

AT HOME IN
EUROPE



Muslims in Leicester



OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE

Muslims in Leicester

At Home in Europe Project

 Open Society Institute

New York – London – Budapest

Publishing page

OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE

Október 6. Street 12.
H-1051 Budapest
Hungary

400 West 59th Street
New York, NY 10019
USA

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION

100 Cambridge Grove
W6 0LE London
UK



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AT HOME IN EUROPE PROJECT

ISBN Number: 978-1-936133-13-0

Website

www.soros.org/initiatives/home

Cover Photograph by Ben Ravilious

Cover design by Ahlgrim Design Group

Layout by Q.E.D. Publishing

Printed in Hungary

Printed on CyclusOffset paper that was produced from 100% recycled fibres.

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OSI Mission

The Open Society Institute works to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens.

Open societies are characterized by the rule of law; respect for human rights, minorities, and a diversity of opinions; democratically elected governments; market economies in which business and government are separate; and a civil society that helps keep government power in check.

To achieve our mission, we seek to shape public policies that assure greater fairness in political, legal, and economic systems and safeguard fundamental rights.

We implement initiatives to advance justice, education, public health, and independent media.

We build alliances across borders and continents on issues such as corruption and freedom of information. Working in every part of the world, the Open Society Institute places a high priority on protecting and improving the lives of people in marginalized communities.

Acknowledgements

This city report was prepared as part of a series of monitoring reports titled ‘Muslims in EU cities’. The series focuses on eleven cities in the European Union with significant Muslim populations. Within the reports, select neighbourhoods in the cities were chosen for more in-depth study which are: Slotervaart, Amsterdam; Borgerhout, Antwerp; Kreuzberg, Berlin; Nørrebro, Copenhagen; Hamburg-Mitte, Hamburg; Evington, Spinney Hills, Stoneygate, Leicester; 3rd Arrondissement, Marseille; 18th Arrondissement, Paris; Feijenoord, Rotterdam; Järvafältet, Stockholm; the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

The reports have been prepared by the At Home in Europe Project of the Open Society Institute (OSI) in cooperation with national experts. The At Home in Europe Project would like to acknowledge the primary role of the following individuals in researching and drafting this report.

Research Team (Policy Research Centre)

Dilwar Hussain

Research Coordinator

Sughra Ahmed

Samina Ali

Rabiha Hannan

Naved Siddiqi

Under the supervision of the Research Coordinator, the interviews were conducted by a team based in Leicester comprising of:

Batool Al-Toma

Khadija Gerardo

Sabiah Ashraf

Umar Gerardo

Julie Aylward

Shelima Hussain

Tony Aylward

Khadija Ravat

Asma Dassu

Riaz Ravat

Tove Delanius

Salma Ravat

We would like to thank Tariq Modood, Professor of Sociology, Politics and Public Policy and Director of the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship at the University of Bristol who reviewed a draft version of this report.

A number of the stakeholders listed in the appendices reviewed the draft sections of this report relevant to them, for which we are appreciative. We would also like to thank everyone that contributed to the report by being available for interviews, providing information or research, or reviewing and critiquing drafts of the report.

In April 2009, OSI held a closed roundtable in Leicester in order to invite expert critique and commentary on the draft report. We are grateful to the many participants who generously offered their time and expertise. These included representatives of minority groups, civil society organizations, faith communities, policy makers, statutory agencies and relevant experts. We would also like to thank the team at the Fatima Women's Network for organising and hosting the roundtable meeting.

A number of individuals also agreed to be interviewed by the OSI Communications team to whom we offer thanks.

The At Home in Europe Project has final responsibility for the content of the report including any errors or misrepresentations.

OSI Team

Nazia Hussain (At Home in Europe Project)	<i>Director</i>
Tufyal Choudhury (At Home in Europe Project)	<i>Senior Policy Advisor</i>
Klaus Nielsen (At Home in Europe Project)	<i>Advocacy Officer</i>
Hélène Irving (At Home in Europe Project)	<i>Programme Coordinator</i>
Andrea Gurubi Watterson (At Home in Europe Project)	<i>Programme Officer</i>
Csilla Tóth (At Home in Europe Project)	<i>Programme Assistant</i>
Katy Negrin	<i>Consultant Editor</i>

Preface

A central belief of the Open Society Institute (OSI) is that all people in an open society count equally and should enjoy equal opportunities. OSI works to mitigate discrimination, in particular harm done to minorities through discriminatory treatment, and to ensure that access to equal opportunities for all is an integral part of social inclusion policies of governments.

The At Home in Europe project of the Open Society Institute focuses on monitoring and advocacy activities that examine the position of minorities in a changing Europe. Through its research and engagement with policymakers and communities, the project explores issues involving the political, social, and economic participation of Muslims and other marginalized groups at the local, national, and European levels.

Whether citizens or migrants, native born or newly arrived, Muslims are a growing and varied population that presents Europe with one of its greatest challenges: how to ensure equal rights in an environment of rapidly expanding diversity. Europe is no longer – if it ever was – a mono-cultural and mono-faith continent; its emerging minority groups and their identities as Europeans are an essential part of the political agenda and discourse.

Through its reports on Muslims in EU cities, the At Home in Europe project examines city and municipal policies that have actively sought to understand Muslim communities and their specific needs. Furthermore, the project aims to capture the type and degree of engagement policymakers have initiated with their Muslim and minority constituents by highlighting best practices in select western European cities. An underlying theme is how Muslim communities have themselves actively participated in tackling discrimination and whether the needs of specific groups warrant individual policy approaches in order to overcome barriers to equal opportunities.

The city reports build upon OSI's earlier work on minority protection, in particular the EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program reports on the situation of Muslims in France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. All of these studies make it clear that further research is needed. The limited data currently available on Europe's Muslim populations are extrapolated from ethnic and country of origin background. This lack of precise data limits the possibilities for creating nuanced, specific policies on the most relevant issues for Muslims, and developing sensitive and integrated social inclusion policies.

The At Home in Europe report series includes an overview and individual reports on 11 cities in seven European countries. The project selected the cities on the basis of literature reviews conducted in 2006, taking into account population size, diversity, and the local political context. All 11 city reports were prepared by teams of local experts on the basis of the same methodology to allow for comparative analysis.

Each city report includes detailed recommendations for improving the opportunities for full participation and inclusion of Muslims in wider society while enabling them to preserve cultural, linguistic, religious, and other community characteristics important to their identities. These recommendations, directed primarily at specific local actors, will form the basis for OSI advocacy activities.

Muslims in Leicester

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Definitions and Terminology

Discrimination: The term “discrimination” is used throughout this report; it includes harassment and direct and indirect discrimination. Articles 1 and 2 of the EU Race Directive expressly prohibit both “direct” and “indirect” discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs “where one person has been treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on grounds of racial or ethnic origin”. According to the Directive, indirect discrimination occurs “where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage when compared with other persons unless that provision, criterion, or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary”.

Ethnic or racial profiling: Describes the use by law enforcement officers of race, ethnicity, religion or national origin rather than individual behaviour as the basis for making decisions about who has been or may be involved in criminal activity.

Ethnicity: Membership of a group which may share language, cultural practices, religion or other common identity based on a shared history.

Harassment is conduct which creates “an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment”.

Integration: The definition used in this report is “a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the European Union”, as stated in the Common Basic Principles (CBPs). In the Explanation to the EU Common Basic Principles on Integration 2004, “Integration is a dynamic long-term and continuous two-way process of mutual accommodation, not a static outcome. It demands the participation not only of immigrants and their descendants but of every resident. The integration process involves adaptation by immigrants, both men and women, who all have rights and responsibilities in relation to their new country of residence. It also involves the receiving society, which should create opportunities for the immigrants’ full economic, social, cultural and political participation. Accordingly, Member States are encouraged to consider and involve both immigrants and national citizens in integration policy, and to communicate clearly their mutual rights and responsibilities.”

Islamophobia: Irrational hostility, fear and hatred of Islam, Muslims and Islamic culture, and active discrimination towards this group as individuals or collectively.

Marginalised: Marginalised groups can be part of an ethnic or racial minority and a subcategory of minority groups. They can also be characterised and distinguished from other groups by suffering socio-economic disadvantage and a powerless position in society or in a group. This report defines marginalised groups as those who experience social exclusion, be they part of a minority or majority group in society.

Migrant: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) definition refers to a “person who has moved temporarily or permanently to a country where he or she was not born and has acquired significant social ties to this country”. This includes students and children, as well as family dependants. A distinction is made in which this term does not include asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons. However, in some countries “migrant” also refers to a person born in the country to which their parents migrated to.

Minority: Under international law, there is no agreed definition of this term. Some countries define a minority as that which is recognised as such by national laws. In this report, the term refers to ethnic and religious groups who are not the dominant group in society.

Muslim: Refers to a member of a diverse group, and although there are common belief systems and possibly experiences as Muslims, this report relies on its Muslim respondents’ identification of themselves as Muslims. Furthermore, this term includes Muslims who view themselves as Muslims in a cultural rather than a religious context.

Nationality: Country of citizenship.

Non-Muslim: For the purpose of this report, a non-Muslim is anyone who does not define himself or herself as belonging to the Islamic faith.

Race: The term “race” is used in the context of discrimination on the grounds of race, which occurs where people face discrimination because of their presumed membership of groups identified by physical features such as skin colour, hair or physical appearance. References to race in this report should not be taken to suggest that there are distinct human races.

Racism: Where used in this report, “racism” will be defined as “racial discrimination” which according to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination “shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction of preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social or cultural or any other field of public life”. Racial discrimination can also be based on markers of visible difference due to membership of a cultural group.

Social inclusion: The provision and promotion of equal rights and access in education, employment and decision-making. Overcoming discrimination is implicit throughout policies and practices to realise inclusion.

Third-country national: An individual who is not a national of an EU Member State.

List of Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BME	Black, Minority and Ethnic
CBPs	EU Common Basic Principles on Integration 2004
CREAM	Curriculum Reflecting Experiences of African Caribbean and Muslim Pupils
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EU	European Union
FMO	Federation of Muslim Organisations
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GP	General Practitioner
I&DeA	Improvement and Development Agency
IAG	Independent Advisory Group
ILR	Indefinite leave to remain
ISB	Islamic Society of Britain
JSP	Job Service Partnership
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LAYA	Leicester Asian Youth Association
LCST	Leicester Complementary Schools Trust
LEA	Local Education Authority
LMAG	Leicester Multicultural Advisory Group
LMAG	Leicester Multicultural Advisory Group
LSOA	Lower Super Output Area
MBCOL	Muslim Burial Council of Leicestershire
MMF	Mainstreaming Moderation Forum

NHS	National Health Service
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PLASC	Pupil Level Annual School Census
RASAP	Refugee and Asylum Seekers Advice Project
SACRE	Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education
SAEMP	Somali Afro European Media Project
SDSA	School Development Support Agency
SOA	Super Output Area

Executive Summary

Leicester has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the United Kingdom (UK) outside London. The Muslim communities in Leicester hail from predominantly Indian (mainly Gujarati), Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali and Turkish backgrounds. According to the 2001 Census,¹ Leicester's population was 279,921, of which just over 30,000 (11 per cent) were Muslims, making them the third-largest faith group in Leicester after Christians and Hindus.

In 2003, Leicester, which is predicted to become the country's first "plural city" with no overall ethnic majority, was awarded Beacon status for community cohesion.² The city has instituted many positive, effective practices in support of its multicultural ethos. All the Asian religious communities – Hindu, Sikh and Muslims – have a significant presence, and individuals from these communities play important roles in the economic and political life of the city. Seventeen of the 54 councillors for the city (31 per cent), including the previous lord mayor, are of ethnic-minority background.

Despite such positive examples, the city shows signs of tensions that cannot be ignored. These include the differing levels of socio-economic deprivation in areas within the city; simmering tension between particular minority groups; underachievement and unemployment among Muslims; and the increasing economic divide between the affluent and not so affluent.

This report examines the situation and everyday lives of Muslims³ living in Leicester.⁴ The most detailed study of Muslims in the city to date, it provides views from diverse Muslims on their neighbourhoods and local area relations and the influence of the media on people's perceptions of Muslims. The study places a particular emphasis on the engagement and political participation of Muslims and on public policies aimed at improving integration and social cohesion. It also seeks to understand whether the concerns highlighted by Muslims differ from those of other minority groups and whether common ground exists in the experiences of Muslims and non-Muslims.

¹ Census 2001, Office for National Statistics (ONS).

² Beacon awards are annual themed awards from the central government that recognise local governments' excellence in improving the quality of life for their residents and communities by delivering services that are innovative and visionary.

³ The research does not provide a definition of "Muslim" in terms of religious practice or belief, but accepted respondents' and participants' self-definition as Muslims.

⁴ The first stage of the "Muslims in EU Cities" project produced a literature review on the UK, providing a comprehensive review of available research and literature on Muslims in the UK. This led to the inclusion of Leicester and the borough of Waltham Forest in London as part of the 11 cities monitoring project by the Open Society Institute. See EUMAP, *United Kingdom, Muslims in EU Cities: Cities Report, Preliminary Research Report and Literature Survey*, Budapest, Open Society Institute, 2007, available at http://www.eumap.org/topics/minority/reports/eumuslims/background_reports/download/uk/uk.pdf (accessed 10 August 2009).

Integration is understood as a two-way process that requires engagement by individuals as well as opportunities for participation.

Belonging and identity can be multifaceted, and for many individuals their neighbourhood and city are their key barometers for belonging. To better understand the role that local structures can play in promoting public participation, three wards in Leicester were selected for research: Evington, Stoneygate and Spinney Hills. Spinney Hills, which has the highest percentage of Muslims (55.9 per cent), is also the ward with the lowest rate of full-time employment (26.9 per cent), highest unemployment (6.7 per cent), highest level of economic inactivity (14.1 per cent), highest percentage of “no qualifications” for work and highest level of social housing (28.5 per cent).

Contrary to popular perception, the majority of Muslims in Leicester possess a strong British identity and sense of belonging to the city as well as the country, holding many values in common with non-Muslims.

Muslim children could now constitute nearly a quarter of state-school pupils in Leicester. Important policy issues arise around the shifting demographics of pupils in schools and the level of educational achievement of marginalised groups. State schools in Leicester, which have not performed as well as in other cities in the region, have shown a marked improvement in recent years. Some Muslim parents have opted for private education. There also appears to be a steady drift of the affluent away from the city to the suburbs and their superior schools. The most significant challenge in education is improving the achievements of white pupils in the most deprived parts of the city in order to stem white flight to the suburbs.

Employment rates of Muslims are low and economic inactivity high, especially among Muslim women, who often stay at home to look after the family. According to the 2001 Census, 50 per cent of Muslims in the UK are below the age of 25. This demographic profile has significant implications for the future of the labour market.

In terms of housing, studies by the Leicester City Council in 2004 show a need to communicate services more effectively and develop strategies for the accommodation of large families.⁵ Except for recent migrants from Somalia, most Muslims in Leicester are long-term residents, with increasing numbers living in owner-occupied property.

The health status of Muslims in Leicester is very mixed. Black, minority and ethnic (BME) groups are recognised to be at greater risk of suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, coronary heart disease and other health problems than white citizens. However, when analysing the problems arising from smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and teenage pregnancy, the outer wards, with a smaller presence of BME groups and a poorer socio-economic profile seem to have the worst health status. As the

⁵ H. Ahmad, P. Robert-Thomson and I. Kszyk, *Report on the Community and Sector Consultation on Community Cohesion*, Leicester, Leicester City Council, 2004 (hereafter Ahmad et al., *Community Cohesion*).

contact between citizens and service providers will often involve discussions of cultural habits, such as diet and lifestyle, providers may need to have more detailed cultural and minority competencies to handle the health-care needs of the city's diverse residents, especially the older generation for whom language remains a barrier.

Relations between police and Muslim communities in certain wards in Leicester are among the strongest in the UK. The police appear to have a fairly thorough understanding of the communities in their area and engage in regular and frequent outreach work. However, recruitment levels of minorities, including Muslims, remain low, reflecting serious issues of mistrust and image that the police must overcome.

Muslims play an active role in civic and political engagement and there is greater trust in local authority than in the central government. Muslim citizens, feeling able to influence decision-making in the city, contribute to the high voter turnout among ethnic minorities. Newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers face important challenges in a time of growing economic uncertainty, in which debates on immigration can seem very negative.

The faith communities of Leicester are valuable contributors to the life of the city. The city is particularly well served by the strong faith presence of Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, along with important institutions committed to positive inter-faith relations in most of these communities.

The influence of the media in defining the public's views on international and domestic issues is undeniable. Respondents reported a more positive picture of the depiction and reporting of Muslim communities by the media in Leicester in comparison with the national media. There are also important signs of well-established institutional relationships between Muslim leaders, community organisations and sections of the media locally. The Leicester Multicultural Advisory Group and other such bodies are broadly seen to be important contributors to positive community relations. However, while the institutional relationships seem largely positive, individuals feel less confident, engaged and empowered in accessing the media. This could be due in part to the fact that there are few Muslims in media organisations. Community media may prove useful in increasing the visibility of Muslim reporters and in enhancing the skills and confidence of residents interacting with the media.

Approximately 50 per cent of Muslims and non-Muslims interviewed by the Open Society Institute (OSI) believe racial discrimination is still very much alive in the UK. An even larger number (over 70 per cent of both groups) feel that there is a fair amount of religious prejudice in the country today and that it has increased over the last five years. Muslim respondents felt that attitudes towards them had become more negative, though Islamophobia and racism did not feature in the list of things respondents did not like about their neighbourhoods.

While policymakers, politicians and community leaders are all keen to assert that there is little room for complacency and that potential threats to stability need to be monitored

constantly, they recognise that Leicester now possesses a culture of basic trust among leaders of different communities and ways to deal with tensions when they arise.

Problems nevertheless exist and cannot be ignored. Looking at the socio-economic data of different wards in the city, for example, the divide between rich and poor seems quite significant, and the differences in deprivation in areas of the city must be addressed.

Also, although inter-faith dialogue, discussion and harmony are celebrated, the inter-faith ethos has yet to penetrate into all sectors of society. There are those who view inter-faith activity with some suspicion. Women and younger people tend to be much less present in the various leadership and representative forums for faith groups. Below the surface there are tensions between faith groups, particularly between Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities. Lack of research makes it difficult to measure such tensions, but this issue was touched upon in interviews with community groups. Surprisingly little work has actually been undertaken in fostering meaningful dialogue between these communities, and the few initiatives seem to have been overshadowed by other priorities in the competition for limited resources.

While ethnic minorities are well represented in elected positions in the city, they remain under-represented, though not absent, in some key positions in the police, council leadership and the National Health Service (NHS).

Challenges also exist within the Muslim communities in the city, between different denominations and different ethnic groups. Pakistani, Bangladeshi and other smaller communities can at times feel as if they are a minority within a minority, whose difficulties are forgotten amid the relative success of Gujarati Muslims.

Respondents raised concerns about the “Preventing Violent Extremism” (PVE) policy, renamed “Mainstreaming Moderation” by the Leicester City Council. While the policy has a relatively small central government grant, it nevertheless has created resentment among non-Muslim communities who have at times viewed this as favouritism, unfair and denoting exclusive attention and resourcing. The current PVE agenda could, therefore, could wind up building capacity in some sectors of the city while undermining cohesion work in other areas. Equally significant, the city has been undergoing a dramatic shift and growth in the size of its Muslim population. Based on school enrolment data, the numbers of Muslims in state schools have significantly increased since the 2001 Census. If Leicester does become a plural city by 2012, this fact may create further tensions, alienating those troubled by the city’s changing identity.

Many of the study’s findings, ranging from community cohesion to relationships with the police to confidence in the media, require collective action and leadership from Leicester’s policymakers, its minority communities (including Muslim communities) and its wider population.

1. INTRODUCTION

Leicester has one of the most diverse populations of ethnic minorities in the UK outside London. The Muslim communities in Leicester are also heterogeneous, composed of both ethnically and culturally mixed groups stemming from Indian (mainly Gujarati), Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali and Turkish backgrounds, among others. Many of the communities settled in Leicester in the 1970s after large numbers of Ugandan Indians expelled by Idi Amin arrived in the UK. By contrast, the Somali and Kurdish communities are considered to be new arrivals in Leicester and have been settling in the city only over the last 10 years.

Policy discussions on Muslim communities have been quite prominent in the UK, especially since the *Satanic Verses* affair⁶ in the late 1980s, which led to pronounced concerns about representation and community leadership. Riots in the north of England in the summer of 2001 also raised concerns of poverty, racism and, crucially, segregation.⁷ Perhaps the most significant (and contentious) policy context now is the discussion of the terror threat in the light of 11 September 2001 (9/11) and, more importantly for the domestic context, the attacks carried out in London on 7 July 2005, which raised the profile of “home-grown” terrorists. The most recent UK government counter-terrorism strategy released in March 2009 brings a renewed emphasis to the “Prevent” side of the strategy, in addition to the other elements: “Pursue, protect and prepare”.⁸ There is also a move to raise concerns about forms of extremism that are not necessarily overtly related to violence. The strategy states: “As Government, we will also continue to challenge views which fall short of supporting violence and are within the law, but which reject and undermine our shared values and jeopardise community cohesion.”⁹

The city of Leicester has established a Mainstreaming Moderation Forum (composed of community leaders, council staff, police and other stakeholders) to help its work on the “Prevent” agenda, but there have been concerns about the impact of this agenda on cohesion in the city. Leicester has a positive reputation for cohesion, race and inter-faith relations and (as has been mentioned) was awarded Beacon status for race equality in 2002 and for community cohesion in 2003. Its inter-faith activities have also generated much interest nationally and indeed internationally.

⁶ The publication of Salman Rushdie’s novel *The Satanic Verses* in 1988 led to widespread protests by those regarding it as a defamation of Islam. See Michael Binyon, available at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article1950780.ece> (accessed 6 August 2009).

⁷ Ted Cante, *Community Cohesion Report: A Report of the Independent Review Team*, London, Home Office, 2001, p. 40.

⁸ Home Office, *The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering International Terrorism*, London, Stationery Office, 2009 (hereafter Home Office, 2009).

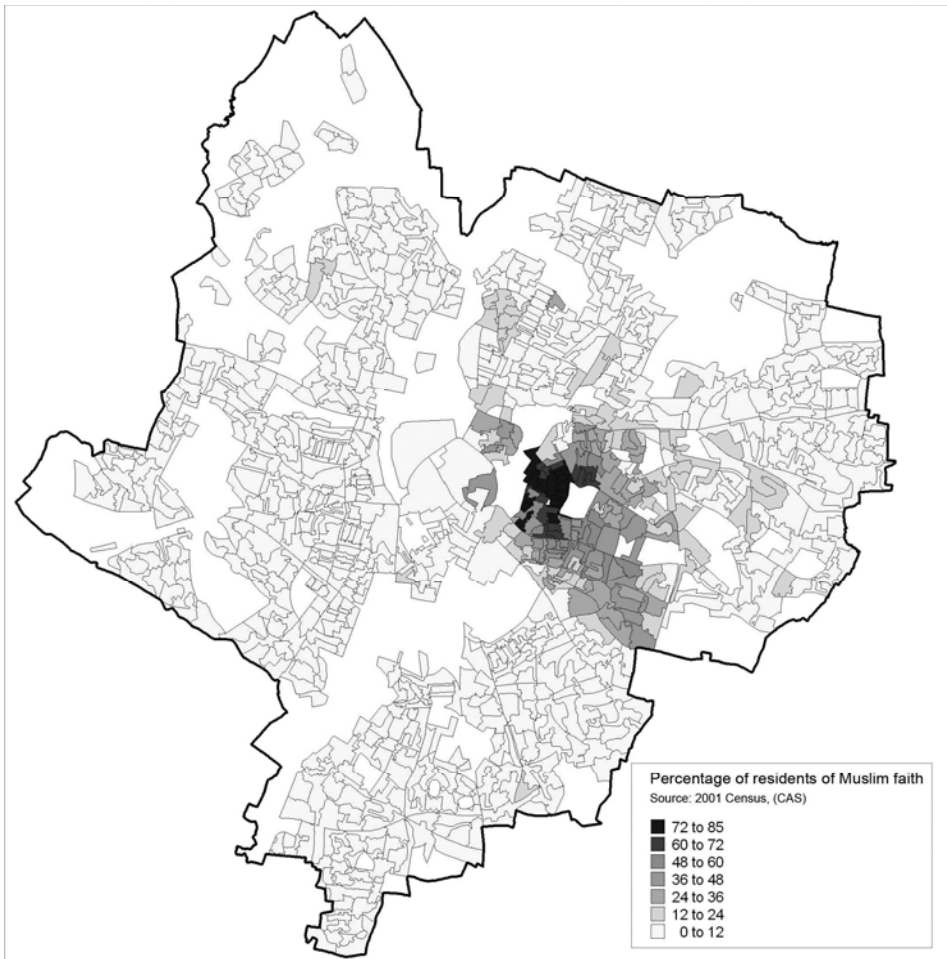
⁹ Home Office, 2009, p. 87.

This report describes the situation and everyday lives of Muslims in Leicester. The term “Muslim” has not been predetermined here and respondents and participants who took part in this study have self-identified as Muslims. No differentiation was made between the various denominations of Islam. The study has a particular emphasis on the engagement and political participation of Muslim communities and public policies aimed at improving integration and social cohesion. Integration is understood as a two-way process that requires engagement by individuals as well as opportunities for participation.

Belonging and identity can be multifaceted and for some individuals their neighbourhood and city is their key barometer for belonging. In order to better understand the role that local structures can play in engaging and promoting participation of its citizens, three wards¹⁰ were selected for research: Evington, Stonegate and Spinney Hills.

The three wards have differing socio-economic characteristics. Spinney Hills appears to suffer greater deprivation; its unemployment rate (6.7 per cent) and economic inactivity rate (14 per cent) is worse than the average figure for Leicester (4.8 per cent and 39 per cent, respectively), while the number of people with no educational qualifications (50 per cent) and living in social housing (29 per cent) is higher than the Leicester average. By contrast, the unemployment and economic inactivity rates in Stonegate (4.9 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively) and Evington (3.9 per cent and 4.8 per cent, respectively) are at or below the average for Leicester. Both areas also have lower proportions of the population without any educational qualifications and living in social housing (see Table 8).

¹⁰ A ward is an electoral subdivision of the city. Leicester has 22 wards that are represented by 54 councillors.

Figure 1. Map of Leicester showing distribution of Muslim residents

In Figure 1 the areas selected for study can be found on the east side of the city. They represent slightly different ethnic and religious demographics (as will be seen in the next section) and were chosen for this mix. On the east side of the city there are neighbourhoods with a significant concentration of Muslims, accounting for half the population, but in most areas of Leicester they have a lower presence (0–12 per cent). The units on the map represent Super Output Areas (SOAs), a new division that is smaller than a ward.

It is useful to make a distinction here between the City of Leicester and the surrounding County of Leicestershire, which have distinct governance structures (the City Council and the County Council respectively), the county being much larger in

population and geographical spread. As expected, the city is highly urbanised, while the county is a mixture of small towns and quite significant rural areas. According to the 2001 Census, the BME population of the city was 36.1 per cent and for the county, 7.2 per cent.¹¹

Methodology

This report is based on field research conducted in Leicester between January and July 2008. The analysis in this study is premised on both qualitative and quantitative data, and the primary research was carried out by the Policy Research Centre. Two hundred questionnaire/interviews, lasting approximately two hours each – half with Muslims and half with non-Muslims – were conducted with residents living in the wards of Evington, Spinney Hills and Stonegate. These wards were chosen for their high ethnic-minority population, varying socio-economic levels and diverse Muslim populations.

Further insight was sought from six separate focus groups held in the above wards on key issues that arose from the questionnaire, with residents who had not participated in the questionnaire. Each focus group differed in topic and therefore attracted Muslims who had a professional and/or personal interest in subjects such as identity, education, employment, health, housing and policing. Interviews, in which subjects were explored in depth, were also held with more than 20 key stakeholders from the city. As such, this research presents the findings from nearly 300 interviews and includes, in addition, analysis from a variety of academic studies and policy literature. A roundtable was held to test the findings and to generate critical feedback on the draft text of the report. In addition to this review process, the text of the report was peer-reviewed by academics specialising in this area of studies.

Data sample

The data sample for the 200 questionnaires can be broken down as shown in Table 1:

¹¹ Robert Radburn and Divya Patel, *Ethnicity in Leicestershire: Key Results from the 2001 Census*, Leicester, Leicestershire County Council, 2004, p. i (hereafter Radburn and Patel, *Key Results from the 2001 Census*).

Table 1. Data sample for OSI research questionnaire

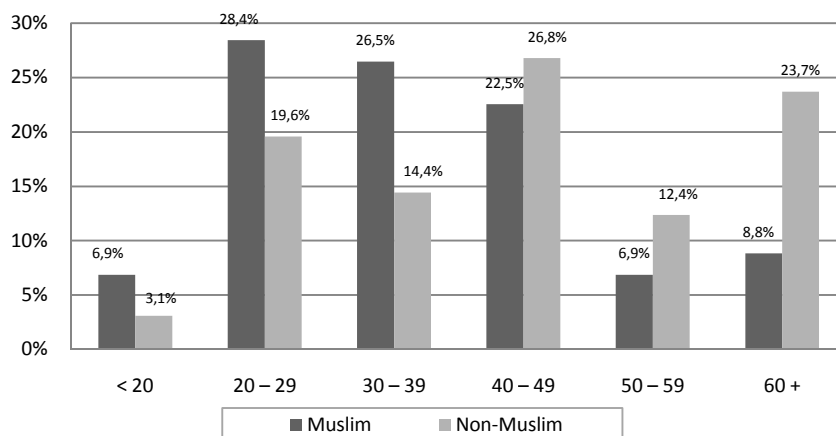
		Muslim %	Non-Muslim %	Total %
Spinney Hills		38.2	30.6	34.5
Stoneygate		14.7	23.5	19.0
Evington		41.2	42.9	42.0
Other wards		5.9	3.1	4.5
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	102	98	200

Source: Open Society Institute

The nine persons in the other wards were recorded as: Leicester (four Muslims), Coleman (two Muslims) and Highfields (three non-Muslims). The gender breakdown of the total was 90 men and 110 women.

People of South Asian heritage made up 22 per cent of Muslims and 11 per cent of non-Muslims. Of the respondents, 26.5 per cent described themselves as White or Western European. Over 90 per cent of both Muslims and non-Muslims categorised themselves as being of British nationality. Of the total, 62 per cent were born in the UK, 10 per cent were born in India and 19 per cent in Africa.

The age profile of the respondents represents the skew found in the wider Muslim population towards the younger age brackets and an under-representation of Muslims in the older age groups.

Figure 2. Age of respondents to OSI questionnaire

Source: Open Society Institute

The religious background of the respondents was varied and can be seen below in Table 2: 78.4 per cent said they ‘actively practised’, while 21.6 per cent said they did not.

Table 2. Religious affiliation of respondents to OSI questionnaire

Religion	Total %
Judaism	1.0
Islam	51.0
Protestant Christianity	19.0
Sikhism	4.0
Other	5.5
No religion	7.5
Total	%
	Number
	100.0
	200

Source: Open Society Institute

Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods this report sets out to probe the policy experience of Muslims in Leicester and represents the most detailed study of Muslims in the city to date. As with any such study there are limitations that should be borne in mind. The quantity of those surveyed overall, while giving important qualitative data, was still quite small in the context of the whole city. The gender balance was good, but if other categories within the data profile are examined,

particularly in the different age groups and also numbers in each of the wards, the data are not weighted evenly. This study is designed to be part of a wider survey of 11 cities across the EU, and these data will be pooled to augment the findings and increase the sampling size for comparisons between Muslims and non-Muslims. Bearing these limitations in mind, only findings where the data can be presumed valid for comparison are highlighted; therefore, comparisons between Muslim and non-Muslim responses are presented, as well as some gender differentials in responses.

The report begins with an overview of the city's Muslim population, their migration history and demographics, and goes on to look at the policy context of the city before exploring the experiences of Muslims in eight key areas: identity, education, employment, housing, health, policing and security, citizenship and the media. Recommendations are made at the end.

2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

At the time of the 2001 Census, Leicester had a population of 279,921, of which just over 30,000 (11 per cent) were Muslims. They represented the third-largest faith group in Leicester after Christians and Hindus. The data are presented below in a number of different ways to provide a comprehensive picture, looking at the religious affiliation figures, the ethnic composition figures, cross-referencing religious affiliation with ethnicity, ethnic composition by percentage and religious affiliation by percentage.

