Political Mobilisation by Minorities in Britain: a negative feedback of 'race relations'?

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Abstract

This paper uses a political opportunity approach for studying the relationship of minority groups to the political community in Britain. The argument is made that the British Race Relations approach established in the 1960s, has had an important effect which still shapes the patterns of political mobilisation and contention by different minority groups today. Original data on political claims-making by minorities demonstrates that British 'racialised' cultural pluralism has structured an inequality of opportunities facing the two main groups, African Caribbeans and Indian Subcontinent minorities. African-Caribbeans mobilise along racial lines, use a strongly assimilative 'black' identity, conventional action forms, and target state institutions with demands for justice that are framed within the recognised framework of Race Relations. Conversely, a high proportion of the Indian Subcontinent minority mobilisation is by Muslim groups, a non-assimilative religious identity. These are autonomously organised, but largely make public demands for extending the principle of racial equality to their non-racial group. Within the Indian Subcontinent minorities, the relative absence of mobilisation by Indian, Sikh and Hindu minorities, who have achieved much better levels of socio-economic success than Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims, suggests that there is also a strong socio-economic basis for shared experiences and grievances as Muslims in Britain. This considerably relativises the notion that Muslim mobilisation is Britain is purely an expression of the right for cultural difference per se, and sees it as a product of the paradoxes of British Race Relations.

Political Mobilisation by Minorities in Britain[1]:
outcomes, side-effects and negative feedbacks of 'Race Relations'?

Introduction

In the 1990s, minority mobilisation has regularly hit the British news headlines. Asylum-seekers riot against the conditions in detention centres, Muslims legally challenge a company director's refusal to employ them, African Caribbean minorities campaign against police racism and discrimination in the criminal justice system. In a country where élite thinking prides itself in the perceived successes of its Race Relations approach, which politicians compare favourably to experiences in mainland Europe, the persistence of minority mobilisation casts considerable doubt on this image of integration and harmony.

The image presented of minority mobilisation by media thematisation, and also to some extent by academic research, tends to be informed by reference to a few paradigmatic examples that become a *cause célèbre*. The Rushdie Affair and the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry have been much discussed in the media and academic literature, but we have less information on how representative these events really are of the conflict lines between minorities, majority and the state. Clearly, at the surface of public culture such key events symbolise a 'rite of passage' in British Race Relations. However, it is also important to build an understanding of the general patterns of interaction and social relationships between minorities and the majority, and the state, so that it is possible to trace these conflicts to contradictions within the British policy approach.

Political élite debates and their shaping of British Race Relations -policies, outcomes and implementation-, and the majority public concerns, have been relatively well documented (e.g., Solomos 1993). In addition, recent survey work makes an important contribution to finding out how different minority groups see themselves within British society (Modood et. al. 1997). Although an important concern in the 'classical' sociological approaches to ethnic relations, typified by the work of Rex (e.g., 1991, 1996), there have been few recent systematic attempts to study the autonomous collective mobilisation by minorities, which is an important indicator for how minorities act in relation to the political environment which confronts them. Much of the contemporary literature focuses rather one-sidedly on minority political activism from the perspective of party political interest representation of minority voters (e.g., Sewell 1993, Goulborne 1998, Geddes 1998a, Saggar 1998). Although an important indicator for political participation, this approach perhaps ends up explaining more about the parties than the minorities themselves. On the other side, many accounts which have actually focused directly on autonomous collective mobilisation in the British context, have been more intent on advocating some idiosyncratic normative version of 'black politics' than giving detailed and accurate information about the subject matter (e.g., Shukra 1998).

Political contention and collective mobilisation have long been a concern of social movements scholars (see Tarrow 1998). Applying a similar approach here, our topic of inquiry is to examine the visible lines of political conflict over the relationship of minorities to the political community, which are constructed by the collective action of state actors, the ethnic majority and minorities. The first aim is straightforward and descriptive, to give a first 'bird's eye' overview of the patterns, identities, organisations, aims, forms and targets of minority mobilisation in 1990s Britain. Secondly, following the recent important international studies on citizenship, and the institutional channelling of political action by minorities (e.g., Ireland 1994), it is clear that patterns of minority mobilisation can tell us much about the

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[1] As the author is editor of this special edition, the article was reviewed by anonymous referees.

system of incorporation. Applying a 'political opportunity' perspective -developed in an internationally comparative research project, Mobilization on Ethnic Relations Citizenship and Immigration (MERCI)[2]- the different levels and types of mobilisation by different groups will be interpreted as an indicator for the 'outcomes, side-effects and negative feedbacks' that are produced by the British Race Relations approach. It is to this theoretical perspective on political opportunities, drawn from social movement research, that we now briefly turn.

Political Opportunities for Minority Mobilization

In the recent international comparative literature on citizenship, migration and ethnic relations, many authors have pointed to the ways that national policies and laws governing citizenship and naturalisation can impact upon the integration of minorities and shape the patterns of migration and ethnic relations politics (e.g., Brubaker 1992, Castles 1995). Some such as Patrick Ireland (1994), have described these institutional frameworks as a 'political opportunity structure', where variables of citizenship laws, naturalisation procedures, and social and political rights, including social welfare, are seen to causally shape the patterns of the collective organisation by minorities and migrants. Others such as Adrian Favell (1998), have pointed out that such institutional variables have a public discursive dimension - as 'public philosophies of integration' - which are embedded in a nationally specific set of language and symbols, and through which they achieve legitimacy. In general, however, one might claim that the application of opportunity approaches in the migration field is still in its infancy.

Social movements scholars (e.g., Tarrow 1989, 1998, Kriesi et al. 1995) have long used the concept of 'political opportunities' for studying protest and collective mobilization, and it is also well established that political opportunities have both institutional and discursive dimensions (see the contributions to McAdam, McCarthy and Zald eds. 1996). In the international comparative project MERCI, a systematic attempt is made to apply a political opportunity approach for comparing 'claims-making' by collective actors in the field of migration and ethnic relations politics. By claims-making we refer not only to conventional forms of protest and collective mobilisation that have been the focus of many social movement studies, but also to speech acts and more conventional action forms, which make demands visible in the public domain. For international comparison, the different national institutional forms and discourses about 'citizenship' have been identified as a key variable for defining the structure of political opportunities which confronts claims-makers. It should be made explicit here that when we refer to 'citizenship', we are not just referring to the 'narrow' meaning of citizenship in formal legal statutes, but to citizenship as a field where political and social rights, and cultural obligations, are contested by collective action. Authors such as Tilly (1997:600) define citizenship in such terms, where access to citizenship is seen as a basis for political claims-making,

'Citizenship designates a set of mutually enforceable claims relating categories of persons to agents of governments... It differs from most other contracts in 1) binding whole categories of persons rather than single individuals to each other, 2) involving differentiation among levels and degrees of members, 3) directly engaging a government's coercive power. To the extent that governments control substantial resources, including coercive means, these three differentials single out citizenship as a potent form of contract liable to fierce contestation.'

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[2] The MERCI project group includes the author and Ruud Koopmans at the WZB Berlin, Marco Giugni and Florence Passy at the University of Geneva, and Thom Duyvene de Wit from the University of Amsterdam.

Following the findings of the citizenship debates cited above, the determinants for the degree and form of inclusiveness/exclusiveness of a national politics for incorporating minorities can be defined along two broad dimensions of citizenship: first, the criteria for formal access to citizenship, and secondly, the cultural obligations that this access to citizenship entails. The approach and findings of this comparative research has been published elsewhere (Koopmans and Statham 1998, 1999a, 1999b), and will not be elaborated further here. However, these two dimensions of citizenship can also be applied to the national level, as a basis for hypotheses on the claims-making by different types of minority groups (see also Rosenhek in this volume).

When applied to comparing different minorities internally within a nation, the first important dimension of political opportunities relates to status of citizenship rights of the minority group. Clearly, minorities with full national citizenship rights will have greater opportunities for access to institutional politics - e.g., through voting, party representation of interests - and social welfare rights, and be conferred a greater legitimacy in the public domain, than either foreign migrants, 'illegal immigrants' or asylum-seekers. The second dimension of political opportunities facing minorities, relates to the cultural obligations which the state places on defining access to citizenship. These requirements depend on the specifics of a state's incorporation strategy, and may range from assimilationist to cultural pluralist approaches, which differ in the degree of cultural homogeneity a state demands in attributing full rights to minorities. There are different ways in which the position of a minority is defined in relation to the state and majority population. Assimilationism is the more demanding variant, requiring the minority to undergo full conversion to the dominant national culture as the single and unitary focus of identity and belonging within the national political community. In contrast, cultural pluralism is the more accepting variant, where the state recognises the right of the minority to retain a degree of ethnic or religious difference as part of the deal for being fully included within the national political community. Of course, much is dependent on the specific categorisation of cultural diversity which a state chooses to recognise as legitimate within its strategy for incorporating minorities within the framework of the national community.

