



Muslims in the UK

The government's role in the rise of Islamophobia

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“[Islamophobia] refers to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs”

Runnymede Trust, 1997.

*To my family, for their patience and good humour,
To Clare Nimmo, for her guidance and encouragement,
And to Julian, my rock, my castle.*

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ABBREVIATIONS

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CV	Curriculum Vitae
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
MEND	Muslim Engagement and Development
MCB	Muslim Council of Britain
MP	Member of Parliament
NEET	[People] Not in Employment, Education or Training
[Tell]MAMA	Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks
UK	United Kingdom
UKIP	UK Independence Party

ABSTRACT

The British Muslim communities have decades-long histories in the UK, and have contributed in a significant number of ways to the post-WWII development of the country. However, the post-9/11 world has seen a sharp increase in Islamophobia in Western countries: the rise of ISIS, the refugee crisis and Brexit have compounded this problem in the UK, where a previously relatively well-integrated community is increasingly suffering discrimination, prejudice and violence in many aspects of their lives. As the UK becomes ever more multicultural, it is paramount to formulate a comprehensive plan to tackle possible areas of friction and guarantee the peaceful coexistence of all. The government has a key role to play in this process, but oftentimes it perpetuates and normalises institutional Islamophobia instead of fighting against it. How this affects wider social discourse surrounding Muslims and Islamophobia, and how the UK Muslim communities are fighting back, are also important aspects to understand if we are to comprehend how to create government policies that help us all.

KEYWORDS

United Kingdom, Islam, Islamophobia, racism, integration, multiculturalism.

RESUMEN

Las comunidades musulmanas tienen una larga historia en Reino Unido, y contribuyeron de manera significativa a la reconstrucción del país tras la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Sin embargo, tras el 11 de Septiembre ha habido un aumento de la islamofobia en los países occidentales. En Reino Unido el ascenso de ISIS, la crisis de refugiados y Brexit han empeorado la situación para los musulmanes británicos, que ahora se enfrentan a discriminación, prejuicios y violencia en muchos aspectos de sus vidas. El cambio demográfico al que se enfrenta Reino Unido aumentará aún más la diversidad cultural y étnica del país, y es por lo tanto imperante formular un plan detallado para poder afrontar el futuro. El gobierno tiene un papel clave en la elaboración de este plan de convivencia social, pero muchas veces es responsable de perpetuar y normalizar Islamofobia institucional. Conocer como afecta esto a la opinión pública y como luchan contra la discriminación institucional las comunidades musulmanas británicas es de máxima importancia a la hora de elaborar políticas que beneficien a todos.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Reino Unido, Islam, islamofobia, racismo, integración, multiculturalismo.

1 INTRODUCTION

When Tory MP Enoch Powell made his Rivers of Blood speech in 1968, it incited hate crimes against people of colour and migrant communities in several cities in the UK (The Times, 1968). The nature of the speech – on immigration and the future of British society and culture – was xenophobic and racist in the extreme, and it demonstrated the stronghold of such views in British politics. The decision of BBC Radio 4 to re-broadcast said speech in April 2018 therefore drew sharp criticism across the board: it was seen as lending freedom of speech to the white nationalist cause (The Guardian, 2018) by viewing racism as a distant, neutral phenomenon. However, it is an error to believe that the UK is a post-racial, post-racist society: xenophobia and racial prejudice are still very much part of British society today (Cabinet Office, 2017). Recent events like Brexit and the refugee crisis have stoked populist and ethno-nationalist discourses, and there is evidence of a worrying ongoing normalisation of such opinions in British society (Gayle, 2018). Muslims bear the brunt of this new found racist élan: there are around 7,000 Islamophobic hate crimes committed every year (Muslim Council of Britain, 2015). What is the role of the government in all of this? Has it moved beyond the Rivers of Blood mindset, or does it still promote racist and xenophobic views?

1.1 AIM OF THE PROJECT

The **aim** of this dissertation is to analyse how governments and official bodies can have a preeminent role in normalising and furthering discrimination of a certain social group and how that affects the wider social discourse and public opinion. The case chosen for this dissertation will be the Muslim community in the UK, due to its pre-existing Muslim community and the rise of Islamophobia in the country. The focus of this project is thus not on the root causes of the UK's Islamophobia and racism, but on how governments can promote and normalise these types of discrimination through their policies and actions. The two key concepts in this dissertation will be **institutional racism** (from the government and official structures) versus **social racism** (of the society at large). This project ultimately seeks to understand how the fight for a multicultural society within a European country can be further expanded to the rest of Europe.

1.2 MOTIVATION

Since 2015, the European refugee crisis has seen the biggest refugee influx into Europe since the end of the Second World War (UNHCR, 2016). Although it is imperative to find short-term solutions to this situation that guarantee the safety and regularisation of refugees, the long-term effects must also be considered. With an aging population and a new wave of young refugees and migrants incoming, Europe is on the brink of a demographic change (European Environment Agency, 2016). As the continent becomes more multicultural than ever, it is paramount to formulate a comprehensive plan to tackle possible areas of friction and guarantee the peaceful coexistence of all.

The rise of global Islamic extremism and the economic crisis of 2009 have intensified xenophobia and islamophobia throughout the world, and Europe is no exception (Gayle, 2018). The global Muslim community as a whole has been blamed for the actions of a radical offshoot of Sunni Wahhabism, itself a small segment of the total Muslim population. The economic crisis also gave rise to different forms of populism, nationalism and extreme-right political movements, like UKIP in the UK and the French Front National, amongst others. Nowadays there are far-right nationalistic parties in most European Union countries as well as in the US (Goodwin, 2011). These parties have accrued power and influence in the political landscape through wielding demagogic anti-Muslim and anti-immigration rhetoric. The refugee crisis has worsened this social divide and stoked the flames of racist groups who seek to further their own agenda. In the case of the UK, Brexit has only added to these social divides.

It is our steadfast belief that the future of the European Union lies in diversity, not in outdated racist notions of a 'white Europe'. The survival of democracy and the rule of law calls – as mentioned above – for a comprehensive approach to social integration and the eradication of any and all forms of discrimination. We believe the government plays a unique and paramount role in securing said social integration and reducing discrimination. However, many times, individual actors within the government and the entire system itself normalise – and even champion – discrimination and damaging attitudes towards cultural and social diversity. A study of the role of the British government has had regarding the spread of Islamophobia can serve both as a

cautionary tale and as a roadmap of what to avoid when building cohesive and peaceful societies, particularly applicable to Europe's multicultural future.

1.3 HYPOTHESIS

The main hypothesis of this dissertation is that **there has been an increase in nationalistic and Islamophobic sentiment in the UK due to the policies and attitudes of the government.** This dissertation will explore if and how a government and individuals within that government can, through policies and actions, influence public opinion and social discourse to a point where it fosters and normalises Islamophobia and other prejudiced behaviour.

1.4 OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This dissertation will have 4 initial objectives that will serve as the starting point of research:

- **Explore what the integration of Muslim communities in the UK looks like.** What is the situation of these communities in terms of various socio-economic markers (employment, education, access to benefits...)? Are there any overarching themes or conclusions drawn from the analysis that can add to the conversation about multiculturalism in Europe?
- **Analyse the effect government policies and initiatives have on the Muslim communities.** What government programmes and initiatives include and take into account the Muslim experience? How can we tell which government policies were useful and beneficial, and which were not?
- **Study the wider social discourse surrounding Muslims in Britain.** How do individual actors influence this discourse? What can anti-racist and pro-Muslim individuals and organisations do to fight Islamophobia?
- **Understand how pre-existing Muslim communities have coped with the increase of Islamophobia.** What are the initiatives, programmes, and community engagement strategies that have developed in response to the increase in xenophobic and Islamophobic abuses? It is important to note that this line of questioning does not imply that the Muslim communities are

responsible for ending these attacks – they are caused by a structurally racist, xenophobic society – but rather indicates what strategies they have used to mitigate their effects within the community.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study will primarily be that of an **analytical case study**, and thus we will apply **analytical methodology**. The bulk of the study will be data analysis of a series of cultural and societal markers that can be measured and studied in the Muslim communities in the UK since 2011 (when the last Census was undertaken). This timeframe was chosen – 2011-2017 – primarily because of the availability of data and statistics, but also because it encompasses the refugee crisis (2015-present) and the surge of nationalistic and white supremacist political parties and groups (UKIP, English Defence League).

Due to the length and scope of this dissertation it will not be possible to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the topic. We will instead focus on 3 factors:

- Hate crimes against the Muslim communities.
- Rate and level of schooling and employment (university population, average hourly pay and unemployment).
- Degree of institutional support (benefits, access to social housing).

Therefore, this study should not be considered a complete and definitive exploration of Muslim communities and Islamophobia in the UK, but an addition to an area of study that the author believes will become acutely relevant in the years to come, as Europe (and the UK) faces a demographic change of a scale unheard of since WWII.

The **first part of this dissertation** will draw on theoretical and academic sources to delineate the framework for later analysis, drawing from different schools of social thought and theories. It is important to note that the dissertation will be undertaken paying the utmost attention to intersectionality. According to Kimberlé Crenshaw (2016), intersectionality is not an analysis of identity, but about how societal structures make certain identities the vehicle for vulnerability.

The dissertation will follow an analytical methodology for the **second part of the dissertation** – the state of the issue – studying and analysing statistical data and primary sources such as official documents by the UK government, NGOs, and civil society organisations, and secondary sources such as journalistic articles and interviews with individuals relevant to the area of study. Data and sources collected by institutions and organisations related to the communities under study will be prioritised, although data

and statistics from a national and community level will also be used to give a more comprehensive picture. This descriptive analysis of the sources and data available will allow a hermeneutically innovative approach to the overlaying issues and relationships of power present in the data.

The **third and final part of the dissertation**, the analysis, will use the previously studied data to try and prove or disprove the initial hypothesis, drawing from the theoretical groundwork developed earlier in the dissertation and from the contextualisation done in the state of the issue.