Table 3. Overall religious affiliation figures for OSI research areas

	Spinney Hills	Stoneygate	Evington	Leicester	East Midlands	England
All people	21,249	17,068	9,788	279,921	4,172,174	49,138,831
Christian	3,083	3,869	4,918	125,187	3,003,475	35,251,244
Buddhist	29	48	8	638	7,541	139,046
Hindu	3,127	3,237	1,632	41,248	66,710	546,982
Jewish	16	41	13	417	4,075	257,671
Muslim	11,886	5,379	874	30,885	70,224	1,524,887
Sikh	885	1,598	941	11,796	33,551	327,343
Any other religion	58	96	35	1,179	9,863	143,811
No religion	1,046	1,952	877	48,789	664,845	7,171,332
Religion not stated	1,119	848	490	19,782	311,890	3,776,515

Sources: Census 2001; Office for National Statistics (ONS)

An ethnic breakdown of Leicester and the three wards in the OSI study can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Leicester wards by ethnicity and number of people

Category	Spinney Hills	Stoneygate	Evington	Leicester
All people	21,249	17,068	9,788	279,921
White	3,739	5,601	5,730	178,739
White: British	3,270	5,040	5,393	169,456
White: Irish	116	161	123	3,602
White: other white	353	400	214	5,681
Mixed	473	416	220	6,506
Mixed: white and black Caribbean	133	136	76	2,841
Mixed: white and black African	65	38	19	539
Mixed: white and Asian	148	140	84	1,908
Mixed: other mixed	127	102	41	1,218
Asian or Asian British	15,402	10,061	3,490	83,751
Asian or Asian British: Indian	12,680	7,641	3,031	72,033
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	1,058	797	232	4,276
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	524	960	47	1,926
Asian or Asian British: other Asian	1,140	663	180	5,516
Black or black British	1,461	851	285	8,595
Black or black British: Caribbean	630	458	121	4,610
Black or black British: African	757	349	141	3,432
Black or black British: other black	74	44	23	553
Chinese or other ethnic group	174	139	63	2,330
Chinese or other ethnic group: Chinese	79	59	28	1,426
Chinese or other ethnic group: other ethnic group	95	80	35	904

Sources: Census 2001; ONS

Table 5 correlates religion with ethnicity:

Table 5. Leicester religions by ethnicity

Ethnic 1	Ethnic 2	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religion	No religion
Asian	Bangladeshi	0	0	4	0	1,844	3	0	3
	Indian	762	16	39,517	10	18,180	10,536	441	312
	Other Asian	175	54	1,171	0	2,791	969	17	45
	Pakistani	42	0	17	4	4,018	11	0	29
Black or black British	Black African	1,431	0	58	5	1,517	3	6	64
	Black Caribbean	3,480	0	5	0	98	0	44	441
	Other black	326	0	12	0	65	0	3	79
Chinese or other ethnic group	Chinese	302	225	3	0	8	0	9	750
	Other ethnic group	182	81	34	4	401	36	9	71
	Other mixed	423	11	62	3	316	21	7	261
Mixed	White and Asian	588	11	132	0	375	61	22	519
	White and black African	211	0	3	0	131	0	3	140
	White and black Caribbean	1,478	3	0	0	31	0	15	1,006
White	British	109,249	219	198	340	471	147	546	43,940
	Irish	3,036	4	0	0	14	3	19	238
	Other white	3,500	9	30	48	625	4	37	891
Total		125,185	633	41,246	414	30,885	11,794	1,178	48,789

Sources: Census 2001; ONS

Table 6. Ethnic composition of Leicester and England, %

Resident population in ethnic groups	Leicester	England
White	63.9	90.9
Mixed	2.3	1.3
Asian or Asian British	29.9	4.6
Indian	25.7	2.1
Pakistani	1.5	1.4
Bangladeshi	0.7	0.6
Other Asian	2.0	0.5
Black or black British	3.1	2.1
Caribbean	1.6	1.1
African	1.2	1.0
Other black	0.2	0.2
Chinese or other ethnic group	0.8	0.9

Sources: Census 2001; ONS

Table 7. Religious affiliation in Leicester and England and Wales, %

Affiliation	Leicester	England and Wales
Christian	44.7	71.8
Buddhist	0.2	0.3
Hindu	14.7	1.1
Jewish	0.2	0.5
Muslim	11.0	3.0
Sikh	4.2	0.6
Other religions	0.4	0.3
No religion	17.4	14.8
Religion not stated	7.1	7.7

Sources: Census 2001; ONS

In 2001 over half the Muslim population in Leicester (18,000) was of Indian ethnic origin (mainly Gujarati). At the time of the 2001 Census the number of Muslims of black African background was small, at only 1,517. Since then the city has seen an

increasing and significant Somali presence, estimated by the city council to be in the region of 6,000–10,000. There are also new arrivals of people of Turkish, Kurdish and Afghan backgrounds. Allowing for growth and adding in the new arrivals, the current Muslim population of Leicester has probably exceeded 40,000.

2.1 Migration Patterns

Although Leicester was known for its successful manufacturing industry (more recently in fabrics and hosiery), there was little Muslim migration to Leicester before the Second World War. The first Muslims to settle in Leicester, of Indian and Pakistani origin, arrived in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The largest influx of Asians occurred between 1961 and 1981.

Citizenship was granted to South Asian migrants after they complied with certain conditions such as the length of time they had lived in the UK, and voting rights for people coming from the Commonwealth were also granted by the Representation of the People Act of 1918. The arrival of South Asians (Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs) from Kenya, Malawi and Uganda (the East African Asians) meant that the period from 1968 to 1978 was a significant turning-point for Leicester. While those from Kenya and Malawi had left in response to pressures from Africanisation policies, most arrivals from Uganda were refugees and involuntary migrants. Many of the East African Asians who migrated to the UK settled in Leicester.

Contrary to Leicester's current image as a city proud of its diversity, in 1972, the City Council, worried that "the entire fabric of our city is at risk" from immigrants, inserted a tersely worded advertisement in a Ugandan daily newspaper warning potential immigrants: "In your own interests and those of your family you should ... not come to Leicester."¹² The local paper also said that Leicester was "full". Ironically, the advertisement in Uganda probably created greater identification with the city and once chain migration began to occur, the numbers rapidly increased. By 1981 the ethnic minority population of the city had increased to 59,709, an almost threefold rise in a decade. It had increased to 76,973 by 1991 and to 100,000 by 2001.¹³

However, the East African Asian experiences in settling in the UK and Leicester were different from those of others coming directly from South Asia. Most were fluent in spoken English, which enabled them to communicate with the wider community and the workplace. In contrast to South Asian men who came to Leicester for unskilled manual work, many East African Asians were well educated and qualified to work in

¹² Richard Bonney, "Understanding and Celebrating Religious Diversity in Britain: A Case Study of Leicester since 1970 Making Comparison with Flushing, Queens County, New York City", *Encounters*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2003, pp. 123–151 (hereafter Bonney, "A Case Study of Leicester").

¹³ Gurharpal Singh, "Multiculturalism in Contemporary Britain: Reflections on the 'Leicester Model'", *International Journal on Multicultural Societies (IJMS)*, Vol. 5, No. 1, "Multiculturalism and Political Integration in Modern Nation-States", p. 14.

professions such as teaching, medicine and accountancy. They were also accustomed to living as a minority in urban commercial environments. This familiarity allowed them to get established in trade and commerce relatively quickly in Leicester.

Both Gujaratis and Pakistanis moved to properties in the Spinney Hill and Belgrave areas of Leicester, where affordable private housing was available. The relative success of the Gujarati East African Asian community created higher mobility and dispersal into wealthier more suburban parts of the city. Those of Pakistani origin also settled in Highfields and Evington and some later some moved to wealthier areas such as Oadby and Wigston. Overall, however, both Pakistanis and Bangladeshis remain quite spatially concentrated. This diverse settlement pattern has meant that the bulk of the Hindu and Muslim communities are geographically concentrated in Leicester: Hindus in the north of the city and Muslims to the east of the city, with some overlap in areas. However, as noted earlier, both the Hindu and Muslim presence is seen across much of city, albeit in lower numbers.

In addition to the more established communities originating from South Asia, East Africa and the newly settled Somalis, there are estimated to be 2,000 refugees (of different ethnic and religious origins) living in the city and a further 5,000–6,000 failed asylum seekers.¹⁴

During the 1990s refugees from Bosnia first arrived, but exact figures of settled residents are not available as many were re-settled in other parts of the country. In 2002–04 a significant number of Somalis settled in the city, many fleeing civil war in Somalia.¹⁵ Some came directly to the UK, whereas others came via other EU countries, such as the Netherlands, according to one interviewee, attracted by the presence of pre-existing settled Somali communities in the UK and the reputation of a more tolerant culture.

The significant migrant and refugee populations contribute to Leicester having a younger age profile (35.5 years), compared with a national average of 38.6 years. The presence of large numbers of students at the two universities in the city also contributes towards this profile.¹⁶

Compared with the national picture, Leicester's older population is declining as the elderly move out of the city into the county (though this trend may not continue much

¹⁴ Leicester City Council and Leicester Partnership, *The Diversity of Leicester: A Demographic Profile*, Leicester, Leicester Partnership, 2008 (hereafter City Council and Partnership, *The Diversity of Leicester*).

¹⁵ See Identities (Briefing Note), "Somali Migration to the UK", available at <http://www.identities.group.shef.ac.uk/pdfs/briefing%20'Somalia'%20and%20the%20Roots%20of%20the%20Diaspora.pdf> (accessed 1 May 2009).

¹⁶ Leicester City Council, "Area Profile for the City of Leicester: Demographic and Cultural", available at <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/index.asp?pgid=1009> (accessed 6 August 2009).

longer).¹⁷ It seems that this has a net effect of bolstering the ethnic-minority population of the city itself. Nearly a quarter of older people in Leicester have an ethnic-minority background, while 23 per cent of people living in Leicester were born outside the UK, which is much higher than the national average of 9 per cent.¹⁸ Though there is some debate about this, Leicester has been identified by some to be the first city that will have no overall ethnic majority (estimated by 2012).¹⁹

¹⁷ Leicester Partnership, *One Leicester: Shaping Britain's Sustainable City*, 2008, available at <http://www.oneleicester.com/EasySite/lib/serveDocument.asp?doc=114461&pgid=116057> (accessed 6 August 2009).

¹⁸ City Council and Partnership, *The Diversity of Leicester*, pp. 4–6.

¹⁹ According to the Commission for Racial Equality, though others, including Ludi Simpson at the University of Manchester, have argued this would occur after 2019. See Ludi Simpson and Nissa Finney, "Minority White Cities", paper presented at the *Annual Conference of the British Society for Population Studies*, St Andrews, Scotland, 2007 (hereafter Simpson and Finney, "Minority White Cities").

Table 8. Combined wards data summary

Category	Spinney Hills	Stoneygate	Evington	Leicester	East Midlands	England
	(Ward)	(Ward)	(Ward)	(UA)	(Region)	(Country)
People stating religion as Muslim	55.94	31.52	8.93	11.03	1.68	3.1
People aged 16–74, economically active, employed full-time %	26.95	32.06	36.86	37.38	41.06	40.81
People aged 16–74, economically active, self-employed %	3.85	5.75	7.59	5.15	7.71	8.32
People aged 16–74, economically active, unemployed %	6.7	4.92	3.78	4.88	3.27	3.35
People aged 16–74, economically active, full-time student %	3.55	5.9	3.72	3.9	2.48	2.58
People aged 16–74, economically inactive: looking after home/family %	14.14	7.73	4.79	7.5	6.2	6.52
People aged 16–74 with no qualifications %	49.92	33.22	35.18	38.52	31.64	28.85
All households (number)	7,074	5,876	4,033	111,148	1,732,482	20,451,427
Owner-occupied households, owned outright %	24.14	29.24	39.2	23.61	30.8	29.19
Owner-occupied households, owned with mortgage or loan %	22.5	30.68	35.76	33.7	40.83	38.88
Rented from council (local authority) (households) %	28.51	6.4	15.05	21.1	13.85	13.21

Sources: Census 2001; ONS

3. CITY POLICY

Leicester City has 22 wards and its residents are represented by 54 elected councillors. Each ward elects two or three councillors, who sit in various committees and meet in the full council meeting to carry out the business of the city. There is a cabinet of 10 councillors, including the leader of the council, which forms the key decision-making body outside the full council. Ward meetings are held to listen to residents' views, to communicate decisions and consult on issues, but decision-making power rests centrally at the city level. The lord mayor, Leicester's first citizen, is chosen annually by the council and is supported by the deputy lord mayor and the high bailiff in representing the city at civic functions and community events.

In 2003 the city of Leicester was awarded Beacon status for community cohesion, a term that has now become a key component of the government's strategy, both at national and local levels, for dealing with diversity and racial and religious tensions. Most of the literature that describes Leicester, in academic, policy or general public discussion, cites many good practice examples hailing from there. The city positively and proudly asserts its multicultural ethos. This is a significant turnaround from the 1970s when there were serious tensions between the then very small Asian community and the right-wing political party, the National Front, which was very active in the city.²⁰

The thriving cultural diversity of Leicester is now one of its most important selling points. The "Golden Mile", a stretch of shops selling jewellery, Asian clothes, Bollywood music and videos, and good-quality Indian vegetarian food, attracts visitors from across the country, as does the city's Diwali celebration.²¹ The largest Asian religious communities – Hindu, Sikh and Muslim – have a significant presence, and individuals from these communities play an important role in the economic life of the city. In terms of elected political leadership, almost one-third of councillors (17 out of 54), including the previous lord mayor, are of ethnic-minority background.

The presence of more than one significant minority-faith community has at times created tensions and competition for recognition and resources, but has also worked to harmonise community relations.²²

Despite its historical reputation for commerce and the growth of the Asian business sector, Leicester is not a very rich city. In 2007 it ranked as the 20th most deprived

²⁰ Richard Bonney, "A Case Study of Leicester", p. 128.

²¹ Diwali, or Deepavali as it is also called, is the festival of lights and is an important religious celebration among Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and some Buddhists.

²² The presence of significant Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities, with some historical tensions, does cause occasional sensitivities, for example tensions between students at De Montfort University on at least one occasion, spillover debates from sectarian conflict in Gujarat and competition for funds and access to grant schemes.

local authority area in England in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.²³ Census statistical data divide the city into 187 local areas known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs).²⁴ The data on deprivation indicate that 22 of the LSOAs in Leicester are among the 5 per cent most deprived areas in the country.

This poses a significant challenge for the city and brings a great deal of complexity to the picture. The deprivation is spread across not just areas with concentrations of ethnic minorities or places where new arrivals may be found, but also among established and long-standing housing estates where the majority of white people reside. In fact, looking at the LSOAs and the ethnic composition of wards, the Indian communities (including the majority of Indian Muslims) seem more geographically spread and are not only represented in the most deprived areas. However, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali Muslims do seem to be less mobile.

With such a diverse population, the issue of community cohesion has naturally been a major concern of policymakers. The Leicester “Community Cohesion Strategy”, which is the key policy framework for enhancing relations between communities, has prioritised five themes:

1. Supporting the social integration of communities in Leicester
2. Working with and supporting young people
3. Building confidence and a sense of belonging about living in Leicester
4. Addressing the immediate social tensions in the city
5. Improving communication and information activities²⁵

In their vision for the future for the city, set in 2006, public authorities were ambitious; by 2025 they saw the city as one that “will be the most cohesive city in Europe, with safe and strong communities where people successfully live, work and learn together, new arrivals are made welcome, and where diverse cultural traditions enrich one another and the lives of all of its citizens”,²⁶ and a city that is “recognised as a model of excellence internationally ... where no one suffers from serious economic or social disadvantage”.²⁷

²³ See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/deprivation07> (accessed 10 August 2009).

²⁴ LSOAs cover areas of about 1,500 people and are a fairly new measure for demarcating areas for analysis.

²⁵ Leicester City Council, “Community Cohesion Strategy”, available at <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/index.asp?pgid=7293> (accessed 1 May 2009).

²⁶ Leicester City Council and Leicester Partnership, *The Strategy for Leicester*, Leicester: Leicester Partnership, 2006, p. 2 (hereafter City Council and Partnership, *Strategy for Leicester*).

²⁷ City Council and Partnership, *Strategy for Leicester*, p. 2.

Important administrative structures of the city include a number of the chief local authority-led bodies as well as civil-society institutions. An important forum is the Local Strategic Partnership, called the Leicester Partnership.²⁸ This brings together over 50 important institutions, including the city council,²⁹ the regional development agency,³⁰ NHS Leicester City,³¹ the universities and representatives from business, voluntary and community sectors. The Leicester Partnership leads the Local Area Agreement (LAA), which is an agreement between the city and national government which sets out the most important targets to be addressed at the local level in return for national funding in key policy areas. Along the policy indicators touched upon in this report, a complex interplay of local and national policymaking occurs. Some of the agenda, such as security and citizenship, is subject to central authorities, while in other areas much stronger local control is present, as in policing and education.

Leicester's LAA contains 58 targets over a whole range of areas including education, employment, housing, health and policing. These targets are important drivers for policy development and implementation at the local level. In order to deal with these various areas of work, the Leicester Partnership consists of a group of sub-partnerships in each policy area. The partnerships bring together a multi-agency group of stakeholders that can coordinate strategy and delivery. The city council has departments that relate to all of these areas of work and drive the core service delivery component, such as the provision of education, housing, benefits and so on.

Other important bodies are the Cultural Strategy Partnership³² and the Regional Equality and Diversity Partnership.³³ NHS Leicester City (Primary Care Trust) and Leicestershire Constabulary³⁴ (county-wide) are naturally key local agencies for the provision of health and policing, but connect with larger national agencies, the National Health Service and the Home Office.

Outside the arena of the local government, the Leicester Multicultural Advisory Group (LMAG),³⁵ established in 2001 by the editor of the *Leicester Mercury* newspaper, the Leicester Council of Faiths³⁶ and the Faith Leaders Forum are also important bodies that are relevant to this study.

²⁸ See <http://www.oneleicester.com/leicester-partnership> (accessed 1 May 2009).

²⁹ See <http://www.leicester.gov.uk>

³⁰ Called East Midlands Development Agency; see <http://www.emda.org.uk>

³¹ See <http://www.leicestercitypct.nhs.uk>

³² See <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council--services/lc/cultural-strategy/cultural-strategy-partnership> (accessed 1 May 2009).

³³ See http://www.lcil.org.uk/Projects/Equality_&_Diversity_Partnership (accessed 1 May 2009).

³⁴ See <http://www.leics.police.uk> (accessed 1 May 2009)

³⁵ See http://83.137.212.42/sitearchive/cre/about/sci/casestudy5_leicester.html

³⁶ See <http://www.leicestercounciloffaiths.org.uk> (accessed 1 May 2009).

Community structures are still largely focused within particular ethnic and religious communities, though increasingly cross-community audiences are now being reached. For example, Al-Ansaar is a local project led by Muslim women that caters for people with learning disabilities from across all communities, and reflects some of the resourceful projects running in the city. An example of an important Muslim community organisation is the Muslim Burial Council³⁷ of Leicestershire (MBCOL), which was awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for Voluntary Service in June 2007. Due to the work of such organisations, the local authority (in this case the Cemeteries Department) and agencies such as the Leicestershire Constabulary are seen to enjoy fairly positive relations with the Muslim communities in the city and county, as evidenced in one of the OSI focus groups. Communities work well with local authorities and seem to have a high sense of trust in their civic institutions, as the results of the OSI questionnaire showed (Chapters 4 and 10).

There are some important challenges on the policy landscape. The government's policy on counter-terrorism has targeted funds exclusively at Muslim communities, much of which is channelled through local authorities. Information gathered from interviews with key Muslim community personnel and policymakers suggests that this is having a mixed impact at the local level. On the one hand, it brings much needed resources into the Muslim communities, where particularly among young people's and women's activities there is significant room for capacity-building and growth, and on the other hand there is the negative context of counter-terrorism, as well as – probably more importantly – a growing feeling that this has an adverse impact on cohesion locally as it creates an impression of privilege and priority given to Muslims. The city's leadership refused to accept the central government's terminology of PVE and instead called its own delivery "Mainstreaming Moderation", which is responsible for all "Prevent" funding and activities. The Mainstreaming Moderation Forum (MMF) brings together stakeholders who are able to discuss the merits of activities in this area and this feeds into the broader "Community Cohesion" strategy of the city. The MMF is chaired by the Councillor that leads on Community Cohesion within the Cabinet of the Local Council.

³⁷ See <http://www.mbcoll.org.uk> (accessed 1 May 2009).

4. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: IDENTITY, BELONGING AND INTERACTION

Identity and belonging have become very important topics in discussions concerning the British Muslim presence and the complexity of the debate does not always seem to feature in the public discourse. Identities are dynamic, fluid and multilayered and involve negotiation.³⁸ Identity and belonging are seen to be important elements of integration.³⁹ But integration also works at many different levels. While an individual may be integrated into the labour market and social networks he or she may not identify with the area, city or country in which he/she lives. At the same time, the failure of public and social policy to acknowledge and respect this important aspect of a person's identity and sense of self can hinder integration.⁴⁰ There is also a growing recognition of the importance for cohesion of meaningful contact and interaction between people of different ethnic and cultural groups, as this helps overcome prejudice and challenge stereotypes.

This section explores how Muslims feel about their neighbourhood and city. This includes their sense of belonging and the positive and negative aspects of their neighbourhood and city. It notes the places and spaces in which interactions take place with people from the same and different ethnic and religious groups as themselves.

4.1 Identity

Since 2001 a number of surveys have looked at how British Muslims identify and define themselves. Fluctuations are apparent in the answers depending on the precise questions, how they are asked and also the political climate at the time. As part of communities with strong global connections, British Muslims seem deeply affected by international events and it is very likely that such events will have an impact on the way that British Muslims feel about and see their place in society.⁴¹

The importance of religion to the Muslims in the UK has received increased recognition by policymakers since the late 1990s and is confirmed by the results of the OSI questionnaire (see Figure 3). In fact, when asked which identity items would say something important about them, Muslims respondents in the OSI study placed religion (47 per cent) ahead of family (43 per cent). This finding differs from that of

³⁸ Dilwar Hussain, "Can Islam make us British?", in Madeleine Bunting (ed.), *Islam, Race and Being British*, London, Guardian Publications, 2005 (hereafter Hussain, "Can Islam make us British?").

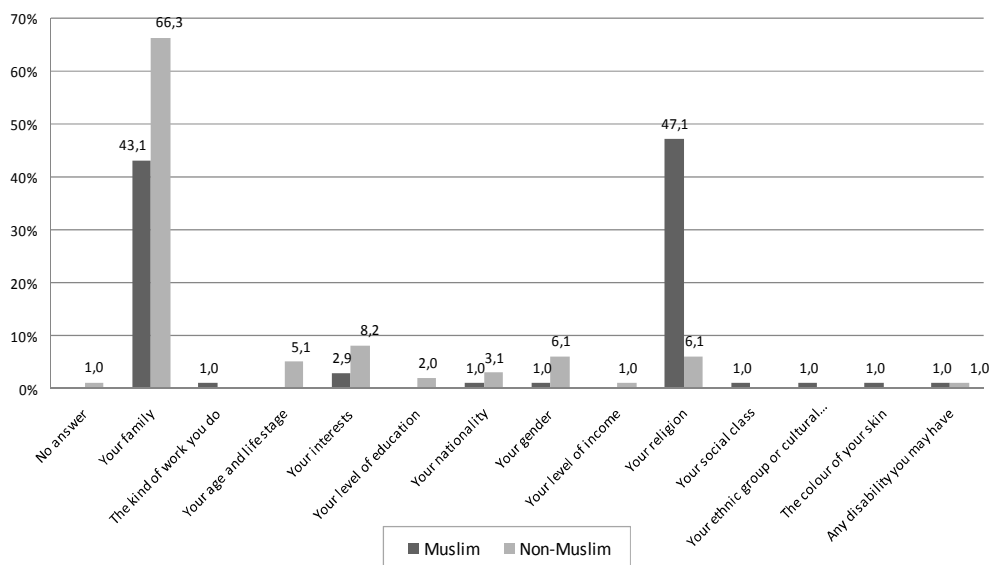
³⁹ Friedrich Heckman and Wolfgang Bosswick, *Integration and Integration Policies, an INTPOL Feasibility Study for the IMISCOE Network of Excellence*, Bamberg, INTPOL, 2005, p. 30.

⁴⁰ Maleiha Malik, "Equality and Discrimination", in Tufyal Choudhury (ed.), *Muslims in the UK: Policies for Engaged Citizens*, Budapest, Open Society Institute, 2005.

⁴¹ See Mohamed Seddon, Dilwar Hussain and Nadeem Malik, *British Muslims between Assimilation and Segregation*, Leicester, Islamic Foundation, 2004; Dilwar Hussain, "British Muslims in the Anti-terror Age", *Global Dialogue*, Vol. 9, No. 3–4, 2007. pp. 75–86.

the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey's in which Muslims' family came ahead of religion.⁴² There is also a stark difference in the proportion of Muslims (47 per cent) who identified religion as important to their identity compared with non-Muslims (6 per cent). Although the sample categories are not directly comparable, in the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey 17 per cent of white respondents said that religion is important to self-identity, compared with 61 per cent of Asian respondents.⁴³ Though the differential role of religion in self-identity is stark and worth pointing out, this is not surprising given the existing research on religious adherence and practice among Christians in the UK compared with minority faiths.⁴⁴

Figure 3. Most important factors defining identity



Source: Open Society Institute

⁴² Maria O’Beirne, *Religion in England and Wales: Findings from the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey*, Home Office Research Study No. 274, London, Home Office, 2004, p. 19 (hereafter O’Beirne, *Findings from the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey*).

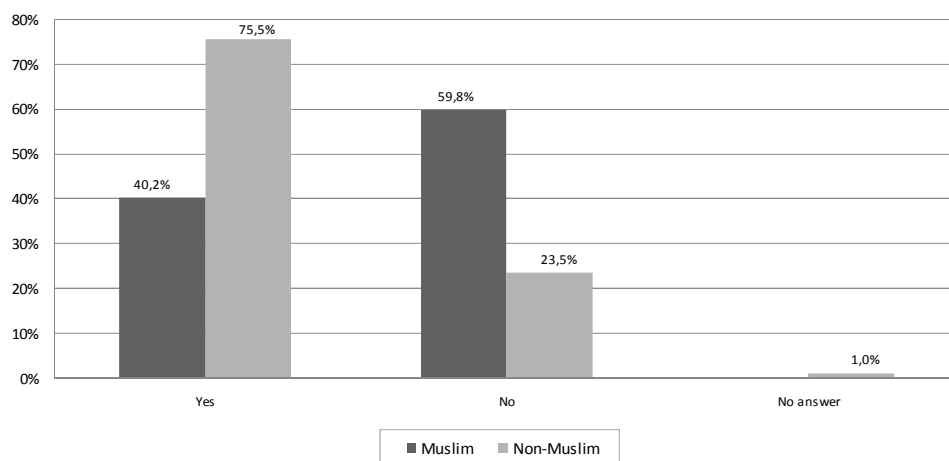
⁴³ O’Beirne, *Findings from the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey*, p. 18.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging*, Oxford, Wiley Blackwell, 1994; Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000; Stephen Hunt, *Religion in Western Society*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.

Much of the public policy discourse on Muslim identity appears to be driven by concern that a strong religious identity can undermine or be in tension with a sense of national belonging. The OSI survey, however, shows that while Muslims have a strong sense of religious identity, a similar and high proportion of both Muslims (82.4 per cent) and non-Muslims (81.6 per cent) see themselves as British and want to be seen as British (69.6 per cent and 71.4 per cent, respectively). These findings are consistent with the analysis of the Home Office Citizenship Survey, which shows that on the question of belonging to the UK, the responses of Muslims as a group are similar to that of white respondents as a group.⁴⁵

While the responses of Muslims and non-Muslims are the same on the question of whether they view themselves as British and want to be seen as British, a third question added a more critical insight: “Do most other people in this country see you as British?” In response to this the results diverged between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Figure 4. Do most other people in this country see you as British?



Source: Open Society Institute

While the majority of non-Muslims (75 per cent) felt they were viewed by others as British, the majority of Muslims (60 per cent) did not feel they were viewed by others as British. Thus, while the overwhelming majority of Muslims in Leicester see themselves as British and have aspirations to be seen as British, they feel that they are

⁴⁵ Rahsaan Maxwell, “Muslims, South Asians, and the British Mainstream: A National Identity Crisis? Spotlight on Immigration: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Immigrants and Their Children”, Paper No. 0002, Institute for Research on Labour and Employment, Zurich, University of Zurich, 21 April 2006.

not seen as such. One perspective was echoed by a number of participants in one of the focus groups:

No, no they don't see us as British. Not only that, even our children's children and no matter how many generations will go, I am fearful they will never see us as British ... In some cases I think they're tolerating us as opposed to actually accepting us and there's a big difference.

Muslims and non-Muslims also differed in their identification of the main barriers to being British. Twice as many non-Muslims (35 per cent) as Muslims (16 per cent) identified not speaking the national language as the main barrier to being British. A greater proportion of Muslims (35 per cent) than non-Muslims (22 per cent) identified being non-white as the main barrier to being British; 11 per cent of non-Muslims said there were no barriers to being British, while only 2 per cent of Muslims felt the same.

A strong sense of British identity among Muslims found in the questionnaire was also voiced by focus group participants:

I do define myself as British, not just as a Muslim, because I was born in England, I was brought up here on fish and chips, you know, the culture is everything. It has defined me so I've become the person that I am because of Britain, because I've been born and bred here, so it's not just that I come from a Muslim family; everything else has defined me as well. That's why I do define myself as British as well and I think that it's very important to respect the laws and to respect the culture and to respect the people.

Another participant added:

My religion is important to me, but also being a British citizen is also very important to me and I think that it's important to balance both.

This was also raised in the reaction of others to a woman in the focus group who expressed ambivalence about her sense of British identity:

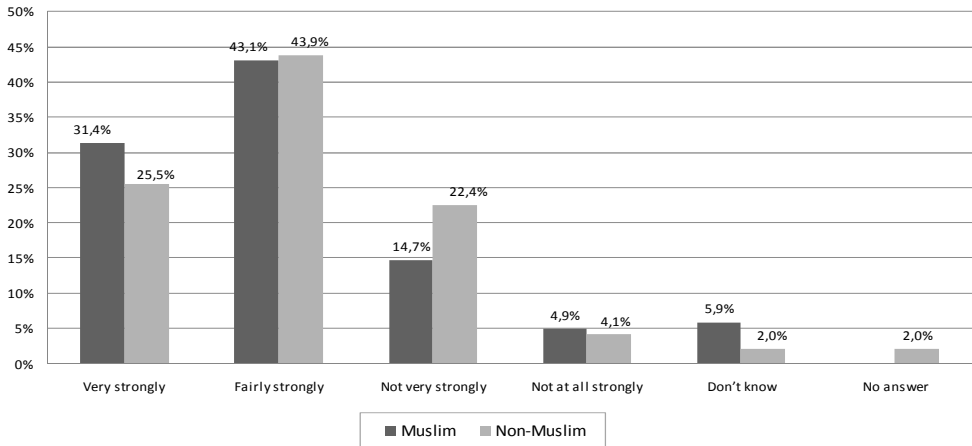
I'd say in terms of being a British Muslim, I would not call myself British. I'd say I'm a Muslim person who happens to be born and bred in Britain, because my mum and my dad were living here, and I would eventually like to move out of England so that I can live amongst Muslims and practise my deen [religion or way of life] freely.

4.2 Belonging

Closely tied to the question of identity is the question of belonging. The questionnaire asked individuals about their sense of belonging to their local area, the city and the country. The results show a high proportion of both Muslims and non-Muslims expressed a sense of belonging at all three levels. Muslims and non-Muslims report a

similar level of belonging to their local area; Muslims (75 per cent) appear to have a stronger sense of belonging than non-Muslims (69 per cent) to the city, while the latter have a stronger sense of belonging to the country (80 per cent compared with 72 per cent) (see Figure 5 and Table 9).

Figure 5. Sense of belonging to Leicester



Source: Open Society Institute

Table 9. Percentage of respondents with stronger sense of belonging to Leicester

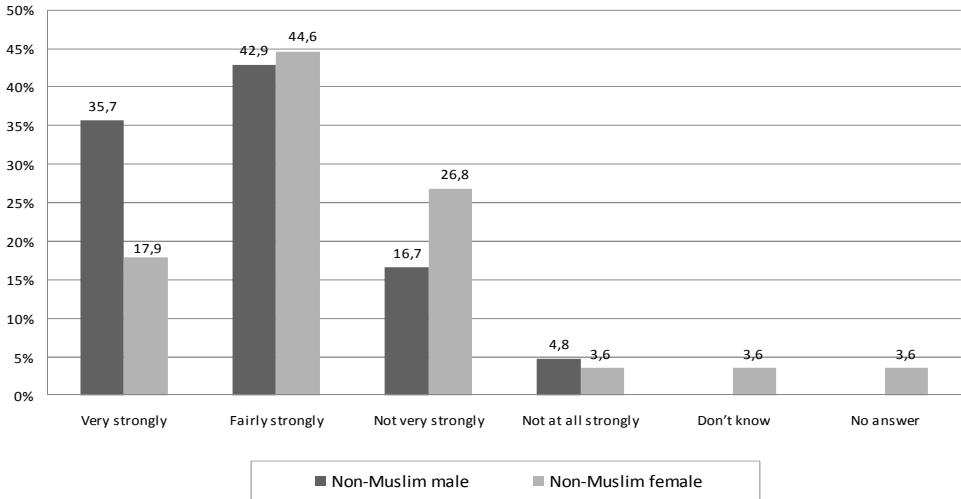
	% responding as “very strongly” or “fairly strongly”	Muslim %	Non-Muslim %	Total %
Area		77.5	76.5	77.0
City		74.5	69.4	72.0
County		71.6	80.6	76.0
Total	%	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Number	102	98	200

Source: Open Society Institute

Muslim identification and sense of belonging is particularly strong when only the data for those who say they “very strongly” identify with the city are considered, at 31.4 per cent as opposed to 25.5 per cent for non-Muslims.