Translating this into opportunities, one would expect as a general hypothesis that those minorities which are recognised by the state's criteria for attributing cultural pluralism - either on the basis of race, religion, or ethnicity - find it easier to constitute themselves as independent collective actors, and to assert claims for a further extension of minority rights. Alternatively, minorities faced by assimilationist pressures, can be generally expected to mobilise across cultural boundaries -of religion, race or ethnicity- and to make demands as a common status group -e.g., as immigrants or along class lines- within the national political community. Of course, as we shall see, much depends on how a national variant of cultural pluralism/assimilationism actually translates into opportunities within a contingent political context, in some cases minorities facing assimilationist pressures may react against these by mobilising along religious, racial or ethnic lines. This points to the need for empirical research on how minorities actually mobilise in relation to national politics.

More extensive details on how this model is applied to the British case are given in the empirical analysis. Before moving on to the analysis of minority claims-making in Britain, we first give summary details on the method that was used for retrieving the data from newspaper sources.

Reconstructing Claims-Making from Newspaper Reports: a note on method[3]

The research strategy attempts to combine the quantitative rigour of recording collective actions with a qualitative sensitivity for the discursive elements of the claims that are made by actors. For the national study, the core data source has been retrieved from one national newspaper, *The Guardian*, which is a broadsheet newspaper with a reputation for a consistent and detailed coverage of the topic. Reports relating to the topic were collected from the 'hard news' sections of the newspaper reporting national daily events, omitting editorial and commentary sections, for three editions (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) of the six which appear each week. This meant using the newspaper materials as a record of significant public events, and bracketing out the journalistic opinion and commentary on the reported news events. It should be made absolutely clear at this point, that this method has also been applied to other newspapers in order to control for biases in the primary newspaper source.[4]

For coding, the primary unit of analysis for 'claims-making' is the reported act. This follows in the methodological tradition of protest event analysis from social movement research (Rucht, Koopmans and Neidhardt eds. 1998), and not that of many media contents analyses which take the article as the unit of analysis. The coded acts for claims-making may either be a protest event (demonstration, riot, arson, etc.) or a conventional action form (public statement, press conference, policy decision, etc.). It needs emphasising that the opinions and claims made by the author of the news article are not coded, we are interested only in the acts and claims that are attributed to 'third parties'. All acts within the ethnic, racist/extreme right, and anti-racist mobilisation fields are coded, plus all acts by all actors in the issue fields of asylum/immigration, ethnic relations, anti-racism/xenophobia that occur on the national territory. Important variables refer to actor types; action forms; the size, target and intensity of protest mobilisation (where present); and the institutional or civil society actor on whom demands are made (addressee). Regarding the semantic contents of the claims, these are coded for the political aims and/or causal frames (where present). The different claims made by one actor in relation to a specific act are coded as part of the unitary act, with the most important being coded as the principal aim.[5] As well as using a highly detailed category system, an attempt is made to store the discursive contents of claims, where this is feasible and necessary by retrieving the original speech of the claim which is present in the original text.

The resultant database has a high level of flexibility. It is suitable for macro-level analyses of general issue-fields for cross-national research, but at the same time it can give detailed information on a particular actor and its strategic location within the national issue-field, which will be the main object of investigation here.[6]

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[3] A more detailed exposition on method appears in Koopmans and Statham (1999b).

[4] In the British case, The Times, The Sun, The Daily Express, The Mail, and The Mirror have been coded in addition to The Guardian for 1995. In all cases except The Mirror – where there were too few cases – similar overall proportions of actors appear in the other samples, as in the Guardian. This vindicates the method showing that the political affiliation and even genre (broad-sheet/tabloid) of the source does not significantly affect the proportion of recorded collective actions by different actor types. For example, in The Guardian sample for 1995, 21.1% of the acts were by government actors; 18.6% by ethnic minority actors; and 1.7% by the extreme right; whereas for The Sun, a populist right-wing tabloid, the respective proportions were similar, 23.3% government actors, 16.3% ethnic minority actors, and 2.3% extreme right.

[5] In this paper the analyses are based only on the principal aim per act.

[6] It should be noted that the interpretation of the newspaper data has been made in conjunction with the qualitative findings of interviews with activists in the field (N 41), and 17 focus groups on relative topics, conducted with Black (6 groups), Asian (4 Pakistani, 1 Bangladeshi groups), and White (6 groups), members of the public.

Minority Claims-making in Britain

The literature on social movements indicates that the impact of political opportunities on levels of mobilisation is curvilinear. When facing highly favourable or highly unfavourable political opportunities, mobilisation levels are likely to be low, in the first case, mobilisation is not necessary and demands are taken up quickly by a responsive political system, and in the second, it is too difficult and there are few chances of success (see e.g., Tarrow 1998, Kriesi et al. 1995). In Britain, although significant steps have been taken through race relations and anti-discrimination policies to combat the inequality and discrimination faced by minorities, the political opportunities facing minorities are not sufficiently favourable to make mobilisation superfluous, not least because the state has itself been identified as a key source of disadvantage and discrimination in society. Of course, not all minorities are in a position to mobilise political demands in the public domain. For example, they may lack the material and organisational resources for entering the political field as an autonomous collective actor and making their demands visible. Alternatively, they may lack the symbolic resources of a legitimate and officially recognised 'status', which is likely to make their claims appear more justified and reasonable by other actors in the political field.

In the first part of the analysis, we give a brief overview and inquire into the formal dimension of citizenship, by comparing non-citizens to resident minorities. Table one shows the share of claims-making by different actors in migration and ethnic relations politics. The overall field is divided into three main political sub-fields: immigration and asylum; minority; and anti-racism/xenophobia. Immigration and asylum covers issues dealing with minorities without full formal citizenship – 'aliens', whereas minority politics and anti-racism/xenophobia are issue-fields concerning resident minorities. Minority politics covers issues in the policy field relating to the integration of minorities (discrimination and cultural diversity), whereas anti-racist/xenophobic politics is that relating to the relationship between majority and minority population in the public domain (mutual tolerance). In addition, all claims-making acts were coded for their ideological 'valence': with –1 for anti-minority/racist; +1 for pro-minority/anti-racist; and 0 for neutral/ambivalent. This gives a 'valence' score ranging from –1 which is anti-minority/racist, to +1 which is pro-minority/anti-racist.

-Table 1 here-

An first important finding concerns the high share of minorities in claims-making who account for about a fifth (19.4%) in the overall field. This shows that British migration and ethnic relations politics is not just *about* minorities, but that it is a political field which is importantly *shaped* by their actions and demands.[7] However, our data also shows that minorities have a three times greater share in claims-making in the field of minority politics (29.8%), and almost twice as much in the anti-racism/xenophobia field (16.8%) than they do in immigration politics (9.8%). Many commentators have outlined the sharp division between British migration and ethnic relations politics into two separate policy fields, immigration and race relations, with differential consequences in the treatment of minorities (e.g., Layton-Henry 1994). This finding demonstrates a general point, that minorities with access to formal citizenship, are able to draw on their resources of legitimacy and access to politics, embedded in Race Relations, and have a greater share in the politics about them, than minorities without such rights. By contrast, minorities making demands in the immigration/asylum field face a

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[7] This is considerably higher than the minority share of claims-making in Germany - 7% - which we argue can be explained by the different types of access to citizenship in the two countries. There is no space to elaborate this argument here, for more detail see Koopmans and Statham 1998, and Koopmans in this journal edition.

more hostile field (0.32 valence compared to 0.51 for minority and 0.41 for anti-racism/xenophobia), and depend more heavily on the altruism of human rights, welfare and pro-minority organisations (15.5%), such as the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants.

Turning briefly to political parties, which constitute an important source of access for minorities to political participation, we find a similar pattern. Table 2 shows the distribution and valence of claims-making by actors with political party identities. Not surprisingly, the overall valences (-0.16 for immigration/asylum, 0.2 for minority and antiracism/xenophobia) show once more that it is harder to take up a political position against issues concerning British minorities than asylum seekers and refugees. What is also interesting, however, is that there is a clear left-right party political cleavage over migration and ethnic relations, principally between the Labour Party (0.8 on immigration/asylum, 0.65 on minority and antiracism/xenophobia) and the Conservative Party (-0.5 on immigration/asylum, 0.03 on minority and antiracism/xenophobia). This finding strongly supports the body of research which has argued that the Labour Party is an important vehicle for the political advancement of minorities (e.g., Geddes 1998b, Sewell 1993). Conversely, the Conservative Party comes out with a strongly anti-minority position in immigration and asylum politics, which implies that there could be a process of co-optation of the issue from the extreme right BNP who have no presence in the field.[8]

After making these brief and very general points, in the remainder of the analysis, we turn the focus of inquiry onto the resident minorities within Britain, most of whom can be assumed to have full citizenship status. This shifts our attention to the second dimension of citizenship: assimilation/cultural pluralism.

