick and Fiske, 2001) is illustrated by the committee member of a Hindu temple who responded to a question about the part played by women in the running of the temple: *'Every day women look after the kitchen very well, and wherever there is need, they are there. General maintenance, cleaning and hovering...'* (cited in Farnell et al., 2003: 34).

5.8 Marriage and Family Life

Most, if not all, religions see heterosexual marriage as the only appropriate relationship within which to engage in sex and to produce and rear children, though they vary in their emphasis on these. Yet it is within the private sphere of marriage and the home that many women experience their greatest inequality and oppression, and in which the law is most difficult to enforce. In this sphere there are a number of areas in which religious doctrines are in tension, if not conflict, with contemporary civil law (and wider social attitudes).

These are thrown into sharp relief by the existence of religious courts or tribunals, such as the Jewish *Beth Din* which have operated in Britain for over a hundred years, and the Muslim *Shar'ia* Councils which have been operational for around thirty years. Both are restricted to religious adherents who voluntarily agree to accept the ruling of the courts, which are thus binding on them, though not implemented by secular authorities. However, three important caveats need to be considered: first, that the voluntary nature of acceptance of religious rather than secular law can sometimes be more apparent than real, particularly in patriarchal communities; second, that voluntary acceptance of religious law does not mitigate its negative effects on women; and thirdly, since 1997, the Muslim Arbitration Tribunal has – in their words – *'exploited a loophole'* in the 1996 Arbitration Act to significantly increase their powers in a way never seen in Britain before (Taher, 2008). Of particular concern is the fact that the rulings of tribunals are open to implementation through secular law, which could thus be used to enforce decisions that are actually illegal. An example here is a disputed inheritance case between three women and two men in which the tribunal awarded twice as much to the sons as to the daughters.

Other examples of the tensions that exist between religious doctrine and secular thinking include:

- It is taken for granted that individuals can choose to marry, or not marry, and that they have full freedom of choice of marriage partner. Yet some religions stress that (heterosexual) marriage is the only 'natural' way of living [Judaism] and others that it is virtually a religious requirement [Islam], where marriages are sometimes

arranged at birth, (MAT, 2008).

- The age of marriage is restricted by law to adulthood, but in Islam marriage is expected to take place early and is permissible from puberty. Some religions refuse to accept the validity of marriages outside the faith (Judaism). Islam regards marriages between Muslims and non-Muslims as highly transgressive, though it allows men (but not women) to marry Christians and Jews (Al-Yousuf, 2006); British law requires that marriage be monogamous, yet an exception is made for Muslim men whose polygamous marriages are recognised if they are contracted outside the UK.
- A woman's right to refuse sex within marriage is protected by the law on rape, but Muslim women are expected to be available on demand: '*A wife may not deny herself to her husband.*' (Kidwai and Huda, 2007: 35).⁶⁷ Some research in the USA with religious leaders is illuminating on this issue. Asked '*What happens if a woman doesn't want sex?*' an imam suggested that it would be unwise for her to refuse sex to her husband, since he might then decide to re-marry (Levitt and Ware, 2006: 1184). This issue is particularly relevant to forced marriage and has been termed 'statutory rape' by Idrus and Bennett (2003).
- Whether or not to have children, and how many, is generally assumed to be an individual decision, but this is not entirely the case in Judaism or Catholicism because of their strict rules on contraception.
- Women (and men) are protected by law from violence within marriage, but the *Qur'an* permits the '*limited physical chastisement*' of women (Mather, 1998).
- The right to divorce is institutionalised, but not accepted by Catholicism, only allowed through men in Judaism, and is generally the prerogative of men in Islam, though women *can* sometimes instigate divorce. Decisions on the custody of children following divorce rest with the courts, but is generally awarded to the mother. This is not the case in Islam, and is a factor that keeps many women in unhappy, and sometimes violent relationships. In addition, Jewish and Catholic rules on divorce can put women in positions of extreme financial difficulty since secular law expects child maintenance to be paid on divorce, not separation (Chantler, 2004).

5.9 Consultations with Muslim Women

The 'war against terror' is generally held to have had a negative impact on Muslim communities and the relationship between them, the Government, and non-Muslims in general. However, as part of the attempt to understand and prevent young men's radicalisation, a range of fora, networks, advisory groups and consultations with Muslim women have been funded by the Government. These have enabled women to articulate their own concerns, many of which are relevant to this chapter, and, indeed, the review as a whole. The outcomes of three examples of these are attached as Appendix 4, but we would draw attention here to some issues raised by the women that have clear implications in the field of equalities:

- Lack of knowledge/understanding by many Muslim women of their human rights, particularly in relation to forced marriage, child abuse and 'honour'-related violence.
- Lack of knowledge/understanding by professionals and service providers of such cultural factors as 'honour' affects their ability to protect vulnerable members of society.

⁶⁷ It should be noted that the 'conjugal exemption' which basically permitted rape within marriage was not repealed in a number of European countries until the 1990s (Romito, 2008).

- Lack of knowledge/understanding by policy-makers and practitioners of the distinction between religion and culture and the link between this and: *'the current stigma that favours 'political correctness' instead of the pursuance of justice in the name of human rights.'* (Mahoney and Taj, 2006: 18).

Pressure of space prevents detailed discussion of many of the issues raised by Muslim women during consultations or of others that arise from research into violence against women. We feel, however, that attention needs to be drawn – however briefly – not only to forced marriage, but to domestic violence and so-called ‘honour’ killings.

Forced Marriage: There are three important points to keep in mind in relation to forced marriage. The first is that forced marriage is not restricted to Muslim groups, though the vast majority of such marriages of which we are aware do take place in Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim communities – 65% and 15% respectively (HoC Home Affairs Committee, 2008). Secondly, forced marriage is specifically forbidden in the *Qur'an*, though not in UK criminal law, as noted below. Thirdly, there is a crucial distinction between arranged and forced marriage (for a clear exposition of the varieties of arranged marriages, see Shaw, 2001, particularly in relation to consanguineous marriages and the reasons for these and MAT, 2008, on the distinction between religious versus cultural approaches to marriage). Basically, however, arranged marriages involve the full consent of both parties, whilst forced marriages involve some form(s) of coercion or force, which can involve:

physical and sexual violence, threatening behaviour, imprisonment, abduction, mental and social pressures, including emotional blackmail, restrictions on lifestyle such as limitations in movement, association, dress, education and career choices, oppressive financial controls, and other demeaning, humiliating and controlling actions. (SBS, 2001: 4)

As with so many areas discussed in this report, lack of reliable statistics makes certainty about the extent of forced marriage impossible (Samad and Eide, 2002). The Home Office investigation (2000) concluded that they are rare, but the picture that emerges from individuals and agencies dealing with forced marriage and from the two consultations with Muslim women reported in Appendix 3 does not support this conclusion (see Keighley Domestic Violence Forum [KDVF], 1998; Gores, 1999; Macey, 1999b; Rehman-Sabba, 1999; SBS, 2001; Mahoney and Taj, 2006; Raz, 2006; West Yorkshire Police, cited in Bhatti, 2007).

Bhatti's (2000) research, though restricted to one city and her own experience of a forced marriage, leads her to conclude that *all* intercontinental marriages are forced. The logic of this is supported by Beckett and Macey (2001) on the basis of experience with distressed students being forced into marriage with a cousin from a remote village in Mirpur with whom they have nothing in common – attitudes, values, education, skills, and not even a shared language. Relevant here is Idrus and Bennett's (2003) reference to ‘statutory rape’ and the clear association between forced marriage and mental breakdown, self-harm and suicide (Newham Asian Women's Project [NAWP], 1988a and b).

A recent publication by MAT states that nationally over 70% of intercontinental marriages are coerced or forced, referring to this as: *'the crisis that has loomed within the Muslim community ... for the past two decades'* (2008: 9). Despite this statistic – and the reality that 47,000 spouses entered Britain last year alone – (UK Border and Immigration Agency, 2007), MAT's ‘solutions’ to the problem do not including anything that would affect immigration legislation.

It is worth noting at this point that though in 2006 the Government decided not to

criminalise forced marriage (Forced Marriage Unit [FMU], 2006), it introduced the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 which takes the form of a new part 4A of the Family Law Act, thereby also placing this legislation in the wider context of domestic violence and family proceedings (HoC Home Affairs Committee (2008). It is also the case that existing law could be brought to bear in at least some of the more extreme cases, such as those involving physical and sexual violence and abduction. And the law in what at first sight appear to be unrelated areas, such as immigration, can have a considerable impact on forced marriage. An example here is the 'primary purpose rule', introduced by the previous Conservative Government to curb abuses of immigration, and repealed when Labour gained power. Under strict immigration legislation, many parents had begun to arrange marriages for their offspring within Britain, but as soon as the primary purpose rule was waived, parents returned to favouring close kin marriages with partners from the Indian sub-continent, as is illustrated by the rise in applications for visas for marriage purposes from 255 in 1997 to 1,132 in 1998 (Home Office statistics cited by Alibhai-Brown, 1998).

Domestic Abuse: Though domestic violence cuts across ethnicity, social class and religion, it is linked to inter-continental marriage (Samaroo, 2005) and to migration more generally (Akpinar, 2003). And here the law and service support impact on women's ability to escape violent partners. For example: gendered risk is not recognised as grounds for asylum (Crawley, 2001; RWA, 2003); the 'two year rule' renders immigrant women subject to deportation unless they can provide legal evidence of violence (Meeto and Mirza, 2007), and eligibility for service support, including refuge places, is denied to many women because of their immigration status (Burman and Chantler, 2004a; HoC Home Affairs Committee, 2008). There is also the suggestion that service providers are afraid of being seen as racist if they intervene in 'community affairs' (Burman, et al., 2004; Johal, 2003; Meeto and Mirza, 2007).

'Honour' Killings: There is growing awareness of 'honour' killings in Britain and wider Europe, and though accurate statistics are limited,⁶⁸ in global terms, the UN (2002) estimates that around 5,000 women every year are murdered by family members (including mothers) in the name of 'honour'. As with forced marriages, the role of the CJS is important, particularly in terms of sentencing, because this sends out messages about what is, and is not, acceptable. There have been cases of judges imposing light sentences for murder because, they have said, 'family honour' was involved. Such cases feed the impression that 'cultural sensitivity'/'political correctness' is more important than women's lives, as suggested by Mahoney and Taj (2006). Of relevance to both domestic violence and 'honour' killings is Kelly's (2005) reminder that the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action declared that culture, tradition and religion cannot be used by states to avoid their obligation to protect women.

SECTION 3: DISADVANTAGE AND DISCRIMINATION – SEXUALITY

5.10 Sexuality, Inequality, Disadvantage or Discrimination: The Wider Context

As with section 1 on disadvantage and discrimination on the basis of gender, we feel that it is necessary to locate our discussion of the role of religion in homophobia in the context of wider society. However, here it has to be noted that if the statistics on various aspects of discrimination against women are complex, and in places confusing, this applies even more

⁶⁸ Marilyn Mornington, a district judge who chairs the Northern Circuit Domestic Violence Group, says that the basic problem for the legal system is that: *'people will not give evidence against perpetrators, sometimes because they support what they're doing ... and, even if they don't support it, they feel it would be against the honour of their community to stand out against it'* (cited in Malik, 2005).

to data on sexual orientation. This is partly because in the UK, non-heterosexuality [LGBT] is a latecomer to legality, let alone the equalities agenda. And even today, the collection of factual information in this sphere is only due to come into operation in 2008-09 (HO, 2007c). The lack of statistics is also partly because many LGBT people feel unable to declare their sexuality in the face of widespread social disapproval. This means that such statistics as *are* available on the disadvantage, discrimination and violence suffered by LGBT people almost certainly underestimates its extent.

Notwithstanding this, there is a considerable amount of information available on the repercussions of being LGBT in today's world. These range across a number of arenas, including education, health, the workplace and the experience of being the victim of hate incidents, crime and violence – up to and including murder.

Children and Young People: *Childline* estimates that around 2,700 young people access their services every year to talk about sexual orientation, homophobia and homophobic bullying, together with fear of telling parents about their sexual identity (Childline, 2006).

Schools: The HoC Education and Skills Committee (2007) says that homophobic bullying is a growing problem in schools and exceeds general bullying [10-20% of children are said to experience general bullying, compared to 30-50% who experience homophobic bullying] (see also Stonewall/DfCSF, 2005). A survey of 1,145 secondary school students carried out by Hunt and Jensen (2006) found that 65% of young people experienced homophobic bullying in schools. In faith schools, however, this rose to 75%, and students were less likely to report it. Teachers are also implicated, as one student indicated: *'It's a Catholic school ... and we are told 'gay people will go to hell because the Bible condemns it' ... It's horrid, you just want to go and cry at some of the remarks made by teachers. It's just not fair'*. (cited in Hunt and Jensen, 2006: 10)

The types of bullying experienced in schools include: verbal abuse: 92%; malicious gossip: 76%; ignored and isolated: 58%; physical abuse: 41%; vandalism and theft of property: 30%; death threats: 17%; threats with a weapon: 13%, and sexual assault: 12%. Hunt and Jensen note that 58% of young people do not report bullying, and of those who do, 62% say that no action was taken. 50% of teachers do not respond when they hear homophobic language.

Commenting on this research, Hartnell (2007) – who experienced extreme homophobic bullying at a faith school run by Benedictine monks – says that this means that 143,000 secondary school pupils suffer name-calling; 64,000 are physically attacked and 26,000 experience death threats. He notes that teachers often join in the 'joke', or ignore incidents: *'Ears all too often turn deaf; eyes turn blind. There is so much avoidance of this problem. That's a breach of the duty of care.'* (Hartnell, 2007).

Ellis and High (2004) found that young LGB people were at risk of violence and victimisation – verbal abuse, isolation and physical assault – on the streets as well as on school premises. Mason and Palmer (1995) found that 78% of LGB young people under 18 had experienced verbal abuse and 23% had been physically attacked by other pupils.

Health: Fish (2007) reports that as few as 13% of young LGB people have disclosed their sexuality to their doctors (see also, Allen et al., 1998) and that when they have, a number of GPs have informed their parents without consent. Fish observes that many children know they are LGB by the age of 11 or 12, but do not 'come out' until they are 14 or 16, leaving them to face several years of isolation.

In the realm of **physical** health, lesbian and bisexual girls are more likely to smoke (Austin

et al., 2004; D'Augelli, 2004); they are also seriously over-represented in relation to alcohol consumption and binge drinking (Austin et al., 2007). Gay and bisexual young men are more at risk of illicit drug taking (Austin et al., 2007). Marshall et al.'s (2008) review of the research found that the odds of substance abuse among LGB youth is on average 190% higher than for heterosexual youth; 340% higher for bisexual youth, and 400% higher for females. In terms of **mental** health, Fergusson et al. (1999) say that LGB young people are at increased risk of mental health problems; McNamee (2006) found depression to be the most common, and Remafedi et al. (1998) found a greater likelihood of attempted suicide among LGB young people.

The Workplace: Until recently some occupations have been officially closed to non-heterosexuals, including all the armed services (which revoked the ban in 2000). The childcare sector, too, held the view that LGBT people were not suitable to work with children, and the Christian Churches either ban gay men from the priesthood or tolerate them to a limited degree. Presumably, a number of non-Christian religions hold similar attitudes. This is not to say that LGBT people did not hold posts in all these sectors, but they did so at the cost of concealing their sexual orientation.

Nor should it be assumed that LGBT people are now fully accepted in the workforce, despite the implementation of the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003. Savage (2007) reports that 470 cases of alleged discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation were brought to ACAS between January, 2004 and August, 2006. These were predominantly related to bullying and harassment – most commonly verbal abuse and threats, though physical assault and sexual harassment were also involved. Patterns of homophobic discrimination raise similar questions to those of religious discrimination about management attitudes and workplace cultures.

Despite the use of ACAS, Cowan (2007) found that many employees found it difficult to report bullying and harassment, due to the workplace culture, fear of lack of confidentiality, career development concerns, peer pressure, and seeing anti-gay bullying as less serious as other forms of bullying or harassment. This is despite its negative effects on physical and mental health. Cowan cites estimates by UMIST that more than 2 million people in the UK experience bullying at work and DoH indications that stress-related sickness costs more than £5 billion a year.

Homophobic Violence: There is no statutory definition of a homophobic incident, though the CPS applies the same definition as that used for racist incidents: *'Any incident which is perceived to be homophobic or transphobic by the victim or by any other person'* (CPS, 2007: 5). Homophobic crime falls under section 146 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, which does not create new offences, but *'imposes a duty on the courts to increase the sentence for any offence aggravated by hostility based on a number of factors including the victim's sexual orientation (or presumed sexual orientation).'* (CPS, 2007: 8)

Notwithstanding the fact that the CJA was implemented in 2005, the Home Office acknowledges that *'we have very little national data to draw on with respect to homophobic hate crime.'* (2006: 1) It notes, however, that young LGBT people are likely to suffer proportionately higher rates of homophobic incidents ranging from bullying to physical assaults; that those living in rural areas experience higher rates than urban dwellers, and that the LGBT community is likely to experience repeat victimisation and an acceleration in seriousness (HO, 2006: 2). It also observes that under-reporting is a significant issue.

Stonewall's (1995) research into violence against lesbians and gay men in Britain found that 1 in 3 gay men and 1 in 4 lesbians had experienced at least one violent attack between

1990-1995 (Mason and Palmer, 1995). A survey by their National Advisory Group (1999) found that of a sample of 2,656 LGBT people, 2/3 had been the victims of at least one homophobic incident, including threats and intimidation, verbal abuse and physical assault. Only 18% of the sample reported the incident to the police, partly out of fear that the police would respond in a homophobic manner. In the 12 months to January, 2006, the Metropolitan Police alone recorded 1,359 incidents of homophobic hate crime, estimating that as much as 90% of such crime goes unreported (Home Office, 2006). In a report on the murder of a young barman, *The Independent* stated that he was the 141st victim of a homophobic assault in *one borough* in London, and the 31st in 2 1/2 months (Milmo, 2005).

SECTION 4: THE ROLE OF RELIGION – SEXUALITY

5.11 Religious Doctrine and Ideology: Heteronormativity and Homophobia

Much of what we have written about religion and gender is relevant to sexuality. The fact that all religions have strong views on what constitute ‘normal’ and ‘acceptable’ means of expressing sexuality – indeed, of being ‘male’ or ‘female’, ‘man’ or ‘woman’ – indicates that religion is involved in the promotion of heteronormativity. The central role accorded to marriage and procreation by most religions⁶⁹ is indicative of their strength of commitment to heterosexuality and the reproduction and transmission of religion to future generations. Thus, it is not surprising that religions appear to be having most difficulty with the sexual orientation aspect of the equalities legislation.

Crockett and Voas (2003) suggest that the Church reflects wider social attitudes in its difficulty with homosexuality, though there are conflicting opinions on the extent of prejudice against LGBT people and the role of religion in this. The survey commissioned by Stonewall in 2006 (N=2,009 adults) found that the majority of religious people support laws to protect the rights of lesbians and gay men; 84% disagree that homosexuality is morally wrong under all circumstances; 88% support legislation making it illegal to incite hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation, and 91% believe that homophobic bullying in schools must be stopped. However, religion was seen by many respondents to be a major cause of anti-gay prejudice (Cowan, 2007).

Religious and social attitudes to homosexuality are illustrated by the fact that whilst civil partnerships between same-sex couples are now legal, Britain is not yet willing to call them marriages. However, some Christian denominations confer church blessings on civil partnerships, though the law does not allow them to marry same-sex couples.⁷⁰ Other denominations and non-Christian religions are more antagonistic to anything outside the heterosexual norm (whether gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender or transsexual) and in almost – if not all – cases they can produce fundamentalist⁷¹ readings of the Bible, *Qur’an* or *Torah* to justify their stance. The Anglican Church is probably the most liberal in terms of sexuality and now accepts that some of its priests are gay – though it has not felt able to condone the *act* of homosexuality.

Despite its relative liberality, Crockett and Voas (2003) suggest that the Anglican Church is suffering from a crisis around homosexuality⁷² which they link to (a) lack of consensus

⁶⁹ In reserving a special place for celibacy, the Catholic Church is the exception to this.

⁷⁰ There is currently a furore surrounding the discovery that an Anglican priest recently blessed the civil partnership entered into by a bishop in the USA.

⁷¹ We use the term to indicate the literal reading of the Holy Books.