The **sources** chosen for the dissertation will be in English, and occasionally in Spanish and French, prioritising sources in their original language with the aim of reducing the possibility of errors and misunderstandings.

Due to the nature of the data available for analysis, there are a number of potentially **problematic points** that need to be addressed: the data used will rely heavily on the 2011 Census, with most data distributed across race and not religion. This can be a problem when trying to extrapolate data to Muslim communities since neither race nor ethnicity denote affiliation to a particular religious group. This is why we have chosen to focus on Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslims, as they represent a majority group that can be used as a paradigm of the British Muslim experience. Both ethnicities are often grouped together in official statistics and surveys, and both communities are more than 90% Muslim (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Furthermore, together they represent more than half of the UK Muslim population (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Regarding geographical area, this dissertation will focus on England and Wales, as there is more data available and the British Muslim population is concentrated in those two countries, although certain figures for Northern Ireland and Scotland will be mentioned on occasion. Even if discrepancies in data parameters and results are thus possible, it is our belief that the data provided will be sufficient to extrapolate the situation of the median British Muslim, and explore the role of the British government in promoting Islamophobia

In order to acknowledge the heterogeneity of the Muslim experience in the UK we will follow Gilliat-Ray's (2010) example by referring to 'Muslim communities' in plural form.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to contextualise and buttress our later analysis, we will explore three highly interconnected terms which are key to the discussion of Muslim integration in the UK, and the role the government has had in it: multiculturalism, integration, and racism. Within each concept we will look at its origins, main proponents, and criticisms that have shaped its definition and prevalence in contemporary discourse.

3.1 MULTICULTURALISM

In this first section we will give a brief definition of multiculturalism, its origins, and how it relates to common definitions of culture. Then, we will explore the main criticisms multiculturalism has faced throughout the years, and how that has informed the current debate surrounding multicultural policies in a globalised world.

Multiculturalism as a concept has been explored by various branches of the social sciences. We focus here on the two most relevant to our later analysis: political philosophy and sociology. According to Rattansi (2011), the former is preoccupied with how multiculturalism – with its emphasis on ethnic groups and cultural continuums – fits in the highly individualised society of Western democracies; whereas the latter is more concerned with the actual makeup of ethnic groups and the characteristics of interethnic relationships.

‘Multiculturalism’ began to gain widespread attention in political academic circles in the late 1960s and early 1970s when Canada and Australia undertook a series of reforms to their immigration system. Up until then these systems had been ‘white’, but these changes in policy began relaxing controls on non-white immigration (Opperman, 1966) and increasing cultural diversity in the host countries. This resulted in an influx of immigrants to Western countries whose culture and ethnicity had such differences to the host culture that they could not be seamlessly integrated (like previous European migrants had been). At the same time, assimilation was increasingly being seen as an unjust and denigrating practice (Rattansi, 2011). Multiculturalism as it began to be understood was a call to strengthen cultural diversity and the reciprocal

exchange between both cultures. According to the social sciences tradition, culture has a set of broad characteristics that shape intercultural discourse and relationships:

Culture is a set of values, beliefs and assumptions that influence our thoughts, behaviours and traditions: culture is learnt [not inherent]; cultural boundaries are not clear; [...] we all have multiple identities; we belong to different groups, every group has a different culture [...] and no group has only one culture; cultural ways of being also vary over time and context. (Hogan, 2007, p. 1-2)

The ratio of exchange between cultures that needs to take place in order for a multicultural society to work remains a matter of debate to this day, and it depends on what cultural characteristics the host society deems more intrinsic to their identity.

Emphasis on difference and plurality is paramount when studying multicultural policies and its effects on society. As we will see later on, one of the main criticisms of multiculturalism is that it pigeonholes minorities into categories that misrepresent them by failing to acknowledge this plurality of identities (Malik, 2010). Tied to this concept of difference, Modood (2006) argues that “our basic concept of civil rights or civic equality has been supplemented by the concept of equality as ‘difference’, by the right to have one’s ‘difference’ recognised and supported in the public sphere” (p. 39).

3.1.1 Multiculturalism in a critical light

In the following decades since multiculturalism appeared in the political sphere, there has been growing concern over certain elements and how they have been implemented. There are several criticisms levelled against multiculturalism: its effacing of the individual for the sake of the group (Parekh, 2005), the isolation of groups into distinct categories, and its potential for cultural relativity. Furthermore, its absorption into the framework of liberal policies caused friction with critical theorists because it engaged with issues of social discrimination and the integration of immigrant communities while doing nothing to challenge the causes of this racism and discrimination (Husband, 2003; Rattansi, 2011).

The main criticism against multiculturalism is its tendency to restructure society into clear-cut boxes of ethnic or cultural groups. The debate is viewed in academic circles as the ‘fruit salad/salad bowls’ problem (Rattansi, 2011; Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK, n.d.), which asks whether multicultural societies should be made up of individual

and separate parts, or recognised as a two-way street where both cultures experience change, and the result is therefore more than the sum of its parts. Rattansi (2011) emphasises that the vision of multiculturalism as isolating communities (i.e. in ghettos, schools and other areas of social life) responds more to the decline of the welfare state and national sovereignty in the globalised world, than to multicultural policies. However, it is important to point out that 'cultural essentialism' (Rattansi, 2011) – considering identities as monolithic – is inaccurate and dangerous.

Another criticism of multiculturalism is that the rigid understanding of identities can also lead to cultural relativism, as government officials and cultural commentators alike misunderstand the multicultural tenet of respecting other cultures with an apparent ban on critiquing any aspect of said culture (Cameron, 2011). Alibhai-Brown (2000) addresses this by stating that although different cultures must be valued, the recognition and respect for their traditions and values can never be put above respect for human rights. For example, although certain cultures in Africa, Asia and the Middle East still practice female genital mutilation (FGM), this cultural tradition must be eliminated because it infringes upon the victim's human rights and personal integrity (UNICEF, 2016). Other times, the distinction between what should be tolerated in a multicultural community and what should be phased out is not so clear: the ongoing debate regarding religious head coverings used by Muslim women is a clear example of this.

In conclusion, the debate on the merits and faults of multiculturalism is entering a new phase: it is undeniable that the rise of Islamic terrorism and the economic crisis have crippled the multicultural agenda (Rattansi, 2011) and lessened the legitimacy of multicultural policies (Malik, 2010). The future of multiculturalism has been further brought into question by the rise of ethno-nationalism and populism, with governments struggling to justify the need for such policies. Some authors (Rattansi, 2011; Alibhai-Brown, 2000; Wood & Henry, 2008) claim the time has come to look beyond multiculturalism to 'interculturalism'. While conceptually similar to multiculturalism, interculturalism emphasises intercultural exchange rather than a mere celebration of difference. Interculturalist policies need to come from a context-centred approach (Modood, Triandafyllidou & Zapata-Barrero, 2006). Although similarities can be made between different countries' experiences in multiculturalism, the unique demographic

makeup of individual states and the plurality of identities need to be taken into account to formulate intercultural solutions that are useful and efficient.

3.2 ASSIMILATION V. INTEGRATION

Multicultural policies rely heavily on social integration, an approach which permits migrant communities to retain cultural aspects of their origin countries while at the same time incorporating aspects of the host culture. This is a relatively new approach that substituted assimilationist approaches. In this section we will explore the two concepts (assimilation and integration), exposing the fallacies of assimilationist thinking and how integration addresses underlying aspects of social structure and debates on the nature of societies.

3.2.1 Assimilation

In its simplest definition, assimilation “argues that a society cannot be cohesive and stable unless its members share a common national culture” (Parekh, 2005, p. 5). In the context of immigration, this means that immigrants coming into a host country must take on all cultural characteristics of the host culture, and let go of any remains or loyalty of their previous culture. If they do not do this, they cannot be accepted as full and equal citizens and thus will be rejected from society.

This approach was the *de facto* immigration policy throughout Western countries since the beginning of colonialism, and especially in the 19th and 20th centuries. A widely used example is the United States: a huge influx of European migrants in the last decades of the 19th century and first decades of the 20th century inadvertently created a multicultural, multiethnic society, and the ‘Americanisation movement’ was created to bring these immigrants into American culture (Barrett, 1998). Cultural elements from origin countries and cultures were forcibly repressed. The post-WWII influx of immigrants from former colonies into Europe caused governments to use similar methods to the ones employed in the US.

Assimilation is often conflated with the term ‘acculturation’, and although they are very similar in definition, acculturation implies political and military dominance to change the culture of a previously-existing culture (i.e. Native Americans and the

expansion of the United States) (Rudmin, 2003), whereas assimilation is most often used for migrants coming into the host society and being made to abandon their previous culture to integrate into the host society (i.e. Muslim migrants to Europe).

In truth, the supposed 'homogeneous and thus harmonious' society that assimilationist policies seek is a twofold illusion: first of all, the belief that it is human nature to reject those who are different is untrue, as there have been countless examples throughout history of interethnic, intercultural and interreligious exchange, and societies where multiple groups with different identities peacefully cohabited¹. Secondly, the belief that immigrants will be fully accepted into society when they let go of any outside cultural influence is also untrue: there has been widespread and continued discrimination towards migrant groups even in the case of extreme assimilationism, such as in the case of Irish and Italian immigrants the US (McClymer, 1980). This is in part due to a conflation of foreign cultures with non-white races into a unique 'other' that encompasses all persons who are non-white and non-Christian (and even then, who is understood as 'white' can vary²).

The truth of the matter is that assimilationist policies in Western countries operate on a base of white protectionism and supremacy that bars people of colour from being thought of as equals, no matter the level of assimilation (Barrett, 1992). Furthermore, assimilation often followed a hierarchical understanding of races and religions (Lacroix, 2015), and demonstrated an "obsession with moral and cultural uniformity [which] springs from and leads to a deep suspicion of moral and cultural differences" (Parekh, 2005, p. 6).

