From Migrants to Citizens: Muslims in Britain 1950s–1990s

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The British Muslim community has played a major role in the public and political discourses of the state. This article charts the experiences of Muslims in Britain. From the mid-century establishment of the community through to the late 1990s this essay explores the politicisation and identity politics of this minority group. Through the case studies of the Rushdie affair and the Honeyford affair, this article seeks to contextualise and chart the development of British Islam and its continuing journey into the public sphere.

Keywords: Muslims; Islam; Britain; Rushdie; minorities

Introduction

As John L. Esposito points out, at the beginning of the twenty-first century ‘it is as important to speak of Islam in the West as Islam and the West.’1

As over 15 million residents of Europe are Muslims, such a perspective appears timely. Muslims now exert an active public presence within the western world, a trend which requires reciprocal social, political, theological and intellectual adjustment. This is especially true in Europe, where indigenous communal identity emerged partly in response to the proximity, but perceived otherness, of the Islamic world.2 This historical experience of tension, if not outright confrontation, has often been emphasized within the contemporary discourse of Islam and the West. However, in a strange and undoubtedly confrontational way, the
development of European culture historically relied on the Islamic ‘other’ in order to provide itself with coherence. An overview of European military history, and the central role the defence of Christianity against the actual or perceived threat of Islam has played, suggests that Islam has traditionally performed a significant role in the evolution of European identity.

In the context of globalisation this dichotomy has become even more pronounced. In Europe, one of the primary by-products of the globalisation process has been the emergence of the European Union (EU). While providing a seemingly viable basis for state level integration, European unification has also triggered a surge of defensive ‘nationalism not federalism’. As a social trend, the intensification of nationalism has serious repercussions for minorities, especially if they are markedly ‘different’. In the case of Europe’s Muslim communities this climate has triggered a reconsideration of what it means to be a Muslim living within the West. Naturally, this reconfiguring of personal identity is also influenced by the specific individual and communal experiences of Muslims in their host countries. Various national modes of engagement have emerged within the EU countries in response to the presence of Muslim minorities, from the social and political exclusion which has traditionally characterised the experience of Muslim migrant workers in Germany to the attempts at various forms of integration, assimilation and multiculturalism which have marked the French and British contexts.

The British Muslim community, which exceeds 1.6 million, provides an interesting case study of how Muslims react to and engage with the realities and challenges of a western nation-state setting. Equally, the British experience illuminates the difficulties and ambiguities associated with Europe’s varied responses to Islam within its borders. This article offers an historical exploration of Muslim settlement, legal status, politicisation and interaction with mainstream British society. The underlying theme of this exploration is the various identifications and loyalties which can complicate, or enhance, the social, religious and political experience of Muslims in a western nation-state.

Despite its current public profile, historically speaking British Islam is a relatively new social and political phenomenon. Small numbers of Muslims of Yemeni and Bengali backgrounds have lived in the United Kingdom since the late 1880s. However, it was not until the 1951 census that a notable Muslim presence (roughly 5,000 people) was registered. This situation altered rapidly in the mid-twentieth century. As the need for migrant labour in the post-Second World War reconstruction period grew it was fulfilled through an influx of individuals from the ex-colonial states.
Many of the arriving immigrants had served as colonial soldiers. Jorgen Nielsen, a leading authority on Islam in Europe, posits that through the 1950s the rate of subcontinent immigration into the United Kingdom approached 10,000 a year.\textsuperscript{4} Many of the immigrant men found work in London and a range of regional centres, and the predominant employment experience was within factories or in menial labour capacities, essentially jobs that the native-born British eschewed. Essentially economic migrants, the Muslim men entering the United Kingdom functioned as ‘bridgeheads for chain migration flows’, with families beginning to trickle in to join the workers.\textsuperscript{5} The political status of Muslims in this period was a legacy of imperialism. The 1914 British Nationality and Aliens Act offered individuals born throughout the Empire the status of British subject. In this sense, at least theoretically, ‘Britishness’ was formulated on the basis of loyalty to a concept of leadership, the Crown. This conception, which sought to foster an empire-wide identity, tempered the importance of territorial, communal or linguistic affiliations. In the early twentieth century migration to the United Kingdom was not a major political consideration. Therefore, the lingering impact of this de-territorialized conception of British identity, could not be foreseen.

As the twentieth century progressed, the disintegration of imperialism and new conceptualisations of the political rights of the individual combined to create an expansion of the notion of citizenship. However, this was not without conflict, and as Linda Colley asserts, at this juncture Britain itself was undergoing an evolution in relation to national identity. Colley suggests that with the mid-twentieth-century decline of religion, the absence of war with Europe – which had entrenched the need for unity in the face of attack – and, crucially, the demise of ‘both commercial supremacy and... imperial hegemony’,\textsuperscript{6} Britain itself was in a state of identity crisis. Into this specific historical moment stepped a migrant community clearly marked by ethnic, cultural and religious difference.

As a result of these social and political processes of change, people born in the lands of the Commonwealth came to be seen as ‘citizens’ as opposed to ‘subjects’. Therefore, prior to 1962 all colonial subjects entering the United Kingdom were offered citizenship. This political identification allowed foreign ex-colonial subjects to migrate, settle and immediately enjoy full political rights. In addition to the economic incentives, the opportunity to claim western citizenship was attractive to many. However, the decision to confer this status upon newly arrived Muslim migrants from the Commonwealth states, many of whom could not speak English, tested the popular understanding of citizenship, which was closely linked
in the public mindset to national identity and based on a sense of shared culture, history, language and tradition. While citizenship and national identity often converge, especially in the public arena, they are two distinct concepts. Citizenship, a legal construct, is based on the rights and responsibilities of the individual within a state. National identity is a far more elusive and emotive concept. For newly arriving Muslim immigrants, although citizenship was assured, achieving a sense of a shared national identity proved difficult. Indeed, as Gilles Kepel notes, in this context ‘citizenship had no meaning as a criterion of national identity, since membership of the Commonwealth conferred automatic rights’. As a result of this new pressure on British society public debate on what constituted ‘British’ identity fomented. In 1962 the Commonwealth Immigration Act was passed, which limited immigration previously aimed at fulfilling unskilled labour needs. Further restrictions on immigration were passed in 1968, 1969, 1971 and 1981. While part of the difficulty associated with the classification of an unambiguous British identity may have stemmed from the state’s unusual multinational position, by the 1970s ‘automatic’ citizenship was popularly defined as limited to the ‘patrials’ (Scots, Welsh and North Irish). Essentially, this represented a racialisation of the concept of identity, with skin colour becoming the influential factor in the popular assessment of what constituted the ‘British’ identity. Another historical trend in the development of ‘British’ identity also had negative ramifications for migrant settlers. Saied Reza Ameli suggests that indigenous British identity eventually pivoted not on unity, but on a sense of ‘distinctness in relation to others’.