⁷² This suggestion is supported by the facts that (a) a number of (mainly African) Bishops are refusing to attend the forthcoming Lambeth Conference because of their disagreement with the Church’s stance

in British society on sexual morality and (b) because they see religion as inherently resistant to change, due to its role as a defender of inherited values and repository of tradition.⁷³ They also suggest that the general trend towards acceptance of gay sex masks a growing gulf between liberal and conservative views in the population as a whole, but especially among Christians where there are ideological, gender and generational divisions. They conclude that the statistics for Britain and other advanced industrial societies: *'should disabuse us of the liberal temptation to suppose that homosexuality is now condemned by only a small minority.'* (Crockett and Voas, 2003:3.2)

Yip and Keenan (2004) agree that the Anglican Church is suffering a crisis around homosexuality. They locate this in an international context, noting the potential influence of non-European members of the Anglican Communion. 17.5 million Anglicans are Nigerian, a country not known for holding liberal attitudes towards homosexuality. Similar considerations apply to the Catholic Church in which liberal priests and religious have concerns about the traditional attitudes of the Nigerian Church hierarchy (Utti, 2007).

A counterbalance to this, however, comes from the South African Archbishop [Emeritus] Desmond Tutu. In a Radio 4 interview in 2007, Tutu commented on the worldwide furore that greeted the election of Gene Robinson, the first openly gay man to serve as an Episcopal [Anglican] Bishop in the USA. Tutu accused the Church of having an *'obsession'* with gay priests, and said that the Gospel message is being undermined by *'extreme homophobia'*. Calling on the Archbishop of Canterbury to make the Church a welcoming place for lesbian and gay people, he commented:

God must be weeping looking at some of the atrocities that we commit against one another. In the face of all of that, our Church, especially the Anglican Church, at this time is almost obsessed with questions of human sexuality. (Tutu, 2007)

Notwithstanding pressures on the Anglican Church's guarded acceptance of homosexuality, Yip's 1998 survey (published 2002) of lesbian, gay and bisexual Christians in Britain points to their growing confidence to challenge the Church on both its theology and practice. In the wider social context of equality and human rights legislation, then, it may be that any attempt by the Church to retreat, rather than progress, its stance on sexual orientation will be vigorously challenged.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Crockett and Voas' warning not to assume widespread liberality in relation to sexual orientation needs to be read in light of the class, ethnic and religious demography of the UK.

5.12 Religion, Social Policy and Discrimination

Cowan (2007) notes the view that LGB people are not suitable to work in the childcare sector. This view is perhaps related to the myth that gay men are more likely to abuse

on homosexuality, and (b) the Church's refusal to invite the first openly gay Anglican Bishop to the Conference (BBC, 2008).

⁷³ At one level, it is difficult to disagree with Crockett and Voas' view of organised religion as inherently conservative and resistant to change. However, this neglects the fact that – internationally and historically – religion has been centrally involved in revolutionary social change in, for example, North and South America and India. In the UK, too, both the Church of England and the Catholic Church have radically challenged Government policy in the socio-economic and immigration arenas, and some Anglican social welfare projects are highly innovative.

⁷⁴ Two of Yip's findings are relevant to this report: (a) 97% of respondents strongly agreed that religion encourages heterosexism in society, and, (b) 96% said that it contributes to homophobia in society (Yip and Keenan, 2004).

children than heterosexual ones, when, in fact, the opposite is the case (Patterson, 1992). It is a view that may have influenced attitudes to non-heterosexual people and children more generally.

An industrial tribunal recently found the Church of England guilty of employment discrimination against a gay youth worker (BBC, 2008). Notwithstanding the tribunal's decision, the Bishop of Hertford continues to claim that the man was not discriminated against on the basis of sexuality, but because the Church only approves of sex within marriage.⁷⁵

Similar discrimination has been found among Evangelical FBOs in the voluntary sector (Farnell et al, 2003). This has implications for equalities legislation, particularly in the context of the growth of this branch of Christianity and its popularity within Anglicanism (Gilliat-Ray, 2001).

Hicks (2003) analyses Christian writings on lesbian and gay parenting and refers to a '*Christian homophobic discourse*' that constructs homosexuality as diseased and dangerous. He analyses the Christian Institute's publication of material in support of Morgan's (2002) book *Children as Trophies?* which claims to produce evidence that '*same sex parenting is bad for kids*' (Christian Institute, 2002). This was part of a highly organised and well-funded campaign to oppose all forms of lesbian and gay parenting, timed to coincide with a Parliamentary debate on a change to the Adoption and Children Act 2002 to allow applications from unmarried couples, including lesbians and gay men.

Hicks locates this incident within a broader anti-gay agenda being promoted by some Christian organisations in the UK and USA (2003: 1.1; 1.2). At the time of the House of Commons' debate, the Christian Institute sent copies of Morgan's book to every Member of Parliament, together with the results of a survey (funded by them) which claimed that 71% of respondents were against adoption rights for gay men, a poster and a briefing paper.

Hicks' paper raises a number of broader issues. First is the fact that some right wing Christian organisations, both in the UK and the USA, appear to be extremely well-resourced (see also Association of Chief Police Officers [ACPO], 2005 on this issue). This gives them the power (particularly in an age of instant global communications) to peddle a gospel of hate, rather than the one of love that most believers see as the very basis of Christianity. Secondly, it raises the question of potential influence, not only on 'ordinary' people's attitudes, but also on decision-making in the legal and policy realms. Was it merely a coincidence, we wonder, that some of Morgan's homophobic discourse was repeated in the Parliamentary debates on amendments to the Adoption and Children Act 2002? The Anglican Lord Bishop of Chelmsford, for example, not only reiterated traditional Judaeo-Christian teaching on the family, but used Morgan's actual words, highlighted below:

*The Judaeo-Christian ethic clearly emphasises that it is within the context of the committed heterosexual relationship of marriage that the paramount interests of the child are best served. All of us emphasise that it is the children who must be our paramount concern ... **Children are not pawns or trophies.** They need and deserve to be cared for and nurtured ideally within a home environment in which the*

⁷⁵ We are not in a position to evaluate the sincerity of the Bishop's claim, but it throws into sharp relief such issues as exemptions from aspects of the religion and belief legislation. And insofar as such claims are rooted in strongly held (transcendental) beliefs, it highlights the tensions, contradictions and genuine dilemmas inherent in the legislation.

complementarity of the sexes is expressed by a male and female parent. (Bishop of Chelmsford, 2002, cited in Hicks, 2003)

5.13 Negotiating Religious Prohibitions

It is clear from this chapter that many, if not all, the world faiths have clear conceptions of what constitutes appropriate sexuality and its expression through heterosexual marriage. It is also clear, however, that all religions have adherents whose sexual orientation and practise is LGBT. These believers have clearly found ways of negotiating their identities in relation to religious doctrine, the public and the private, and – in some cases – the intersection between culture and religion.

An extreme case of this concerns Muslims because, relative to other world faiths, the Islamic prohibition on same-sex relationships is so clearly stated in its religious texts (the *Qur'an*, *Shari'ia* and *Hadith*) that it has a far-reaching impact on cultural as well as religious definitions of what constitutes acceptable sexuality. This extends across the individual, micro, mezzo and macro levels of social structure and organisation to constitute one of the clearest examples of the power of belief.

Yet even in this context, Yip's (2002; 2004) research with lesbian and gay Muslims of South Asian heritage, illustrates how individuals can negotiate and manage identities and social relations at the individual, interpersonal and intergroup levels. The participants in Yip's research had developed widely varying strategies for coping with the dissonance between their sexuality and Islamic teaching, and the demands of family, community and mosque. These sometimes varied by context and often involved drawing on both their own and Western cultural traditions (see Bose, 2000, and Roald, 2001). Thus, despite the power of religious doctrine and cultural ideology to structure both attitudes and actions, individuals retain the ability to resist these and to negotiate, instead, their own definitions of reality.

5.14 Key Points

- There are high levels of gender inequality in the UK and other societies, with women being disadvantaged relative to men in most arenas.
- Religion is implicated in the production and reproduction of gender inequality and oppression in both the ideological and theological domains.
- The concern with gender and sexuality is linked to religious reproduction and leads to a focus on 'purity', the specification of 'appropriate' male and female roles, and an emphasis on heterosexual marriage as the only legitimate expression of human sexuality. This promotes and sustains heteronormativity.
- While social attitudes to LGBT people have generally improved over time, most religions (or denominations) remain negative and antagonistic. This can promote – and certainly attempts to justify – homophobia.
- It is in relation to the sexuality legislation that religions, FBOs and religious individuals are having the most difficulty and there is evidence of discrimination against LGBT people in access to employment.
- There is evidence of harassment and bullying of lesbians and gay men in the workplace. There is also some evidence of conflict between Christians and LGBT people in the workplace.
- There is some evidence of growing mobilisation by 'far-right' Christian groups (see Appendix 4).
- There is a widespread perception that Muslim women are discriminated against in access to the labour market and service provision. However, though the evidence for

disadvantage is clear, that for discrimination is considerably less so.

- In the spheres of gender and sexuality – as elsewhere – inadequate and potentially inaccurate (or even non-existent) statistics remains a problem, as does the failure to differentiate between ethnicity and religion.

CHAPTER 6

RELIGION AND EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

6.1 Religion in the Workplace

Variations in access to employment by religion and ethnicity are discussed elsewhere in this report (see Chapters 4 and 5), but different questions arise in relation to potential disadvantage or discrimination on the basis of religion in the workplace itself. These range over a number of dimensions, from pay and promotion, to institutionalised procedures – both formal and informal – that impact on people’s ability to practise their religion.

As with many parts of this report, some information refers to ethnicity, rather than religion, so that interpretation of the data in this section must bear in mind the general points made in Chapters 2 and 4 above.

One indication of the reasons for the lack of specific information about religion in the workplace is the finding of one survey that only 20% of employers monitored religion (Adams and Carter, 2007). This may be symptomatic of a more general neglect, since the National Employment Panel found a surprising lack of awareness about ethnicity and race, let alone religion or belief, among ‘*over a thousand businesses*’ surveyed. 42% of the employers could not explain why race equality might be a business objective, and no less than 83% of employers did not believe they would face formal investigation or legal action from employees over race equality issues (Pell, 2007:13). Since this is thirty years after the original legislation in the field, it is to be hoped that the same situation will not be found in thirty years time in relation to the legislation on religion or belief. There is also the point that the focus on the public sector in this Chapter mainly reflects the relative availability of information, and should not be taken to indicate the existence of a more favourable climate regarding religion or belief within the private sector.

Differential Pay (Men): Berthoud found that when education, age and other factors are controlled for, there remains an ethnic ‘deficit’ or ‘penalty’ in average male weekly earnings compared to white male earnings (2000, Table 14: 408):

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Average Weekly Pay</i>	<i>Deficit (%)</i>
White	£332	-
Indian	£309	7%
Caribbean	£251	24%
Pakistani/Bangladeshi	£203	39%
African	£200	40%

Differential Pay (Women): Platt’s (2007a) investigation for the EOC of full-time pay gaps between men and women by ethnic group found:

- **Hourly Pay:** A substantial full-time hourly pay gap for women from *all* ethnic groups relative to white men, and for all minority group men, other than Indians.
- The average hourly pay gap for minority women (13%) is almost three times as high as that for minority men (5%).
- Pakistani women have the highest pay gap among women at 28%, compared with the pay gap among white British women of 17%. Bangladeshi men have the highest full-time pay gap among men (39%).
- Indian, Pakistani, Black African and white women are paid less per hour in full-time

work than men from the same ethnic group, except for black Caribbean women who are paid marginally more per hour than Black Caribbean men. *Indian –women: £10.28; men: £12.45; Pakistani – women: £8.31; men: £9.32; Black African – women: £9.38; men: £10.38; Black Caribbean – women: £10.50; men: £10.34.*

- Higher qualifications make little difference to the pay gaps suffered by women from all ethnic groups, relative to white men qualified at the same level. However, being higher qualified decreases the pay gap for most groups of men compared to their white counterparts, though for Black African men the pay gap actually increases (to 15%).
- **Weekly Pay:** There are very substantial full-time weekly pay gaps for women from all ethnic groups relative to white men, and for all minority group men except for Indians. The average weekly pay gap for minority women (20%) is over three times as high as the average weekly pay gap for minority men (6%).
- The estimated pay gaps for Black Caribbean women double from 9% (full-time hourly pay) to 18% (full-time weekly pay).
- The weekly pay gaps also show an increase on hourly pay gaps for Pakistani women (35%) and Bangladeshi women (33%), compared with a weekly pay gap of 24% among white women. Among men, Bangladeshis again have the highest weekly pay gaps at 46%. *Indian – women: £397; men: £515; Pakistani – women: £316; men: £380; Black African – women: £368; men: £430; Black Caribbean –women: £397; men: £429; white – women: £369; men: £485.*

It should be noted, however, that statistics on women's pay relative to men's need to be interpreted with some caution, particularly in relation to ethnic differences. For example, the proportions of women in paid employment vary by ethnic group (see the next paragraph), as does the tendency to work part-time. Age profiles also vary and changes occur over the life cycle. Thus, as Platt notes, women with very different characteristics are being compared.

Economic Participation Rates: The Report of the National Employment Panel (Pell, 2007) is entitled '60/76' in order to highlight the discrepancy between the employment rate of all minority ethnic groups (60%) and the white population (76%) according to recent Labour Force Surveys. But this difference involves considerable variation between ethnic groups, and between the genders. Indian men have almost the same level of participation as white men (78% to 80%); Indian women have the highest minority participation (62% compared with 73% for white women). On the other hand, Bangladeshi men have the lowest rate among men (57%), and Pakistani and Bangladeshi women share the lowest rate among women (24%) (Pell, 2007: 56). This is a good illustration of the point that overall figures on ethnic inequality often conceal almost as much as they reveal.

Progression: The ACAS research reported below (Savage, 2007) includes allegations of discrimination on the grounds of religion in relation to both recruitment and promotion. Interestingly, these came particularly from non-Catholics working in Catholic schools.

Workplace Policy, Practice and Provision: On a different level, the religion or belief legislation raises a number of issues around workplace policies, practices and provision with respect to minority faiths. For example:

The Christian Calendar: The fact that work is organised around the Christian calendar can disadvantage other religions whose festivals and holy days do not include Christmas, Easter or Sunday (see Sharp, 2002).

Working Hours: Similar problems apply to the issue of conventional working hours in the UK which may interfere with religious practice on, or in preparation for, holy days. It is noteworthy that the dominant theme of calls received by the ACAS helpline – from both employers and employees – related to problems around working hours, time off or leave to meet religious obligations (Savage, 2007).

Facilities for Religious Practice: The ability to fulfil faith requirements varies not only by religion, but also by denomination, tradition (e.g. Orthodox v. Reformed Judaism), gender, and individual interpretation, all of which could lead to problems in interpreting the legislation. For instance, some Muslims may demand the provision of a private prayer room and its use at specified times; others state that it is acceptable to combine the requirement for daily prayer outside working hours. Some Muslims may demand separate prayer spaces for men and women; others will accept mixed facilities. Lack of provision of *kosher* or *halal* food on works' premises is seen as an issue for some, but not all believers. Sharp's (2002) research on Muslim police officers raised this (together with lack of prayer facilities). There appears to be little allowance made for the effects of fasting during Ramadan.

Dress Codes and Religious Symbols: EOC research (2006a) suggests that though women perceive discrimination to be related more strongly to racism than to any other dimension of identity – age, class, gender or religion – negative attitudes to Muslim women wearing the *hijab* are seen to be associated with post 9/11 reactions. However, whilst we have reported elsewhere on a number of cases of conflict over Muslim women's dress in the education sector (see Chapter 5), we are not aware that this has been an issue in the workplace. Sikhs being exempted from the legal requirement to wear safety helmets on building sites was touched on in Chapter 3. Many employers, including the police and armed forces, as well as a range of retailers have opted to change their uniform policies to accommodate religious requirement for both men and women.

However, in 2006, British Airways [BA] suspended an employee for wearing a Christian cross, despite allowing Muslims to wear *hijabs* and *taweez* (lockets) and *Sikhs* to wear turbans and *karas* (bangles). BA subsequently changed its policy to allow the wearing of religious symbols.

Exclusion: The issue of exclusion from informal networks is also raised by some Muslims who cite the consumption of alcohol as exclusionary (Sharp, 2002). We are aware, too, that this has caused conflict in some Universities where the proposal that alcohol should not be served at social functions has caused considerable resentment among non-Muslim students. This highlights the issue of potentially conflicting rights, as well as questions of self v. social exclusion, and the extent to which the majority can – or indeed should – be expected to change their traditions to fit the religious or cultural sensibilities of minorities. This is not the place to discuss such matters, but their possible impact on attitudes to the effects of equalities legislation is worth considering.

Formal Challenges under the Religion and Belief Legislation: Savage (2007) reports that ACAS research shows that between January 2004 and August 2006, 461 cases were brought where religion or belief discrimination was the main jurisdiction. Two-thirds of these had race discrimination as a secondary jurisdiction (which again illustrates the difficulty of distinguishing between discrimination based on ethnicity and that based on religion). Muslims brought half of the cases; the rest included claims by Christians, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and non-Catholic claimants bringing cases against Catholic schools. Seven in ten of the cases related to the private sector; within the public sector, claims were most

likely to be brought against local authorities and educational organisations.

Workplace Bullying and Harassment: In addition to alleged discrimination in relation to workplace provision for religious practice, the ACAS figures also included many allegations of bullying and harassment based on religion. Verbal abuse was the most common form, consisting of name-calling and threats; however, physical attacks, incidents of sexual harassment and unfair treatment by managers were also alleged.

The alleged bullying or harassment may have been perpetrated by one or two individuals or alternatively have been part of a wider culture of discrimination within the organisation. The bullying or harassment may have gone on for a considerable period of time, lasting up to two years in some cases, and some claimants asserted that they had developed mental health problems (including anxiety or depression) as a consequence of this. It was also alleged that managers sometimes joined in with the bullying or harassment, whilst in other cases they failed to stop it when it was reported to them.

Potential Problems with the Religion and Belief Legislation: In other parts of this report, we have referred to the potential for conflict between various elements of the equalities legislation, particularly that between religion and sexual orientation. And some of the material reported above throws a number of issues into sharp relief – not least the evidence of concern by both employers and employees about rights under this legislation.

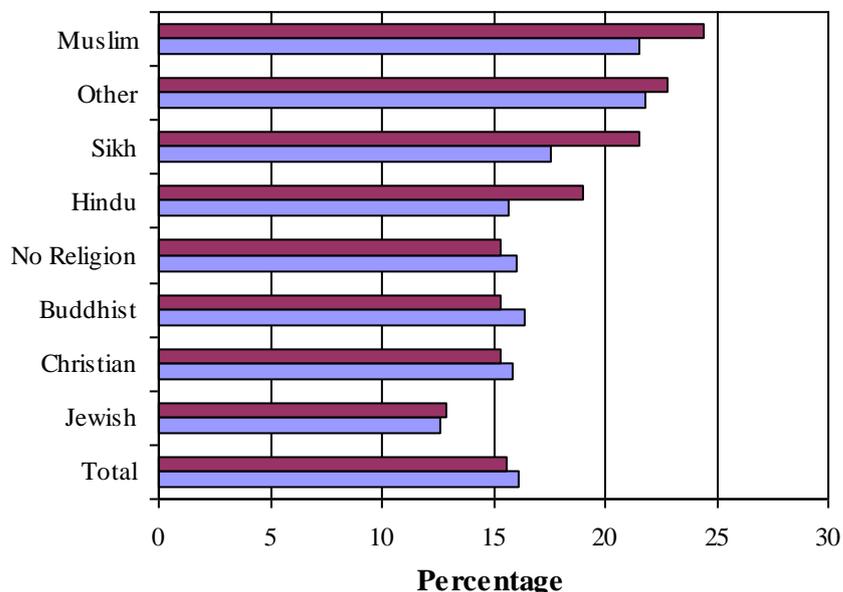
In fact, it seems to us that the legislation is relatively balanced and does not involve excessive demands on employers (see ACAS, 2005). However, the number of enquires received by ACAS on the workplace rights aspect of the legislation, from both employers and employees (Savage, 2007) suggests some need for education in the arena.

As in all the other areas discussed in this report, it may be that the effectiveness of the religion and belief legislation as it applies to the workplace will depend to a large extent on knowledge and understanding, but ultimately, perhaps, goodwill and reasonableness – on the part of both employers and employees. In this context, it is worth taking as a case study a recent incident in the police service which raises issues of wider relevance to workplace equalities (ACPO, 2005). This is attached as Appendix 4.

6.2. Inequality, Disadvantage and Discrimination in Health and Social Care

Figure 6.1 Age Standardised limiting long-term illness or disability rates: by religion and sex. GB.

Source: Census 2001. ONS, 2003.



The above table refers to long-term illness or disability which restricts daily activities and illustrates clear differences by religion (and gender) in health status, showing similarities between the Christian, Buddhist and No Religion populations, with women's health in each category being slightly better than men's. However, the health of Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and Other Religion women is worse than their co-religious, and – with the exception of Hindus – worse for both genders than that of the general population. Jewish men and women have the best health of any group.