As multicultural policies became more common in the late 20th century, compounded with civil rights movements in the US and in Europe and increasing progressive social changes, assimilationist policies began to lose favour with governments. Policymakers increasingly understood that cultural plurality did not spell a descent into social chaos and the dissolution of national identity, but could in fact favour the nation (if appropriate steps were taken) (Rattansi, 2011).

¹ Examples of this include the Roman Empire, Al-Andalus and the Mongol Empire.

² The evolution of whiteness in the US is a good example: Irish and Italian immigrants were not considered white until the 20th century (McClymer, 1980).

3.2.2 Integration

On the other side of the spectrum from assimilation lies integration. The main difference between the two is that integration allows the migrant or minority group to retain elements of their culture, instead of discarding them for the majority or host culture. Of course, the minority does adopt cultural norms and practices of the majority culture, but in turn it adds to the existing culture elements of the minority culture (Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK, n.d.). It is understandably preferred by immigrant communities, as it ensures the continued existence of a definite cultural identity when it is not part of the majority.

Integration is a key element of multiculturalism, as it allows for the peaceful coexistence of different cultures within a society: following this, cultural minority groups play a major role as “vehicles of integration” (Rattansi, 2011, p. 8). In practice, the use of the term ‘multiculturalism’ began to be phased out due to the problems and criticisms detailed before, and ‘integration’ gained traction amongst politicians and sociologists alike (Rattansi, 2011).

Following Rattansi’s account of integration, there are three distinct categories into which integration policies might be classified. These categories are not dependent on one another, that is, existence of a certain level of integration in one of these does not mean there is correlating integration in the others. The three levels are: spatial (i.e. residential patterns of migrant communities and distribution throughout the national territory); structural (i.e. access and level of education, labour conditions and unemployment rates); and cultural (i.e. shared values with the host culture, religious practices and household languages).

This recognition that integration and its processes are multidimensional has been reiterated in several official documents by the British government, such as the 2001 *Integration: Mapping the Field* report (and its subsequent iterations), and the *Parekh Report* (also called the Commission for Multi-Ethnic Britain report). The main aspects analysed in this thesis are structural and cultural (per Rattansi’s system), but more closely follow the *Integration: Mapping the Field* report, which distinguished five major themes in the process of integration: “general issues, adult education, training and employment, health, and housing” (Fyvie, Ager, Curley & Korac, 2003).

3.3 RACISM

To further contextualise the following analysis, in this section we will briefly explore a bicephalous definition of racism: on the one hand, social (or informal) racism, and, on the other, institutional racism. They are two sides of the same coin: social racism is bolstered and in turn bolsters institutional racism, creating between them a racist society with pervasive and ubiquitous overt and covert racism by the white population and the white socio-political and economic institutions. As Shukla (2016) points out, an awareness of race is indeed inescapable, because these institutions were made by and for a white society (more accurately, white men, as women also suffer this kind of social and institutional discrimination), to the exclusion and detriment of everyone else. The use of 'white' here is deliberate because the mechanisms and prejudices that form contemporary racism were born out of colonialism and imperialism, which was overwhelmingly carried out by European powers.

There has been some epistemological debate on what, exactly, constitutes race and where the line between racism and xenophobia lies (Butler, 1990). For the purposes of this analysis we will use Butler's exploration of race, which goes beyond phenotypical characteristics such as colour of the skin, hair, eyes, and so on to include social and cultural characteristics, including, most prominently, religion. According to Butler, all of these characteristics are arbitrary, and expose the retroactive nature of racism: "a set of fears and anxieties emerges, a name is retroactively and arbitrarily attached to those fears and anxieties" (Butler, 2000, p. 26). In other words, there is no preternatural or objective definition of race because it is a human construct made to classify the world into definite parameters. Therefore, the two pillars of racism we will study in the next section must be understood as the real consequences and implications of a concept that has been brought into existence by an elite, and not a reflection of inherent human nature.

Traditional notions of racism run very close to discussions about what constitutes race and ethnicity, as well as nationality and citizenship (Rattansi, 2007). Throughout the analysis in this dissertation we will explore how racism applies to the experience of Muslim immigrants in the UK, who experience this 'otherness' created by racism not only due to their ethnicity but also religion and cultural elements, three

aspects which are separately analysable and the combination of which varies depending on the individual.

3.3.1 Social

Apart from institutional racism, there is the more widespread 'social' or 'informal' racism, perpetrated by members of the majority culture or host country, and against which state's policies can do woefully little. Parekh (2005) argues that even when laws and institutions have efficient anti-discrimination policies and working enforcement mechanisms, society can disregard those laws in everyday life with impunity in the majority of cases. The myriad of ways social racism is embedded into everyday life creates a system of pervasive belittlement, humiliation and resentment towards the cultural majority. Parekh claims that without widespread societal action racism can remain prevalent in a society even when its laws and institutions are not racist in themselves. However, Parekh's thinking is inherently flawed, as institutions are human constructions that reflect the values and mores of the society they govern, and so it would be extremely rare to find a genuinely racism-free institution governing a racist society. Even though the wording of laws might itself be racially neutral, they are surrounded by a series of structures and systems that are nonetheless racist, and so perpetuate racism in society irrespective of the wording of the law.

Experiences of non-white people are 'othered' because white experience is seen as universal (Shukla, 2016). 'Race blindness' is not an option for people of colour, because their experiences are underpinned by the reality of living and operating in a society where white is seen as the norm, and they the exception (Mills, 1997). Racist social interactions are thus sometimes difficult to identify and denounce, because they are seen as natural and logical (much in the same way that discrimination against women has historically been commonplace and overlooked). Indifference and fear of losing social status stop many onlookers from denouncing racist attacks, even if they do not participate in them (Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967), and overlook microaggressions as fabrications of the 'other' and not actual events. In cases of more overt racist attacks, it is easy to denounce and condemn such acts because they are seen as the individual acts of one person, not as the reflection of a wider system that encourages such acts

(Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967). Social racism is thus pervasive, insidious and ubiquitous, and feeds and is fed by institutional racism.

3.3.2 Institutional

Institutional racism was a term coined by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, Black Power and civil rights activists, contemporaries of Angela Davies and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who fought against racial segregation and discrimination. They understood racism as a multidimensional system that affected all areas of life. Institutional racism was the system by which the Black population – no matter their starting point in life – had less rights, liberties and opportunities (i.e. education, housing, standards of living, employment, incarceration rate, representation in seats of power...). The system was inherently against them, and continually put them at a disadvantage compared to their white peers (Carmichael & Stokely, 1967). By the definition used by the Black Power movement, institutional racism is more insidious and undetectable than overt acts of racism, which are easily condemned because they engage in outright violence (Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967). Institutional racism is thus the series of structures and policies that discriminate and disadvantage non-white people, all by maintaining a veneer of objectivity and impartiality (similar to Butler's exploration on the creation of racism discussed above). Historically, arbitrarily assigned racial characteristics have been used in conjunction with faulty analyses of class and gender (amongst others) to exclude segments of the population (i.e. non-white people, poor people and women) from being full citizens or obtaining the rights and liberties awarded to rich white men (Rattansi, 2017).

Throughout this analysis we will base our exploration of institutional (and social) racism in the UK through statistics and data. This method of studying racism through data was pioneered by W.E.B. Du Bois, an American civil rights scholar who first used markers such as education, occupation, illiteracy and wealth to measure the breadth and the scope of racism in the United States (Chalabi, 2017). Nowadays, it is sufficiently established that there is a strong enough correlation between race and class that any analysis of race and racism has to take into account the socioeconomic factors of said group.

Institutional racism is present in all Western societies, and as mentioned above, it forms a feedback loop with social racism, creating a society that is racist, and many times utterly unaware or indifferent to it. The treatment of British Muslims is an example of how institutional racism disadvantages minorities and creates circumstances and situations which further racist stereotypes, which are later taken as truths by individuals in the implementation of social racism, which in turn influences policymakers and those in institutions, *ad nauseam*. Racism, in this respect, makes itself true.

4 STATE OF THE ISSUE

In this section of the dissertation we will provide a brief account of the Muslim communities in Britain, starting with their growth and evolution in the 20th century, and mentioning key characteristics and statistics of these communities today. We will then focus on three areas that will help contextualise and direct the later analysis: hate crimes against Muslim communities, rate and level of schooling and employment, and degree of institutional support. It is important to keep in mind the intersectionality of oppression when looking at any kind of data surrounding British Muslims, because they face a dual challenge: they are discriminated against not only because of their religion but also because of their race³. Therefore, the data we will explore here not only reflects the increase in Islamophobia in recent years but also the long history of racism present in British culture.

4.1 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF MUSLIMS IN THE UK

4.1.1 History of Muslim immigration to the UK in the 20th century

When WWII ended, a debilitated United Kingdom was not able to maintain its remaining colonies abroad (which had begun to shrink following WWI), and pro-independence and anti-colonial movements began to gain relevance and political power. The British Empire began to morph into a ‘Commonwealth of Nations’, an international structure created by the British in a bid to maintain control over their former colonies (Srinivasan, 2006). Another result of WWII was the mass immigration that responded to labour shortages and the post-WWII rebuilding process and the development of the manufacturing sector (La Barbera, 2014). Scores of immigrants from former colonies began to arrive to the UK. This was helped by the Nationality Act of 1948, which granted former colonial subjects the right to live and work in the UK without being subjected to immigration control (Migration Watch UK, 2018). This, alongside

³ Very often racism and religious discrimination also intersect with classism and other types of discrimination (such as ageism, ableism, and gender and sexuality discrimination). We will see aspects of some of them throughout the dissertation.

India's partition in 1947, prompted the first wave of mass Muslim migration to the UK, mainly from the Indian subcontinent: Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indian Muslims⁴.

