

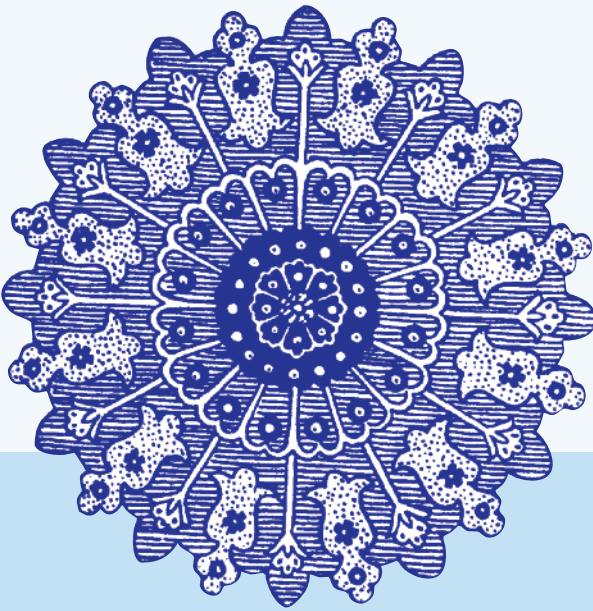


# BRITISH MUSLIMS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT

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DUAL CITIZENSHIP:  
BRITISH, ISLAMIC OR BOTH?  
OBLIGATION, RECOGNITION,  
RESPECT AND BELONGING



SAIED R. AMELI  
ARZU MERALI

ISLAMIC HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

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## FOREWORD

Citizenship and the recognition of discrete individuals by the state is a key but often overlooked human rights issue. Whilst recent discussions in the UK have focused on citizens – and in particular Muslim citizens – duties and roles vis-à-vis the state and wider society, the parallel issue of recognition as a citizen has been underplayed or forgotten. Imams must now pass examinations in English, families are encouraged to speak English at home, and new citizens swear oaths of allegiance to the Queen. With all these developments, comes a crucial question: in a world where human rights are supposed to be universal, if some rights are conditional for minorities, does this mean that some rights holders are more equal than others?

By raising the spectre of conditionality – duties before or in return for rights – recent debates sparked by media pundits and high ranking politicians have implicitly contested the idea of a ‘universal citizen’. This undermines the very agent that the burgeoning body of human rights treaties and instruments developed over the last century sought to protect from the vagaries of the state.

By interrogating this development in the discourse surrounding British Muslim citizenship, this series aims to provide a point at which serious engagement can be made between British Muslims and their government.

By using quantitative and qualitative research, as well as case studies, the British Muslims’ Expectations of the British Government series is charting, from the ground up, what the key areas of concern for Muslims are and what they as participants in the social order expect the government’s engagement with them as individuals, communities, a religious minority and above all as active and equal participants in the business of society, to be.

This engagement is one that is urgently needed to prevent the increasing polarisation, indeed fragmentation, of society into the haves and have-nots of stake-holding – not through poverty or lack of education – but a hitherto top-down discussion of what citizenship should be and should mean – for Muslims in Britain.

**Islamic Human Rights Commission**



## INTRODUCTION:

The issue of citizenship has been debated since the time of the Greek and Roman civilizations. In our times, the concept of citizenship has been defined in terms of a 'series of rights and obligations'. Human rights are indeed at the core of this conception of reciprocal rights and obligations; and the relationship between individual rights and collective rights is of particular sensitivity when located within a context of plurality, diversity and minority rights. Hence one observes that, while the concept of human rights is relatively new in the modern world, it has had a great, political, legal, ethical and rhetorical impact on the theory and practice of social and political citizenship (Leary, 1999: 245). From the point of view of cultural diversity, a certain dilemma is implicit in the concept of universal human rights. This concept posits a fundamental equality of all persons simply because they are 'persons' and considers that human rights norms apply equally to all countries, cultures and religions without any distinction between white, black and Asian or any types of segregation between Muslim and non-Muslim.

The Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights begins with the statement that 'recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world' (UN, 1948). But violations of the inherent dignity of persons occur continually on the basis of ethnic or religious affiliation. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between Muslim identity and British citizenship such as this emerges in the concrete context of life for British Muslims in this country. Exploration of the principle and practice of 'British Muslim Citizenship' is of vital importance in today's socio-political milieu for obvious reasons. Such a study can help to shed light on the sensitive interface between the perceived religious duties flowing from the Islamic faith and the legal, political and social responsibilities entailed by British citizenship, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, it can contribute to the articulation of British Muslims' expectations and aspirations, which derive from their perceived rights as citizens of this country.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of bringing these expectations and aspirations closer to realisation, and thereby enhancing the sense and coherence of the concept of 'British Muslim citizenship'. The opposite scenario within the Muslim community – increasing frustration of expectations, a deepening sense of alienation from British society, a diminishing sense of belonging, and thus an intensifying sense of the contradiction between being a faithful Muslim and a loyal British citizen – is one which has potentially catastrophic consequences for the peace, stability and order of British society. According to the 2001 National Census, Muslims constitute 3% of Britain's population; and one in every ten Londoners is now a Muslim. It is thus the single largest religious minority in Britain. For a community of this size and importance to be marginalised, alienated or persecuted is in itself dangerous. In this light, the following questions are of the utmost salience:

- How do Muslims in Britain understand the concept of 'British Muslim'?
- What does 'British Muslim citizenship' mean to them?
- As a British Muslim, what are their expectations of the British Government? What should they do for Muslims?
- Do you feel a strong or weak affiliation or sense of belonging to Britain? To what extent does this affect your life? Did you have the choice to live in another country which you sacrificed because of Britain?
- Do you think that British Muslims have really been recognized as British Citizens?
- Do you see any serious contradiction between being a 'Good British Citizen' and a practising Muslim?

Past research in this field has tended to characterise Muslims as radical, 'fundamentalist' or, minimally, as religious believers who have a completely different mode of discourse which detaches them from the wider society, seen as Christian, secular, or atheistic and thus hostile to 'the faith'. This research, by contrast, attempts to provide an empirically sound and analytically nuanced appraisal of British Muslims. The intention is to bring to light attitudes, orientations, perceptions that shape the Muslim community, doing so from within, rather than superimposing certain preconceived notions from without. Additionally this study aims to demonstrate ways in which Islamic values complement, rather than contradict, the principle of good citizenship. The question of whether Islamic values lead to integration or segregation is thus open-ended and fluid: the outcome will depend on a range of factors, amongst which the perceived level of discrimination is possibly the most important.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to explore the nature of both British citizenship and Muslim citizenship in Britain. The exploration of British citizenship with regard to British Muslims is central to the understanding of the participation and inclusion/exclusion of British Muslims in British society and the public sphere. Understanding the Muslim community's perception of citizenship thus provides a key foundation for understanding British Muslims' expectations of British government, and vice versa.

## BACKGROUND: STUDIES ON BRITISH MUSLIM CITIZENSHIP

British citizenship could be deemed an umbrella under which the national identity of all those who are citizens in the UK can take cover. However, Scottish and Welsh constitutional developments have contributed to the complexities of understanding English culture on a national level and amongst the English themselves. More and more it seems that, 'Englishness' as opposed to 'Scottishness', on the one hand, hinders the construction of a national identity in the UK which would, in turn, be viewed as a British Identity; and on the other hand, 'Englishness' could be said to even comprise British Citizenship (Saeed *et al.*, 1999: 823). The dialectic for Muslims and their sense of belonging depends on whether they find themselves living in either England, Scotland or Wales.

Muslims have long been involved in the quest for full citizenship rights, and one of the earliest struggles of the last century was amongst sailors at the time of the First World War. According to Ansari (2004: 118) 'the most powerful force that modified, moulded and undermined official policy was the resistance of the Muslims themselves. Throughout the interwar years they struggled to preserve their livelihood through collective and individual protest'. The process of becoming a British citizen at this time was fraught with paradoxes as the process of assimilation in British society inevitably appeared as an erosion of values, and yet ironically, contributed to the construction of a cultural diaspora based on Islamic values.

The 'Rushdie' affair and the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 both reinforced the 'symbolic identification' with Islam for Muslims in Britain, and as Koopmans and Statham (1999) put it, these events acted as a 'cultural marker' which overshadowed any ethnic or racial affiliation for Muslims: the factor of religion here operating to disintegrate the thin fabric of British society, aided by the prevalence of the designation of a 'secondary level of citizenship' such as Pakistani-British, Iraqi-British etc.,. Clearly meta-citizenship factors such as religion are now more transparent in their operation exposing the state of flux and hybridity that post-war/modern national identity is in.

The issue of British Muslim citizenship is a central concern for some recent studies; Werbner (2000), Ansari (2004), Ameli (2002) and Koopmans & Statham (1999). Werbner (2000) examined citizenship regarding British Muslims from the point of view of their diasporic development. She argues that the Muslim diasporic transnational mobilisation has been a key factor in the development of a Muslim British civic consciousness and the capacity for active citizenship. Werbner highlights two hurdles to the integration and incorporation of the Muslim minority in Britain. First, there is the historical treatment of minorities, or diasporas, being the target of racialised and xenophobic nationalist imaginings. This is illustrated by the portrayal of British Muslims in both the popular press and by fascist political parties. For example when Muslims exercised their rights as citizens and participated in the July 2004 by-elections, sections of the press were alarmed at the emergence of Muslims and claimed to protest about the '...the black heart of Islam, not its black face' (Cummins, 2004a). Remarks that would not have been tolerated with regard to any other faith community were made; '... all Muslims, like all dogs, share certain characteristics' (Cummins, 2004b), as well as articles advancing the 'clash of the civilisations' theory such as *The Spectator* cover headline 'The Muslims are coming' (Browne, 2004). This climate has been exploited by the BNP and other racist organisations. Whilst carefully keeping within the law, these organisations have extensively used the term

'Muslim' in a pejorative sense with the aim of exploiting and disrupting any remnant of social cohesion in areas of severe economic and social deprivation. (Oldham Independent Review, 2001; Ahmed et al, 2001:). Today such imaginaries are part of a discourse that posits the oppositional dualism between Islam and the West as a political reality. From a Muslim perspective, a similar unbridgeable opposition is invoked in a discourse of defensiveness (Merali et al, 2002). However in the final analysis, Werbner denies the validity of these dualistic arguments. She argues that far from revealing disloyalty, or an unbridgeable cultural gulf, the British Muslim's struggle for justice and transnational human rights has in itself engendered a British Muslim citizenship (Werbner, 2000 :309).

The second hurdle is the slow development of any extensive religious pluralism with regard to Islam and Muslims in Britain. It has been argued that the integration of Irish Catholics into British society began when they were granted state subsidies for separate Catholic schools (Lewis, 1997). Only recently, after a long and bitter struggle, state subsidies have been granted to two Muslim schools. The argument is that public and civic recognition of Islam and other minority religions leads to the negotiation of a new participatory public order, based on the acceptance of religious minorities as a permanent feature in society. Werbner's paper includes a case study on a Pakistani women's association Al-Masoom. Her findings show that in gaining the moral high ground through civic activism for international human rights affecting Muslims, the organisation gained the right to speak in the public sphere in Manchester on issues relating especially to women's issues. Werbner has thus shown how activism for a cause beyond national boundaries paradoxically enhanced the women's practical civic consciousness as citizens of the nation.

Another approach to British Muslim citizenship relates to their settlement, assimilation and integration into British society. From a historical perspective, alongside the changes in the political and social situation of Muslims in Britain, their reaction to integration and communication with the majority society and the government has changed. Muslim integration into British society cannot be analysed/illustrated solely according to historical changes as it is necessary to take into consideration such factors as the location and ethnic groups amongst others.

Ansari (2004) attempts a typology of the assimilation of Muslims in Britain into four different categories: 1) the sub cultural, 2) the counter-cultural, 3) the accommodationist and 4) the assimilationist. For him, 'the sub-cultural response entails separation from the cultural mainstream, with the desired degree of separation depending on the proponents. The counter-cultural response attempts to safeguard distinctiveness in the midst of the mainstream, and by exercising influence in favour of reform strives to win concessions from the wider society. The accommodationist response opposes withdrawal and isolation from the wider society but differs from the counter-cultural response in its positive evaluation of mainstream culture, or at least in being less dissatisfied than the other respondents. Those who hold this view fear labelling and alienation, are relatively tolerant of other faiths and ideologies, and feel that their children should avoid social and cultural conflict, if necessary by conforming to the mainstream. Indeed, those who support this position wish to be recognised as part of the mainstream, Islamic identity for them remains paramount. The assimilationist response, while not explicitly endorsing religio-cultural absorption into the mainstream, does tend towards it quite strongly. It allows Islamic specificity to give way to the vague generalities of civil religion, with perhaps a few incidental religious or ethnic vestiges being retained. In all likelihood, those Muslim parents who adopt this perspective are themselves not particularly observant; this response

tends towards secularism and has reflected the view of a substantial proportion of British Muslims (ibid: page 214).

Finally, Ameli's approach (2002: 195-6) includes the affiliation, integration and engagement of British Muslims in the wider society. According to his research some British Muslims may adopt the new cultural norms of the majority society and even reject their native culture. Others may reject the dominant culture of the majority society and insist on their own native culture. A further group of respondents show a hybrid tendency, they feel/identify themselves as British because they were born and raised in Britain but they also have strong emotional ties towards their motherland or their parents' homeland. Still others reject both countries. According to Ameli (2002: 138 ), this group of Muslims seems to have no particular views or direction in terms of their national loyalty; these represent those with an undetermined identity.

Koopmans and Statham's research (1999:675) on citizenship of migrants and ethnic minorities in Britain categorises four broad types of identities; one of which is religion. First of all, for Koopmans and Statham, migrants and minorities may identify themselves across ethnic and cultural boundaries on the basis of their common status as 'immigrants' (ethnic) 'minorities,' or 'foreigners'. Secondly, minorities may identify, or be identified with a certain racial group, such as 'black' or 'Asian'. As a 'powerful cultural marker', religion can be a third possible basis for migrant and minority claims making. Finally, migrants may identify themselves on the basis of their common national or ethnic descent.

In this research, Islam is taken as a main indicator and 'cultural marker' for understanding British Muslims regardless of their ethnic background or even their particular religious affiliation i.e. being Sunni or Shi'a Muslim. However, we will discuss some of the demographic factors such as ethnicity, education, gender and occupation, in relation to other religious, social and cultural factors so as to articulate the reasons for diversity of British Muslims in terms of identity and affiliation to Britain.



## BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT

Until the British Nationality Act 1948 all Commonwealth countries had a common citizenship (British subject status). The Act provided for a new status of Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies, consisting of all those British subjects who either through birth or descent had a close relationship with the United Kingdom. In the 1960's the British Government was concerned with the threat of large scale immigration from its former colonies. Until the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962 all Commonwealth citizens could stay and enter the United Kingdom without restriction. The British Nationality Act 1981 abolished the status of Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies. The Act created three new forms of citizenship: British Citizenship, British Dependent Territories Citizenship and British Overseas Citizenship.

Recently the Government has developed a new policy with regards to citizenship. The policy focuses on developing an active citizenship and emphasises the importance of the civic and political dimensions of British citizenship. In its white paper the Government argues that helping migrants to gain a fuller appreciation of what British citizenship entails, will help to improve active participation in the democratic process and a sense of belonging to the wider community. In order to achieve the ends the Government's new policy includes; speeding up the process of acquisition, preparing people for citizenship by promoting language training and education for citizenship and celebrating the acquisition of citizenship. With regards to the citizenship ceremony the Government believes that it will 'make clear the fundamental tenets of British citizenship: that we respect human rights and freedoms, uphold democratic values, observe laws faithfully and fulfil our duties and obligations'.

Source: Home Office, (2002) 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain'.

## WHAT CITIZENSHIP MEANS

Turner (1999: 262) defined citizenship as 'a collection of rights and obligations which give individuals a formal legal identity; these legal rights and obligations have been put together historically as sets of social institutions such as the jury system, parliaments and welfare states'. Faulks initiated the importance of power of citizenship in implying equality, justice and autonomy in society (2000: 13). Turner attempts to present a rigorous sociological model of citizenship. In this model his main concerns are related to the institutions of citizenship, such as social identity, the nature of inequality and access to socio-economic resources and membership of the political community- the nation-state. From a sociological perspective, the institutions of citizenship protect individuals and groups from the negative outcomes and unintended vagaries of the market in a capitalist society.

One advantage of Turner's model over the Marshal theory of citizenship is that Turner considered the economy as a very significant factor for the empowerment or rendering powerless the resources of citizenship. So that,

for example, inflation is regarded as negative and has the largely unintended consequence of eroding citizenship, alongside corruption in public life which is a major negative indicator of the condition of citizenship in modern society (Turner, 1999: 265).

One can argue that whilst Turner rightly gave much attention to the political and economic resources of citizenship, he neglected the role of cultural resources in citizenship. Culture can play an important role in establishing the solidity, firmness and powerfulness of citizenship and vice versa. Ong (1996: 737) viewed cultural citizenship 'as a process of self-making and being-made in relation to nation-states and transnational process...such modalities of citizen-making are influenced by transnational capitalism'.

Evidently, citizenship is a multi-layered concept. One can distinguish three different components of citizenship:

- 1) **Individual and social rights:** This pertains to the responsibilities of the state towards citizens as much as the responsibility of citizens towards the state and society. Rights are reciprocal, with obligations on both individual and collective levels.
- 2) **Need of recognition:** Recognition is a very important element for strengthening the feeling of belonging to a nation, culture and state. This element of citizenship is especially important for immigrant communities, those residing in rural areas, peripheral ethnic groups who do not share the same language, ethnicity and ethos of the central state. Faulks (2000:4) suggested that 'the status of citizen implies a sense of inclusion into the wider community. It recognises the contribution a particular individual makes to that community, while at the same time granting him or her individual autonomy'. Faulks (2000) called this the 'ethic of participation'. When the collectivity assumes large dimensions, such as in cosmopolitan societies or in the context of the digital development of the world community, the need for recognition is more apparent and demanded by society. Citizenship is an umbrella force, which creates a sense of belonging and membership in a society. It seems that globalization, the process of unification of time and space and the 'virtualization' of realities, creates an unrecognized position for the members of a previously bounded political geography, a nation-state and a welfare society. Therefore, recognition from political authority, as well as from the individuals in society, is in a state of complex fragmentation.
- 3) **Emotional elements of citizenship:** This is the hidden layer of citizenship which shows the level of belonging to a culture and state; this emotion acts as what Hoffman (1997) calls a 'momentum concept'. Indeed one of our major criticisms of much of the existing literature on citizenship such as the work of Marshal (1950), Turner (1999), Delanty (2000) is that it fails to pay enough attention to this question of emotional attachment to the indigenous culture and the state. Citizenship contains an internal logic that is rooted in the love of the culture and state in which one finds oneself. This elucidates how it is that Faulks (2000) believes that citizenship is not domination, whether the source of that domination be the state, the family, the church, the ethnic group or any other force that seeks to deny the recognition of the self as an autonomous individual.

After almost a century of Muslim settlement in Britain and the formation of a sort of 'hybrid native British community', Muslims are still challenged by the citizenship policy formulated for so-called migrant communities. From a



human rights perspective, citizenship rights are the most important rights for demonstrating the equality between members of any state. There are different approaches to the issue of citizenship policy. Three different approaches to citizenship in relation to minority groups have been identified in particular European countries: post-national, national and multicultural citizenship.

