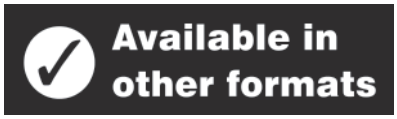
Immigration, faith and cohesion



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Immigration, faith and cohesion

Evidence from local areas with significant Muslim populations

Hiranthi Jayaweera and Tufyal Choudhury

JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION

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Joseph Rowntree Foundation
The Homestead
40 Water End
York YO30 6WP
Website: www.jrf.org.uk

About the authors

Hiranthi Jayaweera is a Senior Researcher at the ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford.

Tufyal Choudhury is a Lecturer in International Human Rights Law, University of Durham, Department of Law; and Senior Policy Advisor, Open Society Institute, Muslims in EU Cities Project.

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The interpretation of data, the conclusions and any errors in the report are the sole responsibility of the authors.

1 Introduction

A lack of community cohesion was identified in official reports as a key underlying factor in the areas that experienced the urban disorder of 2001 (Cantle, 2001; Clarke, 2001; Denham, 2001; Ouseley, 2001; Ritchie, 2001). Since then, increased priority and public funding have focused on developing and supporting community cohesion. Concerns about disaffection and the risks of violent radicalisation, as well as the terrorist attacks of 7 July 2005, ensured that the initial debate on cohesion remained dominated by discussion relating to Muslims. The final report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC, 2007) attempted, in part, to rebalance the cohesion discussion. It emphasised the need for a broadening of the cohesion agenda, to take into account the impact and needs of new migrants and other groups. In response to the report, central government support for local authority cohesion initiatives has increased from £2 million in 2007/08 to £50 million over the following three years (Blears, 2007). Strong cohesive communities, alongside active citizenship, are an important ingredient for the Government's civic renewal agenda (Blunkett, 2003). Issues of migration, identity and civic participation are also central to Lord Goldsmith's Citizenship Review, which is due to report to the Prime Minister in 2008.

Developing our understanding of the dynamics that impact on cohesion is critical in ensuring effective policy interventions. This report is an exploration of multiple factors that contribute to, or undermine, community cohesion in local urban areas. It analyses new data on the lived experience of everyday cohesion in three areas in England where proportionally large numbers of Muslims and people of other faiths and of no faith – both recently arrived migrants and established residents – live alongside one another. The focus on Muslims in this study allows us to explore the role of faith communities in the cohesion process, as well as the relationships between new and settled groups with similar and different ethnic or religious backgrounds. The study compares the experience of Muslims in these local areas with the experience of other residents. It is important to acknowledge and keep in mind the diversity in both the categories 'Muslim' and 'non-Muslim' used in this report. The term 'non-Muslim' is used to refer to people who are of faiths other than Muslim or of no faith. It is used purely as a technical term. The detailed study of specific local contexts can serve to sharpen understanding of the ways in which, by way of key cohesion indicators, various views and experiences of British Muslims and non-Muslims are shaped.

Muslims in Britain

At the time of the 2001 Census, there were 1.6 million Muslims in the UK. They constitute 3 per cent of the population and are the largest minority faith group. Census data shows that nearly half (46 per cent) of Muslims living in Great Britain were born in the UK and nearly three-quarters are of South Asian ethnic background. In 2001, 43 per cent were Pakistani, 16 per cent Bangladeshi, 8 per cent Indian and 6 per cent of other Asian ethnic background (ONS, 2004). There are also Arab, Afghan, Iranian, Turkish and Turkish Cypriot, Kurdish, Kosovar, European, North African and Somali Muslims. Hussain (2006) provides a summary of some of the research on Muslims from these groups.

Three-quarters of Muslims in Great Britain live in 24 cities or authorities in the five major conurbations of Greater London, the West and East Midlands, West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. In absolute terms, Birmingham is the local authority with the highest *number* of Muslims, while the five local authorities with the highest *proportions* of Muslims are Tower Hamlets, Newham, Blackburn, Bradford and Waltham Forest (Hussain and Choudhury, 2007). Within these local authority areas, Muslims are disproportionately represented in the most deprived urban communities. One-third of the Muslim population live in the 10 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods (Beckford *et al*., 2006, p.39).

While acknowledging that the relationship between cohesion and deprivation is complex, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion found that 'deprivation remains a key influencer of cohesion' (CIC, 2007, p. 8). Data from the 2001 Census, revealing the extent of social and economic marginalisation and disadvantage that Muslims experience in education, employment, health and housing, is now well documented (ONS, 2004; Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, 2004; Beckford *et al*., 2006). While, for some time now, data has recorded the employment disadvantage experienced by Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, further analysis of the 2001 census data on religion shows that 'Muslim men and women of *any* ethnic origin are in a similar position to Pakistani/Bangladeshi men and women' (Berthoud and Blekesaune, 2007, p. 72, emphasis added). This, Berthoud and Blekesaune suggest, 'could mean that religion rather than ethnicity is the characteristic associated with employment disadvantage'. They state that a cross-referencing of the census categories for ethnicity and religion shows that 'when investigating religious groups within different ethnic groups, we find that all Muslim groups are in a disadvantageous employment position irrespective of which ethnic group they belong to' (Berthoud and Blekesaune 2007, p. 76).[1]

There are, however, signs of changes occurring. In education, the final report of the Equalities Review (2007, p. 55) notes that:

> … the proportion of Bangladeshi pupils achieving the expected attainment levels *[at Key Stage 2]* has risen each year, and Bangladeshi pupils, on current trends, could be expected to achieve parity with the national average within a decade. This is despite these pupils having much higher entitlement to FSM *[free school meals]* and the fact that Bangladeshi children are more likely to live in poverty. Data also show that Bangladeshi children perform well above their expected level at GCSE when we take into account the fact that their families are likely to be poorer than most. There may well be a case for further study focusing on why some groups of children have outperformed expectations.

The review estimates that, on current trends, the attainment gap in Key Stage 2 for 11 year olds in English and Maths will be closed by Bangladeshis by 2010, compared to Pakistanis who are expected to reach this by 2017, black Caribbeans by 2045 and black Africans by 2053 (Equalities Review, 2007, p. 25).

While survey data shows the levels of disadvantage experienced by Muslims in the UK, identifying the sources of this disadvantage and the role of discrimination in causing, reinforcing or exacerbating this disadvantage is more difficult. Surveys of minority groups can provide an indication of their perceptions of discrimination. In the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey of England and Wales, of those who had been refused a job in the past five years, a quarter of Bangladeshis and just over a tenth of Pakistanis cited racial discrimination as the main reason for this. Perceptions of religious discrimination, lower than perceptions of racial discrimination, were highest for Bangladeshis (13 per cent) and Pakistanis (9 per cent). Pakistanis were also the most likely to cite religion as a reason for being refused a promotion in the preceding five years (Green *et al.*, 2004, Table 3.32).

Embedding ‘community cohesion’ into the policy framework

‘Community cohesion’ emerged as a central aspect of the policy response to the disorder that occurred in several northern mill towns during the summer of 2001. Commissions of inquiry published reports into the state of community relations in the cities that experienced the disturbances (Clarke, 2001; Ouseley, 2001; Ritchie, 2001) and more broadly in other parts of England and Wales (Cantle, 2001). The Government responded to these reports with the creation of a cross-departmental ministerial group on community cohesion and public order – leading to the Denham report (Denham, 2001).

While the local reports differed in the emphasis, focus and weight they gave to different background conditions, the perceived lack of 'community cohesion' was seen as central in the analysis of these reports by the ministerial review team. The Denham report notes that: 'Cantle, Clarke, Ritchie and Ouseley have all identified segregation along racial lines as a growing problem and a significant contributory factor to the disturbances' (Denham, 2001, p. 2). Thus, 'the binary opposition between "social cohesion" and "segregation" has become the dominant frame through which the riots are "read" with segregation now seen as exemplifying a "dysfunctional community" (Bagguley and Hussain, 2006, p. 4).

Central government responded to these reports, which identified the lack of 'community cohesion' as underlying the breakdown in order with the creation of a 'Community Cohesion Unit', later renamed the 'Faith and Cohesion Unit', within the Race Equality Directorate of the Home Office. In May 2006, this moved to the newly created Department for Communities and Local Government. In 2007, a Cohesion and Extremism Unit was also created in the Department for Children, Families and Schools.

Government policy work on community cohesion required a clear definition of the term. The Local Government Association (LGA, 2002) identified a four-point working definition of community cohesion as one referring to contexts in which:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities;
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

This definition was the basis for the development of ten community cohesion indicators. These were incorporated in the design of the research for this report. The core indicator of cohesion is the 'proportion of people who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get on well together'. Three of the ten indicators focused on a 'common vision and sense of belonging':

- the percentage of respondents who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood/ town/county/England/Wales/Britain;

- key priorities for improving an area;

- the percentage of adults surveyed who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area.

Another two indicators focus on the extent to which diversity of backgrounds is appreciated and valued, and three on whether those of different backgrounds have similar life opportunities. The final indicator explores whether strong and positive relationships were being built between people of different backgrounds in the workplace, schools and neighbourhoods. Questions based on these are included in the Citizenship Survey, the data from which provides an opportunity to examine different factors that affect cohesion.

Cohesion policy was developed in the 'Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme', which funded local programmes that considered 'the best means of exploring the ways of increasing community cohesion' (Home Office, 2003). Beginning in April 2003, the programmes tested 'new and innovative methods of engagement and adapting existing networks and expertise, to bring people closer together' across 14 local areas (Home Office, 2003).

Practical guidance on implementing cohesion at the local level was developed by the Home Office Community Cohesion Panel led by Ted Cantle (Home Office, 2004). The Local Government Association (2005) also produced further guidance for local authority leaders and chief executives for 'leading cohesive communities'.

Community cohesion was embedded further into the policy framework through its inclusion in the Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets between the Treasury and other government departments as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review for 2005–08. The Government extended the performance framework to schools through the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which imposed a 'duty to promote community cohesion' on schools. This came into effect from September 2007.

Policy on integration of migrants, to the extent that there has been one, has been quite separate and managed by the Home Office (2005a). It relates to refugees only and it is only with the experiences arising from the arrival of East European migrants that Government has recognised that there may be a need for a wider strategy covering other new migrants. The CIC recognised this. *Our Shared Future*, the Commission's final report, was the first official report to bring migrants significantly within consideration of cohesion policy (CIC, 2007).

There are other policies that are important to understanding the context in which community cohesion policy is being developed. For example, there are duties on public bodies to take action to tackle unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equal opportunities and good relations between people of different racial groups.[2] This provides an important tool for challenging institutional racism. Equality laws have also made it illegal to discriminate on the grounds of religion and belief in employment. This will soon extend to the provision of goods, services, facilities, education and the exercise of public functions.[3]

The report of the CIC (2007) offers the most recent definition of community cohesion, which expands on the LGA's working definition. It provides a greater focus on integration as a process whereby new and established residents adapt to each other. It identifies a cohesive community as a condition where:

- there is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country;

- there is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn;

- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, access to services and treatment;

- there is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny;

- there is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common;

- there are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods.

The CIC in its report argues that:

> Integration and cohesion is no longer a special programme or project. It is also not about race, faith or other forms of group status or identity. It

> is simply about how we all get on and secure benefits that are mutually desirable for our communities and ourselves. (CIC, 2007, p. 5)

The key proposal of the Commission is for 'a new national campaign that promotes our shared future based on a number of key principles – those of rights and responsibilities, visible social justice, and the somewhat old fashioned sounding ethics of hospitality' (CIC, 2007, p. 5). It notes that cohesion is about more than ethnicity and faith groups; that it can be about income and generation, and therefore is about more than inequality and discrimination. It points out that the fact that 'some areas have high deprivation and high cohesion shows that local action can build resilience to its effects. Equally, some affluent areas have poor cohesion, so wealth is no protection' (CIC, 2007, p. 8). It warns that the goals of building integration and cohesion cannot be met if the discrimination experienced by some groups within society continues. The report finds that increased diversity 'can have a negative impact on cohesion, but only in particular local circumstances' (CIC, 2007, p. 9). While acknowledging the benefits of immigration to the country as a whole, the commission argues for the need to address the impact of immigration in particular local areas and wider concerns about the fair allocation of public services based on perceptions that immigrants and minorities are getting special treatment (CIC, 2007).

The Government responded to the Commission's final report with a ten-point action plan. This included: funding to local authorities for cohesion projects as stated earlier; the promotion of new 'Citizens' Days' across England and the provision of information packs for new migrants.

The critique of 'community cohesion': challenging the policy

As community cohesion has become embedded into the government policy framework, a growing critique of different aspects of the cohesion policy has emerged.

A key line of criticism challenges the extent to which the focus on social capital in the community cohesion policy turns attention away from the importance of social and economic deprivation and inequality. McGhee (2003) finds that:

> … the overwhelming emphasis on the failure of inter-community communication and the concern over the absence of established common values in culturally disharmonious areas in these documents

> de-emphasises contributory factors such as poverty, exclusion from the workforce, exclusion from consumption. Perceived and actual material deprivation was acknowledged in places … *[but]* the overwhelming emphasis is firmly focused on cultural recognition and cultural respect and the opening up of the channels of communication between cultural groups rather than dealing with perceived and actual material deprivation. (McGhee, 2003, p. 392)

Choeng *et al*. (2007) argue that the 'social capital cure' underpinning community cohesion policy ignores the extent to which exclusion on the basis of religion and ethnicity has historically been the basis for the construction of national identity and the rights enjoyed by British citizens. Furthermore, policies in other areas that reinforce and perpetuate prejudice and suspicion of immigrants undermine the attempt to build social capital. The 'social capital cure' also:

> … overlooks the complexity of immigration processes and context of the reception experience. The politics and practices of racism and discrimination are often underplayed in initiatives promoting bonding and bridging social capital. The presence of oppressive conditions for relationship building among new immigrants and between newer and older immigrant groups may deter the social participation that is crucial for the formation of bonding and bridging forms of social capital. (Choeng *et al.,* 2007, p. 33)

Choeng *et al*. argue that the problems that led to the urban disturbances were 'due to "citizenship thwarted" among second generation immigrants … with a gap between these young people's expectations of economic and legal equality and the realities of racism and exclusion that they experience in their everyday lives' (Choeng *et al*., 2007, p. 34).

The critique of 'community cohesion': questioning the evidence

Researchers have questioned whether the Bradford review team's suggestion in its 2001 report that 'there was a worrying drift towards self-segregation' applies to South Asian communities in the city (Ouseley, 2001, foreword to the report). Simpson (2003) found that levels of segregation in Bradford had not increased over the past decade. Growth in the clusters and concentrations of South Asian Muslims in particular areas of Bradford is accounted for mainly by natural growth in the

population. There has been movement out from those clusters by individuals and families: 'the movers are those who can afford something other than the inadequate housing associated with low income; they have avoided the unemployment endemic where once-welcoming industries have failed' (Simpson, 2005, pp. 1229–30). This picture is confirmed by the work of Phillips (2006) who found that, by 2000, 10 per cent of Muslims in Bradford were living in the more affluent suburban areas. This shift, Phillips argues, is indicative of growing class differentiation within the British Muslim population of Bradford and counters the pervasive myth of inner-city segregation. Growing inner-city clustering is therefore being accompanied by the slow outwards movement of British Muslim people. Further, 'given ethnic inequalities in access to power and resources, the sustained patterns of settlement in deprived inner-city living are more likely to reflect the choices of white, non-Muslim people and institutions' (Phillips, 2006, p. 57). Focus groups in Phillips' study revealed that there were 'white' areas where Bradford's Asian Muslims would not go, but that reasons for this were not related to a desire for self-segregation, but sprang from fear of racism, ethnic tensions and racial harassment.

In Oldham, one of the other cities that experienced disturbances in the summer of 2001, a Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) investigation in the early 1990s had found that segregation was the consequence of racial discrimination in the allocation of council housing. Arguments supporting self-segregation become even more difficult to sustain if we look beyond the northern mill towns. Ceri Peach notes that 'all Muslims … in England are currently living in wards with mixed populations' (Peach, 2006, p. 651).

Others have questioned whether aspects of cohesion are affected by residential clustering of particular groups. Analysis of data from the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey by Maxwell (2006) finds that Muslims, as a group, are only slightly less likely to feel that they belong to Britain than white people. Both religion and ethnic concentration of neighbourhood are statistically insignificant to a sense of belonging and identity with Britain across all groups. Furthermore, among Muslims, socio-economic status is not a significant predictor of identification with Britain. However, perceptions of discrimination were found to be important for identity and a sense of belonging (Maxwell, 2006).

Results from the 2005 Citizenship Survey also show that the views of Muslims on levels of community cohesion in their area are the same as those found in the population as a whole (Kitchen *et al.*, 2006a). Muslims were found to have a very strong sense of belonging to the local neighbourhood, to believe that people in the neighbourhood pulled together to improve it, to feel that people from different backgrounds in their area got on well together and to observe that residents

respected ethnic differences between people (Kitchen *et al.*, 2006a, Tables 17 and 30). Muslims (along with Hindus and Sikhs) were, however, slightly less likely than the general population to say that they enjoyed living in their neighbourhood, or that they felt safe walking alone in the neighbourhood in the dark. Muslims (as well as Hindus and Sikhs) were significantly less likely than the general population to say that people in their neighbourhood could be trusted (Kitchen *et al.*, 2006a, Table 17).

The Citizenship Survey also examines whether people have friends outside their ethnic group. Although the results are broken down by ethnicity rather than religion, they show that Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, like other minority ethnic groups, are much more likely than white people to have friends beyond their ethnic group. Among 16–24 year olds, 93 per cent of Bangladeshis and 86 per cent of Pakistanis have friends from a different ethnic group (Kitchen *et al.*, 2006a, Table 44). Similar experiences are reported by Muslims in opinion polls. In the Populus/Times 2006 poll, 87 per cent of Muslims said they had a close friend who was a non-Muslim, echoing an ICM poll in November 2004 in which only 6 per cent of Muslims reported having no non-Muslim friends and 11 per cent very few. In the ICM poll, 37 per cent of Muslims said they had a lot of non-Muslim friends, 25 per cent 'quite a few' and 21 per cent a few. The polls also suggest that younger people are more likely to have non-Muslim friends than older people and Muslim women are more likely than Muslim men to have non-Muslim friends. Some 94 per cent of Muslims rejected the idea that Muslims should keep themselves separate from wider society.[4]

This study was undertaken to explore in depth the way these issues on the lived experience of everyday cohesion are played out at a local level.

Research question and structure of the report

The research question addressed by this report is:

> What are the factors that contribute to or undermine community cohesion in local areas with significant numbers of recent Muslim migrants and established Muslim residents?

Factors investigated include area-based characteristics such as the level of deprivation and ethnic and religious mix of communities; socio-demographic characteristics of individual residents including gender, age, religion, country of birth, ethnicity, education and socio-economic status; interactions and relationships of residents with others in the same locality, in other localities in the UK and

abroad, and with agencies in the locality; and the impact of national and local policy interventions. The aim is to understand the interaction of all these factors and the ways in which they are played out in residents' daily life: at work, in school, among neighbours and networks, in leisure, in civic and political activities, and in public spaces. The report is based on two modes of data acquisition:

1. semi-structured interviews with 319 Muslim and non-Muslim migrants and longer-term established residents in Birmingham, Newham and Bradford;

2. qualitative interviews with policy-makers and service providers in each of the local areas and at national level.

The research was conducted between January 2006 and June 2007. The findings reported here and conclusions drawn from them are intended to inform national and local policy debates on integration and community cohesion.

Chapter 2 covers the factors governing the selection of the three local areas and provides a brief description of the areas in relation to our research question. We elaborate the methods used to recruit the sample and consider some of the challenges encountered by the community researchers while undertaking the fieldwork in the local areas. The final part of the chapter describes some of the key characteristics of the sample that are relevant for the presentation of findings in the next four chapters.

Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 presents on findings of the semi-structured interviews with the Muslim and non-Muslim recent migrants and established residents in the three local areas. Chapter 3 first examines whether and to what extent there are inequalities in material circumstances and perceptions of these circumstances between different categories of interviewees. It then goes on to consider their perceptions of fair and unfair treatment of themselves by individuals and authorities in their localities.

Chapter 4 discusses the findings on the interviewees' experiences and perceptions of their neighbourhoods and localities, and then goes on to examine the kinds of people they meet and interact with informally in their daily lives in a range of spaces in their localities and beyond, and the nature of such interactions. Chapter 5 turns to more formal interactions and engagement in the public sphere, considering interviewees' patterns and views of electoral and organisational participation, and their perceptions of local and national decision-making. Chapter 6 is concerned with the extent and nature of the relationship that the recent migrants and established Muslims born outside the UK have with people in their countries of origin and elsewhere in the diaspora, and the way such transnational involvement relates to their integration experiences and perceptions of belonging in Britain.

Chapter 7 draws on the findings from the interviews with local and national policy-makers and service providers, relating particularly to their understanding of the term ‘community cohesion’, factors affecting it and the ways in which current policy approaches to community cohesion impact on individuals and communities. Chapter 8, the final chapter, provides a conclusion to the report through a discussion of key findings from the research and their implications for policy, service provision and academic debates.

2 Research methods and sample characteristics

The primary research on which this report is based involved semi-structured interviews with 319 Muslim and non-Muslim recent migrants and established residents; and 32 interviews with local and national policy-makers and service providers. Interviews with recent migrants and established residents, as well as with local policy-makers and service providers, were conducted in three urban localities – the borough of Newham in London, Birmingham and Bradford – from January 2006 to June 2007.

Part one: research methods

Selection of local areas

The selection of the three local areas primarily reflected the patterns of migration and settlement of Muslims in the UK. Each area had significant numbers of long-term Muslim residents and of new arrivals, but differed in ways that may impact on cohesion, such as ethnic mix, and migration patterns of Muslims from different countries of origin. There are no reliable estimates, as yet, at city or borough level of people who have *recently* migrated to the UK,[1] according to country of birth. Based on reviews of migration trends at the time the research was designed (Home Office, 2005b; Kyambi, 2005; Vertovec, 2006) and an analysis of census 2001 data on country of birth and religion at city and borough level, the borough of Newham in London was chosen as one area because there are recent Muslim migrants from a variety of different ethnic groups compared to the established Muslim communities (for example, Somali, Turkish and Bosnian settling in an area with an existing Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian Muslim community). Newham has several wards with very ethnically diverse Muslim communities, in particular Canning Town North and Stratford and New Town (Harriss, 2006).

The second area chosen, Birmingham, has recent Muslim migrants from diverse groups originating in South and East Africa and the Middle East, as well as those from the same ethnic groups as the established Muslim communities of South Asian origin. This is clearly an area where there is an established pattern of marriage migration coexisting with diverse groups of new Muslim migrants arriving as labour migrants or refugees (Abbas, 2006). A recent report shows that population increase

in Birmingham between 2001 and 2004, according to ethnic group, has been the greatest for black Africans, followed by Chinese and the 'Other White' category, suggesting the importance of Somali refugee and Eastern European labour migrant immigration to Birmingham in recent years (Cangiano, 2007).

The third area, Bradford, is one of lesser ethnic diversity where there is a high proportion of marriage migration and family reunification, particularly among people of Pakistani origin (Valentine, 2006). Therefore it is an appropriate area to examine the interaction between 'new' marriage migrants and settled Muslim communities, and to attempt to understand how this affects community cohesion. These diverse origins and patterns of settlement of Muslim communities in the three areas can be seen in the Appendix, Figures A1, A2 and A3, from 2001 census data, although, from this data source, it is not possible to distinguish between recent and established migrants.[2]

Two adjacent wards in each area were selected as focal points for recruiting interviewees for the main part of the study. The selection of these wards was based on the extent to which they fitted the criteria relevant to the selection of the three main areas discussed above, particularly the ethnic composition of the locality, the characteristics of the Muslim population and the nature of recent migration (see Appendix, Tables A1 and A2). The recruitment of the sample was focused initially within these six wards, but, with snowballing, later fanned out to other nearby wards that had similar characteristics to the designated wards.[3]

Community researchers

The community researchers who were responsible for selecting interviewees and conducting the interviews in the local areas were recruited from within these localities. They included students in the social sciences who had skills and experience of relevant research methods and a good working knowledge of communities in the local area, and interviewers with experience of working with local non-governmental organisations to meet service needs of the local communities. In all three localities, a concerted effort was made to recruit interviewers with similar gender, ethnic, religious and language characteristics as the groups from which the sample was to be selected. In Sparkbrook, where there is a high proportion of Muslim migrants and established Muslims from the Indian subcontinent, several of the male and female interviewers were from a Muslim background, while the greater migrant diversity in Newham was matched with interviewers who spoke Polish, Albanian and Bengali languages and had access to people from these communities. Where required, interviews were conducted in the languages the interviewees

were most comfortable in speaking, and were later translated by the interviewers themselves or by specialist translators. Just over a quarter of the interviews – 84 out of 319 – were conducted in a language other than English or in another language and English.

Design and selection of the sample

The aim of the research was to explore factors that contribute to or undermine community cohesion as it affects Muslims and non-Muslims, recent migrants and established communities living alongside each other in the chosen localities. Therefore, it was important for the sample to reflect this diversity. In each of the areas, recent Muslim migrants (less than five years' residence in the UK), established Muslim residents (more than ten years' residence or born in the UK), recent non-Muslim migrants and UK-born non-Muslims were included in the sample. In the balance of numbers, more recent Muslim migrants than respondents in the other categories were included (see Appendix, Table A3), as the primary emphasis in the research was recent Muslim migrants' experiences and perceptions of belonging in their neighbourhoods, local areas and in Britain. The recent non-Muslim migrants provided a comparison with their Muslim counterparts as regards integration experiences and perceptions of belonging; and it was useful to relate the perspectives of the recent migrants to the established categories, given differences in length of time in the UK. The final sample included 155 recent Muslim migrants, 74 established Muslim residents, 44 recent non-Muslim migrants and 46 UK-born non-Muslims across the three localities (see Appendix, Table A3 for a breakdown by locality, gender and age against quotas set).

A purposive, quota-based sampling strategy was used to select eligible interviewees to meet the desired characteristics of the sample as discussed above, and based on the ethnic and country of origin mix, and the demography – particularly the balance of gender and age[4] – of the local areas. This kind of non-random sampling meant that the interviewees were not necessarily representative of the population groups they were selected from, in the areas the research was conducted, in other areas, or in England as a whole. While it is not possible to generalise the results of this research, the experiences and views of the migrants and established residents, Muslims and non-Muslims studied make a valuable contribution to understanding factors that affect community cohesion at neighbourhood and local area level. This contribution is particularly important given that the processes, consequences and implications of new migration to the UK are still very much under-researched at the local level (Berkeley *et al.*, 2006; Robinson and Reeve, 2006; Zetter *et al.*, 2006).

In keeping with the sampling strategy, local interviewers used a variety of recruitment methods to gain access to eligible interviewees defined by the quotas. These included contacting local community and religious organisations – churches and mosques – as well as service providers for specific groups such as refugees and those learning English, and especially snowballing through key contacts in these organisations and through known individual contacts in the community.[5]

Challenges in access and recruitment

Throughout the fieldwork period in 2006 and 2007, community researchers often reported that accessing the relevant population was slow and difficult. At times it seemed that the localities we had chosen were continuously in the forefront of issues around radicalisation and the intense state, public and media scrutiny of people of Muslim origin. This meant that, despite extensive use of "snowball sampling" where the community researchers gradually gained access to the heart of communities through chain referral, there was a considerable amount of suspicion, even at times hostility, among some contacts within the local communities towards the research process. This was especially the case where assumptions were made by some of the members of the communities in linking the research with government policies and activities. One community researcher observed that:

> As we were running interviews almost immediately after the 'Forest Gate event'[6] a number of people tended to hide/refuse to answer specific questions *[such as those on the justice and fairness of authorities]*. Though we have tried to assure them of the confidentiality of the data, the instant impact of the events makes it more and more difficult.

A key contact who helped recruit interviewees for another community researcher, with variable success, commented that many of those he approached 'were worried … you've got to understand them … that's the state people are living in now'. The same community researcher, who was already an 'insider' in the community in which he was seeking interviewees, felt that people started viewing him 'differently': 'even some of those who know me think I'm being "used" [by the police/security forces/the Home Office] without even knowing it'. Even after the interviewees' trust and participation in the interview had been gained, some specific questions were uniformly greeted with suspicion across all three local areas. Understandably, in the current political context around migration and around the fear of international terrorism, these included factual questions on immigration status, benefits, income and employment status, and some questions on transnational engagement, particularly participation in political activity and ownership of assets in countries of

origin. This means that some caution is needed in interpreting responses to such questions.

As part of these challenges around recruitment, it was difficult to systematically record refusals to take part in the interviews by potential recruits. The main reasons for refusing were given as lack of time, family commitments and illness. However, several community researchers felt that these were at times excuses 'hiding behind fear'. For one community researcher, contact with members of a specific community through a community organisation in Stratford failed because no one wanted to give his/her real name or number for contact purposes, despite assurances of anonymity, and the interview was too long to be attempted at the time of first meeting. At times the interview was agreed to initially at recruitment, but refused subsequently when contact was made to arrange a time for interview. More positively, some community researchers found that snowballing did help in dispelling doubts and fears among potential interviewees. As one community researcher stated: 'I may have asked him before to do the interview, but it was certainly the recommendation of a previous recruit which made his mind up'.

Just over half the interviews took place in the interviewees' homes. This is congruent with the nature of recruitment described above, particularly the predominantly community- and neighbourhood-based contact and the snowballing method used. Around one-fifth of interviews were conducted in the interviewees' workplaces and the rest were done in public places such as cafés or restaurants, parks, and premises of community and religious organisations. At the end of each interview, a £15 supermarket voucher was given to each interviewee to thank them for giving their time to the interview. The intention was not to provide the voucher as an incentive payment to encourage participation, as this may have led to some bias in those agreeing to participate. Therefore, no mention was made of the vouchers in the information leaflet that the community researchers used for recruitment. In reality, however, some community researchers found that mentioning the existence of the vouchers verbally while recruiting interviewees helped in persuading some of them to take part, especially as the interview, taking up to two hours, was perceived as quite long. As one key contact of a community researcher said, 'since they are poor, £15 is a lot'.

Questionnaire design and data analysis

The design as well as the analysis of the interviews combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. Pilot interviews with four individuals falling into each of the four interviewee categories were undertaken in Oxford in the last stages of

questionnaire design, so that any issues around the structure and interpretation of questions could be ironed out. The questionnaire was semi-structured in format, containing a mixture of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The structure of the questions depended on the nature and depth of the information sought. Information about the circumstances of the interviewees' lives – for example, their educational background, neighbourhood and workplace characteristics, the kinds of spaces and people they interacted with, organisational participation, transnational activities – was gained from closed-ended questions containing a range of possible responses or open questions eliciting short answers, and were analysed using quantitative methods as far as possible. But, where the interest was in understanding the perceptions, motivations, and feelings around, for example, interactions in the neighbourhood, political and civic participation, belonging in the local community and in Britain, and transnational engagement, questions were structured to bring out the interviewees' responses in depth and at length. The entire interview was audiotaped where permission was given by the interviewees, and the in-depth, detailed responses were analysed by theme.

Policy interviews

Interviews were also conducted with a range of policy-makers and service providers involved in the areas of integration of migrants and community cohesion, at local and at national level, to gain information on their views on facilitators of and barriers to community cohesion. Seven interviews were conducted in Newham, ten in Birmingham and eleven in Bradford. These interviewees included:

- local government officials responsible for formulating and implementing community cohesion, education and housing policies at local level;
- service providers such as the police and head teachers of schools;
- councillors from political parties;
- religious leaders;
- representatives of non-governmental organisations involved in the integration of migrants and community cohesion processes.

The interviews were organised around a topic guide and covered areas such as the meaning and significance of community cohesion to the interviewee's organisation;

issues and challenges around cohesion in the local area – for example, the dynamics of faith and ethnicity; the impact of new migrants on local, national and international events, and on national and local policies and interventions; and organisational responsibilities and strategies to improve community cohesion in the area.

In addition to the local-level policy interviews, four national-level policy interviews were conducted. The interviews were with individuals working on cohesion policy and practice in central government, in public bodies, and in relation to Muslim communities. The interviews explored the perceived strengths and weaknesses of national level policy on cohesion.

Part two: characteristics of the sample

This last section provides an introduction to the basic characteristics of the 319 people interviewed in the three local areas – Newham, Birmingham and Bradford. These characteristics provide useful background information in considering the interviewees' responses to topics covered in the rest of the report.

Gender and age range

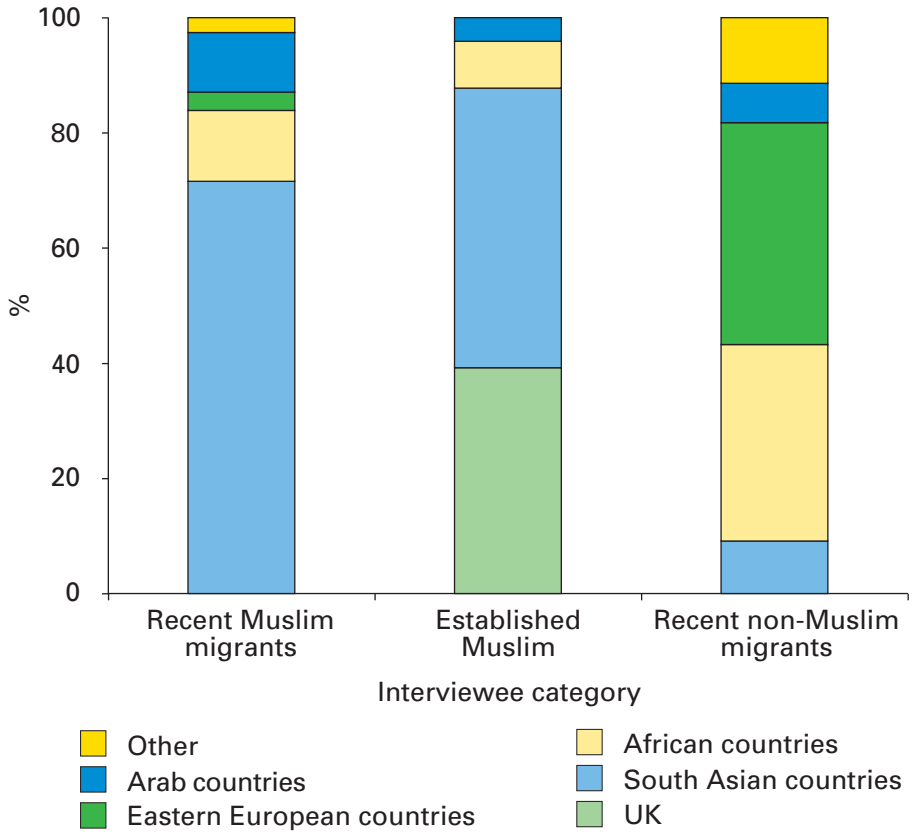
Across the three local areas, men formed 51 per cent and women 49 per cent of the interviewees. In the entire sample, 29.5 per cent were aged 18–24, 54.5 per cent were in the age range 25–44 and 16 per cent were 45 years and over (see Appendix, Table A3).