There were two main waves of immigration: first were unaccompanied males from rural areas who came to Britain due to the demand for low-skilled labour in the industrial sector, although there were vacancies for skilled labour (such as NHS posts⁵) that were also filled overwhelmingly by immigrants (Butler, 2008). Although initially economic temporary migrants, changing circumstances in their countries of origin and a tightening of immigration controls in the UK accelerated family reunification in the late 1960s and 1970s (Gilliat-Ray, 2010). In its majority, Muslim migrants concentrated in urban areas such as London and other industrial towns (Modood, 2006). For the early migrants and the families that followed, religion was often seen more as a way to maintain and build communities than a purely spiritual endeavour (Mondal, 2008).

4.1.2 Muslims in the UK now

There have always been statistical problems regarding Muslims in the UK. This is in part due to the misleading practice of equalling religion with ethnicity, which makes numbers swell and drop, as well as the questions used to calculate these statistics. As far back as 1981 a study of Muslims in Europe pointed out that the estimate for the UK was by far the most inaccurate in Europe as a whole, with a margin of error of 20% (Nielsen, 1981). This should be taken into account regarding the following data, but nevertheless does not represent such a deviation as to make the analysis unusable.

The UK is the European Union country with the third most Muslims (Modood, 2006). According to the 2011 Census, Muslims are the **largest religious minority** in the whole of the UK and in each of the four countries (Weller & Cheruvallil-Contractor, 2015). The Pew Research Center (2017) estimates that Muslim population in the UK could increase to 13 million by 2050⁶ due to the fact that the UK is the preferred destination for regular Muslim migrants, and the current refugee influx is set to decrease

⁴ During the 20th century most Pakistani immigrants to the UK came from the Mirpur region, while immigrants from Bangladesh overwhelmingly came from the Sylhet region (Striking Women, n.d.; Gilliat-Ray, 2010).

⁵ It is estimated that more than 18,000 doctors from India and Pakistan came to Britain in the 1960s (Butler, 2008).

⁶ See Table 1.

in the following years. As of the 2011 Census, Muslims made up around 4.8% of the total population, with the highest percentage of Muslims living in England (5%) (MCB, 2015). The count in 2011 was 2.71 million Muslims (MCB, 2015), although the number had increased to 4.13 million by 2016 (Pew Research Center, 2017). Nevertheless, almost half (47%) of Muslims living in the UK were born there (MCB, 2015)⁷.

In terms of **concentration by local authority**, the highest concentration of Muslims⁸ is in London, in the boroughs of Tower Hamlets (34.5%) and Newham (32%) (MEND, 2017). The geographical concentration of Muslims in the UK – especially at the local level – is interesting in that it indicates how religious minorities and social class interact in British society, but due to the length of the dissertation it will not be possible to explore this conflux further.

As mentioned in the introduction, the **ethnic makeup** of the Muslim population of the UK is incredibly diverse, although more than two-thirds (68%) is Asian. Of that 68%, 38% is Pakistani, and almost 15% is Bangladeshi. The next biggest ethnic group is Black African (7.7%) and Indian (7.3%) (MCB, 2015). The **age profile** of UK Muslims is younger than the UK population average, with the median age being 24 as opposed to 40 in the overall population (MCB, 2015). British Muslims of 24 years of age and younger are represented in a higher proportion than the overall population, but their representation dips significantly in the over 65 age group. This suggests that British Muslims have a lower life expectancy than the overall population. This is due to a series of factors that will be explored later on.

Although numbers are not conclusive, it is estimated that the overwhelming majority of British Muslims are Sunni (75%), while only 8% are Shia (El-Menouar, 2017). There are also other minority denominations present, such as Salafi (3.8%) and Ahmadiyya (1%) (Staetsky, 2017). According to official government data, most mosques in the UK are run by Bangladeshi and Pakistani congregations (Naqshbandi, 2017).

⁷ See Figure 1.

⁸ See Figure 2.

4.2 HATE CRIME AGAINST THE MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

4.2.1 Negative view of Muslims

According to Home Office data, there has been a steady increase in hate crimes in England and Wales in the last few years: from 2015 to 2017 religious hate crimes have increased by 35%, and race related hate crimes by 27% (O'Neill, 2017). Although not all religious and racially motivated hate crimes are against Muslims, the Muslim communities still bear the brunt of racial and religious hatred in the country: there are around 20 hate crimes against Muslims per day, almost 7,000 a year (Cabinet Office, 2017). In the analysis section of the dissertation we will go into more depth regarding the reasons why the hate crime rate against Muslims is on the increase, and how media depictions of Muslims and education on Muslim customs and multiculturalism can affect these statistics, as well as the main groups inflicting and combating Islamophobia. This section will be limited to a brief exploration of the main trends and paradigmatic Muslim hate crimes that have occurred in the past few years.

As mentioned above, there has been an increase in religious and racial hate crimes in the past few years. The sharpest increase was in the 2015-2016 period – the height of the refugee crisis and the first ISIS attacks on Europe – when anti-Muslims attacks in London alone rose by 33.7% (MEND, 2017).

Media coverage of Muslims may play a big role in how the religion and those who practice it are perceived by the overall population. According to a recent study, for every moderate reference to Islam in the media, there are 21 negative ones (Baker et al., 2013). Surveys on public opinion about Muslims are similarly negative: 6 in 10 British people believe that Islam is incompatible with British culture (MEND, 2017), and only one in four has a positive view of Islam.

This view of Muslims and Islam as inherently problematic and always in opposition to 'the West' has been prevalent in the post-9/11 world, where theses such as 'the clash of civilisations' have nurtured racial prejudice and incorrect views about Muslims and Islam throughout the world (Morey & Yaqin, 2011). The rise of ISIS and its subsequent attacks in Europe and the UK have further deteriorated and polarised social discourse surrounding Muslims: the UK was the target of four terrorist attacks perpetrated by ISIS in 2017: two vehicle attacks (Westminster and London Bridge

attacks, in March and June respectively) and two bombings (the Manchester Arena and Parsons Green attacks, in May and September respectively) (Hayden, 2017). Brexit has also been a key event that reflected populist fears of the UK being in danger of losing control of immigration (Stewart & Mason, 2016). These events have all served as fuel to further populist, nationalist, and xenophobic discourses, groups, and political parties, especially in Europe (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010). The UK is no exception, and in the analysis we will explore how groups like the English Defence League and UKIP have fed from and augmented this environment of fear and mistrust of Muslims in the UK.

4.2.2 Islamophobic hate crime trends

It is impossible to know the true number of Islamophobic attacks in the UK since many of them go unreported (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010). Aside from the 7,000 *reported* Islamophobic attacks per year, in places like Nottingham one in three Muslims have suffered Islamophobic attacks, many of which are not reported to police (Embury-Dennis, 2018). Oftentimes, Muslim women bear the brunt of Islamophobic attacks as the use of different types of head coverings make them conspicuous targets for assault (BBC News, 2014). School and workplace discrimination against Muslims due to their faith is also considered a hate crime. The ubiquitousness of Islamophobic hate crimes is one of the main challenges facing British Muslims today.

Hate crimes which do not entail physical violence – spitting, verbal abuse and intimidation – constitute the majority of Islamophobic crimes (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010), but they form part of a wider chain of escalation of violence that includes grave desecration, destruction of private property (such as Muslim businesses, establishments, houses and mosques), arson, and physical assaults which can lead to murder (MEND, 2017).

Statistics show that Islamophobic attacks have surged in the aftermath of terrorist attacks as innocent Muslims are used as scapegoats and blamed for the actions of terrorists (MCB, 2018). All types of Islamophobic hate crimes increased in the 2016-2017 period, sometimes as much as by 250% (verbal intimidation and abuse). Furthermore, attacks on mosques went from 47 to 110 during this period (MCB, 2018).

Finally, acid attacks committed against randomly selected victims constitute a rising trend of Islamophobic hate crimes (Ismail, 2017).

The perpetrators of Islamophobic hate crimes often have links to far-right nationalist and white supremacist movements (Ismail, 2017). These types of movements were identified as one of the main threats to British society by The State of Hate report (2018) by the HOPE Not Hate organisation.

4.3 RATE AND LEVEL OF SCHOOLING AND EMPLOYMENT

In this next section we will take a brief look at two of the main statistical areas that will help us get a clearer view of the experiences of Muslim communities. These are schooling and employment. Within employment we will look at unemployment rates, the discrimination faced by British Muslims when they are seeking a job, poverty rates and average hourly rates, as well as the rate of higher education. As mentioned earlier in the dissertation, in this section (and the next one) we will look at the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities as paradigmatic of the Muslim experience in the UK. Most of the data used will be from the *Race Disparity Audit* undertaken by the Cabinet Office in 2017.

4.3.1 Unemployment, access to work and average hourly rate

Regarding unemployment, the Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnic groups had the highest unemployment rate out of all ethnic groups (11%) (Cabinet Office, 2017). Numbers have increased since the last census in 2011, when it was calculated that only 7.2% of Muslims were unemployed (MCB, 2015). Furthermore, Pakistani and Bangladeshi are also the two ethnic groups with the highest percentage of young NEET (not in employment, education or training) (Cabinet Office). White men are 76% more likely to be employed than their Muslim peers (Adesina & Marocico, 2017).

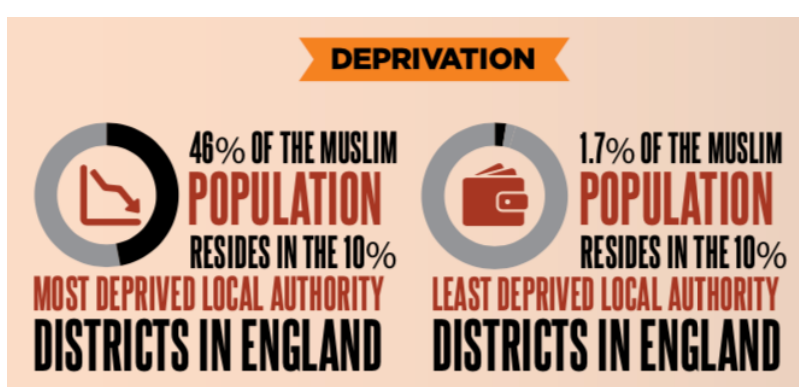
Although this is due to several factors, workplace discrimination and difficulty accessing the job market due to racism and religious discrimination is one of the main reasons for this high unemployment rate among British Muslims. This is due to the 'double penalty' British Muslims face upon entering the workforce: race *and* religion. Although there have been several policies implemented to try and reduce discrimination

in the workforce⁹, recent studies demonstrate that individuals with Muslim or Arabic names are less likely to be chosen for a job: based on the same CV, Muslim applicants were only called back 9% of the time, compared with 23% of white applicants (BBC, 2004).