According to the post-national citizenship theory, 'transnational migration is steadily eroding the traditional basis of nation-state membership namely, citizenship' (Jacobson, 1996: 8). Postnationalists argue that the collective action of migrants plays an active role in the erosion and transcending of the frontiers of nation-states. This is because through the acceleration of the communication industry, migrant communities increasingly take on the character of transnationally linked diasporas and this can effect national unification (Deloye, 2000; Koopmans, 2004).

The notion of a national citizenship signifying a single, homogenised culture shared by all citizens has become obsolete. A possible alternative is presented in which an uncoupling of nationality and culture would lead to an open and equal communication between citizens and the development of the transmigrants' identities as members of a transnational and multicultural global society who may have ties with two or more nation-states. Thus, multicultural citizenship reflects the emergence of cultural diversity within nation-states and the deterritorialisation of cultures and peoples (Dijkstra *et al*, 2001: 55). Multiculturalism requires recognition to expect identification on the basis of cultural difference, whereas the national citizenship model predicts identification on the basis of racial and cultural groups in Britain (Koopmans & Statham, 1999).

The prevailing current discourse which informs the majority opinion on British Muslim Citizenship has been shaped by two factors. First the civil disturbances of Bradford, Burnley and Oldham, in 2001 which led the Home Secretary to call for a national debate on the rights and responsibilities of being a British citizen (BBC News, 2001; Ahmed *et al*, 2001). Second, the events of 11 September 2001 and Britain's subsequent involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq all of which have led to a specific focus on British Muslim citizenship in the media. The root of the nation's social disharmony is attributed to fears that young Muslims are being indoctrinated by extremists –'immigrants' –a euphemism for Muslims who have not integrated successfully. Extensive coverage has been given to the stereotype of the fearful British 'fundamentalist' (Phillips, 2001).

In an attempt to protect the social cohesion of the nation, initiatives have been taken to promote good citizenship by the Home Office; and the debate in the media mirrors this and is very limited. The core of the discussion is the adherence to 'British norms' even if this is likely to be in contradiction to Islamic law such as the promise not to practice polygamy (Byers, 2004; Power, 2004). There is also much discussion on the government's decision to include the need to study the English language, culture and politics for all those who apply for British citizenship (Oliver, 2002; Morgan, 2004). This includes the call for overseas imams to pass a basic English test before they are allowed into Britain in an attempt to clamp down on "extremist" preachers (Shaikh, 2004). Thus the discourse is both limited and lop-sided; with an emphasis on the 'enemy' within who 'dine a la carte from the menu of citizenship' (Heffer, 2004).



## METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE GROUP

Sociological objects like other social and cultural objects are constructed socially by persons socialised in a particular inter-cultural context with particular expectations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Here we are examining British Muslim citizenship as a social product not only as series of rights and social responsibilities but more as social phenomenon; implying a sense of trust, belief and confidence of the British Muslim Citizen towards the government and the whole social structure. From the perspective of the dominant discourses on British citizenship and national belonging, British Muslim citizens and their sense of belonging serve to reinforce the presumed differences of dominated others from the majority white British, who constitute the norm of national belonging (Hall, 1996).

This research project utilises a sociological approach based on both qualitative and quantitative survey data examining the perceptions, feelings and sense of belonging of British Muslims as citizens of Britain. The target group consists of British Muslims who were born in England, Wales and Scotland, the majority of whom were British passport holders. This research is a result of a quantitative survey and qualitative research based on interviews with British Muslims across England, Wales and Scotland.

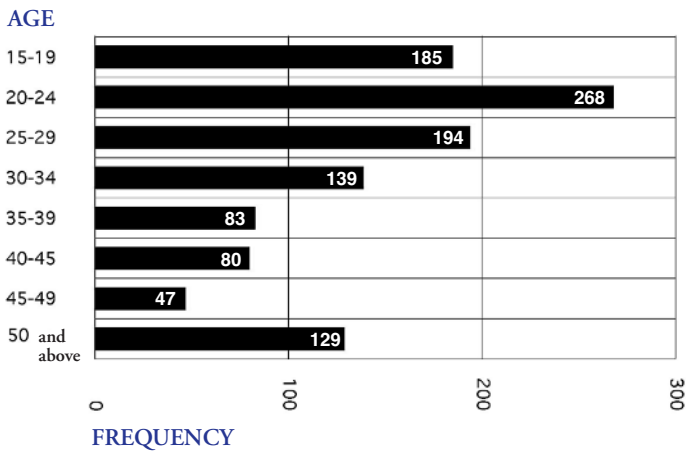
The total number of interviewees in the qualitative research was 37; and the majority were from England, namely, Birmingham, London, Manchester and Luton. The majority of the respondents were male (69%) and the age profile was very young. The respondents were in the age groups 14-25 or 25-34 at 48 and 29 percent respectively; only 14 percent were over the age of 40. Thus, it is not surprising that the majority were students (42%); however, a third were self-employed and only 15 percent were employed. The educational profile was not consistent with that of the 2001 National census, with over 50 percent of the respondents having a higher education qualification and 36 percent having completed A' levels or an equivalent qualification.

In the quantitative survey, the total number of respondents is 1125. The sample is fairly diverse and reflects the Muslim population in Britain. Respondents are from different ethnic groups including Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Arab, African-Caribbean, Turkish, Iranian, mixed and others. Notably the samples also include White British Muslims which indicates that there is a growing presence of White Muslims in Britain. Approximately 90 percent of our respondents are British citizens and 55 percent are born in Britain; reflecting the 2001 National Census which found approximately 47 percent of Muslims were born in Britain.

**Age profile:** The age profile of the respondents is relatively young. About 58 percent of them are between the age of 15- 29; and only about 12 percent are in the age group of 50 and above. This age profile is consistent with the demographic pattern from the 2001 National Census. In the census Muslims aged 15- 29 are approximately 30 percent of the Muslim population. This highlights the fact that British Muslims represent the youngest cohort in the UK. According to the 2001 census the average age of British Muslims is 28; 13 years below the national average.

**Employment:** 43 percent of the respondents are employed and 48 percent constitute the categories of the unemployed, self-employed and students. 135 respondents (12%) were self-employed. This is important as the literature notes that the entry into self-employment can perhaps be attributed to racism, Islamophobia and various other obstacles in the

**Figure 1: Age Groups of the Respondents**



labour market. Further self-employment in itself is an economic dead-end (Aldrich et al.; 1981). In the fourth PSI survey, it has been noted that the Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (over 90% of whom are Muslim and constitute 60 percent of the British Muslim population) are more likely to be ‘driven into self-employment’ and ‘least successful in terms of growth in turnover’ (Pilkington, 2003:77).

Notably, 42 percent of the respondents stated that they ‘do not work’. This conforms to earlier figures published by the Ethnic Minority Employment Division (EMED), which showed that ‘Muslims have an employment rate of 38 percent, the lowest of all faith groups and almost half of that of the Christian group’ (Bunglawala, 2004: 17). Moreover, recent findings indicate that Muslims were more likely than members of other faith groups to report that they had never worked (O’Beirne, 2004).

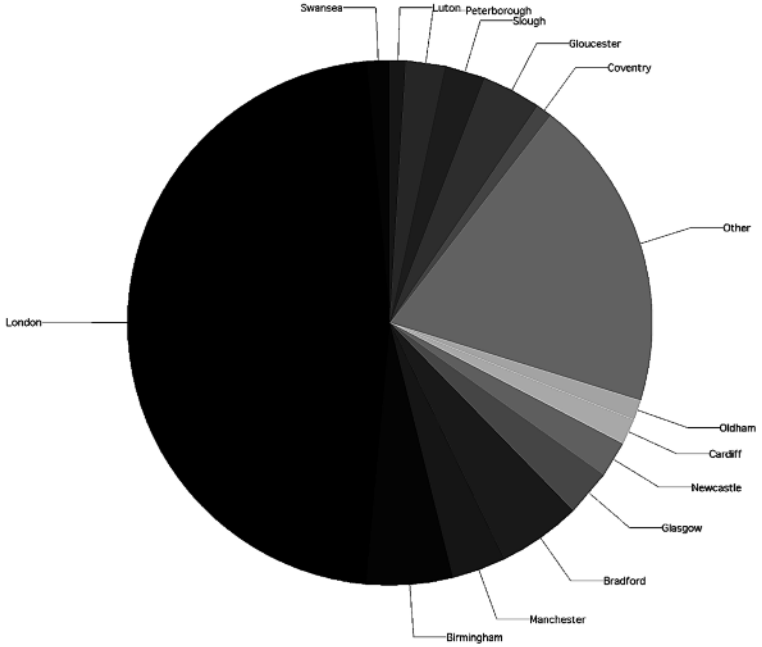
About 27 percent of respondents are employed in the public sector while 31 percent are involved within the private sector. Two single occupational sectors where Muslims are clustered are Education and Health & Social work, at approximately 18 percent and 13 percent respectively. This is a greater proportion than expected given the employment profile of Muslims in the 2001 National Census. This divergence may be attributed to the nature of the survey which required written answers which may have barred many Muslims who are in four major sectors: retail, catering, manufacturing and transport, from participating. Modood et al., (1997:109) found that ‘more than half of all Bangladeshi employed men have just one occupation: waiting and kitchen work in restaurants’, a higher percentage of Pakistanis are involved in manufacturing (including one in ten in textiles) and transportation. These jobs do not generally require a higher educational qualification.<sup>1</sup>

**Geographical Distribution:** The sample groups of the survey are distributed in England, Wales and Scotland reflecting the actual distribution of the Muslim population in UK. Approximately 90 percent of respondents are from England and the rest are from Wales and Scotland. Of these approximately 47 percent are from London which conforms to the present Muslim demography where approximately 40 percent of Muslims live in Greater London (Howes, 2001).

<sup>1</sup> Page: 15

According to census 2001 in wholesale & retail trade and repairs about 22% Muslims are involved, in restaurants about 13%, in manufacturing 13% and in transport about 11%.

**Figure 2: Geographical Distribution of the Respondents**



City	Frequency	Percent
Swansea	16	1.4
London	530	47.1
Birmingham	60	5.3
Manchester	37	3.3
Bradford	58	5.2
Glasgow	32	2.8
Newcastle	25	2.2
Cardiff	18	1.6
Oldham	14	1.2
Other	217	19.3
Coventry	11	1.0
Gloucester	41	3.6
Slough	28	2.5
Peterborough	27	2.4
Luton	11	1.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1125</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Education:** Approximately 21 percent of the respondents achieved A'levels or an equivalent qualification, 30 percent undergraduate and approximately 24 percent post graduate level qualifications. Whilst about 19 percent achieved GCSE or equivalent qualification, 4 percent were below GCSE. This may not be fully representative of the average educational level of Muslims as other studies have found that Muslims are more likely to have no formally recognised qualifications in comparison to members of other faith groups (O'Beirne, 2004). As discussed above, in this study the respondents have a higher education profile than the average.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

Citizenship is a multilateral concept, intertwining nationality, rights and obligations; phenomena that replicate in national and international settings. Identity is particularly contextual so that most nationals introduce themselves on the basis of their comparative national identities, but increasingly, for many, their religious identity becomes the first-mentioned identity and their national identity follows. The confluence of Islamic and British identities demanded that Muslim Britons be identified as a third category of individual called the 'British Muslim'.

Arguably, the dimensions of citizenship that are the most decisive are emotional and cognitive as these enable the citizen to construct their sense of belonging or to perceive their alienation. Social and political rights on their own are not enough to foster that sense of belonging and build a 'political love' in citizens, particularly when it comes to 'minority communities' even though in Marshall's approach formal equality on the plane of citizenship rights are considered to be enough to answer moral demands for social justice and inclusion (Engelen, 2003). Thus, in this research there is an attempt to explain citizenship rights not only from the social and political angle but also from an emotional point of view which also serves to illustrate the relative cultural rights of those Muslims who have been living in the UK for a long period of time. The term 'British Muslim' and all the issues that it exposes are explored so as to determine what Muslims in the UK understand by this, and to enable a meaningful comprehension of the sense of belonging to Britain, in particular, as a key to gain access to the deeper layers of 'citizenship'.

### BRITISH MUSLIM: MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

The concept 'British Muslim' is understood in a variety of ways. Some of the respondents defined 'British Muslim' as those Muslims who live in Britain, or those who are born and grow up in British culture. For other respondents, British nationality and citizenship are the main resources for the formation of a British Muslim identity.

- It doesn't mean much, my understanding is that I am a Muslim living in UK. (Male, 28, Birmingham)
- I think of myself as a British Citizen whose religion is Islam whether practicing or not. (Male, 47, London)
- A person with a British passport, who is able to freely practice their religion in Britain, be a completely free individual without being racially discriminated against. (Female, 19, London)
- Being a Muslim in the UK having the same rights & responsibilities as any other citizen/subject. (Male, 38, Burnham-on-Crouch)

The current social, political and psychological pressure induced by the stereotyping of Muslims in Britain as inextricably linked to terrorism, violence and regressive social attitudes has produced a serious negative impression for both Muslims and non-Muslims; a great feeling of fear, insecurity and distrust is manifest in the current climate. Concepts such as 'Islamic Identity' and 'Islamic Law' in contrast to 'British Identity' and 'British Law' and it seems, the vision of 'us' and 'them' have gained a currency; there is a profound albeit covert divergence between the 'British Muslim' and the 'British non-Muslim'

citizen. A negative development which is bound to lead to more fragmentation and disintegration.

Being a British Muslim means being discriminated against, hated by non-Muslims, abused by UK law, and the new label 'terrorist'.  
(Male, 28, Coventry)

We are labelled all the time as terrorists and being discriminated and degraded by non-Muslims. Being a British Muslim does not mean a lot. But the rights toward our religion does.  
(Male, 29, Birmingham)

Being a British Muslim our identity is always judged and we are known as terrorists, and to me I am proud to be a Muslim so I feel it would be great for us to be able to stand up for our rights as humans and to be able to practice Islam peacefully.  
(Male, 33, Birmingham)

Due to Islamophobia a British Muslim in other words can be called a terrorist suspect. This is my understanding of the identity of a British Muslim. The only way to live is in fear, therefore, now, in this country it's best to hide your identity.  
(Male, 26, Birmingham)

Apart from this perception of Islamophobia, the pursuance of a tribal sovereignty policy to protect the threatened British-white native culture has frustrated many minority groups, in particular Muslims, particularly since September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. In reality, such a policy in fact fails to address the very cultural conflicts between native and non-native communities that it purports to promote, and instead facilitates illiberal and/or undemocratic practices. Cultural theorists like Michael Rabinder James (1999) draw on Jürgen Habermas' conceptions of discourse and the public sphere in order to develop a universalist approach to cultural pluralism, such as the 'intercultural public sphere', which analyzes how cultures can engage in mutual learning and mutual criticism under fair conditions. Fairness or parity is central to any sort of conflict resolution; without the corrective element of fairness, any resulting imbalance in social policy is almost bound to lead to marginalization or extremism.

Identity is a matter of choice. It is not an issue of what one has to be or does not have to be. In some, the sense of identity is the result of a 'pull and push' process. As soon as one tries to impose a typical form of identity, especially when it comes through insults and fear, resistance and struggle can take place in the form of extreme Jihadist attitudes or fundamentalist orientations. To form a friendly environment, equal opportunity for individual expression and social manifestation together with fair representation in the political sphere is a necessary requirement.

A 23 year old female from Cardiff and a 34 year old male from Luton gave a very inclusive picture of how Muslimness and Britishness can come together and merge to form a complimentary identity of belonging both to Islam and Britain. Although this language might be considered idealistic, it represents one of the most articulate expectations of Muslims in Britain:



My understanding is that one feels they are part of both the British community and Muslim community, and that both terms identify aspects that are important to them. To me it means that I feel that Britain is both my country and my home. My mannerisms, way of doing things, and mentality is decisively British. Even little things like knowledge of Monty Python and supporting the England football team when they play contribute to my feeling British! Being a British Muslim to me is just a term that takes into account that being a Muslim and being part of the Muslim community is also an equally important part of my identity. I don't feel that either identity impedes the other. Some may argue that in some cases the two identities are contradictory- for example the British drinking culture- but I would argue that you can find British non-Muslims who choose not to indulge in this culture- this does not make them any less British.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

A British Muslim identity involves synthesising and accentuating the best of both cultures/ways of life where they are compatible and finding ways of imaginatively reconciling them in areas where there is conflict.

(Male, 34, Luton)

Distinguishing between what it means to be both Muslim and British, with the possibility of accepting both dimensions is another obvious orientation that has arisen from many responses:

I understand the term British Muslim Identity to mean that one identifies with both communities, the Muslim community being the one of faith that binds us together in our goal to worship Allah and follow his messenger. The British identity comes from the fact that one lives, works and interacts with others in British society. To me personally this is what being a British Muslim is - although I am a Muslim I am also part of the community in this country as I was born here. So much of my thinking, ideas and conditioning are shaped by this country, which is reasonable in that I was born here.

(Female, 23, Essex)

British Muslim Identity, to me is a result of being someone that practices the faith of Islam whilst living in Britain. Muslims living all over the world to a degree are influenced by the culture they are subjected to whilst living in that particular part of the world. Muslims in Britain will have their own identity in the sense that they are likely to dress similarly, have similar attitudes regarding national issues, and have similar issues to deal with. Being a British Muslim is part of who I am and the views I hold simply because I have been brought up in Britain.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

For me, being a 'British Muslim' means more than simply existing as a Muslim in Britain. I feel solidarity with other Muslims living in Britain: not only do we share a common religion, but we also share

the same daily difficulties in practising this religion in a non-Muslim country. Thus we are able to empathise with one another. The more positive side to this is that we are also able to give each other mutual encouragement as the ‘underdogs’ in today’s society. This includes celebrating each other’s successes. I feel that a British Muslim identity is then gradually emerging.

(Male, 21, Bolton)

For some respondents, the term ‘British Muslim’ is a nationalistic idea that goes against the notion that a Muslim is linked by virtue of his/her faith to other Muslims all over the world, something that for them is essential to understanding the unity and universality of Islam. A 29 year old male from Luton stressed this point: ‘British Muslim Identity is the coinage of a term by the powers that be and many Muslims to try to partition Muslims from the Muslims of the rest of the umma. I feel the powers are trying to do it to encourage people to put their nationality above their religion and to encourage people to not look for religious guidance from abroad. This is an attempt to sever the moral link with the fundamentals of religion as well’. Such Muslims see a conflict with the ideals of an understanding of ‘Islamic universalism and human community’:

I am not sure that being a ‘British Muslim’ has any meaning for me beyond describing what passport I carry. I am very nervous of the term as I reject nationalism of any sort. Until very recently I did not support Britain in any sporting events even, and very latterly became ‘attached’ to the England football team, an experience soured by the fact that the St. George’s flag, which I can only associate with right wing extremism, has resurfaced as a result of football passion in this country.