Disparities in health status, lifestyle and access to services on the basis of ethnicity/religion have been established by the HEA (2000). And a number of other publications suggest differential treatment on the dimensions of age, class, disability, ethnicity, gender and sexuality (Roberts, 2000; Roberts et al., 2002; CRE, 2004; Social Exclusion Unit, 2005, 2006; Age Concern, 2005; Bromley et al., 2005; Lee, 2007). However, the biennial Citizenship Surveys show that BME confidence in the provision of equal treatment by the health service is high, with only 4% expecting to receive differential treatment, a lower percentage than for education (6%); the courts (11%); prisons (14%) and the police (22%) (DCLG, 2008a).

Despite this confidence in the health service, the evidence of inequality/disadvantage has caused the Government to introduce a range of measures across a number of areas, aimed at reducing disparities. These include: raising standards; setting targets; addressing discrimination; introducing NSFs; improving interpreting and translation services and creating culturally appropriate services (DoH, 2001; DoH, 2007; National Institute for Mental Health Education [NIMHE], 2003; Chahal and Ullah, 2004; King's Fund, 2006). Whether or not such measures are likely to succeed depends on the *reasons* for the inequalities in both health status and differential access to health care. And this raises the question of whether discrimination by service providers is at the root of disadvantages, or whether there are ethnic/religious reasons for it – or some combination of the two.

6.3 Religion and Health

As with many areas of welfare provision, historically religion provided care for the sick in Britain and even today many religious orders remain heavily involved in health provision. There are a number of dimensions to the link between religion and health, only a few of which can be explored in this review. It is worth noting, however, that religion could potentially have both direct and indirect positive effects on individual and community lifestyles and health outcomes. To cite just two examples: most, if not all, religions expect their adherents to demonstrate religious commitment via charitable acts/social works (Farnell et al., 2003). And on an individual level, adherence to the religious restriction of sex to marriage could help to reduce the spread of STDs and HIV/AIDs. The research that we discuss below, however, highlights a range of both negative and positive effects of religion on health – as well as illustrating the fact that self-identification by religion is no guarantor of doctrinal observance!

The overall finding for the Judaeo-Christian tradition is that higher levels of religious involvement are modestly associated with better health (McCullough and Larson, 1999; Koenig, 1998; Koenig et al., 2001). There is a generally positive relationship between religiosity and psychological well being. Maltby et al. (1999) highlighted a number of significant correlations, but found that the dominant factor was frequency of *personal prayer*, and Francis et al. (2008) reached similar conclusions.

Research into the effects of religion on lifestyles – and hence health – reaches rather varied conclusions. For example, a study by Douds et al. (2003) into *Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking* shows that South Asian men using liver services in Birmingham were differentiated by religion, with Sikhs comprising 63% of patients, Hindus 32%, but Muslims only 5%. In this instance, it would appear that the Sikh prohibition on alcohol is ineffective, whilst the Muslim one is effective. A study by Heim et al. (2004) of 174 Indian, Chinese and Pakistani men in Glasgow aged 16-25 found that individuals with strong religious beliefs generally drank less. However, Muslims who did drink had higher levels of alcohol consumption than non-religious respondents, and a survey by Mirza et al. (2007) of young Muslims found that 21% of respondents had drunk alcohol. Thus, it would appear that whilst there is a general tendency for the Islamic prohibition on alcohol consumption to be effective, this is not universally the case. Interestingly, Heim et al. (2004) found that some young Pakistanis criticised their community for denying problematic levels of alcohol consumption as a ‘white problem’, which is similar to the situation found by Khan (1997) in relation to drug use.

Bradby and Williams (2006) reported that substance abuse was lower among young respondents from minority religions, though the survey by Mirza et al. (2007) found that 9% of young Muslim respondents admitted to taking drugs. Ross et al. (2004) found that drug use was correlated with lack of religious identification, as well as gender and peer pressure.

Research by Bush et al. (2003) into smoking among Pakistani and Bangladeshi men suggests both cultural and religious influences. In both groups, there was a taboo on women smoking, but, despite Islamic disapproval, Bangladeshi men had high rates of smoking. This confirms the suggestion above that religious individuals do not always obey doctrinal imperatives, despite their potentially positive effects on health and wellbeing!

HIV/AIDS: In 2005, an estimated 63,000 adults were living with HIV in the UK, with 7,450 new diagnoses that year – double the number in 2000 (ONS, 2006c). Here again, religion can be seen to play both positive and negative roles: positive in that restricting sex

to monogamous marriage should help to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS; negative in a number of other ways. Adogame (2007) suggests that African Pentecostal churches do not discuss the issue of HIV/AIDS and fail to support sufferers. Anderson and Doyal (2003) suggest that religions can inculcate such a sense of guilt or shame in sufferers that they feel unable to disclose their condition to friends or family – including partners – with clear consequences for the spread of the disease (61% of their sample were African Christians; 1% were Muslims).

An additional way in which religion is implicated in the spread of HIV/AIDS is via their formal teachings or traditions. Catholic teaching on birth control falls into this category, as does the Islamic acceptance of polygamy. Gatrad and Sheikh (2004) suggest that the Muslim practice of circumcision helps to prevent the spread of AIDS (which also applies to Judaism), but that a range of other Muslim traditions put believers at risk of contracting AIDS, such as sharing razor blades on completion of *hajj* and the preparation of bodies for burial. They also refer to the dangers of Muslim attitudes to childbirth and breastfeeding increasing the risk of HIV positive mothers transmitting the disease to babies. Caesarean sections are recommended to reduce this risk, but these also limit the number of children a woman can bear which goes against Muslim preferences for large families. Likewise, *Qur'anic* teaching that a child has the right to be breastfed for two years runs counter to medical advice on risk reduction.

The relationship between religion, ethnicity and *mental health* has been a focus of attention for some time, particularly because of the over-representation of some BME groups in the mental health system (Nazroo, 1997; Sproston and Nazroo, 2002; Sproston and Mindell, 2006; Healthcare Commission, 2007). Until recently, this over-representation was blamed on racism in psychiatry, though alternative/additional reasons are now being considered (Singh and Burns, 2008). A survey by King et al. (2006) of 4,000 BME adults found no difference in the prevalence of common mental disorders (CMDs) between religious and non-religious people. However, they also found that people who had a spiritual life view, but did not translate this into religious practise *did* have a higher prevalence of CMDs.

A long-term study by Coleman et al. (2004) of the religious experiences of 342 mainly Christian elders also found that religion could have both negative and positive effects on mental health. Those for whom religion meant more than it used to displayed higher levels of self-esteem, but those for whom religion meant less were found to be more depressed.

Pote and Orrell (2002) found that some ethnic groups viewed schizophrenia through a religious lens as spirit possession or witchcraft. And a series of studies show that help is not sought for a range of mental illnesses because of the ethno-religious shame/stigma attached to them (see Dogra et al., 2005, on South Asians and mental illness; MacKenzie, 2006, on Eastern Europeans and Muslims in relation to dementia, and Leavey, 2007, on Muslim and Christian Pentecostal attitudes to mental illness). Leavey also found that clergy – priests, rabbis or imams – may not be adequately equipped to support the mentally ill people who request their help. Hussain and Cochrane's (2003) research with a small group of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs on depression found that whilst religion could be a source of comfort and support, it could also serve to make people fatalistic in the face of illness and this impacted negatively on their ability, or willingness, to seek help.

6.4 Religion and Disability

Both negative and positive attitudes towards disability can be associated with religion and ethnicity; for example, the Hindu belief in reincarnation can result in disability being viewed as a punishment for transgressions in previous incarnations. In other religions, too,

it is sometimes the case that parents and extended families regard the birth of a disabled child as punishment for sin or a 'curse' or a 'test' (GLAD, 1986; CIO, 1987; Shah, 1997; Atkin et al., 2002). However, the reverse also applies in that people of faith can be more ready and/or able than those without religious belief to accept disabled children (Ali et al., 2001; McGrother et al., 2002; O'Hara, 2003; Rosario, 2005). Begum (1992) suggests that whilst there are negative attitudes towards disability in Asian communities, these may be partially explicable in terms of lack of knowledge and understanding, a finding supported by Shah (1999) who notes language barriers. Smith (1994) and Chambra et al. (1998) also found that knowledge of, and access to, services is low among minority ethnic disabled people and carers.

Atkin et al. (2000) found in their study (in England and Scotland) that religious values could negatively influence the take-up of service provision. This research involved 70 Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh deaf young people and their parents/carers and found a disjunction between the two groups in relation to using service provision. The young people valued the respect and affirmation that they gained through deaf culture and mixing with other deaf people, but some parents' concerns centred around the threat that this could pose to ethno-religious values. The study also pointed to lack of provision for young deaf people in mosques and temples. Shah (1999) also found that parents were reluctant to use day centres or respite care due to fears that cultural and religious issues would not be addressed – such as male staff caring for girl children, mixing between the genders and lack of provision of *halal* food. However, Ahmed et al.'s (2000) research with young deaf people from minority communities contradicts this, saying that parents and families encouraged their children to engage in activities that they thought were beneficial. They did, however, acknowledge parents' fears that deaf children would lose their ethnic and religious identities, expressed by one Bangladeshi mother: *'I send my child to school and he comes back an Englishman'* (cited in Ahmed et al., 2000: 69/70). The situation is, perhaps, summed up by Begum who suggests that the only firm conclusion that can be drawn from apparently conflicting research is that *'extreme caution needs to be exercised when trying to interpret the evidence'*. (1992: 2)

Hussain's (2005) study explored the views of 29 Muslim and Sikh disabled young people, parents and siblings and concluded that strong religio-cultural expectations of marriage conflict with negative attitudes towards disability which reduce the chances of marriage for disabled people. Hussain also found that barriers exist to mosque and temple attendance.

The incidence of *learning disabilities* in some South Asian communities is three times higher than in the majority communities, and 19% of these families have more than one member with a learning disability (Mir et al., 2001). Emerson et al. (1997) found that in the North of England, the prevalence of severe intellectual disability is 3 times higher among the Asian community between the ages of 5 and 34, than in the majority population. Katbamna et al. (2002) and McGrother et al. (2002) found that though GP consultation rates are significantly higher in minority ethnic communities than majority ones, South Asian patients are far less aware of the existence of specialist services and make significantly lower use of psychiatric, respite and residential care services. All these factors are linked to material and social deprivation which, in turn, are linked to inequalities in access to, or use of, maternal health care and environmental and genetic risk factors (Baxter, 1998).

On the other hand, Nadirshaw (1997) points to language barriers and lack of understanding of learning disabilities and O'Hara (2003) observes that a common misconception among South Asian parents about learning disabilities is that they are curable – particularly through marriage. This supports earlier research by Channabasavanna et al. (1985) who found that neither the severity of the disability, nor the socio-economic status of the

family had any effect on this belief. O'Hara and Martin (2003) refer to Bengali parents' belief that the marriage of their children with learning disabilities is at the heart of their parental responsibility and notes the struggle of service providers with the ethical issues that this raises for them. Currently, an early day motion on 'forced marriages of people with disabilities' is proposed, based on a report by the Director of UK Visas in Pakistan that of the 250 'reluctant sponsors' for visas dealt with by the consul in 2007, 86 involved adults with severe disabilities (www.parliament.uk, 2008).

Linked to disability is the issue of **Genetic Disorders** which are significantly higher in South Asian – particularly Pakistani Muslim communities – than the general population (Overall et al., 2002; Christianson and Modell, 2004). These are sometimes connected to consanguineous marriages, which are estimated to account for 35% to 60% of all marriages among Pakistanis (Shaw, 2001; Hussain and Bittles, 2004).⁷⁶ The problem of genetic disorders is particularly important because of the Muslim emphasis on large families and women's role as child bearers. Phillipson et al. (2003) say that the average family size in the Bangladeshi population in Tower Hamlets is 5.2 and Rozario observes: '*Above all, the primary role of a Bangladeshi woman is to produce children*'. She notes the influence of community attitudes on this, but suggests that it might also be linked to recent religious revivalism in which contraception, prenatal testing, termination and sterilisation may be seen as un-Islamic (2005: 190; 192). Rozario discussed the issue of genetic disorders with four Imams and found that none of them had any knowledge of the subject, one commenting: '*Islam says not to go near people with contagious diseases*', (2005: 193). Secrecy surrounds genetic disorders because family marriage prospects could be threatened and this influences the use of service provision, including interpreters who are not trusted to maintain confidentiality. However, Walji (2008) states that the introduction of a screening programme at his local mosque in Birmingham, which includes advising against marriage between carriers, has led to a marked reduction in the incidence of birth defects.

Gilliat-Ray (2007) also explored the role of religion in relation to Bangladeshi and health professionals' views on genetic screening and the management of genetic disorders. Her findings are almost identical to Rozario's, i.e. families might prefer to risk having a child born with a genetic disorder rather than damage the marriage prospects of other siblings; imams have little knowledge of the subject and are not consulted by families, and few families took up day or respite care because they feared neglect of such religious requirements as *halal* food.

6.5 Unequal Treatment/Oppression

There are two spheres of religion and health in which we find suggestions (or evidence) of unequal treatment. The first concerns **Hospital Chaplaincies** where a national survey of multi-faith chaplaincy arrangements in England and Wales showed that the majority of chaplains were Christian (93.3% and 91.4% respectively). 6.7% of full-time chaplains were Muslim, and of the remaining part-time chaplains few were from non-Christian faith groups (Sheikh et al., 2004).⁷⁷ A similar situation applies in Scotland, where most chaplains have been appointed and employed historically by the Church of Scotland's Board of National Mission (Levison, 2005). Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that the Muslim share of hospital chaplains is higher than their overall share of the population, so that too ready an acceptance of discrimination needs to be treated with caution.

⁷⁶ The link between consanguineous marriage and the prevalence of genetic disorders is both complex and contested – the latter particularly by non-medical researchers such as Ahmad, 1995; Darr, 1997 and Stacey, 1997.

⁷⁷ The NHS has issued guidance on meeting the religious and spiritual needs of patients and staff in hospitals which require the provision of suitable 'spaces', accessible 24 hours a day (DoH, 2003: 17).

The second sphere in which there is some evidence of unequal treatment is in the broad area of **women and health care**. Ahmad and Jones (1998) suggest that the quality of care received by South Asian [Muslim] women from GPs and midwives is affected by negative stereotypes and ‘culture blaming’ assumptions about a range of conditions, particularly their association with consanguineous marriages.

Puri (2005) carried out research in both the United States and the United Kingdom and found that in both countries, the emphasis on ‘cultural sensitivity’ dictated by multicultural was essentialised in practice and resulted in South Asian women receiving unequal treatment from GPs. Though the research focused on domestic violence, Puri’s findings and conclusions have implications that extend far beyond how doctors respond to battered women. Rather, it raises questions about the theoretical, policy and practice aspects of the multicultural project itself and – given the influence of this on current equalities thinking – it is a highly significant piece of research. Lack of space prevents our reporting this research in the detail that it deserves, but of particular relevance to this review are the findings that GPs acknowledged that they treated minority ethnic religious women differently to others and that this was influenced by the policy emphasis on cultural awareness/competence/sensitivity and also their fear of being accused of racism. Among more specific findings were that: GPs sometimes allowed husbands to be present during consultations with women; that they sometimes felt the need to breach patient confidentiality by reporting back to families; that their treatment of South Asian women was based on assumptions and stereotypes, particularly if the women wore traditional dress, and that among the most commonly used phrases by GPs in the UK about South Asian women were ‘religious’, ‘troubled’ and ‘family oriented’ (Puri, 2005: 421).

Among more general issues raised by Puri that have relevance for the wider equalities agenda are such questions as: who determines a community and its needs? What is the role of religious leaders in suppressing women’s issues? What are the effects on vulnerable individuals (such as women and children) of privileging male voices in consultations on service provision? What are the consequences of reducing patients to their religious, ethnic or cultural backgrounds?

Puri observes that despite major differences between the USA and the UK: ‘*the outcomes of [multicultural] approaches to health care provision are eerily similar: that is, for different reasons, South Asian women seem only rarely to find the support and intervention they need from their physicians*’ (2005: 429/30). Puri’s key conclusion is the question of how far ‘difference’, whether cultural, racial, religious or ethnic, should influence health care provision, particularly when questions of women’s health and safety are at stake. The relevance of this to other services – and, indeed, equalities thinking in general – is, we believe, self-evident, but see the Newham Asian Women’s Project (1998) on medical breaches of confidentiality; Okin (1998; 1999) on multiculturalism as being ‘bad for women’, and Mahoney and Taj’s (2006) report on the consultation with Welsh Muslim women that echoes a number of Puri’s findings on the negative effects of multiculturalism and the fear of being seen as racist.

Female Genital Mutilation [FGM]: We raise the issue of FGM partly because research shows that it is most common in religious, especially Muslim, communities (UNICEF, 2005; El-Zanaty and Way, 2006), though there is no Islamic justification for the practice – and because migration has resulted in demographic changes by ethnicity and religion that have led to the practice becoming an issue in the UK. Despite the fact that FGM is illegal, as recently as the 1990s there were demands that it be carried out on the NHS (Stewart, 1998). Dorkenoo et al. (2006) produce statistics to show that the practice is ongoing in England, though no prosecutions have taken place here. Hilsdon and Rozario (2006)

suggest that the law has also been largely ineffective in France and other Western European countries and Ahlberg et al. (2004) extend this to Sweden. All these studies indicate the importance of attitudes and values, a view confirmed by research in London by Morison et al. (2004), which additionally highlighted the role of integration in changing attitudes. None of the researchers dismiss the importance or utility of the law, but they suggest that it needs to be combined with educational/awareness raising programmes.

6.6 Religion, Parenting, Social Work and Social Care

The literature on **parenting** characteristically notes the preferences of some BME people for early parenthood (Higginbottom et al., 2006), multi-generational households and 'traditional' parenting models (Beishon et al., 1998; Barn et al., 2006). However, the extent to which cultural, rather than religious values are responsible for differences is unclear. Research by Beishon et al. (1998) suggests some tendency for BME respondents to feel that white children lack discipline and respect for their parents and elders. Grant (1997) found that African and African-Caribbean respondents were not keen to use statutory services because they felt that teachers and social workers diminished parental authority.

With respect to substitute parenting, including **adoption**, the Children Act 1989 requires that religion be considered alongside racial, cultural and linguistic factors. Patel et al. (2004) surveyed 1,200 people in England and Wales to ascertain their views on the importance of matching children's and adoptive parents' religious and cultural identities. They found that whilst the majority felt that this was important, they also felt that it should not override a child's chances of adoption. The exception to this was a small group of Muslims who felt that religion should take precedence over all other factors. Golda Smith (2000) has similarly argued that the needs of Jewish children can only be met within Jewish families, matched according to type of Judaism.

Religion and spirituality are neglected areas in **social work** (Furness, 2003; Furman et al., 2005; Gilligan and Furness, 2005), despite its origins in religious voluntary action (Payne, 2005), and it is only recently that educators have begun to introduce students to these dimensions of their clients' lives (Furness, 2003). This is despite the fact that it is over ten years since Patel et al. (1998) advocated the need for greater attention to be paid to religion in social work education, and despite the fact that it is a major area of study in the USA (Furman et al., 2005).

As we noted above, however, religion can have negative as well as positive effects, perhaps especially with regard to such beliefs as spirit possession which can lead to child abuse and even death. Lord Laming's (2003) inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié stressed the importance of making connections between some religious beliefs/practices and child abuse. Gilligan (2008) has emphasised that places of worship must be open and held to account in this area. The consultations with Muslim women in England and Wales raised the issue of child abuse in homes and mosques and criticised social workers' failure to act in such cases (Appendix 3).

Grewel et al. (2004) examined the influence of ethnicity (and religion) on elder care and the quality of life. This study covers a range of factors – extended family living (Evandrou, 2000), volunteering activities, and the effects of poverty on fulfilling family obligations. Muslim elders stressed religion as a means of transmitting cultural and ethnic values to the younger generation. They also saw poor health as negatively affecting their ability to practise their faith. For both Hindus and Muslims, poor health was Allah's will or karma, which helped them to accept a poorer quality of life.

6.7 Religion and Education

The relationship between education and religion raises issues that are among the most difficult and contentious addressed in this report. On the one hand, education and socialisation into the faith remains a vital interest for all organised religions because the long-term survival of any faith depends on its transmission across generations. For the same reason, religious socialisation is a focus of concern for those opposed to the claims of organised religion. On the other hand, publicly-funded education has been subject to the process of secularisation, despite the fact that educational institutions in Great Britain at all levels can often trace their origins to religious foundations, and in some respects the educational system remains marked by these. An obvious example of the latter is the UK academic calendar, which is still organised around the major Christian festivals (with some strain in some cases) which is not unlike the situation for religion and social work.

