



GLOBAL MUSLIM DIASPORA

Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC Member States



UNITED KINGDOM

Country Report Series



ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION
STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH
AND TRAINING CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES



GLOBAL MUSLIM DIASPORA:
MUSLIM COMMUNITIES AND MINORITIES IN NON-OIC MEMBER STATES



COUNTRY REPORT SERIES

UNITED KINGDOM



Organization of Islamic Cooperation
The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and
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Acronyms

GMD	Global Muslim Diaspora
MCB	Muslim Council of Britain
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
SSUA	Social Sciences University of Ankara
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
WWII	World War II

Foreword

The SESRIC has launched the Global Muslim Diaspora (GMD) Project - a comprehensive research effort trying to analyse challenges, attitudes, experiences and perceptions on a range of issues related to Muslim communities and minorities living in the non-OIC Member States. The main objective of the project is to provide a range of useful comparative statistics and insights, which can help identify issues, initiate cooperation forums and shape future policy.

Islam is not only present in all continents as a religion but also as a cultural and civilizational value. Starting with the *Hijrah* of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Muslim migrants have laid the foundations for the spread of Islamic values, ideas and habits in the regions where they are settled, thus contributed to the cultural richness and economic development of these places.

Today, whenever we raise the point concerning Muslims communities and minorities living in non-OIC Member States, we have in mind a context in which Islam is present through more recent migrations. However, we should keep in mind that many of these countries have also been the homeland of its Muslims for centuries.

Despite the recent growth of literature on Muslims living in non-OIC Member States, our knowledge regarding this subject remains limited and fragmented. The GMD project intends to fill this gap through engaging more closely with the representatives of Muslim communities and minorities in different countries.

In context of GMD project, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the report on the United Kingdom (UK), which affords the political elites, policy makers, analysts and general public the opportunity to understand how the Muslims in the UK view the most pressing issues they face today. The report on the UK is based on two basic pillars: desk research and fieldwork – conducted by travelling to London, the UK. Survey and workshop with representatives of Muslim communities and minorities and in-depth interviews with Muslim and non-Muslim public opinion leaders are the main components of this fieldwork study, whose results are integrated within the report.

I would like to encourage the readers of this report to have a look on the GMD general report titled “Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC Member States: Diagnostics, Concepts, Scope and Methodology”, which inter alia provides description of methodology and research activities applied when preparing the report on United Kingdom.

The development of this report has involved the dedication, skills and efforts of many individuals, to whom I would like to thank.

Amb. Musa Kulaklıkaya
Director General
SESRIC

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The United Kingdom case report has been prepared by Onur Unutulmaz and Servet Erdem, with contributions of Erdal Akdeve, Gürol Baba. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Barca, Rector of SSUA, supervised and contributed to the preparation of this report. Clive Campbell proofread the document.

Amb. Musa Kulaklıkaya, Director General of the SESRIC, provided pivotal leadership during the preparation of the report. Several SESRIC members also contributed to the finalization of the report, including Dr. Kenan Bağcı, Acting Director of Economic and Social Research Department, and Dr. Erhan Türbedar, Researcher, who coordinated the report on behalf of SESRIC. Kaan Namli, Researcher, edited the report and Fatma Nur Zengin, Events and Communications Specialist, facilitated the fieldworks.

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Executive Summary

This report aims to contribute to the literature and public debate on diasporic Muslim communities and minorities by providing a comprehensive outlook on the principle aspects of the Muslim community in the United Kingdom (UK). The data presented and analysed in this report were collected using several primary data collection methods and a review of the existing sources. A survey was conducted in London on a sample of 150 Muslim individuals (in May-June 2017) to complement 9 in-depth interviews with, Muslim and non-Muslim, key individuals during the London fieldwork between 4 May and 9 May 2017. Lastly, a workshop was organized on 14 September 2018 and attended by representatives of Muslim and non-Muslim NGOs, municipalities, and media organizations.

The UK is a critical country for the Muslim diasporic communities. Not only does the country have one of the largest, most diverse and most dynamic Muslim communities across the globe; it is also a prime example of political multiculturalism where the Muslim communities were provided more communal autonomy. The UK is also a very important context because the immigration of large Muslim communities to this country took place in a different, if not altogether unique, colonial context. This historical background is partly responsible for the dominance of Asian Muslim communities in Britain today.

It is estimated that today the number of Muslims in the UK is around 3 million, corresponding to approximately 5 per cent of the population in 2011. The significance of Islam and Muslims, however, is felt on a much greater level than these mere figures might suggest. This is even more true in the cultural, economic, and political heart of the country. More than one-third of all Muslims (37.4%) in Britain live in the capital and Muslims constitute 12.4% of London's population.

Muslims in the UK have managed to establish very strong civil society organisations, partly due to the policies of multiculturalism in the country. Research outcomes indicate that Muslim communities are united in complaining about lack of unity, dividedness, and fragmentation amongst Muslim communities. The suggested reasons for this include lack of leadership, lack of representation, and lack of financial resources.

There is a very high level of praise among Muslims for Britain as a country that provides religious and cultural freedom for everyone, including the Muslims. The UK is also praised for having a strong democracy that is based on the rule of law and human rights. Moreover, the UK has been very successful in receiving the trust of the Muslim communities. Indeed, Muslims report a very high level of trust to the British government, its legal system, and its law enforcement bodies.

There is, however, still room for improvement. Despite the very strong system that offers freedom and protection to Muslims, Islamophobia and discrimination are still being experienced in the daily life. In addition, although the number of Muslim individuals at the key positions in the economy, politics, and society is increasing daily; Muslims are still not completely satisfied with their representation in British politics and media. They believe that compared to their size and significance, Muslims need to be better represented in these two crucial realms. There is a particularly high level of concern regarding the poor and often biased representation of Muslims in the British media.

Another thing that the UK seems to have managed with great success is to allow its Muslim communities to foster a sense of belonging to both Islam and to Britain. In fact, not only do a great majority of Muslims suggest that they see no potential contradiction between being British and being Muslim, they report a very high degree of sense of belonging to the UK. This success has a lot to do with the British policies of multiculturalism, which are increasingly being replaced with policies of integration and cohesion. It also has a lot to do with the fact that the “British” identity has long been an umbrella, kind of supra-national, identity which by definition left more room for other national, ethnic, and religious identities in the history of the British Empire.

The Muslims in the UK appear to be content with today and mildly optimistic about the future. Not only are they not concerned about any repercussions to be caused by the process of Brexit for the Muslim minorities in the country, they project a better future for both themselves and other Muslims living in Muslim majority countries.

The GMD project in the UK has found a richly diverse, vibrant and strong Muslim community that is getting stronger every day. A reason for this has been the advent of the second and third generation Muslims, who are taking over from their parents and grandparents as leaders of the Muslim community. These individuals, simultaneously proud Muslims and proud Britons, are the future of the Muslim diaspora and their secret for success is their level of integration into both the mainstream society and their cultural communities. These individuals are able to adapt according to the necessities of multiple identities and they are more than equipped to lead the Muslim communities of tomorrow. Therefore, instead of a potential threat, Muslims’ integration into their host societies should be seen as an opportunity and instrument of a much brighter future for all Muslims.

1 Introduction: Context and Background

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, hereafter the UK or Britain, is a critical country for the Muslim diasporic communities. Not only does the country have one of the largest, most diverse, and most dynamic Muslim community across the globe; it is also a prime example of political Multiculturalism where the Muslim community is provided with greater communal autonomy. The UK is also a very important because of the large immigration of Muslims to this country, although chronologically coinciding with the emergence of other European Muslim communities in the immediate aftermath of World War II (WWII), it took place in a different, if not altogether unique, colonial context. This historical background, as it will be further demonstrated in the report, is partly responsible for the dominance Asian Muslim communities in Britain today.

It is estimated that the number of Muslims in the UK is over 3 million, although the last official figures, which were provided by the population census of England and Wales, placed the figure at 2.7 million, corresponding to the 4.8 per cent of the population in 2011 (MCB 2015). The significance of Islam and Muslims, however, is felt on a much greater level than these mere figures suggest. This is even more true in the cultural, economic, and political heart of the country. More than one-third of all Muslims (37.4%) in Britain live in the capital city and Muslims constitute 12.4 per cent of London's total population.

This report is the product of an intensive fieldwork conducted in London on 4-9 May 2017 in the framework of the Global Muslim Diaspora (GMD) Project. Before presenting and discussing the findings of the fieldwork, the following few sections will provide a background and contextual information on the UK.

1.1 Islam in the UK: A Brief Historical Context

Mass immigration of Muslims into the UK has a relatively short history. Although Britain had contact with Islam for centuries because of its colonial empire, large-scale movements of Muslims into the British mainland started after WWII. However, it should be highlighted that first small Muslim communities started settling in Britain after the middle of the 19th Century, mostly as cheap labour for the growing industrial and seaport cities of London, Liverpool and Woking (Fetzer and Soper 2005: 26). With this initial settlement came the formation of a small number of Muslim social and religious organizations and the construction of the country's first all-purpose mosque at Woking in 1889 (Lewis 1994: 10–12; Macpherson 1997: 113). Despite this, for the most part, the Muslim presence in Britain prior to WWII was invisible.

The first large wave of Muslim immigrants came to Britain after the War, and the pattern of this immigration was rooted in British colonialism. The largest percentage of immigrants came from

Commonwealth countries, particularly from the Indian subcontinent where many people were displaced after the partition of British India in 1947. The state had an economic incentive to encourage the migration of foreign workers to help rebuild British cities that had been damaged during the War. This construction demanded the immigration of a large number of unskilled and semiskilled workers who would work for low wages and in jobs that many British workers did not want to work in (Siddiqui, 2000: 185).

Many of these early immigrants were men who, through military service or personal experience, had some connection to the British colonial administration (Vertovec, 2002: 19). They were the vanguard of a chain migration that would follow from India, Pakistan, and other Commonwealth countries. Some theorists have speculated that Britain's colonial history influenced the country's initial treatment of Muslim immigrants. Jørgen Nielsen (2001) noted "the British inherited a positive image of Islam because of their experiences in Muslim parts of the Empire." Of course, colonialism might have imbued the British with a paternalistic attitude toward Muslim immigrants, but at least it was a relatively less malign paternalism. Moreover, this fairly positive initial impression of early Muslim immigrants was in stark contrast to that of the French, where the painful memories of the Algerian War of Independence meant that the French viewed North African Muslim immigrants with a mixture of fear and apprehension (Cesari, 2002b: 37). In Britain, at least, Muslim immigrants had almost unrestricted right of access throughout the 1950s.

Ataullah Siddiqui (2000: 185) argues that the primary goal of many of the Muslim immigrants was "to earn enough money so that they would return to Pakistan, buy a plot of land and build a house there." In describing the initial expectations of the Muslim immigrant community, Shuja Shaikh (2001), a Councillor of the London Borough of Hackney, Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party on the Council, and the town's Former Mayor, similarly reflects:

"Most of our people came to this country in the 1950s and '60s to work, and their concept in those days was that if we collect 2,000 pounds, that will be enough. We could take this money and go home (to Pakistan or India), set up a shop, buy a farm, and that would be enough for a livelihood because 2,000 pounds was a lot of money" (Fetzer and Soper, 2005: 2).

For a variety of reasons, the Muslim migrants did not return to their country of origin as they had initially planned. For many, the economic and educational opportunities in Britain encouraged them to stay, while in other cases political circumstances made returning to their country of origin less likely. Britain neither anticipated a mass migration nor did it encourage these foreign workers to become British citizens, but the inherited policy allowed both to occur. Under the terms of the 1948 British Nationality Act, Commonwealth immigrants had access to all the rights and privileges of British citizenship. People born in the Commonwealth countries were subject to neither immigration controls nor considered aliens (Adolino, 1998: 25). They were, instead, citizens of the British Commonwealth who enjoyed the same civil and legal rights as persons born in Britain (Vertovec, 1997: 173). The intent of this very liberal policy was to permit white colonial subjects to gain automatic citizenship when they returned to Britain; the policy's unanticipated consequence was to give similar legal rights to non-white immigrants. As Christian Joppke notes, "some 80 million subjects of the Crown, inhabiting one-fourth of the earth's landmass, had the right of entry and settlement in Britain" (1998: 287).

The policy did not initially elicit much popular or elite concern. While British cities witnessed a few anti-immigrant riots in the late 1940s, immigration control did not become a national political issue until after many race riots occurred in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Karapin, 2000). In 1968, Enoch Powell delivered his infamous ‘rivers of blood’ speech, in which he called for the end of non-white immigration to England and for subsidizing the repatriation of immigrants from New Commonwealth states. The Conservatives expelled Powell from the shadow cabinet because of the speech, but his populist intervention on race heightened the salience of the issue (Spencer, 1997: 142–3).

The Tories never adopted Powell’s vitriolic position on race and immigration, and neither the Labour Party nor the Conservatives explicitly supported the racist, anti-immigrant National Front Party that followed Powell in the 1970s, nor its successor, the British National Party founded in 1982. Nonetheless, beginning with the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, a series of Labour and Conservative governments passed laws that tightened citizenship laws and sharply limited the right of Commonwealth citizens to enter Britain. The result of these new policies was the virtual cessation of primary immigration; for a period, Britain became as restrictive in its immigration policy as any country in Western Europe (Kepel, 1997: 100; Messina, 1996: 139–49; Money, 1999: 66–8).

Thus, Britain differed from Germany and France, where controls on immigration came later, beginning in the early 1970s and largely in response to the weakening of the European economy. In Britain, by contrast, race shaped the politics of immigration control during this period. The government was explicitly concerned with ‘coloured’ immigration, the assumption being that racial pluralism was a problem to be avoided. The intent of the policy, as Ian Spencer notes (1997: 150), was to “limit and then stop the movement into Britain of people of colour from Africa, the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent” (1997: 150). Despite this aim, hundreds of thousands of Commonwealth-born persons of colour had already become citizens under the 1948 Act, and Britain was well on its way to becoming a multiracial and multi-religious society when restrictions on immigration were imposed (Kepel, 1997: 97–9; Spencer, 1997: 152–3).

An ironic and wholly unanticipated consequence of the new restrictive policy was actually to increase temporarily the number of immigrants who came and settled in Britain. For a while, Britain placed significant restrictions on primary immigration, it did not deny the legal rights of those already admitted, which included the right of family reunification. As a result, the largely male immigrant population, fearing that more restrictive resettlement legislation would eventually follow, brought their families from overseas to join them in Britain (Spencer, 1997:154). The ethnic minority population expanded rapidly from the 1970s onwards, growing from an estimated 1 million in 1968 to 3 million in 1991. As a proportion of the total population, the non-white community grew from 1% in 1968, to 5.5% in 1991, and 7.1% in 2001 (Adolino, 1998: 27; Hoge, 2002).

Recent political developments have intensified the trend toward tighter immigration control. The media began to report on Britain’s asylum law, which was said to be more liberal than its continental counterparts were, and partly in response to popular pressure, the Labour Party introduced the Nationality, Immigration, and Asylum Bill. The bill proposed deporting more rapidly those whose applications for asylum failed, requiring asylum seekers to learn English, and educating the children of asylum seekers in special classes in asylum centres separate from children in British schools (Lyall,

2002). The bill passed in the House of Commons by an overwhelming margin of 362 to 74 (Mason and Hughes, 2002).

Race riots in Oldham and Burnley in May 2001 fuelled some support for the anti-immigrant, far-right British National Party (BNP). While it did not win any seats in the House of Commons in the 2001 general elections, the BNP did well in constituencies near the sites of the riots and enjoyed the best performance of any far-right party since the Second World War (Crewe, 2002: 229). In Oldham, the BNP party leader, Nick Griffin, won 16.4% of the vote, and his party won its first two victories in over a decade in the city council races in the following year. In nearby Burnley, eight BNP councillors were elected to office in 2003 (Flinthoff, 2003). While the BNP had historically focused exclusively on Britain's race policy, Griffin shifted the party's discourse from race to religion, commenting in one interview, for example, that Britain "does not have an Asian problem but a Muslim one" (quoted in McLoughlin, 2002).

1.2 Legal and Political Context in the UK

Roughly overlapping with different dynamics in the history of immigration in the UK, four different discursive frameworks in which diversity is perceived and conceptualized can be identified in Britain: 'assimilation', 'race relations', 'multiculturalism', and 'cohesion and integration'. These frameworks have been the products of the contextual factors in which they came to exist including legal and political ones, and thus, not only indicate the ways in which such diversity is responded in the British context in terms of policies and legal frameworks, but also shape the ways in which people perceive and talk about it. Of course, all of these frameworks do exist today favoured by different people just like they have never completely dominated a single period. Still, however, it is possible to identify certain historical periods in which a certain discursive framework enjoys widespread use and political predominance.