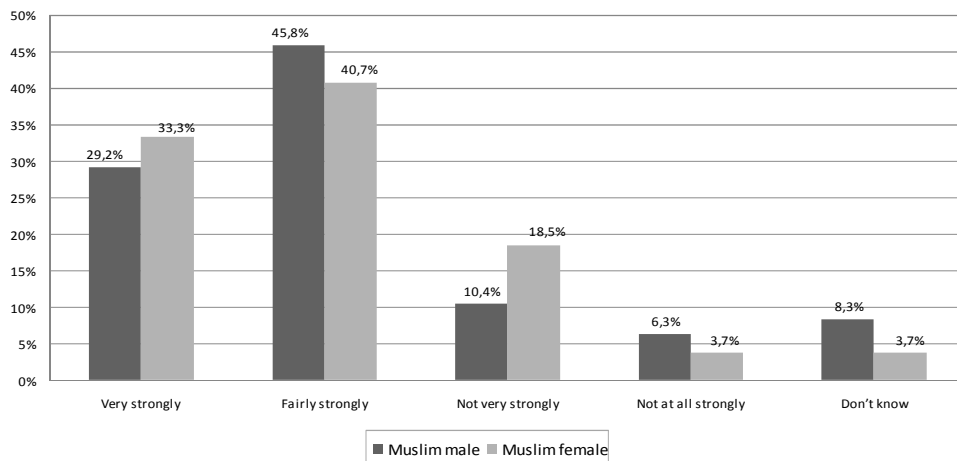
In terms of differentiating this by gender, non-Muslim men tended to feature higher in the “very strongly” category than women when considering belonging to the city, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Sense of belonging to Leicester, by gender (non-Muslims)



Source: Open Society Institute

However, when considering belonging to the country, Muslim females tended to feature higher than Muslim males in the “very strongly” category, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Sense of belonging to the UK, by gender (Muslims)

Source: Open Society Institute

Over 70 per cent agreed that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their locality. This figure was lower than the national figure in the Citizenship Survey (81 per cent). There was, however, also a recognition of tensions among minority faith groups:

I think it's getting worse, certainly the difficulty between the Hindu community with the Muslim community, the Sikh community and the Muslim community ... I know there's a lot of tension.

The local authorities have set themselves the goal of making Leicester “the most cohesive city in Europe” by 2025. There is a range of indicators that are used by policymakers to measure cohesion, including the existence of shared common values as well as the extent to which people feel that people in their local area can be trusted and will help one another.

A question on the most important values in the UK, in which subjects chose from a list of 11 options and ranked their four most important values, revealed that Muslims ranked “respect for all faiths”, “respect for the law”, “respect for people of different ethnic groups” and “equality of opportunity” as highest (in order) when all four choices were combined. Non-Muslims ranked “respect for the law”, “tolerance towards others”, “freedom of speech and expression” and “respect for all faiths” as the highest (in order) when their choices were combined. But it is interesting that this order was repeated when looking at the first choice alone for both groups. Some have suggested

that fundamental social values are now very similar across faith groups⁴⁶ and the 2007 Citizenship Survey showed a similar ranking: “respect for the law”, “tolerance and politeness towards others”, “equality of opportunity”, followed by “freedom of speech/expression” as the fourth.⁴⁷ At a time when national policy discussion seems to be moving towards the concept of shared values, this seems to reflect a positive starting-point. However, while Muslims and non-Muslims do appear to share similar values, there were noticeable differences in whether people believed that people in their neighbourhood shared the same values. While the majority of Muslims felt that people in their neighbourhood shared the same values, only a third of Non-Muslims responded likewise.

The majority of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents both agreed that their neighbourhood was close-knit, although some 40 per cent from both groups disagreed. There was also equally weighted disagreement that most people worked together to improve the neighbourhood: nearly half of the Muslim respondents felt local people did not work together for the benefit of improving the local area. While communal efforts to work together scored negatively across both groups, the presence of trustworthy individuals appeared to present a different picture. On the whole, both groups recorded that people could be trusted (to some extent), with only 1 per cent of Muslims and 2 per cent of Non-Muslims saying none could be trusted. But only 28 per cent of Muslims felt that many could be trusted, a proportion measuring comparatively low against 40 per cent of non-Muslims. A similar pattern was found in exploring whether people in the neighbourhood were willing to help their neighbours. Almost 90 per cent of Muslim and 80 per cent of non-Muslim respondents agreed, but of those who did, a noticeably higher proportion of the non-Muslims, more than double, strongly agreed. The findings point to the strengthening of bonds between individuals over time where such relationships can be placed within a social environment of comparative change. This could be explained by considering that the longer households remain within a neighbourhood the more likely that stronger and more lasting neighbourly relationships can be nurtured. The research found that non-Muslims were more settled in their respective neighbourhoods, with a third likely to have lived in the same area for 11–20 years, while a third of Muslims were likely to have lived in the same area for 6–10 years. Half of all Muslims, compared with a quarter of all non-Muslims, had lived in the same area for 10 years or less.

⁴⁶ Dilwar Hussain, “Islam”, in Zaki Cooper and Guy Lodge (eds), *Faith in the Nation: Religion, Identity and the Public Realm in Britain Today*, London, Institute for Public Policy Research, 2008, p. 45.

⁴⁷ Department for Communities and Local Government, *Citizenship Survey 2007: Race, Cohesion and Faiths Statistical Release 2*, London, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008, p. 12.

4.3 Interaction

The issue of how people of ethnic and religious difference interact has been very topical in UK policy and popular debates over the last 10 years, with the backdrop of race riots as well as terrorism. The policy framework of “Community Cohesion” has become the accepted model for measuring and discussing the relationship between different groups that make up British society. Despite an overall positive report, a review of community cohesion in Leicester in 2002 led by the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA) commented, while looking at the arenas of residential segregation, schooling and leisure, that in “these three key areas of social activity, different communities in Leicester could be said to lead ‘parallel lives’ as described in the Cattle and other reports into community cohesion in northern towns and cities and elsewhere”.⁴⁸ The report further commented that the “lack of contact between Leicester’s different communities is a factor in competition over scarce mainstream and regeneration resources, with communities on the City’s outer estates and the African Caribbean, Pakistani and Bengali communities feeling that they have fared less well”.⁴⁹

In a consultation by the city council (following the above report and in preparing the city’s “Community Cohesion” strategy) it concluded:

At the micro level, the importance of personal networks of family, friends and neighbours was constantly mentioned as factors in sustaining good personal and community relationships. Likewise at the macro level, there was widespread recognition that communities are often disconnected from mainstream city life by the multiple impact of broad social problems such as crime, disaffected youth, low standards of housing, high unemployment, poor educational standards and physically unattractive environments.⁵⁰

Opportunities for interaction with people from different backgrounds can be affected by the ethnic composition of the neighbourhood people live in. On the whole, Muslim respondents viewed their neighbourhood as more homogeneous and non-Muslims viewed their neighbourhood as more diverse. Markedly, more Muslims felt that their neighbourhood was of the same ethnic or religious background, 20.6 per cent saying it was the “same ethnic and religious background” and 22.5 per cent saying “same religious, but different ethnic background”. This compared with 1 per cent and 3.1 per cent in the same categories of response for non-Muslims. However, 9.8 per cent of Muslims said their neighbourhood was composed of people of “different ethnic and religious backgrounds” and 36.3 per cent said “mixed backgrounds of ethnicities and

⁴⁸ Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA), *Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester: Solutions*. London, Improvement and Development Agency, 2003, p. 7 (hereafter I&DeA, *Taking Forward Community Cohesion*).

⁴⁹ I&DeA, *Taking Forward Community Cohesion*, p. 7.

⁵⁰ Ahmad *et al.*, *Community Cohesion*, pp. 8–9.

religions”, whereas non-Muslims’ figures answering in the same category were nearly double, at 22.4 per cent and 65.3 per cent, respectively.

The OSI survey pointed to “schools, work or college”, “shops” and “your home/their home” (in that order) as the areas where there was significant daily interaction of people with someone from a different religion. Non-Muslims (22 per cent) were more likely than Muslims (9 per cent) to say that in the last year they had daily interaction with someone of a different religion in the home (the question asked “at your or their home?”) (See Figures 8a and 8b).

Figure 8a. Frequency of inter-religious interaction at home (Muslim)

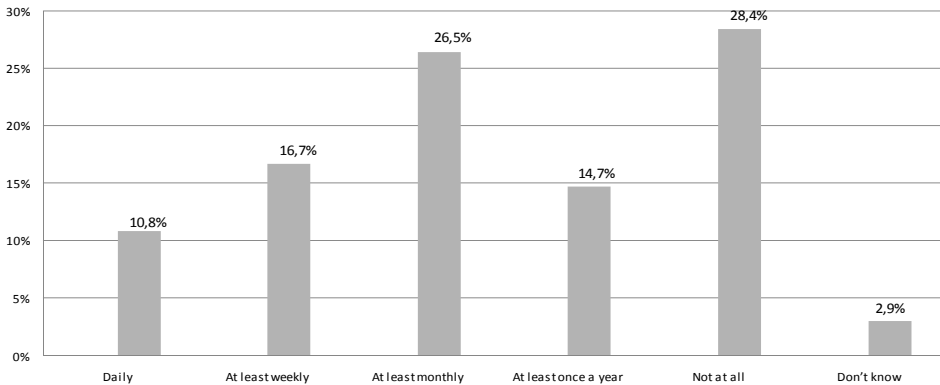
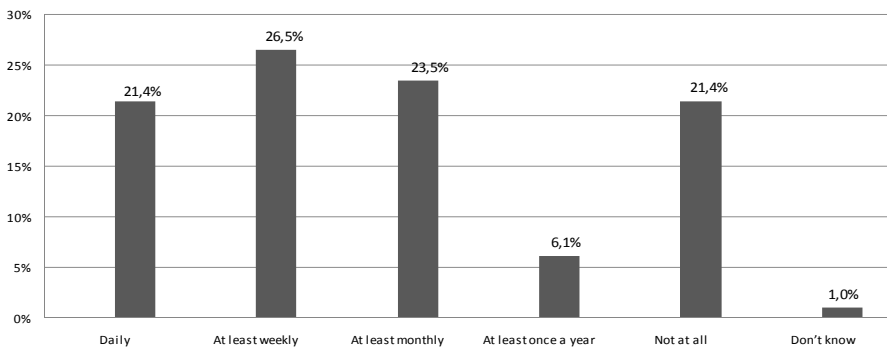


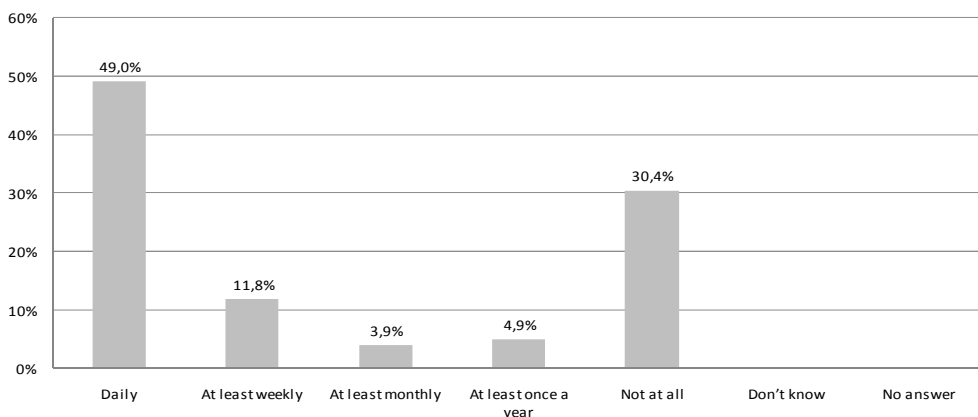
Figure 8b. Frequency of inter-religious interaction at home (non-Muslim)



Source: Open Society Institute

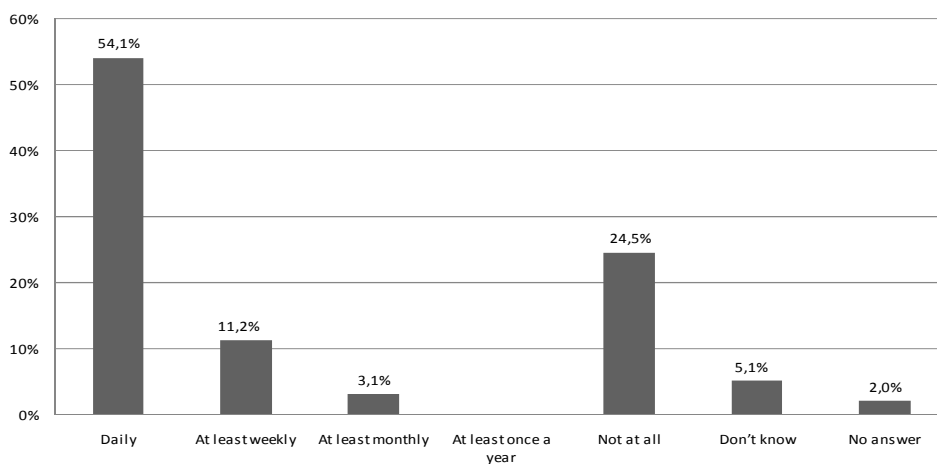
The school was the most significant place of meeting across religious groups. Around half of all people said they had daily interaction at “school, work or college”; presumably much of the school part of this would be on the school run while dropping off and picking up children (some respondents may have been in attendance at college, but none were of school age) (Figures 9a and 9b).

Figure 9a. Frequency of inter-religious interaction at schools (Muslim)



Source: Open Society Institute

Figure 9b. Frequency of inter-religious interaction at schools (non-Muslim)



Source: Open Society Institute

One interviewee, Jaffer Kapasi, a local businessman, said that the employment picture is not as rosy as it may be often painted in Leicester. He explained that where there is a predominantly Asian workforce “it is a struggle” to recruit white people.⁵¹ From the questionnaire the results show that 41 per cent of those in employment work for people who are of the same religion (Muslim) and 59 per cent work for people of different religions.

In a related question about meeting people of a different ethnic group, results were similar, at “schools, work or college”, “shops” and “socially” were the most frequent ways of meeting people of a different ethnicity. Little interaction took place in bars or clubs. Other places of high interaction included the home, creche/nursery and places of worship, where three times as many Muslims than non-Muslims said that they met people of different ethnicity on a daily basis.

In one of the focus groups there was a feeling that Leicester is more ghettoised compared with cities like London (but less than some other cities):

There is a lot of segregation here. You see it in the school and you see it at college. There’s groups of Asians, there’s groups of this, there’s groups of that; I think we need to mix more as well.

The questionnaire asked if people thought “more needs to be done to encourage people from different backgrounds to mix together”, to which 79.6 per cent of non-Muslims and 87.3 per cent of Muslims answered “yes”. In terms of how this could be done, some suggestions were made in focus groups about increased inter-faith activity, greater participation in events such as mosque open days, participation in festivals of other religions and twinning between Muslim and state schools.

The combined results from the OSI survey and the focus groups tally with the I&DeA report on community cohesion (and other research, such as the *State of the English Cities* Report) in that a consistent picture is painted of a city that has higher mobility than some other cities, is more ethnically mixed than some other cities, but still has moderate levels of segregation, and where residents and policymakers feel that more could or should be done to encourage people of different backgrounds to mix. For three different patterns of segregation – white/non-white, white/Asian and white/black – the highest level of segregation in Leicester is between whites and non-whites. Based on data that go back to 2001, Leicester was ranked 10th (in descending order of segregation) in this regard in a list of 56 cities, performing more favourably in consideration of white/Asian segregation (13th) and white/black segregation (25th) in the 2006 *State of the English Cities* Report.⁵²

⁵¹ Interview with Jaffer Kapasi, business owner, Leicester, 21 May 2008.

⁵² Monika Bugaj, *State of the English Cities*, London, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2006, p. 147.

It can be seen from the data presented here that some areas of the city were identified as being places where people felt uncomfortable and the sense of getting on well with people of a different background (70 per cent) was lower than the national figure in the Citizenship Survey (81 per cent), but was still a high figure. Data from the OSI survey in terms of identity and belonging were very positive, showing a strong sense of British identity and a strong sense of belonging to both the city and the country. Generic shared values were also held very much in common, with the same values being identified as the first choice by both Muslims and non-Muslims.

5. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: EDUCATION

Education, especially in schools, is one of the most important pillars of integration. The education system provides individuals with the skills and qualifications for participation in the labour market. It also plays a formative role in the socialisation of young people in the unspoken rules and values of society⁵³ and is the first public institution with which young Muslims have contact. The ways in which schools respond to and respect the needs of Muslim pupils is therefore likely to shape their feelings of acceptance and belonging to the wider society. Schools also contribute to integration by providing opportunities for interaction between pupils and parents of different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

This chapter looks at the chief issues in education. It looks at the educational attainment levels of pupils across Leicester and the factors involved in low achievement. It also briefly examines some of the reasons why pupils are performing badly, including high pupil mobility and difficulties in retention. It looks at interviewees' experiences of the educational system, challenges to educational achievement, language, the role of religion and faith schools. Finally, it explores some initiatives to improve achievement and quality.

5.1 Primary and Secondary Education

All children between the ages of five and 16 must receive a full-time education according to UK law. In 2007 there were 25,018 schools in England catering for 8.15 million pupils,⁵⁴ and though parents are allowed to educate children at home, or send their children to private or independent schools, the vast majority attends state schools that are funded by the government through local education authorities (LEAs). The National Curriculum is taught in all state schools, though independent schools are not obliged to. The religious education (RE) curriculum is devolved to the local level where a locally Agreed Syllabus is reviewed every five years with the help of a local body called a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). The SACRE, which should be composed to reflect the local faith demographics of the LEA, can ask for the Agreed Syllabus to be reviewed and advises on collective worship⁵⁵ in schools. The

⁵³ Werner Schiffauer, "Staat-Schule Ethnizität (State School Ethnicity)", in Frank Gesemann (ed.), *Migration und Integration in Berlin*, Wiesbaden, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2001, pp. 233–250 (in German).

⁵⁴ Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), *The Composition of Schools in England*. London, DCSF, 2008.

⁵⁵ UK state schools are required to provide daily collective worship for all pupils. Parents can withdraw pupils from worship and after they are 16 years old they can withdraw themselves. The nature of the collective worship depends on the religious background of the pupils in the school and the ethos of the school. It is expected that schools would provide collective worship that is mainly Christian in character; however, schools can apply to SACRE to change this, depending on the composition of pupils.

SACRE can grant permission for schools to lift the legal requirement to hold collective worship based on broadly Christian ideas. This is now often the case in schools where the majority of the pupils are no longer Christian.

Schools are normally split into primary (ages 5–11) and secondary (ages 11–18) age groups. At the end of compulsory schooling at 16, secondary-education pupils take exams in (normally) up to 10 subjects for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). At this point pupils may leave education or continue to pursue other qualifications, including Advanced-level (A-level) certificates, or equivalent, which are normally required for university entrance.

There are currently 72 primary schools in Leicester and 14 secondary schools, including one Muslim state-funded, mixed-gender, secondary school (Madani High School). There are in addition to this a number of private (independent) schools, including six private Muslim schools.⁵⁶

5.2 Educational Achievement in Leicester

A key measure of educational achievement for UK policymakers is the number of students who obtain five GCSE exam passes at grades A*–C. On this measure Leicester city schools, compared with other schools in the UK, have performed poorly until recently. In 2007/08 Leicester had the weakest performance in the East Midlands region with 50 per cent of boys and 57 per cent of girls obtaining five GCSEs at grades A*–C. Results have improved in recent years: “the city has climbed 15 places up the national league table, with test results for 11-year-olds improving at a much faster rate than the national average”.⁵⁷ However, the improvement is not as good as it might initially appear to be: “After many years near the bottom of the league table – and for the past two years Leicester was second-worst in the country – Leicester has now risen to joint 133rd out of 150.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ The six Muslim private schools are: Al Aqsa Primary School (mixed gender); Dar ul Uloom Leicester (seminary) (secondary, boys); Jameah Girls Academy (Dar ul Uloom (seminary) (primary and secondary, girls); Leicester Islamic Academy (primary, mixed gender); Leicester Community Islamic School (primary and secondary, boys); Tiny Tots Pre-school and Primary School (nursery and primary, mixed gender).

⁵⁷ *Leicester Mercury*, 5 August 2008.

⁵⁸ *Leicester Mercury*, 5 August 2008.

Table 10. East Midlands GCSE results at the end of Key Stage 4, 2007–2008

Government office region local authority	No. of end of Key Stage 4 pupils			% pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 achieving at GCSE and equivalents		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
EAST MIDLANDS	27,353	26,165	53,518	57.6	66.7	62.1
Derby	1,542	1,520	3,062	59.5	62.2	60.8
Derbyshire	4,732	4,605	9,337	57.2	67.7	62.4
Leicester	1,851	1,662	3,513	50.0	57.3	53.5
Leicestershire	3,988	3,699	7,687	58.7	69.3	63.8
Lincolnshire	4,293	4,208	8,501	67.0	74.2	70.6
Northamptonshire	4,328	4,091	8,419	54.3	63.6	58.8
Nottingham	1,439	1,434	2,873	52.0	61.1	56.5
Nottinghamshire	4,942	4,715	9,657	55.0	65.9	60.3
Rutland	238	231	469	69.7	72.3	71.0

Source: Department for Children, Schools and Families

At the time of this research a breakdown of attainment by religious affiliation of pupils in Leicester was not available. The closest correlation was by broad ethnic category, as in Table 11. These data are two years older than Table 11, but it can be seen that Asians performed better than other ethnic categories in maintained (state) schools. However, given the multi-faith dimension of Asians in Leicester, less than half of this figure would be Muslim.

Table 11. Leicester pupils' achievement at GCSE or equivalent in maintained (state) schools, by ethnicity, 2005

Ethnicity	White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Chinese	All
% 5 A*-C	35.2	44.7	59.0	40.3	57.1	45.5

Source: Department for Children, Schools and Families

Interviews with teachers and council members indicated that there were many reasons for the relatively low achievement levels in Leicester schools. One teacher who was

interviewed said: “There are a huge number of reasons why there are achievement issues including: levels of children coming into schools, turbulence within key stages due to movement of refugees/asylum seekers, leakage from city to Leicestershire schools and the parallel of affluence and moving out.”

High pupil mobility in the city is identified as one factor contributing towards low attainment levels. This was mainly attributed to a regular influx of various communities into Leicester, and the time taken for them to be settled and allocated housing and schooling. The Leicester City Council Admissions Forum Report for 2007/08 indicates that over 1,000 new pupils applied for places across the city and that “this continues to pose complex challenges to the School Admissions Service and to those schools with space”.⁵⁹ This concurs with comments in a Leicester City Council report that says there are: “significant levels of mobility and turbulence in Leicester’s schools. There were 285 newly arrived pupils at the start of term in September 2006. Between September 2006 and March 2007, and including the above number, there have been 917 new primary school pupils and 544 new secondary students coming to Leicester’s schools.”⁶⁰

A senior member of staff in the city council agreed that some of these factors were affecting attainment levels in Leicester schools, but felt there were also other reasons that were important:

Some of it is about complacency and leadership. I can show you data of similar children in schools in Leicester that are doing well. I think what undermines Leicester is a poverty of aspiration: you have to have aspiration as a city and ambition as a city, you have to encourage aspiration in communities and aspiration within individuals, what I encountered when I came to Leicester (two years ago) was a poverty of aspiration: people who didn’t believe the education system could deliver ... there are kids in other parts of the country with the same demographic profile or the same disadvantaged indices that do better.⁶¹

Sheila Locke, chief executive of the city council, feels that it is as a direct result of this positiveness, “a changing of mindset and an application of learning of some of the professionals” that pupils’ attainment levels, which had remained particularly poor in

⁵⁹ Leicester City Council, *Leicester City Council Admissions Forum Annual Report for 2007/8*, Leicester, Leicester City Admissions Forum, 2008, p. 9. Available at <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council--services/education--lifelong-learning/about-schools/school-admissions/reports> (accessed 1 April 2009).

⁶⁰ Trish Roberts-Thomson, *Report on European Union A8 Migrant Workers in Leicester*, Leicester, Leicester City Council, 2007, p. 5.

⁶¹ Interview with a senior member of the Leicester City Council, Leicester, 25 September 2008.

Key Stage 2 for a number of years, had started to improve dramatically in the previous two years, resulting in a large shift in placement for Leicester in the league tables.⁶²

Jasbir Mann, head of Service for Learning, Transformation and Development, commented also:

Attainment and standard are a big challenge for the authority, the work we are currently involved in is attempting to look at and almost do the analysis school by school. We made an incredible increase in a number of our areas, because I think we're getting better intelligence, better collaboration between different partners focused on what the needs of a community is, e.g. Secondary Education and Improvement Partnerships' systems for analysing our data are better, more people are using data to inform their practices, where it was not that effective previously.⁶³

Leicester schools also appear to have difficulty in retaining children. Most of the interviewees felt that this was due to many parents feeling that Leicestershire county schools generally performed better than Leicester city schools, so many of the brighter students or those of more affluent backgrounds were being transferred to Leicestershire schools in their fifth or sixth year (just before entering secondary school). This further affected Leicester's results, as some of the best performing students were benefiting from the work put into Leicester schools in the early years, only to leave.

Achievement levels among different ethnic groups in Leicester also appear to vary significantly. According to the city's own analysis: "Leicester has high educational achievement amongst Asian students comparable to East Midlands and England averages. However, white, black and mixed heritage students all fare worse than the national average."⁶⁴ Furthermore, rates vary considerably between ethnic groups, Indians performing much better than Bangladeshis and African Caribbean, as stated in document cited above: "Compared to other cities in the region and to England, there is a high proportion of people in Leicester with no qualifications, and a high proportion with both low literacy and low numeracy skills. Low skills are particularly prevalent amongst the white population on the outer estates and amongst the smaller ethnic minority groups in the city such as Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Somalis and African Caribbeans."⁶⁵ An article in the local paper in 2008 also emphasised that "Our standards and socio-economic data tell us that our most serious challenge, in terms of raising standards and closing the attainment gap, lies in the outer-city estates which

⁶² Interview with Sheila Locke, chief executive of Leicester City Council, Leicester, 19 September 2008.

⁶³ Interview with Jasbir Mann, head of Service for Learning, Transformation and Development, Leicester, 23 September 2008.

⁶⁴ City Council and Partnership, *The Diversity of Leicester*, p. 18.

⁶⁵ City Council and Partnership, *The Diversity of Leicester*, p. 18.

have a predominantly white, working-class population.”⁶⁶ This appears to be confirmed when one looks at an overlay of the data on ethnicity and school attainment (as presented above) in which white pupils performed worst in the city, as well as data that look at diversity in wards and performance. Stoneygate, Rushey Mead and Evington, three of the most diverse wards, had the highest levels of attainment at GCSE level in 2008. The Stoneygate result for 5+ A*–C grades was 86.7 per cent, and the results for Rushey Mead and Evington were 71.7 per cent and 61.6 per cent, respectively.⁶⁷ To complete the picture for the three wards examined in the OSI research, Spinney Hills’ result on the same scale was 60.2 per cent (a dramatic improvement from 30.7 per cent in 1997). In the same year, the results for some of the poorer outer-city estates were as low as less than 30 per cent.

Several measures have been undertaken by Leicester City Council to improve attainment. These include the development of Datanet, a central database that allows a greater examination of the issues at school, local and city-wide level. For example, currently it is known that all but two local-authority schools have Muslim children on the school roll; Datanet further enables one to gauge a more detailed breakdown of their ethnicity and their performance, which was not previously possible. If this is better understood, then more specific initiatives can be used to improve attainment levels. More investment has also been made in the Early Years Support Team of the city council to enhance language provision, training to help adults support children better, support for pre-school activity such as mothers’ and toddlers’ groups, and other similar initiatives.⁶⁸

5.3 Muslim Pupils in Leicester Schools

The steady flux of new people coming into and more established persons leaving the city has led to a shift in faith demographics in recent years, rendering the 2001 Census dated in this respect. More recent data can be obtained from analysis of the yearly Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) results,⁶⁹ which gather data based on ethnicity, and the city’s school admissions records (which monitor religious affiliation). It is important to raise the limitation in the data available. The question on religious affiliation in the schools admission records was optional and 23 per cent did not answer it, and it is also estimated by the city council that 11 per cent of 5–16-year-olds

⁶⁶ *Leicester Mercury*, 13 August 2008.

⁶⁷ It is likely that the grades are higher partly due to the presence of private schools in these wards.

⁶⁸ See <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council--services/education--lifelong-learning/about-us/lea-services/special-needs-teaching/3-early-years-support-team>

⁶⁹ This is part of the Department for Children, Schools and Family (DCSF, previously Department for Education and Skills) “Information Management Strategy” (IMS), and has made a major change to the way statistical information is collected from schools. Central government has helped local education authorities and schools with funding to implement the system and it became a statutory requirement from January 2002.

attend independent or county schools. This implies that, although this remains the most complete data available for the moment, the PLASC and admissions data only capture around 66 per cent of the sample. Tables 12 and 13 also show that the admission data table has a lower sample size than the PLASC data table.

These results indicate that a significant shift could be occurring in the ethnic and religious background of pupils in Leicester schools, as compared with the 2001 Census results. Responses to the school admissions survey show that at primary level almost 27 per cent of children are now of a Muslim background (compared with just 11 per cent in the 2001 Census). Furthermore, “two secondary schools have a Muslim majority (one with 88 per cent Muslim students), while 16 primaries have a Muslim majority (two have 95 per cent and one 94 per cent). In all, 25 primary schools (30 per cent) have over 25 per cent Muslim pupils.”⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Clive Billingham, *Faith and Education: Responding to School-based Issues – Islam. Guidance for Schools and Colleges*, Leicester, Islam and Education Network, 2007, p. 6 (hereafter Billingham, *Faith and Education: Responding to School-based Issues*).

Table 12. Ethnicity breakdown in Leicester schools, 2006–2007

	All School	Primary	Secondary	Special	Totals	Grand Totals	Percentages
	Unknown	55	0	0	55	55	0%
	African Asian	347	336	8	691		
	Bangladeshi	535	238	3	776		
Asian	Indian	8469	5507	123	14099		
	Pakistani	864	479	14	1357		
	Other Asian	740	504	20	1264	18187	39%
	Black Caribbean	379	230	12	621		
Black	Black Somail	1262	546	9	1817	3814	8%
	Other Black African	683	354	12	1049		
	Any Other Black Background	194	129	4	327		
	Mixed – White & Asian	423	262	8	693		
Mixed	Mixed – White & Black Asian	194	65	2	261	2778	6%
	Mixed – White & Black Caribbean	688	374	12	1074		
	Any Other Mixed Background	515	230	5	750		
	Chinese	56	39	1	96		
Others	Info Not Yet Obtained	52	123	4	179	1098	2%
	Information Refused	137	101	1	239		
	Any Other Ethnic Group	395	182	7	584		
	White British	11247	7170	393	18810		
	White European	596	276	8	880		
White	White – Irish	65	89	1	155	20594	44%
	White – Traveller of Irish Heritage	35	5	2	42		
	White – Gypsy Roma	17	5	2	24		
	Other White Background	389	235	59	683		
	Total	28337	17479	710	46526		

Source: Leicester City Admissions Forum Annual Report 2006/7

Please note that this data reflects the position 2006/7 and, therefore, excludes Samworth Enterprise Academy and the Madani High School and Community Centre, which opened in September 2007.