A period of economic stagnation in the 1970s placed the nascent Muslim community under further social pressure. As Gerd Nonneman et al. notes, relations between a migrant community and its host nation are often tested by periods of economic decline. Coupled with the identity debates of the late 1960s, this changed economic climate led to a significant change in immigration policy. In response to the increasingly tight immigration restrictions, family reunification schemes developed throughout the late 1960s and 1970s with wives and children joining their husbands and fathers. This marked a fundamental change in the development of the British Muslim community. The increasing arrival of families signalled an acceptance, by Muslims, of Britain as a permanent homeland—a foregoing by the first generation of the ‘myth of return’. Rather than an economic subset, Muslim men thus became the leaders of a burgeoning community. Chain migration patterns resulted in the arrival of community leadership structures and the tribal, clan and regional loyalties of the subcontinent were replicated in British cities. The arrival
of women and children reinforced a sense of a distinct community and, as the raising of the next generation highlighted issues of personal and collective identity within a minority paradigm, led to the establishment of community infrastructures such as mosques. The Union of Muslim Organizations of the UK and Eire (UMO) was established in 1970 as an example of the desire for political organization. However, this initiative was largely unsuccessful. The UMO’s lack of success as a representative body can be attributed to both the strength of local leadership and the embryonic nature of the community.

Family reunification was not the sole force to affect the composition of the British Muslim community in the 1960s and 1970s. Change and upheaval in the Muslim Middle East also affected the community’s composition. From the 1970s political asylum increasingly became a source of Muslim immigration. This added new social and political dimensions to the relatively homogenous ethnic background which had previously characterised the community. Other than the small number of Yemenis and Cypriot Turks the overwhelming majority of British Muslims were from the subcontinent. The diversification of the community continued as Africanisation programmes in Kenya and Uganda led to the arrival of East African Muslims of subcontinent descent who displayed distinct cultural patterns. Distant political upheavals, such as the 1979 Iranian Revolution, also triggered small surges in migration. Additionally, this period saw the arrival of a small contingent of wealthy and influential Arabs seeking to further their fortunes in an increasingly cosmopolitan London. While wealth, prestige and education facilitated the entry of upper-class Arab immigrants into British society, such experiences were not the norm.

The arrival of Muslims from the Middle East undoubtedly complicated the prevailing approach of defining Muslims on the basis of ethnicity, as Pakistanis or South Asians, or on the basis of perceived racial affiliation, such as the contested and controversial designation of ‘black’. Sporadic confrontation within these supposed ‘communities’ further tested such preconceptions. Riots in 1981 and 1985 were sparked by South Asian/Afro-Caribbean tensions and such incidents demonstrated that engaging with Britain’s increasingly complex ethnic spectrum required a more comprehensive approach. Muslims, increasingly an ethnically diverse community bonded largely by religion, presented a challenge to the prevailing sociological and socio-political approaches, which were based on ethnicity. While the role of religion as a unifying factor needs to be treated with caution, and as Humayun Ansari points out, religion ‘conceals a great deal of diversity and is interlocked with other, secular, forms of
identity', it can still be viewed as increasingly relevant to the communal identity and self-understanding of Muslims in Britain.

The Status of the British Muslim Community

The uncertainties surrounding the status of the Muslim community proved a point of tension and confrontation throughout this period. By the 1970s the Muslim community was clearly entrenched as a permanent component of the British social and political landscape. Individual citizenship provided the early migrants with protection and status under the law. However, the community’s standing was not as clear-cut. Since the late 1970s the buzz words of assimilation, integration and the closely related concept of multiculturalism have influenced the discourse on minority relations within western nation-states. Assimilation, similar to acculturation, can be understood as a process in which ‘language, customs and institutions of the adopted country’ are internalised by the settler body. The final result of this process is a disintegration of the settler identity and the complete acceptance of the settlers as an indistinguishable part of the host society. This has sometimes been understood as the inevitable end product of migration. However, in the context of British Muslims, and indeed Muslim communities throughout the West, many have challenged the likelihood of this outcome. Muhammad Anwar asserts that Islam ‘will remain a distinct layer in the social makeup’ of Britain and indeed European society, arguing that rather than promoting assimilation ‘education and economic well-being give (Muslims) greater confidence in (their own) cultural identity’. As Anthony Giddens had earlier recognized, because of its social potential Islam was unlikely to decline in the face of secularisation.

Throughout the West the socio-political climate of the 1970s and 1980s sought to embrace and legitimise cultural difference. Thus, in acknowledgement of the increasing diversity of British society the concept of integration and multiculturalism, a doctrine which supports and allows for cultural difference within a paradigm of coexistence, emerged as the preferred method for reconciling the changing social landscape. Articulated by Roy Jenkins in 1966 as ‘not a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance’, the right of Muslim settlers to maintain a distinct identity was enshrined within the British approach. However, as John Rex observed, the expectations of the dominant national group within a multicultural structure are significant. Minorities are expected to display loyalty to the state, acceptance of the system of
governance, and acknowledgement of the privileged place of aspects of
British culture (including Christianity). The dominant national group,
however, appears to retain the right to question, if not condemn, the
minority’s religious and cultural practices. Therefore, institutionalised
multiculturalism may have resulted in little reciprocal adaptation. Further
complicating the situation, as Gilles Kepel points out, the system of
multiculturalism adopted in Britain unofficially continued along
racial/ethnic lines, a trend which tended to obscure the vital role religious
identification played in the formulation of identity in the British Muslim
community.

This historical approach was institutionalised in the Race Relations Act
of 1976 which legislated against discrimination on the basis of racial/ethnic
grounds but did not offer the same protection against religious or cultural
discrimination. Unlike the Jewish and Sikh communities, Muslims
were not afforded legal recognition as an ethnic group. Muslims were
considered a religious minority and therefore denied legal protection and,
perhaps more importantly, formal recognition as a distinct community.
As a result of this legislation, Jews and Sikhs were able to claim legal
protection for the visible manifestations of their religious beliefs as they
were understood as a component of their racial identity. The visible
indicators of Islamic belief, however, were not legally protected. This
translated into a legislative refusal to accept Islam as the basis of a distinct
social grouping. Rather than reflecting a fundamentally anti-Islamic
agenda, this discrepancy can be understood as reflective of the increasingly
secular nature of British politics, with the allowances made for Jews and
Sikhs perhaps demonstrative of a slightly ad hoc governmental approach to
the new ethnic realities of Britain. Influential Muslim scholar Tariq
Modood identified this trend of attempting to understand the Muslim
community on the basis of race alone as a doctrine of ‘political blackness’,
the simplification of immigrant identity to a question of racial identity
alone. The scepticism and suspicion with which Islam as a signifier of
identity is viewed by British society is keenly felt by this theorist who
asserts that ‘Muslim identity is seen as the illegitimate child of British
multiculturalism.’

