

Yunas Samad, *University of Bradford, Great Britain*

MUSLIM YOUTH IN BRITAIN: ETHNIC TO RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

Paper presented at the International Conference Muslim Youth in Europe. Typologies of religious belonging and sociocultural dynamics, Edoardo Agnelli Centre for Comparative Religious Studies, Turin, 11th June 2004

Introduction

Muslim presence in Britain is intimately associated with the Empire. Diplomats, traders, seamen and visiting dignitaries typified the small number of early arrivals. The merchant navy, since the late 18th century, employed Asian and African seamen and discharged them in British ports along with their cargoes. The largest Muslim presence was the Yemeni seamen's settlement in the port of Cardiff and the first mosque was built there in 1870. Later other seamen colonies, consisting of Mirpuris and Sylhetis, were established much later in the inter-war years. Another trend was the visiting dignitaries and traders from India, which led to the establishment of the Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking, in 1889. There was also a Muslim presence in the diplomatic community and for them George VI (1944) inaugurated the Islamic Cultural Centre, in Regents Park. It was, however, the post-war labour shortage, which stimulated chain migration from the West Indies and South Asia, which brought contemporary Muslim labour migrants to Britain. Muslims immigrants arrived in 1960s and 1970s and the overwhelming number came from the Mirpur district in Pakistan, the Sylhet district in Bangladesh, Gujarat in India and refugees from East Africa. Not all Muslims, however, were South Asian in origin and there are Turkish Cypriots, Turks, Somalians, Nigerians, Malayans, Iranians, Arabs of various nationalities and a small but growing number of converts. In the 1980s with the collapse of communism and the break up of Yugoslavia Muslims from Eastern Europe arrived as refugees and asylum seekers. This diverse group has formed settled communities with substantial young population that has been born in or wholly educated in Britain. This paper is divided into three parts the first outlining the socio-economic characteristic of this diverse groups and indicating differences and similarities in trends. The second part examines the evolution of Muslim organisations and the shift in orientation that took place and the impact on the youth. The final section examine how young people are reinterpreting Islam and the focus is to examine this process in relation to the two largest groups of young Muslim population in the country. The primary focus is to examine major trends among Muslim population in general and among the youth specifically.

Socio-economic background

There was controversy in the 1990s over the size of the Muslim population as Muslim organizations argued it was between 2-3 million. This calculation was based on the HMSO Official Handbook 1969, which incorrectly estimated that there were 1.5 million Muslims in Britain. This figure was dropped from the official literature implicitly implying its inaccuracy. A consequence of this controversy was it led to a lobbying campaign run by a number of religious organisations that a question about religious identity should be included in the last Census in 2001. The topic was new to the Census in England, Wales and Scotland although the subject had been included in previous Censuses in Northern Ireland. The question, which in England and Wales was voluntary, was answered by 92 per cent of the people and revealed that Islam was the most common faith in Britain after Christianity (72 per cent) with nearly 3 per cent of the population, that is almost 1.6 million people describing themselves as Muslims (see figure 1). It should be noted that while there are now gross aggregate figures for the Muslim

population the 2001 Census still uses ethnicity for a range of statistics that cover demography, spatial distribution, and social characteristics for the minority ethnic groups and only in some cases religious affiliations can be deduced. Hence the data available so far is a combination of statistics based on religion and ethnicity.

Population: by Religion, April 2001

	Thousands	%
Christian	42079	71.6
Buddhist	152	0.3
Hindu	559	1.0
Jewish	267	0.5
Muslim	1591	2.7
Sikh	336	0.6
Other religion	179	0.3
<i>All religions</i>	<i>45163</i>	<i>76.8</i>
No religion	9104	15.5
Not stated	4289	7.3
<i>All no religion/not stated¹</i>	<i>13626</i>	<i>23.2</i>
<i>Base</i>	<i>58789</i>	<i>100</i>

Figure 1

¹ Includes 234 thousand cases in Northern Ireland where data is only available as a combined category.

Source: Census, April 2001, Office for National Statistics
 Census, April 2001, General Register Office for Scotland

Islam in Britain is primarily South Asian in character. The largest number of Muslims in Britain originates from Pakistan (687,592), Bangladesh (261,833) and India (133,783). All together Muslims of South Asian origin constitute almost three quarters of the adherents of Islam in Britain. There are also sizeable groups from Cyprus, Malaysia and the Arab countries. In the Census data many Muslims are to be found within the category ‘white’ which accounts for 11.6 percent of Muslim population, this includes 60,000 Muslims from Eastern European and the number of converts to Islam is estimated at about 10 000. About 6.7 percent of Muslims in Britain are black and many of them come from African countries such as Somalia (figure 2).

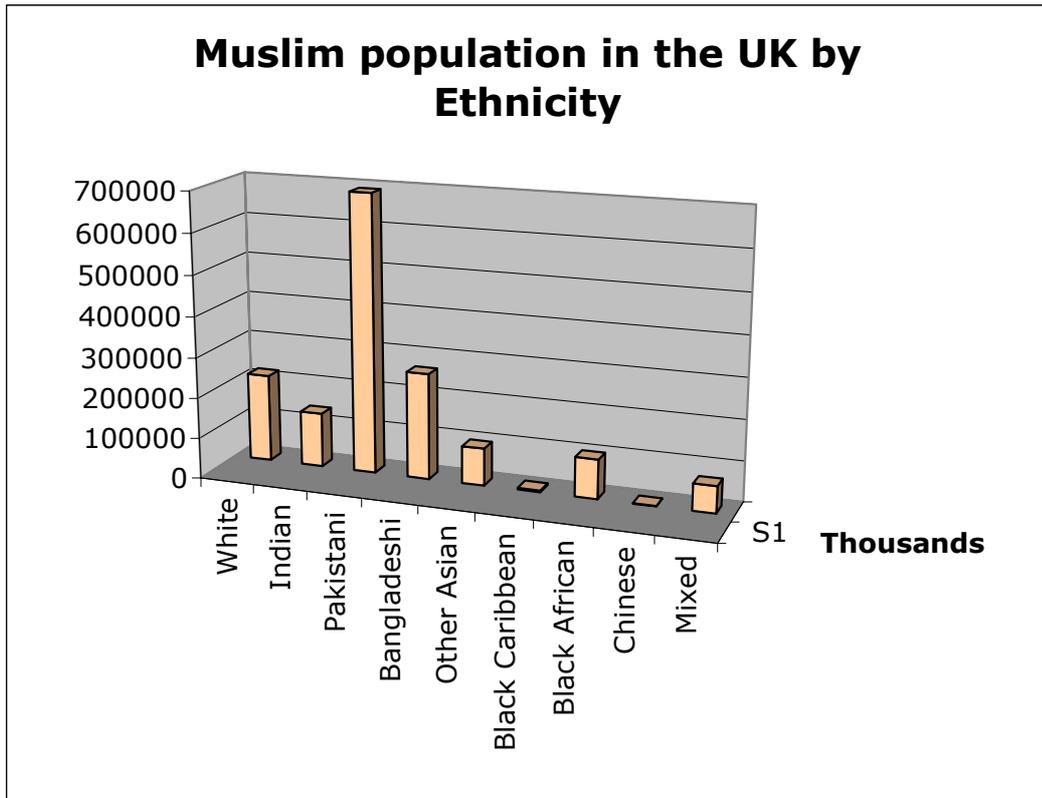


Figure 2

Source: Census, April 2001, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Census, April 2001, General Register Office for Scotland (GRFS)

Muslims are not evenly distributed throughout the country. Their distribution is the result of chain migration informed by kinship and friendship networks. Chain migration has contributed to concentrations of Muslims in particular regions and cities. Large concentrations are found in the Greater London conurbation, where according to the latest census 607 000 inhabitants are Muslims (see figure 4) and other areas of the South-East, the Midlands, West Yorkshire and the South Lancashire conurbations. There is also a concentration of Muslim population in the central Clydeside conurbation in Scotland (table 3 & 4).