(Female, 33, London)

Questions such as ‘Do you think there is such a thing as a single British Muslim community in Britain?’, and ‘Are there many diverse British Muslim communities?’, produced significantly unexpected results. The Islamophobic agenda of the media and arguably, the government, post-September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 has had a very obvious impact. One very palpable result of such an Islamophobic climate is that despite the huge diversity of Muslims in Britain – due to differences in their ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations – many Muslims feel they should be united and that they should merge into one ‘British Muslim Community’. Although their differences are sometimes very profound, the way in which they comment on this question seems to suggest that there is a serious attempt to overshadow it:

There are many diverse British Muslim communities in this country however we are all branded as one due to a lack of understanding and also due to the mass media stereotyping.

(Male, 47, London)

There is a Muslim Community which is made up of groupings of diverse communities. I think over time there will be a move towards burying historical differences and moving towards common ground and the fundamentals.

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

I believe that there are many diverse communities simply because by and large the British Muslim community in this country originated from many parts of the world. So while there is a strong bond with those of the same religion as you and this may cause the British Muslim community to unite on certain issues (such as war on Iraq). It is also true that Islam is not a cultural practice but due to its

nature its highly adaptable to all cultures and that's why we have diverse Muslim communities.

(Female, 23, Essex)

There are many communities founded on divisions: either racial (Arab, Black African, Indian, Pakistani etc) or sectarian. However, I feel that there are recent trends towards greater unity.

(Male, 21, Bolton)

There are many communities which used to live happily within their traditions-now I think they are coming together after noticing Islamophobia.

(Male, 26, Birmingham)

I think both exist. Just as people from across Britain will identify themselves as being British but within the British community people will identify [sic] themselves as being from the South, North... etc. The Muslim community is no different. They will stand united as one community in some cases and in others show diverse opinions.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

One point made by a female respondent from Surrey, is the impact of the British cultural context in bringing all Muslims into the same category of culture and identity. Basically, the 'social interactions' that construct an individual's identity as the result of various social experiences intrinsically associated with all the joining and departures of social life, are sustained by a process of negotiation through interacting with others (Ameli, 2002:29). From this perspective, British society plays an important role in creating a similar experience for Britain's Muslims, and therefore becomes a source for placing Muslims in a unified position, integrating Muslims from within. The commonality of Muslim experience in Britain was also articulated:



I feel there are many sub-communities based on ethnic and religious lines ... Yet I feel you can describe a British Muslim experience as we all face similar things through living in the UK. In addition, we all experience the same trials through living here such as during the recent invasion of Iraq or simply things like the drinking culture at work.

(Male, 28, Surrey)

I think that whilst the Muslim communities in the UK are very diverse to the point of not recognising each other as co-Muslims, there is such a thing as a common Muslim experience in the UK and this is an increasing phenomenon that has meaning.

(Female, 33, London)





## DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES OF BEING A BRITISH MUSLIM:

It seems that those who have longer-established roots in the UK, and who grew up here as residents in England, Wales or Scotland, and in particular those who came from a non-Muslim background, have a different sort of social and cultural experience. Firstly, they see Britishness as apart from an identity for those who belong to a Diaspora culture that has arisen from different ethnic groups originating from outside the UK. Secondly, whilst British culture is not necessarily an alien culture for them, it is distinct in terms of its assimilation of Islamic values and religious principles and sometimes they feel isolated and alienated by majority British society.

Before I was Muslim, whenever I saw the St George's Flag, I was very proud of my heritage. But since I became Muslim, now, when I see it, I feel intimidated by it. When it was the World Cup and all the flags were flying around, I associated it with the jobs, and anti-Muslim people because of the way they acted towards me. I don't feel like I belong to England anymore coz England doesn't accept me for who I am, and that is, a Muslim who is English.

(Female, London, 43)

I would describe myself as culturally British but with the Islamic Religion and some Islamic cultural influences. I have been a Muslim for 15 years. At first I was interested in identifying the essence of Islam independent of culture (i.e. how to be a Muslim without wearing Shalwar Kameez, how to take the exotic out of Islam!). Now I am interested in the way in which Islam influences and provides a seedbed for the flourishing of cultures, attitudes etc. Thus I am interested in traditional Muslim ideas and ways of life and in answering the question 'what would a British Islamic culture be?' I am interested in my traditions and history and at the same time I identify with the history and traditions of many Muslim people. I am not a nationalist - I think my country right or wrong is totally unislamic. But I am happy to be British (most of the time). I am proud of the fact that Britain is host to Muslims (and non-Muslims) from so many different countries and that even in the past two decades I feel we are developing a 'British Muslim identity'. As an indigenous Brit in a mixed marriage I see cultural interchanges and modifications taking place, 'communication' which I feel is really positive. We are getting to know each other and exchange views and ideas and share common experiences and concerns.

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

British Muslim, as I perceive it, is used to describe someone who racially does not originate from any part of the UK but has citizenship here and practices Islam. I do not see myself as a British Muslim, rather an English Muslim. To me, this means my ethnicity and cultural values are in essence English, whereas my faith and spiritual values are from Islam. Where issues arise out of a contradiction in values, Islam takes priority as I consider this the higher of the two as its source is truth.

(Male, 28, Surrey)

## THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF BRITISH MUSLIM CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship is a wide concept which often appears paradoxical. The concept of a 'British nationality' is very obvious, however the discourse relating to rights and obligations is very ambiguous. Exploring the dimensions of nationality such as affiliation, loyalty and political love, the concept 'nationality' evolves into that of social and political responsibilities which increases the diversity of perceptions connected with these concepts.

In response to 'what does citizenship mean to British Muslims?' a variety of responses were received. Some of the responses reflect distrust of the utility of citizenship in general and British Muslim Citizenship in particular. One of the respondents articulated the increased responsibility that one should feel when he/she is Muslim and British:



Citizenship to me as a British Muslim is about practising my faith and meeting my duties-both moral and legal to ensure that we have a positive and tolerant and respectful society that benefits all of us-irrespective of wealth, social status, faith, race, gender etc.

(Male, 26, London)

Citizenship is a secular definition of morality in the current climate to unify people under a common set of objectives and to put their own moral values as secondary. Instead of diversity it is encouraging singularity.

(Male, 29, Luton)

I believe – for want of a better phrase – in transnational citizenship. As a Muslim I have a strong belief in the idea of an ummah, and I also feel that this camaraderie extends to the oppressed world-wide and those who want to share in a movement for a better future at a time when the world is polarising into different extremes. As such I do not think that citizenship in a national context is particularly meaningful for me. Especially as it seems to have failed in the British and European context to secure equal or indeed basic rights for minorities, either as European nationals between wars, religious minorities (Jews in 1930s) or indeed local majorities (Bosnia 1992 – 1996), or as 'immigrant' minorities now.

(Female, 33, London)

Citizenship for a British Muslim means equal rights but higher responsibilities as Islam exhorts us to excel and exemplify a model character and ethics in all spheres. We can not claim that Islam has more to offer humanity while only expecting of ourselves the same standards as those espoused by an increasingly virtue-less society.

(Male, 34, Luton)

It means to me that I belong in this country, and I'm one of the citizens living here and I have to live by the responsibilities and duties.

(Female, 14, Sussex)

Citizenship is security.

(Female, 19, Manchester)

The responses gathered expressed a tremendously varied attitude and understanding of the concept of citizenship. Some of the respondents seemed to be very thoughtful about the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen, others were cynical or suspicious about the significance of citizenship for Muslims such as the ones cited below. For them, there is no such particular phenomenon as being a 'British Muslim Citizen' and they were dissatisfied by the segregation between Muslim and non-Muslim as citizens or any other categorisation which would lead to a heterogeneity in terms of social policy in Britain:

I am not a nationalist, I think one has to stand up for the right thing, not just support ones tribe and I am also by the same token, not a 'Muslim nationalist'. I do not think we should separate ourselves off from British society and I don't think we should be interested in exclusively Muslim issues like Halal meat or the Hijab. I think we should be out there participating and debating and getting involved with things and influencing policies such as on the environment or education or just raising awareness. I am a British person who is very glad I found out about Islam and there is a lot of ignorance out there about Islam. I am a citizen not just of Britain but of the world, 'Think globally, act locally', but my closest affiliation is with the Ummah. However, I think things are changing over time.

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

A significant statement made by a 65 year old lady, was that 'British Muslim citizenship is in the line of exaggerating the religion to overshadow the citizenship right.' Other respondents gave very indifferent responses, neither feeling they are being ignored as a minority group or as British Muslims:

Citizenship for me is reduced to a purely formal (ie legal) status. Beyond that it has no meaning. If anything, I feel more European than British.

(Male, 21, Bolton)

Can't really say.

(Male, 38, Burnham-on-Crouch)

Virtually nothing and I resent being picked out as Muslims rather than as for my rights as a citizen.

(Female, 65, Birmingham)

Not much really- I would not be in this country if it had been my choice. But at least I am secure in that I cannot be kicked out of Britain.

(Male, 27, Manchester)

Not much but I would hope that we as Muslims would be able to make a change so that the next generation to come will be able to live a better Islamic life without discrimination.

(Male, 33, Birmingham)

Whilst a few of the interviewees defined citizenship as a complex of responsibilities with a sense of attachment to British society and social rights, a minority of the respondents saw citizenship more as a formal national phenomenon which gave them a national identity, without any social and cul-

tural connotation of respect, or support from the British government and consequently they lacked a sense of belonging and loyalty towards Britain. This reflects the findings of the qualitative research carried out for the Home Office Citizenship Survey which suggested that people had difficulties with the word 'citizenship'. When given time to consider it, they almost 'universally' equated it with nationality (Home Office, 2002).

Citizenship brings an official sense of belonging to Britain and entitles certain rights such as freedom when travelling. Citizenship also endorses the notion that the British Government has a responsibility towards you in a legal, social and political sense.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

Citizenship to me is a citizen of Britain under British laws.

(Male, 52, London)

Some of the responses quite clearly manifested a sense of loyalty and positive perception about citizenship in Britain

I am proud to be a British Muslim citizen.

(Male, 38, Birmingham)

I think of Britain as my home and will always do so.

(Male, 47, London)

Citizenship means that I belong to this country and I should do all in my power to benefit this country. I am responsible for contributing to the country on all levels, such as financial, security and social responsibility as long as my actions are not in clear contravention of Islamic principles.

(Male, 28, Surrey)

Getting citizenship for a country opens up new paths, roads, and routes for you to follow. It gives me the chance to be as good as the others and it brings together unity.

(15, Male, Essex)

The majority of responses attest to the complex cultural identity of British Muslims who are attached to their faith as well as possessing a sense of belonging to Britain. This sense of belonging is a central expectation of living in any cultural environment no matter how different it may be from that in which one originated. Such an expectation is not unique amongst Muslims in Britain, but emerges in the vast discourse concerning cultural citizenship. There have been lively debates in citizenship studies on the role of culture in citizenship.

Three orientations that are not totally divergent but which have emerged recently in theoretical fora discuss minority culture as an important element of minority citizenship manifesting the difference of values and religious affiliation of the minorities. Tony Bennett and colleagues in the cultural-policy studies movement have focused on a guaranteed set of cultural competences that a government should give to its citizenry (Bennett, 1998 and Miller, 1998). Renato Rosado (1997) in Californian Texan, and New York Latino studies of the same period look to a guaranteed set of rights for minorities. The third group are scholars like the liberal political theorist Kymlicka (1995) who seek a rapprochement between collective minority cultures and individual majority culture.

All these approaches to cultural citizenship are based on the assumption that culture is a set of tools for living that are deployed or not depending on their value for achieving specific purposes, rather than purely expressive ends in themselves. Therefore, liberal governments are criticised for the myth of the sovereign individual and the assumption of a shared language and culture. It is impossible to expect every body to live in the same cultural performance or share the same cultural values. In particular when society is exclusively multicultural, such an assumption is irrelevant and inapplicable (Rosaldo *et al.*, 1997).

The concept of cultural citizenship is about connection between collective membership such as British Muslim and the nation-state in a way that can help distinguish life-enhancing values of belonging, participation and access from the potentially destructive and exclusionary ramifications of nationalism. As the notion of cultural citizenship highlights the role of cultural rights, privileges and obligations in enabling political change or challenge, it also draws attention to an extraordinary opportunity for people to take responsibility for matters that concern them fundamentally (Knight, 2003).

## 'GOOD BRITISH CITIZEN' AND MUSLIM: A DICHOTOMY?

In response to the question: "Do you see any serious contradiction between being a 'Good British Citizen' and a practising Muslim?" respondents were adamant that there was no distinction between being a good British citizen and being a practising Muslim, with the majority looking upon the two as complementary to one another.

No. Islam is a law abiding faith. It talks about respecting the rules of the host nation. Islam is a socialist faith-about being good to other people and doing the right thing by people...what does 'Britain' think its value are, if not these?

(Male, 26, London)

I find it offensive to suggest that there is a contradiction, unless it means blind allegiance to our flag, in which case I take the same line that ee Cummings does in his poem, and refuse to kiss it.

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

Not really, as being a British citizen does not mean that you have to give up your religious beliefs or stop practicing them.

(Male, 17, London)

No. My idea of practice is more of a Sufi type and less based on formal Sharia or Sunni prescription.

(Female, 65, Birmingham)

None whatsoever.

(Male, 47, London)

No, as we are supposed to live lives by the law.

(Female, 19, London)

No since there is not one single definition of 'Being a good British citizen'.

(Male, 38, Burnham-on-Crouch)

A contradiction would only occur if being a good citizen was given a higher priority than being a practising Muslim. Being a practising Muslim itself does entail being a good citizen in terms of being bound to abide by the country's laws. However if citizenship commands doing something against Islamic principles then that would cause me to see a serious contradiction. As I see it, there are no current serious contradictions.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

No both mean the same. We taught the west how to become a good citizen look in history books you will see the west had no laws.

(Male, 28, Coventry)

No none at all. In fact the opposite, part of being a practising Muslim requires one to respect the laws of the land.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

No. there is no contradiction. As a Muslim you have to abide by the laws of the country in which you live and pose no threat to the community or commit treason etc. If one can't do that so leave the country. In light of that there is no contradiction.

(Female, 23, Essex)

No, I think they go hand in hand.

(Male, 21, Manchester)

According to our survey illustrated in table 1, only 22% of the respondents came across a significant contradiction between their Islamic values and being a 'Good British Citizen' and the rest either did not see any serious contradiction between these two (46.1%) or saw some similarity as well as deviation (31.8%). The ambiguity of the concept of being a 'Good British Citizen' could be one of the reasons for rejecting it, the other reason could be the incorporation of the atheistic as well as Islamophobic and racist culture with the notion of 'British Citizenship'. One can see the articulation of these two reasons throughout the responses of interviewees.

**Table 1: Do you see any serious contribution between a 'Good British Citizen' and Islamic Values**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
No, there is no serious contradiction	519	46.1	46.1
Yes, there is significant contradiction	248	22.0	68.2
There is some similarity as well as deviation	358	31.8	100.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1125</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Some of the respondents believe that there are relatively some kind of contradictions between being a good Muslim and a good British Citizen:

Of course there are some contradictions just as many of the other lifestyles British people choose contradict in some ways the notion of 'good British Citizenship' but on the whole being a practising Muslim is relatively no less a feasible proposition.  
(Male, 34, Luton)

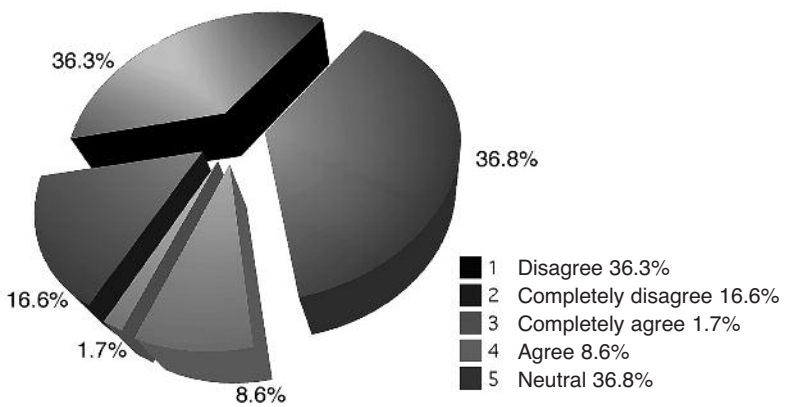
Yes, there is a significant amount of contradiction, deviation also.  
(Male, 33, Birmingham)

Depends upon the definitions- essentially the two should be one- a good citizen is a law abiding peaceful one, a Muslim is a person who follows his religion.  
(Male, 33, Manchester)

## RECOGNIZING MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN

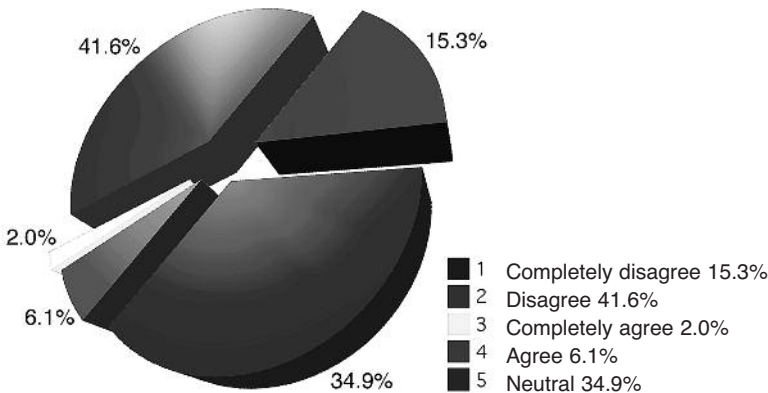
Recognition is an important element of citizenship: recognition stems from acknowledgement in the prevailing political and social constructs: we employed the terms 'respect' and 'recognition' in order to explore these emotive dimensions of citizenship. Our survey results show that over 50% disagreed with the statement that the British government respected British Muslims, with just over 10% agreeing with the statement (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Do you feel British Government respect British Muslims?**



Less than 10% believed that British society respected British Muslims with almost 57% stating that it disrespected British Muslims (Figure 4). 17% felt strongly that the British Government does not respect Muslims, and slightly over 15% felt that British society did not respect British Muslims. However, 37% of respondents were undecided as to whether the British Government respects British Muslims or not. In a similar way, 35% were undecided about the attitude of British society towards British Muslims. This could be due to the mixed messages received from the Government.

Figure 4: Do you feel British Society respect British Muslims?



The common sense of belonging which is fundamental to citizenship comes through mutual recognition and respect. Members of the society should, 'feel *both* that they belong to a common political community and that it belongs to them..... and one cannot belong to a community unless it also accepts one as its valued member' (Parekh, 1999:449). Many respondents did not think that the Muslim community is equally accepted and respected. They felt that they were continuously perceived as 'suspicious', 'alien' and 'foreigners' always plotting against the interests of Britain. They explained that the sustained environment of suspicion about Islam blended with an ethnic prejudice barred their recognition as equal members of society:

I think there is considerable suspicion cast on our allegiances (which cricket team do we support, do we fly the flag of St George the mythical crusader saint moor slayer), do we think our boys should kill foreign Muslims? I think it is offensive to suggest that dissent makes us bad citizens. I would hate Britain to go down the line of America where the label 'unAmerican' is commonly used to silence dissent.

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

In response to the question: "Do you think that British Muslims have really been recognized as British Citizens?" a variety of responses were identified:

No, as we originate from countries other than Britain.

(Female, 14, London)

No. they are treated unfairly.

(15, Male, Essex)

No but as Muslim extremists.

