The Adab
'Respect' Research Programme

A perspective on Muslim-Sikh relations in the United Kingdom and causes of tensions and mistrust between the two communities.

By Professor Gurharpal Singh

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A Perspective on Muslim-Sikh Relations in the United Kingdom and Causes of Tensions and Mistrust between the two Communities

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By

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Foreword

Faith Matters has been working to ensure that Muslim and Sikh relations in the UK are strengthened and to highlight the fact that further work in this arena is needed. We are also committed to promoting the positive impacts that both communities have made in the UK and their shared histories within South Asia and in this country. However, where there are social tensions, it is important to discuss them openly and to look at constructive methods of getting both communities to find solutions.

Also, increasingly, there is a collective amnesia within younger generations which reduces the awareness of the rich shared history of both communities within India and Pakistan and the Punjabi diaspora. A resetting of these narratives needs to take place. The history of Muslim and Sikh interaction has been difficult, yet enlightening and remarkable; it has supported nations and sometimes worked to divide them. Things are therefore not as simple or 'black and white' as some may want to portray the interaction.

We hope that this research encourages further work and provides positive mechanisms to enhance relations between both communities here in the UK. We also hope our experience will encourage better relations wherever in the world Muslims and Sikhs are destined to co-exist.

Fiyaz Mughal

Fiyaz Mughal OBE FCMI

Founder and Director - Faith Matters

C O N T E N TS

Executive Summary

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1. At the beginning of the 21st century Britain faces new challenges in managing religious and ethnic diversity that are significantly different from those of the post-war era. As policy makers grapple with religiously mobilised groups and 'super-diversity' while prosecuting the 'War on Terror', they are confronted with two other issues: the political growth of the British Nationalist Party (BNP) and the rise of horizontal tensions between minority religious and ethnic communities.

2. Over the past nine years Muslim and Sikh youth have been engaged in serious acts of violence in a number of localities. This mobilisation has been conducted over allegations of 'forced conversions' of Sikh girls by Muslim boys and set against the backdrop of 9/11 and 7/7. At the same time the BNP is seeking to fish in troubled waters by making overtures to sections of Sikhs (and Hindus) to form a tactical alliance against Muslims for the promotion of Islamophobia.

3. Together these developments have the potential to seriously derail good community relations between two of Britain's settled communities as well as add to the rising tide of racism and Islamophobia.

4. This report argues that despite these mobilisations, and the efforts of some sections of British Sikh leaders to distance themselves from British Muslims, there are strong bonds that bind the two communities. These include a common Punjabi heritage, history, language, culture, and shared experience of living in Britain. This heritage is a rich resource against divisive and separatist tendencies, especially among the youth. Creatively used it has the potential to transform Muslim-Sikh tensions, to provide a new model of self-confident, self-reliant community relations with far-reaching consequences for a tolerant society in Britain and South Asia.

5. Both communities share many common concerns. They have much that is similar in their socio-economic profile and in their recent past experience in Britain.

6. However to prevent further polarisation between the communities developing in the immediate future, urgent evidence-based research is needed into the reality, or otherwise, of allegations of 'forced conversions'. In addition, funding for Muslim and Sikh organisations in localities with a significant presence of these two communities should be conditional on promoting cross-community relations between the two, particularly among youth and women.

7. As well as these measures efforts should be made to promote better links and networks between the two communities through inter-faith dialogue, documentation for popular consumption of shared heritage, and a tool-kit that explores interactions between Muslims and Sikhs. Where possible expertise in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should be used to counteract essentialist, reductionist and communal constructions of South Asian Muslim and Sikh heritage.

(1) Introduction

1.1 In terms of religion and ethnicity, Britain is a diverse society. In the 2001 Census, 71.6 per cent of the population identified themselves as Christians, 15.5 per as non-religious, and 7.3 per cent did not identity a religious identity. The rest of the population consisted of minority ethnic communities, with a significant representation of Muslims (2.7 per cent) Hindus (1.0 per cent), Sikhs (0.6 per cent), Jews (0.5 per cent), Buddhists (0.3 per cent), and 'other religion' (0.3 per cent). Within these religious groups there is also considerable ethnic diversity determined by country of origin, language, history, culture and subjective identification. Of the total population, 92.1 per cent identified themselves as white, 1.2 per cent mixed, 4.0 per cent Asian/British Asian, 2.0 Black/British Black, 0.4 per cent Chinese, and 0.4 per cent other. Together minority ethnic communities made up 7.9 per cent of the total (Census 2001; Office for National Statistics, 2003, online).