While privileging Anglo-Saxon religious and cultural heritage, the
prevailing understanding of British identity was largely secular. In a clear
reflection of the Western European tradition of a separation between
church and state, the UK census had not included a question pertaining to
religious affiliation since 1851. Despite the retention of elements of
Christian authority within the system of governance, and the privileged
place of the Church of England within British law, individual religious
affiliation was increasingly relegated to the private sphere. As Nielsen points out, British Muslims challenged the prevailing expectation that ‘communities of immigrant origin would quickly follow a course characterised by the privatization of religion’. Considering Muslim responses to such developments, Ansari contends that the primary strategy adopted by the South Asian Muslims was one of accommodation, a slow process which theoretically includes adaptation to the host society with a focus on the maintenance of a distinct identity. However, in this context cultural encapsulation became a trend, with some sections of the Muslim community remaining separate, culturally encapsulated, from the mainstream society. A perception within the Muslim community of morally permissive British social norms in the late 1960s and 1970s further solidified this trend. The Muslim community’s concerns over mainstream British social norms may be understood as a legacy of the initial migration patterns. As the post-war migrants were economic not political, they had arrived seeking greater economic opportunities not a different identity structure and, as such, were more inclined to maintain their pre-existing communal identity.

This tension over the role of religion in the formulation of identity and society was also being confronted in the Muslim world. John L. Esposito observes that in the 1970s and 1980s political Islam challenged the ‘belief that modernization means the inexorable or progressive secularization and Westernization of society’. Placed within the specific context of a migrant community in Britain, such theories indicate that the Muslim community, sections of which were determined to maintain a distinct ethnic and religious identity, would contest the dominant (if problematic) migrant trend of secularization. Yet, as a result of the early willingness of the state to confer citizenship, the British Muslim community found itself legally protected in ways other Western European Muslim communities were not. Thus political freedom and a diversity of organizations have been features of the British Muslim community. Gerd Nonneman et al., for instance, link the politicised nature of the British Muslim community directly to the security provided by citizenship. Therefore, commencing in the late 1970s, activists capitalised on the growth of the Muslim community and began to assert a politicised Muslim/Islamic identity and enter the public sphere, often calling for parity with other religious groups. This can be identified as part of the general trend of identity politics in the western world in the post-1960s period. The affirmation of ‘positive difference’ and the emergence of socio-political movements aimed at encouraging the empowerment of societal groupings such as women and young people triggered a similar desire for public recognition and acceptance of a
separate Muslim identity. Activists within the Muslim community began blending religious and political issues and several highly publicised incidents in the 1980s demonstrated the community’s willingness to assert a public presence.

The Politicisation of British Islam: The Honeyford and Rushdie Affairs

As political Islam emerged throughout the 1980s various actors, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, tussled for religious and ideological leadership of the Muslim world. Both states sought to fulfil a global vision. Iran, still guided by Ayatollah Khomeini, actively engaged in the attempt to ‘export the revolution’, while proponents of Saudi Arabia’s Wahhabi doctrine also sought international influence. Attracting Muslims to their respective doctrines became an objective both states pursued throughout the Muslim world and beyond. In Thatcher’s Britain, the withdrawal of state-funding from community groups caused many to dissolve. The organizational void within the Muslim community offered an open field to various religious groups, both domestic and international. In this way, the experience of British Muslims in the 1980s was influenced by the involvement of external actors. Domestically, the community was also responding to an increasing awareness of a disjuncture between the legal and the socio-political realities of citizenship. The discourse of multiculturalism had fostered a societal approach which although allowing for differences in British society, often obscured the multiplicity of perspectives within the Muslim community itself. This created a situation whereby perspectives were often homogenised and British Muslims were presented as a single, unified community. Within the emergent ‘them and us’ paradigm, Muslim attempts at political organization were often misunderstood as a reflection of unity, not diversity. Concurrently, multiculturalism was popularly understood not as plurality of coexisting cultures but rather as the willingness of an Anglo-Saxon state to accept the presence of other cultures, as evident in the then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s comment that Britain was ‘a tolerant Christian nation’.25 This popular notion was reinforced by media coverage which represented the Muslim community as a united, often threatening, presence within Britain. This was further underscored by the application of British law. As discussed, Muslims were not offered legal protection as a minority community. Furthermore, blasphemy laws were not extended to cover the denigration of Islam. This unequal status of religion, and by extension identity, was brought to the forefront of British politics in the 1980s.
In 1980 an ex-Guardian journalist, Dr Kalim Siddiqui founded the Muslim Institute. An activist seeking to re-establish the ‘civilizational power of Islam’, Siddiqui had long agitated for transnational cooperation between Muslims. Siddiqui believed that British Muslims could be politically effective despite their minority status, citing the experience of the Prophet as a blueprint for generating ‘political power in a minority situation’. Siddiqui was greatly influenced by the apparent success of the Iranian Revolution, so much so that his Muslim Institute became widely viewed as a proxy for the dissemination of Iranian revolutionary ideas. In line with his transnational mentality, Siddiqui viewed the Shia revolution as providing inspiration, and more controversially, leadership to the entire Muslim world. While a minority radical, Siddiqui did reflect a growing trend in the British Muslim community: the tendency to view the interests of local Muslims as irrevocably connected to those of Muslims in the Middle East. The Muslim Institute represented the influence of Iranian revolutionary doctrines upon British Muslims. Yet, while Siddiqui and others like him were connecting British Islam to upheavals and change within the Islamic world, domestic politics were dominating the British media.

The 1983 Honeyford affair is a prime example of this. Since the 1940s Bradford had been a major Muslim centre and a showcase of ‘multiculturalism’. This did not, however, mean that the relationship between Muslims and the broader community were consistently positive and diverging views on the success of multiculturalism in Bradford existed. It has been argued that Bradford, rather than a showcase of multicultural harmony, was distinguished simply by its ability to avoid ‘large-scale disturbances’, and functioned largely on the principle of ‘benign indifference’ towards minority groups. It has also been contended that inter-ethnic relations became an issue in Bradford after 1980 primarily because of the introduction by the local council of new multicultural policies that lacked widespread support. Either way, by the early 1980s inter-cultural and inter-ethnic relations had emerged as significant concerns in the city. In this climate the area of education became an important battleground. Since the late 1960s Muslim groups had become increasingly active in the education of Muslim children. As the community became more confident and active within the structures of the British education system groups sought to utilise the 1944 Education Act as a basis for the teaching of Islam in schools. By the early 1980s, Muslim parents, increasingly concerned about the impact of ‘permissive’ British cultural norms on their children began to petition the local authorities for changes and a policy of multicultural education subsequently emerged. This policy pivoted on two central components: concessions to the minority group
which ensured children could not be asked to ‘act in a way which (was) contrary to their religious beliefs and the treatment of all ‘religions and cultures with equal respect’. It was in this increasingly politicised climate that Ray Honeyford, a local secondary headmaster, began to publish his views on education and race. Honeyford’s major arguments initially hinged on the varied responsibilities he believed the home and the school had for the development of a child. Some of his concerns, such as the emergence of what he called a ‘racially determined attendance policy’, may have actually required the engagement of educational authorities. The policy of compulsory attendance, a central feature of the British educational system, was on occasion challenged by minority families who returned to their countries of origin, with their children, for extended periods. Irrespective of multicultural sensibilities, the need for clear policy on administrative issues such as this, which clearly affected the education of individual students, was clear.