(Male, 33, Birmingham)

No- not at all although they have rights.

(Male, 29, Birmingham)

No we are foreigners

(Female, 43, London)

At present no, before September 11 yes.

(Male, 28, Birmingham)

No-they have been rejected totally.

(Male, 33, Birmingham)

No I don't think that's entirely the case. I do believe in media and politics there is much talk of British Muslims and their role as citizens. But I think that on a community level by and large there is great ignorance and even fear of Muslims. This is compounded by the fact that Muslims are largely from ethnic minorities –this com-



bination of racism and xenophobia hinders Muslims being recognised as British citizens

(Female, 23, Essex)

Although about half of British Muslims were born in Britain, there still seems to be a general perception that Muslims are ‘outsiders’ and thus not equal members of society; such as the female Londoner’s view that Muslims are not recognized as proper British citizens because they ‘originate from countries other than Britain’. Some respondents viewed unequal treatment (being “treated unfairly”) as a kind of ‘defective’ citizenship. This is resonant of Parekh’s (1999) emphasis upon equal treatment as an essential condition to achieve a stable ‘common citizenship’; without equal treatment for all members of society irrespective of their cultural, ethnic, religious and other differences a common sense of belonging cannot be achieved.

## PARTIAL RECOGNITION

Respondents felt that although they had been recognised as citizens in theory, in practice they were treated as outsiders. Some respondents felt that first and second generation Muslims were treated as foreigners, whereas third generation Muslims were integrated as British citizens.

Yes –in theory, on paper and in principle. But in practice, outwardly practising Muslims are made to feel as if they are ‘foreigners’ or even potential fifth columnists when continually asked to pledge their allegiance to Britain and to denounce terrorism. ‘Our’ British troops invading ‘their’ Muslim countries also leads to polarisation and raises doubts about the loyalty of British Muslims.

(Male, 21, Bolton)

If by this you mean those Muslims of ‘Asian’ or other descent then I would say, the older generation have never been accepted as British Citizens but the younger generations are now seen as British. Similarly the first arrivals from the Caribbean were never seen as British but now their children and grand-children are all seen as British.

(Male, 28, Surrey)

On the level of the general public, I think this has not happened, but on a governmental level there is recognition that Muslims born in Britain are British citizens.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

On paper and in official aspects yes. In everyday life- a little but not totally. There is currently too much suspicion that Muslims have an underlying agenda due to all the ‘war on terror’ campaigns targeting Muslims.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

Debatable, depends who you talk to but probably not seen as being British, possibly as Asians, Arabs etc.... but part of that is our fault.

(Female, 22, Manchester)

Yes those who choose to be involved.

(Male, 33, Manchester)

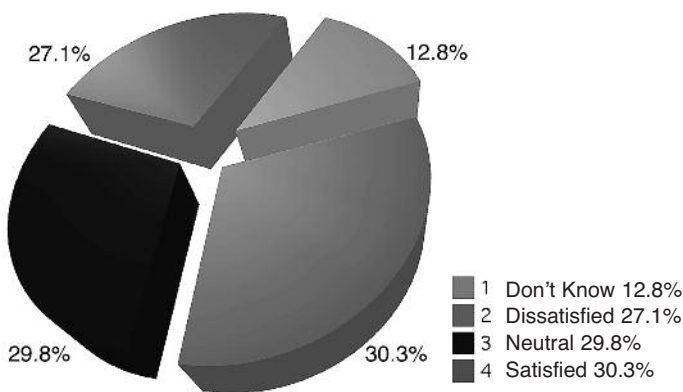
Yes, because even though we're Muslims we're still living in their country, and if I live in their country we're citizens of their country.  
(Female, 14, Sussex)

The attitudes are multi-dimensional, with some taking into account historical developments, and other respondents feeling that there had been some improvement. Arguably that sense of progress would have been more uniform if the few Government initiatives had been followed through all strata of society, and in particular spearheaded by the media. Since the very converse is the case and the popular media very hostile, respondents understandably gave mixed responses, although nearly all sensed that Muslims, particularly those visibly identifiable as such, were regarded suspiciously .

## THE BRITISH MUSLIM CITIZEN: CONTENT OR DISCONTENT?

Satisfaction is an essential part of 'comfortable citizenship'. If a community, for whatever reason it may be, feels antagonized, then society is practically undergoing a deconstructive social process damaging productivity and efficiency. According to our survey, 30.3% of respondents endorsed their satisfaction with living in Britain and 27.1% expressed their dissatisfaction. 42.6% of the respondents remained either neutral or they could not have a clear expression of their feeling (Fig. 5). The low level of satisfaction is significant given the fact that the majority of British Muslims in one sense constitute a diasporic community and are aware that the countries from which they originate are economically, politically or in terms of law and order far worse than Britain.

Figure 5: As a British Citizen are you satisfied or dissatisfied?



As shown in the table below (Table 2) , there is a meaningful relationship between income group and proportion of satisfaction; the lower the income, the less satisfaction. Significantly, even the highest figure of satisfaction expressed by high income earners is only 40.5%.

	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Total
<b>INCOME</b>					
Lower Class	66 22.0%	84 28.0%	110 36.7%	40 13.3%	300 100.0%
Middle Class	258 33.0%	243 31.0%	183 23.4%	99 12.6%	783 100.0%
Upper Class	17 40.5%	8 19.0%	12 28.6%	5 11.9%	42 100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>341</b> <b>30.3%</b>	<b>335</b> <b>29.8%</b>	<b>305</b> <b>27.1%</b>	<b>144</b> <b>12.8%</b>	<b>1125</b> <b>100.0%</b>

Table 3 shows that the proportion of satisfaction of those who live in England (29.3%) and Wales (29.5) is significantly lower than those who live in Scotland (48.3%). Reasons for relatively higher proportion of satisfaction among Muslims in Scotland is unknown, although it is not possible to be conclusive about the comparative socio-economic strata of the communities within those regions.

	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Total
<b>REGION</b>					
England	299 29.3%	302 29.6%	289 28.3%	131 12.8%	1021 100.0%
Wales	13 29.5%	16 36.4%	7 15.9%	8 18.2%	44 100.0%
Scotland	29 48.3%	17 28.3%	9 15.0%	5 8.3%	60 100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>341</b> <b>30.3%</b>	<b>335</b> <b>29.8%</b>	<b>305</b> <b>27.1%</b>	<b>144</b> <b>12.8%</b>	<b>1125</b> <b>100.0%</b>

Table 4 illustrates the relationship between the feeling of citizenship and satisfaction. It shows that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction and those who feel that they are accepted and respected as British citizens (32%). The proportion of satisfaction is significantly low (14.9%) among those who feel that they are not respected and regarded as citizens. It is noticeable that the proportion of those who 'don't know' whether they are satisfied or not is significantly high (45%), among respondents who feel they are not respected as citizens.

Table 4: Relation between level of satisfaction and citizenship status					
	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Total
<b>CITIZEN</b>					
Yes	66 22.0%	84 28.0%	110 36.7%	40 13.3%	300 100.0%
No	258 33.0%	243 31.0%	183 23.4%	99 12.6%	783 100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>341 30.3%</b>	<b>335 29.8%</b>	<b>305 27.1%</b>	<b>144 12.8%</b>	<b>1125 100.0%</b>

Table 5 shows the relationship between academic qualification and satisfaction. It appears that the proportion of satisfied people is higher among those with a lower level of education. Whilst below GCSE, 40.5% are satisfied, among PhD holders it hits almost the lowest level (27.6%). The Least satisfied group of people are those who are at undergraduate level (27.3%). It seems that among these respondents better education does not inevitably result in satisfaction.

Table 5: The level of education and extent of satisfaction					
	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Total
Below GCSE	17 40.5%	7 16.7%	9 21.4%	9 21.4%	42 100.0%
GCSE or Equivalent	72 34.1%	60 28.4%	57 27.0%	22 10.4%	211 100.0%
A Lever or Equivalent	72 29.9%	82 34.0%	57 23.7%	30 12.4%	241 100.0%
Undergraduate	91 27.3%	111 33.3%	97 29.1%	34 10.2%	333 100.0%
Postgraduate	81 30.1%	67 24.9%	79 29.4%	42 15.6%	269 100.0%
PhD	8 27.6%	8 27.6%	6 20.7%	7 24.1%	29 100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>341 30.3%</b>	<b>335 29.8%</b>	<b>305 27.1%</b>	<b>144 12.8%</b>	<b>1125 100.0%</b>

Table 6 shows the relationship between religiosity and citizenship satisfaction. Out of those surveyed, the majority identified themselves as practising Muslims with very few identifying themselves as not caring about Islamic values at all. A significant number identified themselves as Highly Practising Muslims. An almost equal percentage of both practising (30.9%) and highly practising (29.1%) Muslims claimed that they were satisfied with their life in Britain. However, similar percentages in both categories expressed their dissatisfaction with life in Britain. Those who did not care about Islamic values at all are the most satisfied group (60%) living in Britain, and the least satisfied, 40%, suggesting that the lack of Islamic values was not an easily quantifiable factor, except for the possible conclusion that such an attitude led to the least moderated and most volatile response.

<b>Table 6: The level of religiosity and extent of citizenship satisfaction among Muslims in Britain</b>					
	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Total
I don't know	20 27.4%	15 20.5%	12 16.4%	26 35.6%	73 100.0%
Highly practicing Muslim	51 29.1%	44 25.1%	55 31.4%	25 14.3%	175 100.0%
Practicing Muslim	228 30.9%	227 30.7%	204 27.6%	80 10.8%	739 100.0%
Secular Muslim	25 31.3%	29 36.3%	20 25.0%	6 7.5%	80 100.0%
Cultural Muslim	14 26.4%	20 37.7%	12 22.6%	7 13.2%	53 100.0%
Don't care about Islamic Values at all	3 60.0%	0 .0%	2 40.0%	0 .0%	5 100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>341</b> <b>30.3%</b>	<b>335</b> <b>29.8%</b>	<b>305</b> <b>27.1%</b>	<b>144</b> <b>12.8%</b>	<b>1125</b> <b>100.0%</b>

Most respondents felt some sort of affiliation with Britain. Our survey revealed a healthy correlation between those who felt a strong affiliation with Britain and a high level of satisfaction with life in Britain (65.9%). The majority of those who lacked a sense of belonging to Britain felt dissatisfied with life in Britain. As their sense of belonging weakens their percentage of satisfaction also lessens. The survey shows that those who strongly say that they do not feel any belonging to Britain are also those who are the most dissatisfied group with life in Britain (58.8%).

<b>Table 7: Sense of Belonging to Britain and the level of satisfaction as a British citizen</b>					
	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Total
<b>SATISFIED</b>					
Yes, Very Strong	89 65.9%	21 15.6%	15 11.1%	10 7.4%	135 100.0%
Yes, I feel a sense of Belonging	152 47.1%	90 27.9%	60 18.6%	21 6.5%	323 100.0%
Neutral	62 21.7%	123 43.0%	51 17.8%	50 17.5%	286 100.0%
No, not at all	10 6.1%	44 26.7%	97 58.8%	14 8.5%	165 100.0%
No, I don't feel a sense of Belonging	11 7.5%	50 34.2%	70 47.9%	15 10.3%	146 100.0%
I don't know	17 24.3%	7 10.0%	12 17.1%	34 48.6%	70 100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>341</b> <b>30.3%</b>	<b>335</b> <b>29.8%</b>	<b>305</b> <b>27.1%</b>	<b>144</b> <b>12.8%</b>	<b>1125</b> <b>100.0%</b>

Table 8 shows that almost a third of those surveyed expressed their preference to live in Britain as they were happy here. An almost identical number of people stated that if given the choice, they would prefer to live in an Islamic country due to their unhappiness here. Clearly, again, there was a strong correlation between a preference to living in Britain and satisfaction with life here.

<b>Table 8: Relationship between the level of satisfaction and the country that would prefer to live</b>					
	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>SATISFIED</b>					
Britain because I am British	105 44.3%	58 24.5%	43 18.1%	31 13.1%	237 100.0%
Britain because I feel happy here	167 46.6%	102 28.5%	42 11.7%	47 13.1%	358 100.0%
An Islamic country, I don't feel happy here	34 10.4%	103 31.4%	161 49.1%	30 9.1%	328 100.0%
Another European Country	5 11.9%	15 35.7%	13 31.0%	9 21.4%	42 100.0%
Another Country	30 18.8%	57 35.6%	46 28.8%	27 16.9%	160 100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>341 30.3%</b>	<b>335 29.8%</b>	<b>305 27.1%</b>	<b>144 12.8%</b>	<b>1125 100.0%</b>

## MUSLIM SATISFACTION IN BRITAIN

In response to the questions: “As a British Muslim, do you feel happy in Britain? Why? Why not?” respondents who felt ‘happy’ in Britain listed their reasons as falling within three overarching categories: that Britain provided a tolerant and democratic environment for religious practice; that Britain was their home; and that Britain offered greater freedom than other European countries.

### A TOLERANT ENVIRONMENT FOR RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Respondents felt ‘happy’ in Britain due to its general policy of tolerance and its democratic values, in comparison to more authoritarian regimes in countries in Asia and the Middle East. Although they did disagree with certain aspects of British foreign policy and the attitudes of certain elements of British society, they preferred Britain to other countries:

Yes- being a Muslim is following a way of life, being British is having an awareness of my surrounding, therefore I live my life following my religion in Britain.

(Male, 33, Manchester)

I feel I am relatively happy in Britain. Compared to most other

countries it is relatively tolerant and democratic and has other traditional values which I identify with. However, we all know there are limits to this tolerance and democracy. You could say that it is one of the better places to live. Besides, I have no family links to any where else.

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

I feel happy because I do not have to follow Sharia practice imposed on women in Muslim countries generally.

(Female, 65, Birmingham)

If the weather was better this would be the nearest thing to paradise on earth. I feel very happy here as this is my home. In addition, I have travelled a lot through the Middle East and Asia and find not only the infrastructure and services a blessing but the people here are easier to live with. As a Saudi mother once said to me while I was there, 'the English practice more Islam than the Muslims'.

(Male, 28, Surrey)

I do feel happy and not. Happy because UK is very developed. There are new roads and paths to follow. Medical science has developed and UK is one of the most well known in it. Unfortunately with the people I am not. There are some really racist, mindless, skinhead bunch of freaks here who make me want to leave this hell hole.

(15, Male, Essex)

As I have never lived in another country (or visited an Islamic country) I have no experience with what being a Muslim living in another country is like. In my home area (which is multi-cultural) most people are open minded and I do not get any problems with being a Muslim. However I do sometimes feel Britain as a whole does not exactly welcome 'Muslims' with open arms.

(Male, 17, London)

I am happy in Britain, although I do not agree with its International policies, I feel there are pros and cons to living in any country and so within this context, Britain is a relatively safe place to be.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

## RELATIVELY GREATER RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Respondents were happy living in Britain as it offered them more freedom to practice their religion than other European countries, although the situation was not ideal, it was much better than in other places.

I feel very fortunate that I live in a country where (traditionally) people enjoy the liberty to practise their religion as they please. I feel that our situation here is much better than that of Muslims in other non-Muslim countries and also when compared with Muslims in countries where the majority of the population is Muslim (eg Turkey).

(Male, 21, Bolton)

I do feel happy in this country; although I don't think it's a perfect situation especially since 9/11. However relative to other countries

in Europe (Holland, France, Germany) I do feel that Muslims have greater freedom and face less discrimination here. On the whole we have greater integration. I also feel happy as in Britain there is greater freedom to practice religion relative to some Muslim countries. Moreover in comparative perspective Muslims have lived through worse times. There have been/are situations when Muslims have been persecuted due to their fate [sic]; with this in mind I do feel grateful.

(Female, 23, Essex)

I know that the UK is probably one of the best countries in which to be a practicing Muslim especially in the West but there are still a lot of problems in its attitude towards Muslims and the mainstream media are not always helping. There's a lot of societal problems that go against Islam and it may be difficult in the future and present to be a Muslim trying to strike the middle way and lead a balanced life as it looks like there's increasing polarisation. At the moment I feel quite happy.

(Female, 22, Manchester)

Yes, I have complete freedom.

(Male, 22, Birmingham)

## BRITAIN AS THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Respondents also associated their happiness in Britain with the fact that they regarded Britain as their home where they have lived for so long.

Yea I do, because I've lived in Britain for most of my life and now I'm used to living here.

(Female, 14, Sussex)

I feel at home in UK so I would feel more home in UK than in any other country.

(Male, 28, Birmingham)

## WHAT CAUSES MUSLIM DISSATISFACTION ?

Respondents' reasons for feeling unhappy in Britain fell into three categories: the antagonistic British culture; the negative portrayal of Muslims in the media; and the lack of respect for religious values in British society.

### ANTAGONISTIC CULTURE

Respondents generally felt unhappy due to the hostility and antagonism they perceived from the government, the media and the society in general. They felt under continuous pressure to defend Islam and justify Islamic beliefs and practices in the face of continuous demonisation of the Muslim community.

I generally do not feel unhappy in Britain. However the culture is very anti Islam now.

(Male, 47, London)



No- too much prejudice.

(Female, 19, Manchester)

Not always- I feel as a Muslim we are being forced into a position where we have to prove that we are 'Good, peace loving' Muslims.

(Male, 38, Burnham-on-Crouch)

I used to feel happy and secure but after Sep 11 no longer. No security, no rights to defend my beliefs. I feel powerless, stranded, hurt, in shock.

(Male, 28, Coventry)

No-because we are always discriminated and I feel sad that people of Britain think of Muslims as terrorists.

(Male, 33, Birmingham)

No-because living with discrimination and always being downgraded is not easy and having my religious rights is far more important. I don't anymore-I have a beard thus I am looked upon as a member of al-Qaeda where ever I go.

(Male, 26, Birmingham)

Clearly the hostility sensed by the respondents is a result of the current international situation, and the rise in Islamophobic perceptions worldwide. The focus is upon viewing Muslims as 'terrorists'. As one male from Birmingham stated 'I have a beard thus I am looked upon as a member of al-Qaeda where ever I go'.

## **NEGATIVE AND SENSATIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE**

The negative and prejudiced portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the media was one of the most significant factors contributing to the dissatisfaction of living in Britain. Frequent articles associating Muslims with terrorism, domestic violence and social backwardness, they felt, caused society to isolate and marginalise them further.

I feel happy but I am concerned about for example some laws that forget Muslims. E.g. Terrorism Act (2000). I am also concerned lately about Islamophobic British government and British media.

(Male, 52, London)

No- we are discriminated and humiliated all the time in the press.

(Male, 27, Manchester)

## **BRITISH AVERSION TO RELIGION**

The trends in British society away from religious values altogether, whether Islamic or otherwise was a significant cause of dissatisfaction with and alienation from British society for Muslims living in the UK. A major component of the dissatisfaction was due to the fear that the culture of alcohol-consumption and promiscuity would be a negative influence upon their children and in contradiction to Islamic values. This anti-religious counter-culture is not attenuated by any attempt to meet Muslim needs in terms of prayer rooms and provision of halal food:

What I am not happy with is the level of promiscuity, the way young girls and women are encouraged to dress and the level of rudeness and bad manners. I have three girls and I worry for their future. I am also unhappy with the debt culture and I hate the months around Christmas. I don't feel entirely comfortable being a British Muslim because I think people feel I am weird, and my children get stick from both non-Muslims and Muslims (they get told by both sides they can't be Muslim because they are white or don't speak Urdu).