Table 13. Leicester City schools, religious affiliation, 2007

	Unknown	Anglican	Buddhist	Catholic	Christian	Hindu	Jewish	Methodist	Muslim	No religion	Other	Sikh	Total
Primary schools													
numbers	1,921	102	11	1,141	4,916	3,360	8	0	6,839	5,587	413	1,185	25,483
%	7.5	0.4	<0.1	4.5	19.3	13.2	<0.1	0.0	26.8	21.9	1.6	4.7	100.0
Secondary schools													
numbers	934	104	15	1,574	3,342	2,941	7	0	3,744	3,050	343	739	16,793
%	5.6	0.6	0.1	9.4	19.9	17.5	0.0	0.0	22.3	18.2	2.0	4.4	100.0
Special school													
numbers	52	27	0	12	183	37	0	1	82	163	26	13	596
%	8.7	4.5	0.0	2.0	30.7	6.2	0	0.2	13.8	27.3	4.4	2.2	100.0

Source: Leicester City Council school admissions data/PLASC

As a result of this increase in numbers of Muslims in schools, the Islam and Education Network (a group of education professionals, both Muslims and non-Muslims, based in Leicester) has put together a booklet called *Faith and Education – Responding to School-based Issues – Islam* (by Clive Billingham, see note 70) for schools to provide advice and guidance for schools and colleges, on how to engage with their Muslim communities and share solutions on possible areas of contention in schools.⁷¹ Issues covered include responses to local problems, with sections on physical education, music, drama, art, Ramadan, dress, visiting places of worship, prayer and other topics.

5.4 Muslim Faith Schools, Madrassas and Segregation

There is considerable debate about the role of faith schools in British society and their possible contribution to segregation. Often in the course of such debates Muslim faith schools become the point of contention even though their numbers are very small compared with other faith schools in the UK.

⁷¹ Billingham, *Faith and Education: Responding to School-based Issues*.

Table 14. Maintained (state) schools in England

	Non-Religious	Church of England	Roman Catholic	Methodist	Other Christian	Jewish	Muslim	Other faith
Primary state schools	11,106	4,441	1,696	26	58	28	4	2
Secondary state schools	2,796	205	343	N/A	41	9	3	2

Source: DCSF, 2008; data recorded as of January 2007

According to the Association of Muslim Schools, the number of full-time Muslim faith schools in the UK is over 130. As previously stated, there are six private Muslim schools in Leicester and one Muslim state school. This school (Madani High School) has voluntary-aided status, the same status as the Catholic schools in the city. They all gained state funding in 2003, although this school has been established and performing well academically for many years. Getting state funding was not easy, the principal of the school, Mohammed Mukadam, said in an interview with the BBC at the time: “The school has been established for over 20 years and the pupils are very excited about this. We applied for government funding 10 years ago so we are glad that Leicester Council is finally accepting diversity.”⁷²

The total number of children attending the six private Muslim schools is 1,091, according to the most recent inspection reports (April 2009) by the Office for Standards and Education (Ofsted).⁷³ Madani High school has another 536 pupils, bringing the total in Muslim schools to 1,627, compared with 10,000 Muslims pupils in non-Muslim state schools. The Muslim schools perform well at GCSE level, ranging from 73 per cent to 87 per cent passes (at 5+ A*–C grades). While there has been much discussion about segregation caused by faith schools in the UK, it should be noted that it is likely that the segregation affecting the majority of pupils in the UK occurs in the state-school sector. The Association of Muslim Schools estimates that only 3 per cent of Muslim children in the UK attend a Muslim school.⁷⁴ However, the data above suggest that in Leicester up to 15 per cent of Muslim pupils attend Muslim

⁷² BBC News online, “Government to Fund Muslim School”, 30 June 2003, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/leicestershire/3033534.stm (accessed 7 August 2009).

⁷³ See http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_providers/list_providers/28leaid29/856/28type29/32768,16384/28typename29/Independent20education/28sort29/datesort,desc/28object_step29/10 (accessed 1 April 2009).

⁷⁴ BBC News online, “Q & A: Muslim Schools”, 7 February 2007, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/6338219.stm> (accessed 1 April 2009).

schools (the exact figure is more difficult to obtain as it is not known how many Muslims attend other non-Muslim private schools).

It is worth noting that, as is the case in towns and cities across the UK, one of the key factors for getting into a school is to live within the priority area (previously known as the catchment area). Given the residential aggregation of ethnic and religious communities, it is therefore common in parts of Leicester for schools to have significantly high numbers of ethnic-minority pupils (over 90 per cent in some cases). In two of our research areas (Evington and Spinney Hills) some state schools are over 90 per cent Asian Muslim by ethnic and faith composition, whereas a Stoneygate school and schools in other parts of Leicester might have 90 per cent white enrolment. One parent described the dilemma in an interview: “The state schools in the area don’t perform that well, so you either have to move to a better area, put your children into a Muslim school (which does well), or send your children to a very expensive private school. The cheapest option is to go to a Muslim school.” This sentiment, coupled with the success of Muslim schools, has meant that demand for Muslim schools has been quite high in Leicester.

Leicester Muslims (especially those of Indian and Pakistani origin), have a long tradition of children attending madrassas, mosques or Islamic centres after school to learn to read the Qur’an (in Arabic) and learn more about Islam. This often results in many Muslim children attending a session of 1.5–2 hours after school every weekday. The Federation of Muslim Organisations (FMO) is currently working with just over 60 madrassas in the city providing training on standards, health and safety.⁷⁵ Asked whether attending such madrassas affected a child’s ability to perform well academically, and perhaps indirectly affect attainment levels, Sheila Locke commented: “I would say look at Taylor Rd Primary School, which has a high percentage of Somali kids (who attend madrassa), but they have been the top performing primary school in the city for the last two years. Giving children the confidence to speak different languages and learn and read in a different language is a strength, and so we have to see the madrassa model as a strength and not a deficit.”⁷⁶

Richard Wale (head of City Council’s Multicultural Services) also felt that many teachers did not necessarily understand madrassas and might therefore see them as a barrier or problematic for their teaching methods. “However, teachers should rather acknowledge it as something that is recognised; show that the school values and recognises its worth. This would help Muslim students feel a greater sense of

⁷⁵ The madrassas serve children aged around 6–13 and vary considerably in the number of pupils that attend, from just a few children in a large living room to over 100 in larger facilities such as mosques or community centres.

⁷⁶ Interview with Sheila Locke, 19 September 2008.

appreciation for their life experiences and feel they are a valued member of this society.”⁷⁷

More research would be beneficial in this area, as there does not appear to be any documented evidence available on the numbers of children attending madrassas, how long for, whether it affects their ability to participate in extracurricular activities, if it interferes with homework and whether it helps children become more rounded individuals. Furthermore, it would be useful to look at ways in which greater partnerships could be built between schools and madrassas to share resources and expertise.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 brought in a duty for all maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion. This duty came into effect on 1 September 2007 and will also now become part of the Ofsted inspection of schools. It is still too soon to see what effect the duty has at a local level, but it provides an important impetus for schools to reach out to the community and also to engage with audiences of a different ethnic profile from their pupils. There are already discussions of how schools can twin and link with other schools in the city located in different wards.

5.5 Language and Educational Achievement

National and local statistics show that the percentage of primary-school pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English (from January 2005) was very high compared with other cities in the region and the national average (Table 15).

Table 15. Percentage of pupils whose first language is not English

Area	%
Leicester	44.6
Nottingham	15.0
East Midlands	7.2
England	11.7

Sources: Leicester City Council, 2008; Leicester Partnership, 2008

Whether language affects the educational attainment of children in schools is strongly contested. Some teachers interviewed felt that spoken English could be picked up relatively quickly by children. However, the inability to grasp grammar and vocabulary

⁷⁷ Interview with Richard Wale, head of the Leicester City Council’s Multicultural Services, Leicester, September 2008.

in later years could affect some children's ability to understand concepts and issues of more depth taught in the classroom. Research shows that pupils who acquire English as a second language face difficulties in the early stage of the acquisition of English, performing at low levels educationally, but later when fluency increases, they may actually go on to perform better than the average English-only speakers at GCSE level.⁷⁸

Sheila Locke and Jasbir Mann (Leicester City Council) both felt that the ability to understand and speak more than one language was actually something very positive for the city, but perhaps was not always being interpreted in this way, to the detriment of the children. School league tables and Ofsted reports on schools in the areas looked at for this research (Stoneygate, Evington and Spinney Hills) further verify this. The Ofsted reports indicate that despite English not being a first language for many children, they have still been able to achieve good results; the schools were awarded grades 1 (outstanding) or 2 (good) on most counts,⁷⁹ and these schools also feature quite highly in the league tables for the city.⁸⁰

5.6 Initiatives to Improve Achievement

With the new focus on the underachievement of ethnic-minority pupils, particularly those of African-Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds in the UK, there are now signs of improvement in these groups. Ofsted has shown that the achievement of Bangladeshi pupils is on the increase.⁸¹

Strand argues that any gap in attainment due to ethnicity needs to be contextualised by also looking at other gaps due to, for example, social class, which was wider in his study. He also mentions that there are broadly three categories of explanation for the different attainment of ethnic groups: social class and the impact on the environment of the pupil, the cultural impact of some ethnic groups on aspiration, and teachers' expectations and institutional discrimination.⁸² Wilson et al. further found that an increase in ethnic-minority attainment occurs most significantly in secondary

⁷⁸ Feysa Demie and Steve Strand, "English Language Acquisition and Educational Attainment at the End of Secondary School", *Educational Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 2006, pp. 215–231.

⁷⁹ See Ofsted reports for Linden, Mayflower and Whitehall schools. Available at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk> (accessed 10 August 2009).

⁸⁰ BBC News online, "Primary Schools in Leicester", available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/education/08/school_tables/primary_schools/html/agg_856.stm (accessed 1 April 2009).

⁸¹ Ofsted, "Achievement of Bangladeshi Heritage Pupils", May 2004, available at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Education/Inclusion/Minority-ethnic-children/Achievement-of-Bangladeshi-heritage-pupils> (accessed 10 August 2009).

⁸² Steve Strand, *Minority Ethnic Pupils in the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England*, DfES Research Report RR-002, London, Department for Children, Families and Schools, 2007.

education and on the approach to examinations at GCSE level.⁸³ Accounting for other factors as well, these researchers felt this indicated that aspiration was high among ethnic minorities in order to achieve mobility via education.⁸⁴

The council has focused some of its efforts on providing specific research and support for the growing Muslim student population of Leicester. It has a well-established SACRE. Leicester City schools are also well supported by the Multicultural and Religious Education Centre, funded by SACRE, which supports the purchasing of good quality artefacts, journals, CDs, posters, DVDs and books on different religions. SACRE advisers are also available to teachers for help and support in teaching a faith that they may be less familiar with.

The questionnaire results demonstrate that although the vast majority of Muslims (60 per cent) and non-Muslims (51 per cent) indicate that they are happy with the way schools respect the religious customs of others, and feel schools have got the balance about right, twice the number of non-Muslims (over 12 per cent, compared with 5.9 per cent Muslims) indicated that perhaps too much was being done in this area, while nearly 22 per cent of Muslims (compared with only 13 per cent of non-Muslims) felt too little was being done.

The council has also formed partnerships with organisations such as the School Development Support Agency (SDSA) to help produce materials specific to Islam and Muslims. The SDSA has supported the “Curriculum Reflecting Experiences of African Caribbean and Muslim Pupils” (CREAM) project in Leicester⁸⁵ and currently works in partnership with the Leicester Complementary Schools Trust (LCST), which is involved in some innovative work with madrassas, looking at ways of sharing good practice, providing training for those running classes and, crucially, developing partnerships between complementary and mainstream schools to share information about children’s needs.⁸⁶ A more recent project known as the “School Linking Network” is currently being developed by the SDSA as part of the city’s “Community Cohesion” strategy. It will help schools in the city to forge links with other schools of different religious or ethnic make-up, to explore similarities and differences.

A number of community organisations are also emerging to which both ethnic and faith groups are turning to for educational advice, for example Aqoon Education and Training Services. This was set up by a group of Somali professionals to help identify

⁸³ Deborah Wilson, Simon Burgess and Adam Briggs, *The Dynamics of School Attainment of England’s Ethnic Minorities*, CMPO Working Paper Series No. 05/130, Bristol, CMPO, University of Bristol, 2005, p. 16.

⁸⁴ Tariq Modood, *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity and Muslims in Britain*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2005.

⁸⁵ See School Development Support Agency (SDSA), *Curriculum Reflecting Experiences of African Caribbean and Muslim Pupils*, Leicester, SDSA, 2004.

⁸⁶ See <http://www.phf.org.uk/page.asp?id=131> (accessed 1 April 2009).

and address any specific educational and training needs of the new Somali community in Leicester.

The OSI questionnaire results indicate that a reasonably high percentage of people in Leicester are “very satisfied” or “fairly satisfied” with primary-school education. Muslims were generally more satisfied (looking at both “very satisfied” and “fairly satisfied” answers) with local primary schools than non-Muslims (64.7 per cent compared with 53 per cent). Similarly, many people seem fairly satisfied with secondary and higher-level (college) education: 57.9 per cent of Muslims and 49 per cent of non-Muslims. A closer look at the results in both these sections, however, also reveals that a significant number of Muslims (over 20 per cent, for both primary and secondary results) have indicated that they are either “fairly dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with the schools in Leicester. This is significantly higher than the 5 per cent and 10 per cent of non-Muslims who responded in a similar way about primary and secondary education respectively. This could reflect the large number of Muslim children in state schools, or it may also be an indication of the level of attainment of Muslim children.

Although this research did not focus on university education, one point about chaplaincy provision at university did arise. Currently there are chaplaincy provisions at the university, but capacity is limited and only voluntary services exist for Muslim pupils. Given the concern about the vulnerability of students on campus and their possible exposure to extremist messages, more attention could be devoted to providing better resourced chaplaincy services in the two universities in the city. Chaplaincy training is now provided by the Markfield Institute of Higher Education, which offers a certificate in chaplaincy⁸⁷ developed with the Anglican Diocese of Leicester. There is also a national Association of Muslim Chaplains in Education⁸⁸ to support chaplaincy needs.

Education is a major concern for parents and, particularly in the context of this study, an important policy arena. The picture in Leicester is quite mixed in that while state schools have not performed as well as other cities in the region, there has been marked improvement in recent years. Muslim parents seem to have opted for private education in significant numbers and there also appears to be a steady drift of the more affluent away from the city to the higher-achieving schools in the county. Ironically, this may contribute to the challenges the city faces in education, creating something akin to a brain-drain effect. There is a strong correlation with housing, area of residence and quality of schooling. However, the most significant challenge for the city in terms of educational attainment seems not to be ethnic-minority pupils, but white pupils in the most deprived parts of the city. For example, in Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields ward, the result for 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE level in 2008 was just below 30 per cent. Thus while institutional discrimination may remain an important factor, social class

⁸⁷ See <http://www.mihe.org.uk/mihe/detail.php?page=102&s=13> (accessed 1 May 2009).

⁸⁸ See <http://www.amced.org.uk> (accessed 1 May 2009).

and a culture of aspiration for success through education seem to be crucial factors in educational achievement. Another important policy issue is the shifting demographics of the pupils in schools. Based on the most recent admission data, Muslim children now constitute nearly a quarter of the state school population.

6. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: EMPLOYMENT

This chapter looks at the employment situation of Muslims in Leicester and examines some of the barriers faced by them in accessing and fully participating in the labour market. It looks at employment figures for ethnic minorities on the national and city of Leicester levels, experiences and perceptions of discrimination and, finally, efforts undertaken to improve access to employment by local institutions and organisations.

Participation in the labour market remains at the core of economic integration, which requires not only opportunities for employment, but employment in the mainstream labour market and in jobs that are commensurate to an individual's skills and qualifications. Labour-market participation can be measured through employment and unemployment rates and levels of economic inactivity.

A report by the OSI revealed that Muslims in the UK have an employment rate of 38 per cent, the lowest of all faith groups.⁸⁹ No single reason has shown why employment rates are low among Muslims, but factors such as educational qualifications, living in disadvantaged areas and discrimination are listed as some of the contributory factors. Muslims also have the highest unemployment rate compared with other faiths, and at 15 per cent it is approximately three times higher than Christians and Hindus; moreover, 52 per cent of Muslims are found to be economically inactive compared with a third of other faith groups. Economic inactivity broken down by gender shows that of Muslim women of working age (16–59), 69 per cent are economically inactive (compared with 25 per cent of Christian women); for Muslim men, this figure is 31 per cent (compared with 16 per cent for Christian men).⁹⁰

According to NOMIS (Official Labour Market Statistics, ONS), in 2008 the unemployment rate⁹¹ for Leicester was estimated to be 11.4 per cent, the highest of all local authorities outside London (where Tower Hamlets had 11.7 per cent unemployment). Economic inactivity levels in Leicester (male 18 per cent, female 34 per cent) are also higher than the UK average (17 per cent for men, 26 per cent for women).

The overall employment rate in Leicester in 2004 was 66.4 per cent, 8.4 per cent lower than the rate for England, which was 74.9 per cent. In the previous year (2003) Leicester's employment rate by ethnicity varied considerably, with Pakistanis and Bangladeshis at 42.4 per cent, black 60.3 per cent, white 76.3 per cent and Indian 68.5 per cent.⁹²

⁸⁹ Tufyal Choudhury (ed.), *Muslims in the UK: Policies for Engaged Citizens*, Budapest, Open Society Institute, 2005, p. 196 (hereafter Choudhury, *Muslims in the UK*).

⁹⁰ Choudhury, *Muslims in the UK*.

⁹¹ Measured as a percentage of those economically active.

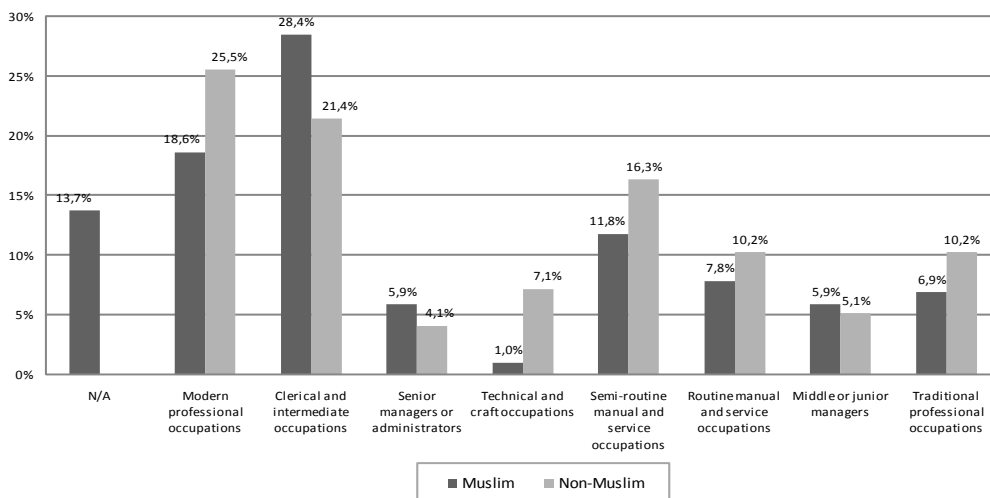
⁹² ONS, *Annual Labour Force Survey*, 2002/03, cited in City Council and Partnership, *The Diversity of Leicester*, p. 17.

The figure for the Pakistani and Bangladeshi group is unreliable as a measure for Leicester’s Muslims mainly because Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities do not account for the proportion of Muslims in Leicester that they do in many other British cities. This figure does not include recent Somali migrants who are entitled to work, but face several challenges in obtaining employment. Suggestions from some in the Somali community in the city are that the unemployment rates are significant within this ethnic group; figures quoted have been in excess of 75 per cent, though this is difficult to verify due to the lack of data.

The majority of participants in the OSI survey and focus groups were found to be in employment: 85 per cent of questionnaire respondents had been in full or part-time employment in the last five years, while 39 per cent were in current full-time employment and 21 per cent were employed part-time. Of the respondents, 36 per cent were currently not working, of which 10 per cent were students or had retired. In addition, 65 per cent of the unemployed had worked in either full- or part-time employment in the last five years.

Figure 10 shows employment by occupation of Muslims and non-Muslims taken from the 200 OSI questionnaires.

Figure 10. Occupations of respondents to OSI questionnaire



Source: Open Society Institute

A third of Muslim respondents worked in clerical or intermediate occupations (such as secretary, administrator and personal assistant). The majority of non-Muslims in the sample and 20 per cent of Muslims worked in modern professional occupations, such as teachers, social workers and welfare officers. Very few Muslim respondents worked in technical and craft occupations such as motor mechanics, plumbers and gardeners.

The ONS data show that Spinney Hills ward has a higher concentration of employees in the lower-end professions. In 2001, 26.7 per cent of employees in Spinney Hills⁹³ were in process plant and machine operation, compared with 15.6 per cent in Leicester overall and 8.7 per cent in the UK.⁹⁴

6.1 Discrimination and Barriers to Employment

The OSI survey explored the climate for Muslims in the labour market over the last five years and their experiences. When asked “To what extent do employers respect religious customs”, it was found that Muslims and non-Muslims shared similar views on the extent to which employers respect religious diversity. The majority of both groups said employers did show the right degree of respect for religious customs; 21 per cent of Muslims and 17 per cent of non-Muslims felt that there was too little respect for religious customs and very few (1 per cent of Muslims, 2 per cent of non-Muslims) felt that employers respected religious customs more than they should.

In response to questions dealing with perceptions of discrimination and prejudice, the respondents showed differences about the effect of discrimination. Among respondents, a greater proportion of Muslims (29 per cent) than non-Muslims (19 per cent) had been turned down for a job in the UK in the last five years. When asked did they feel discriminated against at work, 9.8 per cent of Muslims, or nearly 1 in 10, believed they had been discriminated against at work over promotion or a move to a better position. By comparison, only one in five non-Muslim respondents answered the same. Moreover, in addition to these respondents, more than a third of the Muslim respondents (37.1 per cent) could not state with certainty that discrimination played no part in career progression or promotion, whereas 96.3 per cent of non-Muslims were sure they had not been discriminated against.

This was further explored in the focus groups where participants gave personal examples to show that they had been discriminated against in obtaining employment. One respondent of an ethnic-minority background had applied for a number of jobs in administration and despite having the qualifications for the job was repeatedly turned down. However, he then applied for work in the same field with the name David and succeeded in getting to the interview level. He felt that his name, recognised as being foreign or Muslim, had led to him being discriminated against and therefore less likely to obtain an interview. The jobs he was applying for were general administrative tasks dealing with customer complaints.

A distinction was made in employment between the public and the private sectors. Many of the participants argued that due to strong equal opportunities policies, the

⁹³ Figures for Stoneygate and Evington were 16.6 per cent and 13.7 per cent respectively.

⁹⁴ NOMIS official labour market statistics, “Ward Labour Market Profile: Spinney Hills”, ONS, available at <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/ward/1308628251/report.aspx#ls> (accessed 1 May 2009).

public sector must be seen to be fair; the application process ensures that the chance of discrimination is minimised. Muslims also said that they preferred working for the public sector as they felt that their employers respected religious practices, such as prayer, more than in the private sector. One participant had left his private accountancy firm due to difficulties of taking time out for prayers and the culture of his working environment:

I made a conscious decision to move into the public sector ... where I think ... you know there's a bit more respect in terms of all your religious practices.

Other barriers in employment that some Muslims felt they faced were related to their appearance. A Muslim female who was dressed in clothing such as the headscarf (*hijab*) or the long overcoat (*jilbab*) would receive a reaction from other people, or such clothing would create a sense of uneasiness in the employment arena, and for men the beard would have a similar impact.

For some Muslims, practices based on their interpretations of religious requirements, such as avoiding shaking hands with members of the opposite gender, were felt to create barriers. One example was given by a Muslim man who explained that when he started an interview he did not shake the interviewer's hand, explaining it was due to his religious belief that those of the opposite gender should not have physical contact. He felt that this created "a distance, a barrier was created straight away". A female respondent said that as she wears the headscarf and long overcoat people are initially wary in their approach to her. She did not, however, put this down to negative prejudice.

Respondents felt that subtle prejudices did exist when it came to interviews with people who wear a *hijab* or have a beard: "We are stereotyped via the media and, so naturally, this is to be expected" was how one participant explained his understanding of barriers in employment. Some respondents laid the blame on the media as they felt prejudices stem from negative portrayals of Muslims there.

Although there was a consensus that covert prejudices and barriers did exist in employment, some participants felt that members of the Muslim community could at times make it difficult for employers. This comment was illustrated by one respondent who discussed the importance of being a good role model and ensuring that opportunities offered by employers are not abused, by for example taking longer than necessary to complete daily prayers. Having worked in a job where there were few Muslim work colleagues, he felt that by respecting his employer he presented a positive example and as a result his employer was more likely to recruit Muslims in the future.

6.2 Muslim Women and Employment

The "Gender and Employment in Local Labour Markets" research programme found that women from ethnic-minority communities experience high rates of

unemployment and are also in low-paid labour market sectors.⁹⁵ This research was carried out in nine English regions, one of which was Leicester. It was highlighted that in Leicester Indian women were heavily concentrated in the lowest-paid jobs and were over-represented in the manufacturing sector. It was found that ethnic-minority women often got “ethnic-minority focused jobs”.⁹⁶

Three challenges were identified: the traditional design of jobs, managerial attitudes and the need for employers to understand the value of part-time work across all occupations. Furthermore, this research identified that some employers held negative and outdated stereotypes of Muslim women, such as that women wanted to work in a single-sex environment or that there was a high chance of women wanting to leave work due to getting married.

In November 2006, research was conducted by the city council on Muslim women of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali origin in Leicester.⁹⁷ It explored their progress in the labour market and work environment and found that many of the women from such backgrounds were working in manual, professional and service sectors. Few women were self-employed or had progressed to managerial level.

In an interview for this report Asif Khan, who led the above research, spoke of the main challenges for these Muslim women in advancing their careers and found that the primary barrier was lack of proficiency in English. He suggested that many of the women could not afford to pay to learn English. Low qualifications and a lack of experience in the employment market were also significant barriers, leading to low self-confidence as well as actual deficits in skills. Access to appropriate advice about employment opportunities also appears to be an issue. Other challenges included cultural barriers and expectations from within their own communities, which limit their options in choices for employment; families tend to be less supportive of women in employment.⁹⁸

Discrimination in the workplace is also a factor raised in a study of second-generation British Muslim women and their position in the labour market. Zamila Bunglawala found that despite high levels of educational achievement and fluency in the English

⁹⁵ Sue Yeandle, *Gender and Employment in Local Labour Markets Research Programme (Director's Final Report)*, Sheffield, Centre for Social Inclusion, Sheffield Hallam University, 2006 (hereafter Yeandle, *Gender and Employment*).

⁹⁶ Yeandle, *Gender and Employment*, p. 4.

⁹⁷ Asif Khan, *Making it Happen – A Study into the Barriers Faced by Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali Women when Accessing the Labour Market and Progression in Work*, Leicester, Leicester City Council, 2006 (hereafter Khan, *Making it Happen*).

⁹⁸ Interview with Asif Khan, employment engagement officer, Leicester, June 2008.

language, economic inactivity among Muslim women of the second generation was still high (51 per cent).⁹⁹

6.3 Vocational Choices of Muslims

It has been observed that many Muslims generally tend to choose to study the sciences, information technology, law and business, as opposed to the arts and humanities.¹⁰⁰ According to Leicester College, courses such as Computing, Business Studies and Engineering normally have a higher uptake of BME students, of which many are Muslims. The reasons for these choices were a presumption that to take these subjects at university level would lead to a better job and prospects. Factors that influenced Muslims to study these subjects included family wishes and advice as well as a feeling that these are thought to be steady and secure careers.

Nick Carter, previous editor of the city newspaper the *Leicester Mercury*, felt that there are too few Muslims entering the field of journalism, as this is perceived as an unstable profession when compared with subjects such as the sciences.¹⁰¹ The project director of the Leicester Asian Youth Association, Mohammed Nasim, said that although the trend was that Muslims were studying subjects like law, sciences and information technology there is also a growing recognition among Muslim youth that there are gaps in employment where Muslims are few in number, such as media studies.¹⁰²

Priorities for other groups such as Muslim women included the home; they are keen to find employment in areas where they are able to work around their children and families and hence are increasingly going into child care and teaching courses. “Many of them look for work within the locality that they are living in,” said Tahera Khan from her personal observations and interaction with Muslim women in Leicester.¹⁰³ Other factors that influence employment choices are family and friends rather than career services and future prospects; the outlook is often short- and medium-term rather than long-term career development.

Harjinder Singh, faith ambassador from Leicester College, emphasises that from his interactions with students and observations, he sees that many Muslim students are encouraged to study certain subjects for better career prospects due to family pressure,

⁹⁹ Zamila Bunglawala, *Valuing Family, Valuing Work: British Muslim Women and the Labour Market*, London, London Development Agency and Young Foundation, 2008, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ Based on interviews conducted with OSI respondents, education specialists, community leaders and professionals in Leicester.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Nick Carter, former editor of the *Leicester Mercury*, Leicester, 14 May 2008.

¹⁰² Interview with Mohamed Nasim, project director, Leicester Asian Youth Association, Leicester, 13 June 2008.

¹⁰³ Interview with Tahera Khan, project director, Refugee and Asylum Seekers Advice Project (RASAP), Leicester, 13 June 2008.

and therefore they are less likely to use student services or career advisers.¹⁰⁴ Singh also suggested that due to the strong family bonds in Asian communities, employment is often sought in areas where it is easy to commute. He mentioned that there is now increasing uptake of student services, counsellors, learning mentors, career advisers by Asians in colleges and universities and the college is encouraging all students, including Muslim students, to use these services. However, those Muslims who are unemployed and outside the education system do not know where to turn to for advice, although a small number use the job centre.

6.4 Efforts to Improve Access to Employment

Initiatives by Job Centre Plus to improve access to employment have been welcomed by employers and have shown that active steps are being taken in Leicester city to combat unemployment levels. In an interview with Marina Duckmanton from Job Centre Plus, initiatives were highlighted, including taking employers to community centres, temples and mosques with the aim of working with communities and faith leaders in showcasing opportunities in employment. This initiative has taken into consideration barriers that ethnic minorities may often face. An example was given of how this approach has worked in partnership with the Leicester City Strategy and the Highcross shopping centre development, when 120 employers came to the city and were involved in a roadshow for the community which has had successful outcomes.¹⁰⁵

Another example given was of the New Deal Traineeship, funded by Leicester City Council as part of the government's "Welfare to Work" strategy. This initiative is targeted at young people aged 18–24 years old who have been unemployed for six months and for those older than 25 who have been unemployed for over 18 months. Job centres refer individuals to this scheme, which provides them with support such as advice, help with CVs, mentoring programmes, help with confidence issues and general support in social issues that act as barriers to employment.¹⁰⁶

Leicester City Council and major local employers have signed up to the Job Service Partnership (JSP) Guarantee Scheme, which is targeted at disadvantaged groups, including ethnic-minority communities. The scheme offers intensive one-to-one advice, guidance and support to individuals who lack skills or confidence in accessing employment. The aim of this scheme is to bring major local employers such as Asda and De Montfort University together with those seeking employment.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Harjinder Singh, Leicester College Faith Ambassador, Leicester, 14 June 2008. A faith ambassador in the college performs a pastoral care role, offering advice to students and the college on faith matters.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Marina Duckmanton, business development manager, Job Centre Plus, Leicester, May 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Marina Duckmanton, May 2009.

Tahera Khan, project director with the Refugee and Asylum Seekers Advice Project (RASAP), stressed that initiatives to improve access to employment of migrants, asylum seekers and Muslim women are high on local government's agenda. "RASAP understands the needs of refugees and more intensive work is needed regarding how to write CVs and single parent families, the employment needs are different, there needs to be a faith friendly environment."¹⁰⁷ This project, funded by Leicester City Council, helps with integration into the wider community by supporting individuals in applications and referrals.

Many of Leicester's migrants and asylum seekers are Muslims of largely Somali background; others are of Iraqi, Sudanese, Iranian, Congo, Albanian and Kosovar origin.¹⁰⁸ Many refugees are single mothers¹⁰⁹ seeking work but facing a number of barriers. The first is language: many of them have difficulty communicating in English and therefore cannot access the labour market. Many have applied for ESOL¹¹⁰ courses, but due to financial pressures they are forced to take employment in low-paid sectors such as cleaning and packing, where significant English-language skills are not needed.

A lack of information and understanding of the documents that grant refugee status, combined with fears about penalties for hiring illegal workers, make many employers reluctant to employ refugees.¹¹¹ There is therefore a need to provide better advice and training to employers to assist them in reviewing legal documents that allow people in these new communities to work.

With 50 per cent of the UK's Muslim population below the age of 25, according to the 2001 Census, and factoring in the picture that has emerged from research on Muslims constituting a high proportion of the pupil numbers of state schools in Leicester, young people of Muslim background could be a significant factor for the future of the labour market. This was discussed at the OSI roundtable and concern was raised that considerable attention is needed to look at potential barriers to accessing employment and the choice of employment options, and – particularly for newer communities – culture-specific ways to promote the integration, especially of women, into the labour market.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Tahera Khan, 13 June 2008.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Tahera Khan, 13 June 2008.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Tahera Khan, 13 June 2008.