Even when British Muslims have entered the workforce they still face discrimination, both in the form of workplace harassment and lower average hourly rates. This is more clearly a religious issue than a race one, as Indian employees – majority Hindu – earn around £15.81/hour (highest average hourly rate), while Bangladeshi and Pakistani employees only earn £11.42/hour (lowest average hourly rate) (Cabinet Office, 2017).

4.3.2 Poverty rate

The different ways Islamophobic discrimination affects Muslim communities is especially noticeable when looking at poverty and deprivation rates: almost half (46%) of British Muslim households live in the 10% most deprived areas of the country. In the latest Census, British Muslims were identified as being overrepresented in deprived neighbourhoods (MCB, 2015). Bangladeshi and Pakistani households were almost half as likely as Indian ones of earning £1,000 or more per month (Cabinet Office, 2017). Overall, the Muslim population is the subsection of society most likely to be at risk of poverty (MCB, 2015).



Source: Muslim Council of Britain.

⁹ The main anti-discrimination policies were the Employment Equality Religion or Belief Regulations in 2003 and the Equality Act in 2010, as well as programmes promoting name-blind applications for jobs and universities (Adesina & Marocico, 2017).

4.3.3 Higher education

Overall participation in further education (which includes vocational training as well as university degrees) has experienced a sharp drop in the last few years due to the economic crisis and cuts in education funding (Cabinet Office, 2017). Nevertheless, although all non-white ethnic groups do better at primary and secondary level education, entry into university is still overwhelmingly white: 77.1% of the university student population is white (Cabinet Office, 2017).

University education is one of the positive markers where the Muslim communities seem to be improving year on year. Rates of higher education have increased to the point where half of the Muslim population has attended university, compared to 38% of the overall population (MEND, 2017). However, Muslim students are still underrepresented in Russell Group universities (as are other minority ethnic groups) (Boliver, 2013). Muslims are also underrepresented when it comes to apprenticeships and other non-university higher education options (MCB, 2015). Ultimately, although the Muslim university student population is growing, this does not always translate to higher employment due to religious and racial discrimination, and when it does, the wage gap is another impediment to the advancement of Muslim people (Noden, Shiner & Modood, 2014).



Source: London Development Agency.

4.4 DEGREE OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In this final section, we will briefly touch upon two main indicators of the standard of living of Muslims in the UK: benefits and access to social housing. As with the previous section, the two groups studied will be Pakistani and Bangladeshi, and the data will come from the 2017 *Race Disparity Audit* by the Cabinet Office.

4.4.1 Benefits

Due to the age profile of ethnic minority groups, which tends to be younger than white age profiles, the majority of the income of ethnic minority groups (such as Bangladeshi and Pakistani) comes from employment (Cabinet Office, 2017). However, Pakistani and Bangladeshi households tended to receive high percentages of state support, including tax credits, income and non-income related benefits (Cabinet Office, 2017) (although they were seldom the ones with the highest percentages in any of these categories). The recent economic crisis and austerity programme has therefore hit these communities the hardest. However, it is interesting to point out that white households are the ethnic group most likely to receive any kind of state support, and that Bangladeshi and Pakistani households are below the average rate of state support receipt (Cabinet Office, 2017).

4.4.2 Access to social housing

Homelessness rates among the South Asian community are low: this might respond to tighter family and community networks and historically tighter controls on immigration, which made it easier for people with higher economic status to immigrate to the UK, as well as higher access to social housing among South Asian ethnic groups such as Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (Cabinet Office, 2017). However, definitions of statutory homelessness have been changed and the rates have subsequently decreased in recent years, but this does not reflect a real change in the living conditions of people sleeping rough or without a permanent residence, just a change in the parameters used to define them (Cabinet Office, 2017).

Regarding living conditions, the fact that Bangladeshi and Pakistani people are overrepresented in the most deprived areas of the country ties in with rates of non-

decent housing and overcrowding: 29% of Pakistani households live in non-decent conditions, and 30% of Bangladeshi households suffer from overcrowding (Cabinet Office, 2017). This matches up with the fact that the group most likely to access social housing following previous unsanitary living conditions was Bangladeshi (Cabinet Office, 2017).

Social housing occupancy and home ownership is where there is a marked difference between the two ethnic groups we have been studying: 42% of Bangladeshi households live in social housing, compared to only 11% of Pakistani ones (Cabinet Office, 2017). This is a staggering difference, which is repeated in house ownership: 41% of Pakistani households own their property (albeit with a mortgage), while only 9% of Bangladeshis do (MCB, 2015). This suggests a varying degree of use of the 'right to buy' policy¹⁰. Overall, Muslim households rent social housing at a higher percentage than the average for the UK population (15.5% to 9.4% in 2011) (MCB, 2015).

¹⁰ 'Right to buy' is a policy popularised by the Thatcher administration that gives tenants of council housing the right to buy, with a large discount, the property they reside in.

5 ANALYSIS

5.1 GOVERNMENT AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

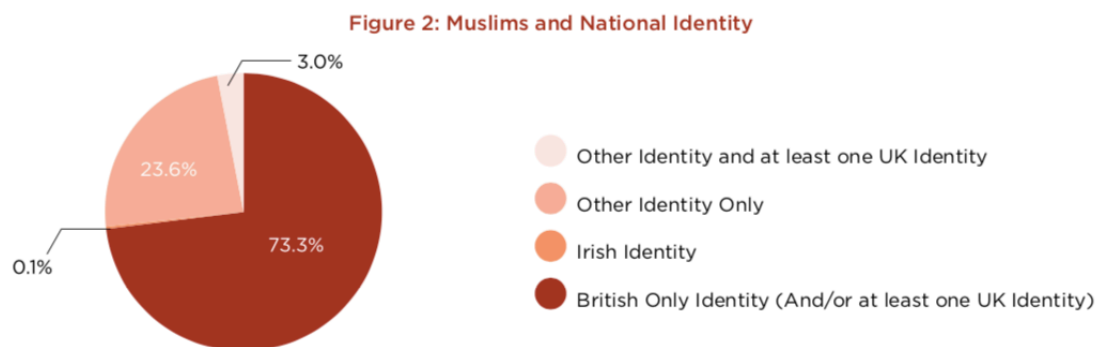
British Muslims face social and institutional racism in many aspects of their lives: the prevailing view of Muslims since the rise of Islamic extremism has made scapegoats of communities that are largely peaceful and in many cases have been in Western countries for decades. In the case of the UK, domestic terrorist attacks have intensified Islamophobic sentiment and actions. MEND (2017) uses the term 'chain of Islamophobia' to illustrate this vicious circle of discrimination and violence that is inflicted on the British Muslim community. Racist actions are usually carried out by individuals, but the state and government apparatus play a crucial role in enabling and fostering an environment where such acts are normalised (Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967) and the blame gets shifted from the perpetrator to the victim. Such acts of racism and discrimination become entrenched in the culture and institutions of the country, and in the case of Islamophobia, it enables the discrimination of Muslims in the workplace, in access to benefits or average hourly pay. Such types of discrimination are not isolated attacks against individuals, but the result of a system that is geared against a community.

In this section we will look at the role the British government plays in the spread and normalisation of Islamophobia, going from more abstract concepts such as national identity, citizenship and the path to integration, to more concrete ones such as anti-radicalisation policies, multiculturalism in the UK, and the 'hostile environment' immigration policy implemented by current Prime Minister Theresa May when she was Home Secretary from 2010 to 2016. A nation's response to religious diversity depends on its institutions and political arrangements (Koenig, 2015). What, then, has been the UK government's role in spreading or combating Islamophobia?

5.1.1 National identity, citizenship and Muslim integration

What constitutes national identity? What are the social prerequisites of citizenship? What role does religion play in both of these categories of social construction, and how do Muslims fit into them?

According to the MCB (2015), 73% of British Muslims feel exclusively British. Clearly, religious affiliation to Islam and ‘feeling British’ are not mutually exclusive for them. There is the increasing belief that people’s identities do not have to be monolithic, and that the intersection between different types of identity is beneficial to society as a whole (Gilliat-Ray, 2010). However, there appears to be a disconnect between how the majority of British Muslims think of themselves, and how the rest of society perceives them: as previously mentioned, over half of the British population (61%) believes British culture and Islam are not compatible (MEND, 2017)¹¹.



Source: Muslim Council of Britain.

This disconnect is because integration is ‘a two-way street’ (Kabir, 2010): there needs to be external recognition as well as internal belonging to ‘British identity’ in order for integration to succeed. But what is British identity? According to Parekh, “being British basically means three things: commitment to Britain and its people, loyalty to its legal and political institutions, and respect for the values and norms that are central to its way of life” (2007, p. 134). But, underlying and buttressing these basic tenets of Britishness, are two factors which we feel are at the crux of the difficulties experienced by British Muslims regarding integration and belonging: the ‘ethnic prerequisite’ and secularism.

The ‘**ethnic prerequisite**’ of British national identity, where traditionally only white Anglo-Saxons were considered British (Gilliat-Ray, 2010) is in reality a myth created to ensure the survival of power structures that benefit white people¹² at the

¹¹ Muslims also have the highest ‘very unfavourable’ opinion out of all religions in the UK (Staetsky, 2017). See Table 2.