However, Honeyford did not restrict himself to commenting on administrative issues. As the climate in Bradford hardened against him Honeyford became more vitriolic in his observations. Initially he argued that migrants, through the voluntary decision to settle in Britain had implicitly accepted British norms, including secular education, which demanded the relegation of religion to the private sphere and that conferring a ‘privileged position’ on a minority group was actually against the children’s best interests as it did not prepare them for life in British society. Following this, he published a series of letters in the locally distributed conservative journal, The Salisbury Review. Honeyford’s letters were the product of his own experience at Drummond Comprehensive Middle School, a school which had undergone a period of significant transition in relation to its student composition, with Pakistani Muslims representing roughly 50 per cent of the student body in 1980 and just over 90 per cent by 1986.

Honeyford’s central concerns appeared to be what he perceived as the disintegration of ‘British’ cultural and social norms in the education system, the emergence of separatism which enabled minorities to insulate local schools from broader British society and the accommodations and concessions offered to minority group parents which enabled them to influence a school’s curriculum on the basis of cultural/religious/ethnic norms. For example, Honeyford asserted that the 1944 Education Act Conscience Clause, included to offer parents influence over their children’s exposure to religious education, had been used by Muslim parents to prevent children, particularly girls, from participating in physical education or dance.
Viewing this period with the benefit of nearly 20 years’ hindsight, Honeyford felt his central contention was simple. The role of the school was to educate children in Britain ‘as British children’, leaving the preservation of ethnic, cultural or religious identities to the family or the community. However, other observers have suggested his aims were more nefarious. Honeyford’s intentions aside, the episode led to media and community debate over ‘whether an apparently racist head teacher should be in charge of a largely Asian/Muslim school’. The letter which altered the situation from a local educational issue into a national debate was published in The Salisbury Review in 1984. In this piece, Honeyford clearly attacks minority groups and asserts his experiences are leading him to ‘perhaps for the first time understand why…fundamentally decent people harbour feelings of resentment’. Honeyford also began to construct the issue as one of freedom of speech which he alleged was becoming increasingly difficult in a politically correct, multicultural Britain and, in what perhaps drew the issue into the mainstream, he argued that ‘white’ children, now a minority in some schools, were suffering ‘educational disadvantage’ under the existing doctrine of multiculturalism.

By means of a critique of the concept of multicultural education as poorly defined and serving only to underscore difference and increase alienation between different ethnic groups, Honeyford saw integration and a focus on British culture and history in the curriculum as the best approach for schools. Perhaps dismissing the more subtle manifestations of racial discrimination, Honeyford reacted strongly to the perspective, expounded upon by minority advocates in the late 1980s, that Britain was a racist society. Comparing Britain to extreme examples such as Nazi Germany, South Africa under apartheid and America in the pre-civil rights period, Honeyford extolled the virtues of the British system. Honeyford’s perspective was perceived by many in the community as advocating, in the classroom at least, the absolute superiority of British culture. Honeyford emerged as a staunch proponent of the integration of minorities into the dominant British system. In relation to education he argued this could be achieved through a focus on the English language and the application of the shared values and cultural norms of wider British society. This approach can be understood as a product of its time as it appears to reflect the practice of British multiculturalism in the 1980s. Indeed, the strength of this perspective soon became evident when Honeyford received an invitation to 10 Downing Street in October 1985 to discuss his views.

Foretelling the Rushdie affair, Honeyford interpreted his actions through the right to freedom of speech which, as a headmaster seeking to initiate debate on national education issues, he felt he was exercising.
The Drummond Parents Action Committee (DPAC) felt otherwise and lobbied both local political structures and the media to force his resignation. As the media seized upon the confrontation between Honeyford and parents at the school, the situation degenerated to a point that police cordons were established around the school for over a year. Additionally, Honeyford was attacked by various left-wing organizations and accused of membership of the British National Party (which he strongly denied) and of racism. Interestingly, as it is rarely included in accounts of this period, Honeyford claims to have received significant compensation and damages pay-outs from both the BBC and the Commission for Racial Equality, while the journal *Educational Studies* was forced to print a retraction after it was alleged in an article that he was a racist. In a further example of the high tensions and occasional misrepresentations which surrounded this issue Mark Halstead, author of the authoritative account of the Honeyford affair, acknowledges that Honeyford’s literary style opened him to misrepresentation and journalists and detractors persistently extracted quotes and used them devoid of the original context. As Halstead cautions,

> [while not] all of the distortions in the Honeyford Affair were made by his opponents. . . it is necessary for us to accept the possibility that at least some of the opposition to Honeyford resulted not from what he actually wrote, but from what parents were misled into believing he wrote.

This acknowledged, once the tone of Honeyford’s articles became clearly hostile the situation at the school and in the local community disintegrated. Honeyford’s articles clearly sought to contrast South Asian, and thus by extension Muslim, culture against British culture which he clearly felt was superior. While the ramifications of this saga continued for several years, after protest from the Bradford Council of Mosques and parent demonstrations, the school suspended and then reinstated Honeyford, who eventually took early retirement. Honeyford claims he was strongly supported by the public and the National Association of Head Teachers, citing the local education authority’s (LEA) desire for ‘political correctness’ in education and the ‘virulence of the opposition’ as the causes of his demise. For the Muslim parents involved a significant victory had been won, community organization and pressure had forced the issue, which was of vital concern because of the intersecting themes of education and discrimination, into the public spotlight. As Nielsen commented, the Honeyford affair was indeed ‘the first major public campaigning victory of any Muslim community in Britain’. This had significant ramifications for the socio-political confidence of British Muslims.
According to Nielsen, at this point in the 1980s the British Muslim community was characterised by two distinguishing features, ‘the comparative legal security of citizenship or the residential status of commonwealth citizens and the relatively lengthy period which the major proportion had lived [in the UK].’ However, as Nielsen also points out, the other resounding norm within the community was the increasing belief that citizenship and multiculturalism with their ‘alleged equal status, was in practice more imagined than real’. The Thatcher years may have reinforced this perspective, ‘both neo-liberal and neo-conservative’, and this period saw a linking of the concepts of nation, family and race. This tension, between the Muslim community’s understandings of its own legal and social legitimacy and the failure of the dominant culture to fulfil the promised rights, developed through the 1980s. Additionally, the second generation was coming of age. Some of these young Muslims, often with no personal experience of their parents’ country of origin, focused on religion as the lynchpin of identity. The combination of these factors created the context for what can be understood as the defining moment of British Muslim political history: the Rushdie affair of 1989.