In the 'assimilationist' framework, which could be argued to have enjoyed its zenith in the early days of post-War immigration up until early 1960s, the basic premise was that the immigrants would eventually cut off their cultural links to their home countries and embrace 'British culture'. In public parlance concerning immigration notions such as 'multiculturalism' or 'cultural identities' had not been invoked, and the expectation concerning the new immigrants, who were quite insignificant in numbers anyway, was total assimilation. In fact, both policy-makers and researchers often used the terms assimilation and integration (defined in a similar way) concerning the immigrants from the New Commonwealth, particularly in the beginning of the post-War years (Castles *et al.*, 2002: 122). It was the demolition of this expectation in mid-1960s in the face of ever increasing cultural diversity and immigrants' insistence of sustaining their links with home regions and cultural identities intact; and the normative rejection of the premise of assimilation that has slowly put this framework out of political favour and public use. Up until this period, most immigrant groups in Britain; Jews, Irish, and South, Central, and East Europeans, eventually came to enjoy the same rights as the indigenous population through what is perceived to be a process of "incorporation [that is] universal and uniform in nature" (Goulbourne, 1991: 29).

With the adoption of the first Race Relations Act (RRA) in 1965 out of a period of contentious developments, the assimilationist framework has been replaced by a new one: 'race relations'. The stated purposes of the RRA of 1965 and later of 1968 and 1976, as explained, were to prevent racial discrimination and to create good race relations between the immigrants and the host society. Still the concept of 'assimilation' and increasingly that of 'integration' were in use; but the 'race relations' framework has firmly recognized the existence of cultural diversity (Hansen, 2000). This was, undoubtedly, a significant step taken from the comfortable assumption of eventual assimilation. However, the 'race relations' framework still implied the existence of two groups or two racial groups in the society: whites and non-whites (Goulbourne, 1998: 30). The discourse, in other words, was centred on relations between white people and non-white immigrants.

This is obviously a very homogenizing framework in the face of a tremendous level of diversity in the immigrants in terms of ethnicity, country of origin, religion, and language. The 'race relations' framework has been the dominant one in the public usage in relation to immigration and cultural diversity for much of the 1960s and the two decades that follow. In the legal system, it is still in use as the last Race Relations Amendment Act has been adopted in 2000. However, "race relations" seem to have lost its power as a framework in which to discuss issues of cultural diversity and integration, and has been limited to legal efforts of preventing racism in a multiracial society.

The third framework that enjoyed considerable influence on the ways in which diversity has been framed in the UK is the "multiculturalist" framework. Multiculturalism as a political philosophy has emerged out of the multiculturalist movements of the early 1970s first in Canada and Australia, and later in the USA, the UK, and elsewhere (Parekh, 2000). It has two fundamental premises; first, that human beings are culturally embedded in the sense that they grow up and live within a culturally structured world; and second, that different cultures represent different systems of meaning and visions of the good life (Parekh, 2000; Modood 2007).

Thus, in a multicultural society, defenders argue, there should be two key principals: active participation and cultural recognition. The first implies that members of all cultural groups should be equally able to participate in all social institutions; and the second implies that immigrants should have "the right to pursue their own religions and languages, and establish communities" (Vasta, 2007: 7). By implication, multicultural policies have been adopted in the 1970s and 1980s to recognize and respect cultural differences; and to provide the necessary means for each cultural community to enjoy their cultural identity freely.

Without getting into a detailed discussion, it should be obvious that in this framework diversity and immigration are necessarily framed very differently. The concept of assimilation is completely out of question. Moreover, the reductionist racial duality between whites and non-whites of the 'racial relations' framework is replaced with a more pluralist view; which in addition does not imply the superiority of one culture over another. 'Multiculturalist' framework has been the strongest during late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Still, it has many supporters defending the basic premises of multiculturalism and asking for more extensive implementation of multiculturalist policies in the face of surmounting attacks to this framework (Vasta, 2007; Modood, 2007). However, with growing criticisms and

increasing level of backlash against diversity, the 'multiculturalist' framework has lost much of its predominance compared to the previous decades.

Many commentators are pointing out that multiculturalism in Britain is being replaced by 'integration' and 'cohesion'. Ellie Vasta quotes the government report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion in which multiculturalism is criticized for focusing too much on difference and not on similarities. Vasta (2007: 6) offers five possible conceptions of social cohesion as "common values and civic culture; as social order and social control; as social solidarity and equality; as social networks and social capital; as sense of belonging and identity". In the current backlash against diversity, it is the first and last conceptions of social cohesion that have been invoked very often, social cohesion as common values and civic culture, and as a sense of belonging and identity. Accordingly, the diversity, coupled with multicultural policies, which are premised on ideas of cultural relativism, is seen as challenging the society's core values thereby pushing it toward segregation. The proposed solution is to reemphasize the common values and civic identity, and a common sense of belonging and identity through 'integration' policies.

Similar processes of increased attention to integration of immigrants and social cohesion measures can be seen in many other Western countries. One common point in all of them is the need for a set of common values, which every member of the society could agree on, and which would constitute the common basis of society and increase the feeling of social cohesion. There is also a common question of individual versus group focus in integration policies. Another common theme can be posed in terms of the paradoxical nature of cultural relativism in a liberal democracy. Cultural relativism suggests that each culture should be recognized and equally valued and respected. Besides, liberal democracy requires tolerance and limits any imposition on any member of the society. To paraphrase Sartori, however, what if the recognized and equally valued culture includes elements, which are destructive of liberal democracy? After all is said and done, this is still a valid question and its validity seems to be the basis of the anxieties of many people. It is also important to point out that this question has gained a significant security dimension particularly after the 9/11 atrocities in the US and 7/7 attacks in Europe.

The most important commonality in Western democracies' encounter with cultural diversity, however, seems to be related to the existence of certain anxieties over identity. At the base of the current backlash against diversity lie these anxieties. Such arguments come into academic discussion in the form of criticism against multicultural policies. Accordingly, "groups have their own institutions and are in large part responsible for their own affairs; ... heterogeneity is transformed into cleavage" (Grillo, 2005: 8). Therefore, segregation does not merely refer to physical forms such as residential segregation but to a "plural society, with different sections of community living side by side, but separately" (Furnivall, 1948: 304) which "lack a common consensus and 'social will'" (Grillo, 2005: 8). The proponents of this line of criticism against multicultural policies suggest that multiculturalism reifies the "most conservative, static and essentialized vision of culture and create a society of enclaves" (Grillo, 2005: 11), it creates a society with no centre, a congregation of "fortified tribes" (Etzioni, 2004).

It is in this context that the Home Office had set up a "Community Cohesion Review Team" headed by Ted Cantle, hence the alias of the final report, in the aftermath of the social disturbances in Oldham,

Burnley, and Bradford in 2001. The most striking finding of the Review Team was that the people in these towns were leading ‘parallel lives’:

“Whilst the physical segregation of housing estates and inner city areas came as no surprise, the team was particularly struck by the depth of polarization of our towns and cities. The extent to which these physical divisions were compounded by so many other aspects of our daily lives, was very evident. Separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks, means that many communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lives. These lives often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote any meaningful interchanges” (Cantle Report 2001, 9).

It is also in this context that many Western European governments intensified their efforts to ensure successful integration of immigrants and help create a cohesive society (Vasta, 2007). The Home Office has established a ‘Commission on Integration and Cohesion’ in 2006 to “consider how local areas can make the most of the benefits delivered by increasing diversity - and also to consider how they can respond to the tensions it can sometimes cause”¹.

It should be noted that the term integration has entered into British use as early as 1960s. A comment from a prominent Labour politician is illustrative:

“Integration is perhaps a rather loose word. I do not regard it as meaning the loss, by immigrants, of their own national characteristics and culture. I do not think we need in this country a “melting pot”, which will turn everybody out in a common mould, as one of a series of carbon copies of someone’s misplaced vision of the stereotyped Englishman ... I define integration, therefore, not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, coupled with cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance” (Jenkins 1967, 267)

Some scholars even argue that Britain has essentially worked in an integration framework since mid-1960s (Favell, 2001: f.353). Nevertheless, they also note that the term has long been rejected by mainly anti-racist commentators from the 1970s onwards, and is only experiencing a comeback in the recent decade (Favell, 2001: f.353; Vasta, 2007). This is not to suggest that ‘multiculturalist’ or ‘race relations’ frameworks have been completely discarded and ‘integration and cohesion’ framework has become completely dominant. All these frameworks coexist as political visions and the current legal and policy framework in Britain does contain elements from each. However, it is also possible to observe a marked increase in the usage of integration as a political currency in the political, academic, and public discourses that makes it the dominant framework in contemporary Britain.

¹ Home Office web site.

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100408193039/http://www.communities.gov.uk/archived/general-content/communities/commissionintegration/> (last accessed 17.03.2019)

2 Demographic Profile

Britain has one of the largest, most diverse and most dynamic Muslim minority community across the globe. Islam has become the second largest religion in the country. In this section, several characteristics of this community will be presented based on the existing secondary data.

2.1 Demographic Profile and Ethnic/National Composition

In 2001, for the first time the question on religious affiliation was added to the Census of England and Wales. Therefore, the question was asked in the last two population censuses, which allow us to have a sense of the demographic trends in the Muslim community in Britain.

To start with, when we look at the size and ethnic/national composition of the Muslim communities in Britain, we see that there has been a significant increase in the Muslim population in the decade between the 2001 census and the most recent one in 2011. Specifically, while the total population of Muslims was announced to be 1.55 million in England and Wales in 2001, it was reported as 2.71 million in 2011 accounting for 4.8% of the British population (Table 1). Today, it is estimated with some great confidence that the number of Muslims in the UK is above 3 million. In fact, even in 2016, some media outlets were running news stories about how the Muslim population in Britain has exceeded the 3 million mark for the first time in history, and that it was expected to further rise due to high fertility rates (Daily Mail, 2016).

Table 1. Different Religious Groups in 2011 Census

Religion	Total Population	%
Christian	33,243,175	59.3
Muslim	2,706,066	4.8
Hindu	816,633	1.5
Sikh	423,158	0.8
Jewish	263,346	0.5
Buddhist	247,743	0.4
Any Other Religion	240,530	0.4
No Religion	14,097,229	25.1
Religion Not Stated	4,038,032	7.2
All	56,075,912	100

Source: MCB 2015, British Muslims in Numbers, based on official census data, p.22.

A large majority of the Muslim community in England and Wales was made up of ‘Asian or British Asian’ Muslims (73% and 66%, respectively) in 2001 (Table 2). Within this category, the largest group is Pakistanis. While the 2011 census shows a decrease in the share of these communities in the overall Muslim community, Asian and Asian British Muslims still make up a large majority.

Table 2. Ethnic Composition of Muslim Population in Britain in 2001 and 2011

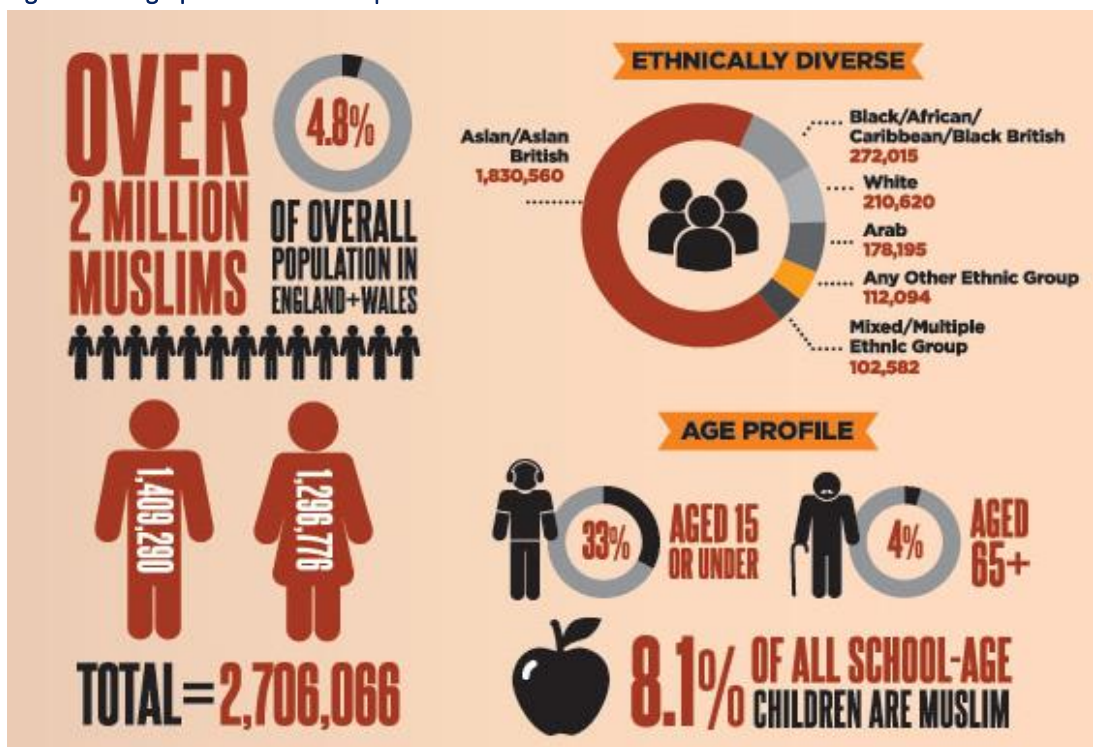
Ethnic Group	Muslims				Muslim Population Change	
	2001	%	2011	%	2001-2011	%
White	179,773	11.6	210,620	7.8	30,847	2.7
British	63,042	4.1	77,272	2.9	14,230	1.2
Irish	890	0.1	1,914	0.1	1,024	0.1
Other White	115,841	7.5	131,434	4.9	15,593	1.3
Mixed	64,262	4.2	102,582	3.8	38,320	3.3
White and Black Caribbean	1,385	0.1	5,384	0.2	3,999	0.3
White and Black African	10,523	0.7	15,681	0.6	5,158	0.4
White and Asian	30,397	2.0	49,689	1.8	19,292	1.7
Other Mixed	21,957	1.4	31,828	1.2	9,871	0.9
Asian	1,139,817	73.7	1,830,560	67.6	690,743	59.6
Indian	131,662	8.5	197,161	7.3	65,499	5.6
Pakistani	657,680	42.5	1,028,459	38.0	370,779	32.0
Bangladeshi	259,710	16.8	402,428	14.9	142,718	12.3
Chinese	752	0.0	8,027	0.3	7,275	0.6
Other Asian	90,013	5.8	194,485	7.2	104,472	9.0
All Black	106,345	6.9	272,015	10.1	165,670	14.3
Black Caribbean	4,477	0.3	7,345	0.3	2,868	0.2
Black African	96,136	6.2	207,201	7.7	111,065	9.6
Other Black	5,732	0.4	57,469	2.1	51,737	4.5
Other	56,429	3.6	290,289	10.7	233,860	20.2
Arab	-	-	178,195	6.6	178,195	15.4
Any Other Ethnic Group	56,429	3.6	112,094	4.1	55,665	4.8
All	1,546,626		2,706,066		1,159,440	

Source: MCB 2015, British Muslims in Numbers, based on official census data, p.24.

Following the Pakistani majority, the second largest sub-group is that of Bangladeshis who constituted almost 15% of the Muslim community in 2011. In addition, as part of the Asian Muslim communities, Indian Muslims are another significant group. Apart from the dominance of Asian Muslims, three observations stand out. Firstly, there is a significant number of ethnically White Muslims in Britain. They made up 11.6% of the Muslim population in Britain in 2001 and retreated to 7.8% in 2011; despite

this, their number showed an increase of more than 30 thousand. In other words, although the actual number of white Muslims in the UK has increased, their relative weight in the overall Muslim population has decreased because of the latter's faster growth. A majority of these are believed to be religious converts. In most other countries, including Germany and France, figures on ethnically White Muslims are not readily available. Secondly, there is a large and growing Black African Muslim community constituting 7.7% of the Muslim population in 2011. Compared to their number in 2001, they have more than doubled. Lastly, there is a significant Arab Muslim community as shown in the 2011 census. While there is no corresponding data on Arabs in 2001, it is believed that there is a significant increase in their number in the recent years (Table 2).