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

Overall Yes- I enjoy my everyday life here. I am however also often disappointed by the lack of catering for Muslim needs. I am also aware that there are many Muslims in Britain who don't enjoy the same opportunities as I do. For example, prayer room on campus, working with colleges who are respectful of my beliefs...etc.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

No because I don't feel that I belong here even though I'm a white English 'woman', they make me feel like I've betrayed them when in fact it's the other way around.

(Female, 43, London)

Yes and no. I have had so many opportunities here for which I am grateful, for instance being able to obtain a degree and going on to start my postgraduate education. At the same time I do feel I have to be extra careful in how I represent myself as people can generalise my actions or beliefs to those of all Muslims and so I wouldn't want to misrepresent Muslims at all. Plus I don't feel totally at home in this country.

(Male, 21, Manchester)

## **BRITISH MUSLIM: BELONGING AND AFFINITY**

The sense of belonging is another essential element of citizenship. National identity, belonging and citizenship (Delanty, 2000) are three interlinked concepts which are seriously challenged, not only by globalization, but also by the inter-cultural communication between minorities and majorities, and the inter-communication between minorities and the government. One consequence of changes caused by globalization is that more and more people are now involved with more than one culture, thus increasing the practical problems of inter-cultural communication (Featherstone, 1990: 8). Although human societies have always been faced with the issue of alien cultures and foreign intervention, globalization produces a completely new level of multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Cultural diversity offers a choice of fashions in all areas; social values, religious affiliation, religious belief and practice are not exempt from this. Therefore, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain religious traditions as sources of unchanging truth. Instead, the dynamic of consumer preference is introduced into the religious sphere. Religion itself becomes, to some extent, pluralistic and subject to 'choice preference'. Settlement of Muslims in Britain is a firm example of cultural diversity and immigration ended by permanent citizenship.

The life landscape is considered a source of collective belonging. In this context, the landscape acts as a centre of meaning and symbolism and creates a sense of belonging and a territorial identity that is particularly strong in some nations and even for those diaspora societies who have a secondary source of belonging. The landscape can play a political role to make a nation proud of its nationhood structure, political ideology and it can also become part of the social and cultural affiliation of an individual or a society. The landscape is not only a material symbol, but also a spiritual symbol enforcing belonging, love and hatred (Nogue and Vicente, 2004: 113-116).

The life landscape is imbued by religion, culture and identity, and that is why British Muslim identity can be a relatively particular construct for this society despite all resemblance to other Muslims around the world, British Muslims are nonetheless distanced from the rest.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Yes, Very strong	135	12.	12.0
Yes, I feel a sense of Belonging	323	28.7	40.7
Neutral	286	25.4	66.1
Not at all	165	14.7	80.8
I don't feel a sense of Belonging	146	13.0	93.8
I don't know	70	6.2	100.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1125</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

In response to the questions: “Do you feel a strong or weak affiliation or sense of belonging to Britain? To what extent does this affect your life? Did you have the choice to live in another country which you sacrificed because of Britain?” Three different types of response were indorsed; high devotion to Britain, neutral and negative sense of belonging.

## **GREAT LOYALTY FOR BRITAIN**

Respondents who felt a strong sense of belonging to Britain felt so because they were either born in Britain or had lived in Britain for a very long time. Interestingly one male respondent (34 years old) made a connection between a sense of responsibility towards God and a sense of belonging to Britain, demonstrating that religious values were not necessarily, nor by definition, in conflict with civic values but a means of enhancing them:

I have a strong sense of belonging to Britain that is rooted in my sense of responsibility for my actions where Allah has placed me. This means that Britain is my country for as long as I am here and that I am duty bound to strive to make it a better place by making

the best contribution that I can.

(Male, 34, Luton)

I feel like I'm a part of Britain and always will be and nothing will affect that.

(Female, 14, London)

Having grown up here I do feel that I belong here. I feel very British. I did not have a choice to live elsewhere.

(Male, 47, London)

I do have a sense of belonging as I do think that I would not feel comfortable living in any other country.

(Male, 38, Burnham-on-Crouch)

The positive multi-faith and multi-cultural aspects of British society influences and encourages some Muslims to feel a strong affiliation here:

I feel very strong affiliation and love for this country. It has no great affect on my life as I doubt it affects any one's in the UK. We are not a nationalistic country. Its major affect on me is in my cultural values. I had many chances to live permanently abroad (Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi) but decided England still offered me more.

(Male, 28, Surrey)

I do feel that I belong to Britain because I live here. To a certain limit I socialize with these people.

(Female, 14, Sussex)

I was born here-I've lived here all my life, of course I feel a strong sense of belonging here.

(Male, 26, Birmingham)

It affects my life in that it forms part of my identity.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

Fairly strong affiliation but not blind or nationalistic.

(Female, 22, Manchester)

Being born here and only having lived here I do feel a very strong sense of belonging here –this is only natural. I think it affects my life in a profound manner, it determines the events, media and opinion I have exposure to which in turn do form a part of my personality and identity.

(Female, 23, Essex)

Despite a strong sense of belonging and affection towards all other citizens there are moments when some Muslims feel fragile and powerless:

I have a strong affiliation as I am 'native' to this land. If the going gets tough, I have no other home to run to. Sometimes I get a bit depressed about this, but only in my most pessimistic moments, which are relatively rare.

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

This demonstrates that like all modern citizens, Muslims have multiple identities. Their British citizenship and identity does not by definition contradict their religious self, but any sense of vulnerability British Muslims feel may not be unique to them but be a common feature of minority communities around the world. Nonetheless there is quite clearly scope to explore the full extent of protection that multicultural citizenship in Britain offers.

## **INDIFFERENT TO BRITAIN**

Respondents who answered “neutral” to the question generally stated that they would prefer to live in Britain if given a choice.

I feel neutral towards Britain, not against it but neither fully pledged to the country. I never had a choice of living in another country.  
(Male, 17, London)

I do not have a particularly strong affiliation to Britain. It does not affect my life. I have not had any effective choice to live in another country but even if I did I would probably stay here.  
(Male, 21, Bolton)

I really don't know.  
(Male, 22, Birmingham)

Feeling ‘neutral’ in terms of belonging to a political community means the absence of a sense of attachment required for citizenship. ‘To say that an individual belongs to a community is to say that she feels a part of it, sees it as her own, feels a strong sense of commitment to it, and enjoys a special relationship with it’ (Parekh, 1999: 449) an attitude absent in some of our respondents. They feel no obligation towards the society they live in. As one young male Londoner puts it: ‘I feel neutral towards Britain, not against it but neither fully pledged to the country’. It is important to analyse why there is a lack of ‘any special relationship’ to British society whilst taking into account that identity and a sense of belonging are not static, but rather fluid and influenced by specific location and the media.

## **DISAFFECTED FROM BRITAIN**

Respondents who felt no affiliation to Britain whatsoever felt they were being forced to live here due to political and social factors which affected them such as their parents’ decision or conflicts in their countries of origin. A repeated reason for this dissatisfaction was that in times of emergency or war, they felt they were unfairly labelled as “terrorists” or as “the enemy within”.

No, I live here because I had no choice. I had a choice to join my family in Canada after the crisis in Uganda. But I came here as a post-graduate student before this crisis and feel that in a way Canada is more American-like than in a way British environment is and I can play an active part intellectually with a small house and a small car that I am content with. In Canada there is very little political or media coverage of current affairs etc. Here we do have sources of information available to us all the time of world politics and global matters.  
(Female, 65, Birmingham)

I no longer feel strong about living in UK. If this terrorist label is not stopped then I will inshAllah leave the UK.  
(Male, 28, Coventry)

I feel weak because when it comes down to war I get label[led] as extremist.

(Male, 33, Birmingham)

No- one person belongs to a country- this is a form of attachment and love of the world- I am only affiliated to God.

(Male, 33, Manchester)

No link at all- none

(Female, 43, London)

For some respondents rejecting a sense of belonging to Britain has become synonymous with being a 'sincere' Muslim. As one male from Manchester stated 'I am only affiliated to God' or another female Londoner expressed 'No link at all - none' shows a strong sense of rejection among some participants. Some respondents clearly mentioned the unjust treatment as the reason for not feeling attached to their country. As one male from Coventry stated: 'If this terrorist label is not stopped then I will inshAllah leave the UK'. Looking at the significant proportion of respondents who do not feel a sense of belonging here, it seems that British society has failed to deliver a sense of dignity and self-worth to many Muslim citizens.

## POLICY AND SUPPORT FOR BRITISH MUSLIMS

A majority of those surveyed believed there was no support from British Policy Makers for British Muslims, with an almost identical number believing there was some support albeit not very serious. Just over 10% of those surveyed believed the British Muslims were supported by British policy makers.

**Table 10: Do you see any support and loyalty for British Muslims from the side of British policy Makers?**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
I don't know	69	6.1	6.1
Yes, the British Government is in favour of British Muslims	38	3.4	9.5
Yes, without any distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims	86	7.6	17.2
Yes, there is some support, but not very serious	441	39.2	56.4
No, they don't care about the minority	249	22.1	78.5
No, there is serious prejudicial policies in relation to BM	242	21.5	100.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1125</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

The primary reason for respondents who felt little or no support from British policy makers towards British Muslims was due to the lack of legal protection for Muslims from discrimination, similar to legislation protecting other religious communities.

According to our interviews with many British Muslims, the majority of Muslims were suspicious about British policy makers' support for Muslims in Britain. In response to the following question: "Do you see any support and loyalty for British Muslims from British Policy Makers?" the majority of answers were negative with different justifications.

## **LACK OF SUPPORT FOR MUSLIMS**

Respondents who felt that there was no support from the policy makers mentioned the lack of legal protection for Muslims, especially when in comparison to the protection from discrimination afforded to other minority communities:

Hardly, especially as there are specific laws helping other religions which has not been extended for Muslims, despite the fact Islam is one of the biggest religions in Britain.

(Male, 17, London)

I am not aware of any.

(Male, 47, London)

No- not really and only when it suits their purposes.

(Male, 38, Burnham-on-Crouch)

There have been no clear cut examples of policy benefiting Muslims specifically.

(Male, 28, Surrey)

I do not see any support; British Muslims aren't even protected in law from prejudice.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

No - they are prejudiced.

(Male, 29, Birmingham)

No - they don't care about British Muslims.

(Male, 33, Birmingham)

Lack of measures to protect Muslims as a minority made respondents question whether policy makers care about them. This even led some to become suspicious about policy makers' intentions as a whole. One male from Burnham-on-Crouch mentioned that they take steps 'only when it suits their purposes'. It is clear that any policy initiatives will always appear hollow unless followed through by significant and adequate legislative change to demonstrate sincerity, and the will to change a situation where discrimination and prejudice exists.

## PARTIAL SUPPORT

Respondents who answered that there is some support from the policy makers did not fail to mention that they are still not treated with equal status compared to other minority religious groups:

I think on a very superficial level there is, but generally no. If there was loyalty the loophole on religious discrimination would be closed –as this is being exploited currently by the BNP to spread lies about the Muslim community which fuels the wider communities fears and it is perfectly legal for them to do so-yet if the same things were said about other minority such as ‘black community’ or the ‘Jewish community’ it would be illegal.

(Female, 23, Essex)

Not enough – any support is either lip-service or window-dressing. The implications of policy for religious or ethnic minorities are compartmentalised and sidelined, not mainstreamed.

(Male, 21, Bolton)

Some but very little. If there was more I don’t think there would exist the lack of provisions for Muslim to the extent it exists.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

Debatable, from some maybe but not all. They need to stop looking at us as an overall problem.

(Female, 22, Manchester)

Respondents felt that they were ‘tolerated’ but not equally respected as other citizens, and perceived as the ‘overall problem’. Within the concept of citizenship tolerating minority communities is not enough. It neither offers them security nor empowers them with the means to overcome disadvantages. Rather, measures should be taken on the basis of ‘respect’ which ensures that the minority community can feel and is able to partake in social discourse in a meaningful way. Democracy has to manifest a commitment to its minorities by engaging in dialogue with them, not as individuals but rather at the institutional level (Addis, 1996). This entails following through positive measures by implementing supportive institutional change of social attitudes towards the minority Muslim community.



## BRITISH MUSLIM COMMUNITY LOYALTY: HOME OR ABROAD?

In response to the question about the extent of loyalty and support towards Britain, a variety of answers were received; some extended support predicated on certain principles, others specified a particular initiative to support and for some there was nothing which inspired support. However, the findings demonstrate a thoughtfulness about the issue in general and in that way a degree of commitment to the notion of citizenship sentiments.



When its right I support it. In sport, in politics in all intellectual pursuits I support Britain because it is the only country I have. However I am also perfectly willing to stand up and be counted as doing so when Britain does not act according to what I believe to be the principles of righteousness and equity, when it crosses lines that it shouldn't e.g. the Iraq war, continued support for trade to Israel, passively over the abuse of Chechens by Russia, persecution of Muslims in Guantanamo Bay.

(Male, 26, London)

### CONDITIONAL SUPPORT

Respondents believed that as British citizens, they had the right to disagree with the government and to support Britain when they felt it was doing the 'right' thing. A blind and nationalistic support for Britain was dismissed:

I support Britain if the decisions the government are making seem fair.

(Female, 14, London)

Only in so far as encouraging a better society for all.

(Male, 38, Burnham-on-Crouch)

I support Britain fully as long as, I feel it is doing the right thing.

(Male, 28, Surrey)

I feel very British and will support Britain but also expect the same back from the government.

(Male, 47, London)

As far as it is doing the right thing. As a British Muslim I want my country to do the right thing, in the same way as I want my daughter to do the right thing. I don't want my daughter to become a playground bully and I would not support her if she did. In the same way I don't want my country to act unfairly either.

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

To answer this one must first must clarify what 'support' means. To me it means to help Britain improve and flourish. Thus it means standing by the country and helping any work and policies that

would be helpful to Britain. And voicing my objections against any policies or work that I see as harmful to Britain. To me doing both these things means I am supporting Britain fully.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

If it does anything good, I'll support them but if it does wrong, no.

(Female, 22, Manchester)

This depends on the issue on [sic] question, if it is a policy which will promote the interests of Britain then I will support it, however if I feel that it will be detrimental to society such as the introduction of tuition fees, bad foreign policy, not just invading other countries, but also our policies on the selling of arms to oppressive regimes, then I will oppose it. Other than such policies being wrong it will also not be in the interests of Britain in the long term.

(Female, 23, Essex)

If I believe in what they are doing then I would support them. But if what they were doing would oppose my personal beliefs then no I wouldn't.

(Male, 17, London)

That I am a citizen here to contribute to the masses of ignorant people of all races, faiths, biases etc.

(Female, 65, Birmingham)

## **SPECIFIC DEMONSTRATIONS OF SUPPORT**

Respondents' answers varied from supporting Britain from merely paying taxes to supporting the country in international sporting competitions, and support in times of national crisis. However, some respondents stated they would not support Britain in times of war, or in the "war on terror" due to their perception that this was a war against Muslims:

Everything apart from war and terror.

(Female, 19, London)

To the degree that it does not compromise my religion.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

In sport (football).

(Male, 21, Bolton)

I support Britain in sports activities; would support Britain in a national crisis; if it stood for truth and justice; pay my taxes.

(Male, 52, London)

I support them in sports.

(Female, 14, Sussex)

None - except taxes

(Male, 33, Birmingham)

## ALIENATION AND LACK OF SUPPORT

Some respondents were completely against supporting Britain as they viewed it as an anti-Muslim establishment:

No longer support Britain.  
(Male, 28, Birmingham)

Do not support.  
(Female, 19, Manchester)

Enough to live here. I don't help the government in any way. I hate them.  
(15, Male, Essex)

Not at all- why would any Muslim support attacks on other Muslims. Attacks that are completely unjustified.  
(Male, 27, Manchester)

The concept of 'support' was diverse and respondents interpreted its meaning in various ways. However, it seems that those who strongly denied any support to the country did so as a protest against the war and current policy in Iraq and the 'anti-terror' campaign in general.

## MAJOR ANXIETIES OF MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN

In response to the question about the major anxiety of Muslims in Britain, respondents expressed major anxieties about the extremist Islamophobic agenda of various institutions, the media and organisations concomitant to the degree of misunderstanding about Islam in British society. One response eloquently articulated the perpetual dynamic of Islamophobic policies and the misrepresentation it generates from Muslims, but considered it incumbent upon Muslims to break free from this, since the true principles of Islam demand transcending such negative cycles of thought and promoting higher values:

My major anxiety is that we as Muslims have misrepresented Islam due to our preoccupation with de-contextualised dogma rather than the evolutionary story of a faith that came to awaken, develop and transform us into illumined and emancipated human beings capable of serving as a conduit for mercy to reach the world. I am also concerned about the Islamophobia rampant in our societies but in my view this is a secondary derivative issue. This is because I find Muslims to be just as Islamophobic, the phobia just manifests itself in a different way. The unwillingness of Muslims to categorically eschew nationalism, racism and sectarianism indicates a fear of real Islam and a lack of trust in its worldview, dynamic and light.  
(Male, 34, Luton)

## REACTIONARY AND EXTREME ISLAMOPHOBIC POLICIES

Respondents' major anxieties centred around the perceived persecution of Muslims from the government, the media and society. Some respondents were so worried about the scale of present persecution that they thought it could even lead to a 'genocide' in future, similar to that in Nazi Europe, Rwanda or the Balkans. Every one of these quotes reflects a range of fears generated by Islamophobia:

That society is polarising around the idea of Muslims and non-Muslims and that this will lead to violence. I also fear that this polarisation although initially against Muslims will eventually be turned on other minorities and eventually dissenters from the mainstream.

(Female, 33, London)

That more and more search for so-called 'terrorists' is taking place and more oppressive laws by the Home Office are coming in like ID cards etc. I see these geared towards us, the Muslims but we are far from prepared to combat these.

(Female, 65, Birmingham)

'BNP' get rid of them. It is clear they want all Muslims to be killed and want us dead. Why is no one doing anything about that? Everyone has turned a blind eye to that. Who is going to protect me from the BNP?

(Male, 28, Coventry)

That Britain could turn more and more Islamophobic. I have no confidence that this country is immune from the sort of hysteria that swept Nazi Germany or the Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella or Gujarat or Bosnia or Chechnya etc etc etc.

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

We are known as outcasts, treated like animals.

(Male, 29, Birmingham)

My current anxieties are: the demonisation of the Muslim community in the media; the rise of right-wing political parties; the Islamophobic and anti-immigrant stance of legislation passed by the government (terror laws etc)... All of which jeopardise the good relations which British Muslims had so patiently been constructing over decades with the non-Muslim majority.

(Male, 21, Bolton)

The anti Muslim culture prevailing at the moment.

(Male, 47, London)

Racism, and women getting racist abuse, job-wise getting discriminated against just because you are Muslim and considered a 'terrorist'.

(Female, 19, London)

Attitudes of public towards Muslims after September 11<sup>th</sup>.

(Female, 14, London)

Being made to feel alien in the UK even though born and brought up in the UK.