Country of birth

The total sample across the three localities represented 40 different countries of birth. The largest number – just under one-third – was born in Pakistan, followed by just over one-fifth born in the UK. In keeping with factors governing selection of local areas and sample design discussed above, most diversity in origins was apparent in the samples in Newham and Birmingham, covering countries in all parts of Africa south of the Sahara, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Bradford had by far the largest South Asian origin category, mainly those of Pakistani origin, and the smallest proportion of people from other parts of the world.

Figure 1 shows the countries of birth of the recent Muslim and non-Muslim migrants and established Muslims in the entire sample.

Figure 1 Countries of birth according to interviewee category, all localities



n = 273.

African countries were those south of the Sahara. The North African countries of Egypt and Libya are included in Arab countries.

'Other' category includes USA, Canada, Belgium, Italy, Trinidad, China, Brazil.

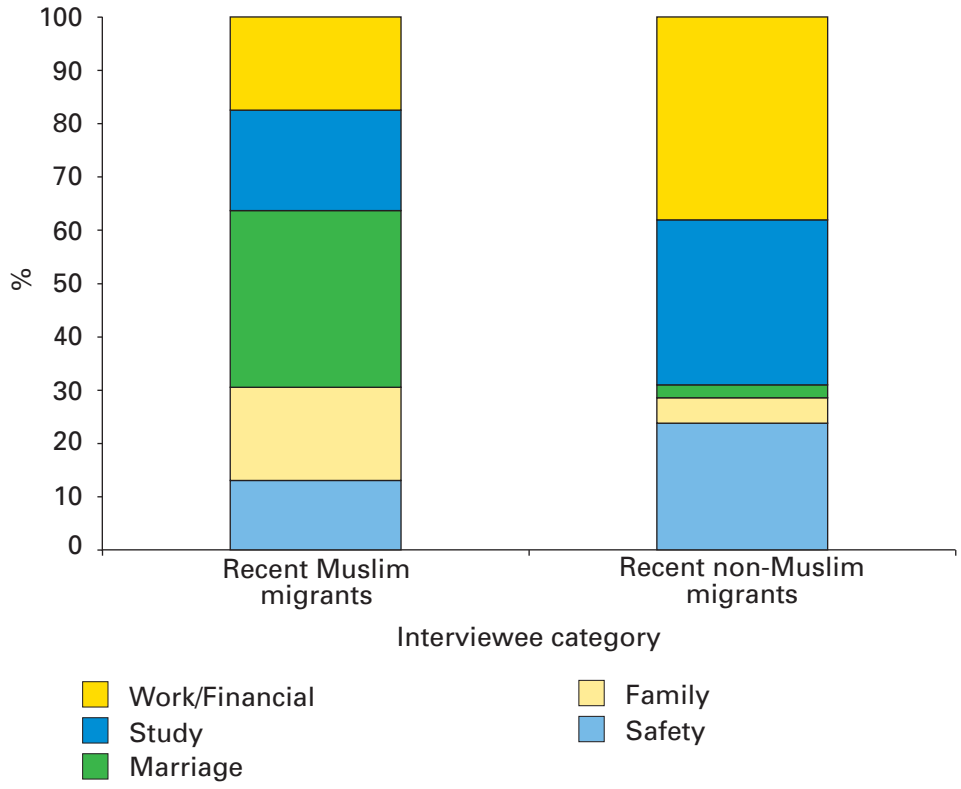
The recent non-Muslim migrants came from a wide range of countries. The largest proportion (just under two-fifths) were from Eastern European countries, followed by those from African countries south of the Sahara. Figure 1 also shows that just under two-fifths of the established Muslim interviewees were born in the UK. There is greater diversity of origin among the recent Muslim migrants in the sample compared to the established Muslims. The majority of the recent Muslim migrants came from South Asian countries – mainly Pakistan and Bangladesh (66 per cent), but also India and Afghanistan – whereas around half did so among the established Muslims. But an examination of self-defined ethnic grouping of the UK-born established Muslims shows that the overwhelming majority (96 per cent) said they were of British Pakistani or British Bangladeshi ethnicity, suggesting that their origins lay in South Asian countries.

Immigration status and reasons for migration among recent migrants

A range of immigration statuses was represented among the recent migrants including work permit holders, asylum seekers, refugees and students. The majority of the sample of recent migrants (54 per cent) appeared to have unrestricted rights to remain and work in the UK, which, as we will see later in the report, may have implications for their integration experiences and feelings of belonging in the UK.

An examination of the main reason for migration to the UK among the recent migrants throws more light on the characteristics of the two categories that are relevant to understanding their experiences and motivations explored in the report. It can be seen in Figure 2 that the majority of the recent Muslim migrants were marriage or family union migrants, largely from South Asian countries as we saw in Figure 1, coming to the UK to join existing relatives. In comparison, the recent non-Muslim migrants were far more likely to come to the UK to work, to study or for asylum. It is clearly the preponderance of marriage and family union migrants among the Muslim interviewees that accounts for the fact that many of the recent migrants had unrestricted rights to live and work in the UK.

Figure 2 Reason for migration to UK for recent* migrants according to interviewee category, all localities



n = 199.

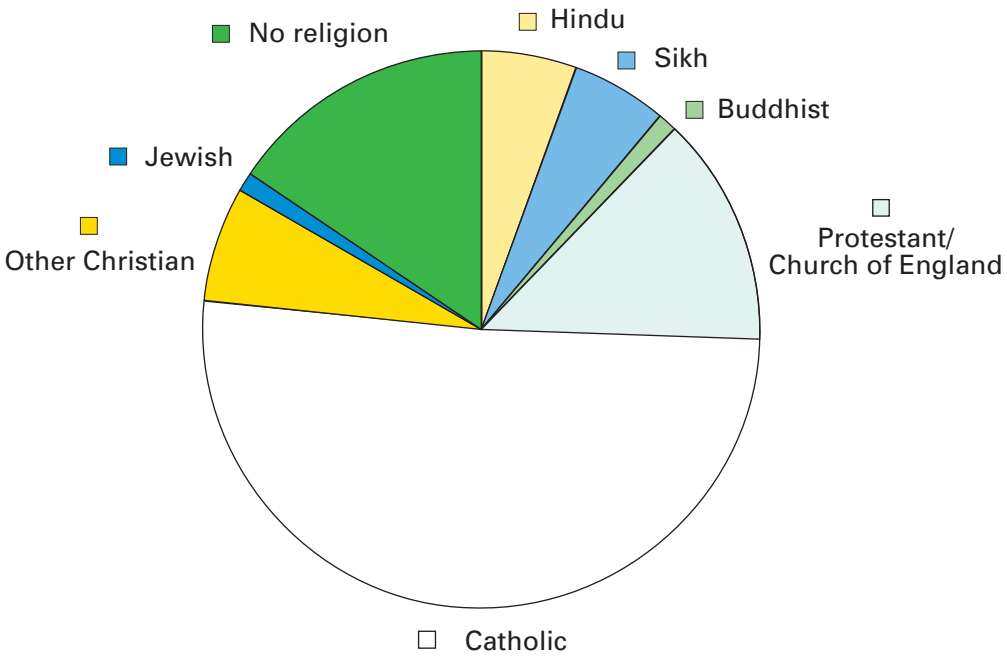
* Recent migrants have lived less than five years in the UK.

Religion

In accordance with the design of the sample, the majority of the interviewees (71.8 per cent) were of the Muslim faith. Of these, just over three-quarters said they identified with the Sunni tradition, but rarely did they provide details of which variant they were committed to. The level of religious practice among the Muslim interviewees was high. Almost all (97 per cent) said they met at least one religious obligation and, among the obligations, fasting (92 per cent) and praying at home (84 per cent) were the most frequently mentioned. The interviewees were less likely to pray at work – 32 per cent did so. This trend possibly reflects lack of opportunity rather than lack of intention.

Figure 3 shows the religions practised by the non-Muslim interviewees. Just over 50 per cent said they belonged to the Catholic faith; there were more Catholics among non-Muslim migrants (27/44) than among those born in the UK (19/46). The next largest category in the non-Muslim sample said they did not have a religion (16 per cent), while 13 per cent said they were Protestants. There were relatively few Hindus and Sikhs. There were no major differences in patterns across the three localities. The preponderance of Catholics in the sample does not appear to relate to any concentration of Catholics in the local areas, but more probably reflects the kinds of people sampled through interviewee contacts with organisations and individuals, and snowball sampling.

Figure 3 Religions of non-Muslim interviewees, all localities



n = 90.

Socio-demographic characteristics

Table 1 sets out some basic characteristics of the entire sample, across the three localities, for the four interviewee categories selected. These are useful for understanding patterns of response of the interviewees in the rest of the report.

Table 1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewees by category, all localities

	Category of interviewee			
	Recent Muslim migrants	Established Muslim residents	Recent non-Muslim migrants	UK-born non-Muslim residents
Languages spoken at home				
English only (%)	2.6	5.4	18.6	78.3
English and other languages (%)	52.9	68.9	51.2	19.6
Other languages only (%)	44.5	25.7	30.2	2.2
*Total (n)**	*155*	*74*	*43*	*46*
Highest educational level				
Primary or below (%)	9.0	16.2	6.8	2.2
Secondary (%)	29.0	40.5	20.5	43.5
Post-secondary (%)	61.9	43.2	72.7	54.3
*Total (n)**	*155*	*74*	*44*	*46*
Employment status				
Employee (%)	41.9	37.8	54.5	73.9
Self-employed (%)	3.9	10.8	15.9	8.7
Unemployed (%)	16.1	6.8	13.6	6.5
Student (%)	9.0	16.2	9.1	6.5
Looking after family (%)	25.8	17.6	2.3	0
Other (%)	3.2	10.8	4.5	4.3
*Total (n)**	*155*	*74*	*44*	*46*
Housing tenure				
Owner-occupier (%)	24.0	60.8	7.0	64.4
Social housing (%)	14.9	12.2	16.3	8.9
Rent privately (%)	42.2	8.1	58.1	8.9
Living with relatives (%)	18.2	18.9	16.3	17.8
Other (%)	0.6	0	2.3	0
*Total (n)**	*153*	*75*	*44*	*44*
Household composition				
Nuclear family (%)	39.3	83.6	25.0	71.7
Extended family (%)	30.7	15.1	6.8	2.2
Friends or others (%)	20.0	0	52.3	10.9
Living alone (%)	8.0	1.4	9.1	15.2
Other (%)	2.0	0	6.8	0
*Total (n)**	*150*	*73*	*44*	*46*

* Totals refer to sample size in each category after missing values for each variable were taken out.

Use of English language

The majority of interviewees in the two Muslim categories and the non-Muslim migrant category spoke English at home together with other languages. The non-Muslim migrant category demonstrated the widest spread in language use, with a little under one-fifth speaking only English and a little under one-third speaking only other languages at home. This probably arises from the diversity of countries that these migrants came from. Nearly 45 per cent of recent Muslim migrants said they spoke only other languages at home, but a closer examination of recent Muslim migrants speaking only other languages at home reveals that over half (55 per cent) said that they generally spoke English very well or fairly well. This is in line with the results of the first quarter of the 2007 Citizenship Survey, which showed a high level of English-speaking ability (69 per cent) among Muslims arriving in England and Wales since 2000.[7]

Educational levels

The recent migrant categories showed the highest educational levels, with 73 per cent of recent non-Muslim migrants and 62 per cent of recent Muslim migrants having a formal education up to university or college level. Further analysis reveals that 75 per cent of the non-Muslim migrants and 67 per cent of the Muslim migrants with post-secondary levels of education had undertaken their education entirely in their countries of origin. However, age did not appear to be a factor in explaining these differences. The recent migrants were not much more likely to have a younger age distribution than the established residents and, in all categories, older interviewees tended to have as high educational levels as younger interviewees. It can also be seen in Table 1 that, apart from established Muslims, less than 10 per cent of those in the other categories had only a primary-level education or less. Overall, established Muslims in the sample had lower educational levels than recent Muslim migrants. Both the recent Muslim and non-Muslim migrants in our sample appeared to have higher educational levels than equivalent categories nationally. An analysis of recent Labour Force Survey data showed that 15 per cent of Muslims and 26 per cent of non-Muslims[8] of working age who arrived in Great Britain since 2000 had a higher educational qualification at, or below, degree level. Slightly higher proportions of Muslims and non-Muslims generally (19 per cent and 28 per cent respectively) had similar qualifications.[9]

Employment

The largest single proportions in all four categories were employees. Proportionally more recent non-Muslim migrants tended to be self-employed than interviewees in the other categories, especially recent Muslim migrants; but the two recent migrant categories had similar, high, unemployment rates compared to the two established categories. This is explored further in Chapter 3. Proportions of those who were economically inactive – that is, mainly caring for family at home but also including those retired, sick or disabled and those not legally allowed to work – were higher among the two Muslim categories compared to the two non-Muslim categories. Nearly half of all the Muslim women in the sample were looking after family compared to around 2 per cent of the men. In comparison, only one woman, a recent migrant, in the non-Muslim sample was looking after home and family. Census 2001 data showed that Muslims were three times as likely as all people to care for home or family and that the proportion was highest among the women (Hussain, 2004, p. 9).

Housing

Where housing is concerned, as expected, there were more owner-occupiers among the longer established categories, both Muslim and non-Muslim. More of the recent migrants tended to live in privately rented accommodation, although nearly one-fifth of recent Muslim migrants were also living with relatives, a proportion that is similar to that of established Muslims and greater than among non-Muslims – particularly among the recent migrants.

Households

It can be seen that nuclear family structures were predominant among both Muslim and non-Muslim established residents, while just over a half of recent non-Muslim migrants and a fifth of recent Muslim migrants had set up shared living arrangements with friends and other migrants as part of their adaptation process. A little less than a third of recent Muslim migrants also appeared to benefit from extended family networks in setting up households in their new environment, but the largest proportion – nearly 40 per cent – lived in nuclear family households.

Summary profiles of interviewees

Overall, the profile of recent non-Muslim migrants that emerges from Table 1 is one largely of highly educated labour migrants working or looking for work, living in rented accommodation with others like themselves. This profile can be distinguished to some extent from the recent Muslim migrants. The latter, also well educated (and overall better educated than the established Muslims), were more diverse than non-Muslim migrants in terms of employment status and household situations, with family union as well as labour migrants living within, or taking advantage of, existing family structures in the community. The profiles of the two established resident categories, Muslim and non-Muslim, showed similarity to each other in terms of housing tenure and, to a lesser extent, household structure, but there were differences in educational and employment statuses.

Locality patterns

There are some differences in these patterns according to locality, although caution is needed in interpreting these differences because of the small numbers involved and interviewer effects. In Birmingham the proportions of those with post-secondary levels of education were high across all categories, while in Bradford fewer recent Muslim migrants had achieved post-secondary educational levels compared to their counterparts in the other locations. In Bradford, also, proportions of recent Muslim migrants speaking only other languages at home were similar to those speaking English and other languages, and a little over two-thirds of the former claimed that they were not fluent in English. Unemployment levels were higher among non-Muslim migrants than among Muslim migrants in Newham, whereas in Bradford there were no unemployed interviewees among non-Muslim migrants while unemployment levels were highest among the recent Muslim migrants. In Bradford, just over half of recent Muslim migrants lived within extended family structures, whereas less than 10 per cent did so in Newham.

It appears that recent Muslim migrants interviewed in Bradford, who were more likely to be marriage or family union migrants (79 per cent compared to 52 per cent in Birmingham and 20 per cent in Newham) and predominantly from Pakistan (87 per cent), were more disadvantaged – in terms of English-speaking ability, educational level, employment – than the more diverse recent Muslim migrants in the other locations.

In the following four chapters, we will examine in detail the experiences and perceptions relevant to community cohesion, of the interviewees in the four categories, across the three localities.

3 Equality and discrimination

In this chapter, we will examine whether and to what extent inequalities exist in the material circumstances and perceptions of these circumstances, between interviewees who are recent Muslim and non-Muslim migrants, established Muslims and UK-born non-Muslims. We will also consider whether factors other than race, faith and/or migrant status have an impact on these circumstances and perceptions. We will first examine indicators of actual and perceived disadvantage for the interviewees and then go on to consider their perceptions of fair/unfair treatment and discrimination by authorities and individuals in their localities.

A key indicator of community cohesion is the existence of similar life opportunities for those from different backgrounds in the community. This includes equality and equal opportunities in areas such as education, employment, housing, health, and lack of direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of characteristics such as migrant status, country of origin, ethnicity, faith, gender and age in institutional and community life. The government strategy to increase racial equality and strengthen community cohesion, *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* (Home Office, 2005c) sets out the current circumstances of minority ethnic groups that the strategy aims to address:

> Many members of black and minority ethnic communities are already doing well in Britain today. But the picture is by no means uniform. Many still suffer particularly poor outcomes in education, employment, health and other life chances, for a complex mixture of reasons, including racial discrimination, lack of opportunities, inadequate thought in how public services address the needs of different communities, the neighbourhoods they live in, longstanding lack of skills and cultural factors. (Home Office, 2005c, p. 8)

As pointed out in Chapter 1, a criticism of the community cohesion policy framework is its relative neglect of the impact of differences in actual and perceived disadvantage between different groups in communities, and of discrimination based on religion and ethnicity on inter-group relationships (McGhee, 2003; Choeng *et al*., 2007).

On the other hand, the evidence for the existence of inequalities and experiences of discrimination on the grounds of 'race', ethnicity and faith is continuously well documented (Berthoud and Blekesaune, 2007; Clark and Drinkwater, 2007), although relatively few studies and reviews systematically take into account migrant

status and the experiences of recent migrants (Dustmann *et al.,* 2003; Spencer and Cooper, 2006; IPPR, 2007). However, the limited evidence that exists does suggest that the circumstances and experiences of recent migrants differ to a considerable extent from both the UK-born white majority and people from established ethnic minority communities:

> The continuing dominance of the term 'ethnic minority' over 'immigrant' in much of race relations discourse has two important implications. The first is that non-white migrants (particularly refugees and asylum seekers) tend to disappear into the category of 'ethnic minority' in both popular and political discourse, despite often having a very different set of needs and experiencing a very different type of discrimination from settled ethnic minorities, and from each other. The second implication is that white migrants remain relatively under-researched and excluded from what is widely-understood as 'race relations' among public authorities. (IPPR, 2007, p. 54)

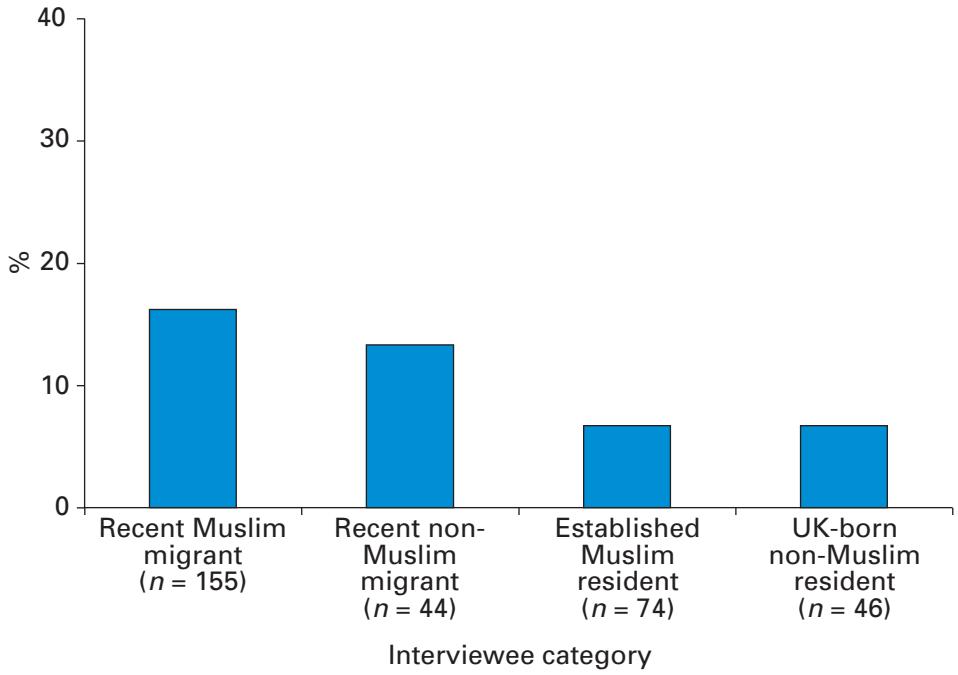
Unemployment, jobs, income and perceived financial circumstances of the interviewees

Unemployment

As we saw in Chapter 2, a characteristic of our sample was that the two migrant categories had the highest unemployment levels. As shown in Figure 4, these were 16 per cent among the Muslim migrants and 14 per cent among the non-Muslim migrants compared to 7 per cent among the established Muslims and among the UK-born non-Muslims, respectively. In interpreting unemployment trends among the recent migrants in the sample, it is important to recognise that more of the Muslim interviewees were marriage or family union migrants for whom being in employment was not a legal condition of stay in the UK, unlike the case of many of the non-Muslim interviewees (see Figure 2 in Chapter 2). The existence of differences in unemployment levels between recent migrants and established residents is in line with national and regional trends. In the 2005–06 Annual Population Survey (APS), using the International Labour Organization (ILO) definition of unemployed,[1] 5 per cent of migrants arriving in the UK between 2000 and 2006 were unemployed compared with 4 per cent who had arrived before 2000 and 2 per cent of people born in the UK. The APS reveals regional differences in the unemployment levels of migrants arriving in the UK since 2000. In the West Midlands Metropolitan

County, this was 7 per cent and, in West Yorkshire, 10 per cent. In both regions, the unemployment level among migrants arriving before 2000 and among people born in the UK was close to the national level reported above.[2]

Figure 4 Unemployment according to interviewee category, all localities

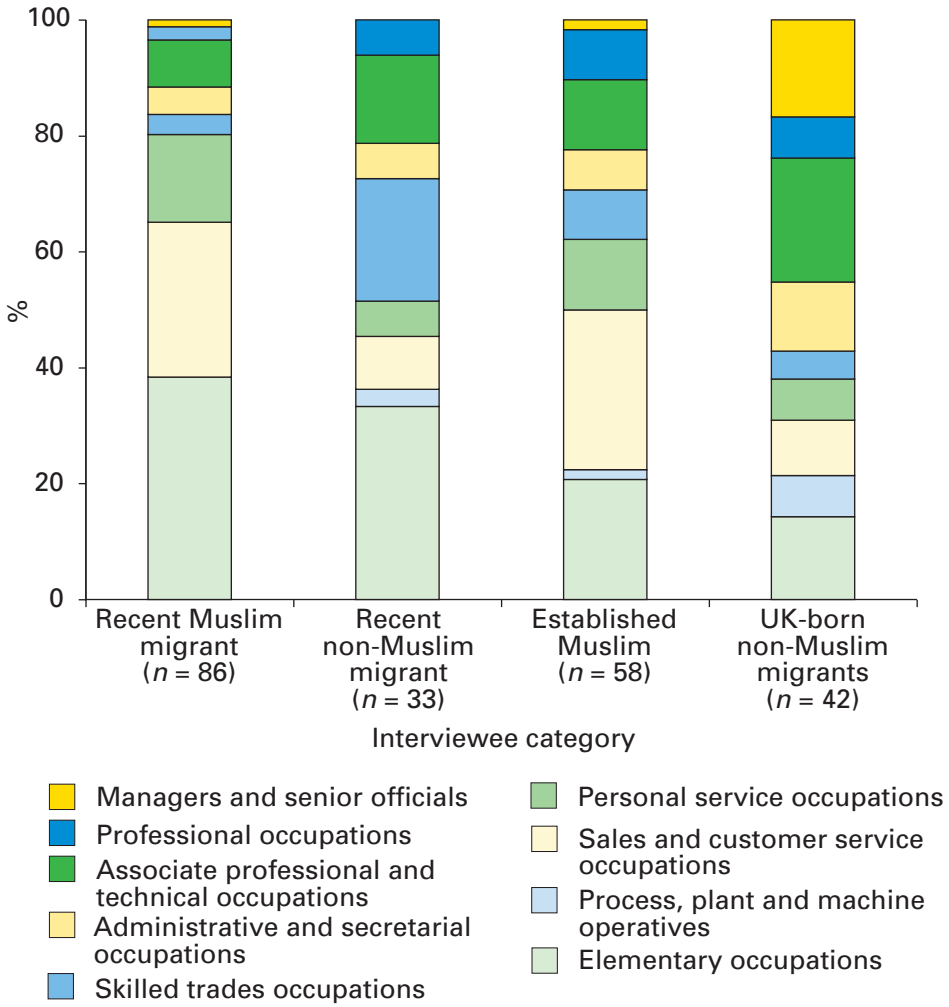


Occupational levels

Figure 5 sets out occupational information given by the interviewees about their jobs at the time of interview or, if they were not currently employed, their most recent jobs. As in the case of unemployment, we can see that proportionately more of both recent Muslim and non-Muslim migrants compared with the established Muslims and UK-born non-Muslims were concentrated in the lower end of the occupational distribution, in elementary occupations – 38 per cent of recent Muslim migrants and 33 per cent of recent non-Muslim migrants, compared to 21 per cent of established Muslims and 14 per cent of UK-born non-Muslims. The kinds of jobs of the interviewees that this occupational category covered included unskilled kitchen work, waiting and bar work, packing and cleaning. The occupational distributions of the four interviewee categories also show other interesting differences and similarities. The UK-born non-Muslims had the most even spread of occupations, including the largest proportions among the four categories at the higher managerial and professional levels. Over a quarter in each of the Muslim categories were found in routine sales and customer service occupations, compared to just under a tenth in each of the non-Muslim categories. More of the recent non-Muslim migrants tended to be in

skilled trades such as painting, plastering, masonry and building compared with those in the other interviewee categories. These patterns need to be interpreted with caution because of the relatively small numbers of interviewees giving occupational information. However, the evidence from our sample that recent migrants irrespective of religion were concentrated in the lower part of the occupational structure is congruent with evidence at the national level. Analysis of recent Labour Force Survey data showed that the largest proportions of both Muslims and non-Muslims arriving in the UK since 2000 and in employment were found in elementary occupations (27 per cent and 23 per cent respectively). These proportions were double those of Muslims and non-Muslims *in general* in elementary occupations.[3]

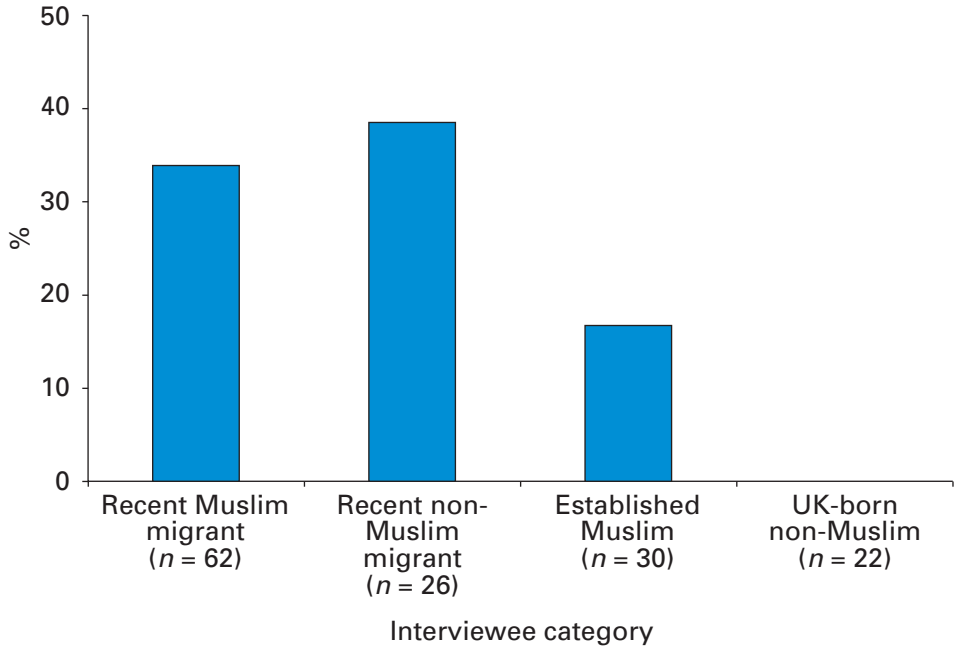
Figure 5 Occupational classification by interviewee category, present or more recent job, all localities



Base = those who gave information on present or most recent primary job (*n* = 219). Occupations classified according to the Standard Occupational Classification 2000 (SOC2000).

Analysing the occupation of interviewees in relation to their educational levels provides further insight into the inequalities between the migrant and established categories. It was shown in Chapter 2, Table 1 that both Muslim and non-Muslim migrant categories had the highest proportions of those with post-secondary levels of education. Figure 6 shows the occupational levels of interviewees with post-secondary education. It can be seen that over a third of both highly educated Muslim and non-Muslim migrants were to be found in routine elementary occupations compared to around half that proportion among established Muslims and none among UK-born non-Muslims. Among all the recent migrants in the sample, 82 per cent reported that they spoke English well or very well at the time of interview, suggesting that English language proficiency was not a barrier. These findings suggest that the kinds of jobs that the recent migrants, regardless of faith, have access to may not be commensurate with the educational levels that they have achieved, and that the qualifications of the majority of recent migrants in the study may not be adequately recognised. Figure 6 also shows that 17 per cent of established Muslims with post-secondary educational levels were in elementary occupations compared to none of the UK-born non-Muslims, suggesting the existence of 'a Muslim penalty' in our sample. At the same time, it is also interesting that the 'recent migration penalty' for non-Muslims was greater than that for Muslims. However, again, caution needs to be exercised in projecting the interpretation of the findings beyond this study, as numbers in some categories were very small.

Figure 6 Percentage in elementary occupations among interviewees with post-secondary education, all localities



In the sample as a whole, there were significant gender, but not age, differences in occupational level. Men were more likely to be in associate professional and technical occupations and in skilled trades than women, while the latter predominated in administrative/secretarial and personal service occupations. However, there were more men than women in the routine unskilled occupations – 31 per cent compared with 24 per cent. Muslim women, both established and recently migrated, predominated in sales and customer service occupations (31 per cent) and personal service occupations (26 per cent). These patterns are congruent with recent Labour Force Survey findings that, in the UK, Muslim women are concentrated in customer service and sales occupations.[4]

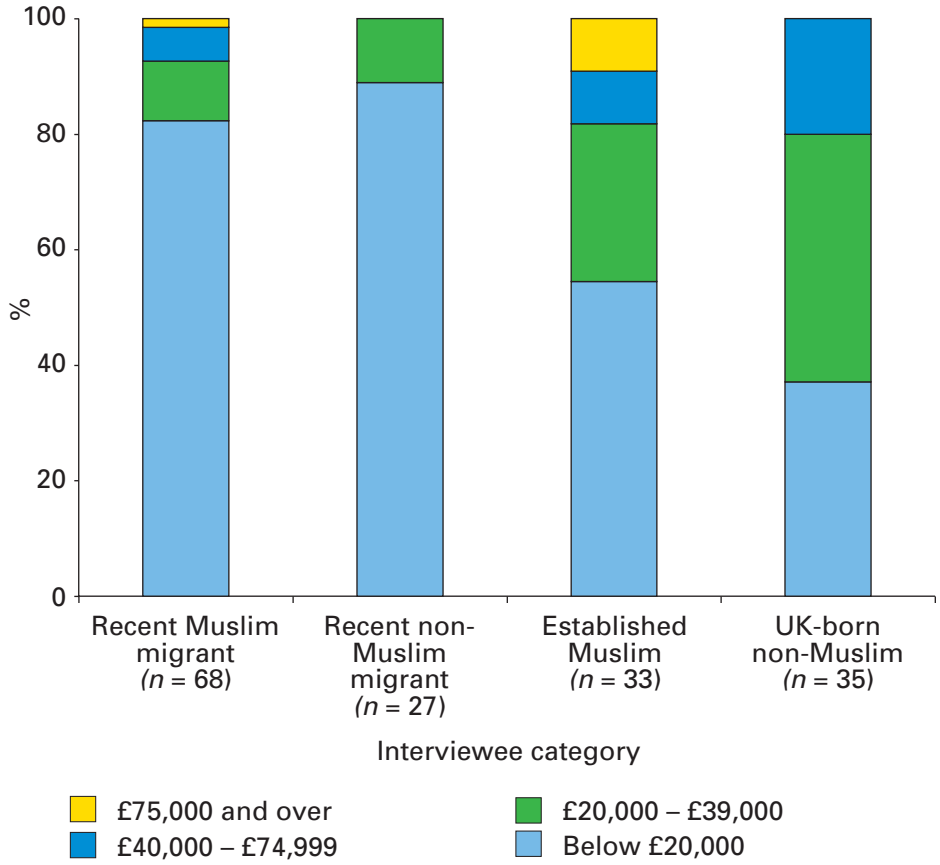
Income

We saw in Chapter 2, Table 1 that, across the three localities, the UK-born non-Muslims had the highest employment levels, that the two recent migrant categories had the highest unemployment levels (also Figure 4) and that the two Muslim groups contained the largest proportions of those who were economically inactive – that is, mainly caring for family at home but also including those retired, sick or disabled and those not legally allowed to work. These differences in the labour market situation of the interviewees can be expected to have affected their income. We asked the interviewees to select the band their income fell into in the last 12 months, before deductions for tax and including income from sources other than earnings from a job.

Eliminating interviewees who were not working for any reason, Figure 7 gives the annual income distribution according to interviewee category among those who were in employment at the time of interview and who reported their income. It shows that differences in income according to recent migrant status were wider than according to religion and were statistically significant ($p<0.001$). Those who were in employment in both recent migrant categories, Muslim and non-Muslim, stand out from their counterparts in the two established categories in being concentrated in the lower income end of the income distribution.