¹¹⁰ English for Speakers of Other Languages.

¹¹¹ Interview with Tahera Khan, 13 June 2008.

7. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: HOUSING

Homelessness, either living on the streets or in temporary accommodation, is clearly a barrier to social inclusion. But long before this level of disruption, living in poor housing conditions can undermine social inclusion and may have a detrimental impact on health. Overcrowding can contribute to disadvantage in other areas. For example, there is less space for young children to study, complete homework or revise for exams, which can affect educational attainment and subsequent employability. Teenagers are more likely to be outside in the streets. Furthermore, the lack of privacy and space can increase stress and affect mental health and family relationships.

This focus of this chapter is the examination of interviewees' perceptions and experiences of housing and their neighbourhoods. It begins with an outline of the reasons for settlement in the areas, their experiences and perceptions of the neighbourhoods and their residents, and the features they like and dislike about their area. It examines efforts under way to improve access to and quality of housing, both of which are inextricably linked to identity and belonging.

The three wards surveyed in Leicester show a variation in housing type and size. In Spinney Hills detached and semi-detached housing constitutes less than 18 per cent of the housing stock; by contrast this figure is 76 per cent in Evington. Furthermore, the average household size in Spinney Hills is three people and the average number of rooms per household is 4.76; in Evington the average household size is 2.4 people and the average number of rooms per household is 5.39.¹¹²

Analysis of the 2001 Census data for England shows that overcrowding in Muslim homes tends to be worse due to larger family sizes and lower household income.¹¹³ According to the data, 19 per cent of dependent children in Leicester experience overcrowding¹¹⁴ compared with 12.5 per cent nationally.¹¹⁵

Muslims in England are also more likely to be found in social housing than the general population (28 per cent compared with 20 per cent) and in private rentals (17 per cent

¹¹² Leicester City Council, *Census 2001 Key Facts: Ward Profiles: Households: Housing*, Leicester, Leicester City Council, 2003, p. 2.

¹¹³ Patricia Sellick, *Muslim Housing Experiences*. London, Housing Corporation, 2004 (hereafter Sellick, *Muslim Housing Experiences*); Farooq Murad and Tariq Saeed (eds), *Understanding the Housing Needs and Aspirations of the Muslim Communities: A Case Study of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea*, London, North London Muslim Housing Association, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Notting Hill Housing Trust, 2004.

¹¹⁴ A property is considered to be overcrowded if either the room standard or the space standard is exceeded. There should be sufficient rooms in each individual letting so that no male and female aged 12 or over should have to sleep in the same room, unless they are living together as "husband and wife". The maximum number of people per room ratio (people:room) is 2:1 room, 3:2 rooms, 5:3 rooms, 7.5:4 rooms or two people for each room for 5+ rooms.

¹¹⁵ City Council and Partnership, *The Diversity of Leicester*, p. 20.

compared with 10 per cent). About half of Muslim households (51 per cent) are homeowners, compared with 69 per cent of the general population.¹¹⁶ This may not hold true in Leicester for all Muslim communities, due to the ethnic and socio-economic divergence. Of the Muslims interviewed by OSI, 40 per cent were owner-occupiers, with just under half of those still paying a mortgage and just under 15 per cent living in social housing. Over half of the non-Muslims interviewed owned their homes, with nearly a third owning them outright (without a mortgage) and only 10 per cent living in social housing. Although clear comparisons with national patterns are not possible given the national breakdown into subdivisions by ethnicity, there are indications that both groups are prospering better than the national averages. By way of an example, over 85 per cent of social tenants in England are classed as white-British and nearly one-fifth (19 per cent) of this group is in social housing, approximately double the figure for Leicester.

This differences in housing may not indicate any disadvantages faced by Muslims in respect of property rights, and could be explained by a difference in demographic profiles, with Muslim households being relatively younger than their non-Muslim counterparts. Three-quarters of the non-Muslims interviewed had lived there for over 10 years, and a quarter for more than 30 years, whereas the largest Muslim group was the one-third who had lived in the local area for 6–10 years.

7.1 Perspectives on the Local Area

For the purposes of the survey, “neighbourhood” was taken to mean the immediate streets around one’s home, whereas one’s “local area” meant the area roughly within 15–20 minutes’ walk from home. Muslims (97 per cent) and non-Muslims (87 per cent) registered very high levels of satisfaction with living in their neighbourhood. The levels of satisfaction did not differ according to perceptions of the visible presence of ethnic and religious diversity in the neighbourhood.

Broad similarities arise in the main reason for moving to or living in the area, although there are distinct differences worth noting. Among Muslims, 15.2 per cent said it was their parents’ house or decision to live there, compared with 20.2 per cent of non-Muslims. To be near family was equally weighted between the two groups at about 7 per cent of the reasons given; so too was the area being multicultural, which 1 per cent cited as the main reason for choosing to live there. Non-Muslims cited cost, being close to work and being offered social housing more often than Muslim respondents, though at the rates implied in these categories (all less than 10 per cent), the differential of the figures may not be statistically significant enough.

Nearly two-thirds of Muslims, however, indicated their main reason was something “other”. The Muslim respondents cited convenient proximity to people and services

¹¹⁶ Sellick, *Muslim Housing Experiences*, p. 2; David Cheesman, *Sector Study 46: Muslim Tenants in Housing Associations: Feedback and Engagement*, London, Housing Corporation, 2005.

connected to the Muslim faith, including mosques and religious learning opportunities for their children. Such comments were not exclusive, however, and were made alongside more general observations, such as the area being well equipped with good amenities and nice people who “mixed well”.

Muslim families expressed aspirations to relocate to adjacent or nearby wards for quality of living, schooling, and a better social and aesthetic environment. These aspirations were weighed up against fear of racism in new areas, ease of access to religious and cultural services and close proximity of other family members or close friends. Residents spoke of a sense of duty to what they saw as the accomplishments of the preceding generation; leaving their ward amounted to turning away from the religiously inspired provisions and services that their parents’ generation and fellow locals had accomplished over time. Homes that can accommodate larger families, in some cases that could include three generations, would have priority over homes with better aesthetics and gardens. A mosque “within walking distance” was an indication of suitability of housing choice, but this was expressed in terms of the key beneficiaries being the elderly and because of related facilities offering religious learning for the children of the house. Moving to an adjacent, more prosperous, ward would be to deny both generations these opportunities. Such tensions between aspirations and generational needs were often expressed in terms of difficult choices, of doing away with the added pressure from not having closer facilities and even guilt. Although staying within the familiar also meant staying close to family and old friends, not all family and old friends would remain and some had relocated to neighbouring wards.

One focus group participant, who spoke of such pressure from efforts to meet the needs of children’s religious learning through classes in homes, complained of a “jealousy” shrouded in “racism”. Neighbours of other faiths would make formal complaints about the noise or nuisance resulting from the use of private homes for religious tuition, even though only two families attended and noise was restricted to motor vehicles dropping the children off. Another respondent, answering what she liked most, said her new residential area was a “nicer area than Highfields” (Muslim majority), where they had moved from. The comment was made with reference to general aesthetics, schooling, property conditions and class. She also added that “people are less friendly” in their new ward.

One of the participants in a focus group commented,

You see the house prices in Highfields going through the roof because everyone wants to live there, because they feel safe and they feel secure ... It’s nothing to do with the police; we feel secure because I personally think it’s a nice Muslim community.

According to local estate agents, roads close to mosques in more affluent areas of the city, such as Evington, experience higher demand for property from Muslim clients.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Question to Moore and York estate agents, Leicester, March 2009.

Results from the survey showed that the presence of a mosque in close proximity was not the most important requirement for Muslim residents (Figure 11a). However, it was still an important factor, jointly as important as a feeling of safety. The presence and extra services of a mosque (consisting, most notably, of religious learning opportunities for children) needed to be within easy reach but not necessarily within walking distance, though this would not be convenient for elderly men in the habit of frequenting the mosque for prayer and social bonding. The service provisions of the mosque did not automatically equate to an equal desire to live within Muslim concentrations, with equal but smaller numbers of Muslims responding as both liking and disliking a majority concentration of Muslims in their neighbourhood. By contrast, no Muslim respondent disliked the presence of a mosque nearby (unlike a very small number of non-Muslim respondents) and none pointed out a presence of residential Islamophobia as a dislike.

Aside from specifying mosques, the likes and dislikes (see Figures 11a, 11b, and Tables 16, 17) match those of non-Muslim respondents. Parking problems and the perceptions of newcomers crowded into houses, with a wider neglect of the physical environment compounded by litter suggesting the area was going downhill, featured in responses from both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Additionally, a dislike of “immigrants” (unspecified) was found among Muslim and non-Muslim respondents,¹¹⁸ though the numbers in each case were small. Another related dislike among Muslims was cultural segregation, where people of the same ethnicity and/or religion would appear to keep to each other, including sections of Muslims. In the focus groups, one Muslim participant criticised this practice among some Muslims as “ghettoisation”.

7.2 Efforts to Improve Access to Housing

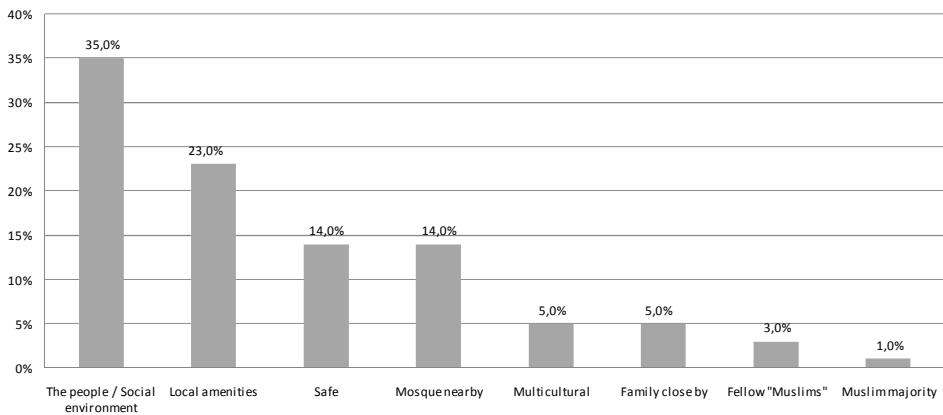
Leicester City Council’s “Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy” 2004 confirmed the need for large family accommodation and set its development on sites preferred by BME communities as a strategic priority. The strategy noted that most of the Pakistani (Muslim) community in Leicester live in the Highfields area, where many households are overcrowded and are on low incomes. Community members stated that there is a lack of confidence to request services to which they are entitled. The community is also not aware of all the housing services that exist that would benefit them, so that there are also problems of access and communication.

Similarly, the strategy stated that a main housing need identified for the Somali community is also large family accommodation. It is necessary to promote housing services to the Somali community, as representatives have stated that many Somalis are unaware of what services the Housing Department provides.

¹¹⁸ In a few other responses categories were specified: “Somali” and “Eastern European”.

In conclusion, the Muslim participants in this study expressed no barriers of discrimination specifically related to their faith in accessing housing, although studies by the council (in 2004) showed a need to communicate services more effectively and develop strategies for large family accommodation. Besides recent migrants from Somalia, Iraq and other places, Leicester's Muslims are long-term and settled residents showing a trend towards outright home ownership in growing numbers. They do seek larger, more comfortable housing, ideally in more prosperous areas, and find their choices limited by the multifaceted needs of three generations. This leads to a mixed picture when deciding on housing options, with some prioritising education (moving to an area with better schools) or a more aesthetic environment, over the services and provisions available down the road that meet a range of religious and cultural needs.

Figure 11a. Perceptions of positive neighbourhood characteristics (Muslim)



Source: Open Society Institute

Figure 11b. Perceptions of positive neighbourhood characteristics (non-Muslim)

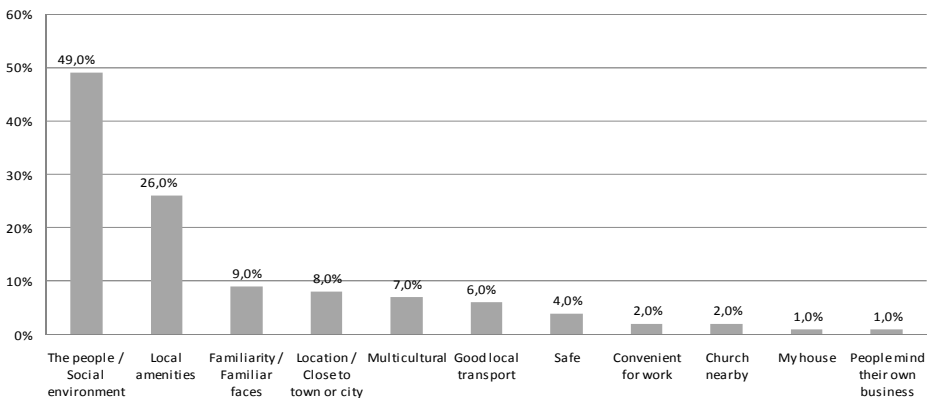


Table 16. Perceptions of negative neighbourhood characteristics (Muslim)

	Muslim
Aesthetics / Litter / Dog litter	14,0%
Overcrowded / Parking	13,0%
Unsafe / Crime	6,0%
Unruly behaviour	5,0%
Public transport	4,0%
Neighbours	4,0%
Drug dealers	3,0%
Speeding	2,0%
Cultural segregation	2,0%
Poor amenities	2,0%
Prostitution	2,0%
"Somalis"	2,0%
Commercial buildings	2,0%
Schools	2,0%
People "unfriendly"	1,0%
Immigration (unspecified)	1,0%
Children ballsports	1,0%
"Eastern Europeans"	1,0%
Mosques nearby	,0%
Islamophobia	,0%
Racism	,0%

Source: Open Society Institute

Table 17. Perceptions of negative neighbourhood characteristics (non-Muslim)

Non-Muslim	
Aesthetics / Litter / Dog litter	19,0%
Unruly behaviour / 'Pub'	10,0%
Overcrowded / Parking	9,0%
Traffic / Lack of cycling space	7,0%
Unsafe / Crime	7,0%
Speeding	6,0%
Neighbours	5,0%
Poor amenities	4,0%
Mosques nearby / Mosque parking	3,0%
Noise	2,0%
Drug dealers	1,0%
The (British) weather	1,0%
Not enough greenery	1,0%
Lack of diversity	1,0%
Feel uncomfortable: Muslim majority area	1,0%
Long way from the sea	1,0%
Neglected roads	1,0%

Source: Open Society Institute

8. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: HEALTH

This chapter examines Muslims' and non-Muslims' experiences of health care and social protection. It looks at OSI respondents' perspectives on the health care they receive and Leicester City's approach to the management and delivery of health services and use of resources. It briefly examines initiatives to improve services and formation of strategic partnerships between the city council and faith- and community-based organisations for effectiveness.

Access to adequate health care is important for social inclusion. Long-term illness affects people's opportunities for economic and social participation, and reduces employment opportunities and income levels, and these in turn affect people's opportunities for social and leisure activities.

According to the 2001 Census and ONS, Muslims in the UK have worse health than Sikhs, Hindus and other religious groups: "Age-standardised rates of 'not good' health were 13 per cent for Muslim men and 16 per cent for Muslim women. Rates were also high for Sikhs: 10 per cent of men and 14 per cent of women rated their health as 'not good'."¹¹⁹

There are significant challenges in addressing the health-care needs of BME communities in the UK. For South Asian communities there are particular concerns about levels of coronary heart disease, strokes, diabetes, smoking, infant mortality rates (for children born of Pakistani parents this is twice the national average), and self-harm and suicide rates (young South Asian women are more than twice as likely to commit suicide as young white women).¹²⁰

These statistics are of particular concern to Leicester city residents, as Leicester has a particularly high ethnic-minority composition, predominantly made up of members of the South Asian community. Data from the Department for Health/Race for Health show that "indicators of health for people living in Leicester are generally below average when compared to England, the East Midlands and other similar authorities".¹²¹ This is confirmed by the council's own data and research, which show that lifestyle indicators are worse than the national average, with one-third of adults smoking and one-quarter of the population obese; one in 18 people in the city are affected by diabetes and only one-quarter has a healthy diet.¹²² "There are believed to be high rates

¹¹⁹ www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=959 (accessed 1 April 2009).

¹²⁰ www.raceforhealth.org/resources/case_studies/leicester_city (accessed 10 August 2009).

¹²¹ Department of Health, "Health Profile for Leicester" (leaflet), Leicester, Department of Health, 2006.

¹²² Leicester City Council and Partnership, *The Diversity of Leicester*, p. 19.

of untreated diabetes, kidney disease, abnormal cholesterol levels and high blood pressure among South East Asians in Leicester.”¹²³

According to NHS Leicester City, BME communities do not feel they have adequate influence on health issues, nor do they feel empowered with either appropriate information or networks that allow access to services more effectively. Some of this may be due to language problems (for some members of the community English is not a first language). Furthermore, it identified that there were insufficient community-based health services (especially for mental health and diabetes), which might provide a better understanding of people’s social, cultural or religious needs.

At the same time there are low rates of alcohol consumption and teenage pregnancy. “Excessive drinking (double the daily recommended units) is estimated to be much lower than in Leicester as a whole, especially in Spinney Hills. This is probably a reflection of the high proportion (45 per cent) of residents who are Muslim and do not drink alcohol. The area also has a low rate of teenage conceptions.”¹²⁴ The 2006 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health highlights differences in health status among Leicester’s wards and population groups, including a significant difference in life expectancies, but pointed to the limitations of health services alone in bridging such gaps and improving the health of disadvantaged residents.¹²⁵

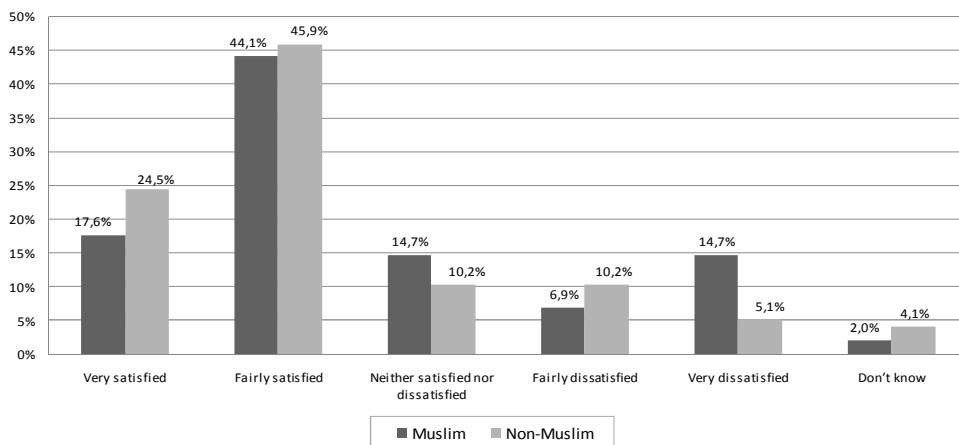
8.1 OSI Respondents’ Perspectives on Health

The findings from the OSI survey suggest that health-care provisions in Leicester are largely successful in respect of meeting the cultural, faith and ethnic needs of a diverse population. Three-quarters of Muslim respondents and half of non-Muslims felt that the health services were doing the right amount to respect the religious customs of people belonging to different religions. Whether this reflects a positive recognition of attitudes towards Muslims in health-service provision (be it a general perception or the measure of personal experiences or towards the different religions in general) cannot clearly be ascertained from this response as the question’s wording did not focus on the Muslim faith. One indicator that suggests this may be the case is the significant proportion of non-Muslim respondents (40.8 per cent) who were unable to answer this question. Around 3 per cent across both groups felt the respect levels demonstrated were “too much”; 14.7 per cent of Muslims felt they were “too little”. The same proportion of Muslims also reported “very dissatisfied” with health services. However, the majority of Muslims (62 per cent) and non-Muslims (70 per cent) were either “very” or “fairly” satisfied with health services.

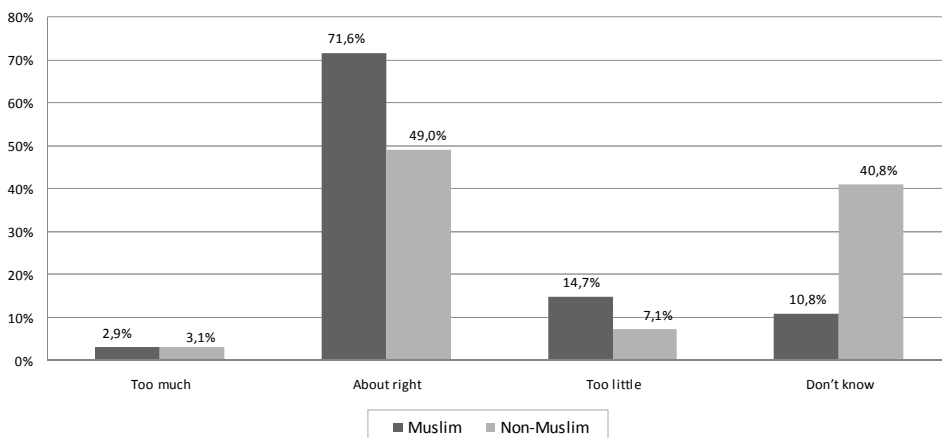
¹²³ Philip Monk, *Choosing Health in Leicester’s Localities: Annual Report of the Director of Public Health, Leicester*, Leicester Primary Care Trust, 2006, p. 24 (hereafter Monk, *Choosing Health in Leicester*).

¹²⁴ Monk, *Choosing Health in Leicester*, p. 25.

¹²⁵ Monk, *Choosing Health in Leicester*, p. 24.

Figure 12. Level of satisfaction with health services

Source: Open Society Institute

Figure 13. Perceived respect for religion in hospitals and medical clinics

Source: Open Society Institute

The differences in what residents wanted to see improved with respect to local health services remain unremarkable when this report's religious groupings are compared, with only three households pointing to improvements in the needs of Muslims per se. The key driver for dissatisfaction levels among Muslim health-service users in the more prosperous Evington was the demand on local services and a failure to deliver, resulting in long waiting times for general practitioners' (GP) services and hospital treatment.

Nine Muslim residents made specific points regarding waiting-list times and underinvestment in the health service and one resident also felt services should provide greater scope for “more alternative and holistic” treatments.

Frustrations with health-service provision included regular changes in processes which they felt were difficult to keep up with, and for those in full-time employment there was a particular problem with making appointments as surgeries would be unable to make appointments several days in advance. To a lesser degree similar points were echoed by the non-Muslim respondents of the same locality. Issues of access here did not stem from barriers preventing ethnicities or social groups, but from the demands of time upon working or busy people, with the emphasis for improvements not restricted to widening the breadth of basic services: respondents felt that evening and extended services would go some way to improving access to health services and alleviating their frustrations.

Eight respondents from the three selected wards said they had personal experiences in a doctor’s surgery or hospital over the past 12 months that they categorised as religious prejudice: of these, seven responses came from Muslims, one from a Hindu. The experiences mainly related to negative attitudes, inattentive body language, neglect or rudeness, although two of the responses also mentioned verbal abuse.

Patients’ experience is an important part of the data-collecting and fact-finding processes established in Leicester, according to Richard Chester, whose responsibility in the region, as the only director of Equality and Human Rights in the NHS in the country, indicates the approach of the city to health-care provision. Patient experience is measured through a number of mechanisms that include surveys and a team of officers and community development workers who report to the management and have direct contact with community organisations. Chester pointed out the importance of patient experience data, “the level of reporting regarding religion is not as big as the big three legal duties, but is critical in having a detailed knowledge”. It is worth noting here that 70 per cent of OSI’s Muslim respondents felt the extent of respect for the religious customs of people belonging to different religions is “about right”.¹²⁶

The differences identified in user experiences and general levels of satisfaction among the different areas of class or affluence do not provide a reliable guide to where improvements are most needed and, taken in isolation can be misleading, according to Chester. Social class does become a determining factor, and a primary one, for equating the state of health and life expectancies, where differences are great. There are sizeable numbers of Asians, including many Muslims, who are socially well off and do not have the health problems that citizens from less affluent backgrounds do. Chester pointed out that the differences in our findings regarding overall satisfaction levels are what he would have expected to see and suggests three key factors. Prosperous areas of Evington

¹²⁶ Interview with Richard Chester, director of Equality and Human Rights, NHS Leicester, September 2008.

are likely to have much better resident associations that would deal with issues of parking and litter in the more spacious aesthetic environments. Residents in Evington are more likely to read different newspapers that echo or focus concerns on national health matters and their governance or management. And in deprived areas, residents are more likely to be concerned about the issues outside their door.¹²⁷

Views on the lack of GP surgeries, waiting times and a desire for evening services featured across all groups. Muslim users in the prosperous areas would be additionally affected by culturally-sensitive needs in at least two ways. The desire for gender matching with GPs, particularly the desire for female GPs for female patients, presents operational challenges that can affect satisfaction levels and impressions of an imbalance in capacity allocation. Chester acknowledged that there is not always “the flexibility to move within the system”.¹²⁸ Demand strains look set to receive considerable relief from city plans to open four new health centres across the city.¹²⁹ A second need would stem from children needing religious tuition (in madrassas) after school hours and the demands of time this can place upon parents in places like Evington where such facilities can be further away.

Related to this is the absence of visible systems for feedback and complaints, such that for many silent victims there was, besides complaining to one’s GP, little recourse for critical comments and input into the system.¹³⁰ They cited the Patients Charter as invisible and felt an ombudsman would be more effective, especially for many who would feel intimidated in challenging their GP in the absence of a more structured system.

8.2 Measures to Improve Access to Health Services

In the context of such an overall mixed picture, NHS Leicester City has taken a number of initiatives to tackle some of the challenges the city faces, feeding into its health strategy, “One Healthy Leicester”.¹³¹ During 2008, the organisation consulted with partners, patients and the public to draw up a five-year “Commissioning and Investment Strategy” which aims to improve health outcomes and the quality of life and life expectancy of local people by tackling the causes of premature death and reducing health inequalities both within the city and between the city and the rest of the UK. In 2009–2010 there will be a concentration upon bringing about

¹²⁷ Interview with Richard Chester, September 2008.

¹²⁸ Interview with Richard Chester, September 2008.

¹²⁹ Since the research took place, three-quarters of Leicester’s GP surgeries are now opening for longer hours and two new surgeries and an 8am–8pm walk-in centre have been set up that have increased choice. There has also been a small increase in the number of female GPs.

¹³⁰ Roundtable meeting for draft report, 29 April 2009.

¹³¹ NHS Leicester City, *One Healthy Leicester: NHS Leicester City’s Commissioning and Investment Strategy 2008 to 2010, Leicester*, NHS Leicester City, 2008.

transformational change in four key areas: primary medical care, cardio-vascular disease, mental health and wellbeing, and intermediate and rehabilitation care.

NHS Leicester has also adopted the Department of Health initiative “Race for Health” and, in pursuing its aims, has responded by establishing a staff and external reference group network for BME communities, which enables community organisations to access and respond to policies and procedures, and ensure they are effective. NHS Leicester is also involved in a pilot project called “Mosaic”¹³² to promote race equality in procurement and implement equalities legislation. Tim Rideout, chief executive of NHS Leicester, responded to the city’s challenges:

We must demonstrate responsiveness to the different needs that spring from such diversity. That’s why we are among the very first PCTs to appoint an executive director of equality and human rights to our board [to] challenge every part of the organisation to move the equality and human rights agenda forward ... This appointment recognises that, when diversity responsibilities reside in HR departments, they can sometimes be marginalised and give insufficient priority in relation to the PCT’s core responsibility to commission services that meet the needs of the PCT’s residents.¹³³

There have been outcomes in the form of initiatives such as “Project Dil” (heart), a health promotion programme aimed at increasing the understanding of coronary heart disease in the South Asian community through education and interventions in GP practices. Through empowering and educating local communities, the project seeks the commitment of individuals to make lifestyle changes. Peer educators have been recruited from communities and understand the community’s perspectives and its needs. Language, a barrier in the past to the effective reach of messages, has been overcome by using peer educators from the same ethnic background and language as promoters of health messages.

The public health-service providers and policymakers see engagement with community groups and organisations as crucial to understanding the drivers that shape the findings of reports, statistics and studies. It is argued that this integrated approach allows policymakers to understand how different challenges or issues contribute to the outcomes reported in national and other fact-finding studies.¹³⁴ Recognition of and understanding how different factors contribute to an overall health finding or result

¹³² Mosaic is an NHS pilot project (funded by the Department of Health) promoting race equality in procurement. Mosaic has three aims: first, to develop, through pilot sites, good practice of procurement based on the Commission for Race Equality’s guidelines; second, to promote and disseminate the knowledge and learning from the pilots and from the rest of the NHS to procurement professionals; and third, to support the development of BME procurement professionals and networks to “mainstream” this work across NHS procurement obligations. See www.mosaic.nhs.uk (accessed 10 August 2009).

¹³³ See www.raceforhealth.org/resources/case_studies/leicester_city (accessed 10 August 2009).

¹³⁴ Interview with Richard Chester, September 2008.

reveal the difficulty of identifying one measure that deals with any problem. Thus, while the experience of service users is captured by the same question, the solutions can be varied.¹³⁵ Officials acknowledge that “cultural traditions, race and religion are difficult to unpick”, yet stress that obtaining a good grasp of what is behind headline statements is vital.¹³⁶

Another example, cited by Chester from his work on patient experience, relates to findings showing patients’ dissatisfaction with poor hospital food. This finding is true across different hospitals as well as across social, religious and ethnic groups. However, the dissatisfaction is the result of different reasons or experiences, some of which relate to cultural sensitivity. The provisions of *halal* food options or better choice for an ethnic-minority palate were significantly different factors – requiring different solutions – from the perceived poor experience of hospital food in general.

The city’s implementation of a national immunisation programme for the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) provides a further example of how the city’s approach to the management and delivery of health services allows better planning of resources.¹³⁷ The effectiveness of this national immunisation programme required clear communication mechanisms across societal groups. The timing of the immunisation programme coincided with the Muslim month of Ramadan, during which mosque management committees, the key community tools of communication for a culturally-sensitive area, are almost wholly occupied by religious services and its demands every day of the month. The city’s integrated approach to outreach and engagement meant that a range of communication mechanisms had been working to raise awareness from as early as spring. This ensured that by Ramadan, the mosques were ready, willing and able to disseminate important health information.

Similarly, for awareness of cervical smears, which was very low compared with other trusts in the strategic health authority,¹³⁸ the trust used Ramadan Radio, a local religious broadcasting service, to reach BME women, especially Somali Muslims (see below). The trust had discussions with a local Radio Ramadan station to encourage religious services to broadcast a programme about the importance of cervical smears. Sandra Oliver from NHS Leicester explained, “At that time a lot of women are at home in the kitchen, preparing food and listening to the radio. The programme was translated into the Somali language.”¹³⁹ In parallel one GP practice, with a particularly large Somali population of which just 60 per cent of the women had been for a cervical

¹³⁵ Interview with Richard Chester, September 2008.

¹³⁶ Interview with Richard Chester, September 2008.

¹³⁷ The vaccine aimed to reduce cervical cancer through a national immunisation programme for girls aged 12–13.

¹³⁸ See www.raceforhealth.org/resources/case_studies/leicester_city/ramadan_radio_reaches_its_audience (accessed 10 August 2009).

¹³⁹ Interview with Sandra Oliver, quality improvement co-ordinator, NHS Leicester, September 2008.

smear in the previous five years, provided targeted information on-site and a Somali-speaking receptionist. “Reminder letters printed in English were not very useful for this group. Some Somali women have difficulties with English and feel awkward discussing the issue with their partners.” Oliver said, “Thanks to this work, take-up has increased to 90 per cent and it is now the second-highest achieving practice in the trust.”¹⁴⁰

City health officials feel that such successes are exemplary models of a city where the local governance of health-services delivery is ahead of most in a service sector where faith or religion is now widely regarded as a mainstream issue.

There are limitations on the capacity and potential for institutions such as mosques to disseminate information (even though Leicester mosques use shortwave radio broadcasts to transmit sermons to homes), as women do not usually physically attend the mosques, the majority of which cater for men only. Thus social institutions and voluntary organisations or initiatives, such as Radio Ramadan, can also help to raise awareness of these campaigns in conjunction with mosques.

In the area of chaplaincy services, participants in the roundtable felt that these could be promoted better to potential users of hospitals and care facilities, from the outset of care. There are currently chaplains of different faith backgrounds available to patients in the city (Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh). However, Suleman Nagdi, of the FMO and Muslim Burial Council, noted that “the time allocated to them is based on numbers of patients and not necessarily the need”. He said that the three non-Christian chaplains had only a few hours of paid time to serve all the hospitals while, as the greatest numbers of patients were registered as Christian, Christian chaplains had full-time facilities. This means that non-Christian chaplains have to invest more voluntary time in providing services. Nagdi suggested: “As the minority religious communities may have more observant people and their religious rituals may require more frequent usage of facilities, such as shrines for daily worship for Hindus or the prayer hall for five prayers daily for Muslims, the time allotted to chaplaincy provision needs to be increased.”¹⁴¹

Nagdi also stated that by way of good practice the city had dealt very effectively with discussions on the procurement of land for burial. He said that this showed “forward planning, as the Council was able to procure and set aside land adjacent to the existing cemetery well in advance of the actual need to expand”. This was important because it avoided potential controversies that might arise in the future if the discussion was held under time pressures.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Sandra Oliver, September 2008. See also www.raceforhealth.org/resources/case_studies/leicester_city/ramadan_radio_reaches_its_audience (accessed 10 August 2009).