The 1976 Race Relations Act and subsequent legislation recognised the principle of 'racial equality' for individuals, and introduced measures for redress against discrimination on the basis of 'race, colour or national origins' and 'equal opportunities', especially in the labour market. In addition, the Commission for Racial Equality was set up as a national watchdog to encourage fair and equal treatment, but with only limited advisory powers. Official forms of categorisation for minority groups are important symbolic markers which define the type of assimilationism/cultural pluralism which is required by a state for including a minority group in the political community. The British 'racial' form is a hybrid between the extremes of assimilationism and cultural pluralism. It recognises one form of cultural diversity -race- as the basis for requiring redress to the discrimination, which prevents full access to social and political equality for minorities. However, this official state sponsorship for 'racial equality' represents only a minimalist cultural pluralism, where other types of cultural diversity, such as religious identification, are relegated to the status of individual private concerns.[9]

From a political opportunity perspective, the degree and type of assimilationism/cultural pluralism -sponsored by a national politics, and variable across time- leads us to different expectations in the claims-making of minorities. In the British Race Relations case, one would primarily expect to find mobilisation by groups along racial lines, where minorities make their political demands as a group which can be recognised and legitimated by the official brand of

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[8] This is no space to give a more detailed treatment of these findings here. A point which should be made, however, is that the Conservatives were the party of Government during our sample period, which may account for their strong anti-immigrant/asylum-seeker position, as Governments have to take difficult decisions whereas the Opposition only has to pay them lip-service.

[9] The characteristics of British Race Relations have been a paradigmatic example for a normative debates on multiculturalism in Europe. See for example, Rex's (1996) discussion of a 'two domains' thesis, advocating assimilationism in the public domain and cultural pluralism in the private domain. See also Parekh (1998), who sees Britain as a mixed assimilationist/cultural pluralist variant, which he labels a 'bifurcationist' case.

pluralism. On the contrary, minority groups mobilising on the basis of a cultural category which is not recognised by British form of pluralism -e.g. a non-recognised religion- face high barriers to making themselves visible and recognised as a group with legitimate grievances in the political domain. Facing assimilationist pressures, such minority groups are likely to be marginalised from access to the political system, and subject to internal pressures of fragmentation, unless they can find a way of linking their demands to the official basis of categorisation. They could, for example, 'racialise' the definition of their religious group, so that it may fit better within the state's interpretative framework of categorisation for gaining access to political resources.

By relating the self-definition of a minority group to the categorisation which it is attributed by the majority group, and which is embedded in the state's integration politics, it is possible to identify four strategies of minority claims-making:[10]

assimilative strategy: where the self-categorisation of minority claims-making primarily emphasises the majority group dimension of membership to the political community, embedded in the state's integration politics, and relegates the minority group self-identity.

dissociative strategy: where the self-categorisation of minority claims-making is made in terms of minority group membership, and not in terms of the majority group labelling, embodied in the official categorisation of the state integration politics.

acculturative strategy: where the self-categorisation of minority claims-making is a mixture of the dissociative and assimilative dimensions. This is an intermediary position which strikes a balance between the majority/state-sponsored categorisation for membership to the political community, and autonomous self-identification as a member of a minority group.

marginal strategy: where claims-making reflects neither the majority group/state categorisation for minorities, nor self-identification as a minority group. In this case, claims-making rejects categorisation either as a 'minority' or in relation to the dominant authority of the host state, for example by defining itself as a transnational community, and its interests beyond categorisation within the receiving state.[11]

Taken as indicators for the relationship of minority claims-making to national ethnic relations politics, assimilative are the most integrated strategies, followed by acculturative, dissociative and, finally, marginal. In the following, we shall use our data on political contention in British migration and ethnic relations, to see which claims-making strategies are used by specific minority groups. In particular, we shall focus on the collective identities, action forms, institutional addressees, and types of claims, that are made in minority claims-making, to see what this tells us about the nature, intensity, and patterns of political conflict, that are produced by minority mobilisation in Britain. First, however, it is necessary to have an idea of the size and composition of minorities Britain, for which the best source is the 1991 Census, although it is worth pointing out that this information is itself a 'politicised' categorisation of

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[10] These four strategies of minority claims-making have been changed and adapted for my research from Modood (1997), who takes them from Hutnik (1991), but they are in any case easily derived from the common distinctions made in the literature on citizenship and national modes of integration for minorities.

[11] Theoretically, there is a fifth strategy for claims-making, an 'integral' one, where collective claims-making is not necessary because the minority group is fully integrated, equal and recognised by the state and majority population. A close empirical example to this situation would be EU citizens in Britain. Such cases are not really relevant to the present discussion in any meaningful sense –though see the case of Indians later- as our data are based on contentious political acts.

minorities (Mason 1995), and –as we shall see- may not coincide with how the actors define themselves.

-table three here-

The 1991 population figures indicate that minorities account for 5.5 percent of the national population, and there are about 900,000 people of African-Caribbean origins, and about 1,500,000 with origins in the Indian subcontinent. As these two groups comprise about 80 percent of the minority population in Britain, much of the analysis will focus on a comparison of these two large macro-categories of minorities. Reference to other minorities will made to draw out specific points.

Minority Collective Identities in Claims-making

The collective identities which minority groups use in their political claims-making are part of a process of 'self' and 'other' categorisation between minorities and majorities. Minority identities are constructed by the group as a self-definition of its relationship to the wider political community, and other ethnic groups. Hence the collective identity which a group uses when entering the public domain, constitutes a strategic dimension of claims-making.[12] For example, minorities of Pakistani background in Britain may mobilise collective claims as 'Pakistanis', 'Asians', 'Muslims', or as 'Black'. The actual collective identity which appears in the field is a political outcome that gives important information on the nature of the relationship between the minority and the state.

Table four shows the collective identities that were expressed by minority claims-making in Britain. It distinguishes between four broad types of identities. First, 'status groups' are where the minorities identify themselves as having a common status that cross-cuts ethnic or cultural boundaries. Examples here include claims-making by groups defining themselves as 'ethnic minorities', or 'asylum-seekers'. Secondly, minority claims-making may be on the basis of 'racial' labelling or self-identification as 'Black' or the generic identity 'Asian'. Thirdly, religious identification may be the important symbolic boundary marker in claims-making, or fourthly, it might be common national or ethnic descent.

-table four about here-

According to the political opportunity perspective, minorities may optimise their chances of success by organising their claims-making along lines of national origin, ethnicity, religion, or common status, depending on which identity is recognised as being legitimate by a country's migration and ethnic relations politics. It is well documented, that in Britain 'race' is the state sponsored category for cultural difference that has been applied in the attempt to integrate minorities within the national community. Integration policies have been framed by the concept of 'racial equality', which has been backed up by several rounds of legislation since the 1976 Race Relations Act, and state sponsored bodies such as the national Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), and local race equality councils which operate with a mandate to uphold these principles (see e.g., Solomos 1993). For Britain, one would therefore expect to find a high proportion of groups using 'racial' collective identities for entering the political domain. It should also be noted that the racial term 'Black' has not only become the predominant form of identification for minorities with backgrounds in the West Indies or Africa, but it has acquired the notion of a 'status group' for representing all minorities in general.

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[12] For perspectives on collective identity formation in collective action, see Melucci (1989) and Eder (1993).

Looking at the first column of table four, more than a third (36.7%) of minority claims-making used racial identities, which was higher than either religious or national and ethnic forms of identification. Of the minority claims-making using racial identification, virtually all occurred with the officially sponsored racial sub-categorisations of 'Black', 'Black and Asian', 'Asian' or 'Black African', that are similar to those which appear in the national population census. Allied to the fact that another 8.4% used the status 'ethnic minorities', it appears that in general there is a strong tendency toward assimilative strategies of identification by minorities (about half of all claims-making) in Britain.

This tendency toward assimilative identification is particularly strong among African-Caribbean claims-making. Of the African-Caribbeans in Britain, the majority -just under two thirds- have origins in the Caribbean. It is therefore striking that there were no recorded cases of claims-making on the basis of national or ethnic origin by minorities with Caribbean ancestry, such as 'Jamaicans' or 'West Indians' despite the relatively large number with such characteristics. In the case of Africans, the few cases of claims-making by national origin as 'Nigerians' or 'Zaireans', were by groups without British nationality, who were seeking political asylum, refugee status or resident rights, and did not have access to the assimilationist criteria. This indicates that virtually all claims-making by British minority groups with Caribbean or African national origins or ancestry takes place under the racial label 'Black'.[13] Political mobilisation by African-Caribbeans can therefore be seen to be strongly shaped by the racialised basis of British integration policies.

This finding does not hold, however, for Indian Subcontinent minorities. In contrast to African-Caribbeans, although Indian Subcontinent claims-making uses the assimilative identity 'Asian' (9.2%), they were three times more likely to mobilise using dissociative identities, of religion ('Muslim/Islamic' 23.8%), or national and ethnic origin (8.5%). Taken at face value, this finding supports the argument that the centrality of the concept of 'black' identity to British Race Relations, has produced an approach which is more geared toward providing for the political integration of African-Caribbean than Indian subcontinent minorities. Several authors have pointed out the difficulty which Indian Subcontinent minorities have in identifying themselves as a single collective group under the official lumpen categorisation 'Asian', or as 'Black' (Modood 1988, 1992). This is backed up by opinion data where less than a quarter of all Asian groups *ever* think of themselves as 'black' – Indian 26%, African Asian 21%, Pakistani 23%, Bangladeshi 18% (Modood et. al.1997:295). Our findings show that the 'racialisation' of the British integration politics, established in the sixties in response to Caribbean migration, then extended for the later wave of migrants from the Indian Subcontinent, has produced a differential set of opportunities for the political participation of these two sets of minorities, which still has an impact on their political mobilisation today.