Figure 1. Infographic on Muslim Population in the UK

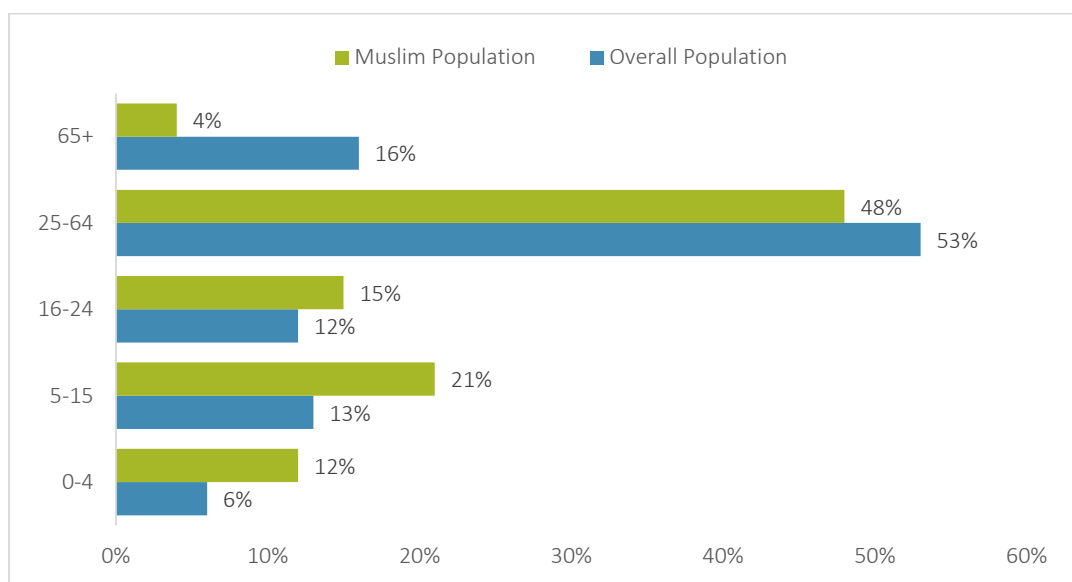


Source: MCB 2015, British Muslims in Numbers, <http://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCB-Muslims-in-Numbers-infographic-final.jpg>

In terms of the geographical distribution of Muslims in Britain, London occupies a special place. According to the census data, more than one-third of all Muslims (37.4%) in Britain live in London. Muslims constitute 12.4 per cent of London's population. In other words, every one person out of nine people who live in London is a Muslim. This figure is up from 8.4 per cent that was recorded in 2001 (MCB 2015: 26).

In terms of the age profile, the Muslim communities in the UK display a different profile than the rest of the population. It is much younger, i.e. when we look at the share of the Muslim population in the 0-4 and 5-15 age groups, we see that a much greater share is represented. In contrast, when we look at the age group of 65 years or older, only 4 per cent of the Muslim population are in this category as opposed to the 16 per cent of the general British population (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Overall Population and Muslim Population Age Profile



Source: MCB 2015, British Muslims in Numbers, based on official census data, p.27

2.2 Religious Profile

There is a major lack of data concerning the internal diversity of the Muslim community in Britain. In fact, provided that the British context generally provide a rich data source on most other areas concerning the Muslim communities, particularly when we compare it to many other countries, this lack of data is striking. It can be argued with some confidence that the vast majority of the Muslims in Britain are Sunni. In fact, Mustafa (2016: 617) states that the official record on the existing number of mosques suggests that only around 4.1% of mosques in Britain were Shi'a in 2015. However, it needs to be emphasized that this should not lead one to underestimate the existence of religious inner diversity of Islam in Britain, as there are very well-established communities with different interpretations of Islamic faith and practice ranging from Salafism to Sufism

2.3 Socio-Economic Profile

Various Muslim communities display a significant degree of variety with respect to socio-economic profile. Overall, however, it can be highlighted that while only 19.8 per cent of the economically-active Muslim population (16-74 years old) is in full-time employment, the same figure is 34.9 per cent for the general population (Table 3).

This shows a significant discrepancy between the Muslim community and the general population. In a similar manner, the unemployment rate among Muslims is significantly higher than that of the wider British population. While 7.2 per cent of the Muslim population are unemployed, 4 per cent of the general population is out of employment (excluding full-time students). Another remarkable difference is seen at the percentage of retired people. While there are almost 10 million retired people in the UK accounting for 21.4 per cent of the national population, only 5.8 per cent of the Muslim population is economically inactive due to being retired (Table 3 & Figure 3).

Table 3. Muslims and Economic Activity

	All	%	Muslims	%
Economically Active in Employment				
Employee: Part-Time	5,701,111	12.5	236,206	13.0
Employee: Full-Time	15,858,791	34.9	358,413	19.8
Self-Employed: Part-Time	1,220,761	2.7	71,452	3.9
Self-Employed: Full-Time	2,823,552	6.2	99,466	5.5
Full-Time Students	1,077,353	2.4	65,759	3.6
Unemployed				
Unemployed (Exc. Students)	1,802,620	4.0	130,553	7.2
Full-Time Students	334,167	0.7	37,801	2.1
Economically Inactive				
Retired	9,713,808	21.4	104,959	5.8
Student	2,397,348	5.3	240,248	13.3
Looking After Home or Family	1,796,520	3.9	247,729	13.7
Long-Term Sick or Disabled	1,783,292	3.9	93,179	5.1
Other	987,457	2.2	125,164	6.9
All (ages 16-74)	45,496,780		1,810,929	

Source: MCB 2015, British Muslims in Numbers, based on official census data, p.58.

Figure 3. Infographic on Muslim Population's Economic Activity (left) &

Figure 4. Education and Qualifications (right)



Source: MCB 2015, British Muslims in Numbers, <http://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCB-Muslims-in-Numbers-infographic-final.jpg>

Another important determinant and indicator of socio-economic standing is educational attainment and qualifications. In this regard, the Muslim population appears to have improved since the last census with a significant decrease in the share of individuals with no qualification. While those without any qualification accounted for 39% of the Muslim population in 2001, they constituted a significantly reduced 26 per cent in 2011 (Table 4 & Figure 4).

Table 4. Muslims in the UK and Level of Qualification

Highest Level of Qualification	2001				2011			
	All	%	Muslims	%	All	%	Muslims	%
No Qualifications	10,937,042	29.1	390,164	38.6	10,307,327	22.7	464,434	25.6
Level 1	6,230,033	16.6	122,509	12.1	6,047,384	13.3	245,043	13.5
Level 2	7,288,074	19.4	149,652	14.8	6,938,433	15.3	206,940	11.4
Apprenticeship	-	-	-	-	1,631,777	3.6	11,775	0.7
Level 3	3,110,135	8.3	94,630	9.4	5,617,802	12.3	179,253	9.9
Level 4 & Above	7,432,962	19.8	208,241	20.6	12,383,477	27.2	434,742	24.0
Other Qualifications	2,609,192	6.9	44,918	4.4	2,570,580	5.7	268,742	14.8
All (Age 16 and Over)	37,607,438		1,010,114		45,496,780		1,810,929	

Source: MCB 2015, British Muslims in Numbers, based on official census data, p.60.

Lastly, the 2011 census also collected information concerning the socio-economic classification of British people. Here, the categories vary from ‘higher managerial occupations’ and ‘higher professional occupations’ all the way to ‘routine occupations’, ‘never worked’, and ‘long-term unemployed’. When we compared the Muslim population with the general population in Britain, we see that Muslim communities are somewhat under-represented in the higher end of professional occupations, but the difference is not very significant. The one category that produced the biggest difference is the category of ‘never worked’. While a remarkable 21.3% of the Muslim population reported that they never worked at the census, only 4.3% of the general population is in this category (see Table 5).

Table 5. Muslims and National Statistics on Socio-Economic Classification, 2011

NS-SeC	Total Population	%	Muslims	%
1. Higher Managerial, Administrative and Professional Occupations	4,518,653	9.9	114,548	6.3
1.1 Large Employers and Higher Managerial and Administrative Occupations	1,047,810	2.3	14,156	0.8
1.2 Higher Professional Occupations	3,470,843	7.6	100,392	5.5
2. Lower Managerial, Administrative and Professional Occupations	9,333,855	20.5	183,025	10.1
3. Intermediate Occupations	5,931,855	13.0	133,970	7.4
4. Small Employers and Own Account Workers	4,251,501	9.3	175,343	9.7
5. Lower Supervisory and Technical Occupations	3,265,517	7.2	86,724	4.8
6. Semi-Routine Occupations	6,527,483	14.3	200,011	11.0
7. Routine Occupations	5,288,065	11.6	157,324	8.7
8. Never Worked	1,956,064	4.3	385,228	21.3
9. Long-Term Unemployed	708,837	1.6	45,062	2.5
10. Full-Time Students	3,715,369	8.2	329,694	18.2
ALL (Age 16-74)	45,496,780		1,810,929	

Source: MCB 2015, British Muslims in Numbers, based on official census data, p.64.

3 Views on Migration and Integration

The UK is amongst the most ethnically, culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse countries in the world. The issue of integration, as it was discussed above in the historical background, has long been a central political and public concern. This section discusses the experience of living in the UK as a Muslim individual and views on integration of Muslims in the UK.

3.1 Experience of Being a Member of the Muslim Community in the UK

Starting with the findings of the London Survey, there were two questions regarding this issue. The first one was about the main advantages of being a Muslim in their respective host countries, while the second one was about the perceived main disadvantages. Here, we did not make any clarifications concerning any frame of reference or comparison to the respondents. In a way, the question is designed to collect the perceived positive and negative aspects of life in these countries for Muslims. The respondents were instructed that they could provide up to three responses to both questions.

When all the answers given to this question were clustered together, strong democratic system, human rights and rule of law, on the one hand, and religious and cultural freedom, on the other, appear to be the top perceived advantages (Table 6).

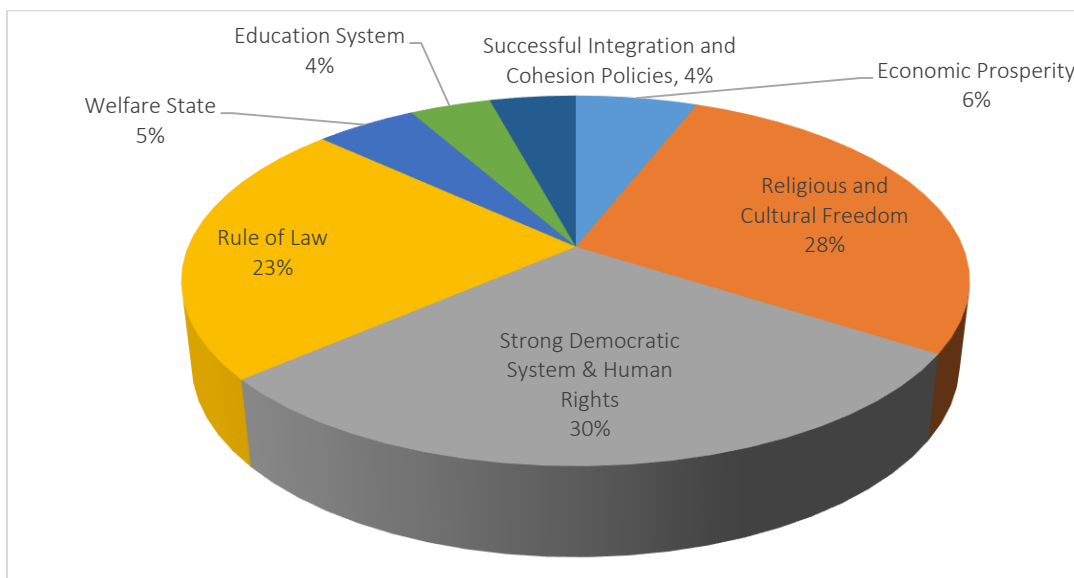
Table 6. Main Advantages of Living in the UK as a Muslim in London Survey

Main Advantages	#	%
Strong Democratic System & Human Rights	119	30
Religious and Cultural Freedom	113	28
Rule of Law	93	23
Economic Prosperity	24	6
Welfare State	20	5
Successful Integration and Cohesion Policies	17	4
Education System	16	4

Among the advantages mentioned by all respondents, the most frequently reported one was strong democratic system and human rights. It has a frequency of 30 per cent of being reported. A closely related answer is the rule of law which constituted almost a quarter of the all responses given to this question. The second most frequently mentioned advantage of living in the UK as a Muslim is the

perceived religious and cultural freedom. In fact, 28 per cent of all the answers given to this question were religious and cultural freedom (Table 6 & Figure 5).

Figure 5. What are the Main Advantages of Living in the UK as a Muslim?



Very similar points to these Survey findings have been raised by the interviewees and workshop participants. Overall, the participants expressed high degree of praise for their lives in the UK. One respondent; after speaking positively about freedom of speech, equality before law, and being treated with dignity and respect as a human being, suggested that being a Muslim was much better in the UK than being a Muslim in any Muslim-majority country. He claimed that the Muslim-majority countries didn't give the individuals the same level of freedom and right.

"In this country they treat you as a human being, in Islamic countries they do not that. And there is the freedom of speech. And as an Islamic missionary, I can say that what is involved in the system is far better than any Islamic country, health for all, food for all, education for all... This is an ideal place for any Muslim. You are not just a number; you are a person. So treating people with dignity, political freedom, and social welfare are the advantages."

While this point about freedom and equal rights were confirmed by all participants, some individuals suggested that it was wrong to compare the UK with Muslim countries of origin, and also, the freedom and equality that is on the paper was not always experienced by everyone in practice:

"I think the whole issue is from which point you look at this. It is misleading and wrong to look back and compare advantages and disadvantages with back home or with the past. So we should not make comparisons with our home lands. So what are the advantages? The advantages are that you are a citizen here. You have access to any service like anybody else. But this also depend on individuals and organizations, whether they know their rights. We are

communities within our Muslim community which are more successful at getting their rights because they are more aware of their rights. They might say that they are discriminated against or do not have the access to certain rights, but actually this sometimes is caused by the lack of understanding of how to access the system”

In addition to the political and legal rights and freedoms, some participants particularly highlighted the welfare state tradition in the UK and how individuals could rely on state for free education, health service, and housing when they need it. Another participant said that the education system in the UK was very good and it allowed Muslim communities to establish very successful Islamic education institutions:

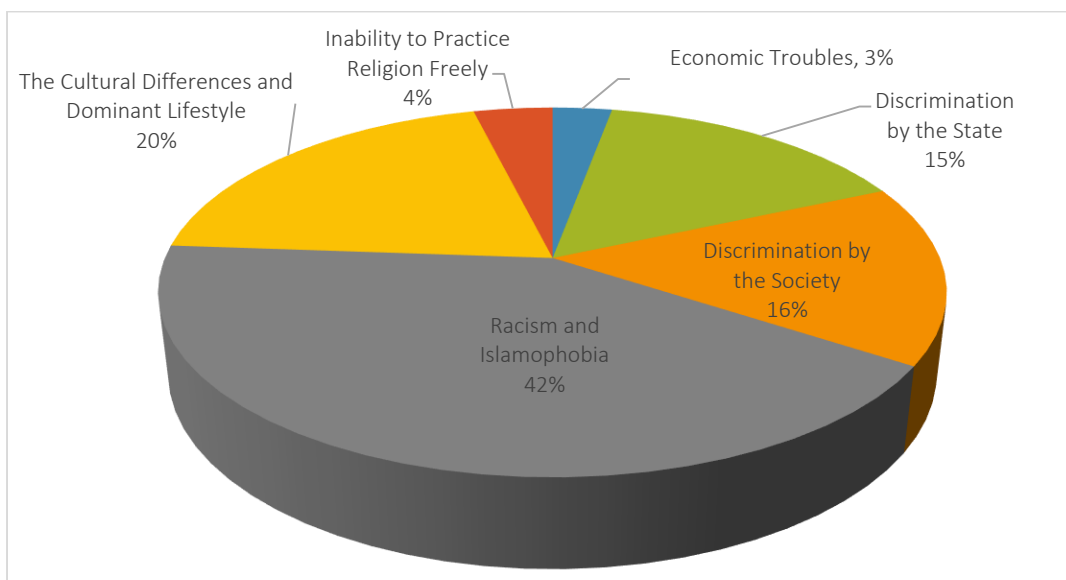
“I think in terms of education in Britain we have made a tremendous progress. The success of Muslim schools and Muslim students had been carried to the newspaper headlines. There are 164 Muslim schools across the UK. The attendance and performance of Muslim students, compared to in the past, is very high now. And even those funded by the government, in those schools as well, they teach Arabic and Islamic studies better than any school in Islamic world. So, the educational rights and advantages are immense.”

Concerning the second question in the Survey, i.e. ‘what are the main disadvantages of living in the UK for a Muslim?’, by far the most often given answer was ‘racism and Islamophobia’, which was suggested to be a main disadvantage by a majority of the respondents. This was followed by the ‘cultural differences and dominant lifestyle’, which appears to be considered as a disadvantage of life in Britain for Muslims. Discrimination, by the society and by state, respectively, also mentioned by a significant number of respondents, which makes sense as the most frequently cited disadvantage was racism and Islamophobia.

The aggregated main disadvantages mentioned by the survey respondents in London are presented in Table 7 and Figure 6 below.

Table 7. Main Disadvantages of Living in the UK as a Muslim in London Survey

Main Disadvantages	#	%
Racism and Islamophobia	130	42
The Cultural Differences and Dominant Lifestyle	62	20
Discrimination by the Society	49	16
Discrimination by the State	48	15
Inability to Practice Religion Freely	12	4
Economic Troubles	9	3

Figures 6. What are the Main Disadvantages of Living in the UK as a Muslim?