The new equalities framework creates additional sources of tension within this (already complex) situation, especially by the way in which it extends the framework of religion/belief beyond Christianity, and, indeed, beyond religion, and adopts an attitude of equality of formal consideration towards all religions and belief systems. But this new legal framework is not entirely unequivocal in its implications for education, because it also attempts to balance the demands of diversity – and therefore religious difference – against the demands of equality (see Chapter 2.8). It is also relevant to note that schools now have a duty to promote cohesion and that this could be a source of potential conflict with the inherently exclusive nature of religious affiliation (Zolberg and Long, 1999).

We will not attempt to address the issues raised by these developments, still less to resolve them, but will concentrate on those emerging from recent research.

Religion and Educational Achievement: Butler and Hamnett (2007) note the strong correlation between social class, race, ethnicity, household structure and gender, and we have commented elsewhere on the links between these factors and religion. All of these have undoubtedly played a role in educational under-achievement by Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslims (CRE, 2007), though there are indications of improvement over time, particularly by girls/women (Abbas, 2002; 2003; EOC, 2007a; Philips, 2006).

Faith based schools – Anglican, Catholic and Jewish – are generally very successful academically, though the part played by religion in this is unclear (Judge, 2001) relative to, for example, social selection (Allen and West, 2007) or class (Butler and Hamnett, 2007). It may be that the high levels of discipline and good standards of behaviour for which faith schools are known create a context that is more conducive to the teaching:learning process. Certainly, this is a factor that influences many parents of minority faiths to send their children to Christian schools (Flint, 2007).

Educational Separation and Social Cohesion: The catchment area system of allocating school places means that there is a considerable degree of ethnic separation in schools in England – that is, a statistical tendency for children of different ethnic backgrounds to attend different schools (Burgess et al., 2003; Miller 2004; Burgess et al., 2005; Johnston et al., 2006a & b; Osler, 2007).⁷⁸ It is notable that some of the LEAs with the highest levels of separation are the sites of the ‘Northern riots’ of 2001 (Ouseley, 2001; Cattle 2001).

⁷⁸ The facts of ethnic and religious segregation have led to a number of initiatives designed to ameliorate its possible effects, such as Bradford’s *Linking Schools* project, which was evaluated very positively by Raw (2006), and was included as an example of good practice in *What Works in Community Cohesion?* (DCLG, 2007a: 116-119).

Faith Based Schools: If ethnic and religious separation is an issue for all schools, it is one that comes to a head over the question of ‘faith schools’. The term ‘faith’ schools is generally used to refer to ‘schools with a religious character’ that are maintained wholly or partly by state funding. ‘Voluntary controlled’ schools receive all of their funding from the Local Authority in return for allowing some control over the religious education element and their governing body. The religious organisation concerned contributes about 10% of the budget in the case of ‘voluntary-aided’ schools (Cush, 2005). It is worth noting here that concerns about the potentially divisive nature of faith based education in Europe are far from new, but date back to the Reformation (MacCulloch, 2003) and centre around citizens’ allegiance to the nation state as well as divisions between citizens (Flint, 2008).

There are 5,000 (including independent) Church of England [CoE] and Church of Wales schools, providing education to 25% of primary and 6% of secondary school pupils (Flint, 2008). The Catholic school system serves around 10% of the school population in England and Wales (Grace, 2001), and state-funded Jewish schools educate around 12,000 pupils (Valins, 2003). There are also an estimated 160 fee-paying Catholic schools; 101 independent Jewish schools; 115 independent Muslim schools and at least 70 independent Evangelical Christian schools (Grace, 2001; Walford, 2001; Valins, 2003; Meer, 2007). In addition, significant numbers of Christian, Jewish and Muslim children receive supplementary religious education in evening or weekend schools.

In 1990, the CRE published a report that questioned the purpose of education and parental rights to choose the form of education for their child. In 2001, the Church of England indicated its intention – with the support of the Government (DfES, 2001) – to expand the number of church schools (Archbishops’ Council, 2001). In 2007, the Government reiterated its commitment to faith schools, citing historic reasons for a dual system of education and arguing the right of parents to choose schools in accordance with their religious beliefs (DCSF, 2007a). Nevertheless, agreement has been reached with the Anglican and Catholic Churches to allocate 25% of future school places to non-Christians (as recommended in the Cantle report).

Judge (2001; 2002) criticises the state’s funding of ‘faith’ schools, questioning their desirability in a society divided on ethnic and religious lines. However, evidence indicates that Christian faith schools tend to be more ethnically diverse than non-denominational ones because they draw from wider residential catchment areas (Phillips, 2006) and also because some minority religious parents choose to send their children to Christian schools.

Others question the admissions policies of faith schools, given that Muslim and Jewish schools operate a more religiously stringent intake policy than do Christian schools, and one Hindu school has fallen foul of the regulations governing admissions (Frean, 2007).⁷⁹ Pennell et al. (2007) examined the religious composition and admission policies of 33 Catholic, 11 CoE, 3 Jewish and 2 other Christian secondary schools in London and found differences in inclusivity by religion. However, it was noted that even religiously inclusive schools sometimes operated social selection with respect to socio-economic status or special needs. Pennell et al.’s conclusion is that all schools need to be inclusive of all religions and none if community cohesion is to be achieved.⁸⁰

There are potentially conflicting demands between educational attainment, religious socialisation and community cohesion. Weekes-Bernard’s (2007) research into school

⁷⁹ The DCSF has introduced new regulations to counter unfair policies (DCSF, 2007b, 2008).

⁸⁰ But Pennell et al.’s conclusion raises the question: at what point do secular demands for ‘inclusiveness’ render the concept of ‘faith’ schools meaningless? This is a question that could be asked of many other areas discussed in this review, and links to Woodhead’s criticism of the lack of logic in, and implications of, the call to restrict religion to the private realm (2008: 54/55).

choice by BME parents highlighted tension between parental choice and policies designed to raise BME achievement and promote community cohesion.

Valins (2003) suggests that some Orthodox Jewish schools aim to preserve a distinctive way of life by ‘fixing’ children’s religious, cultural and social identities. He found that though academic standards were of key importance to parents, so, too, was a Jewish ethos. Interviews conducted by Grace (2002) with Catholic head teachers identified tension between market values and Catholic values. The requirement that schools demonstrate academic success to preserve their educational standing is at odds with the Christian value of the dignity of the individual regardless of achievement. The pressure to admit more able pupils also affects the inclusivity of schools.

Smith’s (2005) study of 100 older children in two Church primary schools focused on children’s understandings of religion and its role in their lives. He suggested that:

- School is one of the few places where children can meet and socialise with others outside their ethno-religious group.
- The majority of children were not aware of any religious ethos in their schools and were largely indifferent to faith based schooling.
- Lunch times and assemblies were events that marked out differences, with the more devout children having less time to socialise.
- Some children found mixing positive, whilst others experienced a degree of tension and conflict.

Overall, it is apparent that the debate on faith schools and social cohesion is informed more by personal opinion than by empirical research. Grace (2003) observes that the evidence base is weak in relation to the potentially adverse effects of faith based schools on community cohesion. He suggests that it is not clear to what extent faith based and secular schools differ in their interpretation of the curriculum, given national curriculum guidelines. And though Valins (2003) and Meer (2007) suggest that some Muslim, Jewish and Evangelical Christian schools fail to teach tolerance, others argue the opposite. Research by Miller (2001), Grace (2003), Association of Muslim Social Scientists [AMSS] (2004) and Billings and Holden (2007) suggests that most faith based schools promote tolerance of diversity and respect for other religious traditions. It is possible, as McGlynn et al. (2004) argue, that it is lack of inter-faith social interaction, rather than the particular teaching ethos or practices of faith schools, which might inhibit positive attitudes to other religious and non-religious groups (Flint, 2008). Similar comments can be made about the impact of the new legal framework of equalities on publicly-funded faith schools, which is potentially very significant, but not at all clear.⁸¹

‘Supplementary’ Education: This is a very general term that can apply to a wide range of religious (and non-religious) institutions, from Christian Sunday Schools to Islamic madrasas. However, since 9/11 and 7/7, the Government has focused particularly on Islam and has questioned the role of mosques in the political radicalisation of young men. Others have considered ways of engaging with Muslim youth and the role of Imams in tackling disaffection and promoting social cohesion. But the suggestion that religion is over-

⁸¹ The effects arise from the provisions of the ECHR, which involve the rights of the individual (and therefore the pupil) to freedom of conscience, coupled with the right to exercise this freedom ‘in community with others’ (Article 9.1); the rights of the parents to an education for their child ‘in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions’ (First Protocol, Article 2), and the rights of the state to limit the exercise of the other rights under Article 9.2. (DCA, 2006: 43-44). It is not all clear how the courts will reconcile all these potentially conflicting rights in relation to faith schools.

estimated as the key influence in people's lives (see Appendix 3) might also apply to mosques. Certainly, empirical research suggests much lower mosque attendance than is generally assumed, particularly by young men (Macey, 2005; Channel 4 Dispatches, 2006; Billings and Holden, 2007; Mirza et al., 2007). It is also increasingly clear that many imams are unable to equip young people with a theological grounding that could help them to deal with the profound challenges with which they are faced in a globalised world (Lewis, 2002, 2006, 2007; Siddique, 2007).

According to the Islamic Cultural Centre, around 10% of Muslim children attend a Muslim supplementary school ('Islamiyat'). They are designed to teach the fundamental pillars of Islam, but it has been found that some classes have been run by the militant *al-Muhajiroun* group which pours scorn on western ideals and aims to '*capture the hearts and minds of the young to win the propaganda war*'. On a different level, Waziz (2002) reflects on his own experiences of attending a Muslim supplementary school (*Islamiyat*) and the uncompromising discipline and harsh punishments that were metered out for minor infringements (Waziz, 2002). The issue of physical violence in mosques was also referred to by the Bradford rioters (Macey, 2005) and raised by mothers with the Labour MP for Keighley.⁸²

Farooq (2000) suggests that the long hours spent in mosques and mosque schools can negatively affect boys' educational attainment due to tiredness and the effects of learning to read the *Qur'an* in Arabic (making English their third language). And the Open Society Institute suggests that this places an additional burden on Muslim children in terms of both time and intellectual effort (2005b: 105). A study by Bolognani (2007) shows that young Muslim people are critical of parents delegating responsibility for moral education to others – including mosques and schools. This raises the question of where, if anywhere, young Muslims are receiving moral guidance – a question that has implications for their vulnerability to extremist ideologies that they might encounter on, for instance, the web.

Religion and Education in Scotland: There are 375,946 pupils in 2,168 primary schools and 309,560 pupils in 378 secondary schools in Scotland. 91.4% are white; 1.4% are 'Pakistani Asian' and 0.8% are 'mixed' (Scottish Government, 2008). Despite the low numbers of minority ethnic (and in some cases religious) people, the Scottish Executive reviewed religious observance in schools to provide a framework to accommodate diverse beliefs and practices and to comply with the Equalities Act 2006 (Scottish Executive, 2004).

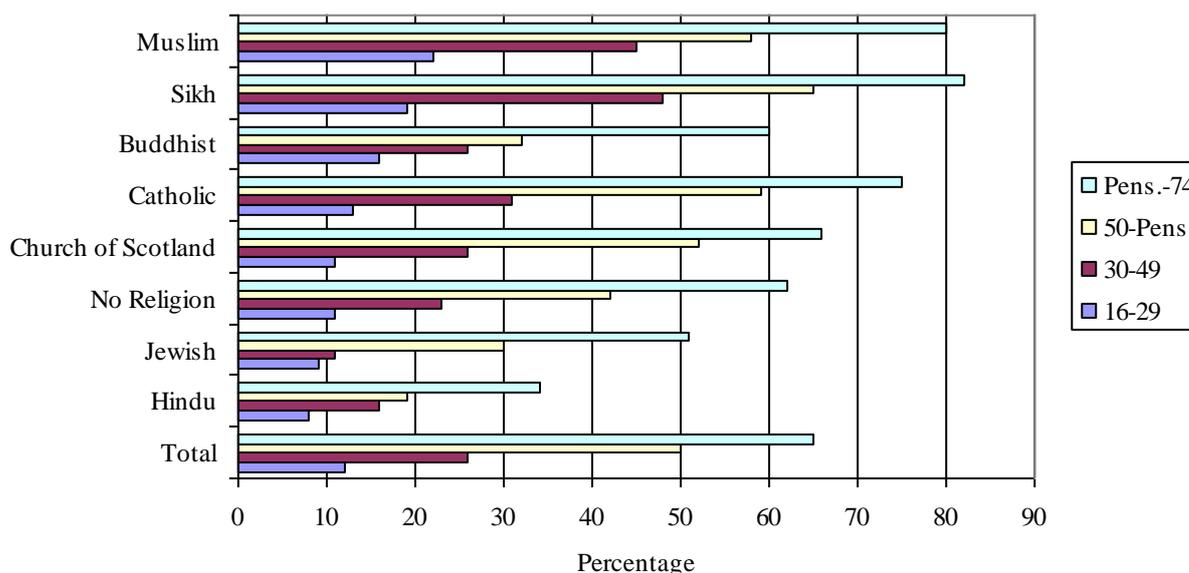
The Scottish education system is different to that of England and Wales as is the historical and contemporary situation with respect to religion, including minority v. majority religions. The main issue confronting Scotland is the question of Christian sectarianism which is rooted in history and in educational terms has resulted in a binary divide between Catholic and state schools. There are 418 Catholic Schools providing education to 16% of the school age population, but no Church of Scotland or other Protestant denominational schools because these were incorporated into the state sector by the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act (Flint, 2008). Catholic schools remained outside this settlement until the 1918 Education (Scotland) Act, which resulted in 226 Catholic schools transferring to the state sector. This binary division between non-denominational and Catholic schools has contributed to the frequent challenges to the legitimacy of Catholic schooling since the 1920s (Conway, 2001; Flint, 2007).

⁸² Personal communication from Ann Cryer, MP.

Religion and Educational Attainment in Scotland: Historically, Catholic children had lower educational attainment levels than Protestants, though these have now evened out (Paterson and Iannelli, 2006). Indeed, as with faith based schools in England, Catholic schools in Scotland have a reputation for high educational and disciplinary standards (Flint, 2008). However, comparison of Catholic and non-denominational schools in 2005 show no significant differences in attainment levels at key stage 4 (Scottish Government, 2007).

There are a higher number of non-Christians than Christians in post-compulsory education (See Figure 6.2). Hindus have the highest number of degree level qualifications (58%), followed by Buddhists (40%), whilst the qualification levels between Church of Scotland and Catholic groups are very similar. Sikhs are the most likely to have no qualifications (42%) (Arshad et al., 2004). However, Netto et al. (2001) note that there is a lack of adequate statistics on minority ethnic learners in Scotland.

Figure 6.2 Adults with No Listed Qualification: by Age and Religious Group. Scotland.
Source: Census 2001. SE, 2005.



As can be seen from Figure 6.2, there has been a very dramatic improvement in the qualification levels of the Scottish population over time: almost two-thirds of the oldest cohort has no qualifications, and only about 12% of the youngest cohort. But there is still a considerable variation in this pattern by religious affiliation. The Church of Scotland, Catholic and No Religion groups have converged on a very similar profile; yet they are less well qualified than either the Jewish or Hindu populations. Although all the minority religions have shared in the educational improvement, almost twice as many young Muslims lack qualifications than the average for the population as a whole, with Sikhs and Buddhists in intermediate positions.

Religion, Education and Social Cohesion: In 2002, the Church of Scotland reported its study of the adverse effects of sectarianism on Scottish society. The findings on Christian sectarianism were seen as applying to other forms of bigotry and intolerance and emphasised the need to promote an inclusive society (Scottish Government, 2002).

Ross and Hill (2006) examined young people's views and experiences of inter-ethnic relations on moving from primary to secondary school. Most of the young people were

from white backgrounds and thought that both their own and others' cultures and religions were respected.

Cassidy et al. (2006) explored how 134 young people in Glasgow experienced the transition to adulthood. The sample comprised: white – 49%, Pakistani – 25%, Indian – 12%, Chinese – 7% and other – 7% students. All had aspirations to go to university and, with the exception of Indians, preferred to study locally. White students chose a greater variety of university courses, while those of ethnic minorities were shaped by family and community expectations, though lack of knowledge may be a factor. Religion and ethnicity was more important for minority ethnic students than their white peers. Indian students reported fewer experiences of prejudice and discrimination than their Pakistani peers which may suggest religious rather than racial discrimination.

6.8 The Criminal Justice System

The Ethnic Composition of the CJS

Following publication of the Macpherson Report (1999) on the handling of the investigation into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence, the Government placed a duty on the police, prison, probation and fire services to promote race equality. This included targets for recruitment, retention and progression of minority ethnic employees in the police and prison services (Home Office, 1999). Jones and Singer (2008) observe that BME employment has, indeed, increased across the CJS in recent years, though there is variation between areas. The lowest BME representation is among members of the Judiciary (3%) the majority of whom are employed at the levels of District Judge and Recorder. There are no BME Lord Justices.

Perpetrators and Victims

Table 6.1. Proportion (%) of Ethnic Groups at Different Stages of the Criminal Justice Process England and Wales, 2005/6.
(Jones and Singer, 2008)

	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
General population (2001 Census)	91.3	2.8	4.7	1.2	0.0
Stops and searches	72.2	15.4	7.9	1.6	2.9
Arrests	83.8	9.1	5.1	1.3	0.6
Cautions	83.5	6.3	4.5	1.4	4.4
Youth offences	87.6	6.0	3.2	0.3	2.8
Tried at Crown Court	76.3	12.6	7.3	3.9	*
Prison population	75.5	15.6	6.8	1.3	0.9

The above information, like much cited in this chapter, clearly indicates minority ethnic over-representation in the CJS, but does not, in itself, explain it. It is likely that a number of interacting variables are implicated, including social class.

The reverse side of the coin is the fact that black and Asian people are more likely than their white counterparts to be the victims of violent crime, including homicide. There were 139,000 racially motivated incidents in 2005/06 and of 2,327 homicides in the three-year period ending 2005/06, 23 were classed as racially motivated: 10% were of black people, 7% of Asian and 4% of 'other' minority people (Jones and Singer, 2008). According to the IRR, 33 racist murders took place between February 2003 and December 2007, 40% of which were of Muslims and 15% were of men working in isolated jobs, such as cab driving

(IRR, 2008).

Hate Crime: A number of cautionary notes need to be applied to the statistics on hate crime.

First, following Macpherson (1999) the definition of hate crimes depends – like those of racist incidents – on the *perceptions* of the victim (and sometimes the police). They are extremely broad, which has resulted in statistics that give an impression of huge increases over time (Mirza et al., 2007). This can be used to paint a misleading picture of widespread Islamophobia and to support accusations of racially based discrimination by the police in, for example, their use of ‘stop and search’ (Malik, 2005).⁸³ It is worth noting here that the methods of data collection employed by, for example, the IHRC are questionable since their online questionnaire includes incidents ‘*heard of*’ by respondents, and defines ‘*dirty looks*’ as comprising religious harassment. The findings reported in Chapters 2 and 4 are also relevant here, since they suggest that the perception of widespread injustice, prejudice and/or hostility directed against Muslims exceeds the levels actually experienced by them in a variety of different fields. It should be added, however, that the self-reports of discrimination suffered by Muslim respondents was highest for the police service among all other agencies, at 6%, according to the 2005 Citizenship Survey (Kitchen et al., 2006: 59, Table 34).

Secondly, racially and religiously motivated/aggravated offences and hate crime are reported together which adds to the inherent difficulty of distinguishing between their religious and racial/ethnic elements. This applies even to evidence that has been carefully collected and rigorously analysed, such as the annual monitoring of anti-semitic incidents carried out by the CST, the authors of which point out that there is no way of distinguishing between violence that is motivated by hatred of Judaism, Zionism and ethnicity. This does not, of course, alter the fact that Jewish people and property *are* the targets of violence! Nor does it alter the fact that – contrary to popular belief – Jews are more likely to be the targets of hate crime than Muslims (Mirza et al., 2007). This finding may support Wistrich’s suggestion that antisemitism is ‘the longest hatred’ (1992) [see also, Taguieff and Camiller, 2004; Chesler, 2005; Bunzi, 2007 on the rise of antisemitism and Kotek, 2004; Gerstenfeld, 2006, and Cook, 2007 on specifically Muslim antisemitism].

In 2006-07, the police reported 5,619 hate crimes involving injury; 4,350 without injury; 28,485 cases of racially or religiously motivated harassment and 3,565 cases of criminal damage (Nicholas et al., 2007). Hate crime is the most extreme and obvious indicator of religious hatred and the one that impacts most directly, and devastatingly, on religious people. From 2009, the police will be recording ‘religiously motivated’ crime, but, of course, similar caveats will apply to the accuracy of this data as we have noted with respect to the category of ‘racially motivated’ crime.