1.2 The management of religious and ethnic diversity arising from the settlement of New Commonwealth immigrants after the Second World War has always been politically contentious. Despite substantive differences between the major political parties, it is generally recognised that the late Roy Jenkins' statement as Home Secretary in the Labour government of 1966-70 provides the main framework within which this diversity has been managed. According to Jenkins the integration of new immigrants was not to be 'a flattening process of uniformity but cultural diversity coupled with equality of opportunity within an atmosphere of mutual tolerance' (Rex and Singh, 2003: 39).

1.3 Since the 1960s, official policy has sought to find a balance between integration and cultural diversity. The current emphasis on community cohesion and British values reflects anxieties that the excessive promotion of cultural diversity among minority ethnic communities has fostered the development of 'parallel lives' and separate communities that have little in common. These concerns have arisen against the background of riots in the northern cities in 2001, 9/11, 7/7 and the growth of religious and racial extremism.

1.4 Alongside these developments, however, it is important to recognise the minority religious and ethnic communities today are far more integrated into British society than ever before. Generally, there is a greater acceptance of religious and ethnic diversity. Minority ethnic communities have an active presence in the political system both nationally and locally. Since 1997, moreover, major legislation has been passed (now being consolidated into the Equalities Bill) that has outlawed racial, ethnic, religious, sexual and gender discrimination (Anwar, 2008).

1.5 Naturally most of the focus of managing religious and ethnic diversity, especially at the local level, has been on promoting good race relations between the host and ethnic minority communities as well as tackling the structures of embedded discrimination that affect the life-chances of all. This focus was necessary, historically determined and an important aspect of evolving shared, common governance.

1.6 As minority religious and ethnic communities have become more firmly established, some of them now comprising fourth and fifth generation community members, most of whom are born in Britain, new types of tensions are emerging between minority religious and ethnic communities. These tensions can arise from differences 'imported' from the homeland; they can also emerge from the construction of new 'communal'[1] identities in opposition to other communities.

1.7 In the past we have witnessed tensions between minority religious ethnic communities in some localities of England that have involved Jews and Muslims, Sinhalese and Tamil Sri Lankans, Greek and Turkish Cypriots, Indians and Pakistanis, Somalis supporting different warlords and Sikhs and Hindus. These tensions have generally been highly localised and therefore relatively easy to contain.

1.8 However, in recent years a new tension has emerged that has the potential to seriously undermine cohesive community relations. Over the past nine years Muslim and Sikh youth in a number of localities have been engaged in mobilising against each other, sometimes leading to serious acts of violence. This mobilisation has been conducted over allegations of 'forced conversions' of Sikh girls by Muslim boys. It is also set against the backdrop of 9/11 and 7/7 after which the British Sikh community increasingly seeks to distance itself from other minority communities, especially British Muslims.

1.9 At the same time as this tension is increasing, the BNP is seeking to fish in troubled waters by making overtures to sections of British Sikhs (and Hindus) to form tactical and strategic alliances against British Muslims for the promotion of its virulent Islamophobia. While the number of Sikhs who have responded to the BNP's calls is no more than a handful, the broader resentment among British Sikhs against Muslims has the potential to grow beyond its current narrow local confines by drawing on events in South Asia, the historic narratives of the two communities' shared and antagonistic paths, and the opportunistic policies of British political parties which promote racism from below by a new policy of 'divide and rule'.

1.10 As a result of tensions between Muslims and Sikhs in a number of towns, Faith Matters, a national organisation that promotes interfaith activities and community cohesion, initiated a Cohesive Communities Programme in 2008. This programme targeted student, religious and political leaders within British Muslim and Sikh communities.