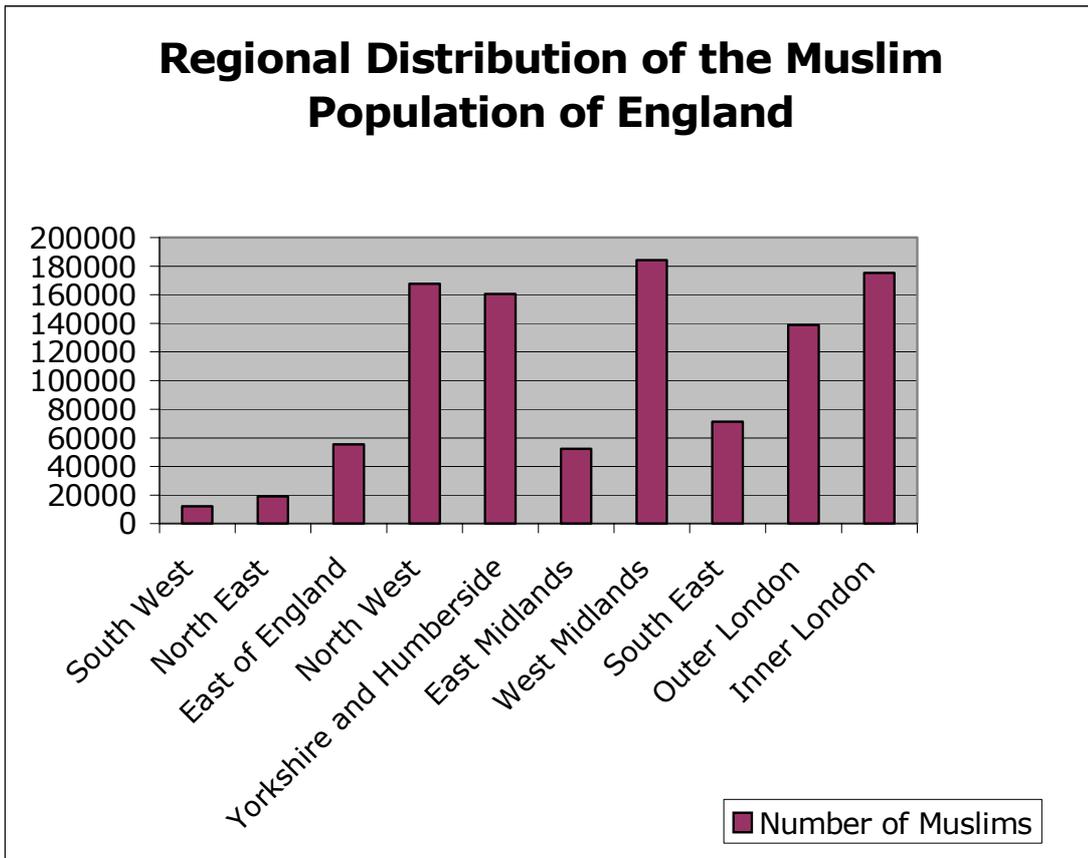


Figure 3

Source: Census, April 2001, Office for National Statistics

There are significant differences between various Muslim communities in terms of settlement patterns. For example, while Pakistanis are more dispersed nationally, the Bangladeshis are concentrated in large numbers in fewer areas, particularly in the East End of London, in the boroughs of Tower Hamlets (71 000 - 36% of the population of the district are Muslims) and Newham (59 000 - 24%) which are also the districts with the highest proportion of the Muslim population in the country. Other large Muslim clusters are to be found in Birmingham (140 000 – 14 % of the total city population are Muslims) and Bradford (75 000 - 16 %).

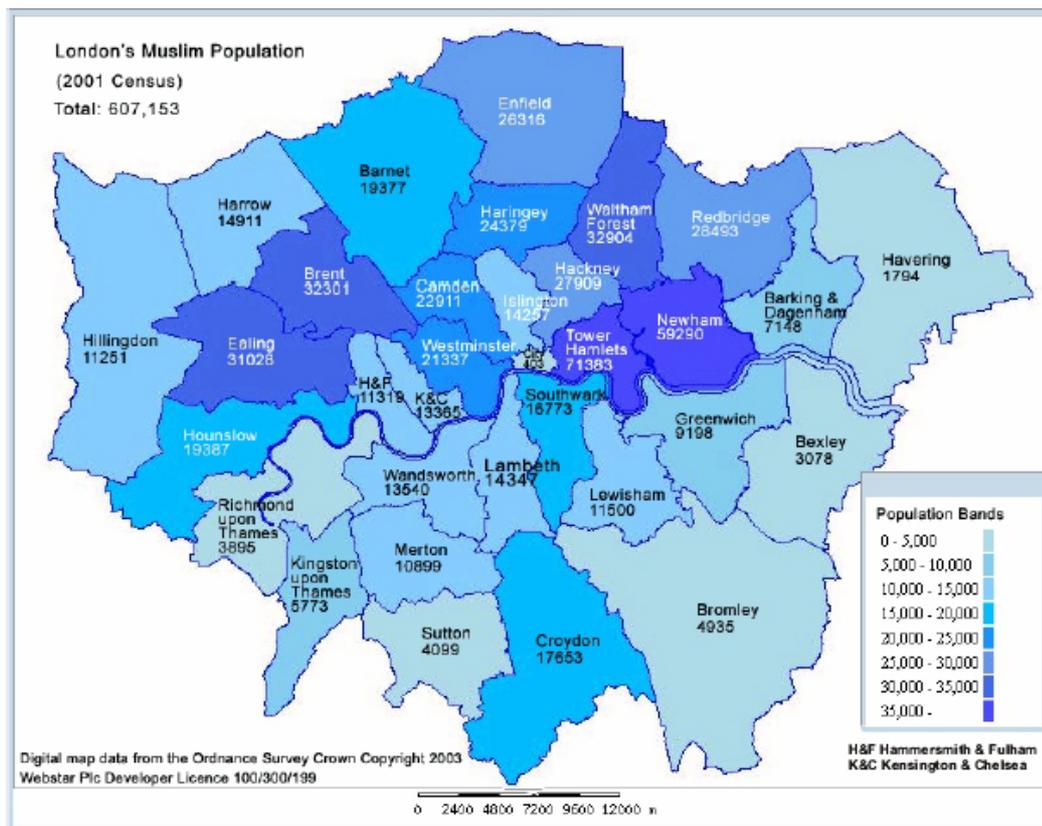


Figure 4

Source: Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright 2003

The age profile of the White population shows an aging population with disparity between the sexes emerging in the older population. In contrast, Muslims are characterised by large numbers of young people and a dearth of elderly people. The Muslim population in Britain is very young. 33.8 percent of Muslims are aged 0-15 years (national average is 20.2 percent), 50 percent of Muslims are less than 25 years of age (compared with only 31 percent of the national average), and 18.2 percent are aged 16-24 (national average is 10.9 percent). It has also fewer older people (see figure 5). The fact that there are more Muslim children of school age than in other groups has numerous social policy implications as they are relatively large numbers of concentrated in some areas. It is not uncommon in such cities like Birmingham, Leicester, Manchester or Bradford to find schools where 90 percent of pupils are of South Asian origin.