¹² Although not all of them: white ethnic groups like Irish or British Travellers are among the most deprived groups in British society (Cabinet Office, 2017).

expense of other races. Non-white people have made enormous contributions to British society and our understanding of Britishness, but continue to be erased by the predominant white narrative. Hence, “whiteness works to perpetuate and reinforce white racial superiority” (Bhopal, 2018).

Apart from ethnic prerequisites, the question of **secularism** and its role in Western democracies has also been put in the spotlight: what have traditionally been thought of as neutral, non-religious nation-states and institutions are instead steeped in religious history and symbolism (Koenig, 2015). The West has reframed key aspects of Christianity as the neutral and therefore only acceptable option for peaceful living: for example, most national holidays fall on Christian holidays, and we are made to think of this as natural and logical. It is thus not true that Muslim communities in the West aim to de-secularise Western spaces because they were never truly secular in the first place. In order to achieve social peace and understanding it would then be necessary to shift the onus of neutrality.

The dilemma of British Muslims raises relevant questions for how we define citizenship, national identity and integration. These questions are at the core of globalisation’s weakening of the nation-state, and are fraught with unquantifiable data and intangible feelings of belonging. In order for multicultural principles to work in the UK, we must do away with false notions of secularism existing in Western institutions, which are a direct descendant of the interplay between Church and State, and recognise the ways that religion (specifically Christianity) still plays a major role in British politics. By ridding the social discourse of the notion that the West is neutral and secular, we can begin formulating a project that welcomes the potential contributions of other religions, like Islam, into the Western democratic project.

5.1.2 Multiculturalism and multi-ethnic Britain: main bodies and texts

The UK was one of the first European countries to embrace a multicultural political agenda, closely linked with ‘social integration’ (Rattansi, 2011): back in the 1960s the waves of Commonwealth immigrants that arrived on British soil made it necessary to create a new framework that permitted the integration of migrants while discarding the previous assimilationist policies which had begun to fall out of favour by

then. Another reason why assimilation was being abandoned was because of the inherent racial component of new immigrants to the UK: non-white people made up the bulk of this post-WWII wave of migration and could not simply be integrated the same way previous generations of white migrants had (Rattansi, 2011) due to the aforementioned 'ethnic prerequisite' and the inherent racism of British society.

However, by 2011 trust in multiculturalist policies was beginning to wane in the face of Islamic terror and British-born terrorists. David Cameron denounced multiculturalism as a failed policy that had isolated communities and allowed behaviours that ran counter to British values to flourish (Cameron, 2011). However, the broader context of the speech – radicalisation and Islamic extremism – should give us pause, as although it is true that multicultural policies have had faults, total condemnation of said policies can quickly lead to a decrease in tolerance of the various cultures that unavoidably form part of British society. Furthermore, such a speech by a PM goes a step further in problematizing an entire community and normalising an over-scrutiny of British Muslims.

According to the three-level model of types of multicultural policies used by governments (Kymlicka, 2007), the UK has a 'modest' grading, which means it does develop and implement multicultural policies, but nevertheless tends to do so with a more tokenistic approach than 'strong' countries (Rattansi, 2011). The height of multicultural policies in the UK was under the New Labour era of 1997-2010 (Parkinson, 2010).

The same year that New Labour came into power, the Runnymede Trust established the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, a 3 year-long study focussing on five areas – "democratic institutions, culture, families, employment, and safety and justice" (Runnymede, 2018) – in order to understand and face the cultural and demographic changes facing Britain at the turn of the millennium. The Parekh Report (2000) that resulted from this study is a seminal document on multiculturalism, race and ethnicity in Britain. Nowadays, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, established in 2006 under the Equality Act, carries out a similar job, but with a broader scope, not only studying of Britain's society and its diversity, but also working closely with policymakers and organisations to tackle all forms of discrimination.

Similar to these two Commissions (but on a European scale), the European Muslim Research Centre report on Islamophobic violence (2010) provides recommendations for police, politicians, and media on how to reduce Islamophobia: they mainly deal with trying to build a hospitable, safe environment for British Muslims to report crimes to the police, as well as suggestions on how to change public discourse to reduce the environment of distrust and hatred of Muslims. Anti-racist and anti-Islamophobic policymakers and scholars agree (Morey & Yaqin, 2011; Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010) in that in order to truly tackle Islamophobia, Islam has to stop being thought of and framed as a 'problem', or a rising cultural wave that threatens to 'drown European culture' (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010). De-problematizing the Muslim presence in Europe seems to be key to ensure the continued survival of European democratic civil society, European values of freedom and equality, and the multicultural/intercultural project.

5.1.3 Prevent: the true cost of anti-radicalisation strategies

Since the turn of the millennium, the UK government has passed a dozen laws designed specifically to counter terrorism. The wider context of the War on Terror informed many of these bills, but the results have been mixed. They could not stop terrorist acts on British soil, and there was widespread criticism that they infringe upon individual liberties and rights instead of keeping British society from the dangers of terrorism (Mulholland & Stratton, 2009).

Related to these acts, but not a policy in itself, is Prevent, one of the four parts of the UK government's counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST (Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare) (Home Office, 2011). Whereas the other three pillars of the strategy focus on building anti-terrorism capabilities, intercepting terrorist plots and generally pursuing terrorists, Prevent is more ambitious: it focuses on challenging terrorist ideology, detecting early-radicalisation and elements within the Muslim community who were at risk of radicalisation, and working with community leaders and stakeholders to ensure this detection (Home Office, 2011). It also funds programmes and initiatives that promote a moderate version of Islam and social integration, which has in itself caused controversy due to its social engineering potential (Casciani, 2010)

In a nutshell, Prevent aimed “to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism” (Home Office, 2011, p. 6).

Anti-radicalisation strategies are and must be an integral part of any government’s counter-terrorism strategy, but there are several problematic elements inherent to the Prevent strategy that have the potential to be incredibly negative for British Muslim communities. The way Prevent is supposed to work, as per the government’s official guidelines, is by establishing relations between the central government and localities, allowing teachers, medical personnel (nurses and doctors), religious leaders and other community leaders to report any suspicious behaviour (Home Office, 2011). Although the official guidelines make a point to insist that the strategy is focused on all kinds of terrorism and not only Islamic terrorism, funds are allocated on a proportional basis (Home Office, 2011), with most being allocated to programmes and initiatives aimed at the Muslim community.

The result of these circumstances is that the programme stigmatises and isolates the Muslim community as the ‘problematic’ element of British society that needs to be monitored. Several independent bodies, such as the National Union of Teachers, the Muslim Council of Britain, as well as some MPs (BBC News, 2017) have criticised the strategy, wary of the consequences it can have for community cohesion and interculturality. By relying on teachers, nurses, doctors and other community leaders to identify and separate potential radicalised individuals in the community, it creates an environment of distrust and over-vigilance that does the opposite of what Prevent is trying to accomplish (Casciani, 2010). There have been increasing reports of mistaken or fake accusations, of innocent members of the community being isolated and questioned for actions that are not consistent with radicalised behaviour (Nabulsi, 2017).

Because Prevent is not a policy but a strategy, it is not subject to the same system of checks and balances that normal legislation follows: it exists in a legal grey zone that covers a very vague set of indicators of radicalisation (Nabulsi, 2017). It is also important to point out how much Prevent is overly focused on the Muslim community to the detriment of anti-radicalisation programmes related to other ideologies like the far-right and white supremacists which, according to HOPE Not Hate (2018), are the foremost rising threat in British society. Finally, the Prevent strategy deeply damages British Muslims because, as we said before, it stigmatises an entire community and can prove

more destructive in the long term than any counter-terrorism measure (Casciani, 2010). The reporting on Muslim individuals for vague ‘radicalised’ activities or behaviours normalises the over-policing of British Muslim communities and validates those who view the communities and the religion itself as something to monitor and be wary of. In short, it compromises the ability of British Muslims to exist in public spheres and go about their normal lives, and therefore endangers the integration of said community.

5.1.4 Hostile environment policy and Muslims

There are many government policies dealing with immigration and the integration of migrants, but in light of recent developments (i.e. the Windrush scandal), in this section we will explore the British government’s ‘hostile environment’ immigration policy and the effect it has had on British society and the situation of people of colour living in the country. We will also look at Appendix FM, a new set of immigration guidelines. Both of these policies were set up by Theresa May when she was Home Secretary.



Source: PA/The Guardian

The policy, first formulated in 2012, aimed to achieve the decrease of immigration promised during the 2010 election campaign (Hill, 2017). Implementation consisted in a series of measures to ‘make life as difficult as possible’ for illegal migrants in the UK: ID checks by landlords, banks, employers, and so on, effectively turning them into border agents (Merrick, 2018). They also implemented more convoluted

procedures to residency and right to remain applications. A publicity campaign with billboards was also organised to encourage 'voluntary deportation'.

There are glaring problems with such a vague, widespread policy: a blanket approach to targeting illegal immigrants results in the targeting of anyone who *might* be an immigrant. As Labour MP Diane Abbott pointed out, "it's almost impossible to produce a hostile environment for immigrants and not produce a hostile environment for people who look like immigrants" (Sylvester & Thomson, 2018). Due to the 'ethnic prerequisite we mentioned earlier, the default for Britishness is whiteness, and so 25% of landlords would turn away people who 'looked foreign' (Merrick, 2018). This especially affects the Bangladeshi community, who as we saw before, overwhelmingly live in rented accommodations (Cabinet Office, 2017). Furthermore, such a policy resulted in thousands of wrong identifications and the deportation of people who are not illegal immigrants (Bulman, 2017).

Policies like the hostile environment affect the Muslim community disproportionately: the refugee crisis, Brexit, and ISIS attacks on Europe have stoked Islamophobic sentiments. 47% of British people want a ban on immigration from Muslim countries, much like the one US President Donald Trump tried to implement (Goodwin, Raines & Cutts, 2017). Therefore, these kinds of policies undertaken by the government do nothing but normalise and validate racist and Islamophobic positions.