1.11 These tensions included: the breakdown of Muslim-Sikh community relations in Derby following the distribution of an anti-Sikh leaflet (2001); heightened anxiety among Sikhs following 9/11 and 7/7 that they would be the victims of hate-attacks because they 'looked Muslim'; rumours of 'forced conversions' of young Sikh females by Muslim males (e.g. Birmingham 2007); and serious tensions between the two communities as result of violence against Sikhs in Pakistan, especially by the Taliban in the NWFP and Swat valley. These recorded incidents, moreover, overlook the daily acts of violence and confrontation that often occur between Muslim and Sikh youths in schools, youth clubs and colleges.

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[1] Communal tensions or conflicts have a specific South Asian pedigree. They normally refer to religious or sectarian conflicts, with special reference to the Hindu-Muslim divide (see Talbot and Singh, 2009).

Faith Matters Community Cohesion Project tackled some of these issues by bringing together Muslims and Sikhs at Corrymeela in Northern Ireland. Corrymeela has made a significant difference to community relations and reconciliation work over the last 40 years in Northern Ireland. The aim of the meeting was to provide space for a much-needed discussion and dialogue between key British Muslim and Sikh student, religious and emerging community leaders. The Cohesive Communities Project was completed in September 2008. Project facilitators noted that this was a particularly difficult exercise that aroused deep passions, especially among young male Sikh participants, and it brought to the forefront areas of tension that still exist (Mughal, 2009).

This research project – *Adab* – builds on the Faith Matters Community Cohesion Project. Its aims and objectives are to help to break down stereotypes between British Muslim and Sikh communities while seeking to understand the underlying sources of tension between them. It aims to:

- Provide a contextual background of Muslims' and Sikhs' shared past in South Asia and Britain;
- Highlight common community concerns such as the need to combat racism, discrimination and disadvantage in public life;
- Identify methods and approaches to manage and reduce potential tensions between British Muslims and Sikhs.

We believe that these three aspects are central to promoting community cohesion and inculcating an enduring pride among British Muslims and Sikhs. Without such action there are real dangers that some sections within these communities will develop 'communal' outlooks that will have serious long-term implications for better community relations in Britain and between Muslims and Sikhs in South Asia.

Methodology: the research for this project draws mainly on published secondary sources. These include academic and official publications as well as commissioned research. Given the time allocation, it was not possible to interview some of the leading actors, or undertake more detailed investigation into some of the incidents highlighted above. Instead the report draws substantially on history and current developments, both in the United Kingdom and South Asia, and is thus 'reflective' and 'analytical' of the contemporary relations between the two communities.

(2) Challenges of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in 21st century Britain

Background

2.1   At the beginning of the 21st century Britain faces a new set of challenges in managing religious and ethnic diversity which are significantly different from those of the post-war era when New Commonwealth immigrants first settled in the country in large numbers.

2.2 Today minority religious and ethnic communities make up nearly 8 per cent of the total population. The size of these minorities has increased considerably since the 1950s. The Muslim population has increased from 21,000 in 1951 to 1.6 million in 2001; a recent Labour Force survey suggests that the current total is around 2.4 million (*The Times*, 30 January 2009). During the same period, the Hindu and Sikh populations also witnessed similar increases from 15,000 and 7,000 to 559,342 and 336,179 respectively (Peach, 2006). These increases have not only been marked by community consolidation but have also been accompanied by the growth of ethnic, social and cultural diversity *within* these communities.

2.3 Alongside the growth of these established minority religious and ethnic communities which have traditionally included South Asians and Afro-Caribbeans, the period since the mid-1990s has seen immigration from new European Union member states and from non-EU states in Europe, Asia and Africa. These new settlers have often been attracted to areas of minority settlement, thereby adding further to existing cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity.

2.4 Some localities in Britain today now resemble what has been called 'super-diversity', a complex form of cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity surpassing anything that has been experienced previously. 'Super-diversity' arises out of the dynamic interplay of a number of variables among new, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants. These new arrivals have created distinctive challenges for local service delivery and complex demands on resources (Vertovec, 2007).

2.5 At the same time as these processes of differentiation and stratification are taking place between and among established and new religious and ethnic minorities, there is a discernable trend among these communities to subjectively assert religious identity. To be sure, this development has been taking place in Britain since the 1980s, but has accelerated since 2001 as the discourse of religion has come to occupy a central place in the self-identification and the imaginary of minority communities – to the exclusion and neglect of other forms of social identification.