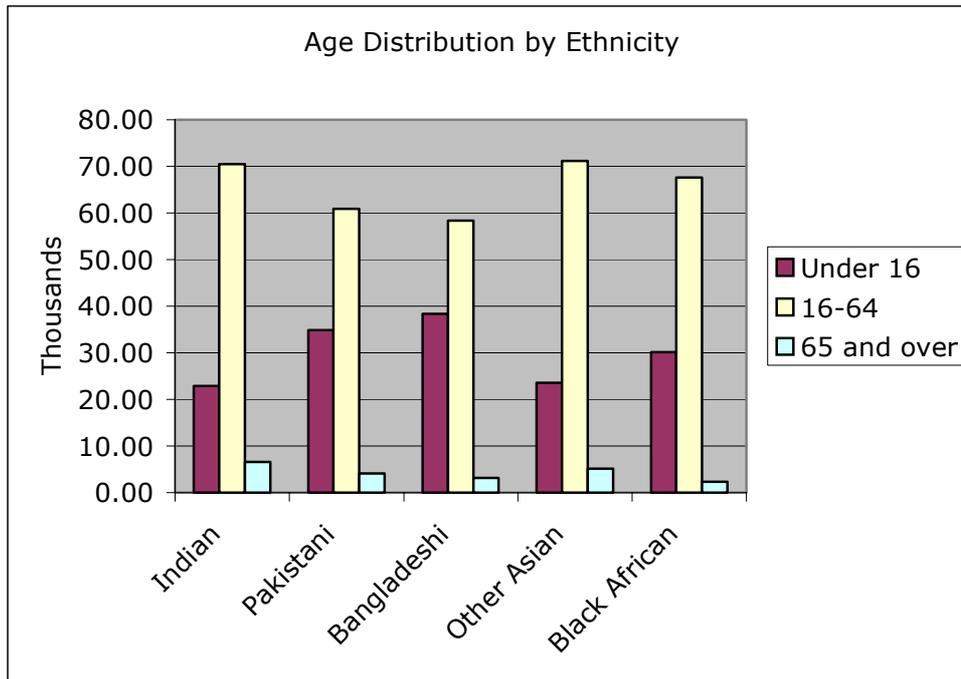


Figure 5

Source: Census, April 2001, Office for National Statistics
 Census, April 2001, General Register Office for Scotland

Pakistani and Bangladeshi households in Britain are larger, 4.7 and 4.2 persons per household respectively, compared with the rest of the population of 2.3 persons. Muslims in the country often live in joint and extended families and there are fewer lone parent families among them than in other group. According to the recent data 13 percent of Pakistani families are lone parent families while the percentage for the White population amounted to 22 percent and 47 percent amongst the Black Caribbean (Source: Census, 2001, ONS; Census 2001, GROS)

There is considerable diversity of occupation between Muslim groups and within other ethnic minorities. Indians (12.7% are Muslims) are 66% more likely than White British to be professionals while Bangladeshis are 33% and Pakistanis 14% less likely to be professionals (Source: Census, 2001, ONS; Census 2001, GROS). Five percent of Indian men were medical practitioners (nearly ten times the national average) (Twomey 2001) and Pakistanis were 185% more likely than White British to be plant and machine operatives and Bangladeshis were 83% more likely to be in elementary occupation than White British ((Source: Census, 2001, ONS; Census 2001, GROS).

In terms of industry Muslims are clustered mainly in manufacturing, distribution, hotels and restaurants, public administration, education and health and the financial sector. They have hardly any representation in agriculture and fishing and energy and water. Bangladeshi men are over-represented in the distribution sector, which includes restaurants and hotels. Sixty-six per cent of Bangladeshi men are employed in this sector compared with twenty-five per cent of Pakistani men (Census 2001). A significant

number of Pakistani and Bangladeshi men are over-represented in textiles and clothing (10% and 9% respectively of employment for these groups compared with just over 1% for all men). Pakistani men are also over-represented in transport and communication, (24 per cent) which includes taxis and chauffeuring (Twomey 2001).

Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are concentrated in certain sections of the economy, in lower graded occupations and areas traditionally associated with low pay such as textiles and restaurant industry that are the lowest paying sectors. Pakistani and Bangladeshi men earn £150 per week less than White men while Indian men earn only £5 less. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women earn £34 less than White women while Indian women earn £14 more than their white counterpart (TUC 2002). Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are the poorest groups in the country and two-thirds (68%) of them live below the poverty line (DWP 2000/1) and areas with high concentrations of these populations have high rates of multiple deprivation.

Employment data (employed and jobseekers) indicate that Whites have a greater participation in the labour market than Muslim groups. Generally employment is lower for all minority ethnic groups of all religions and the lowest rates are found among Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Women's employment rates are far lower than men's with only 28 percent of Pakistani women and 23 per cent of Bangladeshi women economically active compared with 73 percent of Pakistani men and 69 percent of Bangladeshi men. Muslim unemployment is considerably higher the rate of White unemployment. Pakistanis adult unemployment is 4 times higher and Bangladeshis is 5 times higher than white unemployment and youth unemployment is approximately twice as high for Pakistanis and three times higher for Bangladeshis ((Source: Census, 2001, ONS; Census 2001, GROS). The proportion of self-employment among Muslim groups is diverse with it being relatively high for Pakistanis at 22 percent and around 13 percent and 12 percent for Indians and Bangladeshi, which is near the rates found for White British (11 percent) (Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey, 2001/02).

Unemployment rates:¹ by ethnic group and age,² 2001-02, United Kingdom
 Percentages