A simultaneous glance at the reported advantages and disadvantages of living in the UK produces a seemingly contradictory finding: the surveyed Muslim individuals are simultaneously happy about religious freedoms and the advantages of the welfare state, while at the same time complaining about 'racism and Islamophobia' and 'discrimination by the state'. This can be explained in a number of ways. Firstly, this maybe an illustration of the fragmented life experiences of individuals in the diaspora. Different individuals experience different things at different times, and even the most similar experiences could be perceived and construed as radically differently by different individuals. A second explanation might be related to a distinction in the minds of the Muslim individuals concerning the formal and ideal, on the one hand, and actual and practical, on the other.

Therefore, while they are happy about the religious and cultural freedom provided to them formally though the legal context and the dominant liberal democratic ideology in both countries; they nevertheless experience occasional incidents of discrimination that they do not want to attribute to the system itself. A last explanation might concern a desire for more: while they are happy to the most extent about their rights and freedoms, they demand still more through their critical emphasis on the existing or remaining experiences of racism and discrimination. This issue of perceived discrimination is further discussed in the next section in light of the interview and workshop data.

3.2 Discrimination and Violation of Rights

The issue was mentioned by several people interviewed in London. According to *Fatima*, in the human rights frameworks, it is quite "important to distinguish between procedural rights and actual rights; in some respects, Muslims are free to participate in politics but this is qualified by practices which work to effectively exclude them." According to *Fatima*, the "rule of law and due process, which is the

bedrock for assuring equality in the exercise of political freedoms,” is intervened by certain recent practices “such as passport revocation, temporary exclusion orders, secret trials and special advocates as well as counter-terrorism legislation which is deemed to consistently undermine civil liberties.” Likewise, “the freedom of association and freedom of assembly are areas that have been more closely circumscribed and scrutinized in recent years largely owing to the securitization agenda.” These examples and practices demonstrate that as *Fatima* (and a few participants of the London Workshop) noted, the procedural rights exist but are not guarantees for absolute transparency and accountability, because statutory agencies, state actors, and non-state actors can interfere with these rights.

According to another interviewee, *Usman*, discrimination in the UK, especially in the context of the employment of Muslims, is not at the state level; rather, it concerns the private sector and the market. The issue of discrimination against Muslims in the workplace, accordingly, is more visible and voiced in the case of Muslim workers since members of other religions that are also open to such treatment in the UK, *e.g.*, Catholics, Sikhs, and Jews, are less visible and vocal about their faith. “No other community prays five times a day and fasts for a full month or covers their head, in the case of female workers.”

Part of the problem, in this perspective, arises from the difficulties of intervention and mediation in the private sector and market. At the state level, legislations and regulations could be and are mitigated by the practice, but the private sector and markets are, in majority of cases, closed to such constructive and corrective intervention. Thus, without a double-attendance to both legislations and regulations at the state level, and attitudes and behaviours at the private sector a satisfactory result may not be achieved. A more refined, multi-dimensional, and effective policy should be developed for long-lasting and constructive results. The subjectivity and performance of diasporic Muslim identity, that is being a Muslim and living as a Muslim, is as much related to and under the control and influence of the state as it is under the control and influence of the private sector and the market.

3.3 Sense of Belonging

A crucial concept concerning the integration of Muslims in Britain is their sense of belonging to various collective identities. Instead of trying to come up with a measure that would supposedly measure sense of belonging in an ‘objective’ way, we preferred to obtain the subjective reflections of the respondents, considering the subjective and politicized nature of the concept. Therefore, we asked the participants to place their sense of belonging to different items on a 5-point scale, 1 indicating ‘weakest’ and 5 indicating ‘strongest’ sense of belonging (Table 8). In presenting the findings, composite average scores are calculated to provide an average measure for the overall responses given by the respondents, instead of providing all the frequency tables (see the Box in the next page).

A note on the calculation of composite average scores: To calculate this average, a weighed scoring strategy was used in the following way: the frequency of the weakest category was multiplied by 1; the next category's frequency was multiplied by 2; the medium category, which is the medium point usually denoting 'neither weak, nor strong', is multiplied by 3; with the stronger categories multiplied by 4 and 5 in the same way. Then, the sum was divided by the total number of respondents to give the composite average score. Therefore, the calculation for the following survey question is done for the hypothetical responses:

Q. How important are religious practices and rituals for a Muslim?

N	Value	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Very non-important	1	30	10	50
Non-important	2	30	20	40
Neither non-important, nor important	3	30	30	30
Important	4	30	40	20
Very Important	5	30	50	10
TOTAL N		150	150	150

Therefore the calculation is done in this way:

Example 1: $30 \times 1 = 30$; $30 \times 2 = 60$; $30 \times 3 = 90$; $30 \times 4 = 120$; $30 \times 5 = 150$

Total Sum: $450 / 150$ (total number of responses) = **3**

Example 2: $10 \times 1 = 10$; $20 \times 2 = 40$; $30 \times 3 = 90$; $40 \times 4 = 160$; $50 \times 5 = 250$

Total Sum: $550 / 150$ (total number of responses) = **3.66**

Example 3: $50 \times 1 = 50$; $40 \times 2 = 80$; $30 \times 3 = 90$; $20 \times 4 = 80$; $10 \times 5 = 50$

Total Sum: $350 / 150$ (total number of responses) = **2.33**

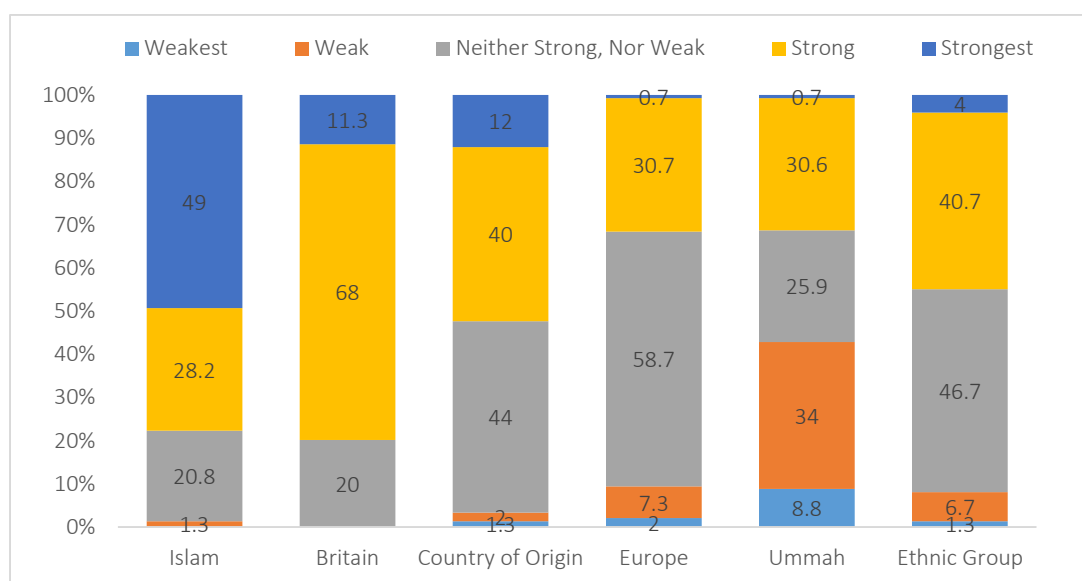
Since each category received the equal number of responses in the first example, the composite average score yields the perfect medium score of 3 and shows that on average the respondents think "religious practices and rituals are neither non-important nor important for Muslims". The second example average score, 3.66, reflects the fact that more people considered this question to be important; and the third one shows more people considered it to be non-important.

To add a further measure of the responses, the summary tables also include the percentage of the people who gave responses in the strongest two categories.

Table 8. How Strong a Sense of Belonging Do You Feel to Following?

	Average Score (/5)	Strong + Strongest (%)
Islam	4.2	77.2
Britain	3.9	79.2
Country of Origin	3.6	52.0
Europe	3.2	31.4
Ummah	2.7	31.3
Your Ethnic Group	3.4	44.7

In London, the respondents reported the strongest sense of belonging to Islam (4.2), and closely following that, to Britain (3.9). For both of these, almost 80% of the respondents suggested that their sense of belonging is either strong or the strongest. While in many different contexts of discussions these two may be conceptualized as conflicting rival or mutually exclusive categories, the respondents from the London Muslim community proved that it was perfectly possible simultaneously to nurture a sense of belonging to your religion and to the country/society of which you are a member. What is more, this finding shows that this is still possible even if the individual is a believer of a minority religion.

Figure 7. Sense of Belonging in the London Survey (%)

Another significant finding concerns the reported low sense of belonging to the 'Ummah'. This response received the lowest degree of belonging. While the sense of belonging to Islam is quite strong among the respondents, one might have expected a higher score for the Muslim Ummah as well. While

the survey methodology does not allow the researchers to further probe concerning why this is the case, it is plausible to argue that the respondents might have interpreted the Ummah in a political connotation. Also plausibly, considering the strong sense of belonging reported to Britain, Ummah might have been seen as a foreign concept that is in contradiction with being British.

3.4 Opinions of the Muslim Communities in London

In this section, the respondents were asked to express their opinions on a variety of issues. They were presented with various statements reflecting certain opinions, sometimes in a deliberately provocative way, and asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale from '1-totally disagree' to '5-totally agree' (Table 9).

Table 9. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Average Score (/5)	Agree + Totally Agree (%)
The success of the Islam depends on the unity of all <i>Ummah</i>	2.9	32.7
There is no contradiction/disagreement between the Muslim identity and the British identity for a young Muslim	3.3	41.8
It is not possible for an immigrant to both integrate in Britain and sustain relations with the country of origin	2.4	3.3
OIC must assume a more active role to achieve Muslim unity	3.0	32.7
There are more religious rights for a Muslim in the UK than my home country	3.0	7.3
The formal and informal political participation of the UK Muslims is satisfactory	2.8	18.1

The highest score of agreement (3.3) was received by the statement that 'There is no contradiction/disagreement between the Muslim identity and the British identity for a young Muslim'. 41.8 per cent of all respondents either agreed or totally agreed with this statement. Similarly, the participants did not generally agree with the statement that 'it is not possible for an immigrant to both integrate in Britain and sustain relations with the country of origin'. This suggests that respondents, indeed, believe that it was possible to sustain their relations and at the same time be a part of the British society. This finding is in line with the findings of the questions on sense of belonging that was discussed above.

When asked about the role of unity of Ummah for the success of Islam, only about one third of the respondents suggested that they believed the success of Islam depends on Ummah unity. While a majority of respondents neither agreed, nor disagreed with the statement, thus producing an average score of 2.9. An almost identical picture emerged as a response to the statement "OIC must assume a more active role to achieve Muslim unity". The average composite score for this question was 3.0, with a majority of the respondents reporting neither agreeing nor disagreeing with this statement.

The second least agreed-on statement was “The formal and informal political participation of the UK Muslims is satisfactory”. Only 18.1% of the respondents indicated agreement, while the composite score was the just below average 2.8 (Table 9).

3.5 Trust in Institutions among Muslims

The issue of trust in various institutions is very important for diasporic communities. Therefore, we asked the respondents to subjectively evaluate how much they trust each institution, or set of institutions such as the legal system, on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 indicating ‘very weak trust’ to 5 indicating ‘very strong trust’. The responses are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10. How would you describe your level of trust to the following?

	Average Score (/5)	Strong + Very Strong (%)
Host Country Government	3.99	69.4
European Union	2.97	8
Muslim Leaders in the Host Country	3.80	54.6
Muslim Country Leaders	3.77	56.8
OIC	3.83	58
UN	2.72	8
Muslim Council of Britain	3.78	55.7
Muslim NGOs in the Host Country	3.92	54.6
Host Country Media	2.76	5.3
Host Country Police Force	3.73	58
Host Country Legal System	3.68	52

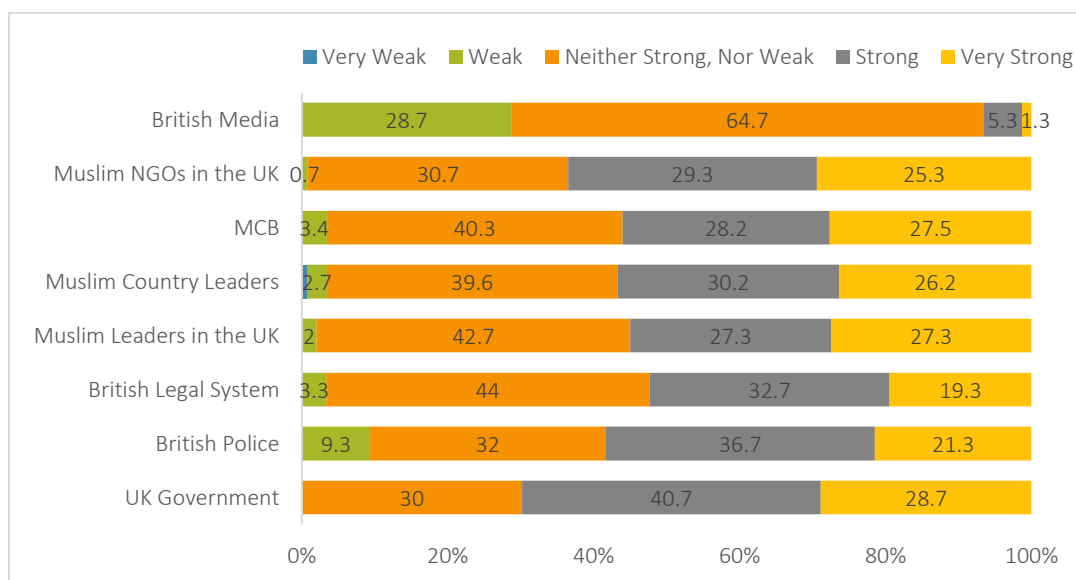
On average, the Muslim respondents in London appear to be displaying a high level of trust in most of the institutions asked about. Most strikingly, they reported the highest level of trust to the British government with an average score of 3.99. Almost 70 per cent of all respondents suggested that their level of trust to the British government was either strong or very strong. Supporting this finding, the respondents also displayed a high level of trust to the British Law Enforcement and Legal System, with the composite scores of 3.68 and 3.73, respectively.

In terms of trust, in second place came the Muslim NGOs in Britain. The average score on this question in the London survey was a strong 3.92 with more than 54 per cent of the respondents reporting strong or very strong levels of trust in Muslim NGOs in Britain. A case in point was the mentioned trust in Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), one of the most widely known Muslim NGOs based in London. The composite score for trust for MCB was a very close 3.78 with a majority, specifically 55.7 per cent, of the respondents reporting strong or very strong trust in this NGO (Table 10).

In addition, Muslim Leaders were trusted strongly by the Muslims in Britain, both of those in the UK and in Muslim countries. Muslim leaders in Britain have one of the highest scores with 3.80, while more than 56.8% of the respondents mentioned strongly or very strongly trusting the Leaders of Muslim Countries producing a similarly high score of 3.77.

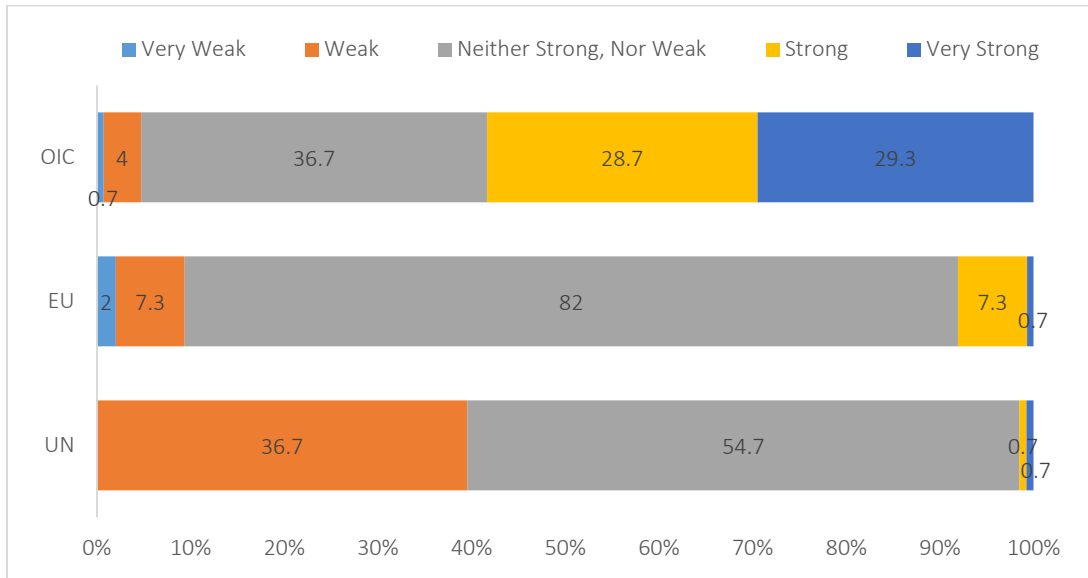
In the British context, the lowest levels of trust were reported to the United Nations (2.72) and the British Media (2.76). While the lack of trust to the UN requires further inquiry, the very low level of trust to the British Media was consistent with the overall findings of the fieldwork where the British Muslims repeatedly complained about the representation of Muslims on the national media (see the below section on Representation and Visibility for further details). In fact, only slightly more than 5% of the respondents reported that their level of trust to British Media was strong (Figures 8 & 9).