⁸³ Organisations such as the IHRC and MCB claimed that the police were persecuting Muslims under the anti-terrorism laws. But Home Office statistics for London show that of the 21,577 people stopped and searched under the terror laws, 14,429 were white and only 1,500 were Muslim. The proportion of Muslims among those who were stopped and searched (just less than 7%) is thus slightly lower than the proportion of Muslims in the population of London (just over 8%). This is in stark contrast to the claim by the MCB of 95-98% and yet they refused to change their published figures, despite Malik (2005) providing them with clear alternative evidence. Notwithstanding this, there have long been accusations of racism in the police in general (MacPherson, 1999; Bland et al., 2000; Miller et al, 2000; BBC, 2003; Whitfield, 2004), and particularly regarding the disproportionate targeting of Asian and black people for stop and search (see Home Office, 2004; Metropolitan Police Authority Scrutiny Panel, 2004).

Violence against religious people and property appears to be related to both international and national incidents and, perhaps, the way these are reported in the media. The CST shows that the number of anti-semitic incidents varies according to incidents in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and EUMC recorded similar changes in anti-Islamic incidents following 7/7 (Allen and Nielsen, 2002). The latter increased dramatically in the immediate aftermath of 7/7, but decreased equally quickly and a few weeks later fell below those for the previous year (EUMC, 2006: 86). And as we have noted previously, following 9/11, a number of *Sikh* people and properties were attacked, presumably in the belief that they were Muslim: ‘*The problem is*’, said a Sikh interviewee, ‘*We look more like the Taliban than the Muslim does*’ (cited in Farnell et al., 2003: 38).

Ameli et al. (2004) report Muslim women being punched, shouted at, spat on and having *hijabs* pulled off. They refer to a 2001 survey – post 9/11 – which reported 80% of respondents being subject to Islamophobia; 68% being perceived and treated differently, and 32% being subjected to discrimination at airports (FAIR, 2004). These findings are supported by the MWN consultation.

Reports of Muslim women having their *hijabs* ripped off appear in a number of places, though the extent of such incidents is unclear and ‘what everybody knows’ does not always yield concrete examples. However, the Muslim Women’s Network [MWN] consultation found safety to be the issue of greatest concern, with the majority of participants recounting personal experiences ranging from harassment and verbal abuse to serious threats and assaults (Raz, 2006).

Franks’ (2000) research is relevant here, because it looked particularly at white women who wear the *hijab*, so that, in theory, instances of harassment and violence relate to *religion*, rather than ethnicity. This research raises the question of how racism and religious discrimination intersect and the differential impact of this on women relative to men.

Notwithstanding our cautions about the motivations of the perpetrators of hate crime, it is probably prudent to note that this is likely to be of little interest to victims such as the 114 Jews who were subjected to violent physical assault in 2007 (CST, 2008. See also EUMC, 2004a and b on anti-semitism in Europe). In this respect, one incident of ‘faith hate’ is one too many.

The Police Service

Sharp (2002) observes that the British police force is based on a model of ‘policing by consent’, rooted in its early development as a relationship between the police and the community. He suggests that today this relationship is more fragile than previously and that whole sections of the public have lost faith in the ability of the police to protect them. This may be due to changes in the ethnic and racial composition of society over the last fifty years or so, tensions between cultural attitudes to, and expectations of, law enforcement, the lack of representativeness of the police force and racism by individual officers and/or the institution.

Following the accusation of institutional racism by the Macpherson Inquiry (1999), efforts were made to change the public perception of the force and to make it more ethnically representative of British society. This included the setting of employment targets, the introduction of new recruitment and selection techniques and the implementation of compulsory race and diversity training. Notwithstanding this, any illusions that the police service had eliminated racism were shattered in 2003 when the BBC’s ‘*Secret Policeman*’ showed shocking examples of racism among police recruits.

This was followed by a CRE formal investigation into the police service in England and Wales, focusing particularly on selection and race/diversity training (CRE, 2005b). Criticisms were made of the lack of race and diversity training strategies in some forces, the content of others, and the trainers themselves. However, the investigation also found that recruitment practices prioritised BME applicants over whites – which constituted unlawful direct discrimination. It was also found that more black and Asian candidates failed the ‘respect for diversity’ competency than whites, and more Bangladeshi and Pakistani candidates failed this than Indians. Another finding was that women and whites performed better overall than men and VMEs in all exercises and competency areas (CRE, 2005b).

The CRE investigation raises questions about approaches to furthering the equalities agenda, including the dangers of setting unrealistic employment targets. This highlights the issue of positive discrimination versus positive action, on which there are strong, and divergent, feelings and arguments that we do not have the space to enter into here (see, for instance, Khan, 2006, who argues for ‘preferential treatment’). O’Neill and Holdaway (2007) argue that the focus on recruiting BME police officers is crucial to improving police culture and on this and the related issue of diversity training they cite the support of black police associations. However, the chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales argues against positive discrimination on any grounds – gender, ethnicity, sexuality – saying that the way to increase the trust and confidence of all communities is by sustained non-discriminatory action (Berry, 2004).

There are around 138,000 police officers in England and Wales, 3% of who are BME individuals, relative to 7% of the general population (Sutton et al., 2006). But in trying to recruit BME officers, the police are faced with the reluctance of minority ethnic and religious groups to join the service. Weller et al. (2000) found that two thirds or more of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh organisations reported unfairness in the attitudes, behaviour and practices of the police service and officers. Stone and Tuffin (2000) found that many BME people saw police ‘culture’ as encouraging racism, and Rowe (2004) found that BME police officers were viewed as having betrayed their communities.

Inequality, Disadvantage and Discrimination Within the Police

Holdaway (1996) and Holdaway and Barron (1997) found that the high attrition rates of BME officers was related to racism within the force. Cooper and Ingram (2004) reported that around 50% of the officers surveyed gave discrimination as the reason for transfer/leaving. Bland et al. (1999) showed slower rates of promotion for BME officers and Foster et al. (2005) found that BME officers believed that promotion was blocked and that if they were promoted they were subject to greater scrutiny.

Sharp’s (2002) research into the experiences of 14 Muslim police officers found that common themes emerged which highlighted: the central importance of religion; the importance of belonging; the pressures of policing, and the experience of racism. Issues raised included lack of provision of prayer rooms and *halal* food; holidays being based on the Christian calendar; exclusion from informal networks developed around alcohol consumption and racist and anti-Islamic language and ‘jokes’.

Of particular relevance to this review is that the Muslim officers felt that it was their presence, rather than official policies or training that had brought about improvements. Another piece of research that raises questions about the effectiveness of approaches to the elimination of racism and religious discrimination is that by Foster et al. (2005). This suggests that though the use of racist language and bantering has declined since the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, many police officers attributed this to the ‘stifling’ atmosphere

of enforced political correctness. This raises questions about apparent versus real change.

A striking voice on racism/discrimination within the police is that of Gurpal Singh Viridi who has been a serving officer with the Metropolitan Police for twenty-four years, despite at one stage being unfairly dismissed by them. His case went to industrial tribunal, which found in his favour. Singh refers to being given inappropriate postings, the worst jobs to do, being set up to fail, and regularly being overlooked for promotion. Although he acknowledges the role of the CRE in bringing about positive change, he is also critical of it for not 'flexing its muscles' sufficiently in enforcement (Singh, 2006: 84).

Discrimination By the Police

There have been many accusations of racism and institutional racism against the police (see Bland et al., 2000, on stop and searches; Phillips and Brown, 1998, on arrests; Macpherson, 1999, on institutional racism). Of the 878,153 stop and searches in 2005/06, 15% were of black; 8% of Asian and 2% of 'other' ethnic groups. Of the 1,429,785 arrests in 2005/06, 9% were of black, 5% of Asian and 1% of 'other' ethnic groups. Of the 256,116 official cautions issued that year, 6% were to black, 4% to Asian and 1% to 'other' ethnic groups (Jones and Singer, 2008).

Like crime, these statistics are likely to be affected by a range of demographic factors, including residential patterns, gender, age, socio-economic and social class factors (Macey, 1999, 2005; Spalek, 2002). For obvious reasons, there is heavier policing of deprived urban areas than of privileged rural ones, and since the former are more multi-ethnic than the latter, there is a greater likelihood of BME people, particularly young men, having negative encounters with the police. Thus, whether or not the accusation of 'over' policing constitutes racism is a moot point, as is the counter-accusation of 'under' policing,⁸⁴ but it seems highly likely that the prejudiced attitudes found within police cultures will impact on policing in wider society (see Whitfield, 2004; Sutton et al., 2006).

Complaints Against the Police

Of the 26,880 complaints against the police in 2005/6, 7% came from black, 5% from Asian and 1% from 'other' minority ethnic people. However, of the 1,116 claims of discriminatory behaviour, only 13 were upheld (Jones and Singer, 2008).

⁸⁴ The perpetrators of the Bradford riot expressed opposing views on this issue, some accusing the police of targeting Muslim areas, other accusing them of deliberately ignoring such crime as drug dealing in Muslim areas. Both articulated a 'conspiracy' approach to the question (Macey, 2005).

Deaths and Near Misses During/Following Police Contact

Table 6.2. Type of Death by Ethnicity, 2006/07. Docking and Menin (2008)

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Road Traffic Fatalities</i>		<i>Fatal Shootings</i>		<i>Deaths In or Following Police Custody</i>		<i>Deaths During or Following Other Police Contact</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
White	31	86	1	100	21	78	12	67	65	79
British	25	69	1	100	20	74	11	61	57	70
Other	6	17	0	-	1	4	1	6	8	10
Asian	2	6	0	-	2	7	3	17	7	9
Bangladeshi	1	3	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	1
Indian	1	3	0	-	0	-	1	6	2	2
Other	0	-	0	-	2	7	2	11	4	5
Black	3	8	0	-	3	11	3	17	9	11
Caribbean	1	3	0	-	0	-	1	6	2	2
African	1	3	0	-	1	4	1	6	3	4
Other	1	3	0	-	2	7	1	6	4	5
Not Known	0	-	0	-	1	4	0	-	1	1
Total	36	100	1	100	27	100	18	100	82	100

Deaths following police contact are rare, none took place in police stations in 2006/07, and most were due to natural causes, alcohol or drug abuse. However, Bowling and Philips (2002) suggest that BME individuals are over-represented in terms of deaths in custody – but that these are construed as ‘accidents’ or the fault of the victim. There are also a number of incidents of self-harm, suicide and ‘near misses’ (Best et al., 2004). Burke et al. (2008) surveyed 121 incidents over a 12-month period and concluded that there may be as many as 1,000 ‘near miss’ incidents per year, the most common (46%) involving attempted suicide/self harm.⁸⁵

Prosecutions and Sentencing

In 25% of cases involving white suspects, a decision not to proceed to prosecution is taken, compared to around 18-20% of black, mixed or ‘other’ suspects (Chen and Lewis, 2007) [see also Barclay and Mhlanga, 2000, on differential decisions by the CPS]. In Magistrates’ Courts, 60% of white, 50% of black and 42% of Asian defendants were convicted.⁸⁶ In Crown Courts, 75% of white, 70% of black and 67% of Asian defendants were convicted with sentencing varying by ethnicity: 58% of white offenders relative to 68% black, 60% Asian and 73% ‘other’ received custodial sentences (see Hood, 1992, on race and sentencing). Similar racial/ethnic disparities are found in relation to statistics for youth offending, pre-court decisions and custodial sentences and to pre- or post-release supervision by the National Probation Service.

⁸⁵ It has recently been announced that every custody suite in England and Wales is to be scrutinised by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and HM Inspectorate of Prisons (*Jane’s News Brief*, 2008).

⁸⁶ Ethnic recording was only available for 20% of Magistrates’ court cases, relative to 80% in High courts.

The Prison Service

Race/Ethnicity: As of June 2006, the prison population comprised – per thousand population – black: 7.3; Asian: 1.7; white: 1.3; Chinese or other: 0.4. Those serving four or more years comprised – black: 59%; Chinese/other: 55%; Asian: 51%; white/mixed: 47% (Jones and Singer, 2007).

Religion: Data provided by Gressous et al. (2001) found a sophisticated breakdown of Christianity into 28 denominations relative to a simplified global approach to other religions, as ‘Hindu’, ‘Muslim’ and Sikh. They found that in 2000, 39% of prisoners defined themselves as Anglican; 32% declared ‘no religion’; 17% said they were Catholic, and 7% Muslim. They noted that the number of prisoners who defined themselves as having ‘no religion’ had doubled in size between 1993 and 2000). And Wilson (1999) pointed to the equally striking growth in the numbers of Muslims in prison.

Inequality, Disadvantage or Discrimination in Prisons: The 2001 and 2005 Citizenship Surveys found negative perceptions of the prison service among black and Asian people who referred to lack of accountability, verbal and physical abuse of inmates, unequal access to parole, and deaths in custody (Gervais, 2008).

Edgar and Martin (2004) carried out research in four prisons into how differential perceptions between officers and prisoners in relation to race/ethnicity might lead to conflict, particularly with respect to disciplinary situations. Interestingly, blatant racism was cited far less commonly than claims of differential treatment, stereotyping, officers’ demeanour and lack of explanations for decisions. Almost 1/3 of the prisoners cited lack of access to facilities to practise their religion as racially biased treatment; 3 prisoners saw this as their main area of concern, and a further 16 raised it among other issues.

Spalek and Wilson (2002) looked at religious provision in prison with respect to access to imams. Because the penal system is basically oriented towards Christianity, particularly the CoE, imams are placed in a relationship of dependency with Anglican chaplains and are marginalised from decision-making mechanisms. They also reported harassment, direct racism and anti-Muslim sentiment.

In 2001, the CRE began a formal investigation into the prison service of England and Wales, the findings of which were published in two parts. The first referred to the murder of Zahid Zubarek, a young Asian man who had been placed in a cell with a known violent racist. The findings of this investigation were that the Young Offender Institution [YOI] concerned exhibited 16 areas of failure under the RRA and a further 4 ‘underlying’ areas of failure (CRE, 2003). It is notable that one of the recommendations of the investigation was that the concept of institutional racism should be extended to institutional religious intolerance.

Part 2 of the CRE investigation consisted of a broader enquiry into the prison service, the findings of which listed 14 areas of failure under the RRA, some of which involved racial discrimination against staff as well as inmates, and a number of which related to Islam, but were classed as ‘racial.’⁸⁷ Among other criticisms, it was noted that Muslims were not allowed adequate access to imams, dedicated prayer rooms/places of worship or facilities for pre-prayer washing. It was also stated that prisons made inadequate arrangements for Muslims to fulfil the modesty requirements of their religion (CRE, 2005).

⁸⁷ The CRE’s ability to raise issues relating to Muslims is interesting, given that one of the reasons for introducing legislation on religion was the claim that Muslims (unlike Jews and Sikhs) were not protected under the RRA.

Deaths in Prisons: There were a total of 74 self-inflicted deaths in prison in 2005/06, 9 of which were of black, 5 of Asian and 2 of mixed race prisoners (Jones & Singer, 2007). The main cause of death was hanging (86%). There were a further 90 deaths, 6 of black, 2 of Asian and 1 of mixed race prisoners. 94% of deaths were due to natural causes, though there were 2 homicides, both of white prisoners.

6.9 Key Points

Health, Social Work, Social Care and Disability

- There is clear evidence of inequality and disadvantage in the health status of ethno-religious groups, but we have found no evidence of discrimination in the provision of health services.
- Failure to access health and social services is due in some cases to:
 - (a) Conflict between the value base of service providers and users;
 - (b) Ethno-religious values that associate certain illnesses with stigma and shame, and,
 - (c) Reluctance on the part of some religious minorities to risk exposure to secular environments.
- Lack of religious literacy can cause miscommunication and misunderstanding between service providers and users.
- Monitoring of service use by religion is inadequately developed.
- Both negative and positive attitudes to disability are associated with religion.
- Some ethno-religious groups view schizophrenia as spirit possession or witchcraft.

Education

- Secular belief systems suffer disadvantage relative to religious ones within the education system.
- The provision of separate faith based schools raises questions across a wide range of areas and elicits strong feelings among proponents and opponents. The debate is currently strongly influenced by emotion and ideology and there is a need for research to provide an adequate evidence base.
- The emphasis on mosques and madrasas as key influences on young people may be misplaced, since evidence suggests that mosque attendance in general is overestimated, particularly for young men.

The Criminal Justice System

- There is evidence of racial and ethnic inequality, disadvantage and discrimination in relation to police and prison service staff.
- Police recruitment and selection techniques and anti-discrimination training has been found to be discriminatory.
- Religious literacy is not currently on the diversity menu of police training, nor are adequate statistics kept on this dimension in relation to either officers or arrests. Prison statistics are inadequate in relation to minority religions, although we understand that a more sophisticated method of recording religion in the prison service has recently come into operation.
- Accusations of racism/ethnic discrimination *by* the police force against lay people are *assumed*, rather than proven, and care needs to be taken in the interpretation of statistics showing over-representation of minority ethnic and religious people across the CJS.
- The definitions of ‘racially motivated’ and ‘hate’ crimes invite inaccurate,

exaggerated and dangerous interpretations and statistics.

CHAPTER 7

OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Overview of Research and Recommendations for Future Research

In Chapter 1, we noted Denvir et al.'s comment about the lack of a strong research base in relation to religion or belief in the workplace, separate from race, ethnicity and culture (2007: 26).

Our review supports this comment in some respects as a general statement of the research on religion/belief, and challenges or qualifies it in other respects, leading to a more nuanced view overall.

First, the literature on the social dimensions of religion or belief has undoubtedly expanded rapidly in recent years. This 'turn to religion' in the scholarly treatment of equality is reflected in the number of references cited in this report – over 700 – and the thousands of other publications disclosed by the search process, which for various reasons did not fulfil the criteria for inclusion.

Second, this substantial research base is dispersed among a wide variety of different types of source, as indicated by the inventory given in Chapter 1. It may be that this dispersion of the research base leads observers to underestimate its extent, and one purpose of the current report is to make this research base more accessible in a single publication.

Third, and despite the volume of recent publication relevant to religion or belief, the coverage nevertheless remains uneven on most of the dimensions of interest, as follows.

In terms of *topic areas*, the most striking finding is that, despite the existence of large-scale enquiries such as the Census, surprisingly little is known about two issues of fundamental importance to the field:

- The overall distribution of religion or belief in the British population, taking account of the distinct dimensions of identity, belief and practice.
- '*patterns of discrimination relating to religion or belief in isolation from race, ethnicity and culture.*' (Denvir et al., 2007: 26)

We regard investigation into these two questions as the top priority for future research in the field of religion/belief.

In very broad terms, roughly 15% of the population is clearly identified (from the 2001 Census) as having 'No Religion', and it is probable that no more than 15% to 25% (at most) practise one of the major faiths (according to the evidence available to us, coupled with conventional views of what it means to practise a faith, such as churchgoing for Christians). But this leaves the majority of the population out of account, in terms of their religion or belief. Research into this huge grouping might focus profitably on issues such as ethnic (as opposed to religious) identification with religion, and the relative distributions of spiritual (as opposed to religious) belief among those who do not practise in conventionally recognised ways. We think that there is a very strong case for amending the question on religion in the 2011 Census (both in Scotland and especially in England and Wales) to address these issues.

On the question of discrimination by religion or belief, we have found that there is a good deal of research about (and well-circulated beliefs concerning) the *perceived* extent of religious discrimination. There is much less research on the *actual experience* of such discrimination, as it affects individuals in the workplace, civil society or the public services. And virtually all of the latter research relies on self-reports of discrimination,

which are subject to methodological shortcomings. There is a correspondingly clear need to establish the incidence and extent of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief by direct methods of discrimination testing. Prejudice of religion or belief also requires investigation (as distinct from unfavourable attitudes).

Some topic areas, such as the labour market and residential separation, are beginning to be covered by 'pioneer studies' which use sophisticated numerical techniques to isolate the religious dimensions of inequality.

There is also established coverage in some areas of qualitative research involving group representation and community cohesion, in which JRF has taken a particular interest. This literature also refers to the evolution, meanings and uses of religious identity, especially among young men, but the empirical research in this area has not kept pace with the theoretical debates, which have, moreover, concentrated on the situation of Muslim young people, with less consideration of Hindus and Sikhs, where the 'politicisation' of religious identity also occurs.

There is very little published work in such areas as housing, transport or rural affairs. Likewise, there is very little research that explores the link between religion and social class, despite the fact that social class is heavily implicated in many of the issues considered above, including poverty, employment, access to services, residence, education and political representation. There is a good deal of published work on the representation of religion in the media, especially the issue of 'Islamophobia', but some of this work is uncritical, and does not conform to the full requirements of social science methodology.