(Male, 38, Burnham-on-Crouch)

I am concerned about the safety of my family and myself particularly due to Islamophobic notions of British media (except some papers) reporters. I am also concerned about laws which practically forget Muslims since 9/11 e.g. terrorism act. I am concerned about Muslims being accused and locked up without any real cause.

(Male, 52, London)

My major anxiety is the backlash of this 'war on terror' and racism/ignorance leading to violence & prejudice.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

To save our identity.

(Male, 38, Birmingham)

Racism, xenophobia and Islam phobia.

(15, Male, Essex)

Fear of attack (physical) and fear of not being able to practice freely.

(Male, 27, Manchester)

Prejudices, ignorance, bad publicity, the heretics that ruin it for everyone for their own selfish reasons.

(Male, 33, Manchester)

That you'll be laughed at in what you believe in, and if you practise your religion.

(Female, 14, Sussex)

Of being arrested as a terror suspect and being locked away for months without any rights basically like a dog.

(Male, 26, Birmingham)

Respondents' concerns ranged from government policies and public attitudes, to physical attacks and abuse. Some mentioned legislation to combat terrorism, (male, London), proposed ID card (female, Birmingham), others the general public attitude of an 'anti Muslim culture' (male, London) such as 'being laughed at if practice Islam' (female, Sussex). But underlying them all was fear of both physical and moral abuse.

## **MISUNDERSTANDING AND IGNORANCE OF ISLAM**

Respondents were concerned about the ignorance in society about Islam and Muslims. This ignorance, they felt, was at the root of the hatred towards Muslims:

I think my greatest anxiety is the profound ignorance that this society has concerning Islam in a context where there is 'war on terror'. This is potentially an explosive combination where those who wish to cause social disharmony such as the BNP can easily exploit this situation to their advantage. The result will be a backlash against Muslims which may be in the form of verbal or physical abuse

(Female, 23, Essex)

That my faith is poorly understood and very often unfairly negatively portrayed by the media. Ignorance is the root of discrimination and prejudice because people fear what they don't understand and when people feel fear they become hostile and defensive against that which they don't understand. I think the heightened suspicion of anything 'Muslim' is the result of a lack of understanding of Islam. Worse is when people do not know they are in ignorance because they think the image they have of Islam is a fair one.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

That all Muslims are seen as backward, terrorists and fundamentalist. I feel I'm always fighting to change some peoples thinking.

(Male, 21, Manchester)

People believing wrongly about Islam.

(Female, 19, Manchester)

## ASSURED AND CONTENT AS A BRITISH MUSLIM

Among our respondents there were very few who said they have no major anxiety as a British Muslim. This respondent qualified his fears and again enjoined a greater responsibility upon Muslims to understand and present their faith by transcending any limited interpretations of it:

I have no major anxieties about living in Britain although I have anxieties about our political leaders and the media. Both seem to [be] steering us back into short-sightedness and bigotry. I feel that Muslims need to combat this through better PR and making a real effort to be part of this country rather than a community within it. If we do not then I see Muslims becoming more and more disillusioned and slipping into extreme interpretations of Islam.

(Male, 28, Surrey)

## IDEAL RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT

In response to the question, "what is the ideal environment for Muslims to practise their religion in Britain?" respondents generally described an environment in which they would be free to practice their religion without interference from the government or society; where their needs, such as prayer and hijab, could be facilitated; and where they would not be prejudiced against and demonised as terrorists or disloyal citizens:

I think that pre-9/11 British society was pretty close to 'ideal': Muslim prayer rooms in schools, universities and workplaces; halaal food widely available; respect from most non-Muslims.

(Male, 21, Bolton)

I would like an environment where Islam was viewed in basically positive terms. I find much of what is written about Islam to be negative to the point of slander. I know this is just anecdotal, but so many people tell me they like Buddhism. And Buddhism gets a positive press in Britain. If only Islam had that sort of broadly supportive press instead of the opposite, it would be a lot more comfortable being a British Muslim.

Ideal environment will be a place described such as heaven. Where there is no hate, envy, anger or distress between people. There is love between everyone.

(15, Male, Essex)

The ideal environment for me to live my faith would be as part of a Muslim community that has developed a contemporary model for collective living that is appropriate for our time and place but founded on immutable Islamic principles, is fully engaged with society on all levels, and provides the space for spiritual development and positive transformation.

(Male, 34, Luton)

... a more pleasant experience would be where a Muslim was judged by his actions and not prejudiced against for being a Muslim.

(Male, 29, Luton)

There [are] two notable things. Firstly that praying, wearing hijab, single sex sports etc. were recognised and respected as not only for Muslim belief and practice, but were open to anyone else who wanted to participate in such things. Generally there is a prejudice against religion per se in the UK even Christianity, and it would be good to have a society that didn't pathologise these things. Secondly I would like a more pro-woman environment, where women were not routinely allowed to be exploited in advertising on the TV [and] in magazines through modelling etc. Whilst British society may have allowed some women to become exceptionally high achievers I feel overall that most women are quite discriminated against and that all women face extreme disadvantage as a result of the way society exploits female sexuality. I think this affects not only me and my daughters but my sons and all future generations regardless of creed or lack of creed.

(Female, 33, London)

For the people in the environment to be more aware of Muslim needs and to cater for these. For example, to appreciate that scheduling exams on days of religious holiday is inconsiderate, to appreciate that taking a 5 minute break to offer the daily prayers will not cause disruption, to take into account simple things like having sterile scarves (a simple piece of cloth would suffice) in theatre changing rooms. For government to do more to protect the rights of Muslims and their freedom to practice their faith.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

A peaceful one.

(Male, 33, Manchester)

No fear of racial intolerance and discrimination of religion.

(Female, 19, Manchester)

A place where there is a strong and diverse Muslim community but who interacts well with non-Muslims and where the latter have an increasing knowledge, understanding of Islam. Also somewhere where there's not always a need for rush in life, i.e. not a big city.

(Female, 22, Manchester)

Where people are more open-minded towards Muslims rather than stereotyping us and also more acceptable towards Muslims beliefs and cultures.

(Male, 17, London)

A mosque nearby and full practicing without oppression/pressure/press abuse on Muslims.

(Female, 19, London)

Ideal environment is one in which as a Muslim I am able to practice my faith without any hindrance in Britain. I also feel religion and religious rallies (all religions) should be actively encouraged by the British government at all costs.

(Male, 52, London)

I can practice my religion fine in this country simply because this is a secular country so I am not persecuted for being a Muslim. The only thing that would make the experience better would be to hear the adhan for the five prayers.

(Male, 28, Surrey)

The ideal environment would be where the majority of British people are more educated about Islam and where employers/educational institutions provide for the needs of Muslims such as prayer halls etc.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

Respondents' ideal requirements were wide-ranging from being able to pray freely, to freedom from media vilification. But most of them have one common aim of living in a peaceful environment where their specific needs as Muslims would be taken into account in an inclusive manner. There is a common aspiration for a mature society where freedom to practice religion would prevail, and minority rights in general would be automatically considered legitimate. This is consistent to what Addis (1996) and Parekh (1999) emphasised to achieve a multi-cultural form of citizenship, to achieve an atmosphere of social harmony where identity is valued and productivity achievable.

## BRITISH MUSLIMS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT

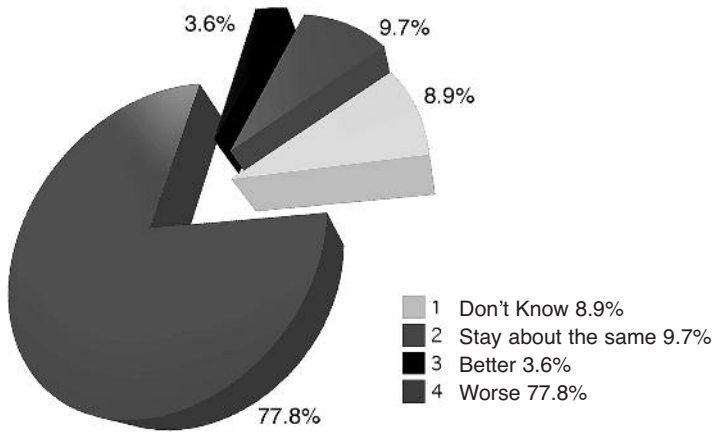
How do citizenship rights become effective forms of entitlement? Critics such as Mann (1987) claim that citizenship is simply a 'ruling-class strategy' to pacify the working class through the promise rather than the enactment of citizenship. Turner's argument is that citizenship as a status position is not in itself sufficient to guarantee an effective entitlement (2001: 191). Enactment of citizenship refers to many individual and social factors, amongst them, 'expectations of citizens' or reproduction of the 'citizen voice' as a major element to reinforce the relationship between citizen and the government. Inclusion of minorities in the decision making process is fundamental to enable their concerns and aspirations to be reflected in policies. It should not be expected that the minorities who are electorally weak would automatically come forward and participate in mainstream politics and voice concerns which ultimately affect their lives. Rather, inclusion and participation of minorities and disadvantaged groups should be ensured through mechanisms irrespective of what the majority population may think. This is consistent with Young's (1989) call for a 'differentiated citizenship' and Parekh's (1999)



insistence upon a 'multicultural citizenship'. All three elements we identified earlier for citizenship; individual and social rights, need of recognition and emotional elements of the citizenship are somehow dependent on government policies as well as on other mainstream agencies' active participation.

When we asked our respondents whether post-September 11 2001, relations between Muslims and the British government have got better, worse or stayed the same, an overwhelming 78% of them opted for worse. This indicates how deeply Muslims have been affected by numerous incidents of physical attack and verbal abuse, the rise of targeted persecution and for example, a 300 per cent increase in stop and search of predominantly Muslims by police:

**Figure 6: Post-September 11 Relation between Muslims and the British Government**



The question that may be posed is whether the government and relevant agencies had been serious about Muslims' specific requirements for citizenship? In regard to the events of 9/11 although 'the government and the media have been at pains' to differentiate between terrorism and Islam, 'British Muslims have been subjected to increasing racist harassment and have felt intimidated about voicing their opposition to the bombing campaign in Afghanistan for fear of reprisals' (Pilkington, 2003:277). The sudden disclosure of their fear and vulnerability should be seen as the continuation of their 'second class' citizen status, encoded through a long process of demonisation in the popular media, denial of proper recognition of their identity in public space and overlooking their citizenship rights and concerns.

Do the Muslims have electoral power to change the situation? Certainly as a minority community who are historically disadvantaged in Britain they are not able to influence the majority. So it is the government's duty not to leave them 'at the mercy of the vagaries of public opinion' (Parekh, 1999:451) and take steps to reflect the true concerns of Muslims. The majority of our respondents expect the government to consider their real concerns with sincerity, remove the current atmosphere of suspicion and distrust so that they can be confident and proud Muslim citizens:



My expectations of the British Government is that it allow Muslims the socio-cultural and political space to live and express their faith and identity like other faith communities free from unjustified stereotyping, prejudice, hysteria and demonisation.

(Male, 34, Luton)

Our views should be taken on board. We should not have to fight for the right to practice our basic articles of faith with every institution that we may happen to be a part of in our daily lives.

(Male, 29, Luton)

I think they should engage in a serious way with the different voices and facets within the community. There is a very obvious tendency by the government to try and manipulate the British Muslim community to fit its own agendas and criteria rather than trying to represent and serve British Muslims. As a result we have government favoured organisations and personalities within the community being given platforms and importance when actually they often have little relevance to the lives of Muslims in the UK.

(Female, 33, London)

One of the issues the respondents returned to regularly is that government initiatives did little to actually meet the needs of the community, as one female from London stated, ‘There is a very obvious tendency by government to try and manipulate the British Muslim community to fit its own agendas and criteria rather than trying to represent and serve British Muslims.’

### **AS A BRITISH MUSLIM, WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT? WHAT SHOULD THEY DO FOR MUSLIMS?**

When this question was posed to them, respondents’ answers generally fell into six categories: establishing a legal structure to grant Muslims equal rights; a change in what they perceived as an Islamophobic policy; facilitating the religious practice of Muslims; creating Muslim representation in the government; promoting social cohesion; and extending Islamic awareness.

■ Make it illegal to slander our religion (criticism is okay, but lies are not), or incite religious hatred.

■ Encourage awareness of Islam, not just in terms of the five pillars but fundamentals of Islamic belief and the commonalities between the Abrahamic faiths. Most people don't know that Islam is an Abrahamic faith, and that in itself gives us something in common with the traditions of this island.

■ Definitely avoid making stupid laws banning articles of clothing.

■ Protect the human rights of Muslims.

■ Stop scaremongering about Islamic terrorism.

■ Listen to our demands for justice for our Muslim brothers and sisters (and for that matter, for our non-Muslim brothers and sisters) in the world.

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

■ My expectations of the British Government is that it will allow Muslims the socio-cultural and political space to live and express their faith and identity like other faith communities free from unjustified stereotyping, prejudice, hysteria and demonisation.

(Male, 34, Luton)

## EQUALITY IN LAW FOR ALL BRITISH CITIZENS

Amongst the issues which respondents frequently cited, and one which underpins perceptions of prejudice and experience of discrimination, is religious discrimination. Under the current Race Relations Act it is unlawful to discriminate against anyone on grounds of race, colour, nationality, or ethnic or national origin but it does not apply to Muslims. Recently, there have been calls for 'a single equality act bringing all protected groups within a comprehensive and coherent legal framework' (CRE, 2004:10). For the respondents, lack of adequate legal protection for Muslims was the one of the most obvious shortcomings in any claim made by the Government about its commitment to Muslims living in Britain:

They should take [note and] acknowledge that they have suffered a severe backlash from 9/11 and all that has followed. They should recognise the vulnerability of the Muslims and be more proactive in condemning Islamophobia in politics, in the police force, in the media and on the streets. Eg.: legislation should put Muslims on the equal footing with Jews and Sikhs as regards protection from discrimination and religiously-motivated crime.

(Male, 21, Bolton)

They should give Muslims the rights that other religions have concerning the legal aspects. For example they should extend specific laws so that they also cover Muslims in religious prejudice.

(Male, 17, London)

They should introduce measures to prevent discrimination against Muslims.

(Male, 27, Manchester)

The government should protect the rights of all individuals whether they are Muslim or not. This is not so apparent at the moment.

(Male, 47, London)

I want them to be tolerant, promote equality and embrace diversity. Treat the Muslims as well as they treat the whites.  
(15, Male, Essex)

They should treat us equally because we are living in their country and it's their responsibility to look after us and do whatever they can for us to practise our religion.  
(Female, 14, Sussex)

They should allow Muslims to practice Islam without degrading us and with equal rights.  
(Male, 29, Birmingham)

Allow us to practice Islam freely with equal rights.  
(Male, 33, Birmingham)

## **ELIMINATING ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE DEMONISATION OF MUSLIMS**

Respondents also believed that the Government had a responsibility to ensure that policy initiatives such as in anti-terrorist legislation had to be carefully pursued without encouraging Islamophobic attitudes. Measures that followed from the anti-terrorist legislation such as policing policies, and the media reporting of police activities have to be more sensitive about the stereotyping of all Muslims as potentially hostile terrorist suspects: the Government has a responsibility to ensure that Islamophobia does not cloud the judgement of law-enforcement agencies and be an excuse to curtail the civil liberties of all Muslim citizens:

Not portray Islam/Muslims in a bad light. i.e. not to be Islamophobic.  
(Male, 38, Burnham-on-Crouch)

We should be treated equal and not be known as a 'terrorist religion'.  
(Female, 14, London).

Make less Islamophobic statements. Promise safe environment for practice of a faith and stop attacks on Muslims or blaming Muslims for everything that goes wrong.

Make Muslims feel safe in Britain.  
(Male, 52, London)

Stop persecuting us- let us live and live a life  
(Female, 43, London)

Translate the word terrorist in many different languages. And define that one does not have to be a Muslim to be a terrorist.  
(Male, 28, Coventry)

I hope that Islamophobia is looked at seriously-and the government puts a stop to the new terror laws.  
(Male, 26, Birmingham)

The British Government should cater for Muslims in terms of providing them with basic religious needs in addition to educating the British people on Islam in order to avoid Islamophobia and general ignorance. The government should also take into account the views and feeling[s] [of] Muslim citizens when forming International foreign policy.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

The British Government must not target us as the enemy of the people. It should try and understand why our youths are asserting their identity by taking a negative path in a way.

(Female, 65, Birmingham)

## BRITISH MUSLIM REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS

The vast majority of those surveyed believed that it was necessary for British Muslims to be represented in Parliament and the Government (86%). This indicates that the majority of Muslims still trust the political institutions of the State as capable of influencing their lives for the better. Only 6 percent believed such representation would not solve any problems, and less than 4 percent believed that British Muslims should not be involved in the State. See table 11 below:

**Table 11: Is it necessary for British Muslims to have a representation in the British Parliament?**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
I don't know	46	4.1	4.1
Yes, definitely	829	73.7	77.8
Yes, somewhat	138	12.3	90.0
No, it would not solve any problems	68	6.0	96.1
No, BM should no be involved with the State	44	3.9	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1125</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

They should encourage Muslim participation in government- At the end of a day no one can better represent the views of women than a woman- similarly no one can better represent the views of a Muslim than a Muslim. Encourage Muslims to participate in political/social/economic activities of the nation.

(Male, 52, London)

Less than 10 percent of those surveyed believed there was at least sufficient representation of Muslims among current MPs and Lords. Over 30 per cent believed there was no such representation, with over half of those surveyed regarding it as nominal representation with no practical power. It suggests that an overwhelming majority of respondents (83.1%) felt that Muslims do not have the sufficient political power to affect their lives in Britain, in turn, implying that political power was a valuable and effective force for change.

**Table 12: Is there sufficient representation of British Muslims among the current MPs and Lords?**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
I have no idea	84	7.5	7.5
Yes, over representation	8	.7	8.2
Yes, extensive representation	15	1.3	9.5
Yes, sufficient representation	83	7.4	16.9
No, there is no representation at all	367	32.6	49.5
It is only normal representation with no practical power	568	50.5	100.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1125</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>55</b>

This faith in the political process was further demonstrated by the response to the question: “is it necessary for British Muslims to have a voice and representation in the British Parliament and the British Government?” The majority of respondents felt that it was necessary for Muslims to participate in the political process:

Of course it is. Our opinion only matters once we are inside the corridors of power where it can be heard. I want lots of Muslim civil servants and journalists too.

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

Yes, for Muslims to move forward it is essential that they take some part in British politics. Otherwise British Muslims would have no voice and wouldn't be able to change things.

(Male, 17, London)

Yes as being a citizen of the land I believe we should have a say in the land.

(Female, 19, London)

Yes because all cultures that live in Britain should have right to freedom of speech.

(Female, 14, London)

Yes. Political change most effectively be brought about through existing structures. It is high time that a multicultural Britain have a 'ministry for minorities'.

(Male, 21, Bolton)

Most definitely. We need elected representatives of Islam to not only carry our views across but to fully participate in the future of the country.

(Male, 28, Surrey)

It is imperative for this to occur in the current political climate where Muslims are very much being used as scapegoats for most problems.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

Yes I strongly agree we need representation in order for our concerns to be heard e.g. BNP.

(Male, 28, Birmingham)

Yes, otherwise this misconduct will continue.

(15, Male, Essex)

Yes of course- there are at least 1 million Muslims in UK.

(Male, 27, Manchester)

Their [sic] should be one from every faith/religion.