Figure 8. Level of Trust in the London Survey (%)



Lastly, it is interesting to see the extent to which the OIC was trusted by the survey respondents. In line with the overall findings, the London sample displayed a high level of trust with an average score of 3.83 and almost 60% of respondents suggested strong or very strong levels of trust. Considering the fact that the same sample of people reported a much lower level of trust to UN (2.72), this finding's significance is accentuated because it is apparently not the product of a high level of trust to international organizations (Figure 12).

Figure 9. Level of Trust to International Actors in the London Survey (%)



4 Perceptions on Socio-Economic Status

This chapter provides a brief overview of the socio-economic profile of the Muslim communities and minorities living in the UK. The analyses are mostly based on the London survey, which included questions on the socio-economic profile of Muslims in Britain. It would be useful to start with the socio-economic profile of the Survey respondents themselves.

4.1 Socio-Economic Profile of the Survey Sample

In terms of the socio-economic profiles of respondents, the three key variables were their working status, educational attainment, and income level. Concerning the first, it appears that while almost half of all respondents were actively working, a quarter of them were students. Only a small minority reported that they were unemployed (Table 11).

Table 11. London Survey Sample by Working Status

	Frequency	%
Student	10	6.6
No profession, unemployed	3	2
No profession, working at casual jobs	5	3.3
Actively working in my profession	119	79.3
Actively working at a job not related to my profession	7	4.7
Others	6	4
Total	150	100

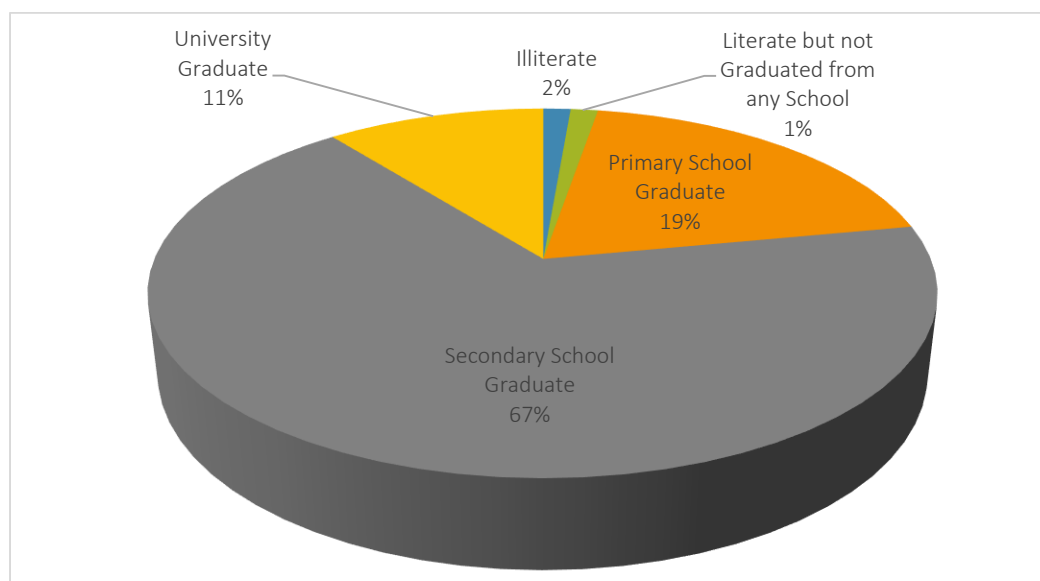
Concerning the income of respondents, we asked two questions: firstly, we asked in objective terms how much money their household were earning every month in GBP. Then, we asked the respondents to evaluate subjectively their perceived wealth level on a scale from very poor to very wealthy.

In the UK, almost half (49.3%) of the respondents reported that their monthly household income was between £2,000 and £3,500. While about a quarter (24.7%) of the respondents had a monthly household income between £3,501 and £5,000, those who earned less than £2,000 a month accounted for 17.3 per cent. In terms of subjective evaluations of the respondents, we found that slightly more than half (51.3%) of the respondents consider themselves as being in the ‘lower-middle income’ category. Those who considered themselves to be ‘upper-middle income’ and ‘very poor’ were similar

in number, accounting for 21 per cent and 18 per cent of all respondents, respectively. According to World Bank data, the GNI per capita in the UK was £30,200². Based on this annual figure, it can be suggested that the subjective evaluations of the respondents were quite realistic and accurate.

In terms of the educational attainment levels, the largest group of individuals within the sample is secondary school graduates (67%). In London, this group is followed by the university graduates (11%) and graduate of only primary school (19%), with the number of those who never graduated from any school negligible (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Educational Attainment Levels in the London Sample



4.2 Educational Issues

One of the most pronounced issues of the Muslim communities in the UK concerned educational challenges. These could be pinpointed in two headlines: First, the underachievement of students from certain Muslim communities and the unsatisfactory level of Muslim visibility in higher education. Second, the immense influence of socio-economic and cultural factors on educational achievement.

In terms of the educational rights and freedoms that students, instructors, personnel, and institutions of the Muslim communities enjoy, the UK stands as an exceptionally advantageous and favourable example compared to many other European countries. Islamic schools are dispersed all around the country and Muslim students and teachers are both benefiting from the freedom of attire in schools whereas in many other countries the display of any religious symbols, including the headscarf, is banned for instructors.

² <https://data.worldbank.org/country/united-kingdom>

Still, there are some critical approaches to the educational rights and freedoms in the UK. According to one such view, raised by *Fatima*, history and proportionality should be taken into account in order for the educational rights and freedoms that are enjoyed by Muslims in the UK to be properly assessed. *Fatima*, pointed to the fact that

“It took considerable time for British Muslims to finally qualify for grant-aided status and thereby establish the first ever British Muslim faith school in the UK. There is a history of faith based education in the state maintained sector but Muslims struggled to get political authorities to grant them equal rights to enjoy public funding on par with the thousands of Christian schools in the UK and the small number of Jewish schools. As far as proportionality is concerned, Muslim schools are still negligible in number in the faith-based sector. Although changes to the establishment of schools, as academies or free schools, means that many more have recently opened up, the numbers are still relatively small for the size of the Muslim population.”

Another issue that was brought up during the UK fieldwork was the general underachievement of Muslim students, which deteriorates further in certain groups. The level of achievement, particularly for students of Turkish origin, was reported as “lamentable,” or previously used to be. There were many issues behind this stark failure. *Musa*, who had been working with Turkish students and head-teachers, reported that school success for students of Turkish origin in a London borough in which the majority of Muslims are of Turkish origin, was about 20-22 per cent. In *Musa*’s opinion, this worrying level of failure was due to the lack of interaction between families and teachers, and socio-economic and linguistic obstacles. *Musa* continued as follows:

“Now, thanks to special efforts and hard work, in some school their success is catching up with the national average which is high 60 and lower 70. From this work on the Turkish under-achieving students, an educational model and trust was born. We realized from our research and investigations that there were three key indicators we needed to work with and on: parents, teachers, and curriculum. If we work with these three elements we can impact the outcome of educational process and students’ achievement. Our project is built on these three areas. And we share our model with schools all over the country. We work with state schools and the Muslim schools (there are around 200 of them all around the UK), we work with the school teachers, all the Muslim head-teachers in the UK.”

One of the most voiced and raised issues, *vis-à-vis* education and the Muslim communities, was the great impact of socio-economic and cultural factors on the quality of education, which, in the case of Muslim students, become even more noticeable. Although the educational system seems to be open to everyone in the UK, a fact that is often under-emphasised—which paradoxically has been demonstrated in various studies—is that the influence of socio-economic capital and resources on the quality of education a student receives is immense. That is to say, if a family has not accumulated enough socio-economic, cultural, and educational capital and resources, their chances of receiving a quality education, attend a good university and thrive academically is significantly low. This selective and educational structure does not favour students with an immigrant background and parents with limited socio-economic, educational, and linguistic resources.

In line with these thoughts, an interviewee with an academic background in Islamic Studies expressed the importance of the integration of Muslim parents into the society, and the educational, political, and legal system, and to become proficient in the official language in order to achieve academic success and personal and professional development. This interviewee, *Usman*, stated that

“There are Muslims in this country who have been living here longer than I have, more than 20 years, but still do not know Britain as a system or its institutions because they are still in their own mosques and organizations. If you tell them go and talk to your grandchildren’s school teacher they do not know who to deal with, this is because they have been engaged with the school system. Felt aloof. If you say go and see a lawyer for a legal issue, they do not know how to present their case. This affects their children. Regardless of which university they went to in Britain, their children are still inefficient to perform within the system. That becomes a major impediment in the Muslim communities’ progress, integration, and representing themselves within the British society.”

It is important to note that numerous participants and interviewees stressed that education is the key to many problems the Muslim communities are struggling with today. Therefore, the educational attainment and quality of the education that Muslim students achieve are amongst some of the major problems, even the diversity dilemma and the conflict over representation will become either less visible or redundant, altogether. According to those who attributed such a mission to education, the fragmented nature and structure of the Muslim communities, as well as the lack of communal interaction between them is a direct outcome of the low-level of education.

Musa argued that Muslim communities of the different ethnic, national, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds have very limited knowledge about one another, and this poses a great challenge when working together with these groups. Thus, inter-communal and intra-communal relationships and interactions involve tensions, unspoken feelings, prejudices, barriers, and unchallenged assumptions. “The lack of proper knowledge and information about the other is one of the main problems of the Muslim community,” stated *Musa*. *Musa* goes on to say that the low level of education also feeds the fear of change, resulting in further isolation and fragmentation since the fear of change causes communities to turn in on themselves and become less involved with other communities.

Such communities also marginalize all differences even within their own community and do not tolerate individual voices and liberties. *Musa* puts this as follows:

“Another problem, which is connected with this one, is the fear of change which is often comes from the lack of understanding and low level of education. An education that is dogmatic will naturally store up the fear of change. This education demands absolute loyalty and resemblance. You have to be like us, you have to attire yourself like us; the same cloths, the same beards, etc. Such dogmatic education does not allow individuals to express themselves. There is no place for individual liberty there.”

5 Attitudes on Visibility and Representation of Muslims

This section discusses the views on the visibility and representation of Muslims in the UK. First, it discusses the findings of the Survey. Then, the findings of the interviews and the workshop are utilized in analysing the perceived lack of unity and representation in Britain. Lastly, the views on and experiences of Islamophobia and discrimination are discussed.

5.1 Views on Visibility and Representation

There were several questions in the Survey regarding visibility and representation of Muslims in Britain. The questions that will be discussed here are asked in the form of presented statements on which the respondents were asked to reflect their degree of agreements. A 5-point Likert scale from '1-totally disagree' to '5-totally agree' was employed.

Among the three relevant statements, the only statement with an almost average score was related to the political participation of Muslims in the UK. More specifically, 18.1 per cent of the Survey respondents suggested that they found the level of formal and informal political participation by the UK Muslims satisfactory, producing a weighted score of 2.8 out of 5 (Table 12).

Table 12. To what extent do you agree with the following statements viz. Muslims' representation?

	Average Score (/5)	Agree + Totally Agree (%)
The formal and informal political participation of the UK Muslims is satisfactory	2.8	18.1
The Muslim community is well-represented in the politics in the UK	2.3	1.3
The Muslim community is well-represented in the media in the UK	2.2	0

The statements concerning the representation of Muslims in British politics and media returned a much lower level of agreement. In fact, almost none of the respondents agreed with the statement that "The Muslim community is well-represented in the politics in the UK", and literally none of the respondents agreed that "The Muslim community is well-represented in the media in the UK". Naturally, both statements produced a low score, 2.3 and 2.2, respectively. It seems clear that Muslims in the UK do not believe that they are sufficiently represented in either politics or the media. As the detailed discussion in the following two sections will demonstrate, the Muslim community in Britain accepts some of the responsibility for this lack of representation, suggesting that it is partly a result of

the failure of Muslims to speak with a united voice. There is also a concern about the perception of Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims in Britain, which both reinforces and reproduces this lack of representation in positions of influence in the politics and media.

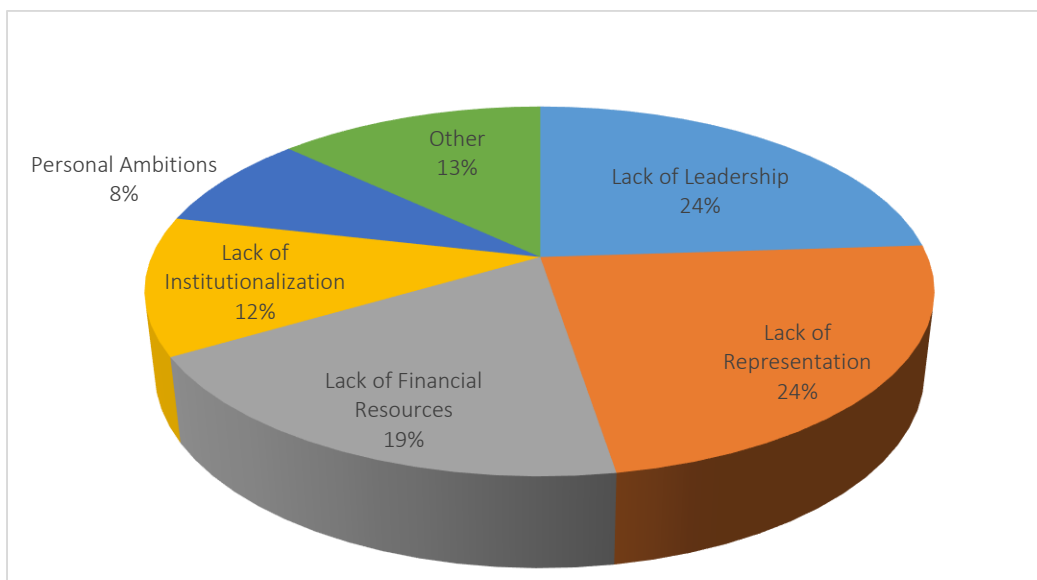
5.2 Lack of Unity and Representation

The question of unity and representation was the most pronounced issue by both the workshop participants and those interviewed in London. In fact, there was a consensus that a lack of discernible unity and a sense of disconnection is the biggest challenge facing the Muslim communities in the UK and could be identified as the only topic on which there is no divergence of opinion. All representatives, spokespersons, individuals, leaders, and organizations of the Muslim communities voiced the fact that the over-fragmentation and the lack of intra-communal and inter-communal interaction is the greatest problem of the larger Muslim community across Europe.

The survey, as discussed above, reflected similar findings. When asked to identify three major factors causing disunity among Muslims in the UK. When all the responses added together, the two most frequently mentioned factors against the unity of Muslims in the UK were 'lack of leadership' and 'lack of representation, with almost the same frequency of being reported. These two were, then, followed by 'lack of financial resources' and, perhaps related to that, lack of institutionalization. The other factors that were mentioned with significantly less frequently were 'personal ambitions', 'interference by non-Muslim factors', and 'sectarian differences'. All the responses are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. What are the Factors against Muslims' Unity in the UK?

	#	%
Lack of Leadership	103	24.0
Lack of Representation	101	23.5
Lack of Financial Resources	82	19.0
Lack of Institutionalization	52	12.1
Personal Ambitions	36	8.4
Interference by Non-Muslim Factors	26	6.1
Sectarian Differences	20	4.7
Cultural Differences	8	1.7
Interference by Muslim Countries	2	0.5
Total	430	100

Figure 11. Reasons of Lack of Unity among Muslims

According to many respondents, the most salient consequence of this lack of unity is the representation of Muslims. The limited representation becomes a political crisis in itself and Muslim communities all over Europe suffer from this because in many legal contexts certain rights and freedoms are attainable only when the question of representation is resolved. Particularly voiced by the participants of the London workshop but also during many London interviews was the question of both super-diversity and the lack of proper communication and interaction among Muslim communities. These appear to be a greater challenge in the UK because of its far more diverse Muslim population. As *Fatima*, a female Muslim researcher reminded us, British Muslims are the most ethnically diverse religious group in the UK.

This diversity, however, is far from becoming a strength. Quite the contrary, in many respects, the communities that constitute this super-diversity are self-contained ethnic/national/sectarian clusters with their own religious-cultural enclaves. Each of them has their own isolated world, with isolated territories³, mosques, cultural centres and the like. In this respect, the inter-communal Muslim relations are as much problematic and a pressing issue as the considerations about the Muslim communities' relations with other non-Muslim groups and the host societies in Europe and elsewhere.⁴

³ This is partly due to the migration and settlement patterns of the Muslim communities as seen across Europe. What is conceptualized as the "chain migration" settlement has been very common among different ethno-national Muslim communities. In this pattern, immigration is overwhelmingly influenced based by familial or fellow-countryman links.