5.2 SOCIETY AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

This last section will explore two opposing sides of the issue of Islamophobia in society. On the one hand, how government policies and attitudes described before can legitimise and normalise discriminatory behaviour by individual anti-Muslim actors (Katie Hopkins, Nigel Farage, and Tommy Robinson), as well as by prominent political parties and organisations (UKIP, British National Party, and English Defence League). On the other hand, we will look at how the Muslim communities and anti-racist individuals and organisations have fought back against both institutional and social racism and Islamophobia. By clearly showing the influence that the government and certain individuals can have on the broader social discourse surrounding British Muslims and Islamophobia, and contrasting it with the counter-effort made by anti-Islamophobia

campaigners and organisations, we aim to offer a tentative roadmap for what initiatives and programmes could help to tackle government-caused Islamophobia and how the communities themselves can protect themselves against it.

5.2.1 Anti-Muslim actors and parties

Social media has played a worryingly large role in promoting Islamophobia and other types of racial hatred. Twitter accounts, Facebook posts and forum-like websites such as Reddit enable individuals like Katie Hopkins or Nigel Farage to reach an unprecedented number of people with their messages of Islamophobia and hate. Although Islamophobia and racial hatred and discrimination existed (and thrived) before the advent of the Internet, the ubiquitousness of social media multiplies its possibilities for recruitment and incitement of violence (Cleland, 2013; Jakubowicz, 2017). Furthermore, out of the top five far-right personalities with the biggest follower count on social media, three are British (HOPE Not Hate, 2018).



Source: Mark Thomas/Rex/Shutterstock

One of the clearest examples of how social media can shape and distort public opinion is UKIP's Brexit campaign. The anti-immigration stance adopted by UKIP and other nationalist parties and organisations during the campaign included many racist remarks and the infamous 'breaking point' ad which was denounced for its "incitement of racial hatred" (Stewart & Mason, 2016). Championed by then-UKIP leader Nigel Farage, the Leave win was due to a multitude of factors, but primarily due to racialised

fearmongering and the perceived necessity of 'order' and 'control' over the UK's borders and economy, especially regarding migration and refugees (The Economist, 2016). The fear of a 'unstoppable wave of migration' was exemplified by the aforementioned ad, which was compared by members of the opposition to "Nazi propaganda" (Wright, 2016) and reported to police for its racist connotations (Stewart & Mason, 2016).

Although UKIP has suffered a decline in the years since the Brexit vote, the extensive and deft use of social media certainly helped the Leave vote, proving the power of such discourses to disrupt and redirect public opinion (Harris, 2018). Even more damningly, UKIP's role in the passing of the Immigration Act, which made law the 'hostile environment' we discussed above, cannot be ignored (Harris, 2018). Their rise to political prominence on the coattails of the economic crisis and populist movements that subsequently swept through Europe has caused long term effects on the political landscape and shifted the political centre to the right. Effectively, in order to stop the bleeding of Tory voters to UKIP, the sitting Tory government at the time began promoting policies that aligned with UKIP's interests, the consequences of which we are still seeing today (Lee, 2018). During a recent visit to the UK by the UN's rapporteur on racism (OHCHR, 2018), she highlighted the increase of racial and religious hatred in the UK since Brexit. The Leave win and subsequent government policies legitimised those who warned about the dangers of migrants (especially from the Middle East) (Gayle, 2018).

Another way the government has been seen to sanction Islamophobia is through Ofsted reports. These reports aim to "inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages" (Gov.UK, 2018). However, a recent recommendation to ban hijabs in primary schools has been denounced by teachers' organisations and Muslim faith leaders as promoting and institutionalising Islamophobia in education spaces (Halliday, 2017).

Other individuals that have used social media to spread messages of hate and Islamophobia are Katie Hopkins and Tommy Robinson (former leader of the English Defence League). Both have been involved in controversies and legal disputes following racist, Islamophobic and other types of discriminatory remarks. Hopkins settled a libel case against a Muslim family who she had falsely linked to al-Qaeda (Jackson, 2016). Meanwhile, Robinson co-authored a book called *Mohammed's Koran: Why Muslims Kill*

for Islam and drew sharp criticism for Islamophobic comments regarding the 2017 Finsbury Park attack (Molloy, 2017).

Similar parties to the English Defence League (EDL) are the Scottish Defence League, Britain First and the British National Party. All of these incite racial hatred and violence, especially against migrants and the Muslim community. Such organisations promote nationalist, white supremacist and far-right ideologies and objectives which, according to HOPE Not Hate (2018), are all on the rise in the UK. It is interesting to point out that although such ideologies are on the rise, the organisations themselves are on the decline. This once more proves the strength of social media and decentralised movements in spreading hatred and catalysing far-right terrorist attacks.

5.2.2 Muslims and Islamophobia: community initiatives and organisations

According to the Cabinet Office (2017), local neighbourhoods and communities are a key element of society and belonging for all ethnic groups in the UK. The local level is where people feel they have a higher chance of being heard and influencing politics, and this capacity for change translates into positive civic engagement and volunteering (Cabinet Office, 2017). Muslim communities are no exception.

The most prominent Muslim organisation in the UK is the Muslim Council of Britain, although there are a many more Muslim organisations based in the UK with different aims, structure and methods. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is the leading voice of British Muslims at a national level, and includes hundreds of smaller organisations, charities, schools and places of worship. It is the main point of contact for the government regarding Muslim affairs, and its objectives include, among other things, promoting Muslim interests and cooperation within the communities, fighting against discrimination and working towards a healthy relationship and status for Muslim communities in the UK (MCB, 2018). They regularly publish reports and statistics designed to help policymakers in developing policies that benefit Muslim communities and reduce Islamophobia. *British Muslims in Numbers*, a report based on the 2011 Census and which was featured heavily earlier in this work, is a perfect example of this.

The intersection of civic engagement, youth and Islam has a decades-long story in the UK. The 1970s marked the beginning of Asian youth movements that sought to

fight against racism, fascism and discrimination (Ramamurthy, 2013). Although these organisations were not exclusively or specifically Muslim, a large part of the Asian population in the UK is Muslim. There are borough-specific initiatives against racism and religious discrimination, such as Bradford Youth Movement and Newham Youth Movement, as well as ethnic-group specific initiatives such as the Bangladeshi Youth Movement (Kabir, 2010). Likewise, the Muslim Youth Initiative (2018) aims to train, inspire and motivate Muslim youth for the future through a range of group and community activities.

TellMAMA is the foremost organisation fighting against Islamophobia. Its main goal is to record and measure Islamophobic attacks and hate crimes. This type of systemic reporting of attacks is key to create policy proposals to tackle any form of Islamophobic action, such as the ones described in the state of the issue: workplace harassment, destruction of private property, attacks on places of worship, violence against Muslim women wearing hijabs, and any type of act that “has anti-Muslim motivation or content, or that the victim was targeted because of their Muslim identity” (TellMAMA, 2018).

Apart from Muslim-driven civic organisations, there are nationwide groups and organisations that aim to fight against different types of discrimination and social injustice, and have had campaigns aimed directly or indirectly at combating Islamophobia such as HOPE Not Hate and Stop Hate UK. The aim of such organisations is to denounce hate crimes of any kind, and work towards de-normalising such behaviour. Calling out individual acts and systemic racism (as well as Islamophobia) can help shift wider social discourse: for example, recent changes on public order offence guidelines will mean harsher sentences for social media users with high follower counts who incite racial hatred or violence (Dearden, 2018). Increasing accountability and negative consequences for those who hold Islamophobic attitudes or perpetrate Islamophobic actions can facilitate the work of anti-racist and anti-Islamophobia organisations.

An important milestone in increasing accountability was the Stephen Lawrence inquiry (or MacPherson report) which exposed systemic and institutionalised racism within the police force (MacPherson, 1999). The report came about after widespread outrage over the racially-motivated killing of teenager Stephen Lawrence and the

subsequent activism by his mother and other community leaders. It prompted a review of racial sensitivity practices and a reckoning with the UK's institutional racism. This is a kind of discrimination that Muslim communities face every day, and thus any positive change in this area will affect them positively.

Even corporate diversity initiatives and ad campaigns, like the Amazon 2016 Christmas ad, which shows an interfaith friendship between a vicar and an imam (Sweeney, 2016), can help in fighting Islamophobia¹³. Like we mentioned above, it is necessary to de-problematise and normalise the British Muslim experience and present these communities as an integral and intrinsic part of British culture and values.

As a final note on this section, figures show that British Muslims contribute more than £30 billion per year to the British economy, and £371 million per year to charity (more than any other religious group) (MEND, 2017). This demonstrates the Muslim commitment to British society and its core values¹⁴, and once more brings into the spotlight questions of what exactly integration looks like, and what it truly means to be British.

¹³ The Amazon ad campaign was made with input from The Muslim Council of Britain, the Christian Muslim Forum and the Church of England (Sweeney, 2016).

¹⁴ Involvement in charities and NGOs is seen as a quintessential way of civic participation in the UK (Parekh, 2007).

6 CONCLUSIONS

The hypothesis that served as the starting point for this dissertation, that **there has been an increase in nationalistic and Islamophobic sentiment in the UK due to the policies and attitudes of the government**, has been proven true to a certain extent, although more work needs to be done to establish causality regarding different government actions and individual actors' commentary on Islamophobic events or trends. However, the bigger picture has been established: Muslim communities in the UK have always had to deal with discrimination to varying degrees, but since the turn of the millennium their quality of life and standing in the social discourse has experienced a sharp decline.

Widespread racism and religious prejudice have affected British Muslims in every aspect of their lives: from education, to work, to access to benefits. The efforts of individuals and organisations within the Muslim community – and some pro-Muslim organisations outside it – have secured some victories, but the truth is that the government remains the key piece for any kind of meaningful change. Change cannot only come from the grassroots level. It has to be a coordinated effort from all levels of society, from civil society organisations to policymakers and high-level politicians. The creation of a healthy, positive dialogue with British Muslims and a debunking of myths and unfounded fears of Islam and Muslims is key to ensure a peaceful society. At the same time, it is important to not see *individual Muslims* as the problem that needs solving, but rather the racial and religious prejudices that nowadays shape public discourse and affect their lives in a myriad of ways.