To add detail to this general point, it is necessary to look more closely at the patterns within Indian Subcontinent mobilisation. A striking finding is that almost a quarter of all minority claims-making (23.8%) is made by Indian-subcontinent groups with the 'Muslim' religious identification. Estimates put the total number of Muslims in Britain at between 900,000 and 1.5 million (Rex 1996, Poulter 1998:197), and a large proportion of practising Muslims are from the Indian Subcontinent. In addition, there are between about 400,000 to 550,000 Hindus and 300,000 to 500,000 Sikhs with Indian Subcontinent origins in Britain (Poulter 1998: 238; 282). As about 95 percent of minorities with Pakistani or Bangladeshi origins are Muslims,

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[13] There were two exceptions to this, namely, mobilisations under the dissociative religious identity, by the Nation of Islam group and by Rastafarians.

and in contrast, 90 percent of minorities with Indian origins Hindus or Sikhs (Modood et al 1997:297), it is plausible to see the high levels of Muslim mobilisation as principally by Pakistani and Bangladeshi minorities.

The use of 'Muslim' identification in political claims-making is a strongly dissociative strategy, because the British state does not recognise the principle of 'religious equality' within its anti-discrimination policies.[14] Acts of discrimination against Muslims in employment or housing cannot be prosecuted under the British law. This shows then that minorities of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origins, have a strongly dissociative basis to their claims-making. Moreover, their self-identification as 'Muslims' is more than four times higher than the old 'colonial' homeland forms of national and ethnic identification. Clearly, the Muslim identity has become the important basis for autonomous political mobilisation by Pakistani and Bangladeshi minority groups, and importantly it constitutes a form of political contention that contradicts the 'racial' basis of cultural pluralism within British integration politics.

Turning to the minorities of Indian origin, the other component of Indian Subcontinent minorities, we find another striking finding. In stark contrast to Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, we find virtually no evidence of political claims-making by groups of Indian origin, either by religious, national or ethnic identities (1% as 'Indian' and 1% as 'Sikh', and none as 'Hindu'), although this group accounts for more than half of the resident Indian Subcontinent population in Britain. This points toward a strong division within Indian Subcontinent minorities relating to their political integration, and strongly supports the argument made by Tariq Modood that the differences in experiences among this group are better explained by the distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims, than by country of origin, 'Asian' background, or colour (1992: 33):

'(B)y most socio-economic measures there is a major divide between Sunni Muslims on the one hand and the other Asians, and that this divide is as great as between Asian and whites, or between Asians and blacks.'

Modood takes this further, arguing that not all Indian minorities have achieved socio-economic success, and that especially Gujeratis of rural origin, who are Muslims, suffer similar levels of deprivation as Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. This again re-enforces the Muslim categorisation, as the important symbolic boundary marker for a group with a shared experience in British society.

The lack of Indian mobilisation, however, is best explained by a combination of factors. Firstly, their relative socio-economic success makes recourse to autonomous political action relatively unnecessary as means for gaining access to material resources within Britain. According to social indicators for economic success, employment levels, and educational achievement where they score similar levels to the ethnic majority, Indian minority groups have achieved a high degree of integration to British society. This is particularly the case for Indians of 'East African Asian' origins who in many cases score even better than whites in social achievement, but also for Indian minorities in general. For example, unemployment rates are three times (2.8) higher for Bangladeshis and two and a half times (2.5) higher for

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[14] The British state has its own Anglican Church, and upholds general religious tolerance, though religion itself is relegated to the private domain of individual conscience and not seen as a field for state intervention. Measures against religious discrimination apply only to Northern Ireland where they are designed to prevent sectarian conflict. Jews and Sikhs are recognised as 'ethnic' minorities and so have recourse to anti-discrimination within British law (Rex 1996, Favell 1998, Poulter 1998).

Pakistanis than for Whites, whereas those for Indians (1.3) are only slightly higher, and those for African Asians (0.9) actually lower (Modood 1998:64). Such findings underline those of the earlier Labour Force Survey and Census studies (Mason 1995). In addition, the Indian groups tended to come from wealthier 'homeland' backgrounds with more resources, and were better qualified than their Muslim counterparts. Lastly, the divisions within Indian Subcontinent minorities along national and religious difference seem to be more important lines of identity cleavage than the commonality of being 'Asian', which is in fact a categorisation that has been imposed by the state. Successful groups from the Indian Subcontinent are therefore much more likely to participate in conventional forms of political action with the ethnic majority, with whom they have similar social status, than risk the high costs of contentious political activism with groups with whom they share a migrant background, but strongly differ in religious and national identification.

Considering that they appear to be relatively well socially integrated in Britain, Indian mobilisation is more likely to be for non-material group demands, rather than for general demands for social inclusion.[15] This in fact brings the mobilisation patterns of Indians closer to that of other well integrated former migrant communities, such as the Jews and the Irish.

In a sense, the 'racial' basis of British cultural pluralism, encourages political quietism from the most successful, and political contention from the least successful Indian Subcontinent groups, as it does not provide a legitimate symbolic marker for political activism with which such minorities can identify themselves. In addition, the high level of Muslim mobilisation is an important finding which illustrates that there are limits to the capacities of a state's ethnic relations politics for shaping the identities of minorities in their own image, and it indicates that there is a grain of truth in the emphasis which multicultural theorists place on cultural difference and the expression of particularity as the key to minority claims-making (e.g., Kymlicka 1995).

The second column in Table four, 'named organisations', is a sub-category of the first. It includes only those cases of organisations which are actually named in the report. This means that the second column gives actual information on minority organisations and excludes groups, such as youths in spontaneous protests, that are lacking formal organisation.[16]

The names which minority organisations give themselves are important indicators how they place themselves in relation to British society. In general, the overall patterns in the second column confirm the tendencies in the overall sample. However, there are still a couple of points worth underlining, from the additional detail which is available.

A first point to make is that although in the overall sample there were more racially defined groups (36.7%) than religiously defined groups (24.5%), the reverse is true when looking at the organisations of the minority groups (29.1% 'racial'; 47.9% 'religious'). This indicates that a higher level of autonomous organisation is necessary for groups that are not recognised by Race Relations politics, than those that are, if demands are to be successfully mobilised. Differentiating between the main categories of religious and racial organisations, reveals more

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[15] Of the six cases of Indian and Sikh mobilisation in our sample, only one made material demands within Britain for relating to employment, the others related to immigration and asylum, homeland politics, and one was a cultural demand for recognition of Indic (sic) languages in schools.

[16] This distinction is made to relativise the effects of possible distortions that might arise from the collective identities we have coded being ascribed by journalists, rather than being the form of self-identification by the group itself.

about the nature of the mobilising structures used by Indian Subcontinent and African-Caribbean minorities for making autonomous demands in British politics.

Almost half (47.9%) of the named claims-making organisations had 'Muslim/Islamic' identities. This not only underlines the importance of Muslim identity as a basis for Pakistani and Bangladeshi mobilisation, but also shows that there is a high level of autonomous organisation within these communities for making political demands. It is worth noting, that no organisations made claims as 'Asians', the state's preferred label for such minorities, although the Black and Asian Police Officers' Association provides a single example of the use of an official 'racial' label, not surprisingly for an organisation within a state institution. These findings make clear that Pakistani and Bangladeshi minorities are highly organised around types of identities which contradict the British state's racial categorisation of them. Although this indicates a dissociative strategy in relation to British politics, a closer look at some of the organisations somewhat qualifies this statement.

Two thirds of the named Muslim organisations identified themselves with British society or their locality in Britain, by their name and scope of operation- e.g., Muslim Youth Movement of Great Britain, Muslim UK Action Committee, Supreme Council of British Muslims' Conference, Muslim Parliament, Islamic Party, Council of Mosques, Muslim Forum, Union of Muslim Organisations- and thus actually express strong acculturative dimensions. Of the other Muslim organisations, a ninth had dissociative religious self-identification strategies – e.g. the Islamic Society for Religious Tolerance- whereas the remaining two ninths were fundamentalist Islamic organisations –e.g., the People's Mojahedin, al-Muhajiroun- with marginal strategies in relation to British politics.

These findings make clear that a considerable proportion of Muslim claims-making is acculturative and made within the British political context. Other studies have also pointed out that Muslims are as likely to see themselves as British as all the other minorities in Britain. Of the minority groups questioned about identity by Modood et al (1997: 329), 66% and 60% of the two predominantly Muslim groups, Pakistanis and Bangladeshi, answered in the affirmative when asked if they thought of themselves as 'British'. This compares with the similar figure of 64% for Caribbeans, and 62% for Indians, who are of course predominantly non-Muslim.[17] Thus the high levels of British 'Muslim' mobilisation cannot simply be explained by the 'primordialist' argument which has some popular saliency, that there is a world-wide rise of militant Islam. On the contrary, the high mobilisation of British Muslims is an outcome of the paradoxical set of political opportunities which they face within British Race Relations politics.