(Male, 33, Birmingham)

Yes as all minorities should be represented to avoid a breach of civil liberties.

(Male, 33, Manchester)

Yes, because they are a community with specific needs. Every community of people within Britain deserve the right to be represented. This is not only by having Muslims in British Parliament and government but also by having non-Muslims who have a good understanding of Muslim needs and opinions of the British Muslim community.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

It is clear that the overwhelming majority of respondents expressed their deep faith in democratic values and commitment to the political process, and not only for the Muslim community but as one respondent put it: 'all minorities should be represented to avoid a breach of civil liberties'. They want the Muslim voice to be heard in the decision making process of the country where their 'specific needs' would be reflected. The only critical voices were those frustrated by the possible compromise made by Muslim representatives who were ambitious for power:

Only if they do not sell out or compromise.

(Male, 38, Burnham-on-Crouch)

and the inability of mainstream politics because of its current prejudice against Islam to incorporate the Muslim voice:

Necessary to have a voice and representation in Parliament but afraid that parties will clamp down on any dissenting comments especially when justified.

(Female, 22, Manchester)

What's the point, they would only be token figures and not be taken seriously-they'd end up in the enemy camp  
(Female, 43, London)

One respondent also recognised that whilst the initiative had to come from the Muslim community, the question of an important distinction between those Muslims who were practising, and more-qualified to represent their needs:

It is most definitely necessary, as they [sic] is the only way in which Muslims needs and concerns will be addressed by the government. Policy will evolve favourably and there will only be adequate Muslim representation if practising Muslims take the initiative to participate.

(Female, 23, Essex)

## PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION

As discussed earlier, the importance of inculcating a sense of belonging is vital to the quality of citizenry that is engendered in society. All current research in social policy points to the pervasive effects of social exclusion upon minority communities. The Parekh Report (2000) viewed economic and social inequality as not only a major cause of racism and injustice in British society, but a condition threatening the very basis of citizenship. This is echoed in the Cabinet Office paper of 2000 where it is stated that 'people from minority ethnic communities are at a disproportionate risk of social exclusion'(2000:7). Researchers found that in particular, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis who are predominantly Muslim have become locked into zones of social exclusion and live in ghetto-like areas of poor housing (Modood et al. 1997). Respondents in this survey wanted the government to invest more money in Muslim majority communities like Bradford or Oldham which have suffered recently. Resolving problems such as unemployment, housing and education in these areas would lead to social cohesion and harmony:

I expect the British government to try and promote as much social cohesion as possible especially in places with large Muslim populations such as Bradford. So this entails discussing the issues of the Muslim community which range from unemployment to the anti-terror legislation and encouraging greater ownership of the policies executed. I do think that there needs to be greater investment in Muslim schools as contrary to the liberal opinion a greater sense of religious values and identity will only improve citizenship.

(Female, 23, Essex)

They should work with us to achieve unity.

(Male, 33, Birmingham)

They should listen to our concerns. Encouraging people from the Muslim community to come forward and discuss with them.

(Female, 23, London)



## RAISING AWARENESS OF ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

Respondents expected the Government to do more to raise awareness about Islam among members of the society in order to confront ignorance and prejudice directly. Working with the Muslim community to encourage understanding of Islam at the grassroots level and to introduce information about Islam as part of the education curriculum were believed to be very important in countering Islamophobia:

I don't know, perhaps make a better syllabus in schools for all religions so that the general populations knows more about Islam as well and are less wary and scared of it. For example at my high school, a predominantly white school, my peers hadn't even heard of Eid, fasting, etc. more knowledge should hopefully lead to more acceptance.

(Male, 21, Manchester)

They should work with the Muslim community to encourage a better understanding of Islam and help the Muslim community to stopping the constant negative portrayal in the media.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

Help increase awareness of Islam and Muslims through education. Help with community services, grassroots services and increase opportunities for employment.

(Female, 22, Manchester)

Give more rights in government -help the British by providing Islamic understanding in schools.

(Male, 28, Birmingham)

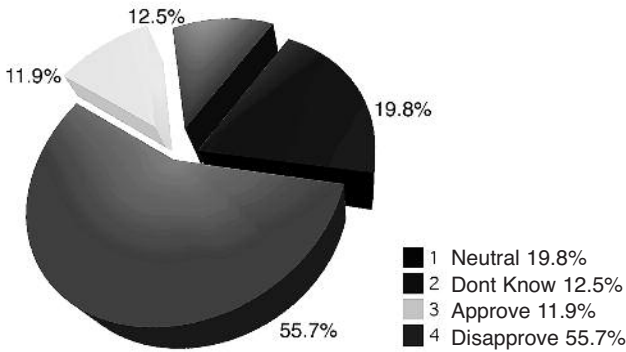
They should make the public aware of Islam.

(Female, 19, Manchester)

## BRITISH NATIONALITY AND OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE QUEEN

Our survey shows that about 57% of our respondents disapproved of the requirement for new British citizens to swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen (see Fig. 7). Muslims who are British by birth would not be affected by this new procedure however the debate this has provoked should be addressed. The requirement of taking an oath to the head of the Church of England is problematic for many Muslims. Further, requiring such an oath from MPs has long been argued to be an anachronism and requiring new citizens to do so is anomalous in a liberal society where many public figures have flaunted their disapproval of similar measures. Two tiers of citizenship are created by this act, whereby British born and naturalised British citizens are treated differentially, which may cause alienation amongst the latter. As such it should be dropped as a requirement of gaining citizenship, particularly when other countries do not make similar requirements.

**Figure 7: Oath of Allegiance to the Queen  
Approve/Disapprove**



### **CHANGING OF BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IN RELATION TO MUSLIM COUNTRIES**

Current foreign policy constantly emerges as a source of disquiet for many British Muslims. In response to the questions: “What is your impression about the British Government’s foreign policy concerning Muslim related issues e.g. Palestine, Kashmir, Iraq and Bosnia? Does Britain’s foreign policy regarding Muslims affect your sense of belonging to Britain?”; respondents were overwhelmingly negative about current foreign policy initiatives. However, their responses were nuanced, drawing a distinction between the British government and British society in general:

Like the foreign policies of most governments that of the British government is largely unethical and is driven by short term material and resource interests and expediencies at best, and by imperialism at worst. Of course this affects my sense of belonging. It does so by deepening it because my sense of responsibility is greater.

(Male, 34, Luton)

I am angry about British foreign policy in all these areas, and it does make me feel isolated, but then again, most British people are against British foreign policy in these areas, so us Muslims are not alone!

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

I can’t help but feel that British foreign policy is biased, oil-driven and hypocritical. Human rights abuses and humanitarian crises only ‘happen’ when they provide a convenient pretext for war. The unjustified British invasion of Muslim countries makes me ashamed to say that I am British at an international level, whereas it does not drive me to reject British society completely at a national level.

(Male, 21, Bolton)

Britain’s foreign policy seems to only follow what America and George Bush decides. Britain’s dealing with Iraq and Palestine especially has been appalling and also unsuccessful.

(Male, 17, London)

Obviously biased. No this does not [affect my sense of belonging]. If we wish to influence foreign policy then obviously greater political participation is necessary.

(Male, 47, London)

Yes, because my fellow Muslims are involved and they may not deserve what they get.

(Female, 14, London)

Very hypocritical particularly regarding Palestine. I strongly oppose the British invasion of Iraq. It was illegal and unjustified. Britain should have its own independent foreign policies not one attached to the USA.

(Male, 52, London)

My impression of British foreign policy is dire. The Government seeks to venture after political and economic gains under the guise of truth and justice. There is either apathy or unjust decision making when it comes to Muslim related issues. This does affect my sense of belonging as I do not trust the British Government or identify with it.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

The British want to destroy Muslims, this makes me feel isolated.

(Female, 19, Manchester)

Yes. They treat them unfairly, I feel like I am being treated unfairly.

(15, Male, Essex)

Yes- just want to destroy and weaken us.

(Male, 27, Manchester)

It is only Muslims that are picked on by the west.

(Male, 26, Birmingham)

I think it is very poor. Yes, [it does affect my sense of belonging] in the sense that I feel that the Muslim community opinions are not listened to regarding these issues. When one is not listened to they will ultimately feel excluded.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

Terrible, and of course it affects your sense of belonging to Britain .

(Female, 43, London).

Yes, I feel we are not listened to and nothing is being done for Muslims.

(Male, 21, Manchester)

The policies concerning these issues are really appalling and unjust. They are based on self-interests, to gain more trade/retain power but these policies are killing people. It doesn't affect my sense of belonging but I do believe that it contributes to me feeling disenfranchised.

(Female, 23, Essex)

It does not affect my sense of belonging as these are governmental decisions, not decisions made by Britain and its people. Our foreign policy rather than being ethical as promised by Jack Straw is short-sighted and inherently racist. Unfortunately the saying that where ever Britain goes it leaves behind it a mess is true.

(Male, 28, Surrey)

No it doesn't affect my sense of belonging but it needs to vastly improve. They should not be afraid to tackle the root causes even if

superficially unpopular and it takes a long time.

(Female, 22, Manchester)

The depth of anger is evident because it is clear that British Muslim views have not been taken account of when formulating foreign policy initiatives, and the need to resolve the Palestinian question re-emerges as central to the resolutions of problems in the Middle-East. However, what is also clear is that the extremely anti-British sentiment that the media projects as representative of British Muslim attitudes towards foreign policies pursued by the Government are simply false. The opinions expressed by the respondents are on the whole reflective and nuanced albeit disapproving; it is clear that the majority are frustrated by their inability to influence debate about foreign policy in any way.

## WHAT SHOULD THE PRIME MINISTER DO FOR MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN?

In response to the question: “If you were the Prime Minister of Britain, what would you do for British Muslims?” respondents’ answers to this question fell into seven main categories:

- **Changing anti-Muslim foreign policy**
- **Challenging Islamophobia, the climate of fear and racism**
- **Fostering a deeper understanding of Muslims**
- **Facilitating Muslim religious practices/ Encouraging Muslim education**
- **Encouraging equal Muslim involvement in society**
- **Ensuring Muslim participation in political processes**
- **Facilitating Muslim engagement with the Government**

Government should be more fair and they should be defending British Muslims. They should be taking a more positive stance towards supporting a positive imagine [sic] of British Muslims-involving us in more initiatives and activities and not just the old bearded men but some if [sic] the younger people too, women, younger people and perhaps secular Muslims too. We're not just one stereotype. The government should also defend the rights of Muslims around the world e.g. Chechnya and Palestine.

(Male, 26, London)



### CHANGING ANTI-MUSLIM FOREIGN POLICY

Once again, current policy initiatives are perceived as anti-Muslim and the Palestinian question re-emerges;

First of all, I shall give Palestinians their State, give up Bush completely and get rid of Blunkett and Straw!

(Female, 65, Birmingham)

I would have my foreign policy set in a way that will work for the sake of justice and not the issue of self interest. I would have laws that will make it a criminal offence to incite Islamophobia. I would pass laws that will make institutions take into account religious practices and allow for that in the way things are conducted.

(Male, 29, Luton)

Listen to them and stop killing Muslims abroad.

(Female, 34, Todmorden)

I would change international foreign policy in order to win back the trust of British Muslims

(Female, 21, Manchester)

Stop bombing other countries. Listen to Muslims and understand them and increase understanding. Provide better opportunities and prevent causes for extremism.

(Female, 22, Manchester)

### **CHALLENGING ISLAMOPHOBIA: THE CLIMATE OF FEAR AND RACISM**

Unsurprisingly, the phenomenon of fear brought about by the climate of Islamophobia re-emerged. Respondents believed this could be done by the creation of legislation outlawing discrimination against Muslims and by the reduction of draconian powers granted to the police under recent anti-terrorism legislation, which they felt had been used disproportionately against Muslims, thus creating a climate of fear and inciting hatred against Muslims:

Pass legislation and introduce education etc. to counteract Islamophobia.

(Male, 38, Burnham-on-Crouch)

Reduce the wide police powers under anti-terror laws. Give fair compensation to detainees imprisoned innocently. Increase the control over a sensationalist media and make it more liable to civil and criminal sanctions for false reporting.

(Male, 21, Bolton)

Provide more laws to prevent racism against Muslims and penalise those who are racist to Muslims.

(Male, 27, Manchester)

I would make them feel safe; -I would encourage them to participate in all social/political/economic actions of the nation; I would repeal any laws that target them and I would ask and encourage the media to be less Islamophobic.

(Male, 52, London)

## **DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM AND MUSLIMS**

Respondents considered that education about Islamic perspectives and values both in the political sphere (including the Government) as well as mainstream society was a key way forward in promoting greater social cohesion between Muslim and non-Muslim communities:

First I would encourage the cabinet, in particular the Home Secretary to have a better understanding of the Muslim community. I would also encourage greater participation and take feedback into account when making decisions, so as the community feel ownership of the policies and are more likely to support them.

(Female 23, Essex)

Educate the British public on Islam and cater for the religious needs of British Muslims.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

Teach religious education (Islam) in detail in schools so that all the pupils know what's happening in the surroundings.

(Female, 14, Sussex)

Provide more resources and change laws for understanding Islam.

(Male, 28, Birmingham)

## **SUPPORTING AND FACILITATING THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY**

As part of their wish list to the Prime Minister, respondents wanted increased efforts towards facilitating Muslim religious practices such as the introduction of more prayer rooms in public institutions, and the public acknowledgement of Muslim festivals. Respondents raised the question of Islamic education not only of children but also of Muslim youth and more importantly Muslim Imams so that they could meet the challenges facing them:

The best thing would be more investment in Muslim schools, which encourage religious values and which ultimately can only produce better citizens and give identity to much of the disenfranchised youth

(Female, 23, Essex)

I would introduce more prayer rooms in certain places (public) so it would be easier to perform salat [prayers]

(Female, 14, London)

Build mosques at better and bigger locations. Make more creative Eids on the streets like Xmas. More support to Imam[s] given [sic] them training in how to deal with drug, sex, crime issues so that they may appeal to those in question.

(Male, 28, Coventry)

Introduce religious education (Islam) in detail in schools so that all the pupils know what's happening in the surroundings

(Female, 14, Sussex)

Allow them true freedom-allow them to practice Islam without any barriers and treat them as humans like every one else.  
(Male, 26, Birmingham)

## PROMOTING MUSLIM PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY

Respondents wanted the Prime Minister to work harder to integrate Muslims as full members of society, and to ensure parity with other minority communities. Again the question of anti-discrimination legislation was raised to demonstrate sincerity on the part of the government to create parity and dispel fear:

Try to give them a place in society rather than shunning them out of the society. As well as extending the laws concerning Muslims and their rights.  
(Male, 17, London)

I would like the human rights of every community protected in Britain. No one should feel isolated or discriminated against. Therefore we need to create such an environment.  
(Male, 47, London)

Listen to them seriously and not try and manipulate them as is currently happening with supposedly mainstream British Muslim organisations promoting an unquestioningly pro-government agenda.  
(Female, 33, London)

Employ more Muslims and learn about them through personal contact so that they are no longer the 'other'.  
(Male, 34, Luton)

I would give them the right to effectively be a part of Britain  
(Male, 33, Birmingham)

Treat everyone with equality.  
(15, Male, Essex)

I would do the same law for other religions/other than Islam  
(Male, 33, Birmingham)

The same I would do to protect all minorities and to allow them to follow their religions peacefully.  
(Male, 33, Manchester)

## PROMOTING MUSLIM PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Reflecting earlier views about the need for Muslims to participate in the political process and thereby demonstrating faith in political institutions, respondents wanted the Prime Minister to appoint more Muslims to positions of power and influence in order to truly address the concerns of Muslims in Britain:

Put more Muslims in power.  
(Male, 22, Birmingham)

The Muslim community has been discriminated in different ways and I would give them the right to be able to be involved in social, political and economic structure.

(Male, 29, Birmingham)

Create a new cabinet post – the ‘minister for minorities’.

(Male, 21, Bolton)

Encourage participation and hence increase representation. Listen to Muslim concerns and address them (there is little point listening without addressing them!). Ensure legislation protected [sic] their basic rights to practice their faith freely. Help create a truer and more hence more [sic] positive image of Islam and Muslims

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

These responses demonstrate a remarkable willingness to engage in the political process to bring change in Muslims’ lives as well as reduce tensions in society. There is a clear desire to remove the shadow of misunderstanding that prevails and encourage a more inclusive social interaction with all citizens feeling able to make valuable contributions to their social and political well-being.

## FACILITATING MUSLIM ENGAGEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT



In response to the question: “How would you describe British Muslims’ engagement with the British government and with majority society?” Respondents believed that there was no serious effort on the part of the British government to engage the Muslim community. Efforts were labelled piecemeal and lop-sided with undue credence being given to certain organisations (such as the MCB) without canvassing wider Muslim views, thereby harnessing the good will of Muslims in Britain and making efforts to secure a greater commitment from mainstream society:

■ Minimal – an area we need to build on if we are to have any input into this society and government.

(Male, 28, Surrey)

■ The engagement of British Muslims with the government is mainly during protests or through voting polls; there is little real engagement in discussion except by MCB. British Muslims are beginning to engage more with the majority of society as they are being educated and joining the workforce.

(Female, 21, Manchester)

■ Not very strong. Lack of attention given by government they come for votes outside the mosque but when it comes to helping and keeping in regular contact they don’t

(Female, 30, London).

■ Engagement is fine- we are very tolerant people. It is the government that is intolerant.

(Male, 27, Manchester)





■ Islamophobia [sic] has put a stop to Muslims succeeding government top positions.

(Male, 26, Birmingham)

■ I think overall it is positive. The number of Muslims who are law abiding citizens and who are in fact going out of there [sic] way to contribute positively to Britain and create better social cohesion is I think significantly higher than the minority that cause trouble.

(Female, 22, Cardiff)

■ Needs to get better.

(Female, 22, Manchester)

■ I think there is a great contribution with the majority of the society in terms of the number of Muslim doctors/businesses and those in the public sector. But I think the engagement with the government is very lop-sided: much of the engagement is through pressure groups and lobbying. There are very few Muslims engaged with the government through political parties etc

(Female, 23, Essex)

## IMPORTANT COMMENTS

As a part of the research on 'Dual Citizenship: British, Islamic or both', IHRC asked scholars, social activists and some other leading religious activists in different Organizations, Colleges and Schools to express their views on the concept of British Muslim Citizenship, and their expectations of the government accordingly.

### HUMAYUN ANSARI

**DIRECTOR OF CENTRE FOR ETHNIC MINORITY STUDIES,  
ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

The religious and cultural claims of Muslims arriving and settling in Britain after the Second World War, and reactions to their claims, reopened issues around the nature and duties of citizenship that were thought to have been resolved thanks to centuries of struggle. As Britain became an increasingly multicultural society debates grew around the potential conflict between citizenship as pursuit of equality before the law and as a recognition of difference. British Muslims have come to understand the changing character of their citizenship in a variety of ways: as a legal status based on civic, political and social rights; as membership of a legally constituted political community; and as a set of duties or responsibilities. However, for them, citizenship has not been simply an assertion of formal right or entitlement. It has also meant engagement with public affairs of the local and national community, thus actively shaping the society of which they are a part.