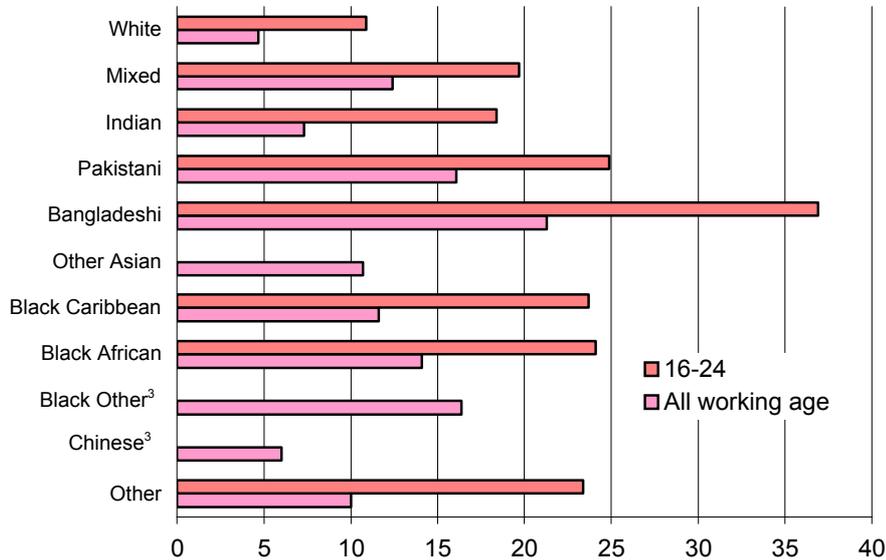


Figure 6

1 See Appendix, Part 4: Unemployment and Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey.

2 Males up to the age of 64, females up to the age of 59.

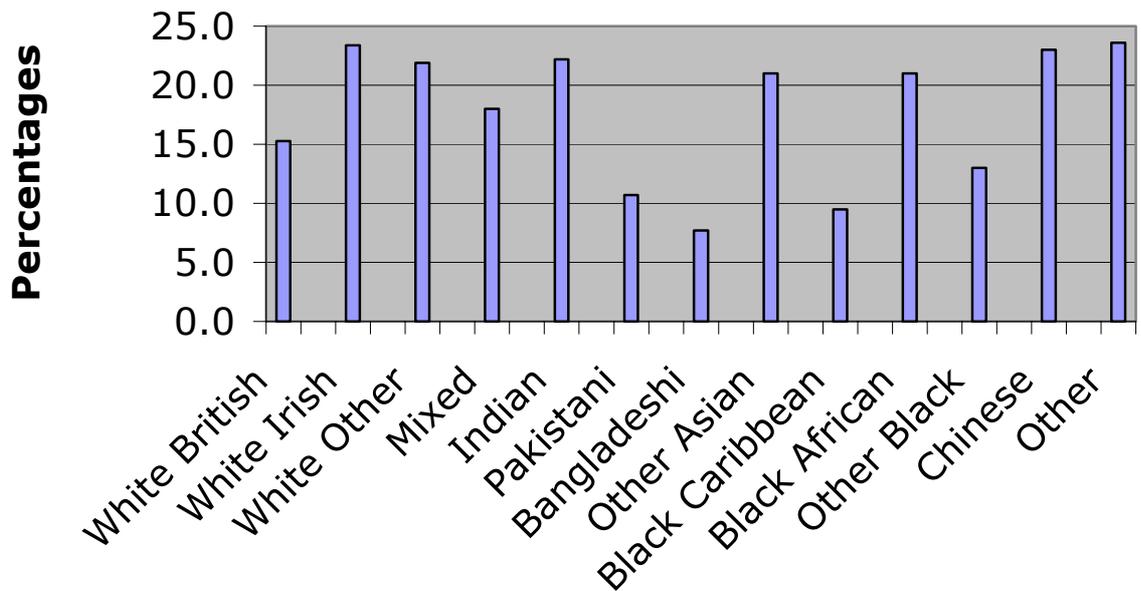
3 16-24 year olds, sample size too small for reliable estimates.

Source: Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

Human capital, non-material assets as education and skills have an impact on employment prospects. At the degree and equivalent level Indian and Other Asians, both of which have significant Muslim populations, out perform White British while Pakistanis and Bangladeshis languish at the bottom. A gender breakdown shows that across the board girls do better than boys (figure 7). Owen demonstrates that Bangladeshis are the most underrepresented group in higher education and that in spite of recent attempts to improve educational and training outcomes there is a considerable gap between Pakistanis and Bangladeshis on one hand and the White population or more successful Muslim groups (2000: 130) Indians and Other Asians have higher educational outcomes than British Whites but have higher unemployment and lower pay levels. Pakistanis and Bangladeshi educational experiences is ‘forked’ with significant number experiencing high and low outcomes but have higher unemployment rates and lower pay levels (TUC 2002). Heath argues that racial harassment and discrimination have impacted negatively on employment outcomes and provide a partial and important explanation for persistent disadvantage. He considers class origins to be an important factor in understanding disadvantage by Muslim groups in the labour market. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are mainly from rural and petty bourgeoisie backgrounds and this limits their chances of entering the salariat (Heath 2001: 128). Cultural and religious factors

may be determinant but difficult to account for statistically. Even after allowances for

Dergee or equivalent by ethnic group



education and residential patterns, Pakistani Muslims are three times more likely to be unemployed than Hindus and Indian Muslims are twice as likely to be jobless than Indian Hindus (PIU 2002).

Figure 7

Source: Annual Local Area Labour Forces Survey 2002, Office for National Statistics

The evidence indicates that Muslims are diverse groups with different, ethnic, class backgrounds and geographical locations. The main division that is emerging between different Muslim groups and within certain groups is that some groups mainly of middle class backgrounds are achieving high educational attainment leading into prosperous professions and becoming integrated into multicultural Britain. However the majority are working class in origin, with poor educational attainment and are subject to uncertain futures and social exclusion and marginalisation. This group is being identified erroneously as at risk of becoming ‘fundamentalist’ or rioters. Two factors are common to all Muslim groups, the first is that it a young population that is rapidly expanding as it matures the second is that irrespective of educational achievement and profession all Muslims face greater degree of discrimination on religious grounds than other minorities

Muslim Organisations

The construction of mosques is the most overt expression of Islam in Britain and they were constituted on a sectarian and ethnic basis representing the religious ethnic preferences of the mosque committees and constituencies. From a base figure of 13 mosques, in 1963, registered as places of worship with the Registrar General the rate of registration increased to nearly 7 a year from 1966 onwards. The upward curve in registration was a direct result in changes in the demographic profile resulting from the reunion of families as a consequence of the immigration legislation of the 1960s. Male migrant workers interest in religious rituals was minimal but the arrival of their families shifted the focus to religion. From the mid-1970s the annual rate of mosque registration more than doubled. Partly it was due to the expectation that such project would be financed by petro-dollars. In most case it was only the prestigious projects that received such infusions. This development, however, coincided with increasing familiarity of the local political, administrative structures and their ability to exploit them. (Nielsen 1987:387) Made easier by the institutionalization, no matter how small in numbers, of the communities 'secular' counterpart. The inter-meshing of religious and non-religious identifications facilitated the establishment of an Islamic presence on the local level. The growth of mosques has continued and there are now about 1000 mosques in the country (Konrad 2003) . Mosques provide Quran classes and religious instruction through which the majority of Muslim children pass through. Muslim organisations are led by the elder generations and there are very few avenues for Muslim youth to exert there influence or views on them.

Jorgen Nielsen points' out that Sunnis presence is predominant and within them there are three overlapping categories. Most local mosques are the product of local initiatives designed to serve local needs. This overlaps with Islamic movements originating from the South Asia, which emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century in reaction to British colonialism. Doctrinal rivalry, however, divides them into traditionalist Brelvis and revivalist trends. Thus while on one hand the *Islamic Times* (1992), a Brelvi paper, calls for Islamic unity it simultaneously castigates Whabbism and the danger it presents. Most mosques belong to the Brelvi persuasion and there are several currents within the Brelvi network. Pir Maroof Shah, a highly influential figure in the Bradford Council of Mosques, represents one important trend. Sufi Abdullah of Birmingham represents another and Sheikh Abdal Qadir Jilani is another *pir* who exerts influence in London as well as in the Manchester Islamic Association. There is also a nebulous development of the sufi *tariqas* which are difficult to detect due to overlapping with Brelvis. But the Naqshbandi, Qadiri and Chisti orders are active mainly among the youth and British converts.

There are several strands associated with revivalist currents such as the Tablighi Jamat, Deobandi and Ahl-i-Hadith. Important centres of the Deobandi sect are the Saddam Hussain Mosques, Birmingham, the Whitechapel Mosque, London, and a number of other mosques and institutions scattered throughout the country. The Tablighi Jamat's centre is the Darul Alum in Dewsbury while the Ahl-i-Hadith are highly organized around a small number of mosques focused on the Green Lane Mosque in Birmingham. The third category consists of elite organizations which aspire for national status. Some of them, at times, have been associated with the World Muslim League (Rabita) based in

Mecca. Organizations such as the UK Islamic Mission, the Islamic Foundation are part of the Jamat-i-Islami network, which originated from the Indian sub-continent. The core of the network is based on the UK Islamic Mission, which is associated with supplementary schools and community work. The different elements of the network are involved in promoting their views of Islam among the Muslim Community. The Islamic Foundation, Leicester founded in 1968 publishes Maudoodis works and Islamic literature particularly for schools. The Muslim educational Trust provides support services for Muslim education in the state system. Dawatul-Islam was formed as a separate organization for the Bangladeshi community in 1976 and works in closely with Jamat-i-Islami and Young Muslim Organization is the organizations youth wing while Muslim Women Association works on women' issues. In the Universities The Federation of Students' Islamic Societies represents the amalgamation of the various Islamic Societies and is linked to the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. (Nielsen 1992) Their influence, however, among students is being displaced by the emergence of Hibzi-ut-Tahrir, originating from the Middle East, and its splinter group Al Muhajiroun. These organisations are elitist in character and focus primarily middle class, professionals and university students. Their turnover is quite considerable and it appears that many Muslim students engage with these groups at some time at university but very few have a long-term engagement with them.