The Rushdie Affair

The 1989 publication of The Satanic Verses did not constitute the first manifestation of anti-Muslim sentiment in western, or British, literature. Rather, Rushdie’s negative treatment of a figure representing the Prophet was heir to a long tradition of denigration, a tradition which includes famous works such as H. G. Wells’s A Short History of the World. In this famous text, Wells disputes the divine origins of the Koran and depicts the Prophet as a ‘shifty character... of very considerable vanity, greed, cunning, self-deception and quite insincere religious passion’. While published in 1922, this book only came to the attention of the Muslim world in 1938 when it sparked protests by Muslims in African cities and London and calls for its proscription were made throughout the British Empire. The obvious difference and the primary point of contention between The Satanic Verses and other instances of western literary denigration of Islam was the identity of its author, Salman Rushdie. Rushdie did not identify himself as a Muslim, yet he was born into a Muslim family of Pakistani origins. As a major western literary figure, Rushdie represented the prototype of an assimilated, successful individual of Muslim heritage.

Rushdie’s Westernised status may well lie at the core of the controversy. British Muslims, increasingly active in the global sphere, were clearly
concerned that Rushdie would be seen as a representative of 'Diaspora Islam'. Bhiku Parekh states Rushdie became a ‘potent symbol of the survival of the British way of life’, a comment which reveals the complexity and irony of this entire situation. That a Pakistani, of Muslim descent, could become symbolic of a British way of life reveals on one hand the absolute integration open to the individual migrant if affluent and educated, while simultaneously affirming the sense of exclusion which increasingly characterised the community from which he came. In an international context marked by a rediscovery of Islam as a political identity, Rushdie’s actions may have been understood as conveying an image of western, and more specifically British, Muslims as willing to reject their heritage and culture in order to achieve recognition and success within the non-Muslim world. Potentially, this event also demonstrated to elements within the British Muslim community the dangers inherent in the secularisation of their own communities. The Rushdie affair, as it came to be known, is probably the single most analysed, publicised and academically deconstructed event in the history of Islam in the United Kingdom. While the community’s internal tensions played a part, the Rushdie affair became emblematic of the experience of Muslims in the West. This controversy included a diversity of internal responses, the participation of powerful external actors, the illumination of divisions on generational and theological lines and it highlighted Muslim concerns regarding the lack of cross-cultural understanding and political space within British society. The Rushdie affair can be understood on many levels, the primary themes which emerge, however, is a fear of the dissolution of identity and a Muslim determination to be accorded social and political parity.

In the initial phase, the Rushdie affair was largely an internal issue which divided the community and was used as ‘fodder in an intra-Muslim competition’. The underlying concerns with the text related predominantly to the determination to defend the faith from attack and the changing nature of religious identity, which manifested in a power struggle between both generations and radical and moderate elements. Community anger and outrage was directed at the publication of a text that was clearly disparaging of both the origins of Islam and the personage of the Prophet, thus British Muslims petitioned the publishers Penguin/Viking to withdraw the book, a request which was declined. The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) then agitated for the application of the blasphemous libel law to prosecute the book’s publishers and to prevent distribution. These laws had been successfully applied in 1977 in the case of Whitehouse v. Lemon and the Gay News, which published a poem
entitled 'The Love Dares not Speak its Name', by Professor James Kirkup. Despite a High Court appeal the newspaper was found guilty. In the initial House of Lords ruling the future challenges raised by the application of this law should have been flagged, as it was affirmed that the laws protecting religion could only be applied to the figures and symbols of Christianity. In response, secularists attempted to remove this legislation through the submission in 1981 of a report by the UK Law Commission recommending abolition of this law. However, the blasphemy law remained.

The UKACIA took the Rushdie case to the House of Lords, which upheld its 1977 decision that the law could not be extended beyond Christianity. The legal battle was finally resolved in the High Court in 1990, where the inapplicability of the blasphemy laws to Islam was once again reaffirmed. The High Court also denied permission for an appeal on this ruling. This revealed the crux of the Rushdie affair: Muslims believed that ‘as citizens they (were) entitled to equality of treatment and respect for their customs and religion’.53 The refusal to apply to Islam the same protection which was afforded to Christianity raised the question of parity, which in turn underscored differences in legal (and social and political) treatment of Muslim concerns. The subject matter of this case, the life and personage of the Prophet Muhammad, transcended all sectarian and political divides within the Muslim community. Defence of the Prophet, revered within all streams of Islam, proved an important catalyst for community unity. The depth of community anger was clearly underestimated by the broader British society, as Modood explains.

The honour of the Prophet is as central to the Muslim psyche as the Holocaust and racial slavery is to others. [Therefore] a book that attacks the honour of the Prophet, which is then hailed as a literary masterpiece, is also a book which attacks the very core of what it is to be Muslim, and therefore the legitimacy of being Muslim in society.54

In January 1989 the Rushdie affair gained greater urgency when a small group of local Muslims staged a public book burning in Bradford. As immigration began in the 1950s, the Muslim community had not shared the European experience of the Second World War and thus many in the community may not have appreciated the association with Nazi Germany that the burning of texts would conjure in the United Kingdom and European public mind, and media. However, Shabbir Akhtar, a Bradford Muslim involved in the Council’s decision to burn the text, explains that, after serious consideration, the action was taken because ‘only a dramatic ritual would ease the frustration and vent the profound anger’ of the community.55 Akhtar also makes the point that the burning of objects to
signal a political opinion is not an uncommon occurrence in western nations.\textsuperscript{56} Parekh supports this, pointing out that a few months earlier Labour MPs had publicly burnt a copy of the new immigration laws without attracting significant media attention.\textsuperscript{57} The decision to burn the text publicly can be understood as Muslim discontent over their perception that citizenship for Muslims entailed equal responsibilities, but not equal rights.