After the Rushdie Affair, when the British state took the clear position that blasphemy law did not extend to the Muslim religion, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities have used their autonomous organisational structures for mobilising contentious demands for an extension of cultural pluralism to include the principle of religious equality for Islam. In addition, the groups are sufficiently well organised at the community level to make themselves visible as an autonomous actor in the public domain, despite the fact that making demands for religious rather than racial equality provokes strong reactions from sections of the majority society and the state itself. However, the total absence of political claims-making by Hindus –another religious minority, who unlike Sikhs and Jews are not recognised as 'ethnic' minorities in

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[17] It should be also noted that this research found that minorities did not think of identities in a mutually exclusive zero-sum way, and that in most cases they saw themselves as being both 'British' and belonging to a 'ethnic' group. This indicates that minorities may select the identities which they use to enter the public and political domain strategically, which is, of course, the premise of the approach defended here.

British law- suggests that we are not simply dealing with a conflict over religious equality in Britain. Survey research has shown that the mean weekly earnings of male Hindus (£338) are much higher than for Muslims (£223), and that Muslims were significantly more likely to live in households with low incomes (Modood et al. 1997:113; 163). In line with the arguments made earlier, it appears that there also is a strong socio-economic basis to the mobilisation of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis as Muslims, and that Muslim identity is increasingly a form for expressing political demands within Britain. In a sense, the Muslim identity has replaced the Asian categorisation, and become a basis for collective mobilisation against discrimination in society. The demands for an extension of the Race Relations framework to a cultural pluralism which recognises Muslims as a minority, has a socio-economic basis, and gives a collective identity for the Indian Subcontinent minority 'underclass'.

Regarding the named organisations with 'Black' identities (29.1%), The Society of Black Lawyers and the National Black Caucus alone accounted for two thirds, whereas other examples include the Consortium of Black Organisations, the London Collective of Black Governors. What is interesting here, is that more than three quarters of these organisations were 'middle-class' type of organisations, such as the lawyers and governors. In contrast, there where very few autonomous grass roots community organisations, with two examples being the Black Panthers UK and the Black Female Prisoners Scheme. This shows that one of the effects of the strong assimilative basis of African-Caribbean mobilisation, has in fact been to militate against autonomous community-level activism. According to this interpretation, the British system of Race Relations provides limited opportunities for access to the political system - channelled along the racial category 'black' - that are taken up by the middle class organisations, whereas the remainder of the African-Caribbean minorities are structured into a position of disadvantage and marginalisation, lacking the resources to mobilise on the basis of an autonomous collective identity and challenge the British state.[18]

We confronted members of the African-Caribbean community with this hypothetical explanation in focus groups, and they were highly critical of the élites within their own community, and the 'representative' function which they perform. The argument was made repeatedly that the leaders within the African-Caribbean community who take on representative roles within politics and local government become detached from the concerns and grievances of the community, and seek individual careerist gains. Whereas they saw their community as divided, and themselves as a marginalised group, they expressed admiration for the level of cohesion and organisation among Asian minorities, which in some cases reminded them of community support networks in the Caribbean.

The main point to draw from this is that the differential opportunities for inclusion within British politics that has been produced by racial categorisation, does not simply translate into beneficial 'outcomes' for African-Caribbean minorities and detrimental 'outcomes' for Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. On the contrary, the peculiar hybrid of assimilationism and limited pluralism defined by 'racial equality' that has dominated the integrationist thinking of British élites since the early sixties, seems to have produced unintended consequences, and negative feedbacks in structuring the potential of both communities to engage in political action.

Minority Action Repertoires in Claims-making

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[18] Other authors make a similar point, namely that when a state enforces cultural pluralism, it can also structure disadvantage for the target minorities. Multicultural policies may have detrimental effects, on the Dutch case see WRR report 1990.

Another important indicator for the relationship of minorities to national politics is the type of actions which they use for making themselves and their contentious demands visible in the public domain. Table 5 gives the action repertoires used by minority groups. In addition to the overall distribution of action-forms used by minority groups, we also present those of different groups, which are defined by their collective identities. Regarding the four action-forms: 'conventional' are those such as public statements and press conferences; 'demonstrative' are symbolic non-confrontational protests, such as peaceful demonstrations, and vigils; 'confrontational' protests include strikes, hunger strikes, and boycotts; and finally, 'violent' protests are illegal acts, causing damage to people or property.

-table five about here-

A first general finding is that those groups directly recognised by British ethnic relations politics have more institutionalised and conventional action repertoires, than those with limited channels of access to institutional power and recognition. Thus ninety per cent of the claims-making of the status group 'Ethnic minorities' and the racial status group 'Black' took conventional forms such as public statements. The same incidentally holds for the 'ethnically' recognised religious group, 'Jews', where 12 out of 13 cases were conventional. In contrast, the group lacking basic rights of residence and nationality, asylum-seekers, needed to use many confrontational protests (44%) to make their demands visible in the public domain.

When we compare the action-forms used by 'Black' (African-Caribbean) and 'All Indian Subcontinent' minorities (columns two and three), we find that a greater proportion of Indian Subcontinent claims-making are symbolic, confrontational and violent protests ('Black' 12.8%; 'All Indian Subcontinent' 32.7%), whereas a greater proportion of African-Caribbean is conventional ('Black' 87.2%; 'All Indian Subcontinent' 67.3%). This underlines our findings that British Race Relations produces more assimilative strategies among African-Caribbean than Indian Subcontinent minorities.

To examine Indian Subcontinent mobilisation more closely, we also differentiate three sub-categories 'Indian subcontinent national and ethnic', 'Muslim' and 'Asian'. The contrast between 'Asian' and 'Muslim' groups is striking. Although 'Asian' is the officially recognised racial status category, which leads one to expect relatively easy access to the political field, less than half of 'Asian' claims-making took conventional forms (46.2%) and more than a third (38.5%) were actually violent and illegal actions. In contrast, almost three-quarters of 'Muslim' claims-making was conventional (72.3%), despite the non-recognition of Islam by British Race Relations policies. Indeed the action repertoire of 'Muslim' claims-making has a similar distribution to that of all minority groups, and included less violent actions than mobilisation by 'national/ethnic' or 'Asian' groups. This evidence quashes the popular myth of Islam being a militant threat to law and order in British society, and suggests that the high level of autonomous organisation by Muslims, actually produces less violence.

The relatively high number of 'Asian' violent actions were mostly committed by gangs of 'Asian' youths, including examples such as a racial attack on white schoolboy, inner urban unrest and rioting, as well as a violent anti-racist mobilisation against a police station where the white perpetrator of a racist attack was held in custody. This high level of violence by 'Asian youths', is indicative of the alienated inner-urban few, who are the most socio-economically disadvantaged –Pakistani and Bangladeshi youths suffer from the highest levels of unemployment, and lowest educational achievements[19]- and who fall through safety net of

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[19] Youth unemployment for Bangladeshis and Pakistanis under 35 years old is 37% and higher than for other groups: Caribbean 34%; Indian/African Asian 20%; White 15% (Modood et al 1997: 91). Other survey research,

autonomous provision by the community. Such findings support the thesis that 'Asian' youths as doubly disadvantaged and marginalised, by falling between 'two cultures' Britain and the Homeland, neither of which fit or provide adequately for their aspirations.

Institutional and Civil Society Addressees of Minority Claims-making

Table 6 turns attention to the institutions and civil society organisations which are addressed by minority claims-making. Regarding all minority demands, just less than a third (29.8%) were made on the police and security agencies. This high proportion of demands directed principally against the police relate to real or perceived discrimination in the carrying out of law enforcement, and charges of racist violence and abuse by police officers. Clearly, this is a prominent concern among minorities, a finding which is backed up by British Crime Survey Data, where 69% of Afro-Caribbeans, 45% Indians and 47% Pakistanis thought that the police did not treat everyone fairly (Fitzgerald 1998:174). That it appears as a particular concern for African-Caribbean minorities is supported by our findings (43.1% demands targeting police; 19.0% judicial system), our own focus group research, and by studies on the criminal justice system. In a state which upholds the principle of racial equality and anti-discrimination, racial minorities are able to target a large number of demands against institutions which they perceive as failing to live up to these standards.

-table 6 about here-

Moving on to compare the claims-making by different groups, we find the most striking differences in the addressees of 'Black' (African-Caribbean) minorities and 'Muslims'. An important difference is the proportion of claims where there was an identifiable addressee, which was much higher for 'Black' (82.9%) than for 'Muslim' (30.8%) groups. Once more, this finding confirms that British Race Relations policies provide greater opportunities for groups defined on a racial basis to make demands on state and civil society actors, than it does for those which identify on a religious basis. Our data shows that it is relatively harder for Muslim than African-Caribbean minorities to make their demands resonate by targeting actors within the institutional framework of British politics. In contrast, a group which is constructed from Indian Subcontinent minorities excluding Indians, Sikhs and Hindus (column three) appears as an intermediate case, which shows that Muslim groups using non-religious identities, are in a better position to make demands on British institutions.