The two migrant categories showed a greater tendency to be engaged in part-time work compared to the two established categories in the entire sample, and this is likely to affect their income levels. Further, a consideration of current immigration status of the interviewees, although numbers were small, showed that proportions of those who had an income under £20,000 or proportions of those who were in elementary occupations were far greater among work permit holders, students and refugees compared to British and EU nationals and those with indefinite leave to remain ($p<0.001$). For example, 14 out of 15 of those with a work permit other than Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) or Sector-based Scheme (SBS)[5]

Figure 7 Annual income by interviewee category, those in employment, all localities



$p<0.001$.

had an income below £20,000 compared to 50 out of 94 (53 per cent) of British nationals. Again, a quarter of British nationals who gave occupational information were or had been employed in elementary occupations or as process, plant or machine operatives, compared with nearly half of those with a work permit other than SAWS or SBS. It appears that the lower income levels of both Muslim and non-Muslim recent migrants were associated with, as we have seen, less desirable, low paid and insecure jobs available to them as new migrants with a less secure immigration status. These jobs could be distinguished from the more skilled, better paid work in such sectors as nursing, accounting, catering and engineering undertaken by some at least of the established Muslims and, particularly, the UK-born non-Muslims.

There were no statistically significant differences in income on the grounds of gender and age among the interviewees; the younger interviewees were a little more likely than older interviewees to have a lower income. Unemployment patterns varied between the localities for our sample but, in each locality, the recent migrants, both Muslims and non-Muslims, had the highest proportions with a lower income. The

established Muslims and UK-born non-Muslims in Bradford also seemed financially worse off than their counterparts in the other two locations, and the total income range of all interviewees was narrower in Bradford.

Perceptions of financial circumstances

We examined the way the interviewees perceived their financial situation in relation to a range of characteristics. As Table 2 shows, recent migrants in both categories were far more likely than established residents in either category to feel that they were experiencing financial difficulties ($p = 0.001$). This is congruent with the evidence above on the former's pattern of lower income compared to that of the latter. The recent non-Muslim migrants showed the greatest tendency to see themselves as struggling financially, although similar proportions – 15 per cent of Muslim migrants and 16 per cent of non-Muslim migrants – said that they were finding it 'very difficult' to manage. The finding reported in Table 2 that UK-born interviewees were far less likely than those born outside the UK to see themselves as having financial difficulties fits in with these patterns, although it is important to bear in mind that those born outside the UK also include some established Muslim residents who migrated to the UK over a decade ago. Interviewees living in Bradford were more likely than those in the other two locations, and men were more likely than women, to feel that they had financial difficulties, although neither of these results was statistically significant. It is also interesting that similar proportions of Muslims and non-Muslims in the entire sample – a little over a quarter – said that they experienced financial problems. Therefore, it does appear from these results, as well as the results in relation to the socio-economic indicators discussed earlier in this chapter, that it is migrant status – and particularly *recent* migration – more than faith that is associated with 'real' and perceived financial difficulty among the interviewees.

However, if we focus on women in the sample and consider perceived financial difficulty in the context of the characteristic shown in Chapter 2 that Muslim women, whether recently migrated or established, were more likely than non-Muslim women to be economically inactive and have family responsibilities, an interesting finding emerges. While the pattern of recent migrants feeling worse off than established residents irrespective of religion still holds for the women, a little more than double the proportion of recent non-Muslim migrant women compared to recent Muslim migrant women – 54 per cent compared with 24 per cent – felt they had financial difficulties. It could be that, as largely family union migrants, the recently arrived Muslim women were more cushioned from excessive poverty as a result of family support than the recently arrived non-Muslim women, who were more likely to be labour migrants, refugees or students.

Table 2 Perceptions of financial situation according to sample characteristics, all localities

Characteristics	% struggling financially*	Total (*n*)
Location		
Newham	28.6	98
Birmingham	20.0	100
Bradford	32.1	112
Category		
Recent Muslim migrant	30.9	148
Established Muslim	16.9	72
Recent non-Muslim migrant	45.5	45
UK-born non-Muslim	13.0	45
Gender		
Male	30.2	162
Female	23.6	148
Birthplace		
UK-born	17.1	70
Not UK-born	30.0	240
Religion		
Muslim	26.4	219
Non-Muslim	28.9	91

n = 310. Row totals for each variable vary because of missing values.

* This response category was made up of those saying they were 'finding it quite difficult' or 'finding it very difficult' to manage financially.

Religious and race[6] discrimination

Recent Muslim migrants

It is important to understand whether the interviewees perceived there to be a relationship between inequality of circumstances and of opportunity and discrimination. When asked directly whether they had ever been treated unfairly because of their religion, around 30 per cent of recent Muslim migrants in all three localities said they had personally experienced religious discrimination since coming to the UK. For these interviewees, a variety of areas of public life were affected, such as seeking employment, the workplace, health care providers and settings, the police, neighbours and just being out and about in the local area. Verbal abuse by individuals was stressed as much as institutional discrimination affecting life chances.

Among the recent Muslim migrants in our sample, there were no significant differences in response between age groups, between men and women, and between those from different countries of origin. For both men and women of varied ages and origins in all three localities, appearance and dress seemed to play a large

part in being unfairly treated as Muslims, and there was a sense, although not always clearly articulated, that this kind of discrimination was linked to or heightened after the incidents of 11 September 2001 and July 2005:

> Yes. And, not in London, but in Birmingham. Because of my headscarf. I went to a couple of interviews and they actually, they straight … told me that if you, you know, maybe you can just take off your headscarf and we'll give you the job you know, it'll be more appropriate to, well I don't know.
>
> *Q:* What kinds of jobs were they?
>
> Oh just sales assistants in town and things like that. But actually I got a very good job after that, with my headscarf. (Recent migrant from Iraq, female, Birmingham)
>
> Yes, by people in a shopping centre *[Bullring]* or in a park. Anywhere where non-Muslims are, as they judge me because of how I dress. When driving, people are aggressive and don't give me way. (Recent migrant from Pakistan, female, Birmingham)
>
> Yes, I experienced at work following London bombings. People started treating me differently. (Recent migrant from Pakistan, male, Bradford)
>
> Yes. A job interview I went for. I feel I didn't get the job because I have a beard and a hat. (Recent migrant from Pakistan, male, Bradford)

While almost a third of the entire recent Muslim migrant sample spoke explicitly about discrimination on religious grounds, some found it difficult to separate unfair treatment because of their religion from unfair treatment because of their skin colour or ethnic origin, as the following statement from an interviewee in Newham shows:

> I found sometimes discriminated as I have 'Muhammad' in my name … In terms of promotions and carer opportunities … I was treated unfairly due to religious and ethnic background … *[and]* especially my GP. My ex-GP most of the time she was saying you are not paying us so don't expect anything from us. But present GP she is very good. (Recent migrant from Bangladesh, male)

Also:

> I don't know if it was because of my ethnicity or because of my religion, but there was an event where I was viewing an accommodation, when the council officer opened the property for me to look at it, the next-door neighbour came out and shook her head to both sides disappointedly. And the council officer asked 'are you all right?' And she said 'I was'. And for that reason I refused the property … But I'm not sure if it had to do with my religion, because my wife *[was]* with me, and you know hijab, and she was with me at the time. So I'm not sure if it had to do with my religion or … my colour. (Recent migrant from Somalia, Birmingham)

Among the recent Muslim migrants, reported levels of unfair treatment and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity and race were similar to those in relation to religious discrimination:

> By employers. This man, he's white, and, as soon as I come in, he doesn't even listen to anything I'm saying. He says I can't speak proper English. I didn't know what to say, I was lost for words … I said 'No, take your job. I'm not coming back to you.' (Recent migrant from Somalia, female, Newham)

> I applied for job. British people not giving of this opportunity *[to]* Asian or Muslim people … when I apply in official work, we can't get any opportunity. British people getting this opportunity. We're only getting labour job like this. But *[a]* lot of quality people don't get … these jobs. (Recent migrant from Bangladesh, female, Newham)

> Yes, by others at the doctor's, in the street, in shops. (Recent migrant from Somalia, female, Bradford)

> Feel this all the time, especially when I apply for work. When they hear your accent they don't want to know. (Recent migrant from Sudan, Birmingham)

Qualitative responses such as these do support the quantitative evidence discussed earlier in the chapter that there are barriers to achieving equality and equality of opportunity for at least some recent Muslim migrants in the sample. Even though some recent Muslim migrants said that they had not personally experienced either religious or race discrimination, there was very limited elaboration of such a response. Many pointed out that they felt they had not lived long enough in the UK to experience discrimination directly, but that they had heard that other longer established Muslim migrants had such experiences.

Recent non-Muslim migrants

A comparison of these responses with those of the recent non-Muslim migrants in the three localities shows some interesting similarities as well as differences. While recent Muslim migrants reported similar levels of both race and religious discrimination, perceptions of religious discrimination did not feature prominently for the non-Muslim migrants. It was mentioned by less than four non-Muslim migrants (9 per cent) in all the localities. Most of the recent non-Muslim migrant interviewees were Catholics. One interviewee in Bradford said that his experience of religious discrimination was that: 'sometimes, being Bangladeshi, everyone assumes I am Muslim and should act like a Muslim'. This has resonance with the way some of the recent Muslim migrants above felt they were negatively perceived because of their religion.

For non-Muslim migrants who reported experiences of unfair treatment, this was overwhelmingly in the form of race discrimination. A total of 25 out of 44 interviewees across the three localities said they had experienced unfair treatment at work, in housing and on the streets because of their race. Inevitably, more of these interviewees were of non-white rather than white ethnicity:

> They don't treat you badly but some don't like me because I am black or because I am not English. People in buses, people in streets are sometimes rude or ignore you. (Recent non-Muslim migrant from Congo, female, Birmingham)

> Because I'm black, sometimes *[employer]* ignore me like I'm thick and stupid. (Recent non-Muslim migrant from Zambia, male, Bradford)

> The police, Home Office, the people which we need them to help us … Especially NASS *[the National Asylum Support Service]*, the people who is working in NASS they are really, really bad people … They are really, really racist. (Recent non-Muslim migrant from Iran, male, Newham)

Some white non-Muslim migrants from Eastern European countries also believed that they experienced unfair treatment because of their ethnic or national background, as the following examples show:

> Not unfairly because I'm a Christian … *[but]* because, yes, I'm Russian, yes. Because I don't belong to European Union and it's kind of difficult to get a job. (Recent non-Muslim migrant from Russia, female, Newham)

> Yes. I felt I was treated badly by the police, they did not solve the problem when my daughter was bitten, they didn't care at all. I felt they would have acted differently towards me if my daughter was English. (Recent non-Muslim migrant from Albania, female, Birmingham)

However, it is also important to recognise that many of the Eastern European recent migrants in the sample said that they had not experienced any discrimination.

Established Muslims

If we compare perceptions of unfair treatment on the grounds of religion and on the grounds of race between recent Muslim migrants and established Muslim residents, the response pattern that stands out most is the way *more* of the established Muslims in all the locations spoke interchangeably about religious discrimination and race discrimination, or gave more importance to the latter. However, the intensity of perception was similar in both categories. A little over half the established Muslim sample in Birmingham and a little under half the sample in, respectively, Newham and Bradford said that they had personally experienced unfair treatment, mainly by employers, service providers (including the police) and neighbours.

> It's a very big complex problem because the racism in the way you go and look for job … that's why I started doing my private business. I've been trying to look for job for all these years which I couldn't get the job. And what they do, they just mess you around so the best thing is to start a bit you can do. (Established Muslim, male, Newham)

> They *[employers]* don't see your religion they see your colour. (Established Muslim, female, Newham)

> I think sometimes at the school, you know, if you go in there and you've got an issue to be raised … because I've worked at a placement at the school before and it was a majority of Asians in the BD3 area … if an English parent came in and showed concern they'd be more concerned of what the parent thinks of them. But if it was an Asian they wouldn't really … bother about what they thought of them, of the teachers themselves. Because they felt that … the Asians weren't really concerned about their child's education anyway so why should we bother? (Established Muslim, female, Bradford)

There was also a strand of response among some of the established Muslims, similar to, but perhaps somewhat more intense than, that of the recent Muslim migrants, that links the events of 11 September 2001 and the July 2005 bombings to a perception of a more heightened public awareness of Muslims as a category and of a somewhat different, if not greater, level of differential treatment:

> I can remember sitting on a bus and some lady who was sitting next to me and she kind of moved away or something … but I felt like 'Oh my gosh' … but, I think because of the area that I live in, I don't really see it as much ... actually you do get on the road when I've walked with my mum or if you're walking down the street you will get your odd person shouting 'Paki' and this and that. You do get that kind of stuff … especially with everything that's happening with the media and stuff, it's really spiced it all up so you are getting affected … before it used to be because you're Pakistani, but now it's because anyone who's that colour is Muslim apparently so it's more because of everything that's going on. (Established Muslim, female, Birmingham)

> Everything was OK before but, since some of our youngsters have been involved in wrongdoings … others are treating us bad and so are the police. (Established Muslim, female, Bradford)

> I think it's, quite a bit of it now since 9/11 … But previously I mean it was all because you're an outsider. Even though we're born here and we're brought up here we're still outsiders. But religion does play a big part in it now as well … I think more to do with service providers and the police. (Established Muslim, female, Bradford)

Many of the established Muslims who said that they had not experienced unfair treatment, either on the grounds of their faith or ethnicity/colour, spoke of the way the perception and treatment of people from minority ethnic communities had changed for the better over time in Britain, and of their awareness of religious tolerance in, for example, workplaces. In this respect, implementation of anti-discrimination legislation on the grounds of faith over the past few years[7] may have had some impact on the experiences of the interviewees:

> Yeah. It's not bad, it's not as it was before. The generation before me was, they had a hard time … I'm just comparing it with when I was a kid … 5, 6 years old, 7 years of age. I still remember some of the stuff that has happened due to racism. And you don't get that these days. (Established Muslim, male, Birmingham)

> No. When we was kids yeah but it wasn't a Muslim thing in them days was it? Because there wasn't that many Muslims around. Kids are school bullies, you get that all the time … Our employers have so many different people working there, they've got Pakistanis, they've got Indians, you know, socially they've got people from different countries. You know these, what do you call it, asylum seekers … obviously they're legit, obviously they won't take people on because, you know, you've got to pay your stamps … Now we've got a lot of different nationalities coming into our warehouse. (Established Muslim, male, Bradford)

> Not really. Not really. Maybe people might think that but no, I don't think so. I think this, in a country like this … you are given places of worship, as many as you want, wherever you want, how can you have a grudge and a problem with a government that allows you to have your beliefs and respect your beliefs. There can't be a better nation to live in than this … And if you don't believe that go and live in other countries … maybe even Europe … you know, the life that you live here you'll never have it over there. (Established Muslim, male, Bradford)

Our findings relating to the perceptions of discrimination of both the established Muslims and the recent migrants are congruent with an analysis of opinion poll surveys, which showed that around 30 per cent of Muslims in the UK reported experiencing hostility and discrimination (Blick *et al.*, 2006, p. 19) and with Citizenship Survey data cited in Chapter 1.

UK-born non-Muslims

Of the 46 UK-born non-Muslims, 28 reported their ethnic grouping as white British (61 per cent), the remaining 18 were mainly of British Indian or black Caribbean ethnic identity. Perceptions of unfair treatment on grounds of race were given by 13 out of the 46 (28 per cent) UK-born non-Muslims across the three localities, including a few of the white British interviewees. Around half the 18 interviewees of minority ethnic origin reported discrimination. Although numbers were small, there was at times similar strength of feeling in relation to similar areas of life among interviewees reporting race discrimination as among the recent migrants and established Muslims:

> I haven't been in trouble with the police but I've seen how they go on … I'll give a very good example: I `wear my fashion different, I chop and change. Sometimes I might want to wear trainers, jeans and a bloody hoodie, right, and straight away … I am considered a thug, you know, and

> yet the next day they would see me in a suit, you know, and it's like, OK I'm still the same person I've just got different clothing. So perception, you know, from the police and so forth, is something that is negative … Jobs too. I think certain jobs straight away … I have to work twice as hard. I don't mind working hard to get a certain job or to get somewhere in life but being black is very difficult so it's like a barrier straight away. So I have to prove myself over and over again. (UK-born non-Muslim, British black Caribbean, female, 18–24, Birmingham)

> Yes. Mainly by the establishment, so, I don't know, not so much employers. Mainly like police, courts and so on and so forth. (UK-born non-Muslim, British black Caribbean, male, 25–44, Newham)

This specific labelling of particularly young black Caribbeans by the police and the criminal justice system was stressed by all the UK-born black Caribbean interviewees in the sample who mentioned that they had experienced discrimination on racial grounds.

On the other hand, the white British interviewees talked about racist remarks by people from minority ethnic communities and positive discrimination practised towards people from minority ethnic communities by the authorities:

> Yes, a few times I've been racially abused because I'm white. (UK-born non-Muslim, white British, female, Bradford)

> More than coloured people. We get brushed under the carpet by government. (UK-born non-Muslim, white British, female, Newham)

This interviewee was not alone in reflecting perception of disadvantage relating to minority ethnic groups in these relatively disadvantaged localities with minority ethnic population concentrations, where there is competition for resources and employment, and implementation of government policies towards improving the position of minority ethnic groups and new migrants.

Several key points emerge from a consideration of the qualitative and quantitative evidence discussed earlier in the chapter.

Key points

- Recent migrants (Muslim and non-Muslim) reported higher levels and perceptions of material disadvantage compared to established residents (Muslim and non-Muslim) in all three sites.
- Muslim recent migrant women appeared more cushioned from adverse financial circumstances than non-Muslim recent migrant women, because of the former's greater access to family support as marriage or family union migrants.
- Significant proportions of Muslim and non-Muslim migrants as well as established Muslim residents with post-secondary educational levels were employed in elementary occupations.
- Interviewees across *all* categories and length of residence reported unfair treatment and discrimination on racial grounds.
- For Muslim interviewees (recent, established and UK-born), perceptions of unfair treatment on the grounds of religion have become as prominent as race discrimination and were experienced across wide spheres of activity, from employment to housing, and in accessing goods and services.

4 Neighbourhoods, localities and interactions

This chapter addresses questions about the interviewees' feelings about their neighbourhoods and localities,[1] and the extent and nature of their interaction with others in public and private spaces. One of the aims of the Government's community cohesion agenda is the promotion of 'strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods' (CIC, 2007, p. 10). Factors that have been identified as affecting the forging of such positive relationships between people in communities include individual, group and area characteristics – for instance, occupational and educational attributes of people, the broad ethnic mix of the area, level of deprivation in the area and the extent to which people feel safe in the locality (Laurence and Heath, cited in CIC, 2007, pp. 22–3). The government community cohesion agenda also emphasises 'the promotion of a common sense of belonging that combines local traditions with a strong sense of Britishness' (Blears, 2007). In successive Citizenship Surveys since 2001, around four-fifths of both minority ethnic groups and white people agreed that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (DCLG, 2007, p. 7). The more insight that can be gained from exploring people's experiences of and feelings about living in their neighbourhoods and localities, and their capacity for interacting with others of similar and different backgrounds in a diversity of spaces, the more it is possible to gain an understanding of the facilitators of and barriers to positive relationships and thereby community cohesion.

Varshney (2002) makes a useful distinction between 'everyday forms of civic engagement' and 'associational forms of civic engagement' in understanding 'networks of civic life, which bring different communities together':

> Business associations, professional organisations, reading clubs, film clubs, sports clubs, festival organisations, trade unions and … political parties are some of the examples of *[associational forms of engagement]*. Everyday forms of engagement consist of such simple, routine interactions of life as … families visiting each other, eating together often enough, jointly participating in festivals, and allowing their children to play together in the neighbourhood. (Varshney, 2002, p. 3)

In this report, we follow Varshney's definitions to include, in relation to *everyday* forms of interaction, the kinds of people the interviewees meet in the course of their

day-to-day lives in the locality, and the kinds of informal activities they engage in, in a variety of spaces and situations – in each other's homes, at work, in college, in shops and markets, on buses and in accessing public services such as health care. But we also make a distinction between informal, everyday interaction within associational activities – such as through attending a gathering or a class in a community organisation – which we include within 'everyday forms of civic engagement', and playing an active role in the community organisation as an office holder or the organiser of the class, which we include in 'associational forms of engagement'. In the next chapter, we focus on the latter – that is, the interviewees' more *formal participation* in associational forms of civic life – and consider the ways in which this relates to 'belonging' at local and national levels and community cohesion.

Both informal and formal forms of engagement could be viewed in relation also to Putnam's notions of 'bridging' and 'bonding' social capital (Putnam, 2000). Social capital 'refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' (Putnam, 2000, p. 19).

'[Bonding] may be more inward looking and have a tendency to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. [Bridging] may be more outward-looking and encompass people across different social divides' (Putnam 2000, p. 22). The extent to which people form 'bridging' civic ties with others in their neighbourhoods, localities and beyond who are from different social and cultural backgrounds from themselves has a positive impact on relations between different communities and thereby on community cohesion.

Evidence on the experiences and views of new migrants and receiving communities at neighbourhood and locality level in the UK is limited. The general picture that emerges of the already deprived areas where there is significant settlement of new migrants is one where the structural conditions (for example, housing) of and access to essential services for new migrants are poor, and choice and opportunities are constrained by racism and violence, and inadequate support by statutory and voluntary agencies (Robinson and Reeve, 2006). At the same time, some evidence is emerging from mainly small, locality-based studies about networks of mutual support, solidarity and co-operation, whether these are with other new migrants with common backgrounds and similar experiences or reaching out to other local communities with shared experiences:

> These close ties, social contacts and networks are reported to be commonplace in clusters of different minority ethnic groups in towns and cities across England … In addition, the mediating community organisations that emerge from these social ties and are used by

> excluded communities to provide alternative solutions can also provide a bridge into local participative and representative democratic networks and structures, challenging the assumption inherent within the community cohesion agenda that strong local communities promote isolation. (Robinson and Reeve, 2006, p. 34)

We begin by examining the interviewees' experiences of and feelings about their neighbourhood and locality, and then go on to look in detail at the kinds of people they meet and interact with informally in their daily lives and in a range of spaces and situations. We will consider the implications of the nature of informal social ties that the interviewees form with people of their own backgrounds and with people from other backgrounds for community cohesion.

Part one: neighbourhoods and localities

Length of residence and reasons for living in the locality

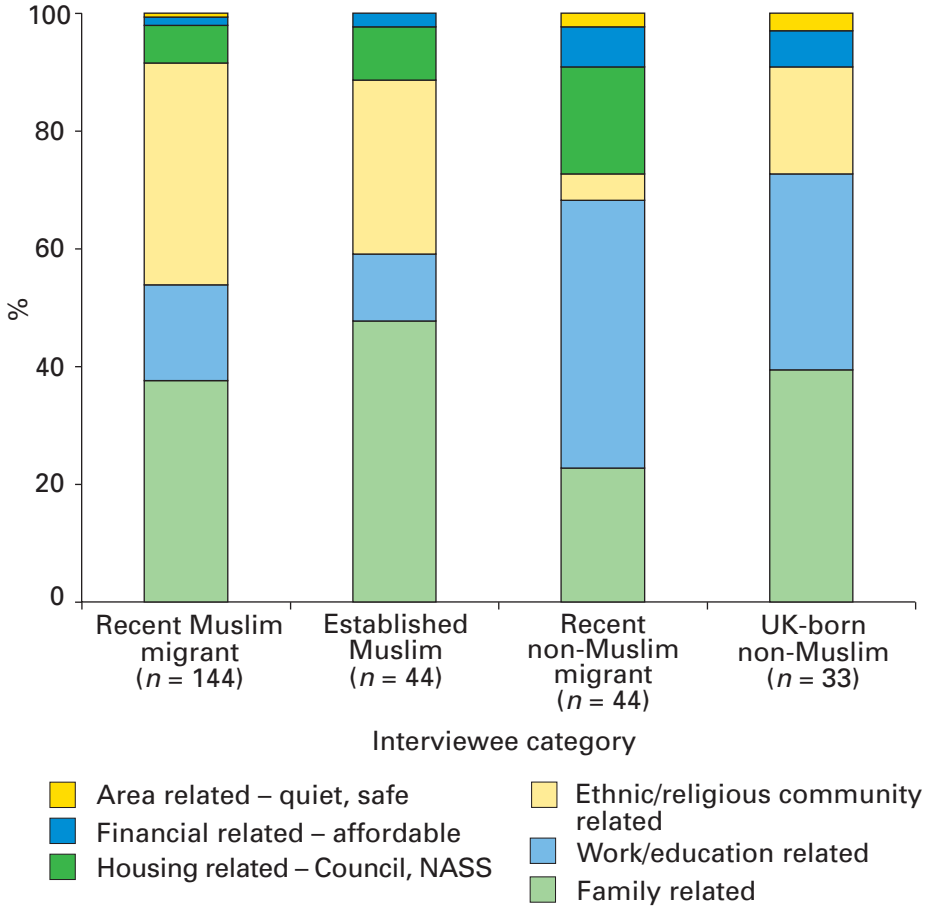
In line with our research design with its focus on recent migrants, a significant percentage of the entire sample, 40 per cent, had moved to the local area within the past two years. However, the majority had over two years' residence in the locality, and a substantial minority (18 per cent) within this said they had lived there all their lives or since coming to the UK. It would seem, then, that a large proportion of the interviewees were likely to have some sense of 'rootedness' in their locality.

This rootedness appears to be closely related to family, kin and ethnic and religious community networks in the locality. There were differences between the three areas in the relative importance given to family on the one hand and ethnic/religious community more generally on the other as the most common reasons for moving to the locality, with interviewees in Birmingham (40 per cent) and particularly Bradford (61 per cent) placing more stress on the former and those in Newham (46 per cent) on the latter. Employment featured as a reason for moving to the local area for proportionally slightly more interviewees in Bradford (27 per cent) than in Birmingham and Newham (20 per cent respectively).

There were some differences in motivations for moving according to category of interviewee, as Figure 8 shows. Nearly half of established Muslim residents and over a third of recent Muslim migrants and UK-born non-Muslims gave the existence of family as the reason for moving to the local area, although a similar proportion of recent Muslim migrants also stressed the presence of other members of their ethnic

or religious community. But employment was the reason for moving to the locality among recent non-Muslim migrants in over two-fifths of cases. Just under a third of

Figure 8 Reasons for moving to local area among those who have moved, according to interviewee category, all localities

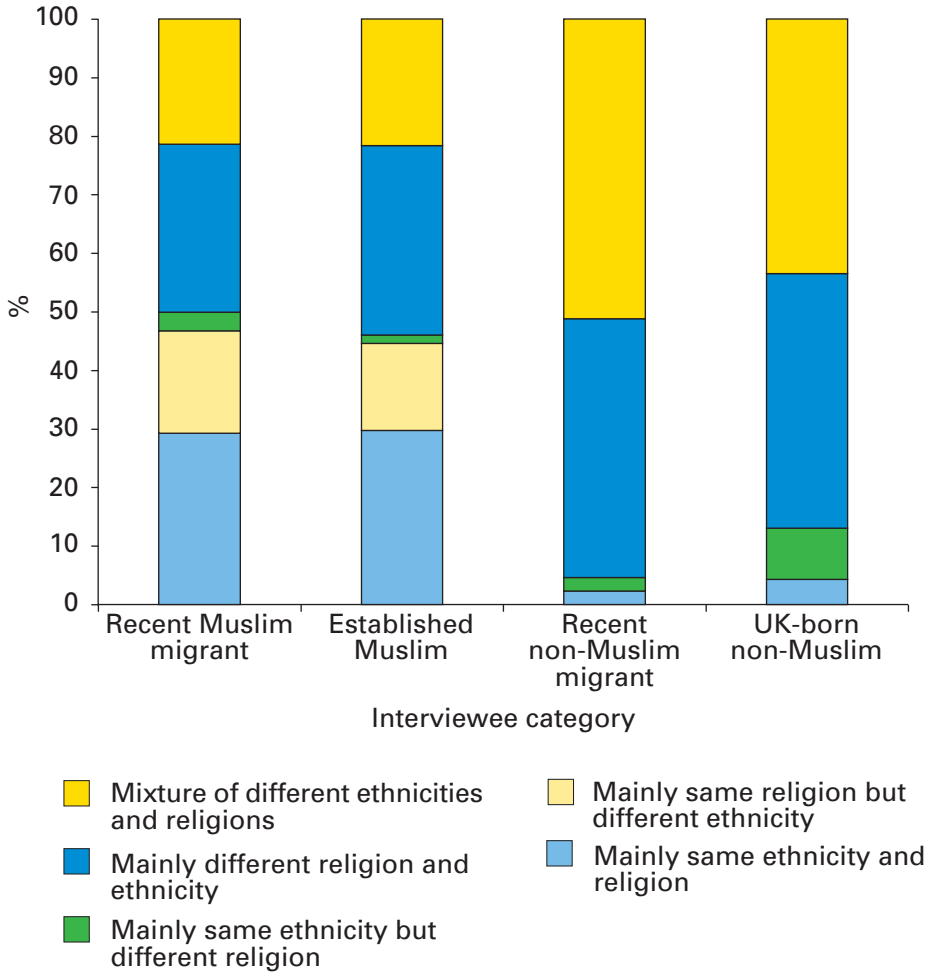


UK-born non-Muslims also gave work-related reasons for moving to the local area.

Characteristics of neighbourhoods

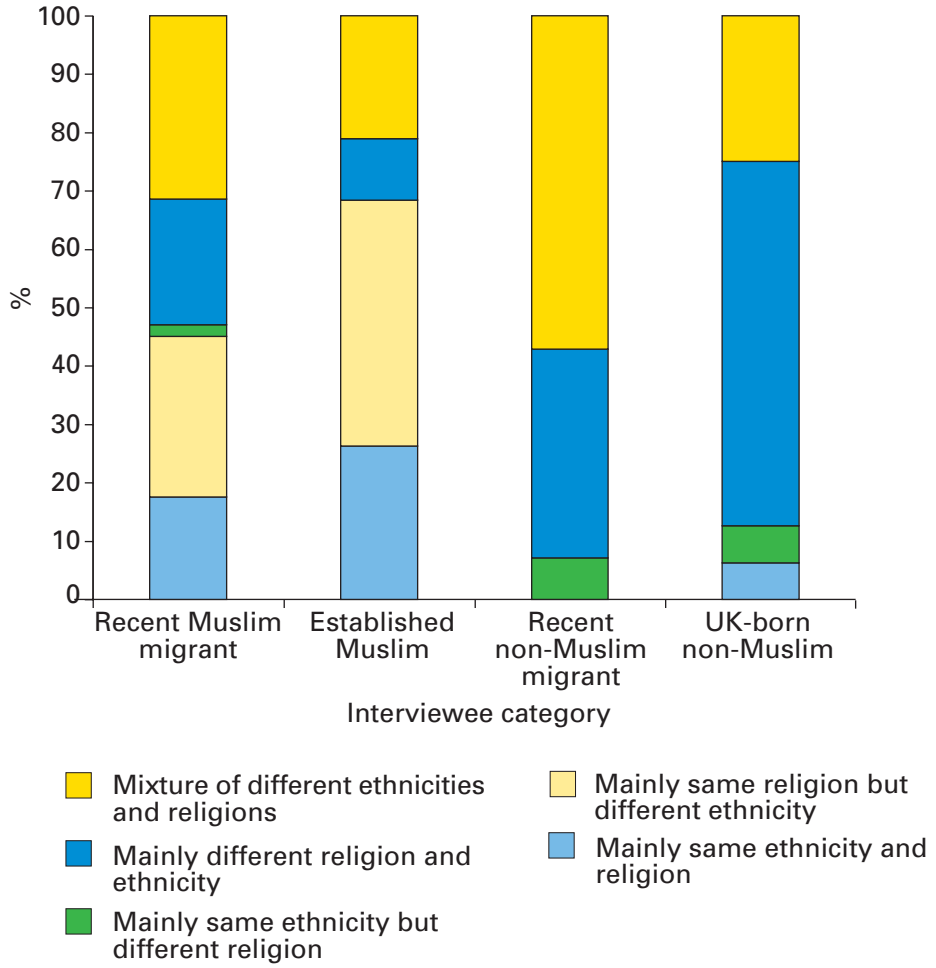
We asked the interviewees to describe the ethnic and religious backgrounds of the people living in their neighbourhood – that is, the street on which their home is located or the streets immediately surrounding it. It is important to note that, when the interviewees talked about neighbourhood, they were asked to consider a much narrower geographical area than when they talked about their locality.[2] Therefore, while in the three main areas of Newham, Birmingham and Bradford they all lived in the selected wards or those with similar characteristics (see Chapter 2), they may have been living in a variety of neighbourhoods within these localities, with varying ethnic and religious compositions. This is in fact illustrated in Figures 9–12 for the different categories of interviewees in the entire sample.

Figure 9 Ethnic and religious backgrounds of neighbours according to interviewee category: all localities



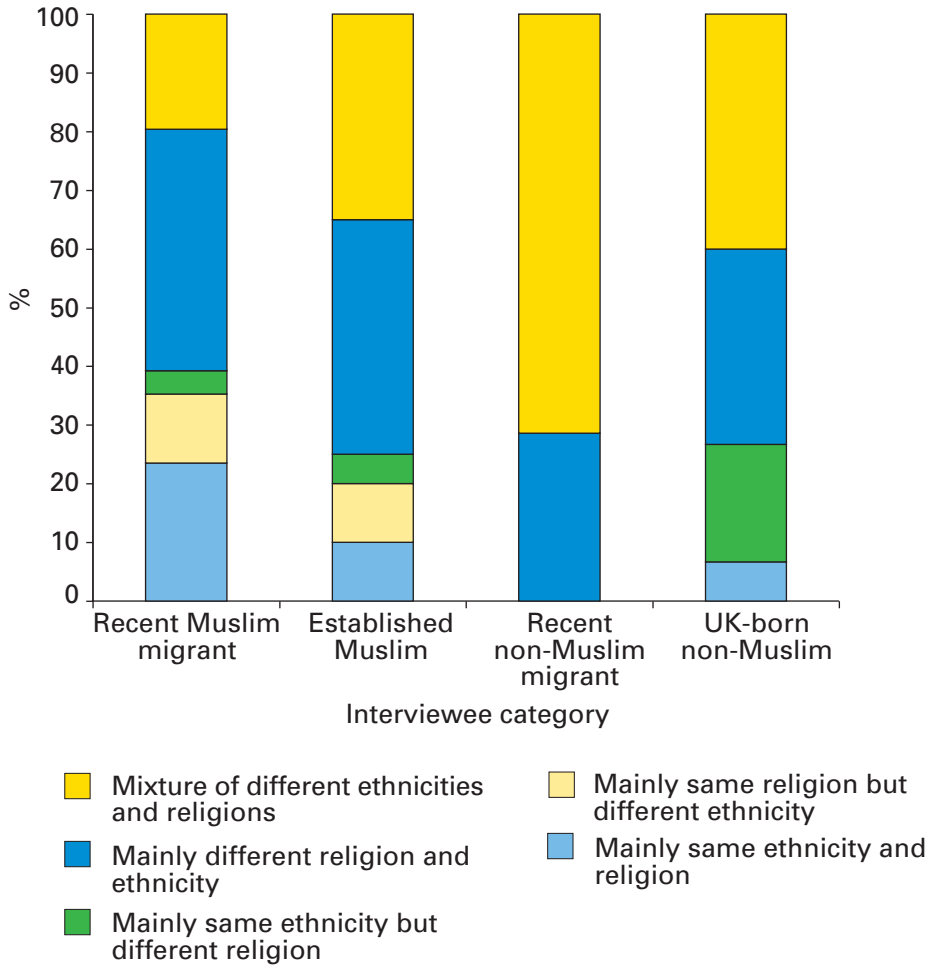
n = 319.