Moreover there are also a number of Muslim organizations of non-South Asian origin. The oldest being the Alawi sufi order among the Yemenis and Islamic education is imparted by cultural centres set up by the Yemen government. Turkish Cypriots have an ethno-cultural centres but mainland Turks have so far failed to duplicate this process. British converts have an association of British Muslims and they are also leading members of the Islamic Party which is a minor force in the Muslim community.

Umbrella Organisations

In opposition to these ethnic based Muslim organisations there emerged umbrella organizations which were a conscious attempt, only partially successful at best, to construct British Muslim organisations to present a common position to the authorities on the national level. The fact that these organizations were multi-ethnic in character as well as multi-denominational meant that they had to search for the lowest common denominators to forge unity. In practice the sectarian and personal rivalries which was so common among the various mosques and organizations were only partially overcome when they joined these organizations. A number of federations developed and it was common for their constituents to hold membership of several bodies. The first development was the Union of Muslim Organizations (UMO) which was established in the late 1970s. By the 1980s it was reduced to one of many organization vying to represent Muslim interests and its influence was restricted to the fringes of the main theological currents. The Council of Imams and Mosques was influential among the Brelvi currents. While the Council of Mosques had support among the revivalist currents.

The advantage that the Islamic leadership had over their 'secular' counterparts was that they were able to fill the political vacuum at the centre with the financial support they received from Middle Eastern and North African powers. The funding of the Union of

Muslim Organization came from the Saudi Arabian and Iraqi government. The Imam and Mosques Council was associated with the Islamic Call Society of Libya while the defunct Council of Mosques was a pro-Saudi federation. The Saudi's intervened directly through the London office of the World Muslim League, closely associated with the Saudi government, and via the director of the Islamic Cultural Centre at Regents Park, who is a Saudi diplomat. It was financially dependent on the House of Saud and its funding was cut, resulting in its collapse, due to the financial squeeze implemented by the Saudi government in the late 1980s. The Muslim Institute also was initially funded by Saudi Arabia and then indirectly by Iran. Generally speaking their dependence on Middle Eastern resources should not be misconstrued to suggest that they are agents of foreign powers or that these countries are gaining influence among Muslims in Britain. The financial support can be best described as seed corn funding to encourage like minded thinkers. Certainly there is evidence to suggest such organizations actually mitigate the external influence and are more sensitive to their constituency than patrons. For instance Zaki Badawi of the Imam and Mosques Council is quite independent from his Libyan patronage and when the Saudi's attempted to cash in on their investment during the Gulf War many rejected their exhortations to support them instead backed the opposition to the war. Even the firebrand Kalim Siddiqui, head of the Muslim Parliament, was very pragmatic in his relationship with Iran and responsive to his internal consistencies.

British Muslim identification is a contested category which attempts to subsume the multi-ethnic features of the community but only does this, with usually partial success, thorough contestation. The Rushdie crisis resulted in greater unity than any other moment in the community's history. There was unequivocal unanimity in the opposition to *The Satanic Verses*. The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA), was a loosely structured, confederation incorporating nearly all the various currents, the only exceptions being the Imam and Mosques Council and the Muslim Institute. It was also the first time such umbrella organizations established a presence on the ground. There are several reasons accounting for this success. The most significant factor was that the issue drew in sociological Muslims in to the fray. On one hand Islamic identity became the metaphor and idiom for social discontent particularly among the youth of Bradford and elsewhere. The intermeshing of identification resulted in the reimagining to take place which drew in 'secular' leadership. There are cases of councillors who openly professed socialist ideology yet become passionate campaigners against Rushdie. The Rushdie controversy was a watershed in that this was the first time that Muslim youth became involved in a Muslim campaign which also had a popular nature to it. The anti-war movements against the two Gulf Wars drew on the politicisation of youth that had taken place during *The Satanic Verses*.

The UKACIA unlike the other organisations was a confederation consisting of national and local bodies such as UMO and the Islamic Foundation or Associations of Schools, Islamia Schools Trust etc. The problem for UKACIA was that many of its members had their own aspirations to represent Muslims on the national stage. Ironically the convenor Iqbal Sacranie, the most active spokesman of the UKACIA was a member of UMO. Moreover the UKACIA lacks any formal constitution or structure and this was done to avoid leadership rivalry at a time when unity was of an essence. Another point of

difference was that it is made up of local mosque associations and national organizations and not individual mosques. It appears that taking the lead from the Bradford Council of Mosques, similar associations were formed representing individual mosques and associations.

The UKACIA was a significant event in that it laid the ground for the emergence of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB). Iqbal Sacranie who led the UKACIA became the secretary general of the MCB. It received encouragement from the Labour government led by Tony Blair the leadership who were keen to have an organisation of the Muslim community, which could liaise with the authorities and negotiate on behalf of the Muslim community. This process was assisted by the expansion of 'secular' politicians of Muslim origins that represented for Labour important constituencies that had significant Muslim populations. There are at least three Muslim Peers in the House of Lords, 5 Mps, 1 MEP and 217 councillors (Pedziwiatr 2003).

MCB like its forerunner UKACIA is confederation which was inaugurated - after 3 years of wide-ranging consultation - on November 23 1997 at the Brent Town Hall in Wembley by representatives of more than 250 Muslim organisations from all parts of Britain including Northern Ireland. However unlike the UKACIA MCB's approach to dealing with civic affairs is one of participation, not agitation. The MCB strives to deal with problems and influence policies and outcomes through principled and effective participation, in conformity with Islamic norms and standards. Among its aims are inter alia: to promote cooperation, consensus and unity on Muslim affairs in the UK, to encourage and strengthen all existing efforts being made for the benefit of the Muslim community, to work for a more enlightened appreciation of Islam and Muslims in the wider society, to establish a position for the Muslim community within British society that is fair and based on due rights, to work for the eradication of disadvantages and forms of discrimination faced by Muslims and to foster better community relations and work for the good of society as a whole. Over the last years the organisation has strengthened and it is now considered one of the most representative organisations in the country. There are currently about 350 institutions affiliated to it including mosques, education and charitable institutions, women and youth organisations and professional bodies, both national and regional. The composition of the membership is ethnically mixed. The organisation is opposed to labels such as 'ethnic minority' clearly favouring religious identification (Pedziwiatr 2003). However Pakistani leaders have complained that it is the largest Muslim community in the country but has only one representative on the governing council.

The retreat by UKACIA's successor the MCB from agitational politics provided the opportunity for the Muslim Association of Britain to step into the breach. The Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) was set up in 1997 by a group of Arab Muslims who felt largely left out in the country where Islam is dominated by people of South Asian origin. The MAB was 'established as an institution that attempts to fill in the gap in terms of Islamic *dawah* work in Britain where the call for a comprehensive Islam that encompasses all aspects of life is lacking. MAB tries to implement this through wisdom and good preaching'. To Make Muslims aware of their duties towards the society, within

which they are living, to promote an active role for the Muslim community in helping to solve the different problems of this society (like crime, drugs, unemployment, families' disintegration, etc.). The organisation which has about 1000 members co-organised demonstrations with the Stop the War coalition which in February 2003 culminated in a 2,000,000 people protesting against the war in London. The significance of this was that substantial numbers of Muslim youth were involved in the demonstrations and protests in opposition to the MCB which attempted to play a behind the scene role in lobbying the government to modify its position on Iraq. Anas Osama Altikriti, an executive Board Member in charge of Media and Public Relations is one of its most active members and is a candidate of the Respect, led by anti-war politician George Galloway, which is contesting local and European elections.