This act, while undertaken by a minority was, within the dominant discourse of multiculturalism (aided significantly in this case by the tabloid media), often presented as a unified Muslim position on the Rushdie affair. The dominant media presentation of the Muslim response to this situation was of a community ‘homogenous in its antimodern values and dangerous in its passions.’\textsuperscript{58} Considering the previous utilisation of burning items to signify political dissent the media response to events in Bradford suggest underlying preconceptions regarding Muslims were seized upon in this context. The conception of Muslims as ‘antimodern’ may well have reflected underlying societal prejudices, as much, if not more than the tendencies of tabloid journalism. This may be confirmed by the nature of the public response. The public and intellectual reaction to the book burnings was immediate, with the prevailing European response being an absolute defence of Rushdie on the basis of the enshrined right to freedom of speech. This tension was enhanced by the public debate the issue created across all levels and spheres of British and European society.\textsuperscript{59} In the United Kingdom, public opinion quickly swung against the Muslim community. Even confirmed liberals, such as the architect of the Race Relations Act of 1976, Roy Jenkins, expressed concern that allowing the influx of Muslim immigrants in mid-century may have been a mistake.\textsuperscript{60}

The international impact of this incident reached cataclysmic proportions on 14 February 1989 when Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa proclaiming the death sentence upon Salman Rushdie and ‘all those involved in the publication of the book who were aware of its content’.\textsuperscript{61} Piscatori suggests that internal power-struggles between Khomeini’s hardline faction and more moderate elements within the Iranian government led to Khomeini’s attempt to gain international attention as a self-proclaimed defender of Islam.\textsuperscript{62} Akhtar strongly rejects claims that external actors, such as Iran, were influential in the community’s response to the text, asserting that the British Muslim reaction was authentic and not a manifestation of international political perspectives.\textsuperscript{63} Rushdie, capitalising on signs of temperance from within the Iranian government, issued a public statement in which he assured Muslims he ‘profoundly regret(ed) the distress that the publication has occasioned’ on 18 February 1989.\textsuperscript{64} However, the Iranian government quickly rejected this as
insufficient and reiterated the fatwa. In an even more bizarre development Rushdie apparently converted to Islam in late 1990, an act which has been shrouded in conjuncture and confusion.\textsuperscript{65} Considering Rushdie’s actions throughout the storm which surrounded \textit{The Satanic Verses}, as Parekh has commented, ‘the Muslim suspicion he was being deliberately provocative is not easy to dispel’.\textsuperscript{66}

For many British Muslims, a sub-theme of this saga was the nature of the evolving relationship between the Islamic regime of Iran and the rest of the Muslim world. While Khomeini had successfully enacted the Islamic revolution which many throughout the Muslim world desired, his Shia belief system diverged significantly from the mainstream Sunni perspective. While there exists no Qur’anic basis for a temporal punishment, in Islamic history the penalty for apostasy has often been death. Khomeini drew on this tradition in his fatwa. However, this hardline interpretation was not supported by the British Muslim Community. This postulation is supported by informal polls which suggested the vast majority of Muslims, even in the politicized area of Bradford, overwhelmingly rejected the fatwa.\textsuperscript{67} However, according to Parekh few Muslims ‘had the courage to dissociate themselves from, let alone condemn, the fatwa’.\textsuperscript{68} This suggests a dissonance between the public and private spheres. Perhaps in the public realm, where the community’s posture was largely defensive, with characteristics of a siege mentality, most Muslims were disinclined to enter the media fray. While most Muslims avoided the public debate, the Muslim Institute’s Siddiqui was an exception. Siddiqui’s position on the fatwa was clear.

\begin{quote}
The fatwa had been pronounced by the Imam of the only Islamic state of the day and was therefore binding on all Muslims. However, Muslims in Britain had, under Islamic law, a prior and higher commitment to the law of the land in which they lived as a minority and therefore could not execute the fatwa in Britain.\textsuperscript{69}
\end{quote}

This view, while endorsing the death penalty as the appropriate response to \textit{The Satanic Verses} did privilege secular British law.\textsuperscript{70} This is important for, as Pnina Werner points out, British Muslims who endorsed the fatwa ‘came close to denying the jurisdiction of British law’.\textsuperscript{71} In her view the irony of this situation lies in the determination to privilege divine law over secular law; especially problematic as this position ‘appeared to deny the right to freedom of religious conscience upon which Muslims’ own claim to citizenship rested.\textsuperscript{72} While Siddiqui’s role and the Iranian perspective he espoused on the Rushdie affair was widely publicised, it was a minority position. Many in the British Muslim community, although outraged by
the text, contested the right of the Shia Ayatollah to issue such a proclamation at all. Indeed, to some the fatwa was seen as counter-productive and ignorant of the British Muslim position. Ahktar asserts that local discontent was focused on the refusal to ban the book, an aim not mentioned in the fatwa which focused on the author’s culpability, and one undoubtedly obscured by the prevailing western response to the issuing of the religious decree.

The Rushdie affair thus brought to the fore issues of authority, theology and leadership within the transnational Islamic community. Additionally, the affair linked British Muslims to the ‘foremost symbol of [the] world resurgence of Islam’ in the public and political arena and thus increased the community’s international profile. To Siddiqui, the Rushdie affair demonstrated the power of Islam both globally and locally. However, in contrast to the Iranian position, the Saudi Arabian-backed clerics and institutions did not express support for the fatwa. These divergent views reflected the ideological struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran in this period. In the international arena the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was also forced by the Saudi Arabian/Iranian rivalry into action. In late 1988 the OIC issued a public statement condemning the book, calling for its proscription and condemning blasphemy against ‘any revealed religion’. The document reflected the depth of transnational Muslim anger and states:

- This publication transgresses all norms of civility and decency and is a deliberate attempt to malign Islam and the venerated Islamic personalities. There can be no doubt that the wickedness of the author has broken all rules of ethics, decency and respect.

The OIC, however, never openly endorsed the fatwa, calling instead for legal recourse. The spate of demonstrations held around the world, some of which included the loss of civilian lives, are further testament to the deep anger this publication invoked.

While the international dimension is important, the central question remains: why did a literary text, which most scholars agree was read by only a small percentage of the British Muslim population, evoke such passionate responses? Perhaps in a post-September 11 context, where Islam and the Islamic personalities have repeatedly been subjected to intense scrutiny, if not outright criticism, western societies have become desensitised to the denigration of religion and minority communities more resigned to suspicion and misrepresentation. However, in the 1980s the Rushdie affair appeared to mobilise Muslims across the social spectrum. In particular it brought women and young people, traditionally sections of the
community whose voices were submerged, to the fore. Peter Mandaville asserts many young people joined the protests against Rushdie not out of religious conviction but because it ‘represented the extent to which they felt alienated from, and rejected by, British society’.79

Demographics may have also played a part. The 1981 Census had revealed the largest age range within the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities was 6-15. By 1989 this generation was leaving school and entering a society and workforce often unable to meet their expectations. The Rushdie affair can be understood as both a symptom and a catalyst of this generation’s coming of political age. In this way the Rushdie affair functioned in a similar fashion to later politicising moments such as the 1991 Gulf War or the 2003 war in Iraq. The mainstream and legal refusal to label the text as blasphemous was seen by many young Muslims as evidence that ‘British society treated them and their religion with contempt’.80 The Iranian fatwa and the controversy it created further underscored the powerlessness of the British Muslim community, as it overrode the community’s attempts to make their own position understood in the public realm. For many Muslims, The Satanic Verses may well have been the catalyst, not the cause, of the protests that went to the heart of the Muslim experience in Britain; the promise of equality, institutionalised through citizenship, had not been fulfilled.