Figure 10 Ethnic and religious backgrounds of neighbours according to interviewee category: Birmingham



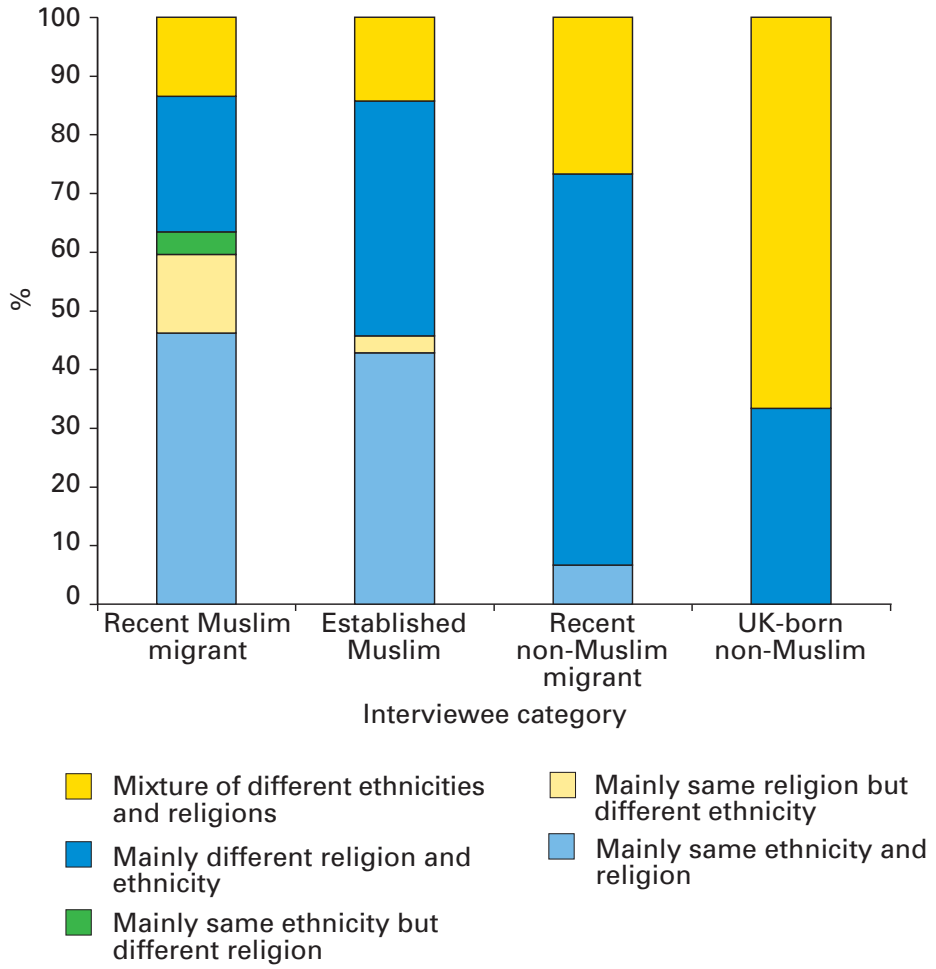
n = 102.

Figure 11 Ethnic and religious backgrounds of neighbours according to interviewee category: Newham



n = 100.

Figure 12 Ethnic and religious backgrounds of neighbours according to interviewee category: Bradford



n = 117.

The Muslim categories, both recently arrived and established, tended far more than the non-Muslim categories to live in neighbourhoods with people of similar ethnic and religious backgrounds (around 30 per cent). Analysis by locality (see Figures 10–12) showed that proportions were greatest – 46 per cent of recent Muslim migrants and 43 per cent of established Muslim residents – in Bradford. The Muslim groups across the three localities were also the least likely to live in mixed neighbourhoods. These findings are not surprising given that our selection of localities and wards (but not actual neighbourhoods within wards where the interviewees lived) was deliberately biased towards areas with relatively high proportions of Muslims (see Chapter 2). However, despite selection bias relating to areas, it is interesting that, in the sample, substantial proportions of both recently migrated and established Muslims tended to live in dissimilar neighbourhoods in terms of both ethnicity and religion. Again, analysis by locality showed that there was greater *ethnic* diversity among Muslims in the Birmingham sample at neighbourhood level. This is congruent with our attempt to capture such diversity at locality level (see Chapter 2) and with other evidence that shows that, in the Sparkbrook and Sparkhill areas where many interviewees lived, Muslims originating in Somalia and Middle Eastern countries as well as other South Asian countries coexist in neighbourhoods with Muslims of Pakistani origin (Goodson *et al*., 2005).

Figure 9 also shows that there was very little clustering at neighbourhood level according to ethnicity and/or religion among the recent non-Muslim migrants across the three localities, a finding that is replicated within each locality as well (Figures 10–12). All the non-Muslim migrants in Newham, and 93 per cent of those in Birmingham and Bradford respectively lived in neighbourhoods made up of ethnic/religious groups dissimilar to themselves or a mixture of ethnicities/religions. The UK-born non-Muslims in all three areas also lived in largely diverse neighbourhoods. These patterns are all in keeping with the research design relating to the selection of areas of Muslim concentration but suggest the relative dispersal of non-Muslims in these areas at *neighbourhood level* as well.

Perceptions of neighbourhoods

An analysis of the qualitative material on the interviewees' views of their neighbourhoods provides evidence that is congruent with the above patterns. Most interviewees had both positive and negative feelings about their neighbourhood and immediate locality. There were considerable common elements, but also some interesting differences between categories.

Positive feelings

Recent Muslim migrants and established residents

The positive effects of being close to people from similar ethnic and religious backgrounds, including families, were most commonly emphasised by recent Muslim migrants, but more so in Birmingham and Bradford than in Newham. This fits in with the greater extent of diversity in Newham, compared to the other areas, which was the basis of sample selection. Over half of recent Muslim migrants in Birmingham and in Bradford said that being close to other Muslims, mainly from their countries and sometimes localities of origin, was their principal reason for liking their neighbourhood, compared to around one-third in the same category in Newham. However, the strength of feeling among these interviewees was similarly strong in all three localities, as shown in the following responses:

> I actually … prefer it because … a lot of Muslims here. And we have a nearby mosque for praying Salaat and as well as a lot of halal supermarkets for food and meat and all this stuff. And a lot of shops as well, it's nearby so shopping is very easy. And it is very cheap and … quite a lot of varieties in food.
>
> *Q:* OK, why do you like these things, like you said about the Muslims, and the mosque?
>
> Because I feel home and it is my culture and I feel as if I haven't lost any of my culture, and my family, my friends, and the way I speak, the way I spend my time. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Birmingham)
>
> People – own people who speak the same language and culture, values, local shops and mosques nearby – as it is easy to pray and speak to shopkeepers in your own language. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 45+, Bradford)
>
> Yes here actually most shops are, you know, from our community, you know, like Green Street, it is almost from the Asian shops, we can get all the goods easily and all the, you know, things we need, we can access them easily. And also there are lots of facilities like library and transport is easy for us … Stratford Station and also, you know, mosques, community centres and lots of other facilities … so we don't feel lonely or, you know, stranger here, it's just like our country. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Newham)

The importance to recent migrants of living in neighbourhoods of ethnic and religious concentration that provide security in relatively new, unfamiliar situations, in the form both of people from similar backgrounds and of access to amenities such as shops selling familiar foods and places of worship, is strongly illustrated here.

In Birmingham and Bradford, the sense of attachment to locality associated with living in areas of ethnic and religious concentration is also apparent in the responses of around half the established Muslim residents:

> I know quite a few people around here and I get along with them. I think because most of the people who live around here are Muslim and the majority of them are Asian, there's like a community bond around here, so I think it's quite nice. There is spirit. I feel comfortable around here. You know the expectations of people here … I think if problems did arise here, they'll be brought from outside. (UK-born established Muslim resident, female, 18–24, Birmingham)

> I like the Muslim community. We've got a strong Muslim community. I like the fact that I can walk onto the main road, which is not far from my house and I can buy just about most things that we need, you know, for our lifestyle. For example, the clothes that we wear, the food that we use like all Halal meat, there's a lot of Islamic shops as well. Generally, overall, I'd say yes, I like living here very much. (UK-born established Muslim resident, female, 18–24, Birmingham)

Positive features of neighbourhoods for Muslim interviewees in Newham, both recent migrants and established residents, revolved to a greater extent around quietness, convenience and access to amenities, but were not particularly related to ways of living associated with their ethnicity and religion:

> Actually I like it because it's convenient and my university is nearby … about two minutes' walk … And everything, the tube station is very near, a couple of minutes' walk, and all the shops selling vegetables are there. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Newham)

In all three areas, a small number of Muslim interviewees also identified the benefits of living in mixed and diverse neighbourhoods as important positive aspects of the area:

> It's good actually, a lot of people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds are living here, peacefully. (Established Muslim resident, female, 25–44, Newham)

> I think I feel very comfortable living there … You can feel comfortable walking around. I've got my family … near me and I've made some really good friends, and we all understand each other … my next door neighbours they're non-Muslims so it's nice when it comes to Eid or parties and things, they really like our food and stuff, so I really enjoy living there because I've got some really nice people around me. (Established Muslim resident, female, age 18–24, Birmingham)

> *[You are accepted]* in your own local area, yes. Because we'll have that Little Horton mentality where … Because, you're known to one another … In some cases you may have gone to school with … a white British youth and grown up with him. (Established Muslim resident, male 25–44, Bradford)

Recent non-Muslim migrants and UK-born non-Muslims

There was less of a uniform response as to what the recently arrived non-Muslims in the sample liked about their neighbourhoods in all three areas. Several stressed the prevalence of friendly neighbours and access to amenities such as transport and shops, but very few seemed to interact within ethnic and/or religious neighbourhood networks. This is possibly because, as shown in Figures 9–12 above, most of the non-Muslim migrants interviewed lived in mixed neighbourhoods. On the other hand, the UK-born non-Muslim residents in all three areas, who also, as we have seen, tended to live in more mixed neighbourhoods, talked more explicitly and uniformly about how they liked the diversity of their neighbourhoods:

> People are very mixed, friendly and it's got a good feeling about people and people concerned about each other, not living each other's life but care about where they live and people they live amongst. (UK-born non-Muslim resident, white British ethnicity, male, 45+, Birmingham)

> It's mixed, it's a good vibe. Everybody gets on with everybody. Once you get to know somebody you're safe. I know a lot of people. (UK-born non-Muslim resident, black Caribbean ethnicity, male, 25–44, Bradford)

> I do like my area because it is multicultural area. A mixture of different people living together so that's the thing I like about my neighbours. (UK-born non-Muslim resident, British Indian ethnicity, female, 18–24, Newham)

Negative feelings

All categories of interviewees

In some contrast to the diversity of responses regarding positive feelings about neighbourhoods according to interviewee category and the emphasis among the Muslim categories, especially in Birmingham and Bradford, on ethnic and religious commonality, negative feelings relating to neighbourhood/local area among all categories of interviewees were far more to do with issues affecting everyone in the community, such as crime, vandalism, use of drugs and pollution. The largest number of responses among all interviewee categories in all three areas – around half the entire sample – brought out similar concerns. For example:

> I use the buses a lot, so I find bus shelters broken, all the time, telephone boxes are always vandalised by youth. Mainly it's vandalism – broken glass, graffiti over walls plus buildings. (Established Muslim, male, 45+, Birmingham)

> Rats. No parking. Loudness of living on a main street. The horrible infrastructure, not very well taken care of. Crime in the area, drugs, police chases down the road, drunk people outside. You can't leave your windows open at night-time. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Birmingham)

> Crime issues in the area and feeling unsafe, a lot of drug dealing and car speeding going on. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Bradford)

> Well, it's a lot better now, but it used to be bookies downstairs, which caused disturbance. Kids hang around on the streets and drugs among them is getting common here. (UK-born non-Muslim resident, white British ethnicity, female, 45+, Bradford)

> I think that I would say the criminal situation … is worse when compared with other parts of London. Sometimes you really can see some dodgy people on the streets … in this area maybe because East London has

> always been … less developed than the rest of London town and the city, maybe that's why criminality is like on a higher level. (Recent non-Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Newham)

As this last response indicates, it is important to set such responses in the context of the characteristics of the areas studied. All the selected localities, as shown in Chapter 2, have high levels of deprivation (see also Abbas, 2006; Harriss, 2006; Valentine, 2006). These findings are consistent with recent research on the reception of new migrants conducted by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) in a range of UK locations, including Birmingham and London, which showed that:

> Local issues such as transport and crime cropped up when focus group participants were asked what they thought were some of the negative aspects of their community or how they thought their community had changed for the worse. (IPPR, 2007, p. 15)

Some of the interviewees in our study, across categories and localities, suggested there was connection between deprivation, minority ethnic concentration in their locality, the poor infrastructure of housing and public spaces, and inadequate investment and action by local and national government:

> I think they're all deprived in them situations – crime rates, the police obviously do their best but their best is sometimes not good enough. So do the … councillors and councils. There's a lot of things, I mean, because it's majority Asian community they're deprived of many things and first can be education from a young age, you know, the education is of the lowest level whereas if you was moved into a more second-class area … like Bingley, Ilkley, you'd have a better education system within them communities than you would have within the community that I come from. But that would be a political issue then, wouldn't it. (Established Muslim resident, male, 25–44, Bradford)

> Areas like this do not necessarily always have the resources and the investment although there is a lot going on … and we're trying to do what we can through the church as well. Sometimes that can be a problem, the lack of investment and the sense of an area being run down … but equally that's become in a sense a challenge to help do something about it. (UK-born non-Muslim resident, white British ethnicity, male, 45+, Birmingham)

> The litter, poor housing, poor health, poor levels of literacy and numeracy. That it's considered a deprived area when really, on the ground, there's a lot of hidden wealth within Asian households. I don't like that all the white people have moved out of my road. It's 'white flight'. This stereotypes an area, whereas I think I live in a really nice house. (UK-born non-Muslim resident, British Indian ethnicity, female, 25–44, Birmingham)

Despite such concerns regarding migrants and people from minority ethnic communities in the localities, only a few interviewees – whether migrant or non-migrant, Muslim or non-Muslim – explicitly mentioned racism as a concern in their *neighbourhoods*, in some contrast to widespread perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination more generally that were highlighted in Chapter 3:

> The white working class. They just have racist undertones. (UK-born non-Muslim, Polish origin, male, 25–44, Newham)

> We're accepted fully by our own, yes *[other Muslims]* … But living in our area? Definitely, they still accept you *[people from other religions and ethnicities]* ... Only when it suits them *[pause, laughs]*. white British the same, only when it suits them … when you go to a different ethnic background, they have little understanding – no, that's wrong – they have little consideration for our differences. Like they'll hold meetings in pubs and clubs, which I'm not going to go to, and I won't attend because of that reason. (Established Muslim, female, 25–44, Bradford)

Summary

In this section, we have seen that most interviewees were relatively long-standing residents in their localities. Within the localities chosen for this research, there were differences in the religious/ethnic composition of the neighbourhoods in which the different categories of interviewees lived. The Muslim interviewees, whether recent migrants or established residents, showed more evidence than the other categories of living in neighbourhoods characterised by similarity in terms of religion and/or ethnicity/country of origin and deriving a sense of security from this, particularly in Birmingham and Bradford. In some contrast, both non-Muslim categories tended far more to live in neighbourhoods characterised by religious/ethnic diversity, which the UK-born interviewees, at least, regarded positively. This evidence of differences in local ethnic/religious characteristics and responses to these for different categories of interviewees at *neighbourhood* level reinforces the point made in the report by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC) that policy approaches to localities

should take into account mapping of characteristics and differences at ward and neighbourhood levels (Blears, 2007; CIC, 2007, pp. 57–9).

At the same time, our evidence showed that the majority of the sample, in all three areas and across categories, had similar concerns about the poor infrastructure and the high incidence of anti-social behaviour characteristic of their neighbourhoods and localities. As we shall bring out later in the report, such common concerns have potential to bring different groups in neighbourhoods and localities together as 'active communities'.

In the next section, we turn to look at the places in which and people with whom the interviewees engage in informal interaction in their neighbourhoods, localities and beyond.

Part two: spaces and interactions

The interviewees were asked about a wide range of spaces around their neighbourhood and local area (within a radius of a mile from where they live) where they met people from their own and other backgrounds, and had meaningful conversation and exchange of information, excluding any references to meeting people that just involved saying 'hello' and passing remarks. They were asked to exclude members of their own immediate families they live with and any other members of their households, but to include relatives, friends and acquaintances. The spaces include their own homes; work or educational arenas; shops and markets; eating places; transport; advice centres, welfare and health-care settings; parks and children's play areas; associations and social clubs; and religious places. Table 3 sets out the mean number of spaces where interviewees met different categories of people according to selected socio-demographic characteristics.

Table 3 Mean number of meeting spaces according to interviewee characteristics, all localities

Characteristics	Meet same ethnicity and/ or same religion*	Meet other ethnicity and other religion*	Meet no one
Gender			
Male	11.75	4.54	12.61
Female	11.05	6.06	12.83
Age group			
18–24	10.78	5.10	12.95
25–44	11.96	5.57	12.40
45+	10.69	4.71	13.39
Birthplace			
Born in the UK	13.13	7.28	11.61
Born outside the UK	10.91	4.71	13.04
Education			
Primary or below	7.40	4.63	13.27
Secondary	9.88	6.12	12.29
Post-secondary	12.92	4.94	12.88
English fluency+			
Speaks English well	11.97	5.92	12.25
Does not speak English well	9.38	3.00	14.43
Employment status			
Employee	11.86	5.50	12.42
Self-employed	10.16	5.08	14.24
Unemployed	7.97	3.59	13.74
Student	17.42	6.42	10.73
Looking after family	9.91	5.69	13.17
Religion			
Muslim	12.66	5.23	12.23
Non-Muslim	8.21	5.46	13.95
Category of interviewee			
Recent Muslim migrant	12.30	4.06	13.23
Established Muslim resident	13.43	7.66	10.11
Recent non-Muslim migrant	5.50	5.00	14.59
UK-born non-Muslim resident	10.80	5.89	13.41
Neighbourhood composition			
Mainly same ethnicity and/or religion	13.98	5.24	11.96
Mainly different ethnicity and religion	9.26	5.73	12.93
Mixture of ethnicities and religions	10.55	4.91	13.43
Overall mean	11.41	5.29	12.72

* These categories are not mutually exclusive.

\+ English fluency was self-defined.

Sample size = 319 before missing values for particular variables taken out.

Total number of spaces = 22.

Spaces asked about were: each other's homes, work or college, café/restaurant/cinema, supermarket or other food shop, street market, shopping centre, school gates, car boot sale, leisure/sports centre, religious centre, family/community centre, playgroup/nursery, GP surgery/child health clinic, regularly taken transport, community organisation, job centre/citizens' advice bureau, park or outdoor play area, parent–teacher association, neighbourhood watch/residents' association, youth group, evening class, social club, any other.

Caution is needed in interpreting the mean values in this table as the values for standard deviation and range in most cells are relatively high, suggesting a fairly considerable spread in the distribution around the mean.

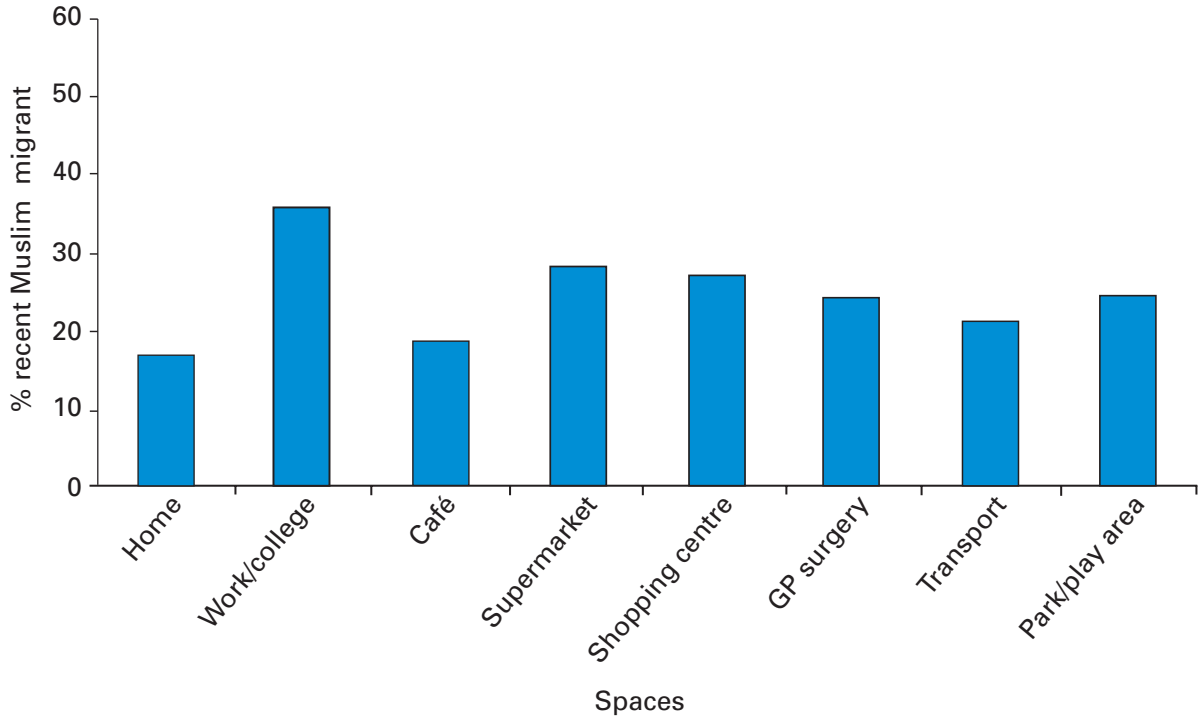
Overall, interviewees met people from their own ethnic/religious backgrounds in more spaces on average than they did people from other ethnic/religious backgrounds. There was also a considerable number of spaces where on average they did not meet anyone, either because they did not frequent these spaces or because they did not interact with others there. Over three-quarters of the sample said they met no one in spaces such as job centres/citizens' advice bureaux, car boot sales, evening classes and social clubs. Women, those in the middle age range, those born in the UK, those who were educated up to secondary level, those who were employed or students, or had family responsibilities and those who were fluent in English tended to have meaningful interactions with people from other backgrounds in more spaces on average than men, younger and older age groups, those who were migrants, those lower and higher educated, those less fluent in English and those who were unemployed. It is possible that interviewees with one or more of the former characteristics were likely to inhabit a larger number of spaces in the course of their daily lives and thereby met people from different backgrounds more often than did some interviewees with the latter characteristics.

Table 3 also shows that Muslims were considerably more likely than non-Muslims to meet people of similar religious and/or ethnic origins in more spaces. However, there was little difference between these two categories in the average number of spaces in which they met people of other ethnicities and religions. As expected, interviewees in homogeneous neighbourhoods tended to meet people from similar backgrounds in considerably more spaces on average than did those living in dissimilar neighbourhoods. However, it is interesting that those interviewees living in mixed neighbourhoods met people from other backgrounds in slightly *fewer* spaces on average than did those in homogeneous or dissimilar neighbourhoods. This could be because, in such diverse neighbourhoods, people are able to make choices about interactions. Overall, however, the chances of meeting people of other ethnic and religious backgrounds did not differ greatly by type of neighbourhood. At least in relation to our entire sample, it could be suggested that homogeneity of neighbourhood according to ethnic and/or religious characteristics was not necessarily associated with social segregation. While the separate results from the Birmingham and Newham samples fit in with this overall pattern, in Bradford it can be seen that those in more similar neighbourhoods met people of other ethnicities and religions in fewer spaces on average (5.64) than did those in either dissimilar (7.93) or mixed (6.73) neighbourhoods. However, the results from the different local areas need to be interpreted with caution because of relatively small numbers involved.

Figures 13, 14, 15 and 16 depict different types of spaces[3] in the localities (rather than just neighbourhoods) in relation to the extent to which the four categories of interviewees regularly met and had meaningful interactions with people from a

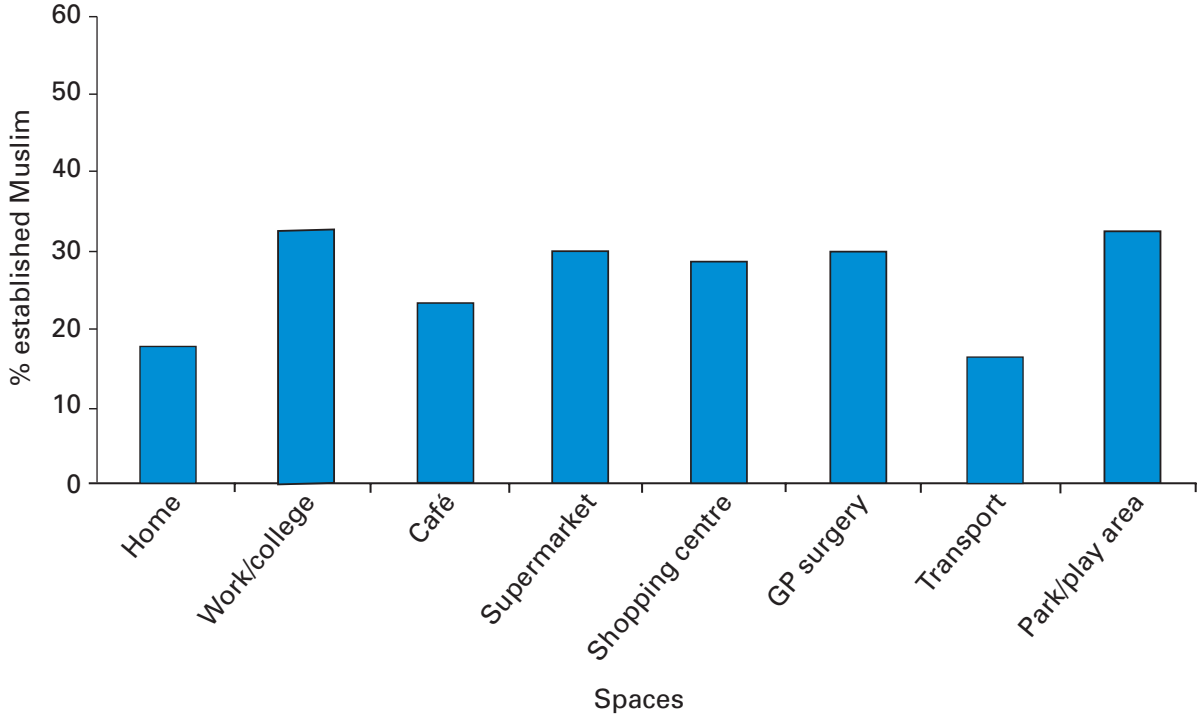
mixture of backgrounds. This included people who were from a different ethnic and religious background from themselves, as well as those who had similar origins. Given the ethnic and religious diversity of the three urban areas studied (see Chapter 2), it could be suggested that interaction with people of *diverse* backgrounds in a range of spaces in the localities, rather than just with people of dissimilar backgrounds, is likely to be a better measure of integration in the wider community for the interviewees.

Figure 13 Percentage of recent Muslim migrants in selected spaces where they met people from a mixture of backgrounds, all localities



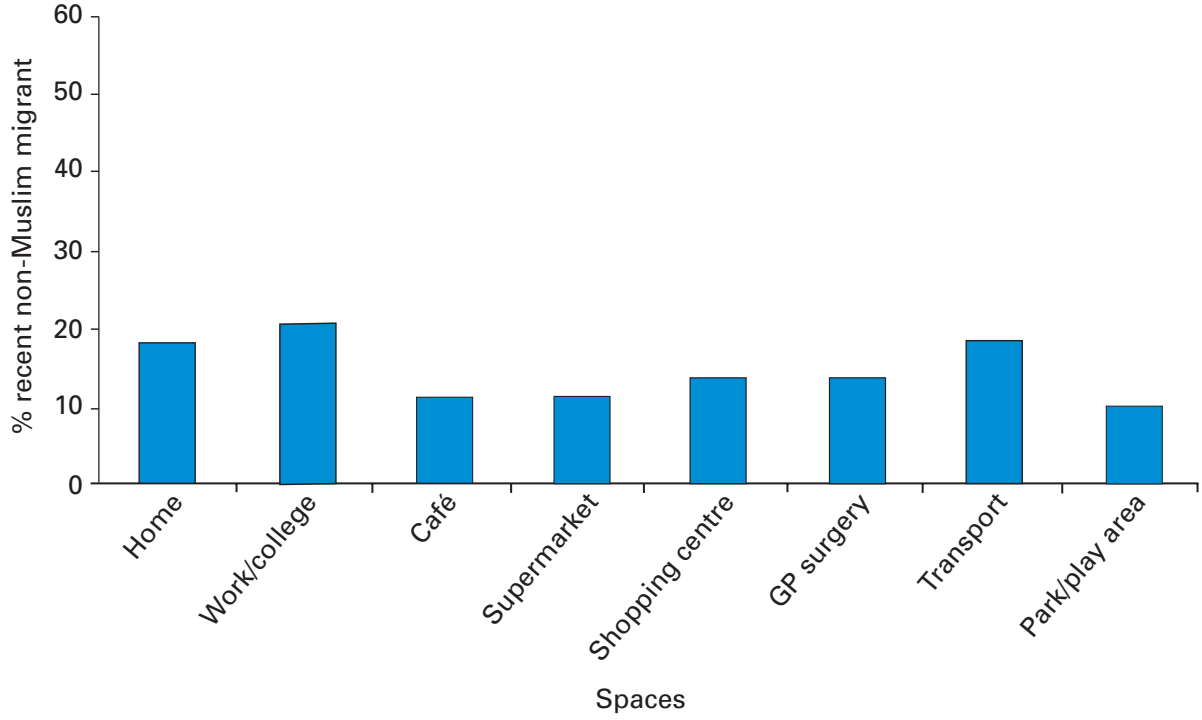
Base *n* = 155 for each column in graph. Meeting spaces not mutually exclusive.

Figure 14 Percentage of established Muslims in selected spaces where they met people from a mixture of backgrounds, all localities



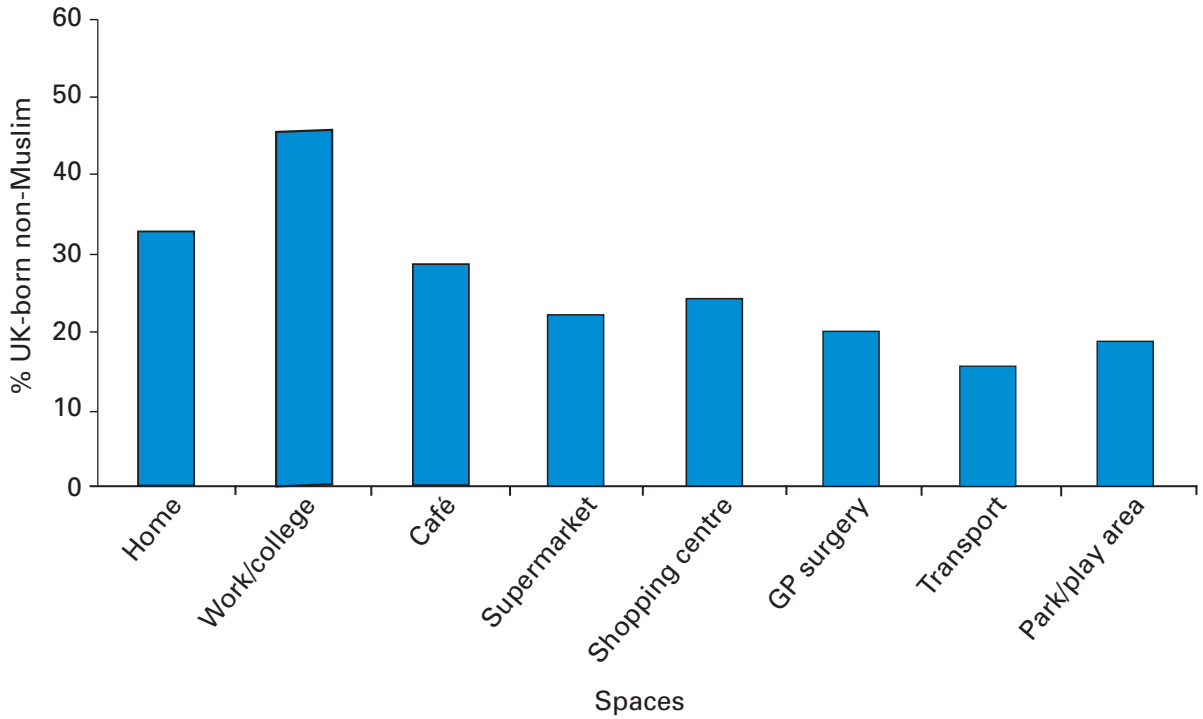
Base *n* = 74 for each column in graph. Meeting spaces not mutually exclusive.

Figure 15 Percentage of recent non-Muslim migrants in selected spaces where they met people from a mixture of backgrounds, all localities



Base *n* = 44 for each column in graph. Meeting spaces not mutually exclusive.

Figure 16 Percentage of UK-born non-Muslims in selected spaces where they met people from a mixture of backgrounds, all localities



Base *n* = 46 for each column in graph. Meeting spaces not mutually exclusive.