As we have seen throughout this dissertation, social discourse is often shaped by government policies as much as by individual actors: when racist, prejudiced individuals such as Katie Hopkins or Nigel Farage find their views legitimised by government action (or inaction), it further normalises this type of behaviour and makes it more difficult for pro-Muslim individuals and organisations to win back control of the narrative. Governments must be aware of the influence and power they wield and truly work for the well-being of all the people they represent, not just those who are in power or who fit antiquated ideals of who is or should be allowed a voice in society (i.e. white males). It is necessary to take a long hard look at British society and how it treats immigrants

and people of colour, and realise what needs to be changed in order to make it equal and peaceful for all.

Further research should include Muslim communities in other European countries, such as France or Sweden, to create a comparative study of how different governments interact with Muslim communities and how Islamophobia has evolved in the last decade. This would help in the goal of devising a strategy or roadmap for inter- and multicultural management in Europe (and beyond). Furthermore, up to date data analysis and surveys are needed across the board. The first and last British Muslims in Numbers survey was made based on the 2011 Census, and the next one won't be until 2021 (Office for National Statistics, 2018). New projects such as these should be undertaken by both the government and Muslim and human rights organisations to monitor the changes in the situation of Muslim communities in the UK, and thus be able to devise strategies to limit racism in all its forms. However, there needs to be a real will for change within the government, and here is where the UK government must focus its efforts. The 'tokenistic' attitude of its multicultural policies must be changed: this means involving members of the affected communities in the development and implementation of policies for these communities and a comprehensive, united effort rather than a 'outsider' perspective. We must also fight against the double or triple penalties imposed on the Muslim communities (housing, work, education...): intersectionality is now a prerequisite for any kind of meaningful social initiative.

Ultimately, it is by embracing our differences that we become stronger as a society: the future is here, and it is multicultural. We must learn to thrive in it.

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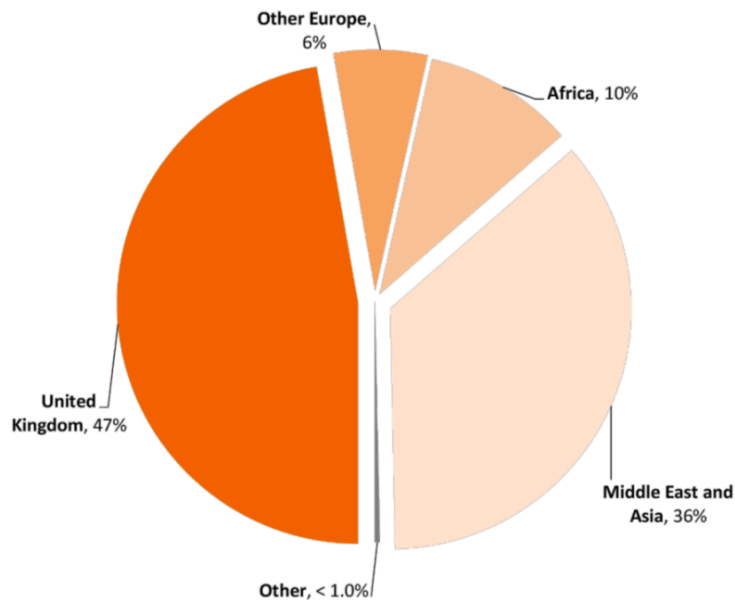
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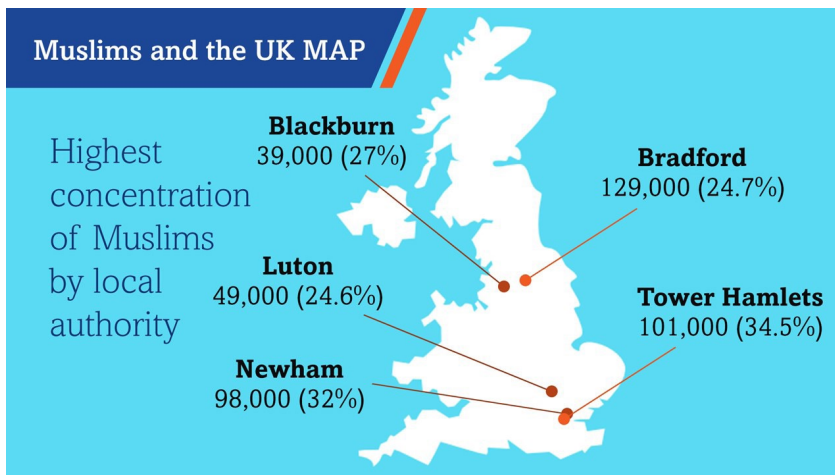
8 ANNEX

FIGURE 1: Place of birth of Muslims in Britain



Source: Muslim Council of Britain. (2017). *Nearly half of Muslims in Britain are born in the UK*. British Muslims in Numbers. Briefing 13.

FIGURE 2: Geographical distribution of Muslims in the UK



Source: Muslim Engagement & Development. (2017). *Islamophobia content for PSHE lessons by MEND*. Retrieved from <https://mend.org.uk/resources-and-publications/teachers-zone/>

TABLE 1: Projected Muslim counts over time under different migration scenarios

Projected Muslim counts over time under different migration scenarios					
	2010	2016	2050 zero migration scenario	2050 medium migration scenario	2050 high migration scenario
Europe overall	19,520,000	25,770,000	35,770,000	57,880,000	75,550,000
United Kingdom	2,970,000	4,130,000	6,560,000	13,060,000	13,480,000
France	4,720,000	5,720,000	8,600,000	12,630,000	13,210,000
Germany	3,300,000	4,950,000	5,990,000	8,480,000	17,490,000
Italy	2,150,000	2,870,000	4,350,000	7,050,000	8,250,000
Spain	980,000	1,180,000	1,880,000	2,660,000	2,810,000
Sweden	430,000	810,000	1,130,000	2,470,000	4,450,000
Netherlands	990,000	1,210,000	1,510,000	2,200,000	2,790,000
Belgium	650,000	870,000	1,250,000	2,050,000	2,580,000
Switzerland	390,000	510,000	660,000	1,140,000	1,520,000
Norway	180,000	300,000	390,000	980,000	1,320,000
Austria	450,000	600,000	750,000	960,000	2,120,000
Denmark	220,000	310,000	430,000	770,000	1,100,000
Finland	60,000	150,000	220,000	720,000	990,000
Greece	590,000	620,000	590,000	700,000	860,000
Bulgaria	820,000	790,000	700,000	500,000	650,000
Cyprus	280,000	300,000	300,000	390,000	430,000
Portugal	30,000	40,000	50,000	210,000	220,000
Ireland	50,000	70,000	80,000	190,000	200,000
Hungary	< 10,000	40,000	30,000	110,000	390,000
Romania	70,000	80,000	70,000	110,000	120,000
Slovenia	70,000	80,000	80,000	100,000	100,000
Czech Republic	< 10,000	20,000	20,000	100,000	110,000
Croatia	70,000	70,000	60,000	70,000	70,000
Luxembourg	10,000	20,000	20,000	60,000	90,000
Poland	< 10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000	60,000
Malta	< 10,000	10,000	10,000	40,000	80,000
Slovakia	< 10,000	< 10,000	< 10,000	30,000	40,000
Latvia	< 10,000	< 10,000	< 10,000	< 10,000	< 10,000
Lithuania	< 10,000	< 10,000	< 10,000	< 10,000	< 10,000
Estonia	< 10,000	< 10,000	< 10,000	< 10,000	10,000

Notes: In zero migration scenario, no migration of any kind takes place to or from Europe. In medium migration scenario, regular migration continues and refugee flows cease. In high migration scenario, 2014 to mid-2016 refugee inflow patterns continue in addition to regular migration. Estimates do not include those asylum seekers who are not expected to gain legal status to remain in Europe.

Source: Pew Research Center estimates and projections. See Methodology for details.

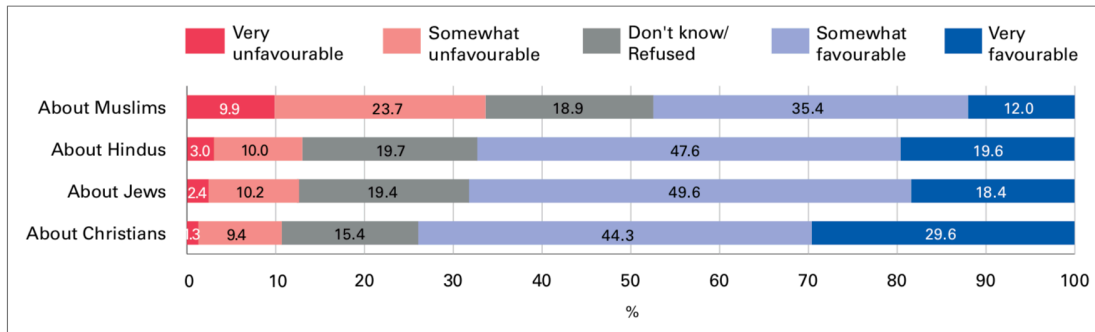
"Europe's Growing Muslim Population"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: Pew Research Center. (2017, November 29). Europe's Growing Muslim Population. *Pew Research Center – Religion & Public Life*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/11/29/europes-growing-muslim-population/>

TABLE 2: Great Britain opinions about religious groups

Figure 2. Opinions held by the population of Great Britain about Jews and other religious groups – an alternative view



Notes: Online sample, N=1,001. Due to rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100%.
Question: see a note to the previous exhibit.

Source: Staetsky, D. (2017). *Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain: A study of attitudes towards Jews and Israel*. Institute for Jewish Policy Research.