As a topic of contention at all levels of society, in many ways the tension created by the Rushdie affair appeared to transcend the concerns of the Muslim community. It could be argued that the fatwa became symbolic of a collision between the perceived secular liberalism of the West and the hardline religious stance of politicised Islam. Or more subtly, the affair demonstrated a confrontation within the West between ‘high’ culture epitomised by the literary elite, of which Rushdie was a part, and ‘low’ culture. While in this case, the role of ‘low’ culture may have been ascribed by the British Muslim community, in many cases, they were excluded from the debate. In the compilation of letters by literary figures in support of Rushdie, The Rushdie Letters: Freedom to Speak, Freedom to Write, Margaret Attwood exemplifies this position. She states that:

[My] fatuous optimism… leads me to believe that everyone reads books with care and thoroughness and an attention to irony and subtlety, though as every writer knows, many a critic can’t even get the plot straight, much less the point.81

The argument underlying this perspective appear to be that if literary critics are unable to grasp the ‘point’ of literature then the general public’s inevitable misunderstanding and failure to comprehend the intention of
a text are the burdens that writers bear for their craft. This perspective is only magnified when the ‘general public’ is a religious migrant minority. For elements of the western cultural elite the Rushdie affair appeared to be about the difficulties associated with ‘art’. Perhaps the overwhelming secular nature of the western literary establishment produced a tendency to avoid issues of religious equality and sensitivity. Indeed at the time, much of the limited western criticism of Rushdie’s treatment of the personalities of Islam came from figures within the Christian faith.82

At its core, the Rushdie affair spoke intensely of a Muslim sense of identity and place in British society. The coexistence element of institutionalised multiculturalism was tested in the call for mutual respect and protection of religious identity, and it largely failed. While secularists argued that the Rushdie affair demonstrated the need to further secularise society by revoking the privileges associated with the Christian church, this was rejected by the Muslim community which called instead for an ‘equalizing upwards’.83 The dominant theme in the Rushdie affair was not the public book burnings, or the fatwa from Iran. If anything, such aspects were divisive. The dominant theme of the Rushdie Affair is a continuing one: the call for parity. On a fundamental level, the community loosely united in defence of the Prophet and their right to be respected in society. This experience created a clearly and inherently defensive mind-set and underscored the need for what Parekh terms ‘biculturally literate’ individuals who could present Muslim concerns within mainstream British society.84 This need would increasingly be filled by the younger generation who were influenced strongly by the experience of the Rushdie affair. If, as has been contended, the Rushdie affair was the watershed moment in British Islam, then it was a moment which created simultaneously a sense of siege, disparity and isolation and an awareness of the need for greater engagement.

The Rushdie affair coincided with an important turning point in the British and European Muslim experience: an influx of new, often politicised, preachers from the Arab Middle East. The surge in international preachers opened the community to the political trends which had swept the Middle East in the aftermath of events such as the Iranian Revolution, the Soviet ‘jihad’ in Afghanistan and the emergence of Islamist opposition in states such as Egypt. Reflecting this international reinvigoration of Islamic politics, by the close of the 1990s, nearly 1,000 Muslim organisations reflecting a diversity of interpretations and objectives were operating in the United Kingdom. The ramifications of the Rushdie affair still linger in the psyche of British Muslims and although the Iranian fatwa was revoked in 1997, other events, both local and
international served to reinforce the lingering perception from the
Rushdie-era, that many westerners ‘secretly harbour a medieval inspired
vision of implacable enmity between Christendom and Islam’. A diversity
of responses thus emerged. The UKACIA, fresh from the experience of the
Rushdie affair, began to agitate for legislative change, calling in the early
1990s for laws to ‘criminalize the vilification and ridicule of religion’.
This call was repeated throughout the 1990s and into the 21st century.

In 1990 Siddiqui’s Muslim Institute released *The Muslim Manifesto*, a
controversial document clearly nourished by the experiences of the
Rushdie and Honeyford affairs. The *Manifesto* called for a separate and
self-governing Muslim parliament in the United Kingdom. This body
would reflect Islam’s role as ‘an island of peace, harmony and moral
excellence, free of promiscuity, sexually transmitted diseases, drinking,
gambling [and] fornication’ in a secular and morally lax United Kingdom.
Siddiqui’s primary concern was the younger generation to whom he issued
his well-known ‘apology’ in July 1990 stating,

> if our children sued us for damages for bringing them to a place where
they have suffered a crisis of identity, cultural dislocation and now
religious and political oppression, we would have no alternative but to
plead guilty.

*The Muslim Manifesto* posits the British state in confrontational
posture against Islam. Siddiqui rejects the integration of Muslims into
the fabric of British society. Indeed, the entire text is clearly an assertion
of difference, constructed in stark terms in order to attain maximum
publicity for its author. In many ways, Siddiqui’s approach takes the
doctrine of multiculturalism to its logical, if extreme, conclusion.
Advocating a plurality of not just culture, but governance, Siddiqui
rejected Muslim participation in the existing political infrastructure of
the state. Essentially denying the legitimacy of the state-structure for
Muslims, Siddiqui’s claim was that the community would be best served
by the establishment of separate ‘institutions capable of meeting needs
in every area without dependence on the British state or government’.
In addition to these domestic aims, Siddiqui supported the international
Muslim community, in both humanitarian and militaristic objectives.
However, Siddiqui’s agenda may have been more self-serving. By the late
1980s the Iranians were beginning to withdraw support from its client
organizations throughout the western world. Aware of the power of the
tabloid press, Siddiqui may well have decided that the Muslim
parliament, a concept assured of significant press coverage, would propel
him and his Institute into the media spotlight, assure Iranian interest
and raise his public profile in an increasingly competitive Islamist marketplace. Whatever his intention, the rumination by Siddiqui that this dual system of governance may one day constitute a ‘non-territorial Islamic state’ provoked widespread outcry. Siddiqui, while both marginal and controversial, promoted the transnational identity of British Muslims and encouraged Muslims to identify as part of a highly-politicised global community. His Muslim parliament was established in 1992, yet was stricken to the point of collapse by infighting and division after his death.