Across all categories, the workplace and/or educational site was an arena where there was considerable interaction with people of diverse backgrounds, as Figures 13–16 show. In addition to these, public areas where essential goods and services are accessed, such as supermarkets, shops, play areas and medical centres, provided the most frequent focal points in the immediate locality for interactions at a day-to-day level with diverse groups of people, for all categories of interviewees. In contrast, the home remained an intimate space where interaction was largely with relatives and friends from similar backgrounds, particularly for both Muslim categories. Around two-thirds in both these categories said they met only people of their own ethnic and/or religious backgrounds at home compared with around two-fifths of UK-born non-Muslims and a little less than two-fifths of recent non-Muslim migrants.

Recent non-Muslim migrants were the least likely to interact with people from diverse backgrounds in most spaces. They were also less likely than those in the other interviewee categories to say that they met people from their own background and more likely to be isolated, that is to say that they 'meet no one at all' in a variety of spaces asked about.

Evidence elsewhere in the study shows that the largest number of interviewees working at the time of interview (*n* = 116) were in workplaces where less than half the workforce belonged to their own ethnic and/or religious background, thus providing the potential for diversity in interaction for many interviewees. Given that workplaces and educational establishments provide an opportunity for longer, more sustained informal interaction compared to other public places such as supermarkets or transport, the evidence above on the extent of inter-ethnic and inter-religious interactions at work or college is possibly a promising indicator of integration and community cohesion where the interviewees are concerned. This confirms the focus in the recent CIC report on the importance of workplaces in building integration and cohesion (CIC, 2007, p. 117). Recent research on migrants to the UK from EU accession states showed that *not* having British-born colleagues had a negative impact on opportunities for meeting British people, with around one in four still not spending social time with British-born people after two years (Spencer *et al*., 2007).

An established Muslim interviewee in Sparkhill, Birmingham put clearly into words the way interaction took place with different groups in different kinds of spaces, and brought out the importance of taking into account the complex ethnic and religious mix of such multicultural areas:

> With homes, it's like restricted to like personal people that you really know well, like very close friends and mostly family … I don't often go to friends' house*[es]*, but most of the people's houses that I would go to or would come to our house are of same ethnic and religious background cos they're mostly my relatives … *[work is]* like completely different … Well at work it's mostly other religious and ethnic background but with uni it's like again it's other religious and ethnic background but the people that I like hang out with mostly … are ones that are not necessarily my religion but my ethnic background … it's just you know a cultural thing, we have a culture in common and we get along easily but I do speak to black and white people as well obviously.

Again, cafés and restaurants:

> These kinds of places you go mostly with your friends and my friends are not necessarily of my religion but of my ethnic background so, but sometimes, if I'm going to a restaurant, I might meet people and I'll talk to them but the restaurants and cafés round here are Asian-owned businesses cos, you know, the majority of people who live here … are predominately Asian.

While shops:

> I think a lot of people who go to the shops around here are the people who live here, but there are a lot of people from elsewhere that come here also cos Stratford Road and even Ladypool Road are quite popular for Asian clothes and stuff. So people come from all over the country sometimes to shop here cos there's a lot of variety here. So you do get a lot of people here, but again they're predominately Asian because it's mainly Asian goods.

Further cluster analysis to explore the characteristics of interviewees who met people of a mixture of backgrounds in the different types of spaces reveals that clustering exists and is significant according to two factors, employment status ($p<0.01$) and gender of interviewee ($p<0.05$). There is also a relationship with whether Muslim or not, country of birth and category of interviewee (but not significant at the 5 per cent level). The characteristics age and education did not appear to relate. The analysis identified one small cluster ($n = 42$) with a high proportion of women and/or those with family responsibilities who interacted with people of diverse backgrounds in public spaces such as supermarkets, shops, parks and play areas, but not so much in the more intimate spaces of home and eating places, or where there can be more sustained contact such as workplaces and colleges. This cluster was more likely to be made up of Muslim women, both migrant and established, originating in South Asian countries, and clearly relates to the high proportion of Muslim women in the sample whose economic status was looking after home and family (see Chapter 2). This cluster can be distinguished from another small cluster ($n = 23$) of, again, largely women – but including a larger proportion of UK-born non-Muslim women – and/or a relatively high proportion of employees who interacted with those of diverse backgrounds in both public and private spaces. Yet another small cluster ($n = 28$), with a majority of men and/or employees, could also be identified, originating in diverse countries, but largely Muslim, and more likely to interact with diverse groups of people socially at work, education, cafés and shops. However, in interpreting these findings, it is important to bear in mind that the largest cluster ($n = 196$) did not have significant defining characteristics and were only marginally more likely to meet people of diverse backgrounds in workplaces and/or educational establishments than elsewhere. All this supports the findings shown in Figures 13, 14, 15 and 16.

Summary

In this section, the evidence has shown that, in the areas we have focused on where Muslims form a large part of the population, the Muslim interviewees tended to meet

people of their own religion and/or ethnicity in more spaces, but this did not appear to preclude meaningful interactions with people of other religious and ethnic origins, depending on their characteristics such as gender and employment status and on the types of spaces visited in the course of daily life. In comparison, the recent non-Muslim migrants appeared relatively spatially isolated. These patterns have implications for policy and practice to take into consideration the kinds of people and the types of spaces in which meaningful interaction could be fostered in local areas. We will return to these patterns and implications at the end of this chapter and in the Conclusion to the report.

Part three: support and kinship/friendship networks

Moving from *spaces* of interaction *within* localities for the interviewees, this section considers the extent and nature of more intimate informal interaction, both locality based and beyond immediate localities. Evidence was gained through questions on present-day sources of help and support, and kinds of people the interviewees had sustained social contact with in their leisure time during the period of one month before the interview took place. We also asked the recent migrants about their sources of help and support when they first entered the UK. All this information is important in providing evidence about the existence of bonding and/or bridging networks with people at an informal level. The extent to which the interviewees have sustained friendships with people from other backgrounds or from a mixture of backgrounds is likely to be a good indicator of the existence of bridging networks bringing together diverse groups in localities and beyond.

Help and support[4]

Recent migrants

Among the recent migrants, proportionally more Muslims than non-Muslims said that they relied on people around them, mainly those who were relatives or friends from the same ethnic and religious background but also to some extent others of their religion who were not from their countries of origin, for support and advice. This was on a range of issues relating to settling in a new environment, such as accessing local services, finding information about English language classes, and seeking accommodation and employment. Muslim interviewees in Birmingham were more likely than those in the other two areas to rely on wider extended family and kinship networks:

> If I've needed any help or support … apart from my family there's friends like supporting me finding jobs, helping with, you know, my CVs … helping me with … if I wanted support financially … Most of them are *[Muslims but]* … not Arabs. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 18–24, Yemeni origin, Birmingham)

Around a fifth of the Muslim migrants in each of the three areas spoke about relying on organisational support in settling in the new localities. The kinds of organisations mentioned included citizens' advice bureaux (CAB), SureStart, the Refugee Council, local councillors about housing and advice centres in colleges. In most cases, such help coexisted with help gained from relatives and friends.

More of the recent non-Muslim migrants in all of the areas said they relied on organisational support and help to solve any problems they had experienced in the last six months, including their GP for health problems, job centre for getting advice on tax and the CAB about accommodation. Unlike the recent Muslim migrants, very few depended on individuals, either from similar or other ethnic and/or religious backgrounds. One asylum seeker said:

> I was depressed because I was moved to different places all the time, but the doctor, the GP helped me with advice, pills. So now I feel better. I don't have any relatives here so I really am on my own.

The differences in the sources of support used by the Muslims and non-Muslim interviewees clearly relate to differences in the reasons for migration of the two categories. As shown in Chapter 2, the majority of Muslim interviewees came to the UK to join established family and relatives. It follows that they were thus able to rely on them for help and support. On the other hand, most of the non-Muslim interviewees were labour migrants, students or asylum seekers and many did not have existing family networks in the local areas covered by the research. They were thus more dependent on organisational sources.

Established residents

Established Muslim residents, especially in Birmingham and Bradford, depended largely on a mixture of friends and neighbours from their own cultural backgrounds – including, in Birmingham, other Muslims not necessarily of the same ethnicity as themselves – and on organisations for advice, help and support. While the kinds of problems they were seeking help about may have been somewhat different given their longer established residence in the localities, the kinds of organisations they

approached were very similar to the ones approached by the recent Muslim arrivals, such as GPs, solicitors, councillors, job centres.

The UK-born non-Muslims followed a similar pattern, with those in Birmingham and Bradford asking their own relatives, friends and neighbours as well as organisations for help, and those in Newham depending mainly on organisations where they said they needed any help at all.

The greater extent of receiving organisational support among all categories of interviewees in Newham compared to those in Birmingham and Bradford may reflect the smaller proportions of interviewees in Newham who had family in the locality whom they could rely on, as suggested by the evidence on reasons for moving to the locality in part one of this chapter. It could also possibly indicate the greater availability and receptivity of organisations for providing support to recent arrivals as well as established residents in the community, particularly in areas such as Canning Town and Stratford where most of the interviewees lived. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution, given small numbers and non-random sampling in the study.

In all three localities, and across all categories of interviewees, there were no significant differences in response patterns by gender or age.

Kinship and friendship networks

Recent migrants

We asked the interviewees to describe up to three people closest to them with whom they had the most contact – including non face-to-face contact – during the month before they were interviewed. More than three-quarters of Muslim migrant interviewees in all three localities, both men and women, and in all age groups spent their leisure time in interaction with relatives or friends from co-ethnic and co-religious backgrounds, both recently arrived migrants and those who had been living in the UK for a long time or were born there. Significantly, this interaction was not always based in the locality, as might be expected from patterns discussed above relating to religious and ethnic clustering at neighbourhood level, but often involved phoning, texting or emailing friends and relatives who lived elsewhere in the UK as well as in their countries of origin and in other countries.

For example:

> I've got a friend. He's Muslim, Arab, Yemeni. He lives in Sparkbrook and *[we have]* everyday contact. I go to his house. I call him as well, phone. Email as well. He's a very good friend of mine. Text. *[Next]* my sister. Small Heath. See her nearly every two days ... Sometimes I phone her, call her. Mostly phone and text. I do see her, yeah … Third person outside my house – I do get in contact with my auntie. She doesn't live in this country … She lives in Czechoslovakia … Every week I call her … Email as well. Cost me a lot of money. (Recent Muslim migrant from Yemen, male, 18–24, Sparkbrook, Birmingham)

Similarly:

> [*The first person*] Is my best friend and she is same religion, Bengali as well. They live in Plaistow area. In a week we met about three to four times and it was face-to-face contact and by phone as well … My uncle. Same religion and ethnicity. They live nearby same area as mine. In a month about seven times contacting with me and it was by text message and face to face and sometimes I email him. (Recent Muslim migrant, female, 25–44, Stratford, Newham)

There was relatively little intimate social interaction with other Muslims who did not share their ethnicity, or with those of the same ethnicity but different religion. Around one-fifth of the recent Muslim migrant sample in each locality said they shared leisure activities with friends from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Most of these interviewees mixed with people of both similar and different origins in different contexts, as illustrated here:

> I mostly mix with my own friends or my husband's friends who are from the same ethnic and original background. We sometimes go to watch movies together, otherwise I pretty much caught up with my studies and I have some friend*[s]* from the university so sometimes I do spend time with them. I mostly mix my own ethnic and origin background people except in the university where I do spend some time with multicultural people. (Recent Muslim migrant, female, 25–44, Newham)

In contrast, recent non-Muslim migrants in the three localities were almost as likely to interact with friends from other ethnic and religious backgrounds as with those from similar backgrounds. This finding is in keeping with their patterns of living in mixed and dissimilar neighbourhoods, which were highlighted earlier in the chapter, but

also suggests that geographically wider interaction is more diverse than among their Muslim counterparts. Around half the sample of non-Muslim migrants in Newham and Birmingham, and slightly fewer in Bradford, had patterns of contact with people of a variety of backgrounds, as seen in the example below:

> *[Respondent talking about person 1]* My boyfriend *[from my]* country … He lives in Birmingham, Solihull. *[Contact]* every day.
>
> *[Respondent talking about person 2]* My best friend from youth club … She's from England. She's white British … She lives in B yeah … Three time a week, sometimes every day of the week … We meet sometimes, we phone and text each other.
>
> *[Respondent talking about person 3]* My friend also. He's from Senegal … He live in Birmingham. We meet two time a week, phone each other and text each other. (Recent non-Muslim migrant from the Congo, female, age 18–24, Sparkbrook, Birmingham)

A small minority of non-Muslim migrant interviewees simultaneously maintained frequent transnational contact with families in their countries of origin as well as other countries.

Established residents

Established Muslims in the three main localities had patterns of interaction similar to those of the recent Muslim migrants, with most contact being with those of their own ethnic and religious backgrounds, but some contact being maintained with other Muslims of different ethnic origins (particularly among the Birmingham sample) and some contact also with others with dissimilar backgrounds. It is clear that the close social networks of both established and recently migrated Muslims contained both recent migrants and established residents. As in the case of the recent migrants, this is congruent with the nature of migration and the transnational network set-up characteristic of the Muslim sample studied, as 50 per cent of Muslim migrants in the entire sample came to the UK to join family or as marriage migrants.

An established Muslim resident in Bradford summed up these patterns of interaction across migrant/non-migrant lines:

> There's *[X]*. He's British, country of origin is Uganda … Every week he come down … cos *[his family is]* in Pakistan.

> *[Y]* he's my best friend. He was born in Pakistan. See him once a week, or twice every two weeks. I'll ring up every day.
>
> *[Z]* he's a friend of the family. He's Pakistani. He was born in Pakistan as well. We play pool together. He lives opposite us … And we always see each other going to work … His *[child]* comes round, my *[child]* goes there. I see him very regular.

UK-born non-Muslims appeared to split their leisure time social contact between people from similar backgrounds and people from other backgrounds in all three areas. Given that a diversity of ethnicities and religions was represented among the UK-born non-Muslim sample, with nearly two-fifths defining themselves as belonging to an ethnic group other than white British, this meant that the kinds of people they interacted with were truly diverse, as the following examples demonstrate:

> Well the first one is someone that I used to work with … They live in Hackney … I speak to them on a regular basis, like every other day, white they are. And then there's another friend that lives in Walthamstow. I don't even know how long I've known him *[laughs]*. It's been so long, you know. But we get together mainly on weekends, he's black Jamaican. *[Pause]* … There's another friend just lives round the corner from me … we met in like uni, so I've known him for about 20 odd years now as well. He's also black. (UK-born black Caribbean, male, age 25–44, Newham)

[Respondent talking about person 1]	Workmate, white English. Work contact – sometimes meet in pub/social.
[Respondent talking about person 2]	Workmate, Pakistani – born in England. Mostly work – sometimes go to his house to pick him up for a ride to work and vice versa. See him four to five times a week.
[Respondent talking about person 3]	Neighbours, Pakistani, born in Pakistan (not all – some born in Britain: kids, wife). See each other a few times a week – mainly talk over the garden wall. (UK-born white British, female, age 25–44, Bradford)

Summary

In this section, the examination of patterns of interaction of the sample across localities and people shows that the Muslim migrants and established residents demonstrated a greater tendency than the non-Muslim groups to have intimate, sustained social interaction with kinship and friendship networks from similar ethnic and religious backgrounds. This is consistent with their greater likelihood of living in neighbourhoods where other Muslims, mainly but not exclusively from their own countries of origin, lived, but it is clear that interaction spread beyond immediate neighbourhoods into other localities within their cities, other cities in the UK, their countries of origin and other countries where relatives lived. However, given the ethnic and religious diversity of the areas chosen for study, we saw in the second section of this chapter that there was also evidence of meaningful (if not always intimate) interaction across religious and ethnic boundaries in a variety of spaces visited in the course of interviewees' daily life, particularly for those with certain characteristics – for example, for women with family responsibilities tending to meet a mix of people with diverse ethnic/religious origins in a variety of public spaces visited in the course of daily life, as well as for both men and women at work and in educational establishments. Such interactions may be creating opportunities for forming bridging as well as bonding capital and networks for Muslim and non-Muslim interviewees. In the next chapter, we will examine the capacity for such bridging opportunities at an informal level to translate to participation at a more formal level in local and national democratic networks and structures.

Key points

- All categories of interviewees had strongly articulated common concern about the negative aspects of their neighbourhoods and localities, such as poor infrastructure and crime.
- There may be potential for bringing together diverse groups of people in the community to organise around these features of the community affecting everyone.
- In the areas of significant Muslim residence we chose for this research, Muslim interviewees exhibited strong ties with people of similar origins and intimate networks of interaction went beyond immediate locality.
- There were spaces within localities, such as educational settings, workplaces and play areas, where there was evidence of and potential for meaningful interaction in daily life across ethnic and religious differences. The kinds of spaces, and extent and nature of interaction, appeared to vary according to interviewee characteristics *other* than religion, country of origin and ethnicity.

These findings have implications for community cohesion in areas characterised by ethnic/religious diversity and we will return to these points in Chapter 8.

5 Political and civic engagement

In Chapter 4, we examined patterns of informal social interaction among the interviewees in the three localities and considered some of the implications of these for bringing people of different backgrounds together in their localities and for community cohesion. In this chapter, we move on to consider patterns of more formal political and civic engagement,[1] that is, *associational* forms of engagement (see Varshney, 2002, cited in Chapter 4) among the interviewees, and the impact these patterns and interviewees' corresponding views may have on bridging and bonding capital (see Putnam, 2000, cited in Chapter 4) and community cohesion. Part of the emphasis here is on willingness to participate in civic life in communities in an organised way that is beneficial for the development of the communities. Bringing people together, particularly across ethnic, racial and faith divides, to organise and take action, broadly speaking, around a common concern – for example, crime in the community, as discussed in the previous chapter – is important for community cohesion. The significance of increasing opportunities for civic engagement is stressed in the Home Office strategy document published in 2005, *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society:*

> Community cohesion relies on all groups having a stake in society: being able to influence political decisions that affect their lives; being able to make a difference in their neighbourhood; helping to shape the delivery of local public services. (Home Office, 2005c, p. 47)

But another part of the emphasis on community cohesion is related to trust in institutions, as set out in the new definition of integration and cohesion from the Commission on Integration and Cohesion:

> There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny. (CIC, 2007, p. 10)

Political and civic engagement will be greater where there is a sense of trust in both local and national institutions to be inclusive, to act in the interests of all groups in the community.

As the government strategy document and its follow-up progress reports in 2006 and 2007 admit, evidence on formal political and civic participation and volunteering suggests that involvement for different groups is not straightforward:

> People living in inner city areas, with few qualifications and from particular minority ethnic communities, are still less likely to engage in some formal types of participation in particular. (Home Office, 2005c, p. 47)

Evidence from the 2005 Citizenship Survey and from the first quarter of the 2007 Citizenship Survey shows that some categories of people from minority ethnic communities, particularly some Asian categories, had lower levels of civic and political engagement compared to the white British category. There is no published evidence on recent migrants, but, in the 2005 survey, ethnic differences in levels of civic participation and participation in formal voluntary activities were smaller for people born in the UK. On the other hand, levels of trust in institutions such as the police, the criminal justice system and parliament were greater for those across all ethnic groups born outside the UK (Kitchen *et al*., 2006b; DCLG, 2007).

Turning to the evidence from our study, we begin by looking at patterns of voting in the general election and local elections among the interviewees, then go on to consider active participation in mixed and co-ethnic/co-religious civic organisations in their communities. More qualitatively, we then move on to look at the interviewees' views of organisations and factors affecting their organisational participation, including their perceptions of their influence on decision-making at local and national levels.

Political and organisational behaviour

We asked the interviewees if they had voted in the May 2005 general election and at the last held local council election before interview. Among the recent Muslim migrants, a little under a third (32 per cent) said that they were either not eligible or had not registered[2] to vote for either election; among the recent non-Muslim migrants, 36 per cent and 38 per cent respectively similarly said they were not eligible/registered to vote.[3] Table 4 looks at interviewees who said they voted in the general and local elections among those eligible/registered to vote, and those who said they took an active role in at least one organisation[4] involving people from a mixture of ethnic/religious backgrounds or in both co-ethnic/co-religious and mixed organisations, with reference to a range of demographic and socio-economic circumstances.

Table 4 Self-reported voting in elections and active organisational participation by sample characteristics, all localities

	% vote in general election	Total (*n*)*	% vote in local election	Total (*n*)*	% active role in mixed or mixed and co-ethnic/ co-religious organisation+	Total (*n*)
Gender						
Male	57.7	*123*	53.7	*121*	14.2	*162*
Female	57.7	*130*	55.7	*131*	21.7	*157*
Age group						
18–24	41.6	*77*	43.2	*74*	16.0	*94*
25–44	61.2	*129*	53.8	*130*	19.0	*174*
45+	74.5	*47*	75.0	*48*	17.6	*51*
Location						
Newham	57.1	*63*	60.3	*63*	19.0	*100*
Birmingham	59.2	*76*	53.8	*78*	21.6	*102*
Bradford	57.0	*114*	52.3	*111*	13.7	*117*
Category of interviewee						
Recent Muslim migrant	41.0	*105*	45.3	*106*	12.3	*155*
Established Muslim	87.8	*74*	77.0	*74*	20.3	*74*
Recent non-Muslim migrant	14.3	*28*	11.1	*27*	11.4	*44*
UK-born non-Muslim	73.9	*46*	65.7	*45*	39.1	*46*
Religion						
Muslim	60.3	*179*	58.7	*180*	14.8	*229*
Non-Muslim	51.4	*74*	45.8	*72*	25.6	*90*
Level of education						
Primary or below	71.4	*28*	73.1	*26*	3.3	*30*
Secondary	61.8	*89*	49.5	*91*	18.3	*104*
Post-secondary	52.2	*136*	54.8	*135*	20.0	*185*
English fluency#						
Fluent	60.7	*201*	56.9	*202*	20.4	*250*
Not fluent	46.2	*52*	46.0	*50*	8.7	*69*
Economic status						
Employee	57.4	*122*	53.2	*124*	20.5	*151*
Self-employed	76.5	*17*	64.7	*17*	16.0	*25*
Unemployed	32.1	*28*	37.0	*27*	15.4	*39*
Student	61.5	*26*	55.6	*27*	21.2	*33*
Looking after family	54.3	*46*	55.8	*43*	11.1	*54*
Neighbourhood composition						
Mainly same ethnicity and/or religion	62.5	*96*	59.6	*94*	18.5	*119*
Mainly different ethnicity and religion	54.7	*86*	48.3	*87*	17.8	*107*
Mixture of ethnicities and religions	55.7	*70*	57.1	*70*	17.6	*91*

* *n* = total number of respondents with particular characteristics responding to the question. Excludes those not registered/eligible to vote.

\+ The organisations asked about were those to do with: schools and children's education; youth activities; adult education; religion; politics; social welfare; community; criminal justice; human rights; trades union; housing/neighbourhood.

\# English fluency was self-defined.

Voting patterns

Looking first at patterns of political behaviour, we can see that higher proportions of established Muslims than UK-born non-Muslims voted and that, overall, Muslims were more likely to vote than non-Muslims. There were no differences by gender, but older age groups were more likely to vote in both general and local elections. Recent migrants were far less likely to vote than long-term residents and those born in the UK, with very low proportions of non-Muslim migrants voting in either type of election – 14 per cent and 11 per cent. The sharp distinction between the high extent of voting among non-Muslims born in the UK and very low extent of voting among non-Muslims who have recently arrived in the UK and are eligible to vote has to be noted.

It is interesting that there were differences in voting patterns according to the types of neighbourhood people lived in. Interviewees living in neighbourhoods with people of similar cultural backgrounds were the most likely to vote in elections, followed by those living in mixed neighbourhoods. Interviewees who were living in culturally dissimilar neighbourhoods, and were therefore possibly locally more isolated in terms of ethnic/religious background, were the least likely to take part in mainstream political processes, particularly at local level. These findings are congruent with results of research on British South Asian electoral participation in the 2001 election, which showed that turnout for Muslims was higher in areas of Muslim concentration, suggesting the importance of the mobilising rather than segregating effects of community networks (Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2007). In our sample, if we look more specifically at the voting patterns of the different interviewee categories by type of neighbourhood, the main difference for the Muslim interviewees was that recent migrants living in mixed neighbourhoods were more likely to vote in local elections (60 per cent compared to 43 per cent in culturally similar neighbourhoods and 36 per cent in culturally dissimilar neighbourhoods). The numbers in the two non-Muslim categories were too small to discern any definitive patterns of voting according to neighbourhood type.

Interviewees with lower levels of education had a greater tendency to participate in both national and local elections, but those who were less fluent in English were less likely to vote. Interviewees who were unemployed voted less than those who were employed or economically inactive, with the self-employed containing the highest proportions of those who voted in both types of elections. There were relatively few differences in voting patterns across the three main localities, especially in relation to the general election, but interviewees in Newham showed the most likelihood of voting in local elections. We can set our findings on voting by locality (57–59 per cent) alongside general levels of electoral turnout in the areas we studied. For the 2005 general election, the turnout in Birmingham Sparkbrook and Small Heath

was 51 per cent, Poplar and Canning Town 45 per cent, East Ham 50 per cent and Bradford 54 per cent.[5]

The striking overall finding in relation to voting patterns was that, generally, there was a relatively high involvement of the interviewees in mainstream electoral processes – over 50 per cent in most categories. However, there was evidence of some distancing from political processes among the unemployed, and particularly recent migrants even when eligible/registered to vote. Marked levels of mainstream electoral non-involvement were apparent among recent non-Muslim migrants.

Organisational participation

Although participating in elections could be considered an indication of integration and belonging in the wider community at local and national levels, it is also important to consider the extent to which the interviewees took an active role in organisations made up of people with a mixture of cultural backgrounds rather than only a specific ethnic/religious category. The fifth column of data in Table 4 sets out percentages of interviewees actively involved in such organisations according to sample characteristics. First, it can be seen that overall levels of active organisational involvement were far lower than those of electoral participation, and there are wider differences according to characteristics. Women were more likely to be involved in mixed organisations than men, but differences between age groups were small. In relation to our sample, locality was important. Interviewees in Bradford were less likely to be actively involved in such organisations than those in Birmingham and Newham. Recent migrants were far less likely to be actively involved in mixed organisations, but in organisational participation, unlike voting, activity was limited among *both* recent migrant categories, Muslim and non-Muslim. However it is also significant that double the proportion of UK-born non-Muslims compared to established Muslims were actively involved in such organisations. This departs from patterns of voting, where we saw that more established Muslims than non-Muslims were likely to vote. In keeping with these different patterns of organisational involvement, it can be seen that, overall, non-Muslims were more likely to be actively involved than Muslims.

Surprisingly, unlike in the case of voting behaviour, there were few differences in organisational involvement according to ethnic/religious mix of neighbourhoods. Less than 20 per cent of interviewees living in all types of neighbourhoods were active in organisations for the benefit of the wider community. As far as socio-economic characteristics are concerned, those who had higher levels of education, those more fluent in English, and those who were employed, as well as those who were

students were more likely to actively participate in mixed organisations. Interviewees who were economically inactive and had family responsibilities were less likely to be involved in organisations, possibly for practical reasons.

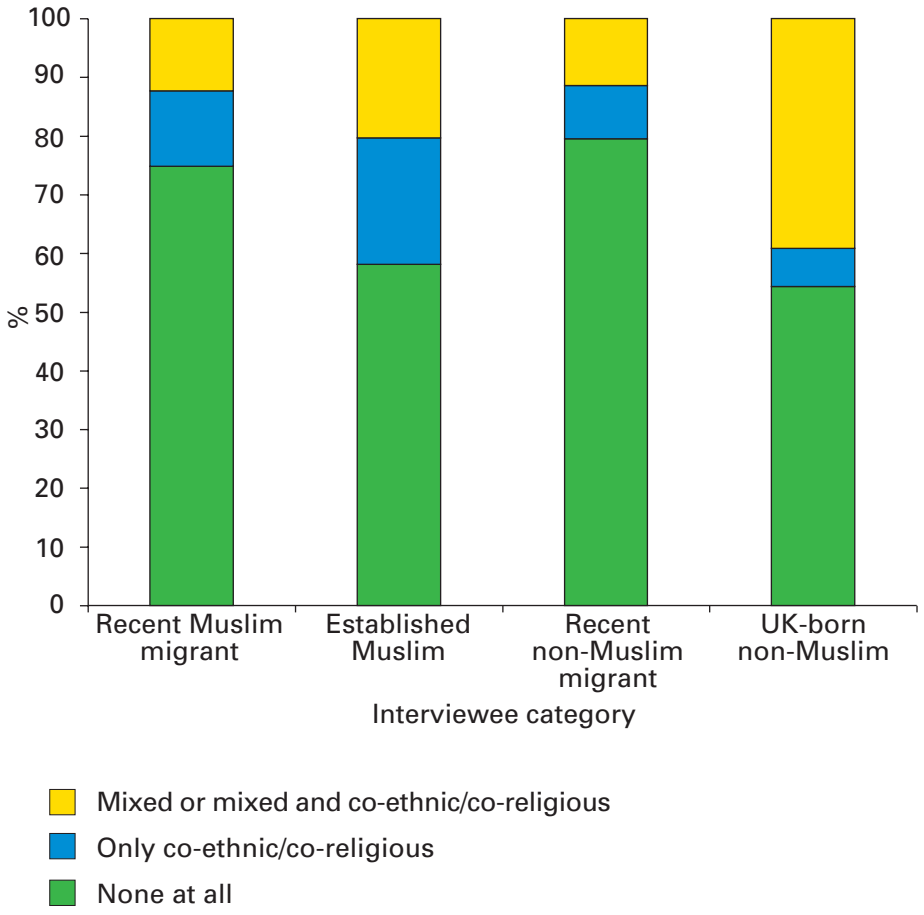
When considering the characteristics of the interviewees who took an active role in mixed organisations, it is important to bear in mind that the number of such interviewees was relatively small ($n = 57$, 18 per cent of the sample). The majority of interviewees in the entire sample (69 per cent) said that they were not actively involved in any kind of organisation. A small minority (13 per cent) were involved only in organisations relating solely to people of their own ethnic and/or religious background.

Participants and non-participants

It appears that, in relation to most sample characteristics, such as gender, age, religion, educational level and English fluency, over two-thirds of the sample reported not being actively involved in any kind of organisation, whether co-ethnic/co-religious or mixed. Non-participation was very high among those with the lowest educational levels and those not fluent in English, over 80 per cent in each case. At the same time, those with the highest educational levels, those fluent in English, men and the youngest interviewees (aged 18–24) were slightly more likely than, respectively, those with lower educational levels, those not fluent in English, women and the older interviewees to be involved *only* in organisations mainly promoting the specific interests of people of their own ethnic/religious backgrounds.

As Figure 17 shows, in the two recent migrant categories, three-quarters or more of Muslim migrants and of non-Muslim migrants were not actively involved in any organisations, whether co-ethnic/co-religious or mixed, although it is interesting that over half of both established groups also reported organisational non-involvement. But, in the entire sample, Muslims reported higher levels of active involvement than non-Muslims in co-ethnic/co-religious organisations only and established Muslims had greater levels of involvement in such organisations than the recent migrants – 22 compared to 13 per cent.

Figure 17 Active involvement in organisations according to interviewee category, all localities



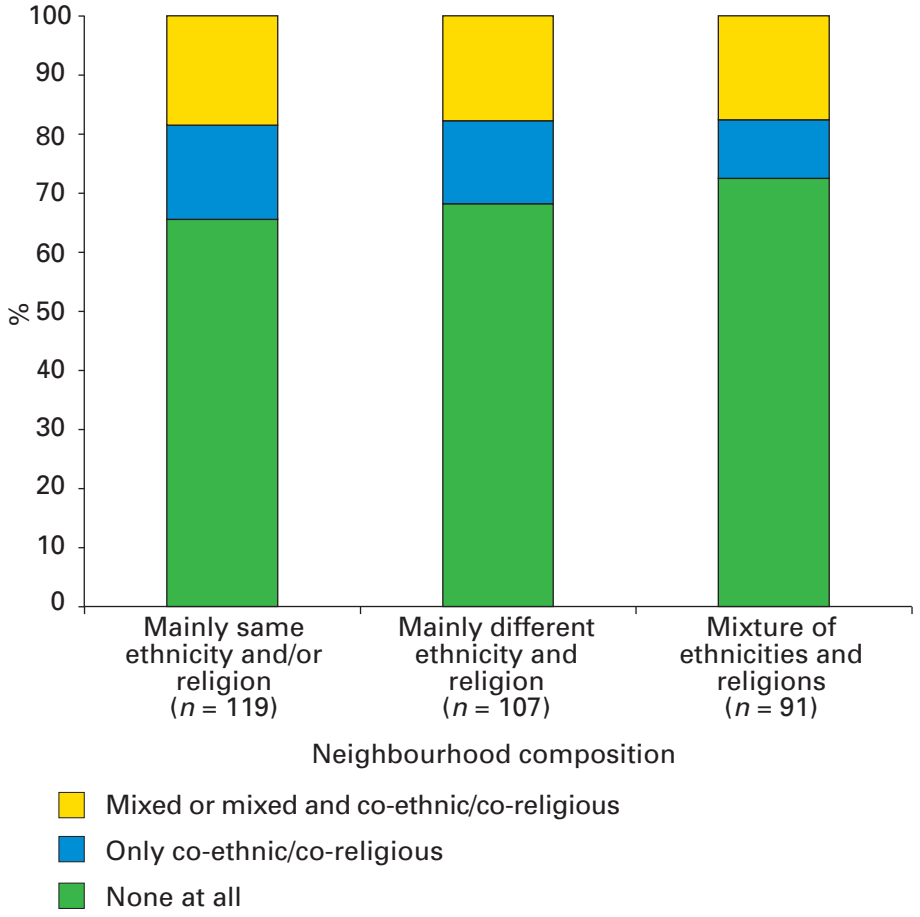
n = 319.

With respect to economic status, the self-employed among the interviewees, while overall numbers were small (*n* = 25), showed the lowest levels of non-participation in any kind of organisation, although this was still over 50 per cent, and highest levels of participation in organisations relating to their own ethnic/religious backgrounds – 28 per cent compared to 11 per cent of employees and 18 per cent of students. This may well relate to a propensity among self-employed interviewees to work within ethnic enclaves that also provide the basis for their social and political participation.

As in the case of involvement in mixed organisations, there was no strongly discernible pattern of non-involvement or of involvement only in co-ethnic/co-religious organisations among the interviewees according to type of neighbourhood, as we can see in Figure 18. Those living in more mixed neighbourhoods were slightly more likely than those living either in similar or dissimilar neighbourhoods to demonstrate non-involvement in any kind of organisation. However, interviewees living in either similar or dissimilar neighbourhoods (16 and 14 per cent respectively) were more

likely than those living in mixed neighbourhoods (10 per cent) to take an active part in organisations relating to people of their own cultural backgrounds. This suggests that the ethnic/religious composition of the immediate neighbourhood may have little to do with the extent of organisational participation and the nature of the organisations participated in, and that involvement in organisations is at a wider locality level.