Islam Generation

The involvement of Muslim youth in *The Satanic Verses* agitation and anti-war movements in opposition to the two Gulf Wars raised the question, for outside observers, of whether the youth are showing explicit slogan of religiosity and moving towards 'fundamentalism' or the increasing influence of various Islamic organisation on them. Paradoxically the concern among the Muslim leadership is the opposite and their concern is that the young are becoming too westernised. This section explores development among the youth through the perspective of these two apparently contradictory perspectives. For the latter position there is an intellectual basis for this argument and this positions coincides with the modernization thesis in western social science that 'assimilation of cultural and religious identities into a national society was a necessary precondition for soci-economic and political development. it was assumed, modernity had eroded communal identities in favour of citizenship and loyalty to the state'. Glavanis challenges social sciences to 'rethink the long-standing theoretical and conceptual models regarding the relationship between the "new" ethnic (religious) identities and citizenship/nationhood. (Glavanis, 1999). He adopts Hall's argument that a new politics of representation has emerged which has to do with diasporic experiences ' and the consequences which this has for the process of unsettling, recombination, hybridisation and cut-and-mix' (Hall 1992). The strength of this approach Eade (1996) argues is that Hall's sensitivity to post-structuralist themes allows for the examination of new modes of representation which anthropologist have paid little attention to date. Gilroy used this argument of hybrid identification as way of levering open space for a secular and radical politics. Several writers have challenge this assumption that new ethnicities are natural allies of the left. Both Van der Veer and Samad have argued that Muslim identification is not necessarily 'fundamentalist' and that Muslim in the diaspora religious ideas are hybrid and syncretic as that of cosmopolitan, secular intellectuals. Claire Alexander (2000) develops this argument further by introducing the concept gender, in her case specifically masculinity, in trying to understand new forms of representation among Bangladeshi youth. It is using this framework of masculinity that hybrid identification among the young is examined. In the case of young men we look at the way Pakistani/Bangladeshi notion of masculinity are reworked in the local urban context and for young women reimagining of identification becomes a context within which alternative strategies are used to lever open space.

Generation is an ambiguous and ambivalent category. Community opinion, however, does vary over age range and hence community understanding on issues such as forced marriage does vary. As for the category of youth, in spite of the ambivalence over its definition, it is accepted that the period referred to as 'youth' is extended by schooling and unemployment. Youths are active agents and not just victims. Amit-Talai and Wulff argue that young people negotiate cultural processes – they do not simply react to them (1995). Yet, as much as young people try to negotiate generational differences, there is a countervailing pull where adults try to re-enculturate them. Therefore, spaces that are levered open are being closed, successfully and unsuccessfully, in a process that makes explicit hierarchy and claims to leadership. Introducing the variable of generation indicates that it is incorrect to assume that ethnicity produces a consistent and single opinion on any issue. This is especially true concerning such contentious issues as riots, anti-war mobilisations and forced marriages, which specifically have a disproportionate effect or concern for the younger generations.

Muslim youth have bifurcated into two trends one epitomised by middle class, educated Indians who integrated successfully into the multicultural discourse in Britain and the other represented by the majority of Pakistani/Bangladeshis who are working-class, and have lower educational attainment and are stereotyped as rioters and fundamentalists. The latter are influenced by two discourses, social exclusion and racism that intersect to produce the context that the Muslim working class communities are located in, and are external inputs that fuel social change among the young. First is the discourse of social exclusion, which impinges on the lives of the majority of the community. The working class characteristics of Muslim communities mean that social ills associated with deindustrialisation have had a profound impact. Indices of social stress such as unemployment – in particular youth unemployment, health problems for the long-term unemployed, inadequate housing – both overcrowding and poor quality, low educational achievement and rising crime and drug abuse are an all too familiar pattern which can be found among the white working class located on housing estates in Britain and Europe. Like the white working class, Muslim youths are becoming a disarticulated, fractionalised and marginalised social formation, but so far are held back from going too far down that road by strong family and community ties. The boundary of social exclusion has a profound destabilising effect on any community, and this disruptive input is compounded by the other discourse of exclusion based on race. The latter exaggerates the class disadvantages that these groups face.

Religion and Culture

Differences emerge between elder and younger generation on the significance of culture and religion. This divergence between culture and region in the younger generation can be attributed to interplay of British education, on the cultural and nationalist heritage of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis and the variations in heritage means that the resultant product of this synergy differs between the two groups. Islam is central to Pakistani nationalism and throughout the 1980s and 1990s the state played a major role in the

reassertion of a particular Islamic identification. Muslim Punjabis read and write in Urdu but traditions and cultural practises are transmitted orally in various Punjabi dialects. In the diaspora linguistic identification becomes weak. Urdu is made available by some local authorities but it is not the mother tongue of most British Pakistanis. Among Bangladeshis, linguistic nationalism is the primary feature of national identification. This nationalism emerged during the 1950s when the region was a part of Pakistan in opposition to the Islamic nationalism propounded by the Pakistani state. Bangla is a written language and is taught in mother tongue classes supported in the United Kingdom by some local authorities. Among the elder generation of both Mirpuris and Sylhetis illiteracy is high, making cultural transmission from one generation to another problematic.

The process of schooling in the United Kingdom has resulted in different worldviews, as well as a nurturing of critical and rational thinking among young Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. The vehicle for this transformation is the linguistic change that has taken place. Modood (1997) and Afshar (1989) confirm this and younger generation are experiencing language loss. While older generations speak in Urdu, Bangla or regional dialects such as Mirpuri or Sylheti, the younger generation consumes and produces media primarily in the English language (Samad 1999). Young people do use South Asian languages and paradoxically use it as a symbol of ethnic solidarity (Saifullah Khan 1982) but they are considerably less proficient in these languages than in English. This linguistic gap is reinforced by the fact that the majority of the youth, those born or raised here, can read and write only in English while their parents, if literate, mainly use Urdu or standard Bangla. This is far more the case for Pakistani youth than their Bangladeshi peers as Punjabi is not a written language. The oral traditions, customs and religious practices are, at best, only partially transmitted and this produces difference between generations in Islamic understanding and identity. The rational worldview, cultivated by education, is complemented by the rational character of modernist interpretations of Islam, which is written in English. This literature is accessed through religious studies at school and religious activists and is freely available in certain bookshops and supermarkets. The move away from oral traditions as the prime source of religious information means that customs and rituals, regulating the lives of the elder generations, do not get effectively transferred.

Complementing this development is the greater emphasis on Islam rather than regional (Mirpuri or Sylheti) identities among many members of the younger generation. As South Asian linguistic skills are lost, identification with Pakistan or Bangladesh - countries that young people may only briefly visit - becomes less significant and Muslim, as an identity, becomes more important. However, it must be emphasised that this process is more pronounced among the Pakistanis than Bangladeshis due to their divergent heritage. The emergence of Muslim identification is not related to an increase in religiosity or to the rise of 'Islamic fundamentalism' but becomes prominent, paradoxically, as people become British. It is, however, suggested that middle class youth, because they retain greater linguistic skills and have better familiarity with Pakistan and Bangladesh due to greater opportunity of travel, have a stronger association with South Asian identifications (Samad 1999).

The other major impact on young people is education, because of this and the fact they are brought up here, being British is not simply about citizenship, as it is for their older generations, it is part of the cultural make. Many of the youth, particularly the young men, are interacting with popular culture, rap artist such as Fun[^]Da[^]Mental and Lala Man, some of their members are or were from Bradford, are examples of how they are integrating in main stream developments. Paradoxically members of Fun[^]Da[^]Mental declare that they are militant Muslims influenced by black nationalism and anti-racism. Other aspects of the popular culture are through dress, use of sub-culture idiom, obsession with cars etc.