⁴ We are indebted to *Fatima*, a British-Muslim academician, for providing information on pan-European, inter- and trans-national Muslim relations. Accordingly, there are a few pan-European groups, e.g., ENAR, Femyso, UETD, European Muslim Union, and European Muslim Network, which provide an inter-national platform and bring European Muslims together in joint enterprises based around human rights and Islamophobia.

A participant in the London Workshop made similar points, stating:

“I think in order to overcome these obstacles we need to put emphasis on building a strong political leadership and having scholars, real scholars. Because, I think, it is the lack of real knowledge that divides us. [...] For that we need to focus on our commonalities not the issues that divide us.”

Beth, a female British academic, also mentioned the role and importance of education in overcoming the challenges of disunity and disconnection:

“As a broad generalization, I can say that, the better educated a Muslim the more opportunity he/she has to mix with Muslims who have different ethnic, denominational, national, and linguistic backgrounds. But this is true of any person. The better educated all of us are, the more able to mix. But obviously in big centres, urban collections of people, different groups, do identify with each other and particularly when there are problems that are broad, they stick together.”

The concept of a single representative and leading platform for all Muslims was one of the most heated points of discussion in the London fieldwork. *Ali*, a male representative from a Muslim NGO and an interviewee with knowledge and expertise on the organizational structures of Muslim communities, made the point stressing that “a single representative and leading body might and would become subservient to the system, like those in colonial times in India and elsewhere.” Many respondents stated that, rather than having one singular voice, what Muslims need is hundreds of voices in harmony and solidarity. The major challenge and downside in creating such framework, noted by numerous participants and interviewees is many voices are far more difficult to unify under the same goal and stance.

This was exemplified by *Aisha*, a distinguished female religious scholar and teacher, with a striking anecdote. After emphasizing that sectarian fractions and different schools of Islamic thought negatively influences Muslim communities and brings about an over-fragmentation and polarization, the participant continued as follows:

“What is worse, even our muftis and imams are afraid of the community. Let me give an example, to start we still cannot agree on the start of Ramadan, and the start of the Eid. Even when there is a fatwa given by a high Imam you can see that a very young and minor imam can dispute it. A couple of years ago, a number of distinguished religious scholars came together in Sweden, to discuss the start of Ramadan fasting. They travelled to the north to measure the sun’s movement, the time it rises and then made a conclusion (that here we do not need to start fasting an hour or 45 minutes before the rise of sun) as a fatwa to how to act here. I took the fatwa to the eight major mosques in London and ask them to act accordingly. They all told me that if they do so, it would be *fitna*! And they insisted in continuing with their own regulation. So you have a Pakistani mosque which starts the fasting hours 3.5 hours earlier before the sun rises. On what basis? They absolutely have no basis. And they still deliver Friday prayer

speeches, reciting the *khutbahs* written thousand years ago, in the time of Abbasid Caliphate. So the same lack of political and religious leadership and dividedness!”

Another much highlighted and mentioned point in relation to disunity is that Muslim communities in smaller towns and the countryside are much more inclined to develop and retain a mono-cultural and isolated position. Many respondents noted that, although in cities like London, Birmingham, and Manchester the Muslim communities are heavily clustered and isolated, the level of interaction is improving with the aid of large cultural centres and mosques, *e.g.*, East London, with no cultural and linguistic dominance or preference. In such religious, educational, and socio-cultural centres the language is English and this further increase the chance of inter-communal dialogue. According to *Ali*, the East London Mosque, and the masjids that are likewise structured and administrated, proved to be effective in diminishing disunity and cultural protection among the Muslim communities. Since such religious-cultural centres do not have a strong, dictating, and monolithic cultural identity different groups such as Arabs, Turks, Pakistanis, Somalis can act and feel as an *Ummah*, rather than an ethnic enclave. Mosques should unify not compartmentalize the sense of Muslim identity.

Ali, although noting that ethno-cultural fragmentation is prevalent in the Muslim community in the UK and many other European contexts, on a more positive note, stated that the level of inter-communal conflicts has decreased over the past few decades.

“There used to be a lot of conflict between different Muslim communities. They used to fight and mock at each other. I am talking about the late 1980s, early 1990s. We used to have a lot of that. Now, it is very rare. Instead of cultural issues, they now have ideological and theological problems, such as Sufism, Salafism, and the like.”

An interviewee with an academic background in Islamic studies, *Usman*, pointed out that a better administration and unification between religious and cultural centres will make a positive contribution towards solving the problems of disunity and disconnection, and representation. *Usman* reported that despite the growing number of mosques and religious centres, more than a thousand over the UK, the majority of these establishments are poorly managed and administrated.

“The government some years ago encouraged the establishment of a national council for mosques and one of the aims of that was to try to improve the administration of the mosques because really many of them were poorly administrated. But it didn’t work. The council was established but in a few years was faltering and now it is dysfunctional.”

According to *Usman* and two participants of the London Workshop, the main reason behind this failure was the fact that the majority of the mosques are being managed and controlled by first generation Muslims who have “status-seeking and protecting minds” and do not want to lose their respected status within their own communities. These leaders of the first generation, according to the participants of the London Workshop and *Usman*, are often inclined to retain the mono-linguistic, ethnic, and cultural identity and character of the religious centres and mosques. If mosques continue to operate in the respective language of the communities, rather than the common language those

different Muslim communities all speak, there cannot be an expected improvement in the level of inter-communal Muslim interaction.

However, a few respondents claimed that the issues of disunity and lack of interaction is not as severe as in the past, and, in fact, some positive developments both on the issue of unity and regarding the question of representation have been recorded over the last few decades. According to *Ali*, a spokesperson for a Muslim organization, for example, the negative representation and media coverage, as well as the rise of Islamophobia have some positive influences on Muslim communities. Such negative representation, the surge in far-right politics, and the rise in anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim incidents brought about a sense of unity and solidarity to Muslim communities in the UK. To a relevant follow-up question about the correlation between negative representation and press coverage and the sense of unity, the same interviewee responded that challenges always bring people together: “Muslim people wake up and find themselves Muslims, in the face of such a representation of Islam.”

One undesirable outcome of the disunity and lack of interaction is that the transfer of knowledge and experience remains limited among different Muslim communities. Newly arrived Muslim groups, such as Somalis in the UK fail to benefit from the experiences of more settled Muslim communities quite familiar with the system and its legal, procedural, and political requirements.

To conclude this section, Muslim communities present an intersectional complexity of diversity composed of different class, social, economic, cultural, historical, educational, denominational, political and ideological backgrounds, stances, values, bonds and affiliations. Once this reality is accepted the problem of representation and the difficulties caused by it could be properly understood and addressed. If the premises are inaccurate, sanguine, and misleading, then the solution would not work. A multi-variable equation requires complex formulations, techniques, and means and a proper knowledge of variables not generalizations, simplifying deductions, and categorical thinking.

If Muslim identity is viewed as a standard and stable set of other-relevant meanings, rather than a processual and shifting set of self-relevant ones (*viz.*, values, ideals, beliefs, thoughts, fears, and other similar intellectual, psychological, social, ethical, cultural, economic, political, ideological variables), then the question of representation would become more problematic than it already is. This sort of an outlook will negate all subjective, socio-economic, cultural, sectarian, gender-related, political and ideological factors, variables, and determinants, and reduce and confine Muslim identity to the single category of “religious other.” Unfortunately, this outlook is becoming increasingly prevalent. There is not a single way of identifying as a Muslim; there are infinite varieties, as is the case with any religion and faith. Yet, Muslim identity when treated as a single, homogenous and standard whole is not a socio-cultural and religious identity but a mere political category.

5.3 Islamophobia and Negative Representation

When asked to list the main disadvantages of living in the UK as a Muslim, an overwhelming majority in the survey listed racism and Islamophobia. According to *Ali*, Muslims suffer from Islamophobia in

much the same way as the Irish, the black and Jewish communities, suffered, and still suffer from racism. The acts, means, and manners of demonization and vilification are much the same. “You know in some of the headlines, you can take the word Muslim and put the word Jew instead, it is that similar,” reported *Ali*. “If you keep your Muslim identity to yourself and do not get involved in politics, you are safe. However, if you want to talk about certain contemporary political questions, such as Palestine, Afghanistan or Iraq, then immediately you become an extremist.” With the rise of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim politics, it has only become more pronounced, according to *Ali*. Today, even having a beard or a Muslim-like appearance is enough to be exposed to an Islamophobic assault—as members of Sikh community can experience because of their turban.

According to another interviewee, *Fatima*, and many other participants of the London Workshop, there is a strong link between the rise of hate speech and negative representation in the media and the rise of hate crimes in the public realms. Another interviewee, *Beth*, an academician working on Muslims in the UK, added the role and impacts of economic deprivation, to the picture. Outside “the successful bubble of London,” in the midlands and in northern England the effects of economic deprivation are more severe and this has led to racism, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiments that were not discouraged by the government and proactively encouraged by the right-wing media. *Beth* continued as follows:

“The very strong beginning of this process was 2007-2008 financial crash. If you realize as a low-achieving member of a society like Britain, that you are constantly missing out on privileges, then you need somebody to blame. If you can blame somebody, not the government, then, that is convenient. Missing out on privileges becomes more tolerable, endurable, and rational. There is a specific example of how this frame of mind has now developed into and supported by policy: the counter-terror legislation.”⁵

In line with the point of parallelism between the rise of Islamophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments and the rise of far-right politics, *Beth*, stated that, statistically speaking, the number of Islamophobic attacks increased and become more visible and notable during the Brexit campaign. *Beth* also noted that it was only in 2016 that the police began to log and record such incidents, while the same has been done with anti-Semitic incidents for decades.

Still, some further respondents argued that the importance that is attributed to Islamophobia by the Government and state institutions is not convincing. For these respondents, Islamophobia is not related to Islam. It is about the concerns and problems of Western societies *vis-à-vis* their Muslim citizens and communities. Official recognition of Islamophobia in the society might, in certain contexts and to some extent, mean the protection of Muslim citizens and rights but in equally many contexts might translate into a legitimate policy for incarcerating Muslim subjectivity in a “protective custody.”

⁵ “In 2015-2016, an act, viz., the Counter-terrorism and Security Act, passed. This act required all public institutions, including higher education institutions, to consider seriously if anybody in their institution was being radicalized into terrorist thinking and/or terrorist acts. The problem arises in the act of providing guidance for these institutions about how to implement the act.”

According to a participant of the London Workshop, this protective custody runs the risk of reducing and confining Muslim presence and identity to some generic and specific “anti-immigrant,” “anti-Muslim,” racist and xenophobic reactions and a dangerously political vocabulary.⁶

⁶ Fatima noted another important impact of the negative representation and anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant media coverage, in the context of schools and classrooms in the UK. Accordingly, recent reports indicate that “the level of Islamophobia in classrooms in the UK is rising and that some Muslim pupils are being branded with terms like ‘terrorist’ and ‘suicide bomber.’”

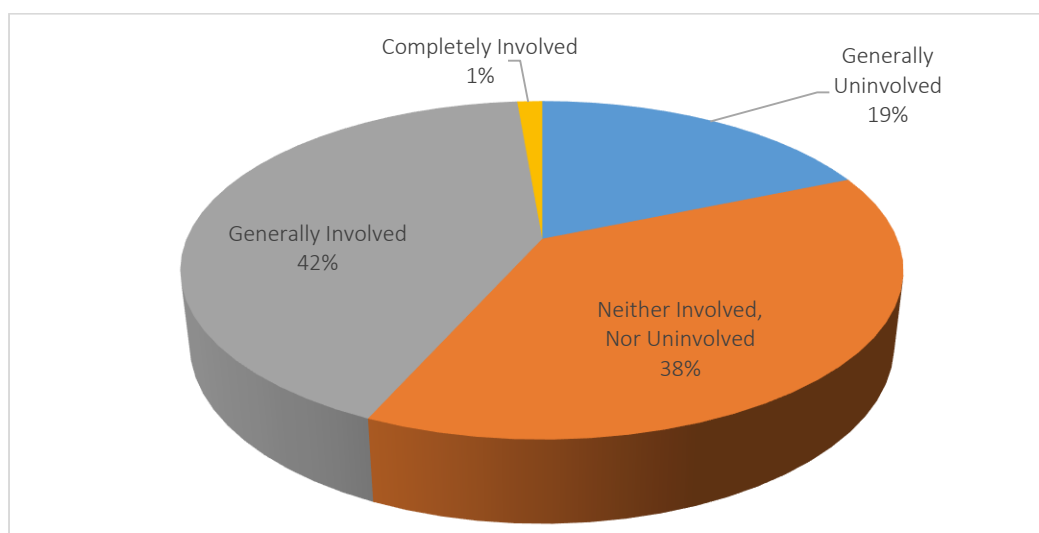
6 Confidence in Relations among Muslim Communities

This chapter discusses the relations among Muslim communities. In the first section, the survey findings are utilized in trying to understand to what extent Muslim people are involved in activities with the members of Muslim community in Britain. The second section, in turn, reiterates the already mentioned dividedness and fragmentation within the Muslim community.

6.1 Involvement in and Relations with the Muslim Community

The survey respondents were asked about to what extent they were involved with the Muslim community in the UK. In this part, we firstly asked plainly their own subjective evaluation of how involved they considered themselves to be with the Muslim community, without explaining what we mean by either involvement or Muslim community. On a 5-point scale, from completely uninvolved to completely involved and where there is a mid-point at 'neither involved, nor uninvolved'; an average point of 3.2 can be calculated for this question in London, which suggests that the respondents consider themselves to be involved with the Muslim society on a slightly more than average basis. In fact, the highest number of respondents, accounting for 42 per cent of all respondents, reported to be 'generally involved' (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Level of Involvement with the Muslim Community in London



Following this subjective question, the respondents were asked, also on a 5-point scale, to evaluate the importance of six items for a Muslim. Specifically, they were asked to state in their view, “how much importance does the following have for a Muslim?” The listed items included ‘Practice and Rituals’, ‘Ethical Conduct’ (explained a living and acting ethically), ‘Social and Cultural Activities’, ‘Political Activities’, ‘Life-Style’, and ‘The Ummah Solidarity’ (explained as solidarity with other Muslims). In the following the responses are presented using composite average scores (Table 14).

Table 14. How important are the following for a Muslim?

	Average Score	Very Important +Important (%)
Practice and Rituals	3.4	50.6
Ethical Conduct	3.4	50.6
Social and Cultural Activities	3.3	51.3
Political Activities	2.4	16
Life-Style	3.4	52
Ummah Solidarity	2.7	36.7

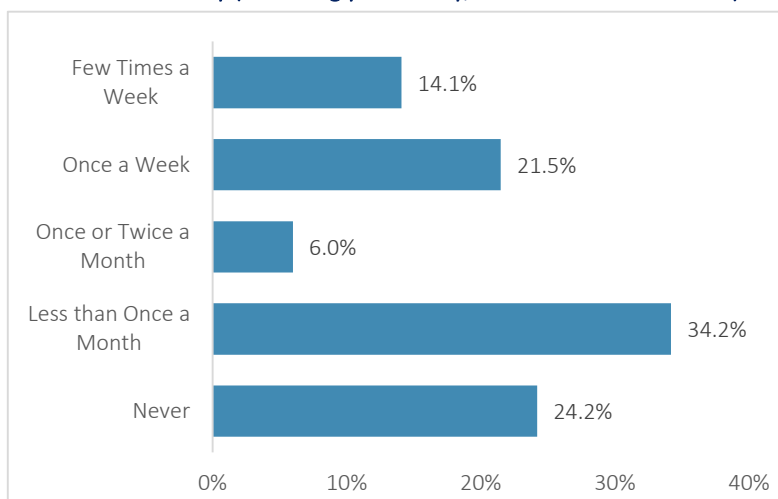
Overall, all the items except for two are considered important, with average scores higher than 3. All four items, i.e. ‘practice and rituals’, ‘ethical conduct’, ‘social and cultural activities’, and ‘life-style’ are considered to be either important or very important by the majority of respondents in London. The only two items that were not, on average, considered important were “political activities” and “Ummah solidarity”. Most strikingly, only 16% of the respondents thought that political activities were either important or very important for a Muslim, producing the lowest score of 2.4 for this question. “Ummah solidarity” was considered more important, with more than 36 per cent of the respondents finding it important or very important for Muslims. Still, however, overall it has a less than average importance for the participant of the London Survey.

After these subjective questions, we wanted to learn about the actions of the respondents. To this end, we first asked whether the respondents were a member of any Muslim NGO, such as associations, foundations, cultural centres, or mosque associations. In London, a large majority reported that they were not a member of any NGOs.

Of course, formal membership of an active Muslim NGO is not the only way of active engagement with the Muslim community. Therefore, we asked respondents two questions to see how frequently they were interacting with the other members of the Muslim communities and engaging themselves with the civic life of the Muslim community in the host context. The first question was designed to see whether, and if so, how frequently, the respondents were interacting with members of the Muslim community in London, excluding their family members, relatives and co-workers during time of work.