Figure 18 Active involvement in organisations according to neighbourhood composition, all localities



The findings on organisational participation according to locality appeared important. While, as we saw above, Bradford contained the smallest proportion of interviewees participating in mixed organisations, it also contained the smallest proportion of interviewees participating only in co-ethnic/co-religious organisations. Overall, interviewees in Birmingham demonstrated the highest levels of participation, in both organisations relating to their own ethnic/religious background and mixed organisations. These locality differences in participation may reflect differences in sampling between the localities, but may have implications for perceptions about impact on decision-making, which we will explore below.

Views on organisational participation

Organisations that bring people from different backgrounds together

Muslim interviewees

We asked the interviewees what kinds of organisations they thought did the most in bringing people from different backgrounds together in the local area. The recent Muslim migrants in all three areas mentioned a diversity of 'organisations' such as charities like Islamic Relief, community organisations supported by the local council (particularly those organising special events bringing people together), sports centres, and supermarkets and street markets. The last brings out the significance attributed by the interviewees to public spaces for mixing with people with a wide range of backgrounds, which was highlighted in Chapter 4. However, educational establishments like schools and colleges, and associated organisations such as parent–teacher associations (PTAs) were mentioned prominently across the three areas by 1 in 5 among recent Muslim migrants. Both men and women, of all ages, in their roles as parents of school-age children, or as participants in educational processes themselves, stressed the importance of educational spaces for integration, particularly for new arrivals in the country:

> … because they provide their stuff for all the people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds here, and for that part of bring*[ing]* people together. For instance, education authority is bringing all children, of all different sorts of people, together in the same classroom, I think it is them who does the most to bring people together. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Birmingham)

> I think ESOL *[English for speakers of other languages]* classes are one platform where people from different backgrounds and different religions come together. Asians are there and women from other religions are also there. There one can meet them or at least one learns how people are like, how is the environment like. (Recent Muslim migrant, female, 18–24, Bradford)

Again, these findings are congruent with the finding in Chapter 4 about the importance that Muslim migrant interviewees attributed to educational establishments for informal interaction with people of a mixture of backgrounds.

The established Muslims, particularly in Birmingham and Newham, also placed emphasis on educational spaces and organisations as being ideally placed to bring people of different backgrounds together:

> Schools probably. Schools have like cultural celebrations like, if it's Diwali, they'll have a Diwali party, if it's Eid, they'll have an Eid party, if it's Christmas, they'll have a Christmas party. And parents get invited and what have you. (Established Muslim, female, 18–24, Birmingham)

However, in all three locations, the established Muslim interviewees attributed the greatest importance to Muslim organisations – for instance, mosques and community organisations. This emphasis, given by 21 out of the 74 interviewees, appeared to reflect their feeling that, in the localities they lived in, where there is a high concentration of Muslims, Muslim organisations were well placed to bring together Muslims of different origins, as well as non-Muslims and Muslims.

> Central mosque … had an exhibition, Islam exhibition with loads of people came there, from different cultures and stuff. (Established Muslim, female, 18–24, Birmingham)

We have also seen in Figure 17 that, overall, the established Muslims in the sample had the greatest tendency to be actively involved in co-ethnic/co-religious organisations. The above quotation also brings out the importance that established Muslims, like the recent migrants, attributed to events and campaigns, which bring together the whole community around a common cause.

> Well any time there's a local fair kind of thing in, there's quite a few like Sparkhill fair or the carnival we have in Balsall Heath that brings a lot of different communities together. (Established Muslim, female, 18–24, Birmingham)

In addition, the established Muslims in Bradford placed some emphasis on organisations set up in the aftermath of the 2001 riots in northern cities to promote community cohesion.

Non-Muslim interviewees

Interviewees in both non-Muslim categories, as in the Muslim categories, spoke strongly of the role played by educational establishments in promoting community cohesion. For example:

> From different backgrounds – the schools do in our area, and you could say the tenants do, but then again only certain people get involved in a tenants' thing. You notice with the friends who have got children, they're much more involved, much more likely to get to meet and spend time with

> other families from other areas and other backgrounds, other religious backgrounds, so I'd say the schools are the biggest things. (UK-born non-Muslim, female, 25–44, Newham)

> Universities … all bring people together. Afro-Caribbean, Asians, Pakistani and so on. (Recent non-Muslim migrant, male, 18–24, Bradford)

In addition, the UK-born non-Muslims in all three local areas mentioned a variety of organisations that, in their localities, bring together people of different cultural backgrounds, such as sports and leisure centres, residents' associations, organisations set up to support specific groups, like SureStart in relation to families with young children, and community organisations and centres supported by the local council and including multicultural events. The recent non-Muslim migrants were less likely to talk about such a diversity of organisations and events, but, in addition to schools and colleges, mentioned events organised by charities and, in Birmingham, the role of the church. The last possibly reflects the fact that some of the recent non-Muslim migrants were recruited through a local church.

Reasons for not participating more in local organisations

Recent migrants

We also asked the interviewees – both those who were involved in any kind of organisation and those who were not – if there were any reasons that people like themselves may not participate more in local organisations. Most of the recent migrants, both Muslim and non-Muslim, cited time factors – too busy with work/education/family – preventing or reducing organisational participation. This included 57 out of 155 Muslim interviewees across the three localities. The following from a Newham interviewee is a typical response:

> … from me, my particular reasons I have come here with purpose to study and build my career, and I was more concentrating in doing that, so I haven't gone through local organisations or anything. If I would join anything that would be my work related. (Recent Muslim migrant, female, 25–44)

At the same time, several recent migrants spoke about being relatively new arrivals and factors associated with this such as lack of English fluency, inadequate information and insecure immigration status affecting their willingness and ability to take part in organisational life. As an interviewee from Birmingham said:

> I think if a person who has not any kind of status, like indefinite leave to remain in this country, does not try to get involved with this kind of activity. He thinks that they are like a traveller in this country. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44)

Similarly:

> Because I'm new in this country, I'm finding it hard to settle myself, yeah. Once I'm settled properly and know what to do and where to go and stuff, then I can do it, I can achieve what I want to. At the moment I'm just struggling to make my language better and get … English education to improve my language skills. (Recent Muslim migrant, female, 25–44, Birmingham)

And an interviewee from Bradford:

> Even if I wanted to it would be difficult as if in this country you need to learn basic English. I have no knowledge as such and would have great difficulty in expressing and making people understand. (Recent Muslim migrant, female, 18–24)

For a few recent Muslim migrants, non-acceptance of them as newcomers, or even hostility towards them on the part of those in the majority population who were active in organisations, served as a barrier to participation:

> We are not given the chance to show ourselves. Everyone look to us as foreigner and stranger with no welcome, so you don't feel you can do anything like this. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 18–24, Newham)

These main patterns were echoed in the responses of the recent non-Muslim migrants in all three locations. The main barrier stressed by half the sample in each location was lack of time because of work/family/educational responsibilities. But factors associated with being newcomers, such as unfamiliarity with organisational environments and lack of English fluency, were also mentioned. For example:

> I don't know. I am poor, not much English. It is difficult to communicate. (Recent non-Muslim migrant, female, 25–44, Birmingham)

> Not sure how to get involved as I have not been here too long. (Recent non-Muslim migrant, male, 18–24, Bradford)

Established residents

Like the recent migrants, around half the samples in both established categories, Muslim and non-Muslim, emphasised time factors as reasons for not participating more in organisations. This emphasis on lack of time for participation by interviewees in all the categories in the sample finds echoes in the results of the 2005 Citizenship Survey. The most common barrier to voluntary participation cited by respondents in that survey was lack of time because of work commitments, other activities or family responsibilities (Kitchen *et al*., 2006b, p. 7).

A small number of established Muslim interviewees in our sample in each location spoke about barriers to participation such as limited English fluency, lack of information, limited applicability to them of issues around which organisation takes place in their locality; and, in the case of three female interviewees in Bradford, negative attitudes of members of their communities, including family members, to the participation of Muslim women in organisations:

> I think maybe because they kind of gender specify it … because there's a lot of Asians that live in the area from a certain specific background and their beliefs may be that women have no dominance. (Established Muslim, female, 18–24, Bradford)

Among the UK-born non-Muslims in all three localities, although numbers were small, a clearer pattern of apathy was discernible; some specifically vocalised this as the lack of relevance of many organisations for, or lack of openness to, non-Muslims in their areas, which had a majority population of Muslims, particularly of South Asian origin. For example:

> My area's very Asian and Muslim, and I suppose the organisations … it's not very open to non-Muslims. (UK-born non-Muslim, Polish origin, male, 25–44, Newham)

Perceptions of influence on decision-making

Apart from looking at patterns of organisational participation, we wanted to find out if the interviewees felt involved in decision-making processes both locally and nationally, and whether they felt that what they did and said had any influence on decisions made about their locality, and also nationally.

Recent migrants

Not surprisingly, the majority of both Muslim and non-Muslim recent migrants in the sample felt that they had little impact on both local and national decisions, but more of them felt able to influence local than national decisions.

Muslim migrants

Across the three localities, 37 of the 155 (24 per cent) recent Muslim migrants said they felt they were able to influence decisions in their local area, while 21 (14 per cent) felt they could influence decisions at the national level. Correspondence between participation in any kind of organisation – mixed or co-ethnic/co-religious – and influence on decision-making was not marked, either at locality or individual level.

In Birmingham where, as we saw earlier, there was the most evidence of participation in mixed and co-ethnic/co-religious organisations in our sample, 14 out of the 52 recent Muslim migrants said they felt they could influence decisions affecting their local area; among them, seven were active in co-ethnic/co-religious organisations and three were active in mixed organisations. However, in Bradford where evidence of organisational participation in our sample was low, similar numbers of interviewees as in Birmingham felt able to influence local and national decisions, and only two interviewees were active in an organisation, in these cases a mixed organisation. Apart from in Birmingham to some extent, there was no clear relationship between perceived impact on decision-making and whether involvement was in co-ethnic/co-religious organisations or mixed organisations. There were few differences according to age or gender in all three areas. The following are the kinds of positive responses given by the interviewees about impact on decision-making.

At a local level:

> If somebody come, we are make together and tell this is not fair. Maybe something help for our locality … We can change, we can. We give our opinion. We can tell better go this way, maybe everybody get justice. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 18–24, Newham, not active in any organisation)

At a national level:

> Britain is our country. Our children are born here. It is like, if Pakistan is our country, then Britain is our country too. They do try to help us a lot. (Recent Muslim migrant, female, 25–44, Bradford, not active in any organisation)

However, negative responses on influence on decision-making were far greater, in both numbers and intensity, across all three localities and were made equally by interviewees who were active and those not active in organisations. There was a widespread feeling of powerlessness associated largely but not wholly with being relatively new arrivals and with attendant problems of unfamiliarity with the environment and language, ineligibility to vote in some cases and low social position. The following responses are about perception of influence on local decision-making:

> I can't speak good English. No one's going to listen to me. (Recent Muslim migrant, female, 18–24, Birmingham)

> No I don't think so … Cos I am just a temporary member of society.

> *Q:* So does that mean that you think that people think that your opinion doesn't matter?

> That would be the one thing that. It does matter but they won't think that this is the right opinion or the right thing, it's not coming from the right planes of experience. (Recent Muslim migrant, male 25–44, Birmingham, active in co-ethnic/co-religious organisation)

> Of course not. I can't find a job for myself, how can I play an important role? (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Newham)

> No. I don't have any authority, I don't have a good job. I am not affiliated with any community club organisation so I don't think so. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Newham)

> I think decisions are made beforehand and you really can't do anything to change them. They do what they feel like. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Bradford)

Perceptions of powerlessness in relation to national decision-making were understandably stronger. Some of those who said they may have influence on local decisions through voting or organising around issues made clear that they feel extremely powerless to influence decisions made by national government:

> *Q:* Do you feel that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?
>
> Yeah, very much, especially in the neighbourhood and the community centres. There is much room here in England I think, but we don't make use of it, I already told you we don't have the people I think at this time, but it will come, who know the system well enough to get involved, with the experience like that. You have more power I think in the neighbourhoods and in your community than in the … country's decisions. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 18–24, Birmingham, active in co-ethnic/ co-religious organisation)
>
> I don't think so … Because I think policy-maker are not honest enough to maintain the equal opportunity for all community. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Newham)
>
> No you cannot. Good example is the Iraq demonstrations, which took place in London. That did not change the Government's mind. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25-44, Bradford)

Non-Muslim migrants

Among the recent non-Muslim migrants, the proportions of those who said they felt able to influence local and/or national decisions were similarly low, less than one-third of the sample in each location. Again, only some who were active participants in mixed or co-ethnic/co-religious organisations gave positive responses. Both sets of migrants had in common a sense of unfamiliarity, not belonging and powerlessness, as can be seen in the following responses of the recent non-Muslim migrants regarding local decisions:

> No, I can't do anything. Because I don't have any status. I don't have nothing in this country. (Recent non-Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Newham)

> No, I don't think that people will listen to what I say. (Recent non-Muslim migrant, female, 25–44, Bradford)

As in the case of the Muslim migrants, a greater sense of powerlessness was apparent in relation to influencing decisions at a national level:

> No, less … Because I am a minority … I cannot affect in my local area … what can I do in England? (Recent non-Muslim migrant from Italy, male, 18–24, Birmingham)

Established residents

Among the two established categories – Muslims and non-Muslims – perceptions of being able to impact on decisions affecting their lives in their localities were proportionally greater than among the recent migrants. Those actively involved in mixed or co-ethnic/co-religious organisations were also more likely to give positive responses:

> I suppose so if you get involved like in local, like when you have meetings and stuff, you get involved and … you can contact your councillor, your MP, I've contacted my MP on several issues, so yes. (Established Muslim, female, 18–24, Birmingham, active in a mixed organisation)

> Yes I do, I think that myself as a member of public … can play a huge role in what goes on in our country … Regardless of where are you from or what background you are from, I think everyone does have the ability to make small changes. (UK-born non-Muslim, female, 18–24, Newham, active in a mixed organisation)

At the same time, to some extent in common with the migrant categories, there was a greater sense of powerlessness about influence on national decision-making among both established Muslims and non-Muslims:

> *Q:* Do you feel that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?
>
> When we talk about it, no, I don't think, but I can vote for it.
>
> *Q:* Do you think you can influence decisions affecting Britain?

> No, because if they don't listen to you on a local basis, how are they going to listen to you on a country level? (Established Muslim, male, 45+, Bradford)

> How do we know voting really makes a change? Don't we vote for a government that will listen to the views of its people? Then why didn't Blair take note of the Stop the War marches? (UK-born non-Muslim, female, 25–44, Birmingham)

Overall, there is little evidence to suggest that the established Muslim interviewees felt less involved or more powerless in relation to local or national decision-making *specifically* on religious and/or ethnic grounds. The fact that there were many minority ethnic interviewees among the UK-born non-Muslim sample may account for some of the similarities in response patterns. For instance, a UK-born interviewee of black Caribbean ethnic identification in Bradford said, in relation to decision-making in Britain:

> No. Me, a little black man, yeah? They're going to *[listen]* aren't they? I'm just another number in the workplace.

These findings can be considered in relation to national results from the 2005 Citizenship Survey and from those of the first quarter of the 2007 Citizenship Survey. These showed that black and Asian people were more likely than white people to say that they felt they had some influence on local and national decisions, although positive response about national decisions was lower for all groups, as in our research (Kitchen *et al*., 2006b, p. 32; DCLG, 2007, p. 4). The fact that our sample contained a relatively large number of recent migrants who were more likely than the established groups to be *and* feel disengaged from mainstream decision-making processes may account for these differences between the national evidence and our findings.

On the other hand, some of the white British interviewees in our sample said that they felt powerless to influence local and/or national decisions:

> On minor things *[in local decisions]* yes, we can have an influence and change things but on the big issues, important issues, no.

> *Q:* And what about influence on decisions affecting Britain? Do you think you have any influence on that?

> I think it's the same thing, I mean just look at the anti-Iraq war march. A million people marched – it didn't do anything, they didn't take any notice. (UK-born non-Muslim of white British ethnicity, male, 45+, Newham)

We looked at the educational levels of all categories of interviewees in all three locations by whether they felt they had impact on local or national decision-making, and found that there was no relationship between level of education and perceptions of influence on policy.

Key points

- There was a relatively high level of participation in voting across socio-demographic characteristics of the sample, but the tendency to vote was less, among the recent migrants (especially non-Muslims even if eligible to vote), those unemployed and (less starkly) those living in culturally dissimilar neighbourhoods.
- There were generally low levels of organisational participation – whether in mixed or co-ethnic/co-religious organisations – across categories, but women, non-Muslims, those fluent in English and those with a longer length of residence in the UK were more likely to participate.
- Ethnic/religious mix of neighbourhoods did not appear relevant to involvement in organisations.
- Among both Muslim and non-Muslim recent migrants, organisational participation was affected by lack of familiarity, information and knowledge of English.
- Lack of time for participation because of work, education or family responsibilities was stressed across all categories.
- There was a belief among interviewees in all categories that organisations relating to education and those supporting multicultural events are well placed to bring diverse groups in the community together, thus reinforcing the findings in Chapter 4 about the importance and potential of meaningful interaction across ethnic and religious lines in some public spaces in the localities.
- Across categories, there were relatively low levels of belief among interviewees that they could have an impact on local, and particularly national, decision-making and not much evidence of trust in organisations of power to act in the best collective interests of all parts of the community.

6 Transnational involvement and belonging in Britain

In this chapter, we examine whether and in what ways the recent Muslim and non-Muslim migrants in the sample maintain contact and identify with people in their countries of origin – mostly informally with family members, relatives and friends, but also through business or political activity. Recent accounts have pointed to the way these kinds of transnational involvement of migrants, rather than impeding integration in the receiving societies, may in fact coexist with a sense of belonging in these societies, although it is important to consider the impact of factors such as the socio-economic circumstances of the migrants on this relationship between transnationalism and integration (Levitt, 2003; Snel *et al*., 2006). As Snel *et al*. state: 'a strong transnational involvement of migrants and integration into the host country, do not rule each other out' (Snel *et al.*, 2006, p. 5). We will therefore, in this chapter, relate the findings on transnational involvement of the recent migrants in the sample to indicators of economic, political and social integration in Britain, and to positive and negative perceptions of British society and their place within it. We will also consider the evidence on transnational involvement of the established Muslims who were not born in the UK – to see if length of residence in the UK has an impact on transnationalism and integration.

Transnational involvement

Following Snel *et al*. (2006), we define 'transnational involvement' as referring to two dimensions: transnational *activities* and transnational *identifications*:

> The former involves the cross-border activities and practices that migrants develop. The latter refers to the extent to which migrants living in *[a country]* identify with compatriots living outside the country (in the country of origin and as well in the international Diaspora). (Snel *et al.,* 2006, p. 5)

Therefore we examine, on the one hand, transnational activities such as the migrants' transfer of money to people and organisations in their countries of origin, ownership of property in these countries, whether and in what ways they keep in touch with events and people in their countries of origin, engagement in business or politics in these countries and travel to countries of origin. On the other hand, we also consider the extent to and ways in which the migrants feel they belong in their countries of origin and identify with others living there – that is, transnational

identification – and whether there is any conflict between belonging in their countries of origin and belonging in Britain.

Recent migrants

The main focus in this chapter is on the 199 recent migrants in the sample across Birmingham, Newham and Bradford. Of these, 155 were Muslims and 44 were non-Muslims. Most transnational activities related specifically to family members and relatives in countries of origin rather than more impersonally to business, political or organisational engagement. For instance, 34 per cent of the migrants said that they regularly transferred money to mostly close family including parents and 83 per cent said that they regularly phoned family members, whereas less than 3 per cent said that they were engaged in any kind of business activity with people in their countries of origin and slightly less than 10 per cent said that they were engaged in politics concerning their countries of origin. However, a higher proportion (21 per cent) said they transferred money to organisations in their countries of origin; this was mainly to religious and welfare organisations. Generally, the level of interest among the interviewees in what went on back home in their countries of origin was high: 81 per cent said they regularly kept in touch through the media – 77 per cent mainly through a mixture of the internet, satellite TV and newspapers. However, the incidence of geographical mobility was lower. A little less than 43 per cent said that they visited their countries of origin – 35 per cent at least once a year. The fact that the interviewees were relatively recent arrivals in the UK (less than five years before interview) may explain these patterns to some extent, as the majority may not as yet have accumulated enough resources or leave of absence from a job to undertake such visits. Slightly fewer interviewees (37 per cent) maintained a stronger link with their countries of origin through ownership of a house; where they did, it was mainly looked after by immediate family members. Where transnational identification was concerned, just over two-thirds of the recent migrants said that the people who were most important in their lives lived primarily in their countries of origin or countries other than Britain.

Similarities and differences between Muslim and non-Muslim recent migrants

There were some differences in transnational activity by whether the recent migrant interviewees were Muslim or not. Proportionately more Muslims than non-Muslims said that they transferred money to both individual family members and organisations in their countries of origin, although the differences between the two categories were

greatest in relation to transfer of money to organisations – 25 per cent of Muslims compared to 7 per cent of non-Muslims. The occurrence of a major earthquake in Pakistan in 2005 just prior to the interview period appears to have accounted for an increase in donations to charities in Pakistan among some Muslim interviewees originating there. The Muslim interviewees were also more likely to own a house in their countries of origin. It is interesting that around 20 per cent of non-Muslims said they were involved in politics concerning their countries of origin compared to just under 7 per cent of Muslims. Caution among the Muslim interviewees about answering questions regarding transnational political activity in case admitting to political involvement could be construed as an indication of 'Islamic extremism' may account for such a difference. Differences between the two categories relating to gaining information about countries of origin and maintaining social contact with people were smaller. Of non-Muslim migrants, 91 per cent compared to 79 per cent of Muslim migrants said they kept in touch with their countries of origin through various media, while 85 per cent of Muslims and 80 per cent of non-Muslims said they regularly phoned close family and relatives in their countries of origin. There was also no difference between proportions of Muslim and non-Muslim migrants who said they visited their countries of origin (a little over two-fifths in each case). Where transnational identification was concerned, around two-thirds of both Muslim and non-Muslim recent migrants said that the people most important in their lives were primarily in their countries of origin or countries other than Britain.

Differences according to gender, age, reason for migration and locality

There were also some differences in transnational activities according to gender and age among all the recent migrants. Financial transnational activity (transferring money to relatives, owning property) and keeping in touch about events and with people in countries of origin, as well as incidence of political activity, were greater among men than women, but more women than men said they transferred money to organisations in their countries of origin. There were fewer differences between the sexes on visits to their countries of origin and also in transnational identification. Among all the recent migrants, 69 per cent of men and 63 per cent of women said that the people most important to them lived in their countries of origin or other countries rather than Britain.

Older recent migrants, particularly those over age 45, showed more evidence of financial transnational activity – transfer of money to individuals and organisations, owning property – than younger migrants, but proportionately more recent migrants aged 25 to 44 kept in touch with events and people in their countries of origin and were more likely to visit. It is, however, interesting that there were greater differences

in transnational identification according to age than according to gender or whether Muslim or not – 73 per cent of migrants in the 18–24 age range compared with 65 per cent of those aged 25–44 and 47 per cent of those aged over 45 said that people most important to them did not live in Britain. It is possible that some of the younger migrants, particularly those coming to the UK as students, left most of their immediate family members, including parents, in their countries of origin. An analysis of transnational identification of the recent migrants in the sample according to main reason for coming to live in the UK shows that 86 per cent of those who came to study, compared with 60 per cent of those who came for marriage and 66 per cent of those who came for safety reasons, said that the people most important to them lived in their countries of origin or countries other than Britain.

Generally, however, those recent migrants in the sample coming to the UK as marriage or family union migrants were more likely than those coming for other reasons to show evidence of financial transnational activity such as transferring money to people or organisations. But differences between family union migrants and those seeking asylum or those who were students were smaller in seeking information about their countries of origin or keeping in touch with relatives. It is interesting that those who came to the UK for safety reasons were the most likely, and those who came for family reunion were the least likely, to say they were engaged in political activity in relation to their countries of origin. But as, overall, small numbers in the entire sample of recent migrants said they were engaged in any kind of transnational political activity, these findings need to be interpreted with caution.

As far as location is concerned, similar proportions of recent migrants in Birmingham, Newham and Bradford said that they transferred money to family members in their countries of origin (a little over a third), kept in touch about events there (around four-fifths) and identified with people in their countries of origin or countries other than Britain (around two-thirds).

Summary

We have seen so far that there was evidence of transnational involvement among the recent migrants in the sample but that this involvement varied according to the type of activity. There was a uniformly high level of transnational activity in relation to information about, and contact with relatives in, countries of origin, even taking into account gender, age, migrant category and location. However, financial activity was generally less and there was little evidence overall of activity in politics or business. The majority of the recent migrant sample, both Muslims and non-Muslims,

and across gender, age, location and type of migrant, had a greater sense of transnational identification – that is, in terms of identifying with people of a common origin living outside the receiving country – than an identification with people of similar or other origins in Britain.

Established Muslims born outside the UK

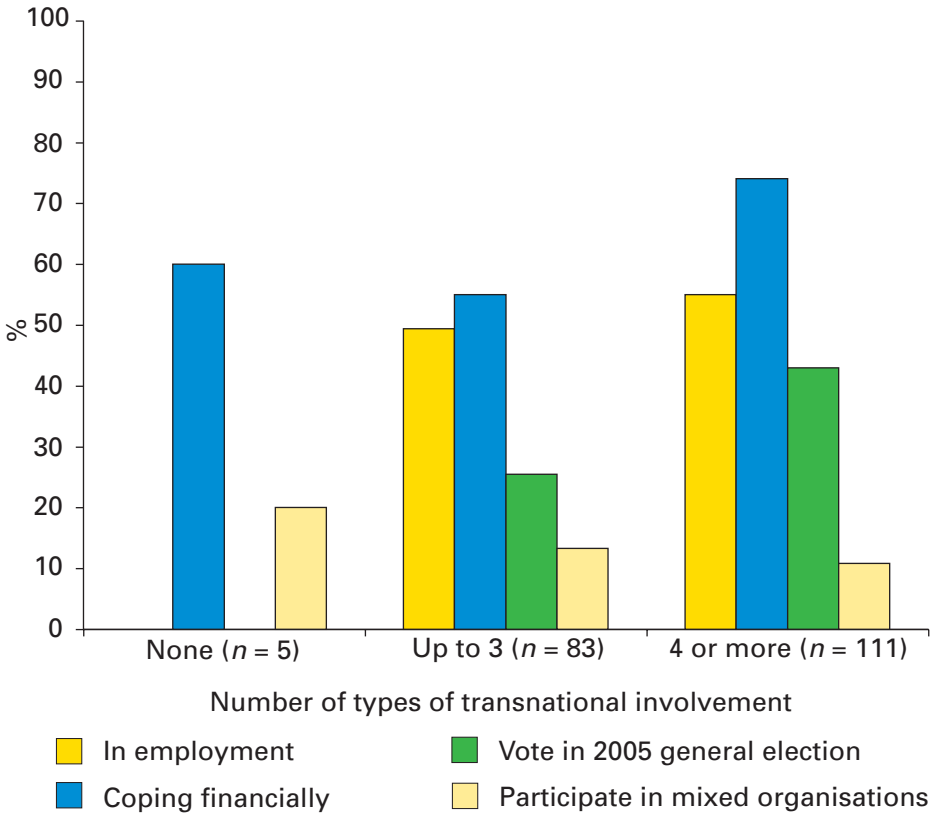
There were 45 established Muslims across the three localities who were born outside the UK and migrated to the UK ten or more years before interview, forming 61 per cent of all the established Muslims in the sample. Comparing their evidence of transnational involvement – that is, activities and identification – with that of the recent migrants, particularly the Muslims, reveals interesting similarities and differences. The established Muslims maintained as high a level of interest in getting information about their countries of origin through the media as did the recent migrants – 82 per cent of the former compared to 79 per cent of the latter. However, the established Muslims were less likely to phone regularly (around 60 per cent compared to 85 per cent of recent Muslim migrants), but were more likely to visit countries of origin (73 per cent compared to 42 per cent of recent Muslim migrants). This suggests that the established Muslims had fewer close personal links with their countries of origin than the recent migrants, but were possibly in a more secure financial position to make visits to these countries, after several years of residence in the UK. A key but not unexpected finding is that transnational *identification* among the established Muslims in the sample was less than among the recent migrants – 40 per cent of the established Muslims, compared to 65 per cent of recent Muslim migrants, said that the people most important to them lived primarily in their countries of origin or other countries. These patterns are clearly linked with length of residence in the UK, as established Muslims form families and build up close relationships over time in the receiving context. But there were interesting differences by gender in transnational identification among the established Muslims, with only a third of women compared to over two-fifths of men identifying with people in countries of origin or in the diaspora. As in the case of the recent migrants, there were wider-ranging differences by age. The older interviewees were more likely to transfer money to families, keep in touch through the media, regularly phone people and visit countries of origin. Transnational identification was highest in the middle age range – 52 per cent of 25–44 year olds, compared to 40 per cent of 18–24 year olds and 26 per cent of those aged 45+. As numbers are small, cautious interpretation of all these patterns is necessary. However, the evidence from the comparison between recent migrants and longer established migrants does suggest that the level of transnational involvement decreases with migrants' length of residence in the UK.

Transnational involvement and integration

Recent migrants

In this section, we explore what relation the transnational involvement of the interviewees – both activities and identification – has to the recent migrants' lives in the UK, particularly the extent to which, in terms of their behaviour and perceptions, they can be considered to be 'integrated' in British society. We focus on some key economic, political and social 'indicators of integration', such as the interviewees' participation in the labour market and perceptions of financial well-being; voting in the general election and participation in organisations involving people of diverse ethnicities/religions; and extent of social contact with people who are of different ethnicities/religions to themselves (see Figures 19 and 20).

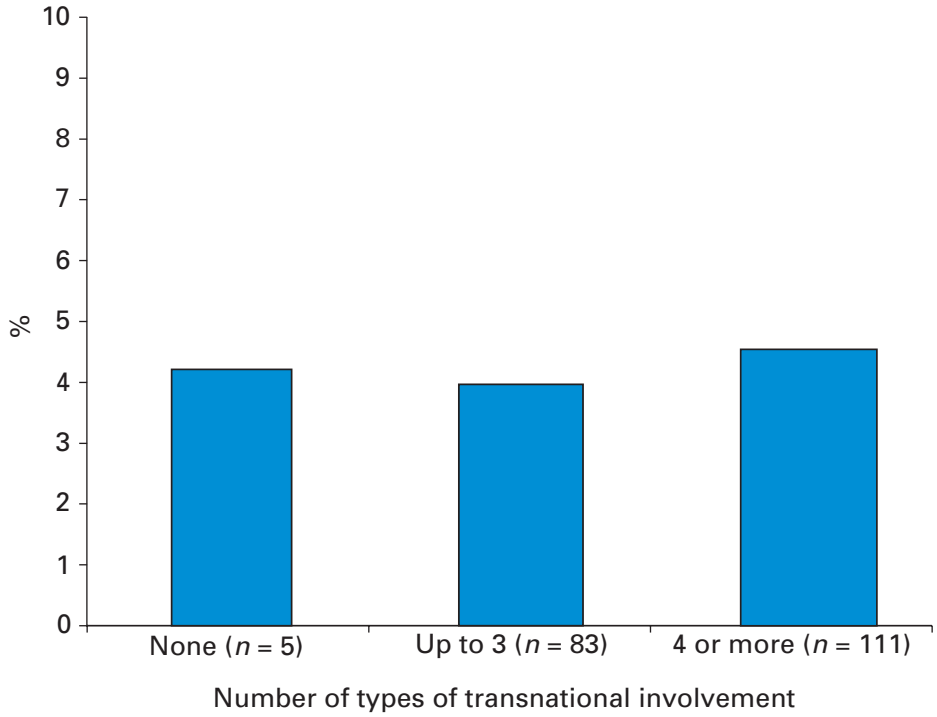
Figure 19 Percentage in indicators of economic and political integration by number of types of transnational involvement for recent migrants*



n = 199.

* The types of transnational involvement asked about were: *transnational activities* – whether transferred money to people in countries of origin, whether owned a house there, whether transferred money to organisations in countries of origin, whether keep in touch with countries of origin through media, whether regularly phone people in countries of origin, whether engaged in politics about countries of origin; and *transnational identification* – where people most important in life live.

Figure 20 Mean number of spaces in which people of different ethnicity and religion+ were met by number of types of transnational involvement for recent migrants*



n = 199.

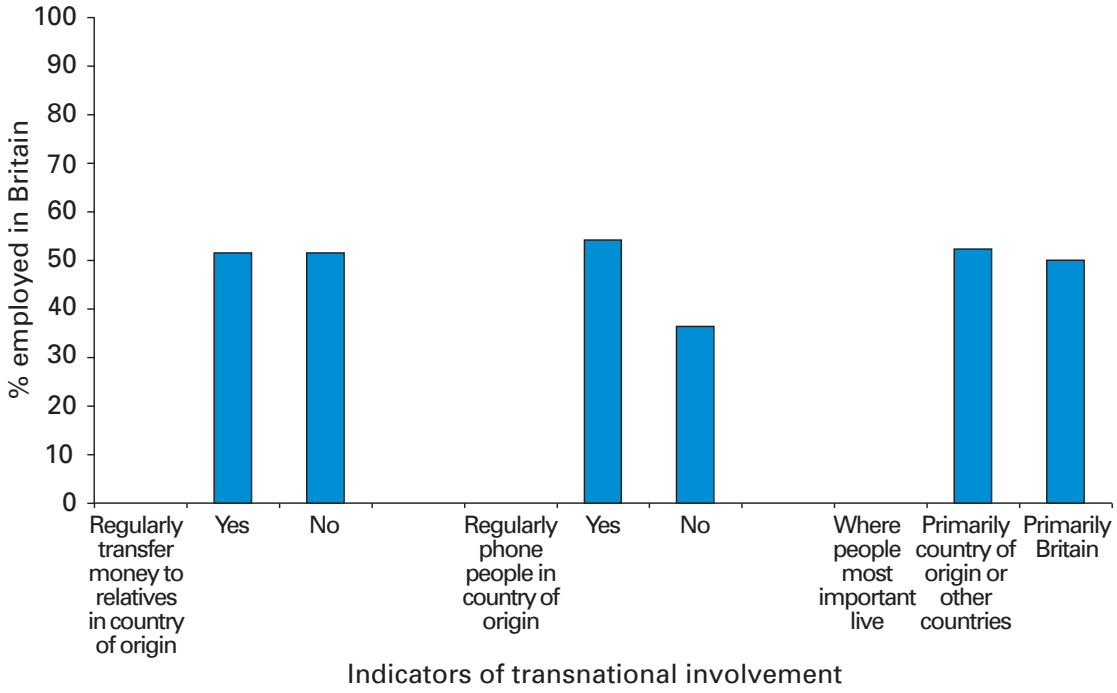
\+ Indicator of social integration.