Experiencing disadvantage and exclusion, Muslims have had to think of themselves in reaction to being rejected and constructed as the 'Other'. As a result, they, by and large, have viewed the identity component of their citizenship usually in differentiated, hybrid and pragmatic ways. An emotional and cultural bond, a shared commitment to the nation, for a sizeable proportion has been lacking. Often possessing a transnational consciousness, their practice of citizenship transcends the boundaries of the nation-state. Violation of rights in any part of the Ummah is deeply felt. Nevertheless, while they have continued to struggle for specific cultural claims, many have equally for long accepted the common obligations of British society, reflecting a desire to extend the scope and meaning of citizenship.

## **MUDASSAR ARANI**

**HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAMILY LAW SOLICITOR,  
SOUTHALL, MIDDLESEX**

It is important for the government to ensure that Muslims are not treated as second class citizens and are no longer discriminated against. Many may argue that this is nothing more than exaggeration on my part. The evidence however is contrary and there are many examples. When for example we had British Muslim men being detained in Yemen it was clear that they did not receive support from the British government. They were presumed guilty from the outset. Yet when two nurses were arrested in Saudi Arabia for murder, the British government went out of their way to state that these individuals were innocent.

Under anti-terrorist laws, Muslims are the main targets, and ordinary people are being questioned about their views on the war in Iraq and subjected to suspicion by the security services, yet no-one would dare to put the same questions to non-Muslims [sic] British nationals with regards to their views of the War on Iraq. For these views Muslims are labelled extremists and yet many non-Muslim individuals marched and protested against the war on Iraq. Freedom of expression was asserted as fundamental when Muslims complained about Salman Rushdie, but now this fundamental right is being applied selectively. Other laws lower the burden of proof and Muslims bear the brunt of this emerging two tier system.

## **BARONESS POLA UDDIN**

**LABOUR PEER**

The concept of British Citizenship is only credible when the two million Muslims of Britain have full entitlement and representation across all sectors of society including the British Government.

British Muslims deserve the protection inherent to every British citizen, this includes the protection of law. British Muslims have contributed honourably to the development of the British multicultural society. This has gone far beyond what is required as citizens to ensure that we are accepted as the fabric of British society.

We have to recognise that while there has been an evolution to embrace different faiths, Muslims have not been allowed to take part in that process, often having to defend international incidents with which the British Muslim community have no connection. These tensions often present since September 11th have increased the demand of religious discrimination legislation. Affording this protection must now be a matter of justice and rights of citizenship.

I welcome the most recent announcement by the Prime Minister to bring in religious discrimination [legislation]. We hope this will not be in the context of stringent anti-terror legislation. Alongside the development of achieving equality for all, our government must ensure now that the representation of British Muslims at the highest level becomes a top priority. Without which, we would have failed to inspire the next generation into active citizenship.

## **FADI ITANI**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MUSLIM WELFARE HOUSE,  
LONDON**

We, as British Muslims, are not looking for special treatment from the government, only fair and equal treatment. Muslims are part of the fabric of British society, but yet, day after day we are asked to prove our loyalty to the country. We are extending our hands and opening our hearts, and we expect the government and other mainstream organizations to receive us similarly. The government needs to recognize that the integration we are talking about is about living in a place, respecting the law and your fellow citizens, being responsible to society and positively contributing to the betterment of society. British Muslims have diverse cultures and backgrounds. I hope that the government makes an effort to understand the makeup of this varied Muslim population. For example, almost 49% of the Muslim community is under the age of 25 (Census 2001) and policy makers need to look at strategies to ensure that these youth are given equal opportunities to access and successfully integrate into the educational and labour market.

We also sincerely hope that our government foreign policy will be more just and that Britain becomes a leading power for the peace and justice around the world.

## **LUQMAN ALI**

**DIRECTOR OF KHAYAL THEATRE COMPANY, LUTON**

I expect the government to: Recognise British Muslims as a culturally and ethnically diverse faith community to whom belong the same freedoms and rights that are accorded to non-Muslim British citizens including the right to dissent and protest within the parameters of the law without the fear of their citizenship or the right thereto being explicitly or implicitly subject to revocation or unjust suspicion and questioning. Uphold and sustain the vision of an ever evolving culturally diverse society to which British Muslims integrally belong and are recognised for their contributions.

Exercise care, discernment and fairness in the representations and descriptions of the Muslim community that reverses the alarmingly prevailing popular association of Islam and all Muslims with terrorism.

Replace inhumane foreign policies based on double standards, unequal life value ratios, short term interests and resource anxieties with benevolent policies based on the universal interests of humanity and the fragile natural environment which we share as an ever more connected global family.

Develop and contribute to civilizational dialogue a positive and optimistic discourse predicated on mutualities and synthesis between East and West that is based on the wealth of knowledge, experience and respect of those with the most direct exposure and understanding of the Muslim world within British institutions. Ensure the proportionate allocation of resources and socio-cultural and political representation, space and opportunities to the British Muslim community that would help to further integrate it and instil within it a sense of belonging and stakeholding.

## **SHAISTA AZIZ**

**FREELANCE JOURNALIST, LONDON**

I expect the British government to protect Muslim people's right to practise their religion fully, this includes defending the right of Muslim women to dress in an Islamic manner and wear the hijab.

I expect the government to acknowledge that Muslim people are vulnerable to racism and Islamophobia [sic], more so in the post September 11th world and expect the government to legislate against all acts of racism and Islamophobia [sic] including verbal and physical abuse.

I believe that the government needs to interact with grassroots Muslim activists and needs to take responsibility in ensuring that their voices are heard when it comes to shaping policies that impact on Muslims lives.

## **FATEMA DOSSA**

**PHARMACIST AND YOUTH LEADER, HARROW,  
MIDDLESEX**

With over 2 million Muslims living in Britain today, the British Muslim community is one of the largest ethnic minorities living in Britain. British Muslims participate in all fields and walks of life contributing to Britain's wealth and culture at all levels. Yet we as a community have faced and continue to face severe obstacles in UK on many areas including employment, education, housing and health.

As a Muslim living in Britain, I believe I speak on behalf of my community in saying that the government needs to do a lot more in addressing the needs of our community in Britain. We need more efforts by the government in meeting the employment needs of the Muslim Community, which has a disproportionately high rate of unemployment, compared to other ethnic minorities. Islamophobia, lack of faith-friendly work environments among other reasons has meant that the Muslim community in Britain has been ostracised and discriminated against thus equal opportunities is still an empty rhetoric for the Muslim community.

It is quite a well-known fact that the British Muslim community in Britain is one of the most deprived and disadvantaged communities in Britain. The discrimination and disadvantages have led to the Muslim community being unable to integrate into the British society, hence feeling isolated and led to the creation of the 'us and them' ideology. As a Muslim youth, I would expect and urge the policy makers in the government and public bodies to counter the Islamophobia and vilification of Muslims by taking necessary initiatives in educating the mainstream public about Muslims and Islam so as to dispel any misconceptions and to encourage and support projects that promote participation of Muslims in the society. Furthermore, in tackling such discrimination, the policy makers have to understand and appreciate the significant role that Islam and faith plays in making the Muslim identity.

In addition to domestic issues, British Muslims are also concerned with the foreign policy adopted by their government. The double standards illustrated by Britain in dealing with Israel and War on Afghanistan and Iraq has led to distrust of the government and its agenda for Islam and Muslims. For the government to regain its trust and to have any credibility within the Muslim community in Britain, it has to re-evaluate its foreign policy as this serves to further alienate Muslims from the mainstream society.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this survey, utilising both qualitative and quantitative data, we have attempted to explore in depth the attitudes of Muslims in Britain towards citizenship. The data findings reflected current theoretical paradigms about citizenship; like those concepts, the respondents' views were multi-dimensional and complex. There were however recurrent themes and we shall attempt to summarise them here.

As discussed throughout this research, citizenship is not only a series of 'rights and obligations', but it also comprises two other important dimensions; namely the 'need for recognition' and the 'emotional' elements of citizenship, without which the concept of citizenship is sterile –and like all lifeless organisms with the potential to fester. The latter two dimensions of recognition and emotional inclusion are all the more necessary components of analysis because of the diasporic nature of the presence of Muslims in Britain. As for all minority communities there are additional complexities that must be considered when analysing facets of citizenship, but in the case of Muslims in Britain there is the unique phenomenon of diverse diasporic communities finding themselves grouped together under one label. The far-ranging ethnic diversity is compounded by tremendous generational differences with some communities present for decades and others relative newcomers (EU, 2002), added to which there are considerable socio-economic differences between the different Muslim groups. The situation of Muslims in the UK is almost unique in comparison to Europe where Muslim communities tend to be more homogenous because of the patterns of politically determined migration . Given that the phenomenon of a British Muslim community is now established, any discussion of citizenship must take account of the fact that those very elements that forge Muslim identity in the British context need to be integrated into the concept of the British citizen. Due to the aforementioned vast ethnic and generational divergences, Muslims in Britain have had to recourse to identifying 'Islamic values' that bind them together; these are not *ab initio* counterpoised against the notion of the British citizen, but without sustained efforts to ensure a sense of belonging and maintaining inclusive attitudes, a fissured polemic is bound to develop. If 'Islamic values' are deemed illegitimate, hostile to 'us' –the 'other' is bound to be established. The data findings demonstrate that already there are notions of 'dual' attachment, that there are already notions of 'them' and 'us', but the sense of isolation, alienation and marginalization has (up until now) been kept at bay, contrary to all superficial understanding, by the very 'Islamic values' that are bound, by definition, to encourage a sense of responsibility to the nation state, a sense of moral conformity to law-abiding values and a sense of service to one's fellow citizen. In the words of one respondent to suggest a contradiction between being a good Muslim and a good citizen was "offensive."

The data findings clearly demonstrate that despite relentless vilification by the media, hostile social and legal policies, marginalisation by mainstream institutions and economic deprivation, Muslims in Britain have maintained an attitude of willingness to participate in British civic life. This goodwill can not continue much longer; what remains of it must be nurtured by a sea change in attitude and the deepening of any commitment to engage Muslims in Britain; their fears must be dispelled, their trust regained and their good will harnessed if a cohesive society is to be forged.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT

### ■ CONSULTATION AND DIALOGUE

- To forge a cohesive society, and encourage civic participation from all members of society equally, demands a greater understanding of the debate around the idea of citizenship per se. Imposing particular understanding of what being British means will fail to promote the very civic values that the debate is aiming to encourage. Currently the parameters of the debate as engendered by the Government and discussed by the media, prescribes a narrow and highly conditional form of citizenship with the implication that Muslims have a different set of citizenship criteria to meet. This perception needs to be countered at the outset with the understanding that the discussion of citizenship values applies to all parties in the debate not only British Muslims. The starting point of the debate has to be inclusive of all groupings including a recognition of the diverse nature of the Muslim community within the consultation process. It is a question of establishing British values for all: not a question of making 'them' more like 'us'. Consultation needs to be pro-active ensuring a voice for all; those who at present consider themselves without a voice, which entails overcoming identifiable barriers to civic participation including an emotional alienation from civic processes and a marginalization due to discrimination and economic factors. This involves more interaction with the British Muslim community at a grassroots level, with wider consultation across the full range of Muslim groups: current consultations are seen as narrow, unrepresentative and agenda led. To enable the Muslim community to feel that they are recognized as part of Britain and that their participation is valued, the consultation should extend to a full variety of issues not just faith or minority related issues. If British Muslims are to be multi-dimensional citizens participating in all spheres of civic life consultation with them should be multi-dimensional not single –issue.

### ■ ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

- The Muslim respondents in this survey viewed democratic and parliamentary processes as legitimate vehicles to safeguard individual and community rights. That belief and expectation is not only conducive to social cohesion but a prerequisite to establishing the well-being of the nation state. According to the respondents, this expectation is currently not being met either in numerical terms with representation corresponding to population numbers, or in qualitative terms with regard to the representation provided by Muslims already in parliament.

### ■ META-LOYALTIES AND FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVES

- An essential component of consultation on all issues is that even extremely difficult topics such as foreign policy initiatives need to be openly debated about. The only way to engender a sense of belonging for British Muslims is to facilitate a voice which will allow open and full debate, even if that entails criticisms of current

foreign policy initiatives: if there are no fora for debate, and the only time Muslims are ever heard is when they criticise British policies abroad then the sense of Muslims as somehow alien to British society will heighten. If all voices are allowed to express their views then the parameters of debate are more inclusive and less divisive. This also requires the Government to acknowledge its own ambiguous stance on issues of trans-national or meta-national loyalties. The price to pay for the globalisation of human rights and to use it as a means to justify even violent foreign policies is that oppositions to it are likewise 'globalised' so that Islam is seen as a global force in opposition, rather than one force in the plural discourse governing international relations. The impact of such policies in the domestic sphere are undeniable.

#### ■ **DISPELLING THE CLIMATE OF FEAR: CHALLENGING ISLAMOPHOBIA**

- Nearly all the respondents attested to a climate of fear engendered by an unashamedly retaliatory attitude of reprisal since the events of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001. Although Islamophobia was categorised as a phenomenon much earlier (Runnymede Trust; 1997) the rise in physical and verbal abuse since 2001 has been unquestionable. There has been an unprecedented rise in criminal harassment coupled by the untrammelled media vilification of Muslims. All the respondents felt that there have been no concerted efforts to acknowledge the level of abuse and vilification nor any systematic efforts to curb it in any way.
- Whilst free speech is important in a pluralistic society and should be promoted, the abuse of this right either intentionally or through institutionalized prejudice should be tackled urgently. The overwhelming expectation of British Muslims is that they should not be made the pariahs of British society but that there should be the contrary assumption that they are a positive force in social discourse with valued contributions to make alongside an acknowledgement of past efforts.
- There must be high level governmental acknowledgement of the existence and prevalence of Islamophobia coupled with visible and viable efforts to counter its effects at all levels in order to stimulate the trust of Muslims in the UK which, though still extant shows considerable sign of strain and wane. Efforts to utilise existing legal and social/institutional mechanisms for the monitoring of abuse in the policing and legal system as well as in the media should be made. For example, extending the use of provisions designed to counteract the defamatory statements and actions of politicians and the media (Contempt of Court Act ) and the effective prosecution of media organisations for any content which could incite hatred against Muslims. Such measures would demonstrate to Muslims that the Government is serious about protecting its Muslim population and that there is not a two-tier system of justice in Britain.

#### ■ **EQUAL TREATMENT AND PROTECTION**

- The overwhelming majority of Muslims surveyed perceived differential treatment in relation to other minority groups in the UK as well as in relation to all British citizens in general. These perceptions are borne out by a failure in the law to recognise and afford protection to British Muslims, thereby undermining the idea of a British



'Muslim' legal identity, and exposing the shallowness of the debates about citizenship initiated by the Government. If this state of affairs continues the tangible feelings of disengagement and negativity towards the processes of the state will inevitably rise. The Government must act to enact or amend legislation to take immediate effect outlawing discrimination against Muslims. Whether this is done by either amending the Race Relations Act to bring Muslims within its scope or by enacting fresh legislation outlawing all types of religious discrimination, is of less concern than the actual acknowledgement that the disparity is being addressed by the Government. Similarly, it is imperative that the Government be seen to act by banning openly racist and fascist organisations such as the BNP demonstrating the genuine concern for the safety of Muslims in Britain. Piecemeal measures will not suffice; for example the failed attempt to outlaw incitement to religious hatred as part of the Anti-Terrorism Crime & Security Bill 2001 was discredited as an attempt to actually prosecute rather than protect minorities. In a similar vein, Muslims are not unaware that new employment regulations outlawing inter alia religious discrimination stem from requirements to adhere to European Union directives rather than from a political will by this Government to ensure the equal treatment of its Muslim citizens. Parity of treatment can only heighten a sense of loyalty and an increased participation in society.

#### ■ **RAISING AWARENESS: EDUCATION ABOUT ISLAM FOR ALL**

- Ignorance fuels hatred: the British Government must invest money and resources in educating the general public about Islam in order to counteract the predominantly negative attitude towards Muslims. In order to generate mutual recognition and trust between Muslim and non-Muslim citizens the quality of information and awareness of Muslim contributions and values has to be raised. Muslim contributions to science, technology and culture need to be understood in school syllabi as part of the process of education which in turns fosters debate. Current debates surrounding religion whether at the level of social interaction or policy making often make profoundly ill-informed judgments based upon stereotypical, erroneous or even fabricated perceptions of Islam and Muslims. This initiative must be accompanied by a concerted effort to increase the quality and prevalence of education about Islamic values amongst Muslims as well. This means the active support and funding of broad-ranging and fully representative Islamic education initiatives within the Muslim community itself. It is the lack of funding to support community measures which has led to the poor quality of some of the Muslim educational institutions in the UK.

#### ■ **TACKLING SOCIAL DEPRIVATION AND ENSURING FAITH-TOLERANT PRACTICES**

- Social exclusion is an undeniable force for societal disintegration and political unrest. The data in this survey and numerous other studies demonstrate without any doubt the likelihood of minority communities suffering from a disproportionate degree of social exclusion. Muslim majority cities such as Bradford and Oldham are centres of high social deprivation and the need to invest in housing,



education and employment initiatives in these types of areas is paramount in tackling the source of social exclusion. Investment in these deprived areas will inevitably decrease hostility between Muslims and mainstream society. Our research showed a huge correlation between a good standard of living and satisfaction with life in Britain. Muslims who are given an opportunity to succeed in life with better educational choices, improved housing and better employment opportunities, are more likely to be 'satisfied' and make a positive contribution to life in Britain. In addition, all the respondents spoke about the need to encourage a more faithfriendly environment manifesting an intrinsic respect for faith practices. For example, the provision of prayer facilities, provisions for faith-compliant use of public facilities such as dedicated women only slots at public leisure facilities, and the choice to observe Islamic dress codes in all public institutions would enhance the sense of belonging for all Muslim citizens. Inclusive social policies such as these would generate trust and ensure the continued active participation of Muslim in all spheres of civic life. .

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## VOLUME

# 1

In light of the perceived threat to the rights and liberties of Muslims in Britain in the aftermath of 9/11 and the Iraq war, this timely contribution addresses serious questions about the British state's commitment to its Muslim citizens.

Easily accessible and drawing on extensive empirical data, this research engages impressively with the rich tapestry of contemporary British Muslim experience and offers a complex understanding of their perceptions, feelings and sense of belonging, in the context of emerging notions and practices of citizenship as they are reshaped by cultural plurality and transnationality. There is much to commend the authors' argument that Islamic values complement the principle of good citizenship and an understanding of British Muslims' expectations of British government could form a helpful basis for their effective empowerment, inclusion and participation in British civic life.

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This report on the current perceptions of citizenship by British Muslims could hardly be more timely or significant. The authors argue convincingly that in age of globalization and multi-cultural societies citizenship has to mean far more than political, legal and social rights. The capacity of minorities to feel that both their unique culture and wider contribution to society is recognized and respected is paramount if they are not to become alienated. It has been their religion that has been so crucial in cementing British Muslims into one 'community' given their otherwise remarkable national, ethnic and sectarian heterogeneity. Paradoxically it has also been Islamic teaching that has generated the greatest willingness to respect British laws and institutions and despite growing media hostility, frequent Islamophobic, and sometimes violent, outbursts and a government reluctant to take appropriate steps to counter these through education/employment programmes, greater legal protection etc. This is a rich, nuanced and balanced report that throws much-needed light on an urgent issue.

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