¹⁴¹ Interview with Suleman Nagdi, public relations officer, Federation of Muslim Organisations and chairman, Muslim Burial Council, Leicester, 25 June 2009.

¹⁴² Interview with Suleman Nagdi, 25 June 2009.

As with education, the health picture is a very mixed one. BME groups are identified to be at risk of suffering from worse health on a number of levels, for example obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and coronary heart disease. However, in other areas such as smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and teenage pregnancy, it is the outer wards with low BME presence and poorer social-class profile that seem to have the worst health. But more than education, health-care needs may require more detailed minority cultural competence, as the contact between citizens and service providers will often involve discussions on the basis of cultural habits such as diet and lifestyle or with people of an older generation to whom minority cultures, even alternative language requirements, may be more significant. Interviews with health-care professionals and representatives of NHS Leicester City revealed that the need for ethnic-minority cultural competence is clearly on the agenda and a part of the outreach strategy for the NHS locally.

9. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: POLICING AND SECURITY

This chapter begins by looking at trust and satisfaction levels in the police overall. It then examines the interaction and experiences of Muslims, in particular youth, with the police, efforts and barriers in recruiting ethnic-minority officers and outreach efforts by Leicestershire Constabulary towards communities and leaders.

Given the current security concerns with the involvement of people of Muslim background in actual or attempted acts of terror and the reporting of high-profile anti-terror raids and arrest, policing has attracted considerable community as well as policy interest. This comes in the context of an already heightened awareness of issues relating to race and policing. The 2006 British Crime Survey indicates that people in Leicester and Leicestershire have more confidence in the police than people in other comparable areas.¹⁴³

Having the confidence and support of local communities is recognised as critical to counter-terrorism policing, especially in the context of the UK tradition of community policing and policing by consent. This requires policing that is sensitive to community concerns and experiences. Changes in the legal framework on key issues such as anti-terror legislation have meant that police officers are now trained on how to use the stop-and-search legislation in more appropriate and effective ways, in order to minimise the effect on community confidence.

However, interviewees from the Muslim community suggest that there is “still suspicion surrounding the field and that disproportionate powers have been used”. Inspector Amrik Basra from the Leicestershire Constabulary described a simple and effective formula: “You can’t be prescriptive with any situation. Our rule of thumb is to gather as much information, make a reasoned decision and deal with it proportionately.”¹⁴⁴

“The number of arrests using such powers can be counted on one hand,” explained one officer. “Legislation can undermine community confidence and people need to understand that it will be used sensitively. Instead of using it at every juncture it should be used with consideration as this will enable the police to administer the legislation as well as maintain community confidence.”

Schedule 7 of the Counter-Terrorism Act 2000 gives police officers the power to stop and interrogate people at ports of entry (in Leicestershire this would include East Midlands Airport), and the impact of points of entry in other parts of the country affects the police and the community locally. Suleman Nagdi, who is also a community adviser to the police, noted concerns about the “disproportionate uses of power, the

¹⁴³ Leicester City Council and Partnership, *The Diversity of Leicester*, p. 21.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Amrik Basra, inspector, Leicestershire Constabulary, Leicester, 13 June 2008.

collation of data such as DNA, fingerprinting, photographing and electronic storage of sim cards etc”. He argued that the situation is exacerbated when high-profile religious leaders such as imams are detained at ports of entry, which can be perceived negatively by the wider community: “We have heard a case of where an Imam was stopped and detained for three and a half hours and told that the stoppage was random. However, during the interview a newspaper article was produced asking the Imam to explain the comments in the paper. So one now asks how the community can be told that the individuals are stopped randomly – and not led by intelligence – because this case proves that intelligence was already available to the officers prior to the stoppage.”¹⁴⁵

He also mentioned that he “welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the new guidelines” drawn up by the counter-terrorism office to be used by officers with powers to stop at ports of entry. He argued for such voluntary guidelines to have greater force and greater transparency about the use of data collected from stop-and-search.¹⁴⁶

9.1 Views from the Ground

Information gathered in the focus group and from the OSI questionnaire reveals a very mixed picture of Muslims’ views on the police. Some spoke highly of the police and their efforts to develop relationships with communities. There was also a perception that the Leicestershire Constabulary was more astute and sophisticated in building community relations than some other constabularies in England. One participant felt “lucky to be in Leicester” because of such relationships.

The vast majority of respondents (91 per cent of Muslim and 88 per cent of non-Muslims) had not been a victim of crime in the last 12 months. Around half of both Muslim and non-Muslims respondents revealed said that they were “very satisfied” or “fairly satisfied” with the police service. A significant proportion, around 30 per cent of both Muslims and non-Muslims, were either “fairly” or “very dissatisfied” with the police service. The experience of Muslims and non-Muslims does, however, differ more markedly on the question of trust in the police. While a majority of both Muslims and non-Muslims reported having “a lot” or “a fair amount” of trust in the police, the levels of trust were significantly higher among non-Muslims (74 per cent) than Muslims (56 per cent). Furthermore, twice as many Muslims (31 per cent) reported low levels of trust in the police compared with non-Muslims (15 per cent).

Participants in focus groups also raised questions whether the police could be trusted and whether they themselves fully trusted the police. Several participants commented that they did not trust the police and would not do so until they felt the police wanted to protect them. There was a perception that police response rates differed according to the socio-economic characteristic of the neighbourhood, with better policing response rates in more affluent areas:

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Suleman Nagdi, 13 June 2008.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Suleman Nagdi, 13 June 2008.

the actions of police officers are different in different areas; the response time is different in different areas ... Generally ... in the suburbs, the posher areas, if you don't mind me saying so, the police response time and the police [themselves] are different than those around Highfields and that sort of area.

Participants also wanted to see more officers on foot and favoured closer working relationships between the community and local police officers and the police station.

One of the chief reasons cited for lack of trust in the police was their portrayal by the media, particularly the national media. This seems to have had a negative impact on the way in which parts of the Muslim community perceive the constabulary: "with the police presence in town, the only thing it's going to deter is somebody making sort of physical abuse or verbal abuse but it's not going to take away the fact that, you know, the deep-seated hatred people have, which primarily the media has caused". Another explained:

A couple of years ago there were police insider programme on TV which looked at the police in Leicester, and they uncovered some serious issues in the police force not really doing what they're supposed to be ... they were just playing games ... like which police car can go furthest away from their base by the end of the day ... And one guy was on the street, who was bleeding pretty badly, and the policeman said, "Oh, I've got five minutes before the end of my shift" and drove straight off.

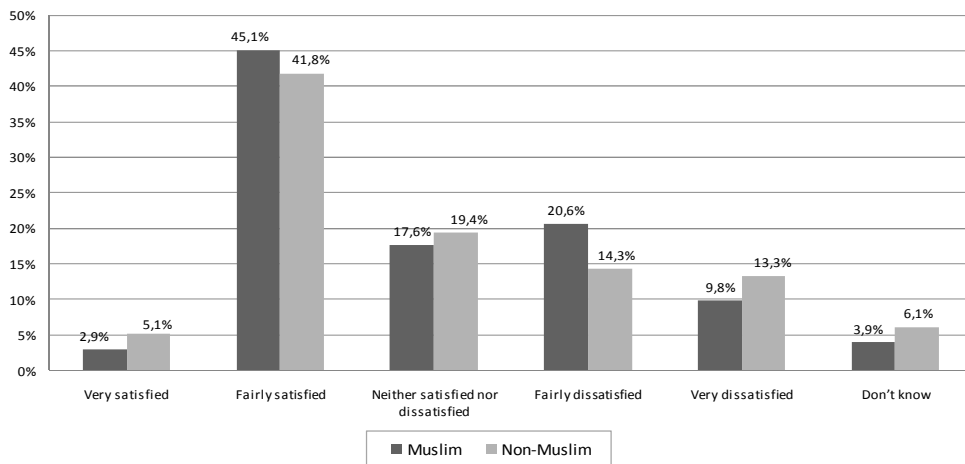
This mixed picture is made even more complex by the positive relationship with leaders of Muslim community groups and organisations in the city. Interviews with leaders of community groups and organisations suggest that these relationships have been strengthened in response to needs arising out of policing in relation to counter-terrorism. These relationships, it was argued, have ensured that potentially precarious and sensitive situations were dealt with calmly through the police and the Muslim community working together. Counter-terrorism raids and arrests carried out in Leicester since 7 July 2005 have resulted in fear and suspicion of the police increasing considerably and have provoked a series of responses, such as public meetings, to reassure and inform Muslim communities of their rights and responsibilities.

The respondents who had become victims said it had happened in their local neighbourhoods. Of these, Muslims were less likely than non-Muslims to report that their experiences had been motivated by discrimination. Around half of those who had experiences of crime (both Muslim and non-Muslim) did not report these incidents to the police. All the Muslims who did report crimes to the police were satisfied by the response. By contrast only a third of non-Muslims felt the same.

Most people (73 per cent of Muslims and 58 per cent of non-Muslims) reported that they had not had any contact with the police in the last 12 months. In instances where respondents had experienced recent contact with the police, on average half of the communication was initiated by the respondent and the other half by the police

authorities themselves. There were similar high levels of satisfaction with these experiences of contact with the police among both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Figure 14. Level of satisfaction with policing



Source: Open Society Institute

Participants in the focus group on policing shared their views on policing and security:

Nine times out of ten in Highfields, if something happens, they won't be looking at the police. If something happens to me, if I need security, I'll ask my neighbour, my friend, my relative ... Because I personally feel distant from the police. I don't want to really involve the police. It's not like we don't trust them, but there's no ... I feel more comfortable calling my friends, my neighbours.

Participants echoed the results of a study on trust between communities and the police. The author suggested that some communities, although they may trust the police, would prefer to contact a neighbour or friend instead of reporting the crime to the police.¹⁴⁷ This may not detract from the trust they may have in the police, but often individuals may feel more at ease discussing such experiences with those they know in an informal setting. A focus group participant said:

When you say do you feel secure because of the police? It's nothing to do with the police; we feel secure because I personally think it's a nice Muslim community, everyone goes to pray at the mosque at night and there are people,

¹⁴⁷ Martin Innes, "Policing Uncertainty: Countering Terror through Community Intelligence and Democratic Policing", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 605, No. 1, pp. 222–241, 2006.

you know that have been there, established, for a long time, so there's that sense of community that's important.

Policing in connection with counter-terrorism was an issue for Muslims:

If you look at the media at the moment, all laws that are being passed at the moment, you know the Anti-Terrorism Act and all the rest of it; I just feel they're a bit biased towards Muslims, they really are.

The issue of treatment at airports and security checks, as previously stated, was also raised.

A challenge that was highlighted in the roundtable by some members of the Somali community was the relationship between new communities and the police. One participant commented:

Some individuals may be scared of even entering a custody suit due to previous experiences with the police in their countries of origin. Hence, there are sensitivities.

In order to try to combat potential prejudice or misunderstanding, one participant strongly suggested that:

when the police are training ... part of their course could have an actual section in which they go to all the religious places; they go to the gurdwaras, they go to the synagogues and to the mosque and they learn about religious life because as their job description will be, they'll be dealing with different people from different backgrounds so it's important to know where they're from.

Currently police trainees undergo community training which includes visiting a place of worship so that they are able to familiarise themselves with the layout and structure of the space as well as learn about the leadership styles and governance in such places. Currently one day is allocated for this type of training, which means they are only able to visit one place. This type of training could be extended to cover a variety of places and faiths, according to a focus group participant.

Senior officers do a level-2 training which looks at different schools of thought, radicalisation patterns, etc; this is more in line with what all officers may now require to effectively discharge their duties.

Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) are set up to advise senior police staff on critical incidents. However, nationally there are no set terms of reference and the practices vary from county to county; some are paid and others are voluntary. For example, Nagdi explained that "some are privileged to have access to training" and he cited his own example, as a member of the group, of spending a training weekend at Bramshill where he underwent the hydra exercise (hypothetical exercises which show a community scenario turning into a high-risk situation) and learnt the command structures of gold, silver and bronze, colours denoting the ranks in the police service and who should be

deployed and at what stage. If more people in IAGs, locally known as PAGRI (Police Advisory Groups on Racial Issues) in Leicester, were provided with such training, police would be better placed to assess and address situations affecting communities.¹⁴⁸

Basra explained that it is important to work with each and every community group and he felt that Leicestershire Constabulary was particularly proactive in doing so. Initiatives include deploying Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) who have longevity of service in particular residential areas; this ensures a low turnover of officers across regions as well as facilitating relationship building between officers and local residents. Basra explained that these are “the subtle but intrinsic aspects of successful policing, once residents are on first name terms with officers and work together for safer communities for a number of years, a sense of trust and reliance is built between the two agencies”.¹⁴⁹ This enables the police to focus its resources on areas of need, depending on the key issues at the time. Some of these have centred on the arrival of newer communities in the city.

Leicestershire Constabulary has taken steps to build positive community relations with the Somalis who have settled in Leicester predominantly over the last few years, by building close relations with key stakeholders in the community, learning about the experiences of the Somali community and their recent history as well as understanding the challenges they face as a recently migrating population. This section of the Muslim community has had specific needs and requirements which are natural stages in the process of settlement, such as developing understanding of local services, and working with other communities and their geography, all of which either directly or inadvertently affect the service provided by the police.

9.2 Police and Muslim Youth

Another very important area of work for the police has been with young people in Leicester. The Constabulary’s Youth Involvement team include outreach work and relationship building as part of their day-to-day jobs and strategy, although much greater investment of resources is still required here in order to have a really positive and genuine impact upon youth communities. Also essential to this process is an awareness and culturally-sensitive approach to all communities, particularly those less familiar with how the system works, as well as the more vulnerable who in the short term need to work in partnership with the police.

Respondents in the focus groups shared examples of how groups of young people congregating in public spaces such as Evington Rd and Spinney Hill Park could be seen as threatening. It was suggested that these areas particularly would benefit from visible policing:

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Suleman Nagdi, 13 June 2008.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Amrik Basra, 13 June 2008.

Like for example Spinney Hill Park; I've had my own experience where gangs [are] around ... at that park I think there was like one policeman and there's a lot of gangs hanging around sort of thing. And I think that's one place where you need a lot of police.

Young people may, however, feel that they are being specifically targeted by police without due cause. In interviews for a BBC Radio Leicester documentary young Muslims felt that hanging around in groups meant that they were more at risk of being questioned by the local police than were their white counterparts in other parts of the city or county:

If you see a group of 15 White people in Oadby they [the police] won't see them as a gang but as a group of people, here there's five of us and they see us as drug dealers and in a gang.¹⁵⁰

In recent years, particularly since 2001, there have been a number of reports on young Muslims and youths in general which often suggest that young Muslims can at times feel as if they are being besieged by both the media and police authorities.¹⁵¹ Often young Muslims are portrayed in an adverse light by the media and a sense of fear will arise from the lack of communication or relationship with the police. If the police does not make a meaningful engagement with youths, they may fail to fully benefit from an increase in police visibility.¹⁵²

In the focus groups, participants were asked where Muslims turned to for advice, information and support on policing and security issues. The respondents discussed policing with reference to anecdotal experiences in their daily lives. Some argued their experience had been of extensive police visibility in places such as Spinney Hills and Evington, while in Stoneygate there was almost no visible police presence:

I live in Stoneygate but I know that there are never any police cars around or anything like that. When you go to somewhere like Highfields or Evington there's always sort of something going on where there has to be like some sort of police cars [presence].

Others in the same group related to this, but also felt safer as a result. In the three wards looked at as part of this study, most Muslims felt that they could leave their

¹⁵⁰ S. Ahmed, *Seen and Not Heard: Voices of Young British Muslims*, Leicester, Policy Research Centre, 2009, p. 27 (hereafter Ahmed, *Seen and Not Heard*).

¹⁵¹ See, for example, Ted Cattle, *Community Cohesion Report: A Report of the Independent Review Team*, London, Home Office, 2001; Herman Ouseley, *The Bradford District Race Review*, Bradford, Bradford Vision, 2001; M. Y. Alam, *Made in Bradford*, Pontefract, Route Publishing, 2006; Amir Saeed, Neil Blain and Douglas Forbes, "New Ethnic and National Questions in Scotland: post-British Identities among Glasgow Pakistani Teenagers", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 5, 1999, pp. 821–844; M. G. Husain, *Muslim Youth and Madrasa Education*, New Delhi, Institute of Objective Studies, 2004.

¹⁵² Ahmed, *Seen and Not Heard*, p. 76.

front door unlocked throughout the day without feeling vulnerable. A visual presence of bobbies on the beat was something most participants in the focus groups valued and wanted to see increased.

9.3 Recruitment of Muslims and Ethnic-minority Officers

Representation of ethnic minorities in the police force across England has been a focus of policy, particularly since the introduction of BME recruitment targets by the Metropolitan police in 2000. Recruitment and retention of officers from ethnic-minority groups remain difficult. The proportion of police officers of BME backgrounds in the Leicester Constabulary has increased from 4.9 per cent (112 officers) in 2004 to 6.1 per cent (137 officers) in 2007–2008. The police force remains a male-dominated profession. Only 543 police officers in the Leicestershire Constabulary are female, of which 29 are of BME backgrounds.¹⁵³ In addition to full-time police officers there are also 176 Special Constables,¹⁵⁴ of which 17 male and five female Special Constables are of BME background.¹⁵⁵

In the past recruitment events were held across the different parts of the city and county and formed part of the positive action aimed at “increasing the awareness of opportunities available in the force whilst maintaining high standards of quality through extensive training”.¹⁵⁶ Initiatives to talk to the community provide opportunities for giving positive advice and information to assist and encourage minority groups to join the force.¹⁵⁷ Such events have been held in community centres, including mosques, as well as through events organised by the police such as the Khidmah sports event, and football and cricket matches organised by community groups.¹⁵⁸ Police officers are also encouraged to engage with community media through participation in bodies such as the Leicester Multicultural Advisory Group and make regular contributions on local community radio. A report from the constabulary highlights “the annual inter-cultural evenings, work life balance week, gender agenda

¹⁵³ http://www.leics.police.uk/files/library/documents/employment_statistics_0305.pdf (accessed 17 June 2009).

¹⁵⁴ Special Constables are volunteers who give up their time to help support police officers. Their duties centre on road traffic accidents, public order, domestic disputes and generally activities such as patrolling city centres, community events and high-profile locations, offering advice, directions and generally being approachable to the public.

¹⁵⁵ Leicestershire Constabulary Employment Statistics 2003–05, available at http://www.leics.police.uk/files/library/documents/employment_statistics_0305.pdf (accessed 1 April 2009).

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Amrik Basra, 13 June 2008.

¹⁵⁷ <http://www.policecouldyou.co.uk/officers/overview.html> (accessed 1 April 2009); <http://policeinformationshop.patrolstore.com/How-to-Become-a-Police-Community-Support-Officer-p-10440.html> (accessed 1 April 2009).

¹⁵⁸ Ruth Gledhill, “Fervour but Never Foul Play”, *The Times*, 30 April 2009, available at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article6194635.ece> (accessed 1 May 2009).

workshops and the continued support of the Personal Leadership Programme (PLP) sponsored by the Black Police Association (BPA)".¹⁵⁹ "The Constabulary continues to hold a range of recruitment events and attend local festivals such as Diwali, Caribbean Carnival, Gay Pride and LeicestHER Day", which attract minority communities. Specific marketing techniques for recruiting in BME communities include placing posters in wards with a high concentration of BME people. The images used on the posters show people who are visibly from ethnic-minority backgrounds.¹⁶⁰

There are some improvements which could be made in order to achieve a greater engagement with grassroots communities. Nagdi would include outreach initiatives such as attachment posts (where a trainee officer is attached to an experienced officer who will then guide and advise him or her while on the job).¹⁶¹ Although these may often be effective, they are few in number due to the constraints of health and safety regulations, such as that the training of officers interferes in the apprehension of criminals on the streets where traffic can be dangerous and the public may be at risk. Thus engagement in this type of activity is limited. Participants in the roundtable recognised that policing works on immediate, reactive and longer-term, neighbourhood approaches, the second of which involves problem-solving by building up understanding and relationships.

Barriers to recruitment include social and cultural factors, such as the perception of policing as a less appropriate career for minority communities, especially women. Also, the criminal justice system includes broader agencies such as the probation service or the law, which according to Amrik Basra, can often seem more attractive as career paths for minority groups.¹⁶² The challenge for the constabulary is to make itself look attractive enough to aspire to for all community groups and members, male and female.

Recruitment initiatives have led to an increase in the number of people joining the force as PCSOs.¹⁶³ PCSOs particularly focus on tackling antisocial behaviour, improving ties with local communities and offering greater public reassurance through their visible presence on the street. This type of visible policing and high-profile community engagement was also recognised in our interviews and focus group discussions. However, not all respondents were complimentary about PCSOs:

¹⁵⁹ Leicestershire Constabulary. "Employment Statistics", available at http://www.leics.police.uk/files/library/documents/employment_statistics_0305.pdf (accessed 17 June 2009).

¹⁶⁰ Interview with PC Nick Miles, member of the Positive Action Group, Leicestershire Constabulary, Leicester, May 2009.

¹⁶¹ Interview with Suleman Nagdi, 13 June 2008.

¹⁶² Interview with Amrik Basra, 13 June 2008.

¹⁶³ PCSOs are paid members of police staff but do not have the same legal powers as police officers.

I think people don't regard them [PCSOs] as being like real police officers but see them as sort of like the fake police that they don't have any real authority. That undermines the police as well because that's the visual that's provided for the community and people of Leicester.

For others the recent drive to recruit PCSOs was a positive step towards visible policing, especially as they wear yellow jackets which are easily identifiable by the public and their presence facilitates good community relations between community groups and with the police authority. An increase in this type of visible policing was vocalised:

I suppose it's getting better in one way because you've got your community support officers now, haven't you, the voluntary police force.

Since 2005, however, financial considerations have led to a freeze on all recruitment of additional officers and on efforts to increase BME representation. In this context, the retention of existing officers from BME backgrounds becomes even more critical. In addition to investigating incidents, systems of support for those facing racism in the police force include a letter from a superior officer, if such an incident should occur, explaining that the incident has been logged and support is available if needed. The immediate line manager will also offer time out to the officer involved. Furthermore, there are two independent support networks, the Leicestershire Black Police Association (LBPA) and the National Association of Muslim Police Officers (a local Leicester branch was newly established at the time of this research), which can offer help, support and advice. The latter would be able to identify with specific issues relating to Muslims and Islam.

The perception in the Muslim community of Muslims who join the police force also affects the potential for recruitment. At times Muslim police officers report being met with hostility from other Muslims as they will be seen as working for the other side. There are also examples of cases of domestic violence, when they have been told by those they seek to help to return to their base and send a white officer. The explanation provided for this presumed that a male Muslim officer would naturally take the side of the husband rather than the wife, as Asian culture is a patriarchal one. Anecdotal evidence such as this was highlighted during interviews with police personnel.

An interviewee who had police officers in his family expressed the view that a more natural relationship between the police and the community would benefit both the Muslim officers and the Muslim communities. He spoke of an aspiration that he hoped would be realised in his lifetime: Muslim police officers attending Juma (Friday) prayer at the mosque in uniform, just for the purpose of worship. This would enable them to feel and be seen as part of the Muslim community rather than people who had come to keep an eye on the congregation.

A participant at the roundtable commented that stereotypes of the demands of police work may pose a barrier to joining the police force: "Traditional Muslim values do not

push for children to join the police force and can even regard such a notion negatively. The community should try to re-align this type of thinking. Police officers are allowed, and have been able for a long time, to carry out their religious duties during work-time.”

In conclusion, the questionnaire, interviews and focus groups show key indicators of the relationship between the police and the Muslim communities. Leicester police appear to have a good understanding of the communities in their area and engage in regular and frequent outreach work, which coupled with balanced policing has led to some of the strongest police–community relations in the country. However, recruitment levels of BME officers remain low and there are some serious challenges of mistrust and image for the police to overcome. Muslim representatives reflected on their experiences of working with the police and cited examples of positive engagement through police contact in the last 12 months, though concerns surfaced in more general terms in focus groups. Although most respondents had no experience of working with these services, almost all had an opinion on their perceptions of the police and how this image affected life in the city.

10. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This chapter looks at participation in the formal electoral processes and the degree and level of influence OSI interviewees feel they have over decision-making at the city and nationally. Civic participation, that is participation in associations and organisations, is discussed, together with some of the ways that policymakers in Leicester have engaged with faith and ethnic groups. The impact of inter-faith collaboration and activities on creating a stronger and greater sense of community cohesion is evident in Leicester where the city council has been instrumental in supporting such initiatives.

As outlined in Chapter 2, access to citizenship and voting rights for migrants from the Commonwealth was framed in the context of laws dating to the early 20th century. For migrants that have settled in the UK more recently for work or having joined a spouse, getting citizenship is a two-step process. First, an application for indefinite leave to remain (ILR) is granted, followed a year later by naturalisation to gain British citizenship. ILR can be applied for after five years of residency, and to gain citizenship one must be over 18, communicate in English and be of "good character" (Home Office). A written test was introduced in November 2005 as part of the acquisition of citizenship. If the applicant is married or in civil partnership with a British citizen ILR can be sought after two years. These criteria mean that citizenship effectively takes six and three years, for single and cohabiting persons, respectively. Voting rights are granted only when citizenship is conferred.

Automatic British citizenship status is also applicable to those born in the UK (if after 1 January 1983, to at least one parent who is a British citizen) and those whose parents were born in the UK (i.e. by descent). There is a legal difference between these two types of citizenship, whereby the latter cannot pass on citizenship to their children.

Robert Putnam's work on social capital identifies bonding, bridging and linking forces in community dynamics.¹⁶⁴ More recent work in the UK, such as by Furbey *et al.*,¹⁶⁵ the Commission on Urban Life and Faith¹⁶⁶ and Lowndes,¹⁶⁷ has looked directly at the

¹⁶⁴ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 2000.

¹⁶⁵ Robert Furbey, Adam Dinham, Richard Farnell, Doreen Finneron and Guy Wilkinson with Catherine Howarth, Dilwar Hussain and Sharon Palmer, *Faith as Social Capital – Connecting or Dividing?*, Bristol, Policy Press/Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2006, available at <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/9781861348388.pdf>.

¹⁶⁶ Commission on Urban Life and Faith. *Faithful Cities: a Report of the Commission on Urban Life and Faith*, London, Methodist House Publishing, 2006.

¹⁶⁷ Vivien Lowndes, "Religious Involvement and Social Capital: Incompatible, Invaluable or Irrelevant?", in E. Graham and C. Baker (eds), *Religious Capital in Regenerating Communities: Proceedings of the Launch Conference of the Manchester Centre for Public Theology*, Manchester, William Temple Foundation, 2004.

role of faith as a contributor to social capital. An examination of the major British cities in which Muslim communities have settled, such as London, Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford and Leicester, suggests that the differential socio-economic dynamics of Muslim communities in these cities have an impact on the level of civic participation and linking, as well as interrelationships with other communities and bridging. In contrast, bonding forces (internally binding communities) seem to be quite strong in most cases.¹⁶⁸ Studies have identified the growth of certain cities or regions in the country as increasingly plural or multicultural environments,¹⁶⁹ but little research has so far been conducted on comparative data between cities, or directly looking at different communities to see if there is any correlation with socio-economic circumstances and the capacity to engage, participate or be active as citizens of the city.

10.1 Participation in Elections

Muslims and ethnic minorities generally seem to have settled well into the political and civic landscape of Leicester. The first ethnic-minority member of local government (councillor) was elected in 1973. From 2003 to 2007 Leicester City Council had 11 members from ethnic-minority backgrounds (20 per cent of the total), of whom 10 were Asian and one black. The current 2007–2011 council has 17 members from ethnic-minority backgrounds (31 per cent of the total), most of whom are Asian. These figures compare favourably with relevant national figures, where ethnic-minority representation is only 4 per cent on average.

In terms of voter turnout, city council data show that in 2007 the four wards with the highest turnout corresponded with large ethnic-minority presence: Latimer, with a turnout of 58 per cent (51 per cent in 2003), Spinney Hills at 55 per cent (48 per cent in 2003), Belgrave at 53 per cent (44 per cent in 2003) and Evington at 49 per cent (48 per cent in 2003). Two of these wards are involved in this study and have a high Muslim composition. By contrast, the four with the lowest turnout were Castle with 23 per cent (24 per cent in 2003), Westcotes with 25 per cent (24 per cent in 2003), Beaumont Leys with 28 per cent (22 per cent in 2003), and Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields (the mostly white outer estates) with 29 per cent.¹⁷⁰ The OSI questionnaire showed that 63 per cent of Muslim and 67 per cent of non-Muslim respondents voted in the last local council elections. This result was not far from the

¹⁶⁸ Dilwar Hussain, "Faith and Solidarity", in Nick Johnson (ed.), *Citizenship, Cohesion and Solidarity*, London, Smith Institute, 2008, pp. 51–60.

¹⁶⁹ See Ted Cante, *Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; Ludi Simpson and Nissa Finney, "Minority White Cities?", paper presented at the Annual Conference of the British Society for Population Studies, St Andrews, Scotland, 2007.

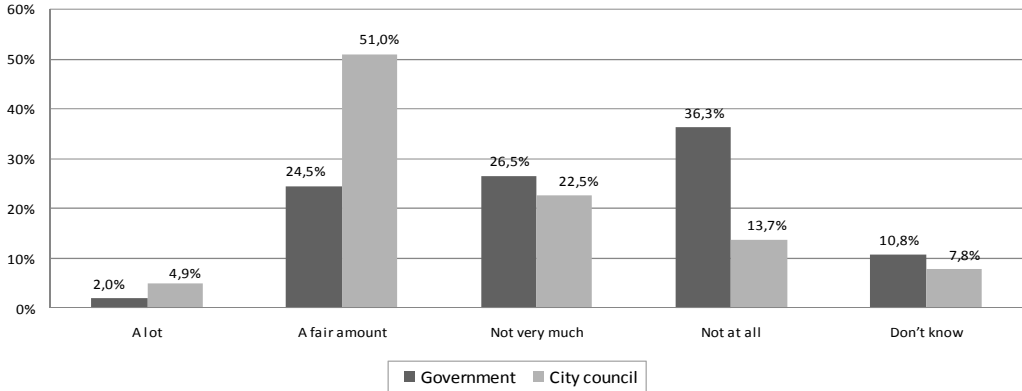
¹⁷⁰ Leicester City Council, *Report of Electoral Services*, cited in City Council and Partnership, *The Diversity of Leicester*, 2006, p. 23.

participation in national elections of 67.7 per cent (for both groups) in the same questionnaire.

10.2 Trust in Political Institutions

The data for the level of trust in local and national government revealed some very interesting discrepancies.

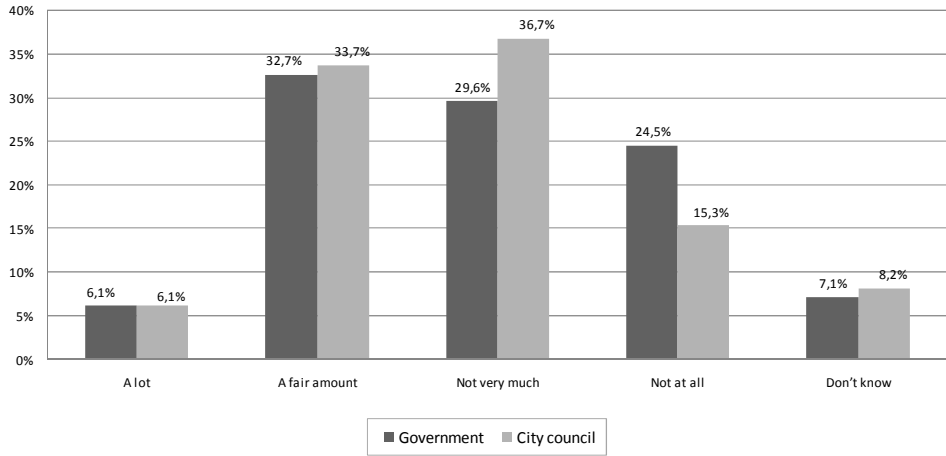
Figure 15a. Trust in elected authorities (Muslim)



Source: Open Society Institute

Among non-Muslims there appears to be greater cynicism towards central government than towards the local authority: nearly 10 per cent more people of non-Muslim background said they were “not at all” trusting of central government. For Muslims this figure was over 20 per cent more. Positive expression of trust was very similar (in fact identical) for central and local government among non-Muslims. Looking at Figure 15a showing Muslim responses, one can see a major difference in the declarations of “a lot” or “a fair amount” of trust between local and national authorities. The expressions of trust are nearly halved for national government, and expression of distrust – “not at all” – is more than doubled. Despite the brighter picture for local authorities, it should still be pointed out that over 35 per cent of non-Muslims and over 20 per cent of Muslims said they had “not very much” trust in the local council.