* The types of transnational involvement asked about were: *transnational activities* – whether transferred money to people in countries of origin, whether owned a house there, whether transferred money to organisations in countries of origin, whether keep in touch with countries of origin through media, whether regularly phone people in countries of origin, whether engaged in politics about countries of origin; and *transnational identification* – where people most important in life live.

It can be seen in Figures 19 and 20 that those interviewees who demonstrated the greatest number of types of transnational involvement (four or more) were the most likely to: be employed, have a perception of financial stability, have voted in the 2005 general election and meet people of a different ethnicity and religion in more spaces on average. This suggests that, for our sample, transnational involvement did not preclude economic, political and social participation in the receiving society. The only integration indicator that shows a contrary relationship with transnational involvement is participation in ethnic/religious *mixed* organisations. That is, it appears from Figure 19 that those who demonstrated most transnational involvement were the least likely to participate in such organisations.

Figures 21, 22 and 23 look in more detail at the way some of the indicators of integration relate to different dimensions of transnational involvement. It can be seen in Figure 21 that there was little difference in the proportion employed among the interviewees – that is, a measure of economic integration – according to whether remittances were made or not and where identification with others most lay. In fact, it can be seen that those who regularly maintained contact with people in their countries of origin were more likely to be employed. It is not possible to establish any causal relationships from these findings – for instance, it might be argued that those in employment have more resources that enable them to keep in touch frequently with relatives in their countries of origin. Overall, what the findings depicted in Figure 21 do suggest is that transnational involvement coexists with participation in the labour market in the receiving society and thus does not preclude economic integration.

Figure 21 Percentage employed among recent migrants by indicators of transnational involvement

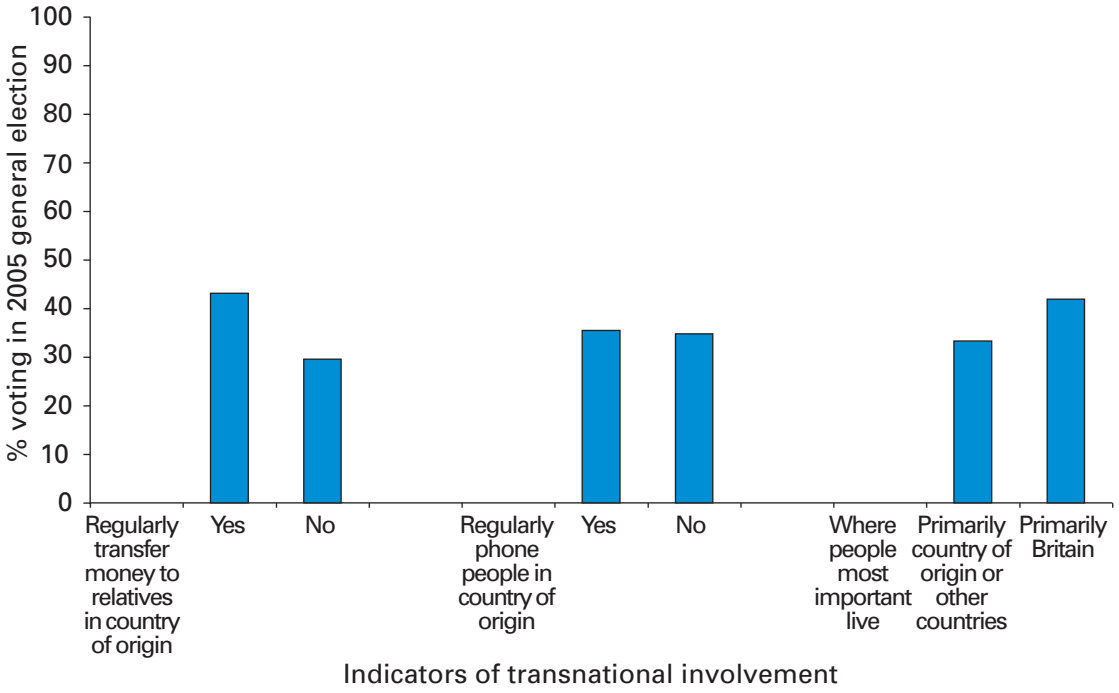


n = 199.

Figure 22 shows a similar picture for political integration – measured by voting in the 2005 general election – at least as far as the transnational activities of transferring money to, and keeping in touch regularly with, people in the interviewees' countries of origin are concerned. Those who do participate in these activities are shown as more likely to vote, although differences are very small in relation to those who did

and did not maintain transnational contact. However, Figure 22 also shows that those whose primary identification was with people important to them living in Britain were more likely to vote in the election than those who had primary transnational identification. The analysis of voting patterns referred only to those migrants eligible and registered to vote in the UK, many of whom were family reunion migrants and therefore more likely to identify with immediate families in the UK that they had travelled to join.

Figure 22 Percentage voting in May 2005 general election among recent migrants by indicators of transnational involvement

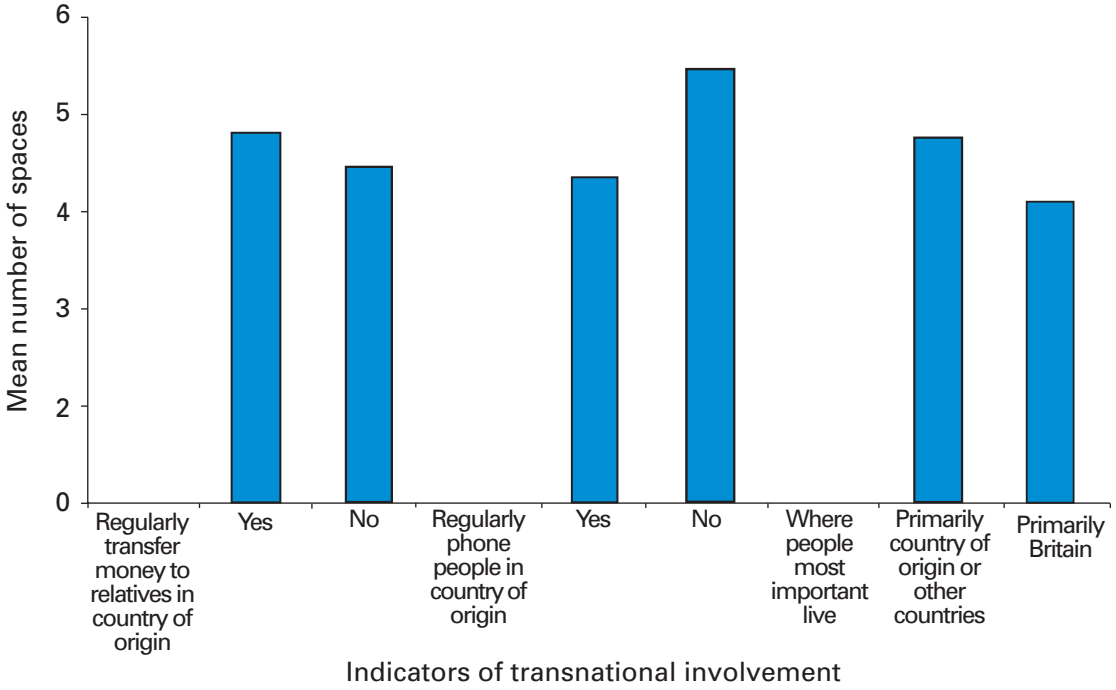


Base = recent migrants eligible/registered to vote, *n* = 132.

Figure 23 shows an example of social integration – that is, the mean number of spaces in which the interviewees informally met people of a different ethnicity and religion to themselves in the course of their daily lives in the localities they lived in (see also Chapter 4). The evidence is complex in that taking part in some transnational activities, such as sending remittances to countries of origin, and transnational identification, did not appear to preclude interacting informally with people from different backgrounds in the local area. At the same time, those among the migrants who maintained regular contact with families in their countries of origin met people of different ethnicity and religion in fewer spaces in their local areas in the receiving society than those who had no transnational contact with families. This may relate to patterns of time and sociability where time and resources spent in

contacting relatives abroad negatively affected the availability of time, capacity and need to interact with people from backgrounds different from themselves living in their localities.

Figure 23 Mean number of spaces where recent migrants met people of different ethnicity and religion by indicators of transnational involvement



n = 199.

Overall, however, the evidence on transnational involvement and indicators of integration relating to the recent migrant interviewees suggests that there was no clear-cut, definitive relationship between transnationalism and integration. It would certainly appear to be the case that transnational activities and identification did not prevent integration, broadly considered, in the receiving context and that the interviewees seemed to have the capacity to maintain ties with their countries of origin at the same time as participate in structures and processes in Britain. Analysis by whether the recent migrants were Muslim or non-Muslim did not reveal significant differences in the relationship between transnational involvement and integration. In the final section of this chapter, we will look more closely at the way the interviewees more qualitatively presented their feelings about living in Britain and how these relate to their feelings about their countries of origin.

Feelings about Britain among recent migrants

Recent Muslim migrants

We asked the interviewees what they liked about living in Britain and conversely what they disliked. The majority of the recent Muslim migrants – around 99 per cent in each of the locations – strongly emphasised democracy, fairness, justice and security and opportunities, for example, for education, a good standard of living and access to services such as health care as qualities of British society that they valued and that contributed to the development of a sense of attachment on their part to Britain. The following statements of the interviewees bring out both these dimensions of their positive orientation to Britain:

> It has to be stability, and … an order of law and everything … It's secure compared to where I come from originally … And there is a relative freedom of speech … you don't have that in other places, so that kind of makes it … I mean I wouldn't say unique, but different … And there is also peace between different cultures, so the coexistence of different cultures. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Birmingham)

> Freedom and safety. These are the things that I missed in my country. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Newham)

> There are a lot of things I like about living in Britain, such as doctors and health. You go to the hospital and they try to make appointments. They do look after you, they also help in other situations. (Recent Muslim migrant, female, 25–44, Bradford)

> Yes here, you know, most of the life is easy if you are working, if you have got good business here. So it is not difficult for anyone to purchase a house, to have a good car and also, you know, to have social contacts, it's not difficult for any person. If you are working well or if you are doing your business well then there is a security and no one can stop you going for that. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Newham)

As far as negative feelings about Britain were concerned, the predominant response by the recent Muslim migrants, again in all three locations, related to racism, discrimination, conflict and differences in values for example, about alcohol-related behaviour, perceived excessive social freedom. However, the numerical strength of this negative response (from about a quarter of the interviewees in Bradford to a little less than half in Birmingham) including among those who also had positive feelings,

was less than in relation to their positive feelings. Dislike of the weather was also stressed by interviewees, particularly in Bradford:

> Hard to get a job. I think as a Muslim … discrimination. You don't get recognised. You study, you work hard, but you won't get recognised unless I change my name the next day, then I might get a job. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 18–24, Birmingham)

> Conflict, mostly related to religion ethnicity … Tiredness from highly competitive life. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Newham)

> All these racist things happening or people don't like each other or doing the racist comments, I don't like. (Recent Muslim migrant, female, 25–44, Birmingham)

> Too much freedom. It gives the chance to others to harm certain groups. (Recent Muslim migrant, female, 18–24, Newham)

> I don't like things like drinking, the way they dress up. They don't have any restriction. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Bradford)

It is interesting that, for the recent Muslim migrants, negative feelings about Britain were more specifically about racism, discrimination and differences in values between religious/ethnic groups, compared to their negative feelings about their local areas, which were more about issues such as crime and vandalism affecting all groups in the local community (see Chapter 4).

Recent non-Muslim migrants

If we look at the feelings about living in Britain among the recent non-Muslim migrants in the sample, we can see that, like the Muslim migrants, they stressed the qualities of freedom, democracy, human and legal rights, and access to a decent standard of living. As the following examples show, there was considerable congruence between the responses of the non-Muslim migrants and those of the Muslim migrants given above:

> Individual freedom. I very much like the nature in this country, British culture in general … I grew up under Communism and I find British culture very liberating and open-minded and it's things that I grew up to actually look out for in my own life. (Recent non-Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Birmingham)

> What I like, living here? Freedom … Maybe it's different from my country … I mean, you can make more money here and feel, you know … more freedom. Maybe in this way you can do whatever, you can go wherever you want, you can buy whatever you want. Maybe just because I'm here by myself I don't have family that's why I feel … (Recent non-Muslim migrant, female, 25–44, Newham)

> I love the way, you know, local communities are supporting their people. For example, I'm attending a salsa class, which is free, and you don't find this in my country. And other things, if you're really good you can do something … I haven't got access to any benefits, but I'm looking around and there are so many, that they can help people just because they're out of work or studies. (Recent non-Muslim migrant, female, 25–44, Newham)

The emphasis on freedom and security that is common to both Muslims and non-Muslims needs to be interpreted particularly in the context of some of the recent migrants' migration histories as refugees from oppressive political regimes in their countries of origin.

The non-Muslim migrants' negative feelings about Britain were not as uniform as those of the Muslim migrants, both between and within the three locations. A series of 'dislikes' were stated such as crime, the weather, bureaucracy, transport and pollution. Among all these, racism and discrimination were also mentioned, but only in Newham was there a relatively numerically strong response on this, in around one-third of the sample. However, what they said about racism and discrimination echoed what the Muslim migrants said, as shown above:

> It's fairly easy to find a job in this country … *[but]* immigrants have to work for lower wages. (Recent non-Muslim migrant from Poland, female, 25–44, Newham)

> As well as I have completed two years' diploma, one graphics. But actually we had a lot of expectation like I'll go to Britain, I'll get good job, I'll get proper *[recognition]* of my education. But I'm not getting any good job. Like the job always I should get, in Britain. Maybe because I'm … like Asian or something. (Recent non-Muslim migrant from Bangladesh, male, 18–24, Newham)

Perceptions of belonging to Britain and to countries of origin among recent migrants

As the above statements indicate, perceptions of lack of equal opportunities for the migrants, both Muslim and non-Muslim, in British society are likely to affect the way they feel about the receiving society and their sense of belonging there. The majority of recent Muslim and non-Muslim migrants in the sample, however, said that they felt they belonged to both Britain and their countries of origin. The following statements illustrate this pattern of response:

> Yes, I think so it is possible to have a sense of belonging with both the countries because life is like an ongoing journey. Wherever you stay it becomes part of your life; the people and places. In Pakistan I spent my past, there I have my parents and siblings and in the UK I have my future, my wife and god willing my children too. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Bradford)

> Because in Britain you have your family, job and new life and ... where you born, your memories and culture. (Recent Muslim migrant, male, 25–44, Birmingham)

> Yeah, I think so. That's my situation at present. I already settled down in this country, but I still have origin in Poland. No, you don't have to make a choice between the two. (Recent non-Muslim migrant, female, 25–44, Newham)

It appears clear that, for many of the migrants, there was little conflict about belonging to both societies. Strong feelings of attachment to countries of origin based on past experience of family life come out in the qualitative evidence – for example, in statements such as this from a Muslim woman in Birmingham: 'Because where I come from and that's where my mum and dad live and I got good memories'. However, these feelings of transnational belonging fit in smoothly and comfortably, for the most part, with forward-looking perceptions of a new life in Britain. As the same woman put it, 'you can have both countries. I live here, I got my life here but I got my memories there'. This finding supports the quantitative evidence presented earlier in the chapter that 'integration' coexists with transnational activities and identification. As one non-Muslim migrant from Newham said: 'When you're an immigrant you live with one foot in one country and the other foot in the other'.

However, it is also important to recognise that some migrants, both Muslim and non-Muslim, did feel that it was difficult to belong to both their countries of origin and

Britain at the same time. More non-Muslim migrants from Bradford compared to both Muslim migrants in Bradford and Muslim and non-Muslim migrants in the other two locations appeared to hold this view:

> I guess it has to do with how happy you are, where you stay, I mean, I don't think it's anything more complicated than that. Where you get support, where you feel comfortable, where you feel happy, where you feel you can live your life comfortably and for me that's back home. (Recent non-Muslim migrant, female, 25–44, Bradford)

Among those who did not feel that they fully belonged in British society, at least at this stage of their settlement histories, we come back to a factor that does stand out for both Muslim and non-Muslim migrants – that is, the lack of acceptance of them in the receiving context associated with discrimination and lack of equal opportunities. The following example succinctly sums up the impact of perceived discrimination against migrants on some interviewees' sense of belonging in Britain:

> Here I'm working in a way that is really not English way. English way don't do cleaner, English way don't do housekeeper. When I get a job in an office or in my area here then I guess I really can feel belonging to England. But in this moment no because I know that this kind of job I'm doing, that my husband is doing are foreigners' jobs you know. (Recent non-Muslim migrant from Brazil, female, 25–44, Newham)

It could be suggested from the evidence that, for the recent Muslim and non-Muslim migrants that we interviewed, it is such experiences of discrimination rather than attachment to their countries of origin that work against 'belonging' in the receiving society. As we have seen, the considerable transnational involvement that did exist among the migrants did not appear for the most part to stand in the way of their attachment to Britain at the same time.

Perceptions of belonging to Britain and to countries of origin among established Muslims born outside the UK

Earlier in this chapter, the analysis of the quantitative evidence showed that proportionally fewer non-UK-born established Muslims than recent Muslim migrants in the sample stated that the people most important to them lived outside Britain. A consideration of the qualitative responses of the non-UK-born established Muslims shows that, across all three localities, the majority said they still identified with their countries of origin but felt there was no conflict in feeling they belonged both to their countries of origin and to Britain. The responses of both men and women were

similar to those of the recent migrants, as the following examples show:

> Why not? Yes. This is your homeland in England but other place is your roots. People need to know their roots. (Established Muslim, male, 45+, Newham)

> Yes of course it's possible. Your nationality is your citizenship, your ethnic background is where your roots come from and your religion is your way of life and your beliefs. They can all be situational, why do we have to choose? (Established Muslim, male, 25–44, Birmingham)

> I like my own country, I was born there … my roots are there, only branches are here … I like both … but not much family left over there now, they are all here. I have my extended family there but immediate family is here. (Established Muslim, female, 45+, Bradford)

A large part of this dual attachment is to do with having members of immediate and extended families in both countries, and is in keeping with the findings discussed in Chapter 4 that more informal intimate interaction for both recent migrants and established residents, particularly among the Muslims, cuts across territorial boundaries. But a part of the established Muslim migrants' attachment to Britain also relates to features of British society that they valued. In fact, like the recent Muslim and non-Muslim migrants, when the established Muslim migrants were asked what they liked about living in Britain, most stressed living standards and opportunities for education and health. There was also an emphasis among the established Muslim migrants on freedom and justice, but as relatively long-term settled residents, this was not as important as for some recent migrants fleeing unstable political conditions and persecution in their countries of origin. It is also interesting that, as for the recent migrants, for the established Muslims, racism and discrimination was the most prominent, although not numerically very strong, response as to what they disliked about Britain, as the following example shows:

> *Q:* So what things do you dislike about Britain?

> The perception and enforcement of the stereotype that terrorists are Muslims or Islamists are terrorists. (Established Muslim, male, 25–44, Birmingham)

The findings relating to the established Muslims who were born outside the UK support earlier evidence in this report that perceptions of racial stereotyping and racist treatment are widespread among migrants, and are likely to affect their sense of belonging in Britain.

Key points

- Both Muslim and non-Muslim recent migrants, across gender, age, location and reason for migration, showed a connection to their countries of origin – through both information-seeking and maintaining contact with relatives and friends – and a greater identification with people living in countries of origin or in the diaspora than with those living in the UK.
- For the established Muslim interviewees born outside the UK, transnational identification in particular reduced with increased length of residence in the UK and the building up of close family ties in Britain.
- For both Muslim (recent and established) and non-Muslim migrants, transnational involvement appeared not to prevent or conflict with economic, political and social integration and a sense of belonging in Britain.
- However, there was evidence that, for both Muslims and non-Muslims, feelings of attachment to Britain are affected negatively by widespread and deeply felt perceptions of discrimination on grounds of their race and/or religion.

7 Findings from interviews with policy-makers and practitioners

The findings outlined in the previous chapters are extracted from the survey of 319 local residents in the case study areas and provide an insight into the lived experience of cohesion among people in Britain. As discussed in Chapter 1, developing and sustaining 'community cohesion' has also become an important aim for policy-makers in national and local government. As a consequence, individuals and organisations working in local communities, whether in the public sector (i.e. education, housing, policing) or in the voluntary and community sector, are considering how their work fits in with the cohesion agenda. The project interviewed 32 officials in local and central goverment, policy specialists and practitioners in community groups and civil society organisations. Of these, 28 interviews were with individuals working at the local level; these included local government officers working directly on cohesion, community participation and related areas of equality and diversity. Other interviewees were involved in areas – such as education, employment, housing, policing and regeneration – where cohesion was a significant concern. There were also interviewees whose role required them to represent and reflect on the views of particular communities and groups. This category included politicians, as well as those working in Muslim and other faith communities and groups.

In addition to the local-level policy interviews, four national-level policy interviews were conducted. With individuals working on cohesion policy and practice in central government, public bodies and in relation to Muslim communities. The interviews explored how the term 'community cohesion' was understood and its impact on the activities of individuals and organisations. Interviewees were also asked to draw on their experience to identify the factors they felt affected cohesion, and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current policy approach. Interviews were conducted throughout the fieldwork period from January 2006 to June 2007.

Understanding community cohesion

The success of national policy for developing and sustaining community cohesion rests on the existence of a shared understanding of the term. This is critical for ensuring that there is a shared set of goals that public sector agencies are working towards and that the actions of local agencies are in step with the national agenda. The interviews however, reveal a diverse range of interpretations given to the term

'community cohesion'. It appears that much of this diversity reflects the broad scope of the definition; most interviewees valued this flexibility, as it allowed practitioners at the local level to implement cohesion policy in a way that is sensitive to local circumstances. However, some thought there was a danger that, as a consequence, public bodies are not all pulling in the same direction.

The Local Government Association's (LGA's) definition of community cohesion, identifies, as we have seen, four main elements:

- a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- positively valuing the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances;
- similar life opportunities for people of different backgrounds;
- the development of strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

The LGA definition is not always reflected in the understanding of the term among policy-makers and practitioners at the local level. While the national discourse on community cohesion in practice places greatest importance on emphasising commonality, for many interviewees the attitude and approach to respecting difference were seen as central to cohesion. The approaches to difference ranged from emphasising the importance of tolerance, through to 'acknowledging', 'accepting' and 'accommodating' difference. For example, a head teacher, in discussing the ways in which her school supported cohesion, focused on the ways in which cultural diversity was accommodated there. Cohesion, it was said, was about accepting difference, educating people 'that there was excellence in every culture', and ensuring that the curriculum and school valued 'people's culture'. Thus, she argued, 'community cohesion is about having an understanding of each community and where it comes from'.

It was widely felt that the emergence of the community cohesion discourse from the reports into the disturbances in the North of England in 2001 has had an impact on people's attitudes towards the term. Interviewees in Bradford noted that a deliberate decision had been taken to shift the policy discourse away from 'community cohesion' to talk of 'shared futures'. The latter was perceived as having broader support, as it did not have the same association with the riots. Some interviewees, perhaps reflecting the origins of the term 'community cohesion' in the policy responses to the riots, understood cohesion in terms of the absence of conflict. Thus, the chief executive of a housing body referred to cohesion as existing 'where communities

have respect for one another so that they live peaceably and there is little or no conflict … peaceful coexistence rather than the current state where there are strong antagonisms'. Such community tensions were not, however, a significant feature mentioned by Muslims and non-Muslims questioned in our research. Instead, negative feelings about neighbourhoods in our research focused more on anti-social behaviour and vandalism. This confirms the findings of other studies (IPPR, 2007).

A senior local government officer in one area argued that 'there is a real problem in trying to make the term [community cohesion] resonate and have meaning beyond the world of local government and policy'. Other interviewees suggested that, in many instances, the introduction of a new language of community cohesion has not led to changes in the work being done or policies being followed. In fact, several interviewees viewed community cohesion as a valuable description of the work they were already doing. One interviewee, with experience of working on community issues in local government and the voluntary sector, argued that cohesion described the work many had been doing since the 1980s:

> We did community cohesion work before it was ever invented, in the late 70s, it's not a new concept … it's a reinvention of the same old thing that's been going on in the 1990s and 80s, about trying to bring back a sense of community or social action in terms of giving people the instruments themselves to do the things for themselves.

In general, however, while interviewees had criticisms of the term community cohesion, it encapsulated some goals that people were aspiring to. According to an interviewee from a voluntary sector organisation, its usefulness came from recognising that community cohesion, however it was understood, 'was not something that would happen by itself but required action and effort'. A senior figure of an organisation that undertook interfaith work argued that groups that identified by faith were often cohesive, not because there was something that was naturally more cohesive about them, but because they worked at it. Faith groups, it was suggested 'are good at setting up circles, networks, groups where people come together to think about their faith, but also to get to know each other, to help each other react to day-to-day life'. Similarly, this interviewee suggested, cohesion in a local community is not something that happens automatically: 'It needs to be promoted … we need to take time to deliberately listen to each other's stories and to hear them without trying to challenge them'.

Several interviewees in Bradford noted that businesses there were increasingly aware of the importance of community cohesion. They noted that more and more business leaders understood the threats to investment in their cities if there were any further disturbances.

One area where the language of community cohesion was viewed as particularly problematic was in its potential for overlooking discrimination. In our research with Muslims and non-Muslims, discrimination and unfair treatment was a significant feature in the experience of participants. For recent Muslim migrants and established Muslims, this was on the grounds of both race and religion, while, for recent non-Muslim migrants, it was mainly on the basis of race and ethnicity. Analysis of the Home Office Citizenship Survey also indicates that the perception of discrimination does affect a person's sense of belonging. The link between cohesion and tackling racism and racial inequality was also a recurring theme in our interviews with policy-makers and practitioners. Some interviewees viewed the language of community cohesion as a way of avoiding direct discussion of race and racism. An experienced local councillor and community activist viewed this as potentially positive, as it provided a non-confrontational language with which to address racism:

> I think discrimination and inclusion are at the heart of *[community cohesion]*. But anti-discrimination, anti-racism is probably much more aggressive and uncomfortable to talk about than community cohesion. Community cohesion is much more user-friendly and cuddly.

Others, however, felt that the language of community cohesion, through its silence on race, undermines attempts to address institutional racism. A former senior government policy adviser on discrimination and equality viewed the shift towards community cohesion within the broader context of the backlash to the MacPherson Report, which placed emphasis on the need for public bodies to tackle institutional racism. For this interviewee, community cohesion is 'a softer term for race relations, challenging racism and challenging inequality'. In his view, its appeal is that 'it is a far more acceptable form for talking about something that has harsh edges that no one really wants to have a feel for'. He argued that it provides a language that 'makes people feel more comfortable with issues of equality and fairness but makes very little difference to the status quo within the institutions of Britain'.

Cohesion within, between and across communities

Some of the policy-makers and practitioners we interviewed felt that community cohesion appeared to be modelled on a perception of ethnic or faith communities as homogeneous, and that parallel lives exist only between minority ethnic and majority groups. Cohesion work was therefore aimed at building bridges across this divide. The interviews suggest that this conception of cohesion work needs rethinking.

In particular, examples from interviews of the complex relations both within and between different ethnic groups suggest that sharp distinctions between work that contributes towards bonding and bridging capital are difficult to draw. Examples of work undertaken in the local areas suggest that what may be seen from the perspective of national policy as the development of bonding capital may in fact be understood in the local context as bridging work. For example, in an organisation working with young Asian men, community cohesion was understood in terms of breaking down inter-ethnic tension and prejudices within the Asian community. Here the community worker recalled the conflict that existed between the two communities in the 1970s and 1980s when young Bangladeshi and Pakistani gangs fought each other. Thus, bringing these two groups together involved emphasising their shared experiences and common values. Similarly, a head teacher argued that community cohesion was also about building bridges not only between the Asian and Somali community but also within the Somali community, between different groups within that community. This point was also emphasised by a senior police officer in whose experience cohesion at the local level could be undermined by intra-ethnic and sectarian tensions within, for example, Iraqi communities.

As noted in Chapter 5, mosques were valued by Muslims in our research for their potential to bring together Muslims of different ethnic origin. Such intrafaith work, across the Muslim community, was also identified as an important area for 'cohesion work' in interviews with policy-makers and practitioners. In the context of a local interfaith Christian-Muslim women's group, a senior figure in the Christian organisation found that 'the crucial thing was not actually bringing Christians and Muslim women together so that they learn about one another's cultures; it's actually about getting Muslim women from different families and clans together'.

Others identified the need for cohesion across generations. In interviews, the gap in understanding between generations was often identified as a factor that undermined cohesion; in particular, a local government official responsible for increasing community participation acknowledged the failure to adequately involve young people in decision-making. An experienced teacher noted that the demographics of the white and Asian communities mean that the gaps that need to be bridged are a combination of both ethnicity and generation. Community history projects were identified as an example of the kind of activities that provided opportunities for bridging this divide. Our local area research results, as we have seen, also indicated concern about the behaviour and activities of young people.

Factors that support and undermine cohesion

The impact of poverty and unemployment on cohesion

Across the board, there was general consensus that addressing poverty and inequality was one of the most important ways in which to ensure greater cohesion. A head teacher in an inner-city school argued that government programmes such as the New Deal for Communities had a positive and noticeable impact on the local communities. They had led to improved housing and new youth projects. They also provided improved opportunities for involvement in decision-making.

It was acknowledged by policy-makers and practitioners that the link between poverty and cohesion was complex. Interviewees identified the different ways in which poverty reduces people's opportunities to participate in community activities. This may be due to a direct lack of financial resources to participate. For those on low pay who work longer hours, the actual time that is available for community activity is also reduced. They are less likely to have the flexibility needed to rearrange their work or family commitments to attend consultation events or community meetings. In our research with Muslims and non-Muslims, lack of time because of educational, work and family commitments was cited by all categories of interviewees as a barrier that reduced or prevented organisational participation.

The chief executive of a housing body identified the toll that unemployment has taken in parts of the community and its effects on cohesion:

> … the economic boom has largely bypassed a generation of inner-city black kids, mainly Pakistani and Bangladeshi kids, but it's also bypassed those permanently unemployed who live on council estates. Now, that can be called 'parallel lives'. They can be described as parallel and equally miserable lives, can't they?

Results from our research with Muslims and non-Muslims also highlight the connection between unemployment and cohesion. We found that, for example, those who were unemployed were less likely than those in employment to participate in activity such as voting or to involve themselves in local organisations. Our research also shows that those who were unemployed tended to have meaningful interactions with people from other backgrounds in fewer spaces than average compared to those who were employed.

A senior local government policy officer expressed particular concern about the experience of underemployment among migrants. In his experience, their aspirations are blocked by the lack of recognition of their qualifications and skills. This is, in part, in line with our data. Within our sample, over one-third of highly skilled migrants (Muslim and non-Muslim) were routinely in elementary occupations. However, we also found underemployment within the established Muslim group, but not among UK-born non-Muslims.

The impact of tackling poverty on cohesion

While tackling poverty is critical to cohesion, the impact on cohesion of specific policies addressing poverty needs to be considered. Area-based funding was identified by policy-makers and practitioners as creating tensions that were exploited during the 2001 disturbances. Where areas in Bradford were perceived as Asian or white areas, funding directed at those areas was seen as funding to a particular ethnic community. Interviewees from Bradford argued that there is a failure to address the myths around regeneration funding and to talk about the wider investment that is being made in the area as a whole. A senior executive for a regeneration body highlighted the ways in which area-based funding exposes a dilemma for cohesion policy. She noted that it is at the local neighbourhood rather than district level that a sense of cohesion and community is created. Area-based funding is therefore important for effective cohesion. However, experienced officials at a community-based regeneration body said that, in this process, the delineation of an area is critical. They suggested that the potential for polarisation from area-based funding may be avoided where the boundaries ensure the area is mixed and also where funding allows the boundaries to be blurred. In their experience, it is important for area-based funding to be sufficiently flexible to allow spending on community facilities outside the area on the basis that people from the area use the facility.

National policy and political discourse

Many interviewees argued that efforts on improving cohesion issues at the local level can be undermined by national policy and political rhetoric, and by media discourse, particularly around issues of asylum and terrorism.

Efforts by local police forces to build trust with minority communities can be undermined by the actions of national forces and politicians. In the experience of a senior police officer, ‘every time the [Minister] opens his mouth it makes my job more

difficult'. Once local councillor argued that framing the debate on counter terrorism and radicalisation in terms of the responsibility of the Muslim community to condemn terrorism or tackle radicalisation in its community leads to other South Asian communities wanting to actively disassociate themselves and distance themselves from Muslims, as a safety measure. This in turn makes Muslims feel more isolated.

Similarly, in the experience of interviewees, government and public discourse on refugees and asylum seekers makes it much harder to get people to work with refugee communities. This is also picked up in our local area research in which non-acceptance and even hostility towards newcomers on the part of some of those in the majority population active in organisations was identified by interviewees as a barrier to participation.

In our research with Muslims and non-Muslims, schools and colleges were identified as important public spaces that provided opportunities for meaningful interactions between people of different ethnic backgrounds. In interviews with policy-makers and practitioners, teachers from a high-achieving inner-city school with a predominantly South Asian student population complained that the national discourse on minority ethnic underachievement in education creates the impression that schools with large minority ethnic populations are bad and underperforming, and this in turn undermines attempts to attract white children to such schools.

Participation and engagement

In interviews with policy-makers and practitioners, participation was viewed as a key to greater cohesion. The lack of capacity to engage with mainstream institutions was identified as a barrier to participation and therefore to cohesion. This is in line with findings in our research in local areas, which shows that those who had higher levels of education and those who were fluent in English were more likely to be actively participating in mixed organisations. It was suggested by practitioners that support and outreach may therefore be needed to encourage members of some groups to participate. For example, in the experience of a Muslim community activist who has worked in the field of education for over a decade, schools often failed to engage parents from minority communities precisely because such parents may need extra support and training to be effective on governing bodies.