Research in all these areas stands in need of further development, as does the philosophical work on the vision of justice underlying the new equalities framework (see Chapter 2.8). Clarity over concepts such as 'equality' or 'toleration' have important practical consequences (Jewson and Mason, 1986) and there is a strong case for investigating the human rights' foundations of some current legislation, with a view to recommendations for change. The issues here include forced marriage (which is not currently illegal); divorce and child custody; the impact of asylum and immigration status on access to places of safety and public support, and the currently-discontinued primary purpose rule for immigration.

The research coverage of *the workplace* and *public services* is uneven in two respects. First, there is more information on religion/belief in the public sector generally than in the private sector. Second, although there are relatively large number of studies related to the public sector, these are typically small-scale, and are often devoted to highly specific topics (such as a particular medical condition or aspect of service provision) with small samples, in single geographical locations and/or institutional contexts, and sometimes addressed to the situations of highly specific ethno-religious groups.

These studies are often very valuable in their own right, and an overall picture begins to emerge by assembling the findings from a range of such research (as in Chapter 6 especially), but a number of omissions will inevitably remain. An example is the lack of research on the educational and social effects of faith schooling, and it is likely that more heat than light will be generated in the debates on this contentious issue until that omission is rectified.

Part of this overall picture for the public services presented in Chapter 6 is that the health services tend to emerge well from the research, so that the main issues in this sector are religious literacy, cultural sensitivity and health education rather than injustice or unfair treatment. This relates to research evidence that a failure of some ethno-religious user groups to take up services in some spheres can be due to cultural or religious attitudes

towards, for example, HIV/AIDs, mental health or genetic disorders, rather than hostility or discrimination on the part of providers. Concerns about unfair treatment tend to be concentrated on the Criminal Justice System among the public services, with Education and the Social Services located between these cases in the overall distribution of concerns.

The *geographical* coverage of research reveals that there are both shared and distinctive features of the experience of religion/belief in the three countries of England, Scotland and Wales. Subject to the uncertainties outlined above, there appears to be a similar balance within the populations of each country between religious and secular orientations, and an issue common to all three countries is the continuing decline of Christian observance.

In terms of national variations:

- (Intra-Christian) sectarianism remains a live issue in Scotland, but not in either Wales or England, although the evidence suggests that even in Scotland, the issue may be more concerned with cultural *perception* than social or economic *experience* (Bruce et al., 2005). This situation in Scotland resembles that with minority religious discrimination in England and Wales.
- The distinctive issues in England revolve around the minority (non-Christian) religions, but the concentration of the relevant populations mean that these are (numerically speaking) issues for London and a small number of other urban centres rather than England as a whole.
- As a broad generalisation, Wales has neither Christian sectarianism nor a numerous minority religious population, so it does not tend to encounter either of the distinctive concerns faced in Scotland or England.

Although the relative extent of the research coverage reflects these national situations, this does not mean that those interested in religion or belief in, say, England have nothing to learn from colleagues concerned with Scotland or Wales. On the contrary, the decline of sectarianism in Scotland may provide one of the best (and closest) models for the development of good relationships of religion or belief in England. And one of the most illuminating consultations on minority religions we have found was carried out in Wales with Muslim women (Mahoney and Taj, 2006).

If the coverage of research by *religion or belief* followed the (probable) distribution of allegiances within the population, most publications would be concerned with the secular spectrum of belief, followed by Christianity, and then Islam, with slightly smaller representations of Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism, followed finally by NRMs. In fact, we have found very little empirical research into the secular spectrum of belief (as opposed to literature concerned with arguments about the existence of God), and almost no studies concerned with NRMs that are relevant to this review.

There is a good deal of research on Christianity, including, for example, the ramifying debate inspired by Davie's (1994) hypothesis of '*believing without belonging*', which is central to the question of religious v. secular orientations. There is some specific research focussed on Judaism, with fewer contributions on Hinduism, followed by Buddhism and Sikhism (as indicated in Chapter 1). Research on the minority religions is nevertheless mostly by, or about, Muslims, and this coverage is reflected in its prominence within this report.

Some of the reasons for this research emphasis on Islam are indicated briefly in Chapter 1. But it is well to remember, in case the concerns of the Muslim minority (or the issue of 'Islam and the West') crowd out the legitimate interests and concerns of other groups, that those who identify as Muslims form just 2.9% – that is, less than one in thirty – of the British population.

We recommend in this light that the research effort into religion or belief should be distributed with greater attention to the full diversity of allegiances within the field.

The next two sections list the more detailed recommendations that have emerged from the previous chapters of the report.

7.2 Recommendations for Stakeholders and Practitioners

It was part of our brief from the XXXX to draw out the implications of research for stakeholders and practitioners. These implications are hopefully made clear in the relevant sections above, but some general themes are drawn together here for ease of reference.

In our view, there are requirements for stakeholders and practitioners with interests in this field to:

- Inform members of the public, especially women from ethno-religious groups, about their rights under the equalities legislation.
- Inform and educate employers about the new requirements of the law.
- Monitor religious hate crime, of which the three main areas of concern are crimes directed against i) Muslims, where the evidence is strongest of crimes directed against women wearing the *hijab*; ii) converts from Islam, who are vulnerable to attack by Muslims, and iii) Jewish people, who, (as noted in Chapter 6) are more at risk of attack than Muslims (Mirza et al., 2007), a finding that may support Wistrich's (1992) suggestion that anti-semitism is '*the longest hatred*' (on which, see more recently Taguieff and Camiller, 2004; Chesler, 2005; Bunzi, 2007).
- Be aware of the possibility of discrimination (and other forms of unfair treatment) on the grounds of religion or belief.
- Committed *against* members of religious or belief groups in the workplace, civil society or the public services.
 - Committed *by* FBOs on this or other protected grounds against members of other religious or belief groups, particularly on the grounds of gender or sexual orientation.
- Develop cultural literacy alongside 'literacy of religion or belief', in order to make information more widely known about the diversity of religious faiths and secular belief systems, and also to bring home the crucial distinctions between:
 - Culture and religion.
 - Unfavourable attitudes and prejudice.
 - The *perception* and the *experience* of injustice.
 - The experience of *inequality* and the experience of *injustice*.
- Work to ensure that misapprehensions about such issues do not exacerbate inter-ethnic tensions and feelings of religious marginalisation, exclusion and victimhood.
- Develop training programmes in cultural and religious literacy *and* the equalities law for the benefit of service providers such as the police, teachers and social workers, as well as the advice sector.
- Recognise that minority communities (whether cultural or religious) are not homogeneous and be aware of divisions within such communities.
- Be wary of 'gatekeeping', and pay particular attention to the question of whether those who claim to speak on behalf of religious groups are truly representative of those groups, and whether they have non-religious political agendas. This is the issue of 'political literacy' (Mukta, 2000; Searle-Chatterjee, 2000; Bright, 2006).
- Be alive more generally to the possibility that assertions of religious identity may be better understood in 'ethnic', 'cultural' or 'political' terms.

- Establish special communication channels, networks or fora to encourage discussion of issues that might not otherwise be raised – among women’s, young people’s or LGBT constituencies within religious groups, for example;
- Orient action where appropriate to the specific circumstances of ‘hyphen-groups’ defined by combinations of race, ethnicity and religion (for example, ‘black African Christians’), rather than ethnic or religious groups considered as a whole;
- Look at ways of increasing levels of awareness among religious and community leaders of the health risks and other factors that contribute to the long-term disadvantage of their communities, including genetic disorders linked to first cousin marriages, attitudes to mental illness and disability, and attitudes to HIV/AIDS and STDs.
- Follow the advice of the Muslim women consulted in Wales, and do not allow ‘political correctness’ (which is in reality *incorrectness*) to outweigh the claims of human rights, especially those of vulnerable individuals (including women and children) within ethno-religious communities (Mahoney and Taj, 2006: 18). This issue can arise in different forms in connection with all the major faith traditions, including Judaism and Catholicism, as well as within Islam.

7.3 Disadvantage of Religion or Belief in Service Provision and the Law

The term ‘disadvantage of religion/belief’ has been used throughout this report to indicate an unequal formal recognition of groups of religion or belief, compared with other such groups, in some official or organisational context. The following cases are drawn from the chapters above, and represent anomalies in current service provision or the law. As such, they present cases for review, including a *prima facie* case for change:

- Secularists (Agnostics, Atheists, Humanists and others) do not have their views reflected in the school curriculum, since the teaching of non-Christian beliefs tends to comprise ‘world faiths’ (i.e. religions), rather than secular belief systems (changing this situation would require an amendment to the Education Act 1996).
- Secularists tend not to be represented on such decision-making bodies as School Boards of Governors, and in some publicly-funded initiatives such as the Inter-faith Network (which should perhaps become a ‘Network of Faith or Belief’).
- Humanist weddings are not recognised in England and Wales.
- Provision is less frequently made for non-Christian denominations (and non-religious belief systems) than for their Christian counterparts in connection with hospital and prison chaplaincies and facilities for the practice of faith (or belief) within these institutions.
- The law on religious hatred does not apply to Scotland, and there seems little reason not to extend it there.
- The law of succession privileges Anglicans over other Christian and non-Christian religions.
- The House of Lords includes Anglican representatives of religion or belief alone by right.
- The Charities Act 2006 (which applies only to England and Wales) defines a charity in part by reference to purposes that include the advancement of religion if it is for the public benefit (Jahangir, 2008), but excludes the similar advancement of secular belief systems.
- Unlike other Western European countries, the UK has not ratified Protocol 12 of the ECHR (Ansari, 2002; Bamforth, 2004: 695, n.14).

7.4 General Recommendations of the Review

There are two broad recommendations that emerge from many of the detailed instances above. These are that activities in the field of religion or belief should be adjusted throughout to correspond more closely with:

- The rough distribution of religion or belief in the population as a whole, including especially the (probable) existence of a spiritual, agnostic or secular majority.
- The ('actual') *experience* of unequal, hostile or unfair treatment, rather than the *perception* or the *presumption* of such treatment.

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METHODS

The process described below was not linear, but interactive, with each element feeding into others and the literature search being constantly modified in light of reading and bibliographical references.

1. Electronic Searches:⁸⁸ The review was heavily dependent on electronic database searches, for which we employed a professional research consultant with extensive experience of literature reviews.

(a) Three searches of the academic databases [ASSIA – Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts; British Humanities Index – BHI, and Sociological Abstracts – SA] were conducted by the research consultant (see below). Each search was modified by reference to the previous one/s with the final search picking targeting areas that had yielded low returns. The final search was by individual religions in relation to specified equalities areas.

Additional searches were carried out towards the end of the project by members of the research team and Iain Macey, using amended search parameters and sources to ensure that material had not been overlooked.

(b) The search parameters used:⁸⁹

- Keyword Search (KW) – automatically searches the Abstract (AB), Descriptor (DE), and Title (TI) fields together. If a database has the Identifier (ID) field, that field is also searched;
- English Language articles only;
- Journals & published works only (i.e. not theses or dissertations);
- Year 2000-2008 inclusive.

(c) Boolean Operators used:

- ‘And’ – to narrow the search to retrieve records that contain *all* of the words that it separates;
- * Truncate – to expand a search term to include all forms of a root word, e.g. patent* retrieves: patents, patented, patentable, etc.

(d) All abstracts were read and additional references obtained.

(e) Relevant articles were downloaded, printed and analysed to form the basis of the review.

2. Web Searches: The research team carried out a comprehensive search of the web for relevant material from a range of sources, some indication of which is given in the ‘Abbreviations’ section of this report.

(a) Examples include: a range of Government Departments (English, Scottish and Welsh), including the Office for National Statistics; University Research Centres; Religions and Denominations; Equalities Organisations (e.g. Commission for Racial Equality, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Equal Opportunities Commission,

⁸⁸ The scale of the search exercise is illustrated by the fact that the *initial* search alone yielded 11,420 abstracts, 1,321 of which were deemed potentially relevant, and from which the research team selected 463 to read in full.

⁸⁹ Unfortunately, it is not possible to set parameters that restrict searches by country, which led to the generation of a large number of abstracts from outside the UK.

Runnymede Trust, Institute for Race Relations, Islamic Human Rights Commission); Research Funding Bodies (Arts & Humanities Research Council, Economic and Social Science Research Council, Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Policy Organisations (e.g. Policy Studies Institute, Institute for Public Policy Research, Institute for Jewish Policy Research); Faith or Belief Based Organisations (e.g. Association of Muslim Social Scientists, British Humanist Association, Christian Research, William Temple Foundation).

- (b) Relevant materials from the web search were downloaded, printed, read and sorted for further references.
- (c) Web materials were analysed to form the basis of the review.

3. Consultation: The research team sought the advice (via e-mail/telephone) of experts in the field, as indicated in the 'Acknowledgements' section of this report. Advice received was followed up and further articles and reports obtained.

**Record of Literature Search
XXXX Religion Review**

ASSIA – Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts

Search Dates	Search Terms 1	+	Search Terms 2	Initial Hits	Abstracts sent
15.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Disability	98	39
15.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Human Rights	47	11
16.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Age or ageism or ageing	358	63
17.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Gender or sexual* or homophobia	414	68
17.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Race or ethnic* or BME	336	48
17.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Immigration or nationality	50	8
17.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	The state	77	20
17.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Individual and community	43	9
17.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Public and private	42	13
17.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Cultural and expression	7	2
18.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Barriers and member* and religious group*	0	0
18.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Barriers and membership and religious group*	0	0

Search Dates	Search Terms 1	+	Search Terms 2	Initial Hits	Abstracts sent
21.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Parenting or social care	49	11
21.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Housing or transport or rural	90	4
21.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Pension* or benefits or financial support	109	14
21.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Leadership or power or representation	211	35
21.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Access and services		
21.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Health	28	3
21.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Citizenship or identity or values	215	75
21.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Social inclusion or community cohesion	334	97
21.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Criminal and justice	21	11
21.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Public and safety		
21.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Discrimination or prejudice or maltreatment	25	2
21.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Survey and UK	9	1
21.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And		61	20
21.01.08	Religion	And		23	17

**Record of Literature Search
XXXX Religion Review**

BHI – British Humanities Index & SA – Sociological Abstracts

Search Dates	Search Terms 1	+	Search Terms 2	Initial Hits	Abstracts sent
23.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Disability	18	5
23.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Human Rights	123	25
23.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Age or ageism or ageing	414	52
23.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Gender or sexual* or homophobia	671	41
23.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Race or ethnic* or BME	714	59
23.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Immigration or nationality	108	19
23.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	The state	210	21
23.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Individual and community	577	98
23.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Public and private	509	47
24.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Cultural and expression	34	6
24.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Barriers and member* and religious group*	0	0
24.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And	Barriers and membership and religious group*	0	0
24.01.08	Religion or faith or belief	And		0	0

Record of Literature Search
XXXX Religion Review
Specific Religious Groups + Equality Terms
ASSIS; BHI; SA

Search Dates	Search Terms 1	+	Search Terms 2	Initial Hits - all abstracts sent, i.e., not sorted to i/d UK research
12.02.08 13.02.08	Buddhist*	And And And And And	Disability Human Rights Age* Gender or sexual* Race or ethnic*	3 8 15 12 10
12.02.08 13.02.08	Christian* or protestant or catholic	And And And And And	Disability Human Rights Age* Gender or sexual* Race or ethnic*	39 70 279 230 174
12.02.08 13.02.08	Hindu*	And And And And And	Disability Human Rights Age* Gender or sexual* Race or ethnic*	4 7 26 17 38
12.02.08 13.02.08	Jew* or Judaism	And And And And And	Disability Human Rights Age* Gender or sexual* Race or ethnic*	26 31 25 125 262
12.02.08 13.02.08	Islam* or Muslim or Moslem	And And And And And	Disability Human Rights Age* Gender or sexual* Race or ethnic*	14 137 109 205 330
12.02.08 13.02.08	Sikh*	And And And And And	Disability Human Rights Age* Gender or sexual* Race or ethnic*	2 2 12 5 10

ACADEMIC OR PROFESSIONAL SURVEYS AND POLLS⁹⁰1. ABRAMS, D and HOUSTON, D.M. (2007) *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain: Results from the 2006 National Survey*, London: CO.

Sample size: representative sample of 2895 over sixteen year olds across Britain, with smaller subsets of various categories, e.g. 128 Muslims. *Methods:* Personal interview survey. *Description:* social psychological survey to assess a range of aspects of prejudice towards age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexuality relative to each other.

Key Findings (authors' headings):

Equality and Human Rights

- The vast majority of people value the principles of equality and social justice. Security is also important value.
- There is a strong endorsement of individualism and the idea that groups should be free to differ and be treated equally. But there is also support for the view that it is better if people share the same values and ways of life.
- The need to promote equal employment opportunities is seen as greatest for over seventy year olds, disabled people and women, then black people, gays and lesbians with Muslims at the bottom.

Expressions/Experiences of Prejudice

- Prejudice is expressed differently towards different groups, with the majority of overt prejudice being against illegal immigrants and asylum seekers and a minority towards Muslims, gays and lesbians. Overwhelming, the majority express positive feelings towards women (though this varies by ethnicity), older people and the disabled.
- 49% reported personal experience of prejudice over the previous twelve months.
- The most pervasive experience of prejudice was ageism followed by sexism.
- Over 50% of the members of relevant groups reported racism and religious prejudice.

Conditions for Prejudice

- People think that media portrayals of Muslims, gays and lesbians are the most negative.
- Arabs and Muslims are less likely than others to be viewed as being accepted as British. Acceptance as British is linked to being white, native English speakers and either Judaeo-Christian or non-religious.
- 1/3 of respondents said they were not concerned about being prejudiced.
- Political correctness applies more in relation to some groups than others. People are least constrained about admitting prejudice against gays and lesbians, Muslims and women.
- Different groups direct their prejudices against particular out-groups, i.e. prejudice is not a psychological aspect of individual personality but a function of inter-group relations.

⁹⁰ Note: lack of space prevents the material in this section being reported in full and readers are advised to consult the originals which not only give more details but are more nuanced than might appear to be the case from a condensed version.

Social Stereotypes Underpinning Prejudice

- Prejudice can be ‘patronising’ – e.g. towards older and disabled people and women. Prejudice can also be ‘hostile’ – e.g. towards Muslims, gays and lesbians.
- The emotions associated with different groups reflect types of prejudice – e.g. older people and disabled people evoke pity; Muslims evoke fear and anger; gays and lesbians evoke disgust and anger.

Together or Apart?

- Difference does not imply hostility or have implications for distancing.
- Economic competition is viewed with less concern than threats to culture, health or safety. Muslims, black people, gays and lesbians are seen as posing the strongest threats, both culturally and physically.
- Socio-economic status is not strongly related to either negative or positive attitudes towards any particular groups.

2. CHANNEL 4 DISPATCHES (2006) *Muslim Attitudes to Living in Britain.*

Details: GfK telephone interviews of a random sample of 1,000 British Muslims aged 18+ using RDD in areas with 5% or more Muslims in population and with all households screened for ethnicity and religion at the outset. Final data were weighted by gender and age to match the profile of British Muslims.

Key Findings (GfK headings):

1. Religiousness

Importance of Religion

- All important: 93%.
- Very important: 73%.
- Fairly important: 15%.
- Not very important: 4%.
- Not at all important: 3%.

Mosque Attendance

- 7 times+: 10%.
- 4-6 times: 8%.
- 2-3 times: 8%.
- Once: 19%.
- Special occasions: 6%.
- Never attend: 48%.

2. Britishness

Britain: My Country or Their Country?

- My country: 49%.
- Their country: 24%.
- Both: 12%.
- 53% of men v 45% of women were more likely to say ‘my country’.

- 55% of those aged 45+ say ‘my country’ compared to 44% of 18-24 year olds.

Belonging to Britain v Belonging to Islam

- 2 in 5 Muslims in Britain (38%) feel they belong to both Britain and Islam ‘very strongly’. However,
- 14% of those who say they belong to Islam ‘very strongly’ do not feel a sense of belonging to Britain.
- 42% of men v 34% of women feel ‘very strongly’ that they belong to Britain *and* Islam.

3. Integration (School Preference)

- Popular state school with good results: 44%.
- Muslim school that follows the national curriculum: 43%.
- Don’t know: 13%
- Muslims in lower social grades are more likely to opt for Islamic schools than their ABC1 counterparts (46% v 40%).
- Islamic schools are most popular in the South of England.

Living Apart 1? (To what extent do you agree with the idea that Muslims should keep themselves separate from non-Muslims?)

- All agree: 4%.
- All disagree: 94%.

Living Apart 2? (I would prefer to have Muslim Neighbours)

- All agree: 4%.
- All disagree: 94%.

4. Sha’ria Law

Would you prefer to live under sha’ria law?

- Live under British law: 54%.
- Live under *sha’ria* law: 30%.
- Muslims aged 18-24 and 25-44 are more likely to say that they would prefer to live under *sha’ria* law than older people (34% and 32% compared to 23%).