Music that is inextricably part of popular culture and yet exhibit their Islamic identification. What this shows is that there are no mutually exclusive categories of popular culture, Muslim, women but rather overlapping and intertwining positions that eclectically select parts to create a hybridisation of identification (Sharma, Hutnyk and Sharma 1996: 52) Identifications are not discrete and mutually exclusive categories but are but overlap and this creates new forms of identification. Locality is another factor, which separates the younger generation from their elders. While the older generation accept that they are perceived to be from Yorkshire/East End through residence, the youth have broad Yorkshire/East End accents, irrespective of whether they are speaking in English or Urdu/Bangla. However, there is a great limitation to subscribing to local identifications as this the territory that is being increasingly occupied by the far right. There is also a major caveat to the argument suggesting the integration of Pakistani/Bangladeshi youth in to British society as Muslims. This drift is slowed down by the trickle of trans-continental marriage, which takes place every year. This continuing top up of locality of origin counteracts the tendency for the youth to identify themselves as Muslim (Samad and Eade 2001).

Here we are looking at the majority of young men, from the working class, who are negotiating space for generation debates within a framework broadly defined by the elder generations of the Pakistani/Bangladeshi community. It is about creating space from within. Research evidence suggested strongly that there was a conflation of rural Pakistani/Bangladeshi masculinity with English working class masculinity. This is more pronounced among those living in the north, which is more conservative than the working class behaviour in the south of England (Ali, 1992). A major characteristics of young men was how they adopting the behaviours and norms of the white working class. They spend a lot of their time 'hanging out' on the streets, this partly due to overcrowding and they participate in various aspects associated with popular culture and are as quick to use violence as their white counterparts. Unlike their elder generation Pakistani young men not only believe but also feel that they are British and are not prepared to take the abuse or be subject to violence in the meek manner that their elders were prepared to accept because they felt they were interloper who did not belong. When compounded by the frustration as a result of social and racial exclusion we have as one observer commented 'angry, arrogant young men' with no idea why they are angry. In this context there is a overlapping of being 'hard' and 'izzat' as both are related to notions of masculinity. The propensity to violence becomes inherent in this situation and in areas of high

concentration such as Manningham/Burnley violence against white residents is rising and cause for concern. As we outlined earlier that Muslim identification has become prominent due to the linguistic shift-taking place it becomes understandable why young men have a propensity to use Islamic symbols and metaphors justify their rebellious nature. Many associated with various groups such as Ahle-e-Hadith, Tablighi Jamat, Jamat-i-Islami or Hibzi-ut-Tahrir with out showing signs of religiosity. In some cases young men were far from a paragon of virtue, have so little knowledge of Islam that they did not know who or what were Shias, have criminal antecedents but yet identifying with a religious organisation. Rebellious young men would either associate with a group because of the shock values or out of territorial loyalty. Only middle class or educated men were the main areas of potential recruits to these organisations. So working class men would claim to be associated with Hibzi-ut-Tahrir or daub wall with slogans such as ' Hamas Rules OK ' because they know only that it is the most militant of the various organisations and had greater shock value. Similarly it was also apparent in the mobilizations against the *Satanic Verses* and the Gulf Wars that the youth were pushing the first generation leadership not to back down and compromise (Samad 1996, 1997).

Clearly the use of religious symbols and metaphors has entered the repertoire of young men who are using it express their anger in the name of community, which now is also being combined with notions of territoriality. This behaviour is similar trait found among equivalent groups among the white communities and is not surprising if large numbers of young men have now where to go except hang around on streets in small groups. In this process these young men stake out territorial claims vis a vis each other. The same argument of defending the community but in practise the articulation of territorial control was at the heart of the Oldham, Burnley and Bradford riots. Rival Muslim groups suppressed their differences and resisted attacks by White youth who were inspired by the far right British National Party. In Burnley (likewise in Oldham but with Pakistani youth) over 200 Bangladeshi and White youth armed with brick and hammers clashed in the town and petrol bombs were thrown at pubs, shops were looted and several cars burnt. It should be noted that when the police intervened the Muslim and White youth disengaged and them reformed to battle with the police. Bradford the violence in 2001 was slightly different as it was clash mainly between the Pakistani youth and the police. The rumour that the BNP were going to demonstrate and launch violent attacks in the town was the trigger that led to the mobilisation of young men and through inappropriate police response triggered of clashes between the youth and the police. In all the three cases the frustration and anger of the youth boiled over and they bypassed the elder leadership and took matters into their own hands. The clear difference that emerges between Muslim youth and their white counter parts is that while both present fractured and disarticulated politics of marginality the Pakistani/Bangladeshi youth have still some notion of community mobilise around.

The young women's agenda was not the same as their starting point was quite different. While the majority of working class young men from Mirpuri/Sylheti background accepted explicitly the patriarchal structures young women, from similar background, main concern was how they could challenge this from within. The question for them was how could they contest patriarchal norms, introduce notions of gender equality and create

space to make their own decisions concerning dress, codes, education and marriage. For them scriptural Islam becomes emancipatory from customary practices. They were aware for instance in the case of marriage that young women were eloping, with their boyfriends, but were concerned that such act would lead to exclusion from the family which would be even more threatening if things didn't work out. Young women didn't want to burn bridges and end up isolated in society that they were alienated from. This major concern redirects the energies of many into trying to find alternative strategies for leveraging open space for gender and generational debates. The way they are doing this is to use textual Islam, which is relatively more liberal than oral traditions and customs. This did not necessarily mean that the young women became more religious, even some became pious but it was part of strategy for generational social change. The linguistic shift that is taking place means that they are accessing Islamic texts in English and critically evaluating customary practices in light of the texts. A major concern was the conservatism of traditional practices, which was challenged by using feminist arguments within an Islamic framework that allowed concepts of patriarchy and sisterhood to be deployed. Textual Islam treats women on an equal basis and gave them respect as long as they conformed to the religious injunctions concerned with modesty. Traditional customary practices were thus challenged such as caste/family traditions, and differential treatment between boys and girls. As one respondent put it my parents indoctrinated me with notions of caste and now I have got it out of my head. They also complained of the preferential treatment of young men and how the elder generation interpreted Islam in a manner, which degraded the position of women. This led young women to distrust religious leader who simply perpetuate customary practices that denigrate women and are not based on Islamic principles.

Marriage was a major concern for young women. . By resorting to textual Islam they can argue that a woman has the right to marry who she wants and cannot be forced into a marriage. Arranged marriages were first differentiated from forced marriages and there was a general recognition and acceptance that biraderi, caste, family and tribe were factors that need to be considered. Most of the respondents wanted to marry someone from a similar background, so that there would not be any incompatibility in terms of customs, but wanted a clear say in the matter. There was a minority who was ready to contravene conventional approaches to marriage. Some would rail against the notion that there should be caste compatibility in the marriage and were ready to challenge the norms. Others would say that they had no choice and that some had already been selected for them. The majority, however, were not prepared to be alienated from their parents for the sake of a 'love-marriage' what they wanted was to choose and their parents to approve.

Dress and education were the other issues that women used Islamic texts to persuade their parents to change from their customary practices. Many were under familial pressure to wear the *shalwar kameez/sari*; this was ascribed to patriarchal domination, which was rationalised by the religious leaders. The women complained how the *maulvis* would pontificate about what women could wear or not and what they could do. However they failed to criticise men for misbehaving, having sexual liaisons, drinking or dressing immodestly. The women countered by stating that Islamic injunctions only required them

to dress modestly and as long as they conformed they could wear anything. Thus young women would alternate between the traditional *shalwar kameez/sari* and a long skirt or trouser and those who were more pious would add a headscarf to their sartorial attire. Education was also a major issue with a minority of parents not prepared to continue their daughters education after sixteen or allow them on to higher education in particular going to university and wanted to marry them off. Young women were able to persuade their parents, by using Islamic injunction that privileged the search for knowledge and this was legitimate even in a mixed-sex environment as long as they dressed and behaved modestly. This allowed them to delayed getting married until at least they finished their education. Other parents felt that going to work was not appropriate and again they would be persuaded because there is nothing in the Quran, which prevents them from working.