A last general finding is that contrary to the expectations of 'postnational citizenship' theories (Soysal 1994, 1997), which emphasise the importance of the transnational level, and especially international human rights institutions and conventions, for minority claims-making, we find little evidence that minorities target supranational (less than 2%) as opposed to national institutions. If this is an emergent trend then we find little empirical evidence to support it.[20]

Political Demands in Minority Claims-making

Lastly, we focus on the types of political demands which are made by minorities, which are central to understanding the political conflicts over relationships between the state and resident minorities, and between the majority and minority publics. Table 7 shows the

Labour Force Survey, found that Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in the age group 16-24 years were the least well qualified, whereas African Asians and Indians were better qualified than Whites (Jones 1993:36).

[20] There is insufficient space to present anything other than a caricature of this argument here, for a more detailed exposition, see Koopmans and Statham 1998.

distribution of minority demands across six sub-fields of migration and ethnic relations politics: integration and anti-discrimination, cultural diversity and group politics, anti-racist and xenophobic, immigration and asylum, ethnic conflict, and homeland politics.

Reminiscent of the Roy Jenkins' famous formula for the British integration of minorities, 'equal opportunity and cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance', integration/anti-discrimination and cultural diversity/group politics are the issue fields represented by the first two parts of this equation. Integration and anti-discrimination politics covers the state actions and policy measures for integrating minorities, whereas cultural diversity and group politics is the field concerning pluralism and the cultural diversity of minorities. Anti-racist and xenophobic politics is the third pillar of the Jenkins formula, namely issues concerning the relationships between the majority and minority populations in the public domain. Our discussion here will focus on these three issue fields.[21]

 -table 7 about here-

A general point to draw attention to here, concerns the different levels of support or opposition from other actors which confront minorities in their claims-making. The second column gives the valences of all non-minority actors –ranging from –1 anti-minority/racist to 1 pro-minority/anti-racist- distributed by issue-field. These figures show that there is a much more supportive set of discursive alliances available for minority claims in the integration field (0.55) than in the cultural diversity field (0). However, minorities themselves made more claims in the cultural diversity/group (27.5%) where they were responsible for half of the demands (50.0%), than in the integration field (21.6%) where they accounted for only an eighth (11.8%). Taken together, these findings show that although cultural diversity is an issue field which is shaped and promoted to an important extent by minorities, they face much more hostile opposition from state and civil society actors for this type of demand. Conversely, majority actors give more favourable support to minority claims for integration within the Race Relations framework, than to demands for a more radical version of cultural pluralism. On the surface, this lends some support to the arguments within contemporary debates on multiculturalism that minorities are increasingly making demands for special cultural group rights, and that this has provoked hostile reactions from the majority society (e.g., Young 1998). More specifically, it gives empirical evidence which supports those authors who argue that opposition to minorities in Britain (and elsewhere) is increasingly expressed as opposition to cultural difference –'cultural racism'- than racial difference (see especially Modood 1997b). We can add more detail to such hypotheses, however, by distinguishing between different types of minorities, and looking at specific demands.

Following the same pattern we have identified in relation to other variables, there are once more striking differences between the claims-making of 'Black' and 'Muslim' groups. Whereas half of 'Black' (African-Caribbean) minority claims (51.4%) related to integration/anti-discrimination and an additional third (37.2%) to anti-racist/xenophobic politics, these two fields together were the subject of only a tenth (10.6%) of demands by 'Muslim' groups. Conversely, more than two thirds of 'Muslim' demands (67.7%) related to cultural diversity/group politics, compared to only a twelfth (7.1%) by 'Black' minorities. At

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[21] Immigration and asylum covers issues of border controls and aliens in Britain, whereas homeland politics refers to issues defined outside of British politics referring to conflicts in the country of origin, for example between Pakistanis and Indians. Ethnic conflict refers to conflicts between different minority groups that occur in the British national context, and cannot be traced to homeland politics, one example being inter-ethnic violence between Black-African and Islamic students at a London College.

the risk of repetition, these marked differences in the claims by African-Caribbean and Muslim groups are best explained by the differential opportunities facing them.

'Black' African-Caribbeans are defined as a racial minority by British politics, and see themselves as such, making anti-discrimination demands relating to the state treatment of minorities, and anti-racist demands relating to unfair treatment in civil society. When seen as a set of political opportunities, the official language and system of British Race Relations channels the demands of this group into focusing on their perceived or real unequal treatment by the state and majority society. What we witness here, is strong evidence that for African-Caribbean minorities, anti-discrimination demands and claims for justice have been racialised into and language and identity for 'black' politics. That 'black' politics has become the way of expressing grievances and injustice claims is demonstrated by the actual language of political demands made in our sample. Demands for extending social and political rights are 'racialised'.

For example, the demand by a group for 'black' representation on juries to redress the unjust effects of prejudice:

'The vast majority of black defendants face juries who are often ignorant bigoted and blatantly hostile to the defendant before a trial even begins.'

In another typical example, the group challenge the unjust effects of inequality in the judiciary:

'Blacks are over-policed and fed into a criminal justice system, where they are less likely to get bail, more likely to be acquitted but, if convicted, likely to get longer sentences than whites'.

The vast majority of demands by African-Caribbean groups are made in these racial assimilative terms. They are framed within the concept of injustice that is upheld by the principle of racial equality. However, such demands are not necessarily 'assimilative' in the sense of being a passive mirror image of Race Relations politics, on the contrary, they often radicalise the concept of racial equality from its watered-down official meaning to the basis of a collective identity of rights for 'black' minorities – i.e. 'black politics'. In a sense they are more acculturative in their assertion for new rights of pluralism. This finding of a strong racialised political identity in African-Caribbean mobilisation against perceived injustices, supports several descriptive accounts which emphasise the dominance of 'blackness' within anti-racist politics in Britain (Modood 1997b, Shukra 1998).

Before turning to 'Muslim' claims, we first look at 'Other Indian subcontinent' minorities, which has been constructed from 'Asian' and Indian Subcontinent 'national and ethnic groups': Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Bengali. This group explicitly excludes the 'integrated' Indian and Sikh minorities[22], and so basically consists of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Asian mobilisation that does not carry the religious identification of Muslim. In contrast to 'Muslim' groups, four fifths (80.9%) of the claims by 'Other Indian Subcontinent' groups were in the integration/anti-discrimination and anti-racist/xenophobic fields, and only an eighth (11.9%) referred to cultural diversity/group politics. This indicates that Indian subcontinent groups which do not publicly identify themselves as Muslim, are in an intermediary position between 'Black' and 'Muslim' groups, although a large proportion of them are actually Muslims. When religious inequality is not the issue, Indian subcontinent minorities have similar

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[22] Though it may be that some actual Indian or Sikh mobilisation is included in 'Asian'.

demands relating to integration and anti-racism as other minorities. Indeed that just more than half (54.7%) of the claims by the 'Other Indian Subcontinent' group were in the anti-racism/xenophobic field, indicates that this section of society is highly active in demanding more measures against racial abuse and violence. This is hardly surprising when the British Crime Survey data from 1992 pointed out that 56% of South Asians perceived assaults against them as racially motivated compared to only 24% of Afro-Caribbeans (Skellington 1996:89). The engagement of Pakistani and Bangladeshi minorities in integration and anti-racist politics with racial and 'colonial' national and ethnic identities, also gives support for the argument made by other authors (see e.g., Werbner 1991) that minorities make a strategic use of self-identification when entering the British political domain.

Our findings highlight an important point: that in Britain the field of demands relating to cultural diversity, is predominantly concerned with a single-issue, the position of Islam within British society. A few examples of demands for special group rights were found by minority groups which did not define themselves as 'Muslim', including 'Black', 'Other Indian Subcontinent', and even one 'Indian' case. However, accounting for only 15.8% of all minority demands, this hardly seems to constitute the general societal change that is envisaged by references –usually on the basis of a few supposedly representative examples- to the increasing number of demands for cultural group rights, in current literature on multiculturalism (e.g. Young 1998). In the British case, our findings point toward a more localised contextual explanation.

Having pointed out that our findings strongly support the emphasis that several authors – principally Modood on 'Muslimophobia' (1997a; 1997b)- have placed on the importance of the Muslim/Non-Muslim distinction as a conflict line between minorities and majority within British society, we turn attention now to the nature of Muslim group claims.

About four-tenths of all Muslim claims were for special group rights, and the recognition of cultural differences. About half of these demands were for special provision of religious instruction in schools, with most cases being demands for pluralism within the existing framework of state schooling, though there were also a few cases of demands for separate Islamic schools. Many claims demanded an extension of the state privileges afforded to Roman Catholic and Jewish schools. For example, a Muslim accused Trafford Council of 'discrimination' for paying fees for Roman Catholics to attend an independent Catholic school but not for his daughter to attend an independent Islamic school:

'Muslims (have) the right to withhold that part of their taxes used to finance denominational schools for Jews and Catholics'.