While education levels were found to be relevant in our research for whether people in local areas participated in organisations, they were not relevant to whether people felt they were able to influence decisions. The interviews with policy-makers and practitioners however suggested that the quality and nature of the engagement is crucial to whether people will actually participate. Structures and processes for consultation and gauging the views and opinions of local communities exist. Nevertheless among Muslims and non-Muslims taking part in our research, there were relatively low levels of belief that what they said or did had any impact on local and particularly national decision-making. A more mixed picture emerges from the policy interviews. Opportunities for participation in some cases were felt to be good. An individual working in local government found that 'people recognise that actually they can make a difference and they can do, they can benefit and they can contribute'. However, in other instances, interviewees, from the voluntary sector in particular, questioned the extent to which these opportunities for participation were 'real' and effective. Here, the interviewees emphasised the limits for such opportunities when power is centralised and when, in their view, local authorities were already constrained by central government around what they could do in response to consultations. Thus one interviewee from the voluntary sector argues that:

> … consulting isn't 'what plans shall we make?' It's 'here's the plan, do you like it?' Consultation really is an exercise in ticking a box to prove that you have consulted and not finding out what people want.

In line with our research findings showing that women were more likely to be involved in mixed organisations than men, several interviewees noted the emergence of a generation of Muslim women who, through a combination of choice and constraints, went to higher education in their home town. This generation, it was observed by a local police officer, have 'been educated in the city and stayed in the city'. Another interviewee, from a faith-based community organisation, notes that these women are bringing about change within their ethnic and faith communities, and are playing an increasingly active role in wider participation and engagement.

Participation in politics was also widely seen in interviews with policy-makers and practitioners as crucial for cohesion in a local area. All political parties were criticised in interviews for reinforcing and manipulating clan networks in minority communities for electoral purposes. It was suggested by one local political activist that this generated cynicism around participation in local politics – that the effect of this was to undermine cohesion at the local level, as young people were unlikely to view local civic engagement as a way to make change happen.

Religion and religious organisations

Islam was seen by practitioners from Muslim organisations as having an important role to play in encouraging and supporting cohesion through its support for values of compassion, generosity and kindness, and its emphasis on civic responsibility. In line with our research in which many Muslims identified mosques and Muslim organisations as having a significant role to play in bringing different communities and groups together, Muslim and non-Muslim practitioners highlighted how, in some instances, mosques and other community facilities are used by service providers to access and reach out to parts of the community. Examples include partnerships with mosques to develop homework clubs to improve literacy and the use of mosques for consultations and as meeting points.

Interviews also revealed some instances where faith institutions played an important role for statutory agencies to access new migrant communities. A senior official in one local authority noted that the Catholic churches, for example, played an important role in identifying some of the problems and issues faced by some East European migrants. Local mosques were also able to raise concerns and issues affecting new Muslim migrants.

New migrant communities

The impact of new migration on local service provision was highlighted by several interviewees. A lack of forward planning meant that situations arose where public services were not prepared for the arrival of new migrants. Examples given include the arrival of new migrant families with children where the lack of school places leads to children having to go to schools outside the area. Many of the tensions with new migrants were said to be around understanding and knowledge of rules around, for example, waste disposal or noise and overcrowding in housing. The interviews with local government officials and local community groups indicated that provision for new Eastern European migrants was not seen as a priority by local government and systems have not yet adapted to the new communities.

An effective regulatory framework

Several interviewees compared the strong regulatory framework for race and equality issues with what was considered to be the weaker approach to cohesion. Thus, in the view of one senior local government official: ‘there is no driver, no compulsion for

cohesion'. It was also argued that work on race, which has to be done, is passed off as work on cohesion, without any consideration of cohesion work beyond race. In fact, in the experience of a senior housing official, it was possible to do work on racial equality that has no impact on cohesion. He noted how:

> … a service provider can increase the number of BME *[black and minority ethnic]* clients, BME employees and members of its board and improve its policies on harassment without directly addressing the issue of cohesion, without, in particular, engaging with parts of the white communities that are voting for the BNP [British National Party].

Our local area research suggests that, for Muslims, discrimination on the grounds of religion is as significant as racial discrimination. The gap between the level of legal protection for racial discrimination compared to religious discrimination was not, however, raised in the interviews with policy-makers and practitioners.

Another senior local government official argued that, in the absence of regulation, cohesion work requires strong leadership within an organisation to drive it forward. 'One of the reasons cohesion hasn't worked is the absence of leadership'. The absence of a director for cohesion within councils was viewed as a weakness in ensuring leadership on the issue.

Key points

- The broad definition of cohesion provides the flexibility needed to allow practitioners to develop polices that are appropriate for local circumstances but necessarily leads to inconsistency in approach and priorities.
- Work on cohesion can include intra-ethnic and intrafaith work when it addresses divisions within what, to outsiders, may appear to be a homogeneous ethnic or faith group. It can also be about intragenerational cohesion.
- Addressing inequality and poverty is widely seen as central to ensuring cohesion, but care also needs to be taken to ensure that measures to tackle poverty do not undermine cohesion.

8 Conclusion

This research set out to investigate the factors which contribute to or undermine community cohesion in areas where there are a significant number of Muslim residents. It provides new data from three local areas in Birmingham, Bradford and Newham, where relatively large numbers of recently arrived Muslim migrants and established Muslim residents are living alongside people of other faiths and of none. It is based on 319 interviews with individuals from 40 countries of origin, including the UK.

The interviews were conducted between January 2006 and June 2007 with 155 Muslim and 44 non-Muslim migrants in the UK for less than five years; 74 established Muslim residents (born in the UK or with more than 10 years residence) and 46 UK-born non-Muslims. In total, 72 per cent of the sample were Muslims. Recent migrants included work permit holders, marriage partners, asylum seekers, refugees and students. Fifty-four per cent had unrestricted rights to remain and work in the UK, including the majority of Muslim recent migrants who had entered for family union. Interviews were also conducted with 28 policy-makers and service providers in Newham, Birmingham and Bradford, and with four policy-makers at the national level.

The findings challenge some common perceptions about Muslims and we suggest, in summarising these findings below, aspects of national policy relating to cohesion and to the integration of migrants, to which this has relevance.

Inequality

Recent migrants in the study were more likely than established residents to be unemployed or to have undesirable, low paid, insecure jobs. Both Muslim and non-Muslim recent migrants were more likely than longer established residents to say they were experiencing financial difficulties; the evidence suggesting that financial insecurity correlated with the individuals' migrant status and their recent arrival in the UK rather than, for instance, with their religion. Skilled migrants, as other studies have found, were not always accessing jobs that matched their qualifications.

Race discrimination was reported by minority ethnic residents regardless of length of residence or birth in the UK. Overall nearly 50 per cent of minority ethnic interviewees said they had experienced unfair treatment because of their 'colour or ethnicity'. For established Muslims, the perception of less favourable treatment in employment, housing and services had included a stronger 'faith dimension' since

the terrorist attacks of recent years and was as prominent as race discrimination. Thirty per cent of recent Muslim migrants said they had personally experienced religious discrimination.

Muslims reported experiences of discrimination in housing, health care and shops and highlights the need to ensure the effective implementation of the provisions in the Equality Act 2006 to protect individuals from discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, and to ensure that individuals, employers and service providers are aware that discrimination on those grounds is unlawful. Extension of the duty on public bodies to address discrimination on those grounds in the new Equality Bill to be published later this year would ensure that service providers are proactive in addressing this issue. Some interviewees were unsure, however, whether the treatment they experienced was on grounds of race or religion, emphasising the importance, in the Equality Bill, of measures to enable individuals to challenge discrimination on more than one grounds, where this occurs.

Choice of locality

For Muslims, family ties and the presence of people with similar ethnic or religious backgrounds were an important reason for moving to and valuing the locality in which they lived. Recent migrants and established Muslim residents were more likely than others to say that they derived a sense of security from the presence of people sharing their religion, ethnicity or country of origin in their locality. The greater access to amenities and services which the clustering of people from similar ethnic and religious backgrounds made possible was also a significant factor. These benefits which residential clustering can bring to individuals need to be acknowledged when consideration is given to disadvantages that may be associated with it.

For other recent migrants and long term residents, employment featured more prominently as a reason for moving to the area. UK-born non-Muslims were more likely than others to say they valued the ethnic diversity of the area in which they lived.

Spaces of social interaction

Although Muslims were more likely than other residents to meet people of similar religious and or ethnic origins in more social spaces outside of the home, there was considerable evidence of meaningful, informal social interaction across religious and

ethnic boundaries in a variety of spaces visited in the course of daily life, including sports and leisure facilities, residents' associations, and colleges and schools (whether as parents or participants in the education process). Significantly, this social interaction with people from other backgrounds was particularly the case for women with family responsibilities, as well as for those who were working or in education. This challenges a common perception of economically inactive Muslim women, in particular, as isolated from wider society. Overall, those most likely to interact with people from other backgrounds were women, those in the middle age range, born in the UK, educated to secondary level, employed or students, with family responsibilities and fluent in English.

The evidence also highlights the importance of the workplace, colleges and (for parents) schools as places where people interact with people from ethnic and religious backgrounds different from their own. This suggests that there may be potential to use such spaces more deliberately to foster interaction (Dines *et al.,* 2006). Consideration could be given to whether the new duty to promote community cohesion that exists in relation to schools might usefully be extended to places of further and higher education.

Support and friendship networks

The home remained an intimate space where interaction was largely with relatives and friends from similar backgrounds, particularly for Muslims. Among recent migrants, Muslims were also more likely than others to rely on extended kinship networks for advice and support. More than three quarters of recent Muslim migrants spent most of their leisure time with relatives and friends with similar religious or ethnic backgrounds, including phone and electronic contact with people living elsewhere in the UK and abroad. For female migrants who had come to the UK to form or join families, these networks, in providing access to social support, gave some protection from financial hardship. Muslims thus demonstrated both higher levels of 'bonding' social capital (interaction with people sharing their religion and/or country of origin) and 'bridging' capital (interaction with people from other backgrounds). The latter occurred despite the interviewees living in localities with relatively high religious and ethnic concentration. This is significant in light of the recent work of Putnam in the United States suggesting that there is a negative impact of ethnic concentration on both bonding and bridging capital (Putnam, 2007) and of Hewstone relating to opportunities for contact lessening prejudice (Hewstone and Schmid, 2007)

In contrast, other new migrants, less likely to have come for family union, appeared to be relatively socially isolated in these localities (and almost as likely to interact with people from other backgrounds as their own). Unlike Muslim migrants, they were most likely to have turned to organisations for help, if they needed it. This may reflect the importance of kinship and friendship networks for any new migrants irrespective of faith and the social isolation of migrants who, perhaps because of the availability of employment, are living in an area where there are few people from the same background as themselves.

Among the long terms residents, Muslims still had most social contact with people from the same backgrounds as themselves but had nevertheless developed broader social and friendship networks. UK-born non-Muslims had the most diverse networks.

Recent migrants

The financial insecurity of recent migrants and relative isolation of non-Muslim migrants, reinforces the importance recently attached in public policy towards addressing the issues raised by new migrants at the local level. The value recent Muslim migrants secure from social networks, suggests consideration could be given to ways in which the contribution of established groups could be enhanced within a broader strategy towards newcomers. Those who sponsor migrants under the new immigration rules could be given a greater role in supporting the induction of migrants into employment and community life and provided with accurate information on rights and responsibilities so that they are in a position to pass on the advice needed.

The research supports the importance of a capacity to communicate in English for social interaction and participation in local organisations. This needs to be reflected in the funding arrangements for English language classes that ensure migrants can get access to tuition at times and at a cost compatible with work or family commitments. Such national policy issues could be covered by community cohesion impact assessments. Government should consider the support that may be given to encourage these being carried out at the national level.

Participation

Interviewees eligible and registered to vote reported relatively high levels of involvement in mainstream elections. In contrast, there were low levels of

participation in local organisations, including ethnic and religious organisations, particularly among recent migrants. Two thirds of all those interviewed were not actively involved in any organisation.

Twenty five per cent of non-Muslims and 15 per cent of Muslims were active in mixed organisations. Highest participation was found among UK-born non-Muslims (39 per cent), with 20 per cent of established Muslims contributing in this way. Women were more likely than men to be involved in mixed organisations despite low participation rates amongst those looking after families.

The ethnic/religious mix of neighbourhoods did not impact on involvement in organisations. Recent migrants cited lack of time, insufficient English, feeling unwelcome or insecure immigration status as reasons for non participation. For some established Muslims, a perceived lack of relevance of local organisations to their lives, and negative attitudes within their community to participation of women in organisations, were factors.

There was little confidence amongst all interviewees, and particularly among recent migrants, that they could have an impact on decision-making at the local, and particularly at the national, level. The minority who were actively involved in an organisation were not more likely than others to feel that they could have an impact on decision-making.

Low participation in local organisations did not reflect indifference to local issues. Significantly, there was a common concern among interviewees about aspects of their neighbourhoods, in particular crime, drug-use and pollution. This suggests that there may be potential to bring people together around these issues, as it would be seen as relevant to their lives, if other barriers to participation could be addressed.

Values and belonging in Britain

Ninety nine per cent of recent migrants, including Muslims, placed the highest value on democracy, fairness, justice and security in Britain, followed by opportunities for education, a good standard of living and access to services. This finding suggests that the emphasis in current policy debates on a perceived need to teach ‘common values’ to migrants may be overstated.

Most migrants, including Muslims, felt there was little conflict in belonging to both their countries of origin and to Britain. As one Muslim woman said, ‘I got my life here but I got my memories there’; and a Polish man: ‘You don’t have to make a choice between the two’.

Recent migrants, as expected, had the strongest sense of attachment to their country of origin and to people from that country ('transnational identification'), a majority saying that the most important people in their lives were not in Britain. For established Muslims born outside the UK, the position was reversed, 60 per cent saying that the people most important to them were in Britain. Information and visits to their country of origin remained important to them, but with very limited evidence of financial, business or political involvement abroad. This suggests that transnational identification and activity lessens with increasing length of residence in the UK.

Significantly, those with the *most* transnational attachment and involvement were also *most* likely to be employed, financially stable, have voted in the general election and to meet more people of different ethnicity and religion and in more places (although least likely to participate in mixed organisations). This evidence shows that continuing transnational attachment does not need to be a barrier to economic and social integration in the UK and thus that initiatives to promote belonging in Britain do not need to challenge a complementary, sense of belonging to the country of birth.

A sense of belonging in Britain for all migrants, recent and established, was however significantly affected by their perception of their lack of acceptance in the UK. Interviewees cited experience of discrimination, verbal abuse and less overt communication that their presence was unwelcome, as reinforcing a sense that they did not belong. The evidence suggests that it is this perception and experience of being unwelcome rather than of attachment to their country of origin that diminishes a sense of belonging in British society. There is thus a need to address public perceptions of Muslims and migrants and discriminatory behaviour towards them as a key component of cohesion strategy.

Cohesion policy framework

The government definition of cohesion recognises the importance of equal life chances – that inequality is divisive. In implementation, however, it appears to place greater emphasis on other dimensions, in particular on the need for common values and on addressing radicalisation. This research suggests that a concern that migrants do not share common values (and indeed common concerns about their area) may be overstated. It also suggests that a prerequisite of a common sense of belonging is that individuals feel confident that their contribution is welcome and that they will not face discrimination. In that context, it is important that the recent separation of the Government's Equality Office from its former association with cohesion policy in the Department of Communities and Local Government does not reduce the priority attached to equality objectives within the cohesion strategy.

The research found concern among local policy makers and practitioners about the linking of the 'cohesion' and 'counter-terrorism' agendas. In particular, it was suggested that this risks stigmatising and alienating law abiding Muslim communities; and may marginalise initiatives that do not fit within a counter-terrorism agenda, but which would build local cohesion (for instance bringing people together around shared local concerns).

Finally, local policy-makers and practitioners, while welcoming backing for initiatives that could build bridges between ethnic and religious communities, emphasised that work (and thus funding) could also be needed to build bridges *within* a religious or ethnic community. This reinforces the conclusion of the report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) that policy must be sufficiently flexible to allow local agencies to address the dynamic of relationships and scope for 'bonding' and 'bridging' activities needed in their own area. The existing duty on local authorities to promote good race relations, little evident in this study, is a policy lever that could potentially be used more effectively to foster initiatives that address the stereotypes and prejudice that were so evident and a key factor in undermining cohesion at the local level.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. The limitations of the ethnic categories used for data collection, however, do not allow comparison of South Asian Muslim groups with Arabs, Turks or North African Muslims.

2. Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

3. Equality Act 2006.

4. NOP/Channel 4 April 2006.

Chapter 2

1. For the purposes of this report, since 2000.

2. An analysis of the Annual Population Survey 2005–06 at the level of government office region (GOR) shows that, among migrants arriving in the UK between 2000 and 2006, in the West Midlands Metropolitan County, the largest percentages were from India, Pakistan and Zimbabwe, followed by those from other Asian countries, Poland, Iran, Iraq, Somalia and the Philippines. In West Yorkshire, the highest percentages were from Eastern European countries, including former Czechoslovakia and Poland, followed by Pakistan, India, the Philippines and Iraq. Inner London covered too broad an area to consider as an approximation for Newham. There was no data available according to religion to provide estimates specifically for Muslims. (Original analysis, dataset obtained from the UK Data Archive.)

3. Background papers on each local area and the specific wards covering the demographic and socio-economic structure of the localities, their institutional landscape relating to the participation of Muslim and non-Muslim communities, issues around local governance and information on local issues relevant to the communities were commissioned from locally based academics in each area, to provide a context for the selection of interviewees and for carrying out the fieldwork (Abbas, 2006; Harriss, 2006; Valentine, 2006).

4. Quotas for gender and age groups (18–24, 25–44 and 45 and over) were set according to 2001 census data for the wards selected.

5. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method often used in a known social setting. It progresses through gaining the help of initial contacts to establish communication with others known to them who are eligible for inclusion in the research. In turn, the latter are expected to provide contact with other eligible individuals, thereby creating a chain of informants. This method is particularly suited to sensitive research targeting 'hard to reach' populations, as in this project where 'chain' access to interviewees is dependent on shared agreement within social networks about the trustworthiness of the researchers and the integrity of the purpose of the research (Atkinson and Flint, 2001).

6. The Forest Gate incident refers to the arrest for alleged terrorist involvement, and later release without charge, of two brothers living in a Forest Gate neighbourhood in Newham in June 2006. This incident illustrated the tensions in areas where large Muslim populations lived after the 7 July bombings in London the previous year (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/5041842.stm – accessed 10 January 2008).

7. Original analysis of the 2007 Citizenship Survey, Quarter One obtained from UK Data Archive.

8. The derived category 'non-Muslims' is made up of those of other religions or of no religion (original analysis of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, April to June 2007 obtained from UK Data Archive).

9. Original analysis of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, April to June 2007 obtained from UK Data Archive.

Chapter 3

1. A count of jobless people who want to work, are available to work and are actively seeking employment, National Statistics Online (www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=165 – accessed 10 January 2008).

2. Original analysis of the Annual Population Survey 2005–06, UK Data Archive. Inner London covered too broad an area to consider in relation to our project.

3. Quarterly Labour Force Survey, April to June 2007. Original analysis by religion and date of arrival.

4. National Statistics Online (www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=1386&Pos=10&ColRank=2&Rank=1000 – accessed 10 January 2008).

5. No one in the sample was on either SAWS (Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme) or SBS (Sector-based Scheme) work permits. These are temporary labour migration programmes that were operational at the time the research took place.

6. The 1976 Race Relations Act defines discrimination on racial grounds as including race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

7. www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/yourrights/equalityanddiscrimination/religionandbelief/Pages/Religionandbelief.aspx (accessed 10 January 2008).

Chapter 4

1. In accordance with the practice of national surveys, such as the Millennium Cohort Study, the boundaries of a locality are defined as 'about a mile around where the interviewees live', and questions to the interviewees about locality were worded in this way. The term 'neighbourhood' on the other hand, as used in this study, has narrower geographical parameters referring to the immediate locality around the interviewees' homes, usually the street where they live and one or two streets around it.

2. See note 1, this chapter.

3. The spaces depicted here were selected for further analysis because they were eight of nine spaces in which *less* than 50 per cent of the sample said they 'meet no one at all'. Religious centres were the only spaces excluded from the analysis of spaces where interviewees met people from a mixture of ethnic and religious backgrounds, as inevitably most interacted with others of similar religious backgrounds in such spaces.

4. The focus here is more on interviewees' sources of support than on quality and reliability of support.

Chapter 5

1. The 2005 Citizenship Survey uses the term 'civil renewal' to incorporate civic activism (involvement in decision-making about or provision of local services, such as through being a local councillor or school governor); civic consultation (engaging in consultation about local issues); and civic participation (varied forms of engagement in democratic processes, such as contacting local or national political representatives, signing petitions). It defines formal volunteering as 'giving unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations to benefit other people or the environment' (Kitchen *et al.*, 2006b, p. 44). Any of these aspects of associational community life is covered in the term 'political and civic engagement' as used in our research.

2. In the question asked of the interviewees about voting, a distinction was not made between ineligibility and registration. Therefore the analysis is not able to distinguish between these two patterns of non-voting and to provide insight into those interviewees who chose not to vote.

3. We recognise that recent migrants who are not Commonwealth or EU citizens are not eligible to vote in national, local or European elections.

4. The organisations asked about were those to do with: schools and children's education; youth activities; adult education; religion; politics; social welfare; community; criminal justice; human rights; trades union; housing/neighbourhood.

5. Information is from the BBC election results website: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/vote_2005/constituencies/default.stm (accessed 10 January 2008).

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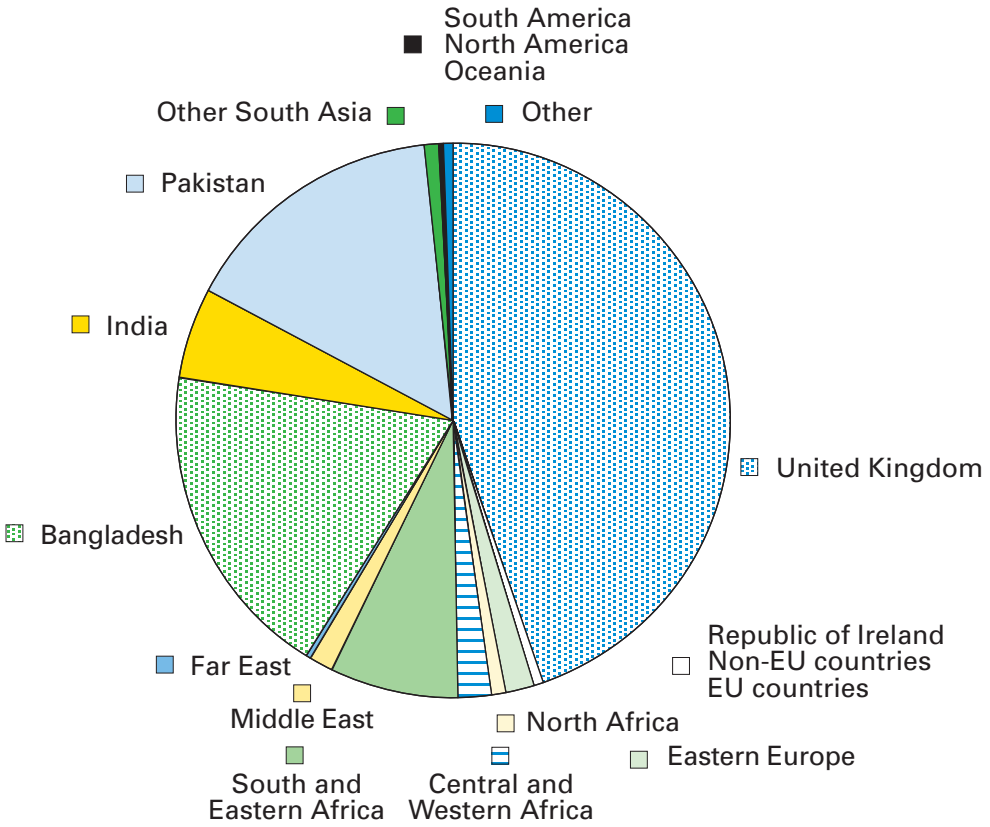
Appendix: Supplementary information on methods

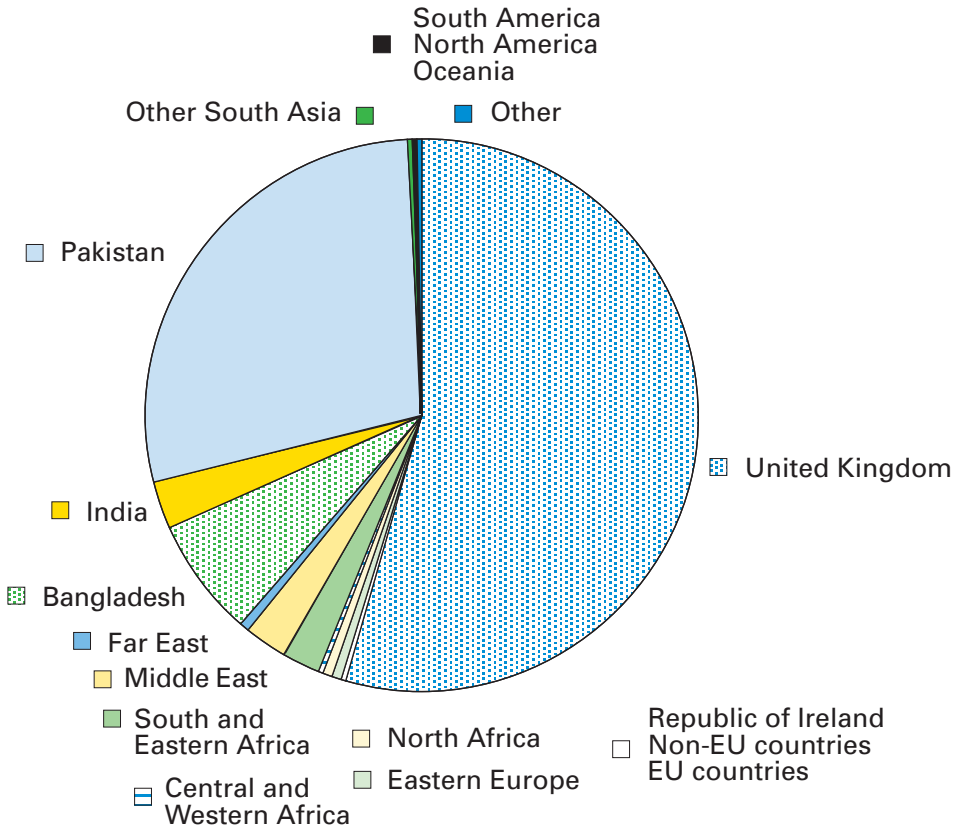
Supplementary information on selection of local areas

Figure A1 Muslims in Newham by country of birth, 2001



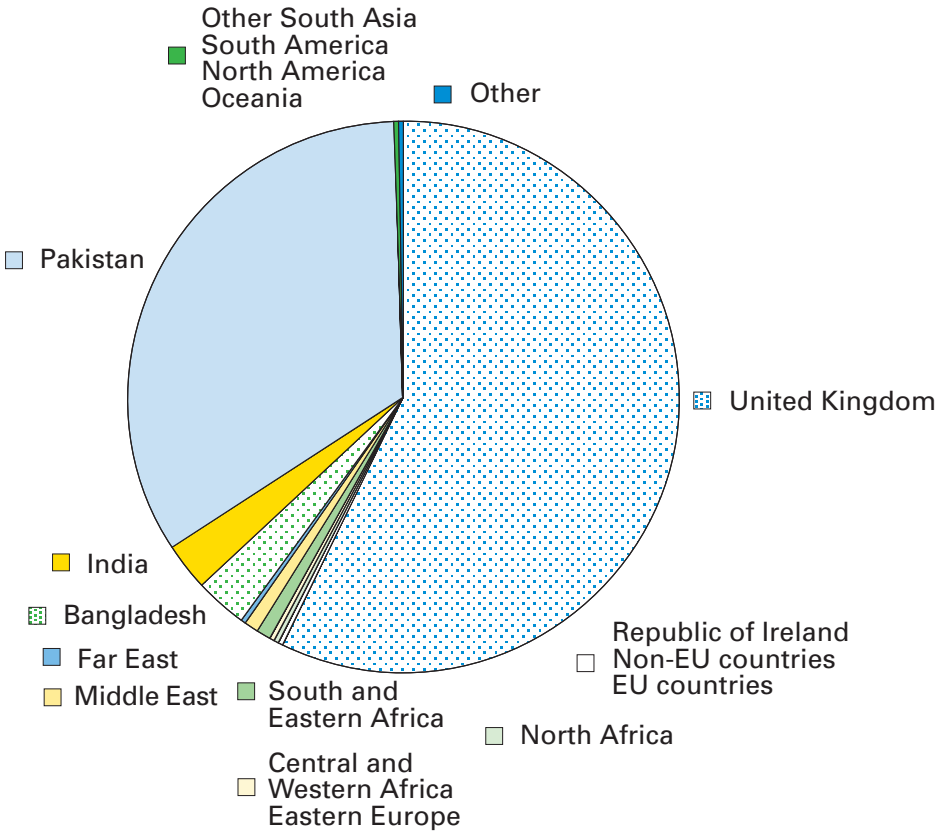
Source: based on 2001 census data on country of birth by religion.

Figure A2 Muslims in Birmingham by country of birth, 2001



Source: based on 2001 census data on country of birth by religion.

Figure A3 Muslims in Bradford by country of birth, 2001



Source: based on 2001 census data on country of birth by religion.

Table A1 summarises characteristics of each area relevant to selection.

Table A1 Characteristics of local areas

	Newham	Birmingham	Bradford
Population	243,891	977,087	467,665
% Muslim, whole population	24.3	14.3	16.1
% ethnic group, whole population[a]			
White British	33.8	65.6	78.3
White Other	4.3	1.5	
Indian	12.1	5.7	2.7
Pakistani	8.5	10.7	14.6
Bangladeshi	8.8	2.1	1.1
Asian Other	3.1	1.0	0.6
Black Caribbean	7.4	4.9	0.6
Black African	13.1	0.6	0.2
IMD[b] average	11	15	30
% unemployed, age 16–74, whole population	6.7	5.7	4.4

a Selected groups only.
b Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Most deprived = 1.
Sources: 2001 Census; Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Table A2 Characteristics of wards

Wards	Newham		Birmingham		Bradford	
	Canning Town North	Stratford and New Town	Sparkbrook	Springfield[a]	Bowling	Little Horton
Population	12,061	12,378	28,311	28,961	17,722	16,431
% born outside the UK and rest of EU	26.7	31.7	36.3	31.1	15.3	22.9
% Muslims	10.3	16.8	58.9	46.5	22.7	34.5
Muslim councillors[b]	0/3	0/3	3/3	1/3	2/3	2/3
% ethnic group, whole population[c]						
White British	49.6	38.2	17.6	28.5	63.8	48.0
White Other	4.0	5.2	1.4	1.1	1.2	2.5
Indian	2.1	5.5	5.7	13.2	5.2	3.7
Pakistani	2.3	3.5	40.5	39.8	18.8	32.4
Bangladeshi	4.0	6.9	10.4	3.0	4.4	2.8
Other Asian	0.8	1.7	5.0	3.2	1.2	1.1
Black Caribbean	7.8	10.3	7.4	3.1	1.2	2.7
Black African	19.3	18.1	1.2	0.7	0.4	0.9
% unemployed, age 16–74, whole population	7.2	7.4	9.6	6.9	7.0	8.0
No. qualifications, age 16–74	39.1	29.4	51.8	43.5	49.3	47.9

a Springfield incorporates large parts of the old Small Heath and Sparkhill wards where considerable sampling took place.
b As of June 2005.
c Selected groups only.
Source: 2001 Census.

Table A2 shows that there are significant numbers of people born outside the UK and the EU in all the wards compared to England as a whole (6.9 per cent), London (21.8 per cent), Birmingham (13.4 per cent) and Bradford (10.4 per cent).[1] The populations in the Newham wards are significantly more diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion and country of origin than the other populations. This is in keeping with differences in diversity aimed for in relation to the three areas. The Birmingham wards have particularly large Muslim populations, many of whom are of Pakistani ethnicity. All the wards show characteristics of relative socio-economic deprivation, with higher unemployment rates and percentages of people with no qualifications than at both national and regional levels. Corresponding percentages of unemployment in April 2001 were 3.4 per cent for England, 4.4 per cent for London, 5.7 per cent for Birmingham and 4.4 per cent for Bradford. Percentages of people with no qualifications were 28.9 per cent for England, 23.7 per cent for London, 37.1 per cent for Birmingham and 35.1 per cent for Bradford.[2]

Sample distribution

Table A3 sets out the way the sample was distributed across the research sites, categories, gender and age groups, alongside the expected distribution according to quotas set prior to sample recruitment based on census results for the main wards chosen in each locality. In total 319 interviews were returned. There was significant over-sampling in Bradford in the established Muslim resident category, as 35 people rather than the expected 20 were interviewed. However, given that the established Muslim population group, particularly of Pakistani origin, forms a significant component of the area population (see Tables A1 and A2 and Figure A3 above), this enhancement of the sample is likely to benefit the analysis. Table A3 shows that men and those aged 18–24 were also over-sampled, although there were more women than men in the latter category. The focus on the younger age group may partially be the result of 'interviewer effects' – the preponderance of younger university students among the community researchers and the kinds of networks of people they had the most access to. The greater number of men than women interviewed may arise from the greater visibility of men in many kinds of community organisations used for recruitment, although the use of snowballing did ensure that women were contacted as much as possible, to reach the target numbers in the sample.

Table A3 Expected and achieved sample distribution

Characteristics	Expected[a]	Achieved
Area		
Newham	100	100
Birmingham	100	102
Bradford	100	117
Category[b]		
New Muslim migrant	150	155
Established Muslim	60	74
New non-Muslim migrant	45	44
UK-born non-Muslim	45	46
Gender		
Male	147	162
Female	153	157
Age group		
18–24	71	94
25–44	173	174
45 and over	56	51
Total	300	319

a The expected values are from quotas set for area, category of interviewee, gender and age. The quotas for gender and age were set separately for each category of interviewee in each area, but combined quotas are given here.

b The expectation was that the sample would be divided equally between the three broad areas, with 100 people across the two wards in each site made up of 50 recent Muslim migrants, 20 established Muslim residents, 15 recent non-Muslim migrants and 15 UK-born non-Muslims.

Notes

1. Office for National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics website (http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/ – accessed 15 January 2008).

2. Office for National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics website (http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/ – accessed 15 January 2008).