As we can see young women resort to feminist argument within an Islamic framework to lever open space for gender and generational debate. The majority of young women have no contact with Islamist organisations they few that do are usually students or graduates. The Islamic organisation which are relatively more liberal on women's issue such as the Young Muslims, the youth wing of Jamat-I-Islamic, for these reasons attract women supporters in greater numbers than organisations that are more conservative on these issues. Misogynist interpretations that are prevalent in organizations such as Hizbi-ut-Tahrir results in very few women being involved with them. The scope for this as Ashgar Engineer argues is limited. The authoritarian nature of many these interpretations mean that their limited mileage in this debate which has only relevance because of the even more androcentric and restrictive customary practises among Pakistanis of a rural origin (Engineer 1996).

Conclusion

Muslim population in Britain is a diverse population made up of a number of ethnicities and the White population. Only recently with the 2001 Census is it possible to make an accurate assessment of the aggregate population of Muslims or estimate the number in terms of ethnic groups. South Asians are the largest Muslim minorities and Pakistanis are clearly the largest Muslim groups in the country. London has the largest concentration of Muslims but substantial numbers are found in the West Midlands, the North West and West Yorkshire. One common factor is that Muslims are very young populations that are rapidly growing. Indians are probably the most mature population and Bangladeshis and Africans have the largest number of young people. In terms of educational attainment and employment prospective there is a clear diverge that Indians are middle class and more likely to be university educated professional while Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are primarily working-class and employed in semi and unskilled work. Consequently unemployment is considerably higher among the later than the former and more pronounced among all young Muslims in general

Muslim organisations started off as primarily as mosques organised on ethnic and sectarian lines representing country of origins of the Mosque committees and one important function they served was to provide religious instructions to the Muslim youth. The leadership of these mosques and of umbrella organisations was primarily by elder

males. Umbrella organisation depart in one important feature from mosques in that they are not ethnic based and attempt to elaborate and valorise a British Muslim identity. Muslim youth became involved in extra-parliamentary activities that was conducted by some of these organisations and the first evidence of Muslim youth becoming involved in mass Islamic politics was with the Rushdie controversy and later with the protest against the two Gulf Wars. Up to this point Muslim youth active engagement with Islamic organisations was minimal.

The involvement of Muslim youth in mass mobilisations cannot necessarily be attributed to either the increasing influence of Islamic organisations or increasing religiosity occurring among the youth. There is congruence between the emergence of British Muslim organisation on one hand and generational shift in identity among the Muslim youth. The slide from ethnic identity where Islam is implicit to Muslim identity where ethnicity becomes implicit is linked to loss of proficiency in ethnic languages and the assertion that they are primarily British. Umbrella organisation's efforts to create British Muslim identity on the national level resonates with identity shifts taking place on the personal level. However there is no evidence to suggest that working class Muslims are more religious or more familiar about Islam than their parents. There is an interaction with popular white working class culture, which is modified to conform and become acceptable to the Muslim community. There are gender difference and masculinity is an issue and violence is not unusual as in their white counterpart but while Muslims still retains some notions of community which is used to rationale rioting either against White gangs or the police, White modes of violence tends to be individualistic. Young Muslim women embrace textual interpretations of Islam as emancipatory ideology to disengage with cultural practise that their families conform with. Freedom of dress, marriage, partner, education and work are the main areas that Islamic text read in English are used to challenge family practise form their parents country of origin. Young working class Muslims are rapidly becoming British and demonstrating characteristics that are very similar to the White working class.

References

- Afshar, H. (1989) 'Gender roles and the 'moral economy of kin' among Pakistani women in West Yorkshire', *New Community*, Vol.15 No.2.
- Alexander, C. (1998) Re-imagining the Muslim Community 'Special Issue on Muslims in Europe', *Innovation: European Journal of Social Science*, 10(4).
- Ali, Y. (1992) 'Muslim Women and the Politics of ethnicity and culture in Northern England', in Sahgal, G. & Yuval-Davis, N. (eds) *Refusing Holy Orders: Women and fundamentalism in Britain*, Virago, London.
- Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey (2002), Office for National Statistics
- Department of Works and Pensions (2004) Households Below Average Incomes 2002/3, Crown Copy Right
- General Register Office, Scotland <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk>
- Eade, John (1996) 'Ethnicity and the Politics of Cultural Difference: An Agenda for the 1990s' in Terrance Ranger, Yunas Samad, and Ossie Stuart eds. *Culture, Identity and Politics: Ethnic Minorities in Britain*, Aldershot, Avebury.
- Engineer, Asghar Ali, (1996) *The Rights of Women in Islam*, C. Hurst, London.
- Gilroy, P., *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, 1987 ///.
- Hall, Stuart (1992) "New Ethnicities" in Donald, J. and Rattansi, A. eds. *'Race', Culture and Difference*, London, Sage.
- Heath, A. (2001) *Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market: Interim Analytical Report*, Performance and Innovation Unit, Cabinet Office.
- Glavanis.P.M. Political Islam within Europe: A Contribution to an Analytical Framework, 'Special Issue on Muslims in Europe', *Innovation: European Journal of Social Science*, 10(4) 1998
- Islamic Times* Vol. 7, no 9 July 1992.
- Modood, T., Berthoud, R., et al (eds) (1997) *Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Disadvantage*. The Forth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities, Policy studies Institute, London.
- Nielsen, J. (1987) 'Muslims in Britain: Searching for an Identity.' *New Community*.
- Nielsen, Jorgen (1992) *Muslims in Western Europe*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- Office for National Statistics <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>
- Ordinance Survey Crown Copyright 2003
- Owen, D. Green, A. et al (2000) *Minority Ethnic Participation and Achievements in Education, Training and the Labour Market*, Race Research for the Future, Research Report No 225, DfEE.
- Pedziwiatr K. (2003) An Overview of Research on Muslims in Europe, unpublished paper.
- Saifullah-Khan, Verity (1976) 'Pakistanis in Britain: Perceptions of a Population', *New Community*, 5 (3).
- Samad, Y. and Eade, J. (2003) *Community Perceptions of Forced Marriage* Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London.
- Samad, Y. (1998) Media and Muslim Identity: Intersections of Generation and Gender. 'Special Issue on Muslims in Europe', *Innovation: European Journal of Social Science*, 10(4) .

- Samad, Y. (1997) 'Ethnicity, Racism and Islam: Identity and Gender and Generational Debates' in *Multiculturalism, Muslims and the Media: Pakistanis in Bradford*, unpublished manuscript produced as part of the research conducted for the ESRC (Award number L126251039).
- Samad Y. (1997) 'The Plural Guises of Multiculturalism: Conceptualising a fragmented Paradigm', in *Politics of Multiculturalism*, edited by T. Modood and P. Werbner, Zed Press, 1997
- Samad, Y. (1996) 'The Politics of Islamic Identity among Bangladeshis and Pakistanis in Britain' in T. Ranger, Y. Samad, O. Stuart (ed.) *Culture Identity and Politics: Ethnic Minorities in Britain*, Avebury, 1996
- Sanjay, S., Hutnyk, J. & Sharma, A. (eds) (1996) *Dis-Orienting Rhythms: the Politics of the New Asian Dance Music*, Zed Books, London.
- Twomey, B. 2001, Labour Market Participation of Ethnic Groups, Labour Market Division, Office for National Statistics
- TUC Report (2002) *Black and Underpaid: How Black Workers Lose Out on Pay*, TUC website
- Veer, van der P. (1997) 'The enigma of arrival': Hybridity and Authenticity in the Global space' in *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-racism*, (eds) Werbner, P. & Modood, T., Zed Book, London.