Looking at the language of such claims, it soon becomes clear that the vast majority frame the perceived injustice at religious inequality within a language of 'discrimination'. It appears that Muslims are not expressing their cultural difference *per se*, but that they are making demands for social and political rights on the basis of their actual shared collective identity. Muslim demands for religious equality, are made in acculturative rather than dissociative terms, precisely because they constitute the demands for equal social and political rights by a collective group who cannot define themselves within the available racialised conceptual framework for redressing discrimination.

Even a British 'headscarf case', a paradigmatic example in multiculturalism literature, has acculturative rather than dissociative tones, where the demand for justice is for   equal

treatment in education, and not a pro-active expression of the intrinsic value of cultural difference:

'There was nothing in the school rules about scarves when we went there. The rules were amended last year to specifically exclude headscarves... We are not fanatics or fundamentalists. We just want the right to continue our education.'

The Race Relations framework offers an unfavourable language of access to redress of grievance for Muslims against their perceived and actual grievances. In contrast to the official 'Asian' category, the Muslim identity brings together the groups sharing the most discriminated and underprivileged status, and is a more natural basis for self-identification. However, their demands which for the most part are for social and political equality, become perceived as a cultural threat by the majority society, because they are a group with a religious identity. Our findings therefore point toward an interpretation whereby the majority of Muslim mobilisation should be seen as that of a status group[23] demanding straightforward social and political rights, whereas only a small minority is indicative of highly dissociative expressions of religious difference.

Conclusions: Cracks in the British Race Relations Pot?

On entering mainland Europe, the British approach for integrating minorities presents itself as a 'success story'. Both leading politicians and élite minority activists from bodies like the Commission for Racial Equality, see fit to lecture the 'Europeans' on the virtues of British Race Relations. This affection for the quirky and idiosyncratic system of Race Relations is often justified on the basis that 'it works', and 'if it works for Britain, then why could it not also work for Europe?' Such a logic was behind the retreat of British minorities from the European Migrants' Forum and the setting up of an alternative, the Standing Conference on Racial Equality for Europe (SCORE) (Favell 1998). Even when they get off the Eurostar in Brussels, British minority activists support only 'one nation cultural pluralism', and that one nation is Britain. Judged by internationalist aspirations, SCORE was undoubtedly an own goal for minorities, but what it really demonstrates, is a point which is the lynch-pin of the political opportunity approach defended here: British minority activism is very much a product of British Race Relations politics. It is therefore pertinent to focus on the national context, and ask to what extent the lines of political conflict that are produced by minority mobilisation can be seen as an affirmation or contradiction of a system for incorporation founded on the principle of 'racial equality'.

A first general point from the analysis is rather self-evident, namely that minorities with full formal citizenship rights face fewer barriers of access to the political system, and have a more favourable set of discursive alliances in the political field, than those without, such as asylum-seekers. Among the political parties, the Labour Party came out clearly as an ally for both resident minorities and refugees/asylum-seekers, whereas the Conservative Party took up an especially anti-asylum-seeker position. This shows that the Labour party fulfils a special role in representing minority interests, however, the degree of co-optation is not sufficient to make autonomous minority mobilisation unnecessary. On the contrary, according to our data resident minorities have sufficient resources to make themselves the most 'visible' actor in the contentious field of ethnic relations politics.

Regarding resident minorities, the most important findings are drawn from a comparison of identities, action-forms, addressees and demands that were used in the mobilisation by

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[23] Modood (1997b) has even argued that Muslims in Britain have the characteristics of a class.

African-Caribbean and Indian subcontinent groups. Our basic finding is that the differences in the claims-making strategies of minority groups are best explained by the political opportunities which confront them. This requires that we interpret the patterns of conflict signalled by minority mobilisation as outcomes, unintended consequences, and negative feedbacks, from the peculiar hybrid of assimilationism and limited racialised pluralism, that has been the hallmark of British integrationist thinking since the 1960s. Our findings clearly show that these élite perceptions have had a lasting impact by shaping the channels of access available to minorities for participation in the political community. Minority claims-making and the patterns of conflict between the minority and majority populations still bear the imprint of such consequences in the 1990s.

The brand of cultural pluralism sponsored by British Race Relations –on the principle of racial equality- has structured an inequality of opportunities facing the two main groups. African-Caribbeans mobilise as 'Black' along racial lines, use a strongly assimilative identity and conventional action forms, and target the state institutions with demands for justice which are framed within the recognised framework for redressing for racial discrimination. In general, this claims-making can be seen as a direct response to the institutional and racialised discursive channels of access which extend from the political system to minorities. However, an important caveat should be inserted here. Most of the 'Black' organisations which had the resources to make their autonomous demands 'visible' in the political domain, were in fact representative of 'middle class' minority interests, such as lawyers and politicians. The relative absence of grass-roots and community type 'Black' organisations, suggests that the incorporation of upwardly mobile African-Caribbeans, may be to the disadvantage of the majority of African-Caribbeans. In other words, there may be important socio-economic 'class' inequalities within African-Caribbean communities, whose political voice is lost through the co-optation of potential leaders. Such a process is encouraged by British integration policies that provide rights for redress to racial discrimination -through courts, industrial tribunals- for individuals rather groups.

In contrast, Indian Subcontinent minorities mobilised along lines of race, religion and national and ethnic origin as: 'Asian', 'Muslim', 'Sikh', 'Bangladeshi', 'Pakistani', 'Indian', and 'Bengali'. This in itself indicates that political opportunities which are extended along racial lines do not encompass sufficient scope for incorporating minorities from the Indian Subcontinent as a single collective group. Indeed the official category of 'Asian' was not used by any of the recorded Indian Subcontinent organisations.

The most visible collective mobilisation of Indian Subcontinent minorities was by 'Muslim' groups. These are highly autonomously organised, use predominantly conventional action forms, mobilise with a religious identification, and although they have difficulty in targeting their demands toward state institutions, they primarily make public demands for extending the principle of racial discrimination to their non-racial collective group. As striking as the visibility of 'Muslim', 'Pakistani' and 'Bangladeshi' groups was the absence of their 'Indian', 'Hindu' and 'Sikh' counterparts. This finding strongly supports the position that has been put forward by Tariq Modood for several years, that the divisions within Indian Subcontinent minorities are at least as great as those between them and other minority and majority groups. More specifically, the division among Indian Subcontinent minorities has a socio-economic and 'class' basis, whereby Indian, Hindu, and Sikh minorities are better integrated within British society, and so have less incentive to mobilise for an extension of social and political rights.

Conversely, the 'Muslim' groups are Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, which according to social indicators are in a highly disadvantaged position in British society, and which are in material need of better social and political rights. This indicates that in the British case, there is a strong socio-economic basis for shared experiences and grievances for the collective group whose self-identification is a religious distinction, Muslims. In a sense, there is a strong 'class' and to a certain extent 'underclass' dimension to Muslim identity, and this goes a long way to explaining one of our central findings, namely, that contrary to the popular 'Islamophobic' beliefs among the ethnic majority in Britain, the strategies of Muslim, Pakistani and Bangladeshi minorities have a strong acculturative rather than a dissociative dimension in their relation to British society. Many organisations identified themselves as British Muslims, and perhaps most significantly, the majority of demands that were made for special group rights and recognition were framed within a anti-discrimination framework of social and political equality, and were not expressions of the right to cultural difference *per se*.

Disappointing as this may be for those multicultural theorists who tend to see demands for particularist group rights as the essence of minority claims-making (e.g., Young 1998), the position of Muslims in Britain is better explained by the national political context. Rather than taking the transnational character of Islamic identification at face value, the conditions of the national setting explain more precisely the form which political mobilisation by these groups takes in the society of settlement. Facing cultural exclusion from the set of racialised rights available to minorities, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis have used religious organisations as the infrastructure for pushing for greater access to the material resources of political and social rights. Indeed, it is quite plausible that if the British framework for combating racial discrimination recognised the Islamic faith as a legitimate basis for 'ethnic' minority demands -in the same way as it does already for Sikhs and Jews, unconcerned by conceptual purity or clarity- then there may still be some mileage in the Race Relations formula. Academics seldom favour such pragmatic solutions, and would most likely prefer to do away altogether with the straightjacket of a racialised cultural pluralism, in favour of a more multicultural solution. However, as such decisions will be taken by the political establishment, who are always fearful of a majority backlash, perhaps British pragmatism is the most that British minorities can hope for.