The responses were striking: In London, a staggering 58.4 per cent of the respondents reported that they either never interacted (24.2%) or interacted less than once a month (34.2%) with other Muslims. Around one-third of the respondents, on the other hand, suggested that they were interacting more frequently with other members of the Muslim community, as often as once a week (21.5%) and few times a week (14.1%) (Figure 13).

Figure 13. How frequently do you interact with members of the Muslim community (excluding your family/relatives and co-workers)?



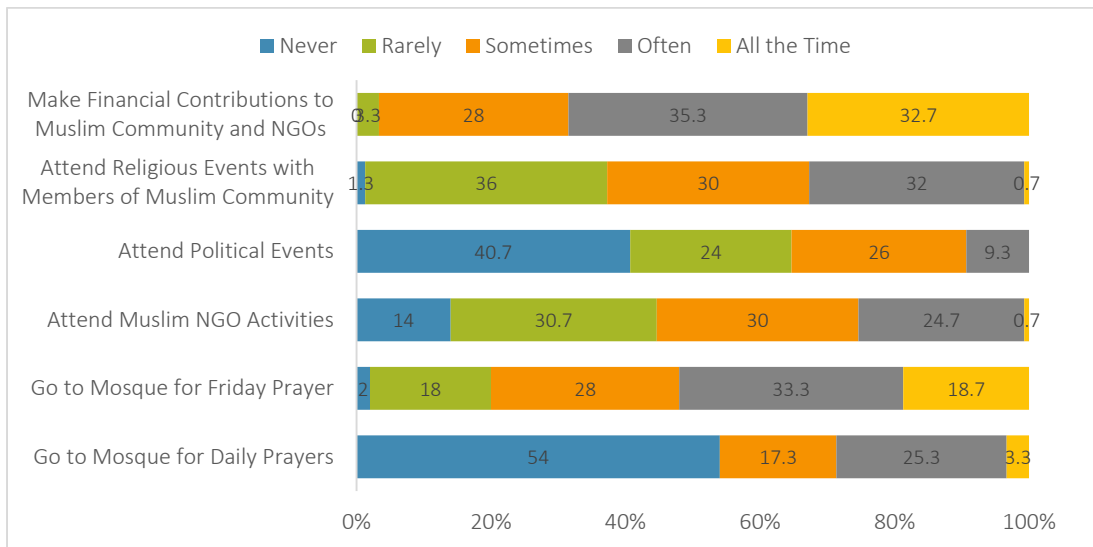
Secondly, we asked respondents to place themselves on a 5-point scale according to how often they took part in activities within the Muslim community, with 1 indicating never and 5 indicating all the time (Table 15).

Table 15. How often do you do the following activities within the Muslim community?

	Average Score (/5)	Often + All the Time (%)
Go to Mosque for daily prayers	2.1	28.6
Go to Mosque for Friday prayer	3.4	52
Attend Muslim NGO activities	2.7	25.4
Attend social gatherings with members of Muslim community (excluding family/relatives)	2.9	34
Attend political events with members of Muslim community	1.9	9.3
Attend religious events with members of Muslim community	2.9	32.7
Attend sporting (e.g., football matches, etc.) events with members of Muslim community	2.9	28
Attend art-related/cultural events (e.g., Cinema, theatre etc.) with members of Muslim community	3.0	30
Attend educational events with members of Muslim community	2.5	18.7
Make financial contributions to Muslim community and NGOs (e.g. donation, charity, fee, fund-raising)	3.0	68

As it can be seen in the table, the average frequency with which the participants are doing these activities is rather low. A few items further stand out. It is striking that participants reported the least frequent activity that they do is attending political events with fellow Muslims. The total share of the participants who said doing this “often” or “all the time” is 9.3 per cent in London (see Table 12). In London, the most significant finding of this question is how frequently the respondents reported making financial contributions to Muslim community NGOs. In fact, a massive 68 per cent of the respondents mentioned doing this “all the time” or frequently (Figure 14).

Figure 14. How Often Do You Make Financial Contributions to Muslim Community or NGOs?



The finding that attending political activities is the least frequently reported activity in London is very significant. It shows the distaste of the survey respondents toward the concept of ‘political’. In fact, this finding repeats itself repeatedly in many questions. This includes the above question concerning how much importance the respondents were assigning to various items. The reason why this is the case may be related to the fact that many of the survey respondents, a majority of whom are first generation Muslims, could be feeling less at ease with politics in the diaspora context, particularly if they do not have the host country citizenship. This distaste toward the adjective of ‘political’, on the other hand, was not observed amongst the interviewees and workshop participants. This may add strength to the possibility that when the Muslim individuals are better integrated into the political and legal system, just like the interviewees and workshop participants a vast majority of whom were active NGO members or professionals, they are less antipathetic to politics.

6.2 Dividedness and Fragmentation among Muslim Communities

When the respondents were asked about the issues that unite the Muslim communities in the UK and those that cause friction among different communities, the first two comments in this part have

crucially set the tone of the discussion and expressed what emerged as one of the most pressing issues for the British Muslim communities:

“I think the first thing that divide Muslim communities is that we do not have a single voice. Every now and then the media would find a fraud and represent him as a leader of the Muslim community and this single man would make some sort of hate speech and leave an extremely poor impression of Muslims. I think not everyone should be allowed to represent Muslims here. Second, for Muslim organizations there should be some sort of regulations. Are those people who run or direct these organizations good representatives, can they really represent those people in their respective community? I think both for smaller organizations and for umbrella organisations representative people and spokesmen should be selected carefully. Especially after the Salman Rushdie case back in the 90s, people who became very vocal and appeared in the media, also became taken as the representatives of Muslims by the government and British people. But this was very wrong. So, we have the representation issue”

“First, we are all Muslim and we are all under the same banner of Islam, *Elhamdulillah*. But unfortunately we have over 50 denominations. From this mosque they do not go to the other one to pray, because they say this is “*kafir*.” We have 80 to 100 muftis, all great people, but they work on their own. What we need is bringing first these muftis together. There is no body no one to bring them all together and control them. So we need a Great Mufti, like an Archbishop, to unite all muftis and bring them together. It may work or not, of course, but we are trying to conduct a research with London University to see if this is feasible for the UK to have that. In every Muslim-majority country there are some denominations, there are Shias, Shafi, Maliki, Xanefi, and etc. But, here we have 50! Everyone has a different denomination! Everyone starts his own denomination! The question is: How we can bring all these together. So the problem of a lack of governing structure, different theologies, being isolated and exclusivist and dividedness.”

While everyone agreed that the Muslim communities in Britain was very much divided and fragmented, not everyone thought that having them unite under a single roof was a good idea:

“We have been talking about having this control mechanism to represent Islam and Muslims, and a single governing body to annihilate the dividedness. But, who are going to be the representatives? Salefis, Halifis, Malikis? If you try to control it, you may cause further divisions. So, a single representing body can raise the question of authority.”

There were also those who claimed that there was an overarching sense of being members of a single Ummah and the fact that there were so many different denominations was not the reason of the problems. It was the symptoms and products of the problems. The real reason of the problems amongst Muslims was the lack of communication and knowledge about one another. It was suggested that if people were able to talk to and get to know one another, they would realize that their commonalities were greater than their differences.

It was also suggested that due to this dividedness, the Muslim communities in Britain were not able to exert influence in proportion to their significance:

“I think in order to overcome these obstacles we need to put emphasis on building a strong political leadership and having scholars, real scholars. Because, I think, the lack of real knowledge divides us. Second, we need concentrate on competence building. Take for example, the Jewish community. They are 1/10 of the Muslim community but they are everywhere, in politics, in professions they are everywhere. We have a weak mentality, always blaming this or that for our weaknesses. If you look at it, the Jewish community is the most victimized community, but they succeeded in rebuilding their community and prove that they are necessary, they are important, they are beneficial. We are claiming that we are *hayr umma* but what sort of *hayr* are we spreading to our community. We need to make ourselves, build ourselves so that people around us could feel that these are the people who are competent, these are necessary, these are beneficial. For that we need to focus on our commonalities not the issues that divide us.”

7 Future Projections for the Muslims in the UK

Muslim communities in the UK are generally optimistic about their future. There are, however, some significant concerns raised concerning some of the changes that are being experienced in the country. The first section below starts the discussion from some of the important changes in Britain and Muslims' views on them. The second section uses the Survey findings in which the respondents were asked whether they were expecting a better or a worse future. The last section, in turn, will try to provide a more detailed discussion of the different future projections among Muslims in the UK.

7.1 Transformation of Life for Muslims in the UK?

The first set of questions attempted to measure whether the Muslims in the country are experiencing any major change in their daily experiences as well as whether they expect to see any such changes in the near future, for example in relation to the Brexit process. Again, a 5-point Likert scale was used and respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with various statements.

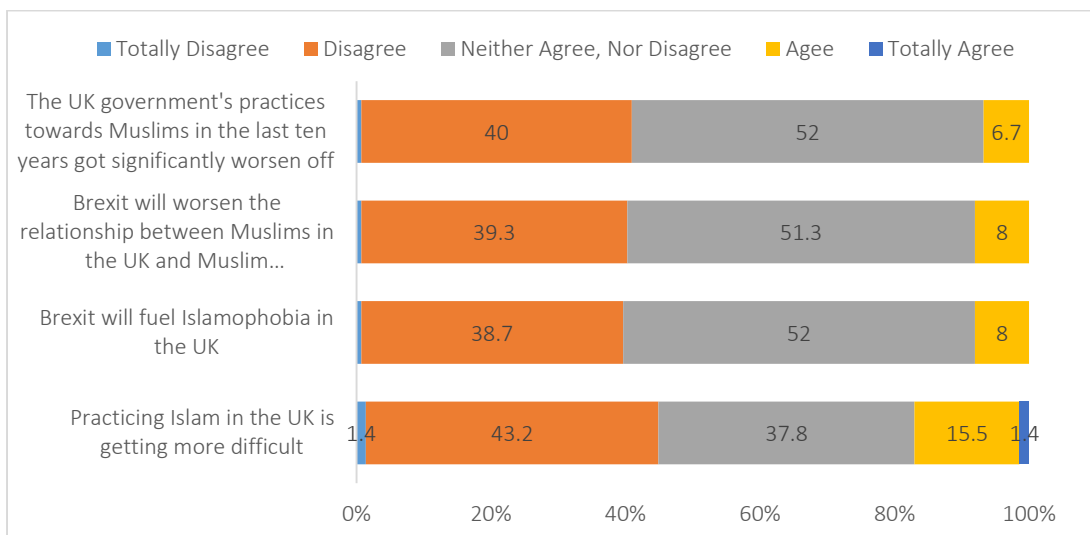
The first statement was "Practicing Islam in the UK is getting more difficult". Although the overall score for all of the respondents was 2.7, indicating that a majority of the respondents did not agree with this statement: some 17% of the respondents did agree that practicing Islam in the UK was in fact getting more difficult. This is not a negligible figure. In addition to this, the respondents were invited to evaluate the UK government's practices toward Muslims in the last 10 years. A vast majority did not agree with the statement that UK government's practices toward Muslims got significantly worsen off (Table 16).

Table 16. To What Extent Do You Agree with the Following Statements regarding Muslims?

	Average Score (/5)	Agree + Totally Agree (%)
Practicing Islam in the UK is getting more difficult	2.7	16.9
Brexit will fuel Islamophobia in the UK	2.7	8.0
Brexit will worsen the relationship between the Muslims in the UK and Muslim communities across Europe	2.6	8.0
The UK government's practices towards Muslims in the last ten years got significantly worsen off	2.7	6.7

Since the London fieldwork was conducted soon after the British referendum on whether or not to leave the European Union, which came to be known as Brexit, and immigration was a major issue before and after this referendum; the participants were asked about their expectations from the future regarding this process. The two statements on Brexit, “Brexit will fuel Islamophobia in the UK” and “Brexit will worsen the relationship between the Muslims in the UK and Muslim communities across Europe”, both produced less than average scores, indicating that the number of people who agree with these statements were very low. In fact, those who either agreed or totally agreed with these two statements accounted for 8 per cent of the respondents in both cases. In other words, Muslims in Britain do not appear to be concerned very much about any repercussions that they would face because of Brexit.

Figure 15. To What Extent Do You Agree with the following statements regarding Muslims?



7.2 The Future Projections and Expectations

The respondents were further asked about their expectations from the future. They were asked to take today as a benchmark and say whether they were expecting the future to be better or worse, also on 5-point scale where 1 indicates ‘much worse’, 5 indicates ‘much better’, and 3 indicates ‘the same’. Specifically, they were asked to speculate about the future of three items (Table 17).

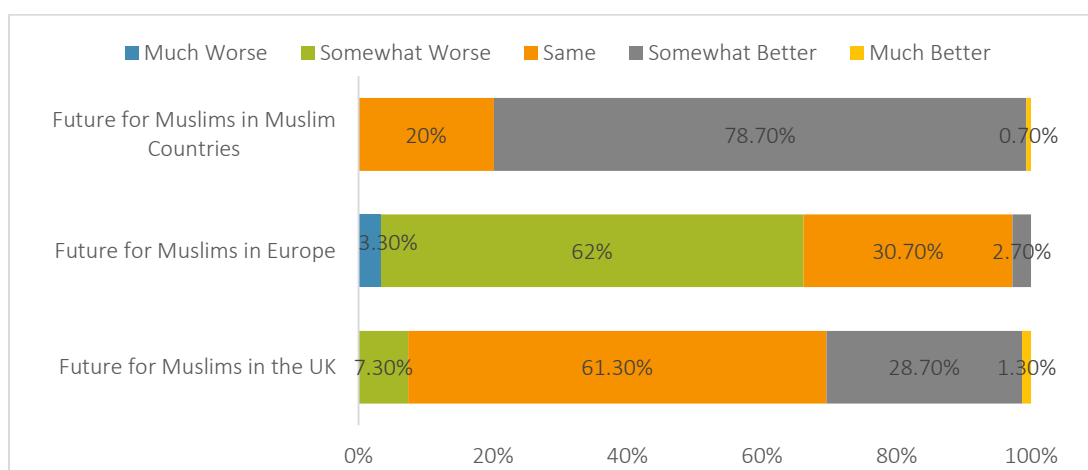
Table 17. How would you project the following in the coming decade?

	Average Score (/5)	Better + Much Better (%)
The Lives of Muslims in the UK	3.2	30.0
The Lives of Muslims in Europe	2.3	2.7
The Lives of Muslims in Muslim Countries	3.8	79.6

The findings are striking. There is a very mild optimism concerning the future of Muslims in the UK. We can see it in the fact that the average score (3.2) for this question is slightly above the mid-point. In addition, almost one-third of the respondents suggested that the lives of Muslims in the UK will be somewhat better (28.7%) or much better (1.3%). The expectation concerning the Muslims in other European countries, however, does not seem to be so optimistic. In fact, there seems to be a rather significant belief that the lives of Muslim communities in Europe will be worse. While only a tiny 2.7 per cent of the participants predicted that their lives will somewhat improve in the future, a huge 65 per cent of the respondents reported expecting the lives of European Muslims to suffer in the years to come.

Perhaps the most striking finding of this question was that the respondents were significantly much more optimistic about the lives of Muslims that live in predominantly Muslim countries. Indeed, the highest score was produced on this question reflecting this optimism about, mostly, the future of Muslims living in their own countries. In fact, almost 80% of all respondents expressed their expectation of improvement in the lives of those Muslims.

Figure 16. How will the future be like for Muslims in the UK, in Europe and in Muslim Countries?



7.3 The Future for the Global Muslim Diaspora

To the question regarding projections for the future of Muslim communities in the UK, the responses given by both those interviewed and the participants of the workshops demonstrate two overarching perspectives: a hopeful and confident outlook that could be identified as *optimistic* and a reservedly positive one that could be termed *cautious*. It should be noted, however, that many of the participants and those persons who were interviewed adopted both outlooks, approaching certain issues in a more optimistic and positive manner while remaining more critical, concerned, and cautious in some other.

Overall, it may be deduced that Muslim individuals and communities, representatives and spokespersons of organizations, and political and religious leaders are both optimistic and confident

about the future. A smaller group of participants and interviewees, generally with an academic and political background, voiced some reservations and concerns, and adopted a more realistic, critical and cautious view. Yet, even these participants and interviewees were not pessimistic and negative about the prospect and possibility of a better future, although firmly stressing that the acts and works of the Muslim community will define this.

In the London fieldwork, the impact of recent electoral polls and results, *viz.*, the Brexit Referendum in the UK, were particularly mentioned by participants of the workshop and those interviewed who adopted a more cautious outlook. However, many clearly expressed that the electoral success of right-wing conservative parties and anti-immigrant politics will hold no sway on the future of Muslim communities in Europe. *Usman*, interviewed in the UK fieldwork, for instance, stated that despite the moderate yet alarming rise of far-right parties and unapologetically xenophobic party leaders, in France, Germany and the Netherlands, the picture is not gloomy and hopeless. The rise of the far-right in European countries will have very little impact on the Muslim presence in the West.