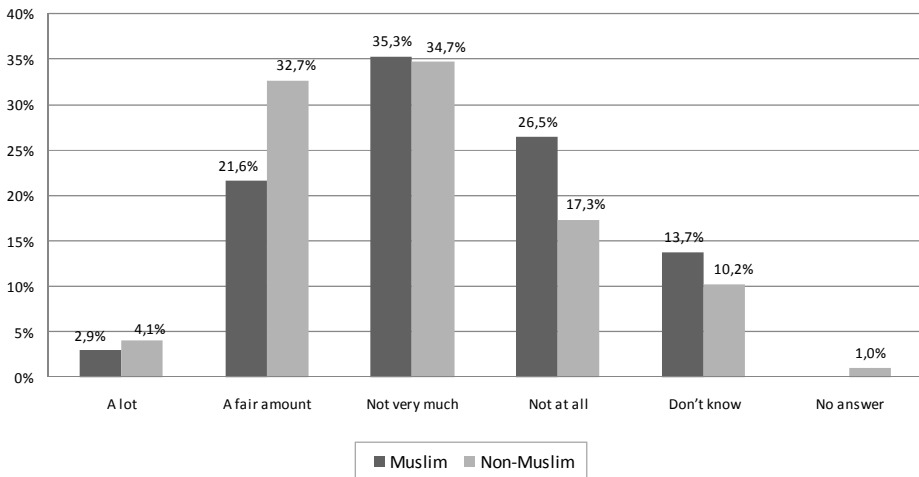
Figure 15b. Trust in elected authorities (non-Muslim)



Source: Open Society Institute

Likewise, trust in the national Parliament showed some differences between Muslims and non-Muslims, as seen in Figure 16. The “not at all” column shows that 9 per cent more Muslims were more distrustful, just as fewer said they trusted Parliament “a fair amount”.

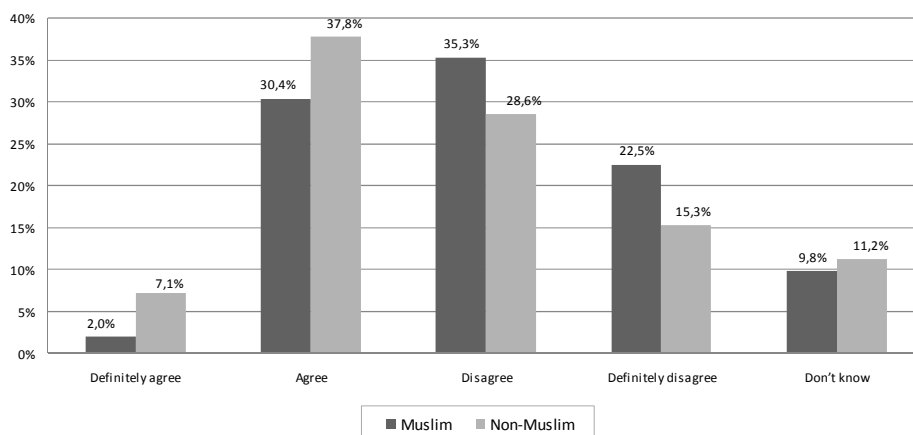
Figure 16. Trust in Parliament



Source: Open Society Institute

Figure 17 shows that Muslims were less likely to agree that they could influence the decision-making process in the city; it also shows that the feeling of powerlessness to effect change at the national level was higher among Muslims.

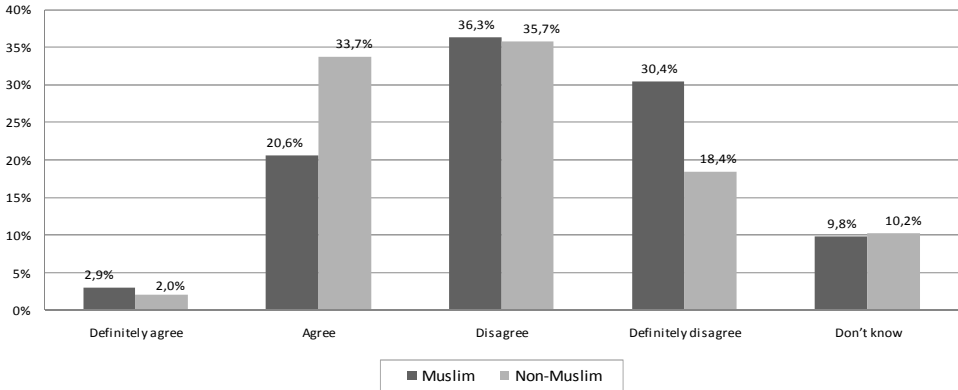
Figure 17. Perceived degree of influence on decisions affecting the city



Source: Open Society Institute

When respondents were asked about decision-making in the country (Figure 18), the difference was starker: 18 per cent of non-Muslims and 30 per cent of Muslims definitely disagreed that they could influence decision-making in the country, while the “definitely agree” response revealed a completely different picture.

Figure 18. Perceived degree of influence on decisions affecting the UK



Source: Open Society Institute

10.3 Civic Feeling

About 12 per cent on average had participated in consultations or meeting about local services. However, for protest activities such as attending a rally, a public meeting, a demonstration or signing a petition, overall levels of participation were much higher, particularly for signing petitions.

Table 18. Participation in civic activities

	Muslim %	Non-Muslim %	Total %
Public meeting or rally	22.5	23.5	23.0
Public demonstration	16.7	7.1	12.0
Petition	57.8	44.9	51.5
Consultation	13.7	11.2	12.5
Total	%	100.0	100.0
	Number	102	98

Source: Open Society Institute

It can be seen from Table 16 that Muslims were more likely than non-Muslims to attend a demonstration and sign a petition. Non-Muslims were more likely to attend a consultation than attend a demonstration.

Another important area considered was participation in civil society. Questions in this section attempted to gauge the level of active participation and feelings about individuals' ability to influence and bring about change. On the whole the questionnaire revealed very low levels of active participation across the board. Both Muslim and non-Muslim responses show a very high level of non-engagement or direct active involvement in civic structures and activities. When asked, "Have you played an active role in organising ...", related to schooling (e.g. running an activity club), or youth activities, politics (e.g. party events), religion (e.g. organising an event at a church or mosque) and so on, the responses in the negative ranged from 79 per cent for Muslims (for religious activities) to 84 per cent for non-Muslims (jointly for religious and school activities) upwards.

In responses to whether such activities were conducted in mixed environments or with people of the same ethnicity or religion, some interesting differences could be seen between Muslims and non-Muslims. For adult education and recreation Muslims responded higher in the "based on own ethnicity or religion" category: 6.9 per cent of Muslims and 3.1 per cent of non-Muslims for adult education, and 11.8 per cent and 4.1 per cent for recreation, respectively. Furthermore, over 17 per cent of Muslims said they were actively involved in a religious organisation, whereas only 12 per cent of non-Muslims said the same. It should be noted, however, that the sample sizes may not have been large enough for these fluctuations to be statistically significant.

10.4 Inter-faith Dialogue

The I&DeA report, *Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester*, noted that Leicester has a well-developed civic infrastructure, particularly in the faith sector, in comparison with other UK cities of a similar size.¹⁷¹ The Leicester Council of Faiths, supported by the city council, is particularly highly regarded for its presence and contribution to inter-faith relations. Established in 1986 after a visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to Leicester and a meeting with faith community leaders, the Council of Faiths includes Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs.¹⁷² In addition to this formal body, an informal Faith Leaders Forum convened by the Bishop of Leicester (and including the police and representatives from the council and other agencies) provides a crucial platform for the discussion of more sensitive and controversial matters concerning faith communities. Political issues and issues of potential tension between communities have been tackled during the meetings, as well as more forward-looking agenda items such as the regeneration of

¹⁷¹ I&DeA, *Taking Forward Community Cohesion*, p. 18.

¹⁷² See <http://www.leicestercounciloffaiths.org.uk> (accessed 1 May 2009).

Leicester and its impact on faith communities. Inter-faith activities were also seen by some focus group participants as important for long-term cohesion in the city; one participant in the focus groups remarked:

If the children are educated from a young age at school to teach them how to integrate with other faiths; I'm sure that contributes when they become older.

A plethora of other faith and inter-faith associations such as the Muslim-Christian dialogue group, the Family of Abraham group and the Women's Muslim-Christian dialogue group ensure that some positive relationships are forged across faith boundaries. Both the Islamic Foundation (founded in Leicester in 1973) and the St Philip's Centre (founded in 2006) have been important actors in promoting inter-faith work.¹⁷³ Canon Andrew Wingate, director of the St Philip's Centre, stressed that "due to their good practice on inter-faith and the positive relationships between such institutions, they have become known across Europe for promoting inter-faith harmony and are regularly visited by inter-faith groups keen to learn from the Leicester experience."¹⁷⁴

The FMO, Leicestershire, has also played a key role not just in inter-faith discussions, but also in liaising with the city council and other agencies on local issues, according to council officials. The presence of these networks and organisations has meant that when there has been a crisis with a potential for local spillover, such as after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 (9/11) and 7 July 2005 (7/7), or a rise in Hindu-Muslim tension after ethnic conflict in Gujarat, India, channels of communication have been available for community leaders to have discussions – even if they have agreed to disagree. When Muslims in the city felt vulnerable after 9/11 and Muslim graves had been desecrated, the Faith Leaders Forum rallied to the Muslim community by adopting the NATO stance of "an attack on one is an attack on all". Likewise, when a Jewish rabbi faced verbal abuse from Muslim youths, a local imam offered to walk with him from the synagogue to his home to show solidarity.

Community leaders and policymakers are keen to express that the situation is far from perfect and that there is little room for complacency, but that there are good mechanisms for the management of tensions when they do occur.¹⁷⁵ Nagdi (spokesman for the FMO) also commented: "While things may not be perfect here, we have built up some very important relationships between the community, the police, the Council and other faith leaders to manage the tensions as and when they arise".¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ See, for example, Interfaith Network UK, *Challenge and Opportunity: Changing Patterns of Inter Faith Engagement in the UK*, London, Interfaith Network UK, 2006; Alan Hamilton, *The Times*, 23 January 2003, "Prince calls for greater understanding of Islam", available at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article854734.ece> (accessed 1 April 2009).

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Canon Andrew Wingate, director, St Philip's Centre, Leicester, June 2008.

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Sheila Locke, 19 September 2008.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Suleman Nagdi, 13 June 2008.

Research conducted by Riaz Ravat in 2004 on social action by faith communities in Leicester identified that just over half of the 240 faith-based organisations in the city were administering 443 faith-led social projects, including assistance for asylum seekers, support for people with HIV, counselling and youth club provision. An estimated worth of the volunteering time of faith communities reached nearly £5m per year.¹⁷⁷ Research conducted by the Policy Research Centre for the Leicester Partnership to map Muslim women's associations in the city also showed that over 60 networks were present, ranging from well-established organisations such as the Fatima Women's Network to an informal group that meets in a local park to go jogging.¹⁷⁸

10.5 Asylum and Refuge

Participation and citizenship are key factors for discussion when looking at the position of new arrivals in the city. This is of particular importance in Leicester, as it receives a significant number of asylum seekers from a variety of backgrounds. In response to this, a group that includes Quakers and others of different religious and humanist backgrounds have been campaigning for Leicester to be recognised as a city of sanctuary.¹⁷⁹ The church and Christian communities more generally stand out as significant agencies that have worked to tackle some of the needs and difficulties of asylum seekers.

Mike Smith, chaplain to the Bishop of Leicester, mentioned that some of the transient communities, who may go on to become resident, reside in the Spinney Hills and Stonegate wards. Although there are no formal statistics available at present, from his experience through the Board of Social Responsibility in the Diocese of Leicester, a significant number of these will be of a Muslim background and will therefore feel a pull towards those areas where there are a significant number of Muslims. This is often "because of a whole raft of basic human needs – they're fleeing without possessions ... whether they be Iranian or from Muslim parts of Africa ... there is a constant flow of people that are allocated to Leicester because of the way the asylum system is worked through NASS (National Asylum Support Service)".¹⁸⁰

Smith explained: "There is often a greater residual grouping of Muslims asylum seekers where there are strong Muslim communities, so Leicester is going to have more than its share than where there aren't strong Muslim communities." Challenges, however, arise over housing schemes, "where needy Muslim people are placed in random, maybe white, communities where their needs are not understood and they may meet

¹⁷⁷ Riaz Ravat, *Embracing the Present, Planning the Future*, Leicester, Leicester Faiths Regeneration Project, Leicester, 2004, p. 55.

¹⁷⁸ Policy Research Centre, *Mapping Muslim Women's Activities in Leicester*, Leicester, Leicester Partnership, 2008.

¹⁷⁹ See <http://www.cityofsanctuary.com> (accessed 1 May 2009).

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Mike Smith, chaplain to the Bishop of Leicester, Leicester, 2 June 2009.

hostility”. He emphasised that Muslims arriving as asylum seekers need their basic human cares met for clothing, diet, psychological care and cultural norms: “This is one body of particularly vulnerable people that are a significant minority that come into this country as Muslims who are fleeing persecution. They need their own culture to be respected; and if they stay longer term they need integrating as well.”¹⁸¹

However, there are many questions about when an asylum seeker becomes a refugee, as well as the legal difficulties which have been posed for many who have “settled” (while awaiting their documentation) and are then given deportation orders to return to countries where their lives may be threatened. Although the cases are being reviewed, Smith said: “You have this group of people that are immensely vulnerable, a number of those have been based in Leicester ... and are now in one of the government’s detention centres. People that have been Leicester citizens are now being dispersed around the country ... treated in all kinds of difficult ways in society.”¹⁸²

Smith questions the impact of such experiences on human lives, particularly when children are involved; this becomes even more complex when children are born in the UK while the parent is awaiting a decision on residency.¹⁸³

In conclusion, in terms of civic participation the position of Muslims in the city seems to be fairly positive. There is greater trust in the local authority than central government, Muslim citizens feel they are able to influence decision-making in the city more than they can nationally and voter turnout is higher than nationally among ethnic minorities. The representation of ethnic minorities in elected positions in the local council is also quite high compared with other cities of a similar size: just over 30 per cent of elected councillors are of BME backgrounds, including seven councillors of Muslim background (13 per cent). The faith communities of Leicester are also seen to be valuable contributors to the life of the city and to race and faith relations in the city. There is a good inter-faith ethos and the city is uniquely served by a strong faith presence of Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, along with important institutions established within most of these communities, some of which specialise in inter-faith activity. Areas of improvement would include greater participation from newer communities such as the Somali, Turkish and Kurdish groups, and also increased participation in the civic space of women of all backgrounds. The issue of asylum and refugee status of new arrivals remains problematic, and one in which Muslim communities could play a much greater role, in a wider context of alliances with others, to work on a platform of social justice.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Mike Smith, 2 June 2009.

¹⁸² Interview with Mike Smith, 2 June 2009.

¹⁸³ Interview with Mike Smith, 2 June 2009.

11. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

This chapter looks at the type of media frequently used by the OSI respondents. It examines the Muslim respondents' perceptions of the media and the role and importance of local media and newspapers such as the *Leicester Mercury*, which have been able to offer a balanced view of issues about Islam and Muslims and thereby have gained the trust of Muslim respondents.

The *Leicester Mercury* is the most important regional newspaper for Leicester city and parts of Leicestershire.¹⁸⁴ It publishes two editions daily. There are a number of radio stations, including BBC Radio Leicester, Leicester Sound and BBC Radio Asian Network. There is also an array of newsletters and free newspapers, such as *The Link* and the *Evington Echo*, which is a free community newsletter for the Evington area. It was observed that local media have an important role in improving community cohesion in the city.

11.1 Acquiring Information

In order to understand what are the direct and indirect sources and influences when seeking information, the research asked individuals where they acquired information about their area, city and country. In responses about local news information, the majority of respondents said they used local resources, including free community newsletters.

Word of mouth also played a large role in communicating news, often through trusted sources in local communities. Participants at times only used this method of communication in acquiring local news and information, often through informal conversations, meetings or community gatherings. Other means of obtaining information included national newspapers and television channels in both English and other languages. A small number of participants said they listened to the local radio for such information, BBC Radio Leicester being cited as the most popular radio station by Muslims and non Muslims.

11.2 The *Leicester Mercury* and the BBC

The *Leicester Mercury* was listed as the most popular newsprint by both Muslims and non-Muslims on local issues. It was perceived to be a trusted source that offered balanced insights into issues affecting both the city and county. The *Mercury* was perceived to have a positive impact upon race relations in Leicester by creating debate and informing its readers, as opposed to sensationalist journalism.

¹⁸⁴ The *Leicester Mercury* is owned by the *Daily Mail* and General Trust.

The *Mercury* is sold across Leicester and the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland. The average circulation of the paper is 73,634. It has a greater penetration than any one national newspaper in the Leicester community. According to Nick Carter (the previous editor of the *Mercury*), “It reaches about 48 per cent of the population, whereas a high selling newspaper will probably reach about 20 per cent. In the county we reach 33 per cent whereas *The Sun* (highest seller) reaches 17 per cent, *Daily Mail* 11–12 per cent. From our own research *Leicester Mercury* is more trusted than any national paper.”¹⁸⁵

According to the paper, its readers are mostly around 45 years of age and above, with approximately 46 per cent from the BME group; some are young Muslim women. However, increasing its Asian audience has been challenging for the paper. As ethnic-minority communities have grown in Leicester, ensuring that all community groups are recognised and represented has been vital to getting them to be readers.

In an interview Nick Carter explained how providing “fair, accurate reporting” has helped maintain community cohesion in the city. He also initiated the Leicester Multicultural Advisory Group (LMAG) (composed of community leaders, faith communities’ representatives, academics and other stakeholders such as police and council officials), which provides a sounding board for the local media in helping them create understanding between different communities in Leicester. An example of how effective this group has been was demonstrated when a member of the Somali community was arrested in Leicester under anti-terrorism legislation. A group of approximately 150 people, of largely Somali-Muslim background, met senior police officers and city council representatives, who could answer questions and reassure the community of what was going on. At the meeting it was agreed that the ethnicity of the person concerned would not be mentioned, as there were already significant tensions within the Somali community. When both the *Mercury* and BBC Radio Leicester reported the incident, neither the name nor ethnicity was mentioned in the reports. Nick Carter commented that it “was a reasonable way, in the way Leicester operates”.¹⁸⁶

A common complaint from Muslim communities in the UK about general mainstream media is that Muslims feel they are poorly represented. In response to this, Carter argued that in his experience, in Leicester, Muslims do not feel this way and that he has had very few complaints from the Muslim community.

After 7/7, Carter felt the *Mercury* was both “understanding and careful in reporting”. It was felt that due to the good relationship forged with members of the Muslim community, the paper made few mistakes in handling a very sensitive situation. For example, the *Mercury* ensured that when Muslims held a peace rally a few days later at Victoria Park this was covered in the paper.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Nick Carter, 14 May 2008.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Nick Carter, 14 May 2008.

Kate Squire, managing editor of BBC Radio Leicester, is part of LMAG and works closely with the editor of the *Mercury* on issues such as community cohesion. According to Squire, the station has changed its approach to covering faith issues, going from doing a feature or dedicating a week to focus on a particular faith, to faith becoming part of the “fabric of what the BBC do” in an attempt to “try to be an integrated station”.¹⁸⁷

Squire felt that the work of the local BBC radio station was often overshadowed by how people viewed reporting in mainstream BBC television and radio. It also suffered due to what was written in the tabloids about the BBC. She emphasised that the agenda of local media means that it is more connected with local issues and championing local causes.¹⁸⁸

The target audience for local BBC radio is for listeners aged 50 and above. The ethnicity breakdown is very difficult to measure, but it is estimated by the BBC that 8 per cent of the audience is Asian.¹⁸⁹ Its outreach is Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and can also be listened to on the internet. BBC Radio Leicester has its own website where there is a section on faith that covers festivals, features on current affairs and events relating to different faith communities.

11.3 Muslims’ Perceptions of the Media

The experiences of Muslims with local media were discussed further in the focus groups. The responses were largely positive. Interviews with key stakeholders in the Leicester community have also reflected this. The *Mercury* was considered an example and a model for all local papers. Discussion in focus groups focused on the national media’s portrayal of Muslims rather than local media representation. It was felt that most were more exposed to national media and much of its impact and impression was generally negative. However, there was some recognition that the local media were different due to the way in which they work.

Local media are somewhat different, and the reason for that is because local media need a clientele, they need the existing people within the vicinity to sell ... for example, in Leicester we have the *Leicester Mercury*, so it will be the local paper people buy and hence they need to be that bit more careful as to how they approach a subject.

Most of the 20 or so key stakeholder interviews had positive experiences of local media. Most interviewees shared the same view and provided various reasons why and how they feel Leicester’s local media are seen to be a good example.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Kate Squire, managing editor, BBC Radio Leicester, Leicester, 15 May 2008.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Kate Squire, 15 May 2008.

¹⁸⁹ See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/leicester/faith> (accessed 1 April 2009).

Hena Ahsan, a local student, claimed that generally the media were negative in their portrayal of Muslims, but felt that the *Mercury* was different.

I have a very positive experience as I have worked with *Leicester Mercury*. BBC Radio Leicester do try and get a measured take on things and you know this when people phone in and have a measured perception.¹⁹⁰

The president of the Islamic Society of Britain's (ISB) Leicester branch stated in an interview, "I've contributed to the local paper – which is good; the fact that they're open to that sort of contribution by Muslims." When asked whether reporting of Muslims was mostly positive in the local paper, the ISB president indicated that the occasions when her organisation had contacted the paper on events that were taking place were positive.¹⁹¹

These examples highlight the fact that when Muslims are given the opportunity to contribute they have had positive experiences. In the same focus group mentioned above, a participant commented on how open the local media was to Muslim voices. A public relations officer for FMO in Leicestershire commented that at least 90–95 per cent of his press releases made it to the press and were aired on the radio (BBC). Other ways he contributed to the paper were that: "I write as a first person columnist for the newspaper, five hundred words, unedited, and that is quite a powerful position to be in; that you can write and they will print it without actually editing the text."¹⁹²

Both Muslim and non-Muslim interviewees commented that the *Mercury* should be used as a model for local and national media in the UK. "Certain cities, such as in the North of England, can learn the lesson from Leicester on how reporting should take place."¹⁹³

It has also been increasingly recognised that the power of a paper lies in the hands of its editor rather than the journalists. The previous editor, Nick Carter, was praised for the way in which the *Mercury* provided objective reporting of the Leicester multicultural community, and avoided sensationalist headlines and reporting on issues such as immigration, asylum and race. Organisations such as the FMO and inter-faith organisations have recognised the local paper as having a part to play in combating negative reporting of Muslims.

One important local figure considered the local media to be neutral rather than positive or negative. Yasmin Surti said that as there had not been any major incidents (such as 7/7) in Leicester, the coverage has been "fairly balanced". However, she further commented: "I think if something would happen it would have more negative

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Hena Ahsan, student, Leicester, 13 June 2008.

¹⁹¹ Interview with Seema Ahmed, former president of the Islamic Society of Britain, Leicester Branch, Leicester, 13 May 2008.

¹⁹² Interview with Suleman Nagdi, 13 June 2008.

¹⁹³ Interview with Suleman Nagdi, 13 June 2008.

connotations.”¹⁹⁴ This contrasts with Nick Carter’s view, as he believes that even when negative stories are published in the national media, the *Mercury* ensures that Muslim voices are heard in the local media to create an understanding of what mainstream Muslims think.

Two interviewees shared the view that the local papers have not always been positive or neutral, but rather, negative. Mohammed Nasim (a community leader and previously a councillor) said that reporting of mosques in Leicester was often negative. Examples were given where mosques had had bad experiences with both the community and the *Mercury*. The most recent example given was that of Masjid Umar, based in Evington, concerning the debate over the length of time the call to prayer (*adhan*) should be. The council and the mosque after much negotiating agreed to three minutes. This issue became a big headline as 25 local non-Muslim residents objected to hearing the call to prayer in their homes. The experience of mosques is that they are not covered objectively. “Anything to do with Muslims the local papers tend to do the same thing as global media.”¹⁹⁵

A Somali community worker commented that although he does not tune into local media for information, he believes that BBC Radio Leicester reflects national BBC policy and they have the same ethos and hence cannot be as objective, regardless of whether it is a local or national media outlet.¹⁹⁶

Muslims in Leicester, in particular Muslim organisations, are increasingly acknowledging that Muslims must engage with media outlets and journalists; they need to interact more with journalists and encourage individual members of the Muslim community to write letters or articles for local papers, bringing to their attention when a Muslim member has been a good citizen or has given something back to the wider community, in order to counteract the negative stories.

According to a focus group participant,

The opportunities are there. I think we need to engage more. I think ... we fall short in a lot of that.

Two Muslim women participating in one of the focus groups had contributed by writing for the *Mercury*, and the press officer of FMO regularly engaged with the *Mercury* and BBC Radio Leicester by sending press releases detailing where Muslims stand on issues that have been a prime focus in the national media.

However, not all Muslim members have been successful in engaging with the local media. It was reported that individuals have more difficulty making connections than do representatives of large organisations. If true, this shows that while institutional

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Yasmin Surti, chair of Aqoon Educational Services, Leicester, 9 May 2008.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Mohammed Nasim, 13 June 2008.

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Somali community worker, Leicester, June 2008.

relationships may be positive, individuals may not have the same degree of confidence in the local media. One individual in a focus group said that he had sent a couple of letters to the *Mercury* and they were not printed. A member of a Muslim organisation emphasised the difference: “The difference between an organisation and an individual, because an organisation is elected, is representative of the community and hence they’re taking a representative view and they’re not taking an individual ... but the odd letter you can get in.”

It was also encouraged in the focus group that Muslims must continue to try, both in an individual capacity as well as part of an organisation, to engage with the media through writing letters or comments regardless of whether the letter or article were printed. Some were even more ambitious:

We should get our people involved in journalism and enter into the field and change the mindset.

I think the opportunity is there and I think we should grab it with both hands and I think more people in the community should grab it and we must become more engaged than disengaged ... my fear sometimes, I think we disengage. We move back, and I don’t know why.

Engaging with the local newspaper seemed to be more common than engaging with local television or radio. There was no mention from participants of the focus groups of any local figure who had engaged with the national media. The president of ISB Leicester said that radio and television were more difficult to work with compared with the local paper. She stressed that the challenge is the effectiveness of a press relations officer in approaching these media outlets and if successful Muslims can then build on those relationships and see them through. “Once you’ve got your foot in, you’ve broken into it, then it’s easier to make those contacts ... but it requires effort.” She further said that effort is required by Muslims themselves as media, newspaper and radio do not go out deliberately seeking a positive story (about Muslims). Therefore the engagement must come from the Muslim community itself.¹⁹⁷

Most of the participants from the questionnaire relied on a complex variety of media sources such as newspapers, television and sometimes the internet and word of mouth for information about their city, national and international issues.

As a result of continuous negative media portrayal in the national media, some Muslim individuals and some Muslim organisations have become more proactive in working with the wider community and engaging with the local media. The negative stories, images and unbalanced reporting of some national television and tabloid papers have encouraged Muslims to step up and take more responsibility in portraying moderate voices in mainstream media and working in areas of inter-faith, engaging more with other communities.

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Seema Ahmed, 13 May 2008.

In Leicester, organisations such as the ISB, the FMO, Leicester Asian Youth Association, FOSIS, the Islamic societies of De Montfort and Leicester universities highlight events or inform the media on what is happening in the Muslim community and what work is going on. Some of these stakeholders believe that local media do not have the same affect as national media. Although the Leicester community may read the *Mercury* rather than any one national newspaper, as stated by Nick Carter, television is more widely used and 24-hour news channels have more of an impact than local newspaper and radio. Therefore, some argued that the national angle overrides and has a disproportionate effect on how local positive stories are covered. Some Muslim women felt that they had to work harder with the media, as Muslim women wearing the *niqab* (face veil) or *hijab* (headscarf) are often misconstrued; this has led to an understanding that women are repressed and have submissive roles in Muslim communities.

Based on interviews, it was perceived that Muslim women have become more conscious in their contact with the wider community, such as making an effort with non-Muslim neighbours. The motivation comes as they want to counteract the images of Muslim women that they see in national media and they see the perception of Islam through personal experiences.

Negative impact was also discussed in focus groups. Concerns were raised over covert prejudices existing in sectors such as health, education and employment, and there was a lack of trust of the police, who received verbal abuse. The Leicester Asian Youth Association (LAYA), based in Evington, works with mostly young Muslims. The charity serves the immediate catchment area comprising the wards of Evington, Spinney Hill, Stoneygate, Charnwood, Crown Hills and Wycliffe, but also has users from a citywide catchment area. In discussions and holding focus groups with young Muslims aged 11–18 years old, the group found that young people were very frustrated with the media. Furthermore, images in national media also show that young Muslims are being drawn into extremism and their loyalty towards Britain is being questioned, leading them to feel sometimes alienated from society and picked on. In another interview a mother expressed concern about the way the media images have affected her 12-year-old son:

He was asking questions such as what is a terrorist and has media images in describing what they think a terrorist looks like. It makes you think that the media has an effect on families that are actually kind of open minded and it's really a very powerful thing.

Another focus group participant said that his wife had been verbally abused because she wears the veil. He felt that more security was needed in the city. It has also been felt that some barriers in employment have been a result of the way in which Muslims are portrayed and perceived in the wider community. A discussion took place about the huge media influence on people who do not have day-to-day contact with Muslim people. This lack of contact has led to the formation of stereotypes, which is an immediate barrier. “The media dictates it all ... whether in a job or in a school,

wherever you are”; here the participant is arguing that media portrayal influences employers and the education system.

11.4 Community News Media

The Community News Agency in Leicester is considered unique in the UK and was noted at the roundtable as a good practice in building community relations. The Community News Agency, called Citizens’ Eye,¹⁹⁸ was founded by John Coster in late 2007. This community media hub is run by a group of volunteers and offers a free service. In an interview John Coster explained that Citizens’ Eye considers itself as part of community media and does not claim to be part of the mainstream local media. It focuses on issues that would often not be covered in the mainstream media as they may not be newsworthy stories.¹⁹⁹

The aim of developing a community-based news agency was to provide support and a voice for vulnerable communities. Many of the community members who use Citizens’ Eye are young and elderly people, those with disabilities, ex-offenders, refugees and new arrivals in the city, who may feel they are excluded by the wider community due to commonly held misconceptions. The reporters are citizen reporters who “provide a news gathering platform”. Citizens’ Eye aims to report on Leicester’s and Leicestershire’s various communities in an unbiased and accurate way by promoting events and sharing good practice among peers. It also provides media literacy training, open to all members of the communities in Leicester, to provide skills such as writing a press release or producing a newsletter.²⁰⁰

In discussions at the roundtable, many of the important local figures from both Muslim and non-Muslim communities said that through community media such as publishing newsletters, newspapers, broadcasting on YouTube.com and community radio stations, the communities have the opportunity to dispel much of the ignorance that often erodes community cohesion. An example was given by a member of the Leicestershire Constabulary during the roundtable. He argued that a positive way to communicate with the public could be through the Citizens’ Eye newsletter, as there are many misconceptions of the police among the Muslim community, and vice versa.

Isaak Abdi, a member of the Somali community, said that community radio can help with community cohesion. He mentioned that the Somali community runs a multilingual radio service which broadcasts seven days a week and raises awareness of different issues such as integration for newly arrived people.

¹⁹⁸ See <http://www.citizenseye.org> (accessed 1 May 2009).

¹⁹⁹ Interview with John Coster, founder, Citizens Eye Community News Agency, Leicester, May 2009.

²⁰⁰ Interview with John Coster, May 2009.

Another example of community media is the Somali Afro European Media Project (SAEMP). This is an online community TV station launched by the Leicester Somali Education and Community Centre, supported and funded by Leicester City Council. The aim of having an online TV station for the Somali community by the Somali community is to educate and raise topical issues and to work towards better integration and community cohesion in Leicester. This will allow for “greater access to Education Services, Jobs, Commerce and other Support mechanisms and community networks”.²⁰¹

A radio project with a wide audience, broadcast around the month of Ramadan, is also run annually by the FMO. This provides an opportunity for scholars, imams, community leaders and also a plethora of organisations and activists to make their voices heard, to promote educational programmes and also engage in topical discussion and debate during the month of fasting.