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Table 1: Claims-making Actors in the Migration and Ethnic Relations Fields 1990-1996

	Immigration and Asylum	Minority Politics	Anti-racism vs. Xenophobic	Total Field*
Supranational institutions (EU, UN) and foreign governments	2.7%	0.4%	0.9%	1.5%
National/local government	29.0%	10.4%	2.6%	15.4%
National/local legislative & political parties	20.6%	8.5%	23.0%	16.7%
Judiciary	9.5%	6.1%	4.3%	6.8%
Police/security agencies & state institutions	3.3%	10.7%	7.7%	7.0%
State institutions dealing with minorities (e.g. CRE)	1.9%	6.3%	3.7%	3.9%
Total state and party actors	**67.0%**	**42.4%**	**42.2%**	**51.3%**
Human rights, welfare, pro-minority organisations	15.5%	4.9%	2.8%	8.3%
Other civil society groups & organisations	7.3%	19.1%	12.1%	12.7%
Anti-racist groups & organisations	0.6%	1.1%	9.9%	3.1%
Minority/migrant groups & organisations	**9.1%**	**29.8%**	**16.8%**	**19.4%**
Racist/extreme right groups & organisations	0.0%	0.2%	11.2%	2.9%
Unknown	0.5%	2.5%	5.0%	2.3%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
N=	483	446	322	1269
% of total field	**38.1%**	**35.1%**	**25.4%**	**100.0%**
Valence:	*0.32*	*0.51*	*0.41*	*0.41*

* includes additional 18 cases relating to 'Homeland Politics'

** includes trade unions, employers, churches, media, cultural organisations etc.

Valence score:

-1 = anti-minority/racist; 1 = pro-minority/anti-racist; 0 = neither pro- nor anti-minority/racist

Table 2: Political Party Claims in Migration and Ethnic Relations Field 1990-96

	Proportion of Political Party Claims (%)	Immigration & Asylum valence	Minority & Antiracism/ Xenophobia valence	Overall Field valence
Labour	29.8%	*0.80*	*0.65*	*0.72*
Liberal Democrats	7.3%	*0.71*	*0.00*	*0.18*
Conservative	59.0%	*-0.50*	*0.03*	*-0.35*
British National Party/ National Front	3.9%	*-*	*-0.73*	*-0.73*
Total	**100.0%**	***-0.16***	***0.20***	***-0.005***
N=	383	218	165	383
Party Claims/ Percentage of all Claims (%)	30.2%	45.1%	21.5%	

Valence scores:
-1 = anti-minority/racist; 1 = pro-minority/anti-racist; 0 = neither pro- nor anti-minority/racist

Table 3: Minorities in Britain According to 1991 Census

Minority Categories	Population	percent of total British population
Black		**1.6%**
Black Caribbean	500,000	0.9%
Black African	212,000	0.4%
Black Other	178,000	0.3%
South Asian		**2.7%**
Indian	840,000	1.5%
Pakistani	477,000	0.9%
Bangladeshi	163,000	0.3%
Chinese and Others		**1.2%**
Chinese	157,000	0.3%
Other Asian	198,000	0.4%
Other Other	290,000	0.5%

sources: Owen 1992:2 cited Mason 1995:35; Modood et al 1997:13.

Table 4: Collective Identities of Actors in Claims-Making by Minority Groups in Britain, 1990-1996

	Minority Groups (%)	Named Minority Organisations (%)
Status Groups	**15.0**	**6.3**
Asylum-seekers	5.9	-
Immigrants/Foreigners	0.7	-
Ethnic Minorities	8.4	6.3
Racial Groups	**36.7**	**29.1**
Black	25.3	28.1
Black and Asian	0.4	1.0
Asian	9.2	-
Afro-Caribbean	1.1	-
Black African	0.7	-
Religious Groups	**24.5**	**47.9**
Muslim/Islamic	23.8	47.9
Rastafarian	0.7	-
National and Ethnic Groups	**23.1**	**16.6**
Jewish	4.8	8.3
Gypsy/Roma	0.7	2.1
Sikh	1.1	-
Bangladeshi	3.7	2.1
Pakistani	1.9	2.1
Indian	1.1	1.0
Bengali	0.7	-
Nigerian	0.4	-
Zairean	0.7	-
Algerian	0.7	-
Egyptian	0.4	-
Iranian	0.7	-
Iraqi	0.4	-
Turkish	0.4	-
Kurdish	1.5	-
Bosnian	0.7	-
Romanian	1.1	-
Chinese/HK Chinese	0.7	-
Sub-national UK – Irish/Welsh	0.7	1.0
European EU	0.7	-
Other	**0.7**	**0.0**
Total	**100.0%**	**99.9%****
N=	273*	96

*   first or second named actor

** less than 100% due to rounding

Table 5: Forms of claims-making by minority groups 1990-96 (%)

	Ethnic Minorities	Black (African-Caribbean)	All Indian Subcontinent	Subcontinent national or ethnic+	Muslim/ Islamic	Asian	Asylum-seekers*	All minority groups
Conventional actions	91.3	87.2	67.3	77.3	72.3	46.2	55.6	75.8
Demonstrative protests	0.0	7.1	10.6	13.6	9.2	11.5	0.0	6.2
Confrontational protests	0.0	1.4	7.9	0.0	12.3	3.8	44.4	9.2
Violent acts	8.7	4.3	14.2	9.1	6.2	38.5	0.0	8.8
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N=	23	70	113	22	65	26	27	273

* includes all asylum-seekers, even cases where a national or ethnic label was also given

+ category includes national or ethnic groups from Indian subcontinent: 'Bangladeshis', 'Pakistanis', 'Bengalis', 'Indians' and 'Sikhs'

Table 6: 'Addressees': Actors addressed by minority claims, 1990-1996

	Black (African-Caribbean)	Muslim	Other Indian Subcontinent*	All Minority
Supranational institutions (EU, Allied Coalition)	-	15.0	-	1.8
Foreign governments	-	-	4.5	2.9
National/local government	6.9	25.0	18.2	22.2
National/local legislative and political parties	-	-	13.6	4.7
Judiciary	19.0	5.0	-	9.9
Police and security agencies	43.1	5.0	40.9	29.8
State institutions	5.2	20.0	4.5	6.4
State institutions for minorities/migrants (e.g. CRE)	-	15.0	-	3.5
Total state and party actors	**74.2**	**85.0**	**81.7**	**81.2**
Unions and professional organisations	3.4	5.0	4.5	6.4
Employers and business organisations	1.7	5.0	9.1	5.3
Other civil society organisations	20.7	5.0	4.5	7.1
Total	100.0%	100.0%	99.8%**	100.0%
N=	58	20	22	171
% of total demands with addressee	**82.9%**	**30.8%**	**52.4%**	**62.6%**

*   Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Bengali and Asian (i.e., All Indian Subcontinent with national, ethnic or racial identities minus six Indian and Sikh cases)
** less than 100.0% due to rounding

Table 7: Distribution of Types of Political Demands in Migration and Ethnic Relations Fields, 1990-1996

	Distribution of All Claims (%)	Valence of Non-minority actors' Claims (-1 to 1)	Distribution of All Minority claims (%)	All Minority claims/ All claims in fields (%)	Muslim (%)	Black (African-Caribbean) (%)	Other Subcontinent* (%)
Integration and Anti-discrimination Politics	**20.2**	**0.55**	**21.6**	**23.0**	**4.5**	**51.4**	**26.2**
Policy measures/implementation	10.2	0.67	7.6	16.3	-	15.7	14.3
Labour market/employment	3.7	0.66	5.5	31.9	1.5	10.0	7.1
Judicial system	1.9	0.93	3.7	41.7	1.5	10.0	2.4
Police law enforcement	4.4	0.07	4.8	23.2	1.5	15.7	2.4
Cultural Diversity and Group Politics	**11.8**	**0.00**	**27.5**	**50.0**	**67.7**	**7.1**	**11.9**
State repression of specific groups	2.7	-0.04	3.3	26.5	4.6	1.4	0.0
Cultural demands (religious equality, group rights)	6.4	0.08	15.8	52.4	47.7	4.3	4.8
Group expression of cultural identity	2.7	-0.18	8.4	67.7	15.4	1.4	7.1
Anti-racist and Xenophobic Politics	**27.9**	**0.33**	**25.3**	**19.5**	**6.1**	**37.2**	**54.7**
Police racism (abuse and violence)	2.8	0.50	6.9	54.3	3.1	11.4	16.6
Judiciary/Politicians' racism (abuse)	3.6	0.38	3.3	19.6	-	7.2	4.8
British societal racism/racist attitudes	11.8	0.59	9.2	16.7	1.5	11.4	19.0
Racial attacks/violence (diffuse)	3.6	-0.26	4.4	26.1	1.5	7.2	11.9
Extreme right/racist activism (organised)	6.1	0.12	1.5	5.1	-	-	2.4
Ethnic conflict (inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic – between minorities)	**0.7**	**0**	**2.9**	**88.8**	**10.8**	**0.0**	**2.4**
'Homeland' Politics	**1.3**	**0**	**5.1**	**82.4**	**10.8**	**0.0**	**2.4**
Immigration and Asylum Politics	**38.1**	**0.21**	**17.6**	**9.9**	**0.0**	**4.3**	**2.4**
Total	100%	0.31	100%	21.5%	99.9%	100%	100%
N	1269	996	273		65	70	42

* Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Bengali and Asian (i.e., All Indian Subcontinent with national, ethnic or racial identities minus six Indian and Sikh cases)

Valence score:
-1 = anti-minority/racist; 1 = pro-minority/anti-racist; 0 = neither pro- nor anti-minority/racist

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