In a similar vein, a respondent in the London Workshop, reminded of the difficulties faced by the Muslim communities in some of the EU member countries, specifically referring to France and Greece, stated that the role and responsibility of British Muslims is to protect their own rights, as well as the democratic framework of the country post-Brexit. The respondent continued:

We are here for some reason not by chance, so we must have a purpose. And this purpose should be what we as a Muslim community can add as a value to this society, which is our society and our country. Post-Brexit and post-election changes will of course affect us, there will be challenges surely. We, Muslims of the UK, have been enjoying the best human, and thus Muslim, rights all across Europe up-to-now. Will this change? Will Brexit continue to protect our rights? Yes, some of these rights were protected by European legislations, but on the other hand, our sisters and brothers are discriminated against in Greece and France, and they are at the heart of Europe when you look at it. So, it is not the European Union that protects our rights.

The main reason behind the optimistic outlook is the faith in Muslim potential. Expressing a strong faith in the potential and power of the young Muslim population, an interviewee, *Ali*, stressed that the far-right surge is not as powerful as the Muslim community, in terms of socio-political and economic capacity. As he maintained, according to 2011 census, of the 3 million Muslims in the UK, 48% is 24 years old or younger. The Muslim community is very young. In *Ali's* opinion, this presents a huge potential and if the factor of discrimination could be eliminated, they will achieve a great success. Pointing to the fact that there is now a Muslim mayor in London, Sadiq Khan as the mayor of one of the most powerful cities in the world, *Ali* concluded his reflections as follows: "Opportunities are there, for those who are willing to work for them. They will never come free, never come easy, but they will come. And Muslims feel better positioned for these opportunities compared to their own countries of origin."

A workshop participant in London also stressed the potential power of young human resources and the high fertility rate, stating that "the prospects for Muslims in the UK in the future is great. *Inshallah*, we all will get together, young and older generations, and get a lot of those Nobel Prizes. For decades,

we had only one or two, but the future is very bright and full of promises and prosperity for Muslims. We can do it; the Muslim impact is going to be great.” According to another interviewee, *Fatima*, the demographic potential, with the age profile of British Muslims showing 33 per cent to be under the age of 15 (as of 2011), will become a pivotal focus in the near future. Accordingly, “the burgeoning youth profile will make the Muslim population stand out against the average profile of Britons, which is considerably older, and will entail a strong focus of attention on policies and factors impacting on young people.” The same interviewee, also stressed the socio-economic improvements that will be borne from rising number of Muslims entering higher education and the growing number of females entering higher education.

In the opinion of many participants, including those persons interviewed, the future of the Muslims in the UK as well as in the West is intrinsically bound to their conducts and attitudes, as well as their responses to intra- and extra-communal challenges. With respect to this perspective, cautious responses could be pinpointed to three principle categories:

(i) Positive depending on internal factors: A better future was possible if the Muslim communities resolved their internal conflicts, hostilities, and rivalries. Many participants and interviewees expressed that their reservations about the future were more a result of internal tensions and the lack of interaction within the community, and a better future was dependent on intra-community developments, political activism and participation. A participant in the London Workshop highlighted the importance of acting at community level and possessing a broader vision. According to this participant, Muslim organizations in the UK are many in number but act and think at a micro-level. It is essential, however, that the Muslim communities focus on an organizational level and get involved in more research and policy making processes.

(ii) Positive depending on external factors: A bright future is possible dependent on the Muslim communities’ response to external challenges. According to *Ali* one of the biggest determinant factors that will shape the future of Muslim lives in the UK is their response to the “fear factor,” *i.e.*, the extent to which the fear that is politically manipulated and circulated by certain power circles to keep Muslim potential separated, isolated, and under control. Muslims’ response to this fear factor, or fear challenge, can manifest itself in two ways with distinct outcomes: First, they might become like the Jewish community and enclose themselves completely, to the outside world. Second, alternatively, they can follow the model of an open civilization and become one. This second scenario depends on the Muslim communities’ levels of endeavour and success in developing an inclusive and accommodating politics. *Ali* argues that the internal challenges will determine both the Muslim community’s response to the fear challenge, and thus its future in the UK: “We can very easily become reactionary or we can be very progressive, and say ‘this is our land and our home, and whatever happens we will take it in our stride and move on to build it together.’” A participant in the London Workshop maintained that the future could be bright, but it depended on their role.

How practical, clever, wise, and pragmatic the Muslims will be—in politics, in the media, in religion. These will determine whether Islam is the future of Britain, whether Islam plays an important role in the wider society or not. If we cannot play a proper role, everything gained is at stake. There are many establishments in the media and British society equipped with stronger and more effective instruments

and some of them are against the rise of Muslim community. They are afraid of so-called Muslim extremism; they are stronger in terms of the propaganda tools available to them compared to the past. So, if Muslims cannot act practically, wisely, cleverly [in terms of political mobilization, organizational and political participation, and potential achievement] we may not have that bright future.

(iii) Concerned and critical yet not hopeless: One of the most critical and concerned perspectives was put forward by one of the participants in the London Workshop. Objecting to the general optimistic outlook that was expressed by numerous other participants stated they stated: “I am a bit worried about both the future and the future projections for Muslims. [...] Our matrix for the future is not about what we will do with our resources but what is possible given the frameworks that are made available to us to exercise. It is not about how much we are able to do to secure our future but how much we will be allowed to secure our future.” The participant took a more critical view of post-Brexit Britain for the Muslim communities, stating that “the impact of Brexit will obviously be more tangibly about how much the rights framework on racial and religious equality will be retained post-Brexit.” One important fact underlined by this same participant was that Muslim political, economic, and social mobility within Europe will also dramatically change post-Brexit. From this perspective, the impact of Brexit on the interaction of Muslim communities in the UK with those in the EU countries is expected to be quite significant.

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

Theoretically and conceptually, is it possible to speak about a Muslim diaspora? If so, is there a Muslim diaspora, i.e. a global community of Muslims who live in predominantly non-Muslim countries where they or their family members moved in the past century? What does it mean to be a member of a Global Muslim Diaspora? Alternatively, does it not exist, even if it conceptually can? If so, why not? What are the psychological, social, cultural, political factors that prevent such a diasporic community, or at least the idea of such a community, from emerging? These sort of questions guided this research from the beginning. Therefore, in the fieldworks, we asked those persons interviewed, workshop participants, and survey respondents to tell us whether they have ever heard of such a concept; what they think about it; whether they felt themselves to be a member of a Muslim diaspora; and if not, why not?

As warranted by the complexity and political nature of the concept, we received a wide variety of responses from a wide variety of individuals. Overall, a slight majority of the participants of our research did NOT believe that “A Muslim Diaspora” exists. Or rather, the majority appear to believe that it is not appropriate to speak of a Muslim diaspora. Perhaps, some suggest, it is possible to speak of Muslim diasporas- a number of distinct diasporic communities, loosely bound by the common identity of Islam. While acknowledging the relevance of the concept of diaspora for Muslim communities living across Europe and in other predominantly non-Muslim societies, many take issue with the sense of homogeneity, which the concept of a Muslim Diaspora implies.

The main reasons for those individuals who either rejected the existence of or remained reluctant to say they are a member of a Muslim Diaspora include the following:

- The perceived negative connotations of the concept of diaspora,
- The lack of necessity for organization as a diaspora,
- The diversity of the Muslim communities,
- Potentially negative implications of employing the concept of Muslim diaspora.

For many, the concept of diaspora has a number of negative connotations, which reduces both its usefulness in objectively characterizing Muslim communities in the UK and its ability to attract members of such communities to self-identify themselves. These include foreignness and alienation to their new societies as the term diaspora is perceived to imply that “home” is elsewhere. The concept is also perceived to imply a sense of temporariness as implies a return to this “home” that is elsewhere. Therefore, many respondents suggested, it was not appropriate to refer to them as diasporas since they consider their future to be in their respective countries of residence, rather than elsewhere.

A second connotation of the concept of diaspora that was found to be prevalent among Muslim communities contacted through this research concerned communal mobilization. It was repeatedly suggested that, in order for a diaspora to emerge or remain salient, a pressing need is required for that diasporic community to come together around shared grievances and/or mobilize for common goals. Many respondents suggested that this was not the case for Muslims in the UK. The participants of the workshops in London highlighted this point: in a context where individuals are treated with dignity, they are considered equal citizens before the law, many of their needs are provided for by the welfare state, why would there be a need for diasporic mobilization.

The other objection raised against the concept of a Muslim diaspora concerned the sheer diversity of the Muslim communities across the globe. Meaning that the cultural and linguistic diversity amongst and within the Muslim communities were so great that they could not plausibly be called a diaspora.

There were a number of participants of the fieldwork who suggested that it was indeed possible to talk about a Muslim diaspora. Even in the absence of a unified vision concerning where home is or a desire to go back to it one day, what defines a diaspora is the common identification with a single identity. For many participants, this was clearly the case for Muslims. Regardless of ethnic background, languages spoken, or theological beliefs held; Muslim communities are unified by Islam and their religious identity. When confronted with the arguments concerning the negative connotations of the concept of diaspora or the potential risks of employing the concept in reference to Muslim communities, these participants failed to see any substantial negative effects. According to their view, being a member of a diaspora as well as a member of the host society was not mutually exclusive. One can consider themselves as a member of the Muslim Diaspora, a global community defined by religious identity, as well as a member of the British society.

The findings of this study suggest that the concept of a Muslim diaspora is not in wide circulation in the UK. However, when individuals were introduced to this concept and asked to reflect on it, slightly more than half responded negatively to the concept. On the other hand, a significant proportion of the respondents suggested that the concept of diaspora was relevant for the Muslim communities in Europe, and being Muslim does create a shared identity through which they identify themselves and shape their lives.

Differences across Generations and Process of Integration

A recurring theme in the fieldworks was how discussions based around the Muslim communities across Europe needed to take into account the significant differences across different generations. Members of the so-called first generation were immigrants who moved from their countries of origin to the UK. The second or third generations, however, were born and raised in these countries, despite often being referred to as immigrants.

Many significant differences exist between first generation immigrants and subsequent generations, which help shape the experience of being Muslim in predominantly non-Muslim societies. These differences highlight several policy implications as to how to engage them. These implications could be briefly outlined here:

- *Command of Language and Familiarity with the System:* The first generation immigrants generally do not have a strong command of the host language and are not familiar with the political and legal system in the host context. Second and further generations, to the contrary, have a strong command of the language and are well acquainted with the overall system. In fact, the majority of second generation respondents stated that English were their native languages. In addition, they received their education in the UK and see their future in this country.
- *Level of Integration:* The majority of first generation Muslims followed what can be termed a national understanding of Islam in the host contexts. They go to the mosques of their respective countries of origin and generally live more conservative lives. Second or further generation Muslims, on the other hand, are much better adapted to life in the host country and show greater degrees of social and cultural integration.
- *Out-Group Social Interaction:* While vast majorities of first generation Muslims tend to live closed social lives predominantly interacting with their co-ethnics in their mother tongue, second generation Muslims display much greater levels of social interaction with other social groups, including other Muslim communities. In terms of their attitudes as well, second and further generation Muslims manifest a much greater aptitude and openness to communication with other Muslim communities and wider society.
- *Multiple Identities:* It was repeatedly mentioned in the fieldworks that ethnic and national identities were far more salient and important for the first generation Muslims. They generally considered themselves as Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Turkish first, and Muslim or British etc. later. While this was not entirely different for second generations, it appears that they were far better adapted to living with multiple and hybridized identities. In other words, while for a majority of the second generation Muslims ethnic and national identities are still very much important, they are better able to identify themselves in reference to their religion, residential neighbourhood, or socio-economic status compared to their parents and grandparents. This has led them to perceive their Muslim identity as a very strong component in their multiple transnational lives. It can be further suggested that, the integration policies adopted in most immigration countries, certainly including the UK, put pressure on national identities in their efforts to make immigrants endorse the British identity, while the religious identities remained a safe harbour of personal identification which was not necessarily seen as a rival to these national identities.
- *Relations with Other Countries:* Finally, while first generation Muslims tend to have established strong and stable relations with their countries of origin, second generation Muslims are more open to having relations on a truly transnational and global basis. This is partly due to the changing identifications of the second generations and the phasing out of the strong emotional bonds with their country of origin, and partly due to the fact that younger generations are better in mastering the technological advancements in communication, most notably in their use of social media. As a result, not only are they far more aware of the developments taking place around the globe, they are also more willing and better able to communicate with other Muslim communities and wider world.

Verneacularization or Localization of Muslim Identities: Efforts for a British Islam

Another significant finding of the fieldwork was that there were a great variety of understandings and interpretations concerning the “Muslim way of life” within the diaspora. This is not a surprising finding given that there is a degree of diversity in how different individuals and groups interpret Islam, its theological teachings, and its practices around the world, including Muslim countries. What is different in the diasporic context is that the level of diversity is higher and the context of practice is far more dynamic. The diasporic experience means that other interpretations are often more visible and more integrated, and the pace of change and hybridization is faster due to the more fluid context of self-identification that is prevalent for Muslims in the diaspora.

Some examples would help illustrate this point. In our fieldwork in London, we came across a number of mosques that use multiple languages in their services in order to attract Muslims from different ethnic communities. While there were many mosques, still using a single language in their services such as Urdu or Turkish, in addition to the Arabic used in prayers, an increasing number of mosques use Urdu, Turkish, and English in addition to Arabic in *hutba* and other sermons. In fact, one mosque in Oxford switched to English entirely to bring together second generation Muslims from all ethnic backgrounds and transcend beyond the ethnic/national divisions within the Muslim community.

It is also evident that technological instruments are being used extensively by Muslim communities in the diaspora for better communication as well as to address several complexities created by internal diversity. In our observation of a Friday prayer in a major East London mosque, for instance, it was striking that the mosque had put up several large screens in addition to having the *hutba* and all announcements in three languages. Most Muslim NGOs and faith-based communities make extensive use of social media as well as making their announcements and communications through Facebook pages or WhatsApp groups in multiple languages.

In addition to these developments, which can be seen as natural changes and efforts by the Muslim communities to reach out to a larger Muslim base, the host country institutions also appear to be pushing in this direction of verneacularization or localization of Muslim identities. A number of these efforts could be considered nationalist reflexes in trying to curb the influence of various countries of origin on the Muslim communities living in their countries. In addition, the UK is trying to establish theological chairs in their universities and higher education institutions to educate “their own” Islamic scholars. The policy-makers we have talked to emphasized that allowing foreign Imams and religious teachers to provide services in their country was making it more difficult for the Muslim children to integrate.

Whether through the efforts of the host country governments or through the cultural and social transformations that young Muslim generations are experiencing in the diasporic context, it appears inevitable that they will develop their own understanding of what it means to be a Muslim. This transformation of Islam for the younger generations in the diaspora needs to be taken into account and Muslim countries as well as organizations like the OIC need to contribute constructively to this process of the localization of Islam for members of the Muslim diaspora.

ANNEX I. A Note on Methodology

The methodologies used in all fieldworks are described in detail in the GMD report titled “Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC Countries: Diagnostics, Concepts, Scope and Methodology”. It should be noted that, the first three country field studies, i.e. the UK, France and Germany, were initially conceived of as pilot studies. Therefore, some significant revisions were made to some of the research instruments after the pilot studies.

The most important of these revisions concerns the Survey, which include two changes. First, in the initial three pilot studies the sample size for the Survey was 150 since the Survey was designed to be complementary and not representative. However, to increase the explanatory and predictive power of the Survey, in the next country fieldworks the sample size was enlarged to 400.

Secondly, based on the results of the pilot studies, the survey questionnaire itself had to be updated by revising questions, adding new ones and removing others.

As a result of these changes, the Surveys results obtained in the UK, France, and Germany, and those obtained from Australia, Japan, South Africa, Argentina, Spain, the United States and Canada are not directly comparable.

ANNEX II. List of Interviewees in London

Pseudonym	Who	Gender	Date
Beth	British Academic, Works on Muslims in Britain and Europe, SOAS London	Female	5.5.2017
Muhammad	Muslim NGO Representative, London Süleymaniye Mosque and Cultural Centre	Male	5.5.2017
Abdullah	Muslim Academic, Regents University, London	Male	5.5.2017
Musa	Muslim NGO Representative, NIDA Foundation Trust	Male	6.5.2017
Fatima	Muslim Researcher and NGO member	Female	6.5.2017
Ali	Muslim NGO Representative, MEND-Muslim Engagement and Development	Male	7.5.2017
Usman	Muslim Academic, Oxford Islamic Studies	Male	7.5.2017
Aisha	Muslim Academic and NGO Member Oxford University	Female	8.5.2017
Zehra	Muslim Academic, Coventry University	Female	8.5.2017

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