Britain as an Islamic State?

- All agree: 28%.
- All disagree: 52%.

5. Attitudes to Freedom of Speech

- Punish the people who published the cartoons: Agree: 78%; Disagree: 15%.
- British people who insult Islam should be arrested and prosecuted: Agree: 68%; Disagree: 23%.
- Free speech even if it offends religious groups: Agree: 31%; Disagree: 62%.

6. Conspiracies and Islamophobia

Do you believe the Holocaust happened?

- Yes, but it's been exaggerated: 17%.
- Yes, as History teaches: 29%.
- It did not happen at all: 2%.
- 34% of ABC1 Muslims v 23% of C2DE Muslims believed the Holocaust happened as history teaches it.

Do you believe that 9/11 was a conspiracy by America and Israel?

- It was a conspiracy: 45%.
- Don't know: 35%.
- It was not a conspiracy: 20%.
- Half of Muslims aged 18-24 (51%) feel that 9/11 was a conspiracy. This proportion drops to 43% among those aged 25-44 and 45+.
- Second generation Muslims are more likely to say it was a conspiracy (50% v 42% of first generation Muslims).

Do you believe that Diana was killed to stop her marrying a Muslim?

- Yes: 38%.
- No, her death was an accident: 31%.
- 41% of second generation v 33% of first generation Muslims feel that this was a conspiracy.
- Two in five females feel that Diana's death was a conspiracy (40% v 32% of men).

Has hostility towards Muslims increased since 7/7?

- Increased significantly: 34%.
- Increased slightly: 29%.
- Decreased slightly: 4%.
- Decreased significantly: 1%.
- Situation has remained the same: 17%.
- Despite the widespread perception of increased hostility, the majority of Muslims (77%) had not been subject to hostility since 7/7.
- The minority who had, mentioned the following forms of hostility:
 - Verbal abuse: 18%.
 - Physical abuse: 3%.
 - Stop and search: 3%.
 - Police harassment: 2%.

7. Terrorism

To what extent do you agree that the July bombings were justified because of British support for the war on terror?

- All agree: 22%.
- All disagree: 61%.
- 31% of young Muslims compared to 14% of those aged 45+ agreed with this sentiment.

Violence and suicide bombings as political tools?

- 'I can understand why young British Muslims might want to carry out suicide operations'. Disagree 80%; Agree: 14%.

- ‘It is acceptable for religious or political groups to use violence’. Disagree: 85%; Agree: 9%.

Were you surprised by the fact that the 7/7 bombers were British born Muslims?

- Yes, I was surprised: 50%.
- No, I was not surprised: 35%.
- 44% of 18-24 year old v 36% of 25-44 and 27% of 45+ Muslims say this did not surprise them.
- 45% of second v 30% of first generation Muslims were not surprised.
- 41% ABC1 v 30% C2DE Muslims were not surprised.

8. Representation

Organisations that represent Muslims in Britain?

- 30% were unsure how to answer and 57% were unable to answer this question.
- 4% mentioned the Muslim Council of Britain.
- 3% said the Mosque.
- 1% said the Muslim Association of Britain.
- 1% said the Islamic Society of Britain.

9. Muslim Attitudes Towards Women

How much truth is there in the idea that Islam treats women as 2nd class citizens?

- A great deal of truth: 9%.
- A fair amount of truth: 15%.
- Not very much truth: 12%.
- No truth at all: 56%.
- 22% of younger, 13% of 25-44 year old and 12% of 45+ Muslims feel that there is a ‘fair amount of truth’ in this statement.
- 30% of women v 19% of men feel that there is a ‘great deal’ or ‘fair amount’ of truth in this statement.

Do you agree that British society treats women with respect?

- All Agree: 63%.
- All Disagree: 28%.
- 68% of first v 56% of second generation Muslims agree with this view.

Do you agree that wives should always obey husbands?

- All Agree: 55%.
- All Disagree: 34%.
- 59% of men v 51% of women agree with this statement.
- 59% of C2DE Muslims v 51% of ABC1 Muslims agree with this statement.

Single sex schools?

- All Muslim boys should go to boys only schools: All Agree: 39%; All Disagree: 53%.
- All Muslim girls should go to girls only schools: All Agree: 40%; All disagree: 52%.
- 45% of men agree with single sex girls’ schools and 42% with single sex boys’ schools.

3. MIRZA, M., SENTHIKUMARAN, A. and JA'FAR, Z. (2007) *Living Apart Together: British Muslims and the Paradox of Multiculturalism*, London: Policy Exchange.

Sample size: 1003 Muslims; 1,025 general population for points of comparison (answers weighted to represent the demographic of the Muslim population of the UK).

Methods: Telephone and internet questionnaires; 40 semi-structured interviews with younger British-born Muslims of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage, all either University students or recent graduates from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. 12 semi-structured interviews with non-Muslims to provide points of possible comparison.

Description: exploration of the attitudes of Muslims in Britain and the reasons for the significant rise in Islamic fundamentalism among the younger generation.

Key Findings:

'there has been a significant rise in Islamic fundamentalism amongst the younger generation [of Muslims in Britain]. ...the growth of Islamism in the UK is not solely a foreign problem, but something that must be understood in relation to political and social trends that have emerged in British society over the past two decades. ...there is a growing religiosity amongst the younger generation of Muslims. They feel that they have less in common with non-Muslims than do their parents and they show a stronger preference for Islamic schools and sha'ria law. ...their interest in religion is more politicised. There is a greater stress on asserting one's identity in the public space, for example, by wearing the hijab'. (p.5)

- 86% of Muslims feel that their religion is the most important thing in their lives.
- 62% of 16-24 year old feel that they have as much in common with non-Muslims as with Muslims, compared to 71% of 55+ year olds.
- 60% of Muslims would prefer to send their children to a mixed state school, compared to 35% who would prefer to send their children to an Islamic school. However, there are clear age differences on this dimension, with 37% of 16-24 year olds preferring to send their children to Islamic state schools, compared to 25% of 45-54 year olds and 19% of 55+ year olds.
- 59% of Muslims would prefer to live under British law, compared to 28% who would prefer to live under *sha'ria* law. However, there are clear age differences on this dimension, with 37% of 16-24 year olds preferring *sha'ria* law compared to 17% of 55+ year olds.
- 36% of 16-24 year old believe that if a Muslim converts to another religion they should be punished by death, compared to 19% of 55+ year olds.
- 7% of Muslims admire organisations like *Al-Qaeda* that are prepared to fight the West. Again, there are age differentials in response to this question, with 13% of 16-24 year olds agreeing, compared to 3% of 55+ year olds.
- 74% of 16-24 year olds would prefer Muslim women to choose to wear the veil, compared to only 28% of 55+ year olds.

'There is clearly a conflict within British Islam between a moderate majority that accepts the norms of Western democracy and a growing minority that does not.' (p.5)

- 21% of Muslims have consumed alcohol; 65% have paid interest on a normal mortgage. 19% have gambled. 9% have admitted to taking drugs.
- 59% of Muslims feel that they have as much, if not more, in common with non-Muslims in the UK as with Muslims abroad.

'the rise of Islamism is not only a security problem, but also a cultural problem. Islamism is strongly coloured by anti-Western ideas. ...There has also been a weakening of older collective identities, notably the undermining of Britishness and the decline of working class politics, which has led to a feeling of disengagement amongst young people more generally. Some Muslims are therefore turning to religion as part of a search for meaning and community. They increasingly look to the abstract and global ummah.' (p.6)

- 41% named foreign policy as an important issue to Muslims but they are not necessarily more informed or engaged than the wider population. Only 18% of Muslims could name the president of the Palestinian National Authority and only 14% could name the Prime Minister of Israel.
- 58% believe that many of the problems in the world today are a result of arrogant western attitudes – 30% of the general population agrees.
- 37% believe that one of the benefits of modern society is the freedom to criticise other people's religious and political views, even when it causes offence. 29% of the general population believes the same.

'The emergence of a strong Muslim identity in Britain is, in part, a result of multicultural policies implemented since the 1980s, which have emphasised difference at the expense of a shared national identity and divided people along ethnic, religious and cultural lines. Islamist groups have gained influence at local and national level by playing the politics of identity and demanding for Muslims the 'right to be different'. The authorities and some Muslim groups have exaggerated the problem of Islamophobia, which has fuelled a sense of victimhood among some Muslims'. (p.6)

- Despite widespread concerns about Islamophobia, 84% of Muslims believe they have been treated fairly in this society.
- 28% of Muslims believe that authorities in Britain go over the top in trying not to offend Muslims. In response to two scenarios presented, 75% believe it was wrong for a local council to have banned an advertisement for a Christmas carol service, and 64% believe it was wrong for a council to have banned all images of pigs from its offices.

'Paradoxically, Government policies to improve engagement with Muslims makes things worse. By treating Muslims as a homogeneous group, the Government fails to see the diversity of opinions amongst Muslims, so that they feel more ignored and excluded'. (p.6)

- When asked to name an organisation that represented their views as Muslims, only 6% named the Muslim Council of Britain. 51% felt that no Muslim organisation represented their views.
- 75% believe there is more diversity and disagreement within the Muslim population than other people realise.

'We argue that the Government has to change its policy approach towards Muslims. It should stop emphasizing difference and engage with Muslims as citizens, not through their religious identity. The 'Muslim community' is not homogeneous, and attempts to give group rights or representation will only alienate sections of the population further. People should be entitled

to equal treatment as citizens in the public sphere, with the freedom to also enjoy and pursue their identities in the private sphere. The authorities should also try to present a more realistic and balanced picture of disadvantage and discrimination in the UK, as 'victim politics' can contribute to a sense of alienation. We should also recognise that the negative effects of multiculturalism are particularly acute for Muslims, but are also experienced by other minority groups.

More generally, we need to revive a sense of direction, shared purpose and confidence in British society. Islamism is only one expression of a wider cultural problem of self-loathing and confusion in the West. One way to tackle this is to bring to an end the institutional attacks on national identity – the counterproductive cancellation of Christian festivities, the neurotic bans on displays of national symbols, and the sometimes crude anti-Western bias of history lessons – which can create feelings of defensiveness and resentment. We should allow people to express their identity freely and in a climate of genuine tolerance. At the same time, we must also recognise that the Government and policy-makers cannot address this sense of disengagement alone. We need to work together, as a society, to develop a renewed sense of collectivity that asserts our shared British identity and Western values in a way that will inspire the younger generation'. (p.7)

4. THE PEW GLOBAL ATTITUDES PROJECT (2006) *The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other*, Washington: Pew Associates.⁹¹

Sample size: 15 nations, n = 16,710; Britain: representative national sample of 902, including a 412 Muslim oversample.

Methods: Telephone and face-to-face interviews.

Description: Survey aimed at exploring how Muslims and non-Muslims see each other, conducted in 13 countries: Britain, Egypt, France, Germany, Spain, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Turkey, United States. Additional questions were asked in China and Japan.

Key Findings:

- After a year marked by riots over cartoon portrayals of Mohammed, a major terrorist attack in London, and continuing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, most Muslims and Westerners are convinced that relations between them are generally bad. Many in the West see Muslims as fanatical, violent, and lacking tolerance. Muslims in the Middle East and Asia generally see Westerners as selfish, immoral and greedy – as well as violent and fanatical.
- A rare point of agreement between Westerners and Muslims is that both believe that Muslim nations should be more economically prosperous than they are. But they gauge the problem quite differently. Muslim publics are much more likely than Americans or Western Europeans to blame Western policies for their own lack of prosperity. Western publics point to government corruption, lack of education and Islamic fundamentalism as the biggest obstacles to Muslim prosperity.
- Nothing highlights the divide between Muslims and the West more clearly than their responses to the uproar this past winter over cartoon depictions of Mohammed. Most people in Jordan, Egypt, Indonesia and Turkey blame the controversy on Western nations' disrespect for Islam; majorities of Americans and Western Europeans who have heard of the controversy say Muslims' intolerance to different points of view is to blame.

⁹¹ See Borger (2006) and Roy (2007).

- The chasm between Muslims and the West is also seen in judgments about how the other civilization treats women. Western publics, by lopsided margins, do not think of Muslims as "respectful of women." But half or more in four of the five Muslim publics surveyed say the same thing about people in the West.
- Despite the deep attitudinal divide between Western and Muslim publics, the survey also finds that the views of each toward the other are far from uniformly negative. For example, solid majorities in France, Great Britain and the US retain overall favourable opinions of Muslims. However, positive opinions of Muslims have declined sharply in Spain over the past year (from 46% to 29%), and more modestly in Great Britain (from 72% to 63%).
- For the most part, Muslim publics feel more embittered toward the West and its people than vice versa. Muslim opinions about the West and its people have worsened over the past year, and by overwhelming margins Muslims blame Westerners for the strained relationship between the two sides. But there are some positive indicators as well, including the fact that in most Muslim countries surveyed there has been a decline in support for terrorism.
- In many ways, the views of Europe's Muslims represent a middle ground between the way Western publics and Muslims in the Middle East and Asia view each other.
- While Europe's Muslim minorities are about as likely as Muslims elsewhere to see relations between Westerners and Muslims as generally bad, they more often attribute positive characteristics to Westerners – including tolerance, generosity, and respect for women. And in a number of respects Muslims in Europe are less inclined to see a clash of civilizations than are some of the general publics surveyed in Europe. Notably, they are less likely than non-Muslims in Europe to believe that there is a conflict between modernity and being a devout Muslim.
- The belief that terrorism is justifiable in the defence of Islam, while less extensive than in previous surveys, still has a sizable number of adherents. Among Nigeria's Muslim population, for instance, nearly half (46%) feel that suicide bombings can be justified often or sometimes in the defence of Islam. Even among Europe's Muslim minorities, roughly one-in-seven in France, Spain, and Great Britain feel that suicide bombings against civilian targets can at least sometimes be justified to defend Islam against its enemies.
- 56% of British Muslims say they do not believe Arabs carried out the terror attacks against the US, compared with just 17% who do.
- There are mixed views on whether democracy can or cannot work with Muslim publics. Majorities in Germany and Spain say democracy is a Western way of doing things, but most of the French and British, and about half of Americans, say democracy can work in Muslim countries.
- Overall, the Germans and Spanish express much more negative views of both Muslims and Arabs than do the French, British or Americans. Just 36% in Germany, and 29% in Spain, express favourable opinions of Muslims; comparable numbers in the two countries have positive impressions of Arabs (39% and 33%, respectively). In France, Great Britain and the US, solid majorities say they have favourable opinions of Muslims, and about the same numbers have positive views of Arabs.
- These differences are reflected as well in opinions about negative traits associated with Muslims. Roughly eight-in-ten Spanish (83%) and Germans (78%) say they associate Muslims with being fanatical. But that view is less prevalent in France (50%), Great Britain (48%) and the US (43%).
- In many ways, the views of Europe's Muslims are distinct from those of both Western publics and Muslims in the Middle East and Asia. Most European Muslims express favourable opinions of Christians, and while their views of Jews are less positive than those of Western publics, they are far more positive than those of Muslim publics. And in

France, a large majority of Muslims (71%) say they have favourable opinions of Jews.

- Moreover, while publics in largely Muslim countries generally view Westerners as violent and immoral, this view is not nearly as prevalent among Muslims in France, Spain and Germany. British Muslims however, are the most critical of the four minority publics studied – and they come closer to the views of Muslims around the world in their opinions of Westerners.
- Concerns over Islamic extremism are widely shared in Western and Muslim publics alike. An exception is China, where 59% express little or no concern over Islamic extremism.

5. THE PEW GLOBAL ATTITUDES PROJECT (2008) *Unfavourable Views of Jews and Muslims on the Increase in Europe*, Washington: Pew Associates

Sample Size: 24 nations, n = 24,717; Britain: national probability sample of 753.

Methods: Telephone interviews.

Description: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Britain, China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, Spain, South Africa, South Korea, Tanzania, Turkey, United States.

Key Findings:

- There has been an overall increase in Europe in negative attitudes towards both Jews and Muslims. Anti-Christian sentiment is also growing in various parts of the world, including parts of Europe.
- Britain is the only exception to the European pattern with respect to Jews, with no change at 9% of those surveyed holding negative views. Comparable figures are: France, 20% (from 11% in 2004); Germany 25% (from 20% in 2004); Poland, 36% (from 27% in 2005); Russia, 34% (from 25% in 2004); Spain, 46% (from 21% in 2005).
- Anti Jewish sentiments are most pronounced in Muslim countries.
- Opinions about Muslims in most countries are considerably more negative than they are for Jews and this has generally increased over time (though in France and Spain there has been a decrease since 2006). The percentages of those surveyed holding negative views of Muslims are: Brazil, 53%; Britain, 23% (from 14% in 2005); China, 55%; France, 38% (from 34% in 2005); Germany, 50%; India, 56%; Japan, 61%; Poland, 46% (from 30% in 2005); Spain, 52%; South Korea, 50%.
- Older, less educated people hold more negative attitudes to Muslims than do younger, better-educated people.
- Notwithstanding the above trends, in Britain, France and the United States, the majority have *favourable* views of Muslims.
- The expression of anti-Christian sentiment has increased in France 17% (from 9% in 2004) and Spain, 24% (from 15% in 2006). In Turkey, Pakistan and China, the majority expressed negative views of Christians –74%; 60% and 55% respectively.
- Religiosity: in most countries surveyed, religion was considered to be a central feature of life.
- There are consistent gender and age differences, with religion being more important to women than to men, and generally more important to older than to younger people (though this age gap does not apply to Indonesia, Pakistan and the three African countries surveyed).
- Apart from the United States there is a clear relationship between a country's wealth and the religiosity of its people, with poorer countries being more religious than rich ones.
- In the majority of European countries, religion is *not* generally viewed as central to

individuals' lives and in Britain, France and Spain, the *majority* state that religion is not important in their lives.

- In Australia, Britain, Japan, Spain and South Korea, at least 4 in 10 report never praying (in Britain, 46% state that they never pray and 26% say that they pray once a week or less).
- France stands out as most secular country in Europe
- Only 46% of Muslims in Pakistan fulfil the requirement to pray five times a day, and prayer and only 16% fast throughout Ramadan.
- In Islamic countries, Muslim support for terrorism continues to decline. In Pakistan, 81% say that suicide violence is never justified.
- Concern about extremism – in their own countries and elsewhere – is still of concern to many, as is concern about conflict within Islam, for example between Sunni and Shia.

HEARING THE VOICES OF MUSLIM WOMEN
Consultations with Muslim Women in England and Wales⁹²

1. RAZ, A. (2006) *SHE WHO DISPUTES: MUSLIM WOMEN SHAPE THE DEBATE*, London: Muslim Women’s Network.

[4 meetings in different locations; 201 women from various parts of England].⁹³

Forced Marriage, Domestic Violence and Honour Killings

- When it comes to domestic violence there should be a zero tolerance policy and the Government shouldn’t allow mitigating circumstances such as culture to play a part.
- By minimising our problems on domestic violence and forced marriage it will not disappear. It has to be addressed. ...we need confident women; we don’t need shattered, battered women.
- Men in all societies may control women, however they don’t use religion as a justification, the way it is wrongly used by Muslim men within the community.
- Issues like honour killings, domestic violence and sexually transmitted diseases – we need to talk about these – they are major issues.

Sexual Orientation

- I know girls taken abroad, or forced into marriage because of their sexuality. There is constant pressure. I had come out [as a lesbian] to my family years before and the relatives in Pakistan said – bring her here, we’ll sort her out. I was forced into marriage. Although many people oppose forced marriage I find a lot of people say it’s OK for lesbians.
- You are told that to get married makes you a better Muslim. I thought if I got married, I could change my sexuality. I’m a transsexual; I believe I was born in the wrong body. I’ve tried everything to change, and I couldn’t. ... I have now lost my children; I am allowed to see them, but only on condition that I don’t change [my sex].
- Training for health professionals needs improvement. Homosexuality was de-listed as a medical condition years ago; If doctors come from abroad, they need to be taught that. And taught about confidentiality – they shouldn’t be able to ‘out’ you to your community, but they do.

Community Consultation

- We can’t pussy foot around community leaders and not address issues because of fear of getting their backs up. By not addressing controversial issues our communities are destroying themselves.
- You get policy makers talking to faith groups. They only come as far as the Muslim male leaders and say “Oh you can sort out the voices of your women, we’ll just deal with you”.

Written Comments on ‘Post-its’ by Women who did not Feel Able to Speak

- Paedophilia from the community.
- Sexual abuse in mosques. Domestic violence at home. Taboo subjects like homosexuality.

⁹² Our understanding is that the ‘Muslim Women Speak’ events included 8 for Scotland, but we have been unable to trace any reports of these.

⁹³ Note: all the material cited above consists of *direct quotations* from the participants.