Local media received a more positive reception than national media, according to OSI research. There are also important signs of well-established institutional relationships between Muslim leaders, community organisations and sections of the media locally. Forums such as the LMAG are broadly seen to be important contributors and mechanisms for fostering positive race relations in the city and agencies such as the BBC and the *Mercury*, although receiving some criticism, are largely seen to be mature in their approach to reporting on issues relating to race and faith, avoiding sensationalism. However, while the institutional relationships seem largely positive, it also seems that individuals feel less engaged and empowered in accessing the media. This could be due to a lack of skills and confidence, or not being seen to be representative by the media agencies themselves. Community media also play a potentially important role in helping to develop these skills and confidence.

²⁰¹ See <http://www.saemp.org.uk/aboutus.htm> (accessed 1 April 2009).

12. CONCLUSION

The bulk of the ethnic-minority communities of Leicester were formed as a result of secondary migration. The original migrating generation had previously lived in eastern and southern parts of Africa, where labourers from India (mainly Gujarat) had been recruited to work on building the railways and other infrastructure of that part of the world. They had thus previously lived as a minority where communities had learnt to negotiate spaces of identity and to function in a plural and multi-faith society. Into the third and fourth generations, they also had exposure to educational opportunities and in many cases were economically proficient and had developed keen business acumen. In contrast, the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities of Leicester migrated directly from mostly rural parts of South Asia where they lived in quite monocultural settings as part of a majority. Likewise the migrations of Bosnians, Algerians, Somalis and Kurds had their own contexts. The reality of modern Leicester cannot be easily described by exploring these communities in isolation, for there are highly complex interactions that take place between these groups, especially by virtue of religious affinity. However, even apart from religious association, intermarriage, cross-cultural influence and inter-ethnic competition (especially economically and educationally), it is very difficult to isolate one group to study it or contrast it with others.

Racism, discrimination, prejudice and disadvantage are cross-cutting issues that feature throughout the report, hence the decision not to dedicate separate chapters to them. Such issues have been described in the chapters on health care, education, employment, housing and citizenship. The OSI questionnaire did ask specific questions on racism and religious prejudice and the results show a very mixed picture. Both Muslims and non-Muslims (both approx 50 per cent) felt there was still a significant amount of racial prejudice in the country today.

The target of this racism varied significantly. Just under a quarter of non-Muslims (nearly 20 per cent) felt that most racism was targeted towards black people (both African and Caribbean). Yet Muslims felt that most racism was directed towards Arabs (over 25 per cent), Muslims (over 15 per cent) or other (over 30 per cent). In both groups just over 40 per cent felt that racism had increased and that there is more now than five years ago. However, 48 per cent of non-Muslims and 43 per cent of Muslims felt that racial discrimination was the same or less than five years ago.

Views on religious prejudice were less ambivalent. Both Muslims and non-Muslims (over 70 per cent in both groups) felt that either a lot or a fair amount of prejudice was prevalent in the UK today. Both groups predominantly felt that there was more prejudice now than there had been five years ago. Further breakdown of these statistics, however, shows the perception of religious discrimination varies substantially. More than double the number of Muslims (56.9 per cent), compared with non-Muslims (23.5 per cent) felt that there was a lot of religious prejudice, indicating that there was a far greater notion in the Muslim community that attitudes towards them had become more hostile in the last few years.

Similarly, although both groups felt that there was now more religious prejudice in the UK than there had been five years ago, 75.5 per cent of Muslims felt this, compared with 59.2 per cent non-Muslims. Also nearly 28 per cent of non-Muslims and 17 per cent of Muslims felt that there was either less religious prejudice or about the same as there had been five years ago. Not all of these data fit in with the overall direction of responses in some areas of the study. For example, few people felt that they had been refused a job or promotion due to discrimination, and Islamophobia and racism did not even feature in the list of issues respondents did not like about their neighbourhood. This could be due to people responding to what they felt was the mood of the country, rather than their specific experiences of life in Leicester.

With good reason, Leicester is often talked of in very positive terms for its recent race relations, cohesion and inter-faith record. Given the ethnic and religious diversity of Leicester, the socio-economic poverty and deprivation in parts of the city, the low levels of educational achievement in schools and the high proportions of new arrivals in the city, one could have expected a dangerous mix and a race relations disaster. But clearly this has been avoided and in many ways reversed. It may be that the complexity of the minority communities of Leicester is actually part of the explanation for the positive reputation of Leicester. Whereas in Bradford the ethnic differences are primarily between whites and people of Pakistani origin, creating a bipolar environment where communities feel that there are two sides, in Leicester multipolar ethnic diversity means that Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs are all seen as major stakeholders in the city, possibly helping to dissipate some of the potential tensions that could occur between two single communities potentially confronting each other.

In addition to this, changes in local government policy over decades now and the visible celebration of diversity²⁰² have created a space where ethnic minorities feel comfortable and not under pressure of assimilation, as perhaps in other parts of the country. Perhaps just as important, the attitude of leadership in the Anglican Diocese of Leicester has been very important. Successive bishops have been able to mediate between members of other faith groups where tensions have occurred or potential conflicts have arisen, for example after 9/11, during the Hindu–Muslim conflict in Gujarat and with reference to tensions in the Middle East. The Faith Leaders Forum, which works in fields similar to those of the Leicester Council of Faiths, was convened after 9/11 and adopted the principle that “an attack on one is an attack on all” in rallying behind the Muslim community when a threat to persons and properties was suspected. The current bishop of Leicester, Tim Stevens, continues to play this subtle, positive and vital mediating role that allows the faith communities to engage in frank conversations and deal with some of the tensions that arise. The local media, for example the *Leicester Mercury*, has also played an important role in maintaining racial

²⁰² For example, the support for cultural and religious events such as Diwali (Deepavali), Eid celebrations, Vaisakhi and corresponding decorations around the city, as well as the way that the city markets its identity visibly, including diversity within it.

harmony by deliberately choosing not to use headlines and reporting angles that could stoke racial hatred.

While policymakers, politicians and community leaders in Leicester are all very keen to assert that there is little room for complacency and that potential threats to stability need to be monitored constantly, they do comment that in Leicester an atmosphere has been created in which a basic level of trust exists between leaders of different communities and the mechanism and relationships are also present to deal with tensions as and when they arise. Of course this trust is not a guarantee, and there are some significant challenges on the horizon. Nor has this simply been the result of good intentions and people being nice to each other. It is evident from interviews with key figures that the harmony and progress achieved have been hard won.

From the above discussion and the research, it seems that the following factors have been significant in creating the positive conditions that Leicester has come to be known for, as follows.

- Response from the city council, bringing progressive policies to the realities of migration over decades, choosing to actively celebrate difference and diversity and put in place concrete mechanisms for engaging with communities, provide support for activities and help new arrivals through the process of community formation and settlement.
- Presence of multiple minority-faith communities, avoiding a bipolar confrontation between Christians and Muslims, as is found in some other cities.
- The understanding built up between faith community leaders, through a firm commitment to inter-faith dialogue; the leadership of the Anglican Church in particular.
- Greater social capital and economic prosperity among significant sections of the ethnic-minority communities, whose members have developed a keen entrepreneurial spirit and business acumen.
- Progressive reporting and editorial policies adopted by the local media, feeding into the wider cohesion strategy.
- A more open engagement with the community by the police than is found in some other parts of the country, in which community leaders are taken into some confidence regarding security and criminal threats, and information is shared more readily.
- The networks, relationships and partnerships that have been built, partly by the council and partly by faith communities, and also in the wider civil society, that allow tough conversations to be had and create room for people to agree to disagree as a last resort.

There are, nevertheless, signs of tensions in the city that cannot be ignored. Looking at the socio-economic data of different wards in the city, the divide between rich and poor seems quite significant, and the difference in deprivation within areas of the city provides a stark contrast. While inter-faith dialogue, discussion and harmony are celebrated, the inter-faith ethos has yet to penetrate into all sectors of society. There are those who view inter-faith activity with some suspicion. Women and younger people tend to be much less present in the various leadership and representative forums for faith groups.

Below the surface tensions exist between faith groups, particularly between Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities. It is difficult to measure such tensions, but occasionally in conversations faith leaders do touch upon this. Surprisingly little work has actually been initiated on creating meaningful conversations between these communities and the few initiatives seem to have been overshadowed by other priorities in the competition for the limited resources of organisations. Challenges also exist within the Muslim communities, between denominational differences, but also between ethnic groups. Pakistani, Bangladeshi and other smaller communities at times feel as if they are a minority within a minority, whose underachievement goes forgotten amid the success of the more affluent Gujarati Muslims. There are also important debates about gender roles and access to places of worship, employment, and the overall role and authority of women, for example wearing the *niqab* was seen by one interviewee to be more common in Leicester than in many other large cities. The role of such a research project is obviously not to enter into a theological reflection of Muslims' faith, but this is raised in the context of the social impact of aspects of Muslims' lives. While this study was not able (and not designed) to focus on such issues much further, it would be interesting in future studies to examine the impact such identity dynamics and more conservative expressions of religious practice have on integration and cohesion in the city.

It will also be interesting to see how the Leicester experience and model of community harmony deals with the rapid changes that the city is undergoing and is likely to face in the coming years. Particularly as the economic climate worsens (as at the time of writing), increased strain will naturally be placed on community relations. The recent months have also seen that far-right sentiments have surfaced in the region, with a member of the British National Party (BNP) elected to the county council (representing Coalville), as well as anecdotal suggestions of BNP support in parts of the city.

A number of concerns have been raised about the roll-out of the PVE agenda (called "Mainstreaming Moderation" in Leicester). While this brings money and focus to potential capacity-building in the city, it is mainly directed at Muslim communities and is allocated centrally by the Communities and Local Government Department (and then through the regional government office) on the basis of size of the Muslim population and an assessment of capacity-building and preventative needs. In the pilot year Leicester was awarded around £150,000. While a small sum in terms of central government grants, it nevertheless created resentment among other communities who have at times viewed this as favouritism and unfair, gaining exclusive attention and

resources.²⁰³ It has also created tensions within the Muslim community as, to some, the fund carries with it the stigma of counter-terrorism and security agendas. This issue could, therefore, have the impact of building capacity in some sectors of the city, while it undermines cohesion work in other areas.

Perhaps more important than even this, the city has been undergoing a dramatic shift and growth in the size of its Muslim population. As mentioned at the outset, the 2001 Census showed the size of religious communities to be in the range of 41,000 Hindus, 31,000 Muslims and 12,000 Sikhs (all figures rounded up). Nearly 10 years on, there has been a significant influx of various groups of Muslims that have settled in the city, particularly the Somalis who are estimated to be at least 6,000 in number. This means that in the 2011 Census, the figures of Hindus and Muslims are likely to be much lower, if the Muslim figure is not higher. The school PLASC data and admissions data (2007) presented earlier also indicate this for the state-school sector. Of course this is not the whole picture, as it only refers to state schools and is based on a voluntary question. Nevertheless, some significant adjustments will happen and are happening in the ethnic and religious composition of the city. And this has the potential to increase significantly the tensions between the Hindu and Muslim communities, particularly when the data hit the public arena around mid-2012. If this occurs, there is a three-year window to work on enhancing relationships between these communities and building stronger ties that could hold.

And perhaps even more serious than this, if Leicester does become a plural city by 2012, as predicted by some, this may create some race relations tensions, as the identity of the city may be seen to be changing.

It may well be that the current partnerships and networks are robust and resilient enough to deal with the challenges that may be posed by such a demographic shift, but more work may be necessary. Furthermore, some of the findings from this study, regarding community cohesion, trust in the local authority, relationships with the police, educational underachievement, unemployment and economic inactivity, improvements in health, civic participation of all and greater engagement of women and young people in civic life, confidence in the media and other matters raised require collective action and leadership from different sectors of the city.

²⁰³ This was raised at a meeting of the Faith Leaders Forum, as well as in an interview with a city official.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

This report makes a number of recommendations concerning education, employment, housing, health, the police, citizenship and the media. It addresses the need for further engagement by the council with its myriad and growing communities. While recognising that Leicester offers a number of very positive practices on inclusion of its diverse communities, it calls for current and future policies on tackling socio-economic disadvantage and minority inclusion to ensure that all groups who make up the diverse population in the city are consulted and listened to, and that their specific needs are understood and accommodated.

13.1 Demographics and Research

1. Leicester City Council and the Leicester Partnership should initiate more focused research on and activities relevant to the plural cities shift in demographics and should establish policies for managing this shift.
2. Leicester City Council should explore the possibility of conducting in-depth studies comparing service delivery and residents' experiences in wards in the city with significant levels of disadvantage. Such a study could offer information on the chief determinants for socio-economic improvement, educational achievement and employment prospects in the long term, as well as enable proactive measures to be taken for the needs of young people.
3. Further studies should be commissioned which drill deeper into the data presented in this report, disaggregating the non-Muslim category into subgroups, and also the Muslim groups into ethnic groups for comparison. This would help provide a better understanding of ethnic, socio-economic and cultural variants of some of the issues discussed in the report. Such research could be sponsored by the City Council or the Leicester Partnership and would help to inform policies for employment and service delivery, particularly where a positive duty may apply.
4. There is a need for more focused studies of underachievement (and the complexities which lead to it) among Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Somali, Kurdish and other smaller communities. Such work could be sponsored by the regional government office or the Communities and Local Government Department, with a view to generating data and analysis that could be relevant in other parts of the country.

13.2 Education

5. Leicester City Council, the East Midlands Learning and Skills Council and related agencies should coordinate to provide more avenues of accessible and free English-language classes, including the establishment of smaller groups for

ethnically similar communities, to make access to learning English as easy as possible. This type of learning should accommodate child-care provision. This is particularly important for older people in existing communities and new arrivals.

6. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Leicester Education Authority should commission further research in order to better understand the impact of attending after-school madrassas on children's educational achievement levels and general wellbeing. Such studies could be beneficial for teachers in understanding the role of the madrasa in children's lives and how to best utilise them to achieve mutual educational goals.
7. The DCSF should commission more projects to look at the relationship between state education and madrasa education and look especially at complementarities, sharing facilities and expertise, for example, sharing the use of premises, dealing with common challenges such as absenteeism or organising classes to support parenting. The identification of best practices should be the focus, finding out what works and why, so that experiences can be disseminated.
8. Leicester City Council should ensure that policies to improve schools in Leicester consider the cultural, religious and social factors in the educational achievement of pupils. The city education authority should commission research on how these aspects affect the educational performance of schools, as well as the impact of non-English first languages on learning ability.

13.3 Employment

9. The East Midlands Learning and Skills Council should facilitate training for ethnic minorities (in particular Muslim women) in interview techniques, CV building and helping them understand the importance of using employment and career services for advice and guidance and where to go to for help.
10. More focused research is needed locally to look at the economic inactivity of Muslim women and if anything can be done to create greater engagement with the labour market. This could be jointly facilitated by agencies such as the Learning and Skills Council and the Leicester Partnership, and also the business sector, such as the Chamber of Commerce.
11. Partnerships of multiple agencies including schools and colleges, universities, careers services, the Mosaic mentoring scheme and Muslim organisations should be encouraged to promote discussions of the widening career choices and mentoring opportunities for young disadvantaged people. This would help young people look for a wider range of educational opportunities as well as take inspiration from successful role models.

13.4 Ethnic-minority and Muslim Entrepreneurs

12. The National Ethnic Minority Business Forum should develop mentoring programmes in the business sector to allow for entrepreneurial skills and experience to be passed on to newer or less established communities.
13. There is a need to support methods of empowering and recognising the contributions of ethnic-minority women, and Muslim women in particular. This has been identified through this report as well as in previous research, and agencies such the City Council, the Leicester Partnership and Muslim community organisations could help to facilitate such schemes.

13.5 Health

14. The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland health authorities should devise more concerted awareness campaigns directed at the communities with the poorest health, on specific health matters such as diabetes and obesity. Approaches using cultural and religious avenues should be especially considered.
15. NHS²⁰⁴ Leicester City should conduct further research on the health needs of those with poorest health and evaluate existing communications strategies. Such strategies will enable pre-emptive measures to be taken on serious health issues which require long-term care and planning.
16. The Appointments Commission (which recruits non-executive directors of NHS trusts) should recruit more BME members to the boards of NHS trusts in Leicester.
17. NHS Leicester City should introduce a clearer and more visible system for providing feedback and critical comments from service users to an independent body similar to an ombudsman in other sectors.
18. NHS Leicester City should review its policy of chaplaincy provision to ensure that the faith and cultural needs of patients of minority faiths are adequately met.

13.6 Policing

19. Leicestershire Constabulary should maintain and further schemes and projects in areas with significant ethnic-minority populations in order to improve the image of the police among those communities and to encourage recruitment of young people and more females from minority backgrounds. Schemes such as work shadowing officers, accompanying police on city drives, visits to police

²⁰⁴ The National Health Service.

force headquarters and other elements of police work may be attractive and useful ways of building stronger bridges. Such work has been shown to be very effective (trials during Islam Awareness Week in 2007).

20. The constabulary should actively recruit more Muslims into Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) positions. An increase in the number of Muslims working across the City as PCSOs will help to combat cultural tensions around Muslim officers and help to create a more relaxed and positive environment for the communities and the police force.
21. The constabulary should further engage with communities to proactively raise awareness and discussions of sensitive aspects of policing, such as stop-and-search and anti-terror raids, and should clarify the guidelines for these procedures.
22. The police should improve the mechanisms for informing communities of police operations, including proactive de-briefing if suspects are released without charge. Such initiatives would enhance the impact of the police force's existing good practices in building community links, helping to build trust and giving communities more of a stake in policing.
23. Leicester City Council should emphasise that community cohesion is all-inclusive and not limited to relations between whites and Asians, or Hindus and Muslims. Efforts need to be developed to also build cohesion between Muslim communities such as the Somali and Pakistani, and more importantly to develop narratives about the commonalities of all citizens.

13.7 Civic and Political Engagement

24. Leicester City Council should consider creating awareness campaigns within Muslim and other BME communities about the civic institutions, processes and consultation mechanisms of the city. This could allow for a better and more strategic engagement in their contribution to the city.
25. Muslim organisations, mosques and leaders should promote the importance of citizenship more strongly and encourage their constituencies to take up more roles in civic forums and platforms in the city, for instance as parent governors, and have a greater engagement with agencies such as museums, libraries and neighbourhood groups.
26. Community groups should explore the model of "Citizen Organising" (for example, the London Citizens), where the institutions that have traditionally mobilised people such as religious congregations, trade unions and student movements come together to work and campaign for the common good.
27. There is room for even greater public- and voluntary-sector partnerships (e.g. through the Leicester Partnership) in order to deal with common challenges

confronting the city in a mutually beneficial way. For example, in East London community organisations and mosques have helped to lower truancy levels, engage in back-to-work schemes and deliver other services on behalf of the local authority.

28. Members of Parliament and other political figures in Leicester are encouraged to help build trust and the increased engagement of Muslim and BME communities with local, regional and national politics and the government. This could include visits to the Houses of Parliament or relevant government departments, for example, to encourage discussion with national political figures.
29. Leicester City Council, the Leicester Partnership and other such bodies are urged to simplify their grant provision processes and to consider offering funding for a longer period of time which would allow organisations to develop in a sustained manner. It is important that organisations applying for funding are easily able to understand and apply for such opportunities. Lengthy procurement terms and volume of paperwork currently serve to dissuade organisations that need the most support. In addition, the short-term nature of government funding does not allow for longer-term and sustainable planning.

13.8 Inter-community Relations

30. The Local Education Authority is encouraged to establish activities and initiatives which foster deeper relations and dialogue between minority-faith communities, considering it its duty to promote cohesion in schools and building on the example of the intercultural leadership programmes in schools across the UK. These could work from cultural similarities such as family life, food, ethics, values and entertainment. To build these relationships among school-age children may mean a stronger and more cohesive Leicester in the future.
31. The faith communities of Leicester, particularly through the Council of Faiths and the Faith Leaders Forum, could identify ways of furthering the inter-faith dialogue initiatives that already exist and build on the excellent reputation that Leicester has. There is a great potential to go beyond existing work and engage in joint practical initiatives, in order to meet the needs of the disadvantaged, as well as include younger people and more women in inter-faith initiatives.
32. Given the complexity and vibrancy of the faith communities of Leicester, there is a great opportunity for the universities in Leicester to play a more public role in fostering research, education and discussion in religious harmony, cohesion and identity.

33. Building on the positive example of a few partnerships identified in this report, more Muslim and non-Muslim civic and community organisations are encouraged to build strong and effective partnerships and develop joint projects that cut across communities and touch on common and shared interests.

13.9 Media

34. Statutory bodies such as the BBC, in conjunction with the city newspaper, the Leicester Mercury, should develop local workshops which will study how to actively engage with the media in its various forms, e.g. writing a first-person column, writing letters, airing a Thought for the Day on radio.
35. Local media organisations should hold open days for higher-education colleges, schools and mosques. These could include a tour, question-and-answer sessions and sessions where young people have the opportunity to express their views on how they feel the local media portray them, as well as listening to presenters and journalists.

ANNEX 1. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND WEBSITES

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ANNEX 2. LIST OF EXPERTS INTERVIEWED²⁰⁵

Ahmed, Seema (School governor/Islamic Society of Britain)
Ahsan, Hena (Federation of Students' Islamic Societies)
Basra, Amrik (Leicestershire Constabulary)
Carter, Nick (*Leicester Mercury*)
Chester, Richard (Director of Equality and Human Rights, NHS Leicester)
Coles, Maurice (School Development Support Agency/Education)
Coster, John (Citizens Eye)
Duale, Hashim (Somali community)
Duckmanton, Marina (Job Centre Plus)
Gokani, Sheena ("Prevent" policy officer, Leicester City Council)
Hettiarachi, Dr Shanthikumar (St Philip's Centre)
Kapasi, Jaffer (Shia community/Housing)
Khan, Asif (Employment/Leicester City Council)
Khan, Tahera (Refugee and Asylum Seekers Advice Project)
Locke, Sheila (Chief Executive, Leicester City Council)
Mann, Jasbir (Head of Learning Services, Leicester City Council)
Miles, Nick (Positive Action Group)
Nagdi, Suleman (Muslim Burial Council of Leicestershire/Federation of Muslim Organisations in Leicestershire)
Nasim, Mohammed (Leicester Asian Youth Association)
Nelson, Tony (Jewish Council of Faiths)
Oliver, Sandra (Quality improvement co-ordinator, NHS Leicester)
Parkinson, Philip (NHS Leicester)
Singh, Harjinder (Leicester College)
Smith, Mike (Chaplain to the Bishop of Leicester)
Sood, Manjula (Lord Mayor)
Squire, Kate (*BBC Radio*)

²⁰⁵ Individuals listed were affiliated with the relevant organisation at the time of the interview.

Suleman, Fatima (Federation of Students Islamic Societies/University Islamic Society/Student Union)

Surti, Yasmin (Chair of Aqoon Educational Services/Federation of Muslim Organisations in Leicestershire)

Wale, Richard (Head of Multicultural Services, Leicester City Council)

Wayne, Elizabeth (Education)

Wingate, Canon Dr Andrew (St Philip's Centre)

ANNEX 3. ORGANISATIONS/INSTITUTIONS CONSULTED DURING RESEARCH PROCESS

Academic

Centre for Social Action

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences
De Montfort University
Hawthorn Building, The Gateway,
Leicester, LE1 9BH
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 257 7777

Islamic Foundation / Markfield Institute of Higher Education

Ratby Lane, Markfield
Leicestershire, LE67 9SY
Tel: + 44 (0) 1530 244944

Leicester Business School

De Montfort University, The Gateway
Leicester, LE1 9BH
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 257 7819

Leicester College

Harjinder Singh
Student Services and Faith Ambassador
Abbey Park Campus, Painter St
Leicester, LE1 3WA

Leicester College Faith Ambassadors

Vinod Chudasama
Abbey Park Campus, Painter St
Leicester, LE1 3WA
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 224 2240

St Philip's Centre

Canon Dr Andrew Wingate
2A Stoughton Drive North
Leicester, LE5 5UB
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 273 3459

Community organisations

Al-Ansaar

Rihana Sidat
112 Melbourne Rd
Leicester, LE2 0DS
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 262 1000

Anjuman-E-Saifee (Dawoodi Bohra Jamat)

Jaffer Kapasi
Leicester, LE4 5HH
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 266 4668

Aqoon Educational Services

Yasmin Surti (Chair)
Leicester
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 247 1144
Email: info@aqoon.org; Yasmin.surti@leicester.gov.uk

Diocese of Leicester

Bishop Tim Stevens
Bishops Lodge, 12 Springfield Rd
Leicester, LE2 3BD
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 270 3390

Faith Leaders Forum

Revd Michael Smith
Bishops Lodge Annex, 12 Springfield Rd
Leicester, LE2 3BD
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 270 3390

FATIMA Women's Network

Parvin Ali
Innovation Centre, 43 Oxford St
Leicester, LE1 5XY
Tel: + 44 (0) 845 331 2373

Federation of Muslim Organisations Leicestershire (FMO)

Abdulkarim Gheewala
99 Melbourne Rd
Leicester, LE2 0GW
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 262 2111

Federation of Student Islamic Societies (Midlands)

Hena Ahsan (General Secretary)
Leicester
Tel: + 44 (0) 7709 176565
Email: hena87ahsan@hotmail.com

Fatima Suleman
Email: Suleman.fatema@gmail.com

Islamic Relief

Salim Lorgat
56 Chatsworth St
Leicester
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 251 3450

Islamic Society of Britain (Leicester Branch)

Seema Ahmed
Leicester
Email: isbleicester@yahoo.co.uk

Leicester Asian Youth Association

Mohammed Nasim
62a Evington Valley Rd
Leicester, LE5 5LJ
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 273 4219

Leicester Council of Faiths

Ajay Aggarwal (Co-ordinator)
Leicester Council of Faiths
Pilgrim House
10 Bishop St
Leicester, LE1 6AF
Tel.: + 44 (0) 116 254 6868

Muslim Burial Council of Leicestershire

Suleman Nagdi
394 East Park Rd
Leicester, LE5 5HH
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 273 0141

Muslim Council of Britain

Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra
Imam and Chair of the Inter-Faith Relations Committee
ibrahimmogra@hotmail.com

School Development Support Agency

Maurice Coles
Alliance House, 6 Bishop St
Leicester, LE1 6AF
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 299 5942

Somali Development Services

Jawaahir Daahir
72 Evington Rd, Highfields
Leicester
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 285 5888

Youth Think

Yasmin Olad
Tel: + 44 (0) 7825 044670
Email: yo12@le.ac.uk

Youth Wise

Nasreen Yusuf
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 249 0449

Local Government

Leicester City Council Councillor

Manjula Sood
New Walk Centre, Welford Place
Leicester, LE1 62G

Leicester City Council

Councillor Rashmikant Joshi
New Walk Centre, Welford Place
Leicester, LE1 6ZG
Tel: + 44 (0) 7976348326
Email: rashmikant.joshi@leicester.gov.uk

Leicester City Council

Sheila Locke
Chief Executive
New Walk Centre, Welford Place
Leicester, LE1 6ZG
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 252 6070

Leicester City Council

Asif Khan
Employment Engagement Officer
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 285 1706
Email:Asif.khan@leicester.gov.uk

Leicester City Council

Leicester Partnership Team
New Walk Centre, Welford Place
Leicester, LE1 6ZG
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 252 6070

Leicester City Council

Jasbir Mann
Head of Services
Learning Transformation and Development
Learning Services
New Walk Centre, Welford Place

Leicestershire Constabulary

Inspector Amrik Basra
Force Headquarters, St Johns
Enderby
Leicester, LE19 2BX
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 222 222

Refugee and Asylum Seekers Advice Project (RASAP)

Tahera Khan
Project Manager, Leicester Racial Equality Council
Epic House, Lower Hill St
Leicester LE1 3SH

Media

BBC Radio Leicester

Kate Squire
9 St Nicholas Place
Leicester, LE1 5LB

Leicester Mercury

St George Street
Leicester, LE1 9FQ
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 251 2512; + 44 (0) 116 251 6688

Leicester Sound

6 Dominus Way, Meridian Business Park
Leicester, LE19, 1RP
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 256 1300
www.leicestersound.co.uk

Sabras Sound

63 Melton Rd
Leicester, LE4 6PN
Tel: + 44 (0) 116 261 0666
www.sabrasradio.com

Somali Messenger

Hashim Duale
161-163 Granby Street
Leicester LE1 6FE
Email: hashim.duale@gmail.com

ANNEX 4. MOSQUES IN LEICESTER

See <http://www.fmo.org.uk/Directory/Mosques/tabid/118/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Daru Uloom Leicester
119 Loughborough Rd
Leicester, LE4 5LN

Dar-us-Salam Mosque
55–57 Upper Tichbourne St
Leicester, LE2 1GL Tel: 0116 254 3887

Gulzar-e-Madina Mosque
Melbourne Centre, Melbourne Rd
Leicester, LE2 0GU Tel: 0116 251 1134

Hamidiye Mosque
16 Great Central St
Leicester, LE1 4JT Tel: 0116 262 4465

Jame Masjid
54 Asfordby St
Leicester, LE5 3QJ Tel: 0116 262 1963

Leicester Central Mosque
Conduit St
Leicester, LE2 0JN Tel: 0116 254 4459

Leicester Mosque
2a Sutherland St
Leicester, LE2 1DS Tel: 0116 285 4052

Madrasa e Talimul Islam
22–28 Cork St
Leicester, LE5 5AN

Masjid Al Falah
3–11 Keythorpe St
Leicester, LE2 0AL Tel: 0116 251 1833

Masjid Al Faruq, IDA
120 Melbourne Rd
Leicester, LE2 0DS Tel: 0116 262 5440

Masjid Al Furqan
298 East Park Rd
Leicester, LE5 5AY Tel: 0116 27 5799

Masjid Al Huda

8 Britannia St
Leicester, LE1 3LE Tel: 0116 251 4807

Masjid Al Khaleel (Majlis-e-Ishaa Tul Quraan)

49 Donnington St
Leicester, LE2 0DE Tel: 0116 255 1524

Masjid al Quba

19 Brunswick St
Leicester, LE1 2LP

Masjid An Noor

146 Berners St
Leicester, LE2 0FU Tel: 0116 262 2640

Masjid Ar-Rahman

71 Guthlaxton Rd
Leicester, LE2 OSF

Masjid At-Taqwa

1 Harewood St
Leicester, LE5 3LX Tel: 0116 212 5802

Masjid-e-Abu Bakar

55 Barclay St
Leicester, LE3 0JD
Tel: 0116 254 5552

Masjid-e-Baitul Mukarram

22-24 St Stephens Rd
Leicester, LE2 1DQ
Tel: 0116 254 6138

Masjid e Ali

42-52 Smith Dorien Rd
Leicester, LE5 Tel: 0116 274 2366

Masjid e Bilal

81 Chesterfield Rd
Leicester, LE5 5LH Tel: 0116 24 0887

Majlis e Dawat ul Haq Mosque

126-128 Earl Howe St
Leicester, LE2 0DG

Masjid-e Usman (Markaz)

162 Nedham St
Leicester, LE2 0BH
Tel: 0116 2621059

Masjid-ul-Imam-il-Bukhari

159 Loughborough Rd
Leicester, LE4 5LR Tel: 0116 266 5506

Masjid Umar

1-3 Evington Drive
Leicester, LE5 5PF Tel: 0116 273 5529

Noor ul Islam

Linden House
Linden St
Leicester, LE5 5EE

Northfield Masjid and Education Centre

8 Essex Rd
Leicester, LE4 9EE

Tajdaar e Madina

1a Garendon St
Leicester, LE2 0AH

Talim ul Islam

40 Cork St
Leicester, LE5 5AN

Taybah Islamic Centre

6 Sylvan Avenue
Leicester, LE5 3SN Tel: 0116 262 7599

Usmani Masjid

308 St Saviours Rd
Leicester, LE5 4HR

Whether citizens or migrants, native born or newly-arrived, Muslims are a growing and varied population that presents Europe with challenges and opportunities. The crucial tests facing Europe's commitment to open society will be how it treats minorities such as Muslims and ensures equal rights for all in a climate of rapidly expanding diversity.

The Open Society Institute's At Home in Europe project is working to address these issues through monitoring and advocacy activities that examine the position of Muslims and other minorities in Europe. One of the project's key efforts is this series of reports on Muslim communities in the 11 EU cities of Amsterdam, Antwerp, Berlin, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Leicester, London, Marseille, Paris, Rotterdam, and Stockholm. The reports aim to increase understanding of the needs and aspirations of diverse Muslim communities by examining how public policies in selected cities have helped or hindered the political, social, and economic participation of Muslims.

By fostering new dialogue and policy initiatives between Muslim communities, local officials, and international policymakers, the At Home in Europe project seeks to improve the participation and inclusion of Muslims in the wider society while enabling them to preserve the cultural, linguistic, and religious practices that are important to their identities.