While the 1993 publication of Samuel P. Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations* assisted in fostering a sense of disjuncture between Islam and the West, Huntington was by no means the first to propagate such a perspective. Siddiqui had referred to the Rushdie affair as taking ‘Western civilization and the civilization of Islam into a head-on global confrontation’, a perspective rejected by Piscatori as early as 1990 when he asserted that ‘reality was too complex to sustain the simple notion of an inherent antipathy between two monothlitic blocs’. Yet, the challenge implicit in this transnational, ‘civilizational’ identification was demonstrated again in the lead-up to the 1991 Gulf War. Even as the British state was preparing to join the international coalition to confront the Iraqi regime, support for Saddam Hussein could be found in sections of the Muslim community. Humayun Ansari asserts this period was even more traumatic for the British Muslim community than the Rushdie affair, with high levels of frustration at the failure of British society to understand Muslim concerns regarding Western military intervention.

Embrowed in the aftermath of the Rushdie affair, some British Muslims supported Saddam Hussein for his willingness to stand up to the West, because, although technically a secular leader, he was on the ‘Muslim’ side in a ‘cultural confrontation – a battle for cultural supremacy’. It was within this context that the Muslim parliament was conceived, with Siddiqui calling for ‘a collective Muslim voice outside the mainstream’. This development clearly reveals the detachment some Muslims felt from British society. Unable to effect change and have their perspectives heard through the existing channels – from within the system – some Muslims advocated a move outside the system.

As public and academic debate regarding the power of Islam as a political bloc continued, Huntington’s thesis was widely read and in most western states passed from academic to public discourse. The willingness of a minority of British Muslims to identity with the ‘other’, whether in the form of the Iranian fatwa or in the support of the ‘enemy’ in a context of international warfare, triggered an occasional media and public
questioning of British Muslims as the ‘enemy within’. Sean McLoughlin posits that the propensity of a minority of Western Muslims to align themselves politically with the *umma* (the transnational community of Muslim believers) over the state is reflective of their sense of exclusion, ‘identification globally because of a lack of representation locally’.95 Alternatively, this could reflect a political trend in which the domestic discontent of sections of Western Muslim communities finds expression through a willingness to support international developments which challenge the dominance of the western model.

A survey of British Islam reveals a community marked by its journey into the public sphere. From the immigrant beginnings of the middle of the twentieth century British Muslims had emerged as a major social and political force by its last decade. This experience has ramifications for Muslims throughout the West. Given their geographical location, ‘Euro-Muslims’ can play a central role in the globalisation of their faith in the modern era. Islam in Britain is a prime example of this process. Since the 1950s and especially since the development of entrenched communities in the 1970s, Muslims have been active in both the preservation and propagation of their faith. Second generation Muslims, removed from the nationalist experiences of their parents and reflecting international Islamic trends have often turned to a ‘universal’ conception of Islam, which stresses the unity of Muslims worldwide. Seminal events, such as the Honeyford and Rushdie affairs of the 1980s, demonstrate the central concerns which have characterised British Islam: the call for parity within the multicultural paradigm and the issue of transmission and preservation of the religion and culture of Islam between the generations. These two fundamental concerns have been at the heart of the policy and political demands which the British Muslim community has made since the 1970s.

Esposito has observed that ‘Islam strains the social fabric of European societies.’96 Yet, ‘driven by demographic, political and economic forces, the Muslim presence will continue to increase in Europe’.97 However, within this tension lies the opportunity for evolution, as evidenced by the emergence of Euro-Islam in the last two decades. While the desire to seek new forms of accommodation and compromise exist, Mandaville has noted that in the late twentieth century ‘Islam also became a form of self-defence and a source of solidarity against a hostile dominant culture’.98 This need for solidarity appears particularly important to the younger generations, which have often experienced a social and cultural disconnection from both their parents’ cultural norms and a broader society which has struggled to meaningfully recognize and accept difference.
During the period under investigation here issues such as integration, assimilation, multiculturalism, cross-cultural dialogue and the importance of inclusion and validation of political, social and religious difference have emerged. Religion and religious identity are vital themes. These trends remain of fundamental significance. Perhaps most importantly, the experience of British Muslims, typified by the Rushdie affair, demonstrates the need for space within the public discourse for individuals from minority communities to express dissent with the political agenda of the state without marginalisation. In today’s political climate, the need to create and maintain such spaces in Britain and throughout the West remains of vital importance.

Notes

[8] Ibid., 100.
[10] Nonneman, "Muslim Communities in the new Europe", in Nonneman, Niblock & Szajkowski (eds) Muslim Communities in the New Europe, 16.
[12] Ibid., 209.
[18] It was not until late 2003 that religious discrimination was made an offence, even then the application of this legislation was confined to employment.
[22] Ansari, The Infidel Within, 211.

[27] Lewis, Islamic Britain, 53.


[29] Ibid., 22.

[30] Ibid., 36.


[34] Honeyford, “Culture and Religion in a Multicultural Society”, 35.


[38] Honeyford, “Education and Race – an Alternative View”.


[41] Honeyford, interview with author, 27 June 2005. Retraction of claims that Honeyford was racist were issued in Educational Studies, 17, no. 2 (1991).


[46] Nielsen, Muslims in Western Europe, 161.


[51] Parekh, Rethinking Multiculturalism, 303.


[55] Akhtar, Be Careful with Muhammad, 43.

[56] Ibid., 43–54.

[57] Parekh, Rethinking Multiculturalism, 300.

[58] Vertovec, “Islamophobia and Muslim Recognition in Britain”, 23.

[59] See Ahsan and Kidwai, Sacrilege versus Civility, for a comprehensive collection of relevant media articles, many of which evidence the hysterical response of mainstream society.

[60] Parekh, Rethinking Multiculturalism, 301.


[63] Akhtar, Be Careful with Muhammad, 54.
[67] A Bradford phone poll conducted by a local radio station in 1991, found over 90 per cent of callers rejected the fatwa. See Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, 170.
[68] Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, 300.
[70] The Hanafi school holds that Muslims, when residing outside the Muslim world, are judged by local laws. See Masud, "The obligation to migrate: the doctrine of hijra in Islamic law", in Eickelman and Piscatori (eds), *Muslim Travellers*, 37.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Akhtar, Be Careful with Muhammad, 94.
[74] Zubaida, "Islam in Europe", 89.
[77] Ibid.
[78] OIC, "Declaration by Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers on Joint Islamic Action to Combat Blasphemy Against Islam"; "OIC Resolution No. 21/19-C on the Unified Stand on Sacrilegious Acts Against Islamic Holy Places and Values."
[82] See, in particular Chap. 4, "Voices of Civility" in Ahsan and Kidwai.
[84] Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, 305.
[95] McLoughlin, "In the Name of the Umma", in Shadid and PS Van Koningsveld (eds), *Political Participation and Identities of Muslims in Non-Muslim States*, 209.
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