- Issues that cannot be discussed – sexual abuse; domestic violence.
- Domestic violence to children/young people. Coercion to marry.
- Sexual abuse. Incest.
- Incest. Rape.
- Child abuse in mosques.
- Emotional blackmail.
- It seems that it is almost impossible to get a divorce.

2. MAHONEY, M. AND TAJ, S. (2006) MUSLIM WOMEN TALK WALES: SAHELI PROJECT REPORT, Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government.
[15 meetings; 600 women from various parts of Wales].⁹⁴

Culture v Religion

- Women felt that their culture was a stronger influencing force on their social behaviour than their faith: *'I can deal with Allah (pbuh) when I die – but I have to face my neighbours tomorrow'*.

Safety/Anti-Islamic Feelings

- Women felt threatened under the current climate of negative feeling toward the Muslim community as a result 9/11, 7/7, of ongoing news items in the media and coverage of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq:
I was walking over the bridge, in the middle of the day, and a white man pulled my scarf off and threw it in the river. I didn't do anything to the man! Why do they hate me so?

Discrimination by Service Providers

- Women have experienced a demonstrated lack of/negative response from statutory service providers including and especially the police:
The sound of my voice turns them off. Even if I speak English – I still have an accent and they put me on to someone else.
If there is an accident between a white person and an Asian – the Asian is always at fault. The police favour the white person.

The Concept of Honour

- Women feel that the concept of honour within the community is not understood by service providers – nor do they feel that the individuals assigned to work with them have even the slightest interest in learning about their culture or how they are expected to behave:
I am always aware that I am here to keep everyone else's honour but no one takes the time to think about how I feel about my own [honour].

Lack of Knowledge – Child Protection

- Women are unaware of child protection issues and the laws relating to treatment of children and young people:
We accept our own pain without realising that we ourselves are contributing to the cycle of violence.
- There is a great concern that the issue of *child protection* within the Asian and Muslim minority communities is not monitored appropriately. At present there are few if any practical ways of working with faith-based communities in monitoring and reporting cases of child and

⁹⁴ Note: all the material cited is from report; that in italics comprises direct quotations from the participants.

domestic abuse. Our research has demonstrated the need to remove the current stigma that favours ‘political correctness’ instead of the pursuance of justice in the name of human rights.

Lack of Knowledge – Rights and Representation

- There is a demonstrated lack of awareness of rights, responsibilities and entitlements under the law, including the representative nature of the National Assembly for Wales in relation to Central Government.

Communications/Consultation

- Women felt that the greatest lack of communication takes place *within* the Asian and Muslim community itself and that there is a distinct lack of support for the wider community from those in a position of either faith or community standing.
- Younger people being excluded and community ‘leaders’ are not growing with the community. Government needs to reassess the way it reaches Muslim communities and consider non-traditional methods of engagement.
- Culturally women haven’t played a visible role in discussions regarding community because this is seen as unacceptable. Mixed groups of men and women are not viewed in a positive light by the community and women taking a stand are considered harridans.

Forced Marriage and Honour Related Abuse

- There are a high number of incidents involving Forced Marriage and Honour related abuse that is either unrecognised or widely ignored by the wider community. We have heard many anecdotes relating to the disappearance of vulnerable women as young as eleven and as old as sixty-five. Few if any investigations into these incidents are carried through to the courts and many are sidelined due to the incapacity of service providers to look beyond the face of an individual and into the inner workings of the family and community.
- It is necessary to raise a question regarding the need to criminalise it and make the act of Forced Marriage an illegal offence.
- In the Asian and Muslim community, ‘honour’ is something that an individual is born with as part of their connection to the family nucleus. Honour is not the sole possession of the individual, rather that of the whole family and extended family as well. Any action taken by that individual has a direct impact on the immediate and extended family. Losing that sense of ‘honour’ can put an individual in far greater danger than is perceived by the Western mind.
- There is a need for awareness raising work with policy-makers and service provider of social behaviour (socialisation) and cultural attitudes towards domestic abuse and violence ‘*in the name of honour.*’
- Whilst we extol the virtues of living in a global village where the advancement and promotion of equality, justice and the advocacy of human rights is a social norm, there are still those men and women subjected to complex and archaic customs such as the practice of honour related conditioned/cultivated behaviour, violence and abuse, living here in Wales.

3. WOLLASTON, H. (2008) *REALISING OUR POTENTIAL: PROMOTING THE TALENTS OF MUSLIM WOMEN*, Wigan: North West Regional Assembly. [1 event held

in Bolton; 150 men and women, Muslims and non-Muslims].⁹⁵

Barriers for Muslim Woman⁹⁶

- The barriers faced by Muslim women vary between families and communities.
- Structural barriers include the lack of visible role models, but also childcare, transport and poverty.
- Lack of confidence is an issue.
- Lack of information about opportunities is a major issue.
- There is an issue of male ‘community gatekeepers’ who prevent development and block access to women and the articulation of their needs. But the danger of restricting consultation to a few key women runs the risk of creating female gatekeepers.

Communicating with Muslim Woman

- Organisations wishing to engage Muslim women may need to employ specialist outreach workers from the local community and/or work in partnership with women’s groups that have established contacts and trust.
- Events need to be targeted specifically at Muslim women and are more successful if held in community venues.
- The importance of working with and through family members, especially men was stressed as a way of allaying concerns.

Access to Funding for Community-based Projects

- The problems of short-term funding for services that target Muslim women were noted.
- Changes in policy with respect to funding for the voluntary and community sector were noted, including LSPs to meet priorities set out in LAAs.

Sharing Good Practice

- The need for role models, Muslim women’s networks and the sharing of information about effective projects was noted.

⁹⁵ Note: this is a very different kind of event to the two reported above, particularly in its focus on highly successful Muslim women. Notwithstanding this, a number of similar points were raised in relation to the barriers that confront Muslim women in their attempts bring about change and to fulfil their aspirations. Though only a few of these are mentioned here, they are relevant to the equalities agenda.

⁹⁶ Many of the issues raised under all the headings apply to women in general, and/or to all community groups, e.g. the problem of short-term funding (see Farnell et al., 2003). A different question may concern the appropriateness of funding FBOs that exclude both men and non-Muslims!

**CONFLICT BETWEEN EQUALITIES STRANDS IN THE WORKPLACE
RELIGION AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

Case Study: The Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland [ACPO]

In November, 2007, ACPO implemented the guidance they had published in 2005 in a 40 page document entitled *Guiding Principles for the Police Service in Relation to the Articulation and Expression of Religious Beliefs and their Manifestation in the Workplace*, the preface to which says that is designed to help readers [police personnel] to:

- *Understand the nature and extent of the protection conferred by the law upon individuals in relation to their religious and other duties;*
- *Understand that the law does not confer an absolute and unfettered right upon individuals to express their religious or other beliefs, and that their rights must be balanced against the legal rights of other individuals to protection against discrimination;*
- *Deal appropriately with situations in which the expression of religious or other beliefs by members of staff impinges upon the rights of others to protection against discrimination, whether internally or operationally, and*
- *Ensure that the religious beliefs of individual members of staff are taken into account whilst at the same time complying with the Police Service's fundamental duty to deliver an efficient, effective and equitable service to all members of the community. (ACPO, 2005: 3)*

Appendix B of the Guidelines provides details of the reason for their publication, referring to a number of examples of the use made by some police officers of the religion and belief legislation. These include the refusal by a Muslim female officer to shake hands with the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Ian Blair, and the unwillingness of a Muslim male officer of Lebanese heritage to perform his duties at the Israeli Embassy [which was not a faith issue, but was perceived as such].

However, what brought matters to a head was the placing of an advertisement in the *Independent* newspaper on 29 June 2006 by the Gay Police Association [GPA]. This featured a Bible beside a pool of blood under the heading '*In the Name of the Father*' and stated that the GPA had recorded a 74% increase in homophobic incidents where the sole or primary motivating factor was the religious belief of the perpetrator. This statistic comes from the GPA Action Line which received 250 calls in 2005 relating to homophobic incidents that were exclusively or primarily faith based.

This incident is apparently the latest manifestation in a prolonged, open debate between leading members of the Christian Police Association [CPA] and the GPA (ACPO (2005: 29)). The GPA's position is that the expression of homophobic views on the basis of religion is accepted and that the growth of faith associations means that the GPA effectively has less of a voice, leaving gay and lesbian officers feeling marginalised. They describe:

a 'hierarchy of diversity', whereby ethnic minority, cultural and religious groups are at the top of the pecking order, making managers fearful of allegations being made against them if they challenge the homophobic behaviour of someone from one of

these groups. (ACPO, 2005: 30)

The CPA's position is that it receives very few reports of either discrimination against its members or complaints about inappropriate expression of religious belief. However, the CPA feels that Christianity is being institutionally marginalised; that consultation is being replaced by validation; that Christians have to argue for the right to have their values considered whilst other groups are afforded more credence and influence. For example:

- '*Faith Issues in the Workplace*' is considered to be predominantly about Islamic issues;
- The CPA has the largest membership in the MPS, but no funding;
- At Christmas, extreme care is taken not to offend other faiths;
- Diversity training covers LGBT and Muslim issues but not Christian ones. (ACPO, 2005: 32)

The CPA, the Black Police Association in Lancashire and the MPS Muslim Police Association state that while many faiths have strong beliefs/views on homosexuality, their members do not allow these to affect their professional behaviour, including that towards their LGBT colleagues.

Following a review of a number of cases that highlight the issue of faith v. sexual orientation, the ACPO report summarises the tension/conflict as:

- (1) From the LGBT lobby: you cannot introduce anti-discrimination legislation that has an exemption that permits discrimination, and;
- (2) From the faith lobby: you cannot legislate against religious beliefs/conscience. (ACPO, 2005: 35).

In addition, the ACPO guidelines raise a number of points that are applicable to other areas covered in this report, some of which are raised elsewhere; for example:

- Managers are failing to exercise their duty of care under employment legislation by not making appropriate interventions;
- There is inadequate monitoring of internal hate incidents in the Police Service;
- Special treatment, however well intended, of an individual or group over and above any other can have a negative impact on others within the Police Service;
- Faith groups cite the sexual orientation legislation as '*the latest affront*' to their freedom of religious belief and freedom of expression;
- There is very real anger amongst religious groups who are forced to comply with legislation which is incompatible with doctrinal teachings and beliefs. Whereas in the past condemnation from religious groups has often been sporadic and piecemeal there is a sense of cohesion developing around this particular issue;⁹⁷
- This build up of anger and cohesion amongst the faith groups, together with the angst felt by LGBT groups, has led to considerable tension between the two;
- The sexual orientation regulations are further evidence of the continuing development of a secular society in the UK. This is not going to change and as faith groups feel more and more marginalised over time, we are likely to see what would be considered more extreme views expressed more and more;
- This is exemplified by the growth in evangelicalism within the Christian Church and research which suggests that young Muslims are developing more radical views than previous generations;

⁹⁷ This is based on an intelligence assessment carried out by the LGBT strand of the MPS Diversity and Citizen Focus Directorate of media articles and religious websites.

- The Police Service must be representative of the wider communities it serves and must value the diversity this brings, but friction between groups/factions within these communities will potentially manifest itself in the workplace;
- The Police Service must therefore be mindful of the potential for '*single issue-ism*' to create a divisive atmosphere within the workplace;
- The Police Service therefore needs to engage in ongoing debate, bringing the associations together, to encourage a move away from single-issuism, to focus instead on what can be achieved together. (ACPO, 2005: 37-40)

RELEVANT ONGOING RESEARCH⁹⁸

SECTION 1: FUNDED PROJECTS

(By Funding Body)

AHRC

Gethin, R. University of Bristol (Centre for Buddhist Studies). *Buddhist Death Rituals of South East Asia and China*.

Nesbitt, E., Arweck, E. and Jackson, R. University of Warwick (WRERU) *The Religious Identity Formation of Young People in Mixed Faith Communities*.

Ram-Prasad, C. and Ganeri, J. Universities of Lancaster and Sussex. *Hindu Senses of Self: A Response to Buddhist Critiques*.

AHRC DIASPORA, MIGRATION AND IDENTITIES PROGRAMME

Gardner, K. and Mand, K. University of Sussex (Centre for Migration Research). *Home and Away: South Asian Children's Representations of Diaspora*.

AHRC/ESRC RELIGION AND SOCIETY PROGRAMME

Bebbington, D.W. University of Stirling. *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in Britain*.

Conroy, J.C. University of Glasgow. *Does Religious Education Work? An Analysis of the Aims, Practices and Models of Effectiveness in Religious Education across the UK*.

Gilliat-Ray, S. Cardiff University. (Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK). *Leadership and Capacity Building in the British Muslim Community: the Case of 'Muslim Chaplains'*.

Gleave, R.M. University of Exeter. *Network of British Researchers and Practitioners of Islamic Law*.

Graham, E.L. University of Manchester. *Promoting Greater Human Wellbeing: Interacting the Happiness Hypothesis and Religion*.

Gregory, I. Lancaster University. *Troubled Geographies: Two Centuries of Religious Division in Ireland*.

Haw, K.F. University of Nottingham. *The Myth of British Identity and the Failure of Multiculturalism? From Hijab to Jilbab*.

Hoffman, R. University of Nottingham. *Religion, Religiosity and Pro-Social Behaviour in Cross-Cultural Interactions*.

Johnsen, S. University of York. *The Difference that 'Faith' Makes: Faith-based Organisations and the Provision of Services for Homeless People*.

Jones, P.N. University of Newcastle upon Tyne. *Religion, Discrimination and Accommodation: The Role of the State in a Multi-faith Society*.

⁹⁸ This appendix has been compiled on the basis of information supplied by some of the individuals we consulted and our own web searches. We apologise to any of our colleagues whose work has been unintentionally excluded as a result of this approach.

Knott, K. University of Leeds. *Media Portrayals of Religion and the Secular-Sacred: A Longitudinal Study of British Newspaper and Television Representations and their Reception.*

Lehmann, A.D. University of Cambridge. *Secularism: A Reappraisal of Institutional Arrangements for Religious Regulation.*

Olson, E.A. University of Edinburgh. *Relational Religious Identities: Exploring Contemporary Meanings of Religion among Scottish Christian Youth.*

Pike, M.A. University of Leeds. *Religious Reading in a Secular Society: Learning for Life in a Liberal Democracy?*

Purewal, T. University of Manchester. *Gender, Caste and the Practices of Religious Identities.*

Scourfield, J. Cardiff University. *Religious Nurture in Muslim Families.*

Seglow, J. University of London. *Religion, Justice and Well-Being: The Normative Foundations of Public Policy in a Multi-faith Society.*

Spalek, B. University of Birmingham. *An Examination of Partnership Approaches to Challenging Religiously-Endorsed Violence Involving Muslim Groups and Police.*

Sreberny, A. School of Oriental and African Studies. *Framing Muslims: Structures of Representation Post-9/11.*

Valentine, G. University of Leeds. *Sexuality and Global faith Networks: A Social Topography.*

Voas, D. University of Manchester. *An Online Centre for British Data on Religion.*

CATHOLIC SOCIAL WORKERS' GUILD

Davis, F. University of Cambridge (von Hügel Institute). *The Experience of Being a Catholic Professional.*

CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY/QUINN CENTRE

Davis, F. University of Cambridge (von Hügel Institute). *Remittances, Migration and Social Enterprise.*

ESRC

Aspinall, P., Hashem, F. and Song, M. University of Kent. *Investigation of the Range of Identity Choices available to Mixed Race Young People in Britain.*

King-Hele, S. University of Manchester (Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research). *The Secularization Debate: An Examination of Evidence of Changes in Religious Affiliation, Belief and Attendance in Developed Nations.*

Wadia, K. University of Warwick (CRER) *Muslim Women and Political Participation in England and France.*

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Jackson, R. (and team). University of Warwick (WRERU). *Religion in Education: Contribution to Dialogue or Factor of Conflict in Transforming European Societies.*

EUROPEAN UNION

Woodhead, L. University of Lancaster. *An Examination of the Political and Public Policy Debates Surrounding the Muslim Headscarf in Eight European Countries.*

Holdaway, S., Sack, F., Hebberecht, P. and Fijnaut, C. Universities of Sheffield, Hamburg, Ghent and Tilburg. *Migrants in the Police: Policies and Experiences of Ethnic Migrant Police Officers.*

EUROSOURCE PROGRAMME

Francis, L. and Williams, E. University of Warwick (WRERU). *Religion as a Social Force in Europe.*

HOME OFFICE

Ram-Prasad, C. and Griffith-Dickson, G. University of Lancaster/Lokahi Foundation. *What Works: The Role of Religion in Successful Post-Immigration Integration in the UK.*

Reader, I., Billings, A. and Heelas, P. University of Lancaster. *The Burnley Project: Evaluating the Contribution of Interfaith Dialogue to Community Cohesion.*

JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION

Savage, S. and Liht, J. University of Cambridge. *Psychology of Fundamentalism.*

JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION

Ali, M. QED. *Tensions Between New and Settled Migrants in Bradford.*

Byron, S. Kings College, London. *Ethnic Diversity and Dynamics in the Housing Market.*

Clarke, L. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. *Fathering in Early-Middle Childhood among UK South Asians.*

Ghate, D. Thomas Coram Research Unit. *Understanding Fatherhood: Masculinity, Diversity and Change.*

Hickman, M. London Metropolitan University. *Rhythms and Realities of Everyday Life: Community Cohesion in Diverse Neighbourhoods.*

Horwath, J. University of Sheffield (Centre for the Study of Childhood and Youth). *Religious Beliefs and Parenting Practices: A Descriptive Study.*

Kintrea, K. University of Glasgow. *Young People and Territoriality: An Exploration.*

Mir, G. University of Leeds. *Women, Faith and Social Cohesion.*

Phillips, D. University of Leeds. *Building Shared Visions of Housing Futures in Bradford: New Migrants and Settled Groups.*

Richardson, L. University of Manchester. *Hitting the Glass Ceiling: Housing and Ethnicity.*

Shafi, W. CommunitySpeak. *Women Working Together Towards Excellence: The OurLives Project.*

LEVERHULME TRUST

Baker, C and Miles-Watson, J. William Temple Foundation. *Faith and Traditional Capitals: Defining the Public Scope of Religious Capital.*

Modood, T. University of Bristol (Research Centre for the Study of Migration and Citizenship and University College London (Migration Research Unit). *Migration and Citizenship Programme. (8 linked projects focusing around 3 aspects of human mobility and its consequences: 1. The diversity of Human Movement; 2. Settlement Issues of Migrants and Descendants; 3. Impact of, and Interaction With, Receiving Societies.*

Stansfield, G. University of Exeter. *Ethnopolitics: Ethnicity, Politics and Society (world-wide study).*

PORTSMOUTH AND BIRMINGHAM ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESES

Stankeviciute, J. University of Cambridge (von Hügel Institute). *Social Capital and Migration.*

WESTHILL ENDOWMENT TRUST

Jackson, R. (and team). University of Warwick (WRERU). *Developing the Interpretive Approach to Religious Education.*

Jackson, R. (and team). University of Warwick (WRERU). *Evaluation of Building E-Bridges: Interfaith Dialogue Using ICT in Primary Schools.*

SECTION 2: OTHER PROJECTS

Anwar, M. University of Warwick (CRER). *Ethnic Minorities and Participation in the British Electoral System.*

ap Sion, T. University of Warwick (WRERU). *Prayer and the Religious Development of Young People.*

Carey, F. University of Cambridge (von Hügel Institute). *The Conceptual Links Between the Notions of Justice and Poverty and the Application of this Theoretical Framework to Social Problems in Zambia.* [Peter Dawe donation].

Davis, F. and Stankeviciute, J. University of Cambridge (von Hügel Institute). *A National Mapping of the Church's Work on Migration.*

Davis, F., Stankeviciute, J. and Rossiter, J. University of Cambridge (von Hügel Institute). *A Review of Caritas Europa Lobbying on EU Social Policy.*

Francis, L. University of Warwick (WRERU). *Collation of a Qualitative Database on Young People's Attitudes Across 15 Value Domains.*

Francis, L. and Robbins, M. University of Warwick (WRERU). *Teenage, Religion and Values.*

Francis, L. and Robbins, M. University of Warwick (WRERU). *Values, Religion and Human Rights.*

Francis, L. and Robbins, M. University of Warwick (WRERU). [Various Charitable Funders]. *Religion and Mental Health.*

Lankshear, D. University of Warwick (WRERU). *An Investigation into and Promotion of the Spiritual Health of Students Attending Church of England Secondary Schools.*

Scott, P. and Scrimshire, S. University of Manchester (Lincoln Theological Institute). *Religion and Climate Change.*

Wadia, K. University of Warwick (CRER). *Integration Indicators and Generational Change.*

Wilkes, G. University of Cambridge (von Hügel Institute). *Ethical Approaches to Contemporary Problems Created by War for Civilans.*