2.6 This change is most noticeable in the British Muslim community. Over a period of almost 20 years religion has become the marker of identity. Post-9/11 and 7/7 developments and other transnational events have further reinforced this trend as Muslims have become stereotyped as a result of the 'War on Terror' and acts of terrorism by extremists.

2.7 As policy- makers grapple with the challenges of managing religious and ethnic super-diversity and of promoting community cohesion while prosecuting the 'War on Terror', there is another serious development that could derail community relations. The last decade has seen the political growth of the BNP with its overt campaign of Islamophobia. The BNP has made some headway in establishing electoral success in certain localities where its breakthrough has also been accompanied by the rise of violence against minorities.

2.8 In addition to these challenges, as we noted in the introduction, new horizontal tensions are emerging *between* minority religious and ethnic communities. To some extent this is nothing new, and in the past such localised tensions have been managed by community leaders and voluntary sector organisations. The current tensions between Muslims and Sikhs in some towns and cities, however, have the potential to adversely redefine the relationship between these two important communities. And if to this picture is added the factor of BNP efforts to exploit these differences, there is a real danger of serious communal disorder in the future.

Minority Religious and Ethnic Communities and Settlement

2.9 The development of Muslim-Sikh tensions today is in sharp contrast to the post-war history of minority communities in Britain. Until relatively recently the major issue that faced most minority communities was racism based on the distinction of colour. It was in response to racism that the earliest organisations of minorities (e.g. Indian Workers' Associations (IWAs), Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD)) were established. These organisations were often cross-community based and fought against a perceived common disadvantage.

2.10 However in the 1970s the coalition of black and ethnic minority workers that was established to combat racism collapsed as Asians, mainly of South Asian and East African background, sought to differentiate themselves from Afro-Caribbeans. Interestingly one reason for this differentiation at the time was the negative perception of the criminal potential of Afro-Caribbean youth.

2.11 Since the late 1990s there has been a distinct shift from 'ethnic' to 'religious' identification. The Iranian revolution (1979), the Rushdie Affair (1988), the First and Second Gulf Wars (1991, 2003), the Bosnia crisis, 9/11, 7/7, the rise of the Khalistan movement in Punjab (1980s/90s), the ascendancy of the Hindu Right in Indian politics and the 2001 Census (which for the first time enumerated the religious category) – these have all impacted to change the discourse on minorities from 'ethnicity' to 'religion'. Indeed, as Peach observes, since the 1950s the policy discourse on racialized minorities 'has mutated from "colour" in the 1950s and 1960s to "race" in the 1960s, 70s and 80s to "ethnicity" in the 90s and to "religion" and "Islamophobia" in the present times' (Peach, 2006:631).

2.12 In Britain today religion is recognised as the core marker of minority identity. This fact is supported by research which has identified the centrality of religious institutions, especially

places of worship, in the daily lives of minority communities (ODP, 2006). It is also evident in the establishment of central and local faith units to coordinate public policy and the establishment of new inter-faith councils and initiatives that aim to better connect communities of diverse background.

2.13 There are considerable variations within the United Kingdom in the ethnic composition of local populations. Ethnic minorities are largely concentrated in England, mainly in the most populous and deprived areas. More than half the UK's ethnic minority population lives in South East of England. Greater London alone contains nearly half the UK's ethnic minority population, although only one in ten of the UK's White population lives there. The other main concentrations of ethnic minority population are in the West Midlands, West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester.

2.14 The differences in South Asian settlement patterns among those of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origins in the UK are marked. More than half of all Bangladeshis and two-fifths of Indians live in Greater London, as compared to only a fifth of Pakistanis.

Historically, Muslims and Sikhs have lived in different localities. Whereas the Muslim population has been concentrated in East London, West Midlands and the North West, heavy concentrations of Sikhs are to be found in West London, West Midlands, East Midlands and Yorkshire. In 2001 the Muslim population of the UK was almost five times larger than the Sikh population.

Since then some localities, such as Southall, Slough, West Bromwich, Handsworth, and Hillingdon, traditionally associated with the Sikh community, have experienced an increase in Muslim settlement. In these areas the transformation of 'little Punjabs' as a consequence of 'super-diversity' and new settlement has created anxieties among Sikhs and Hindus – anxieties not too dissimilar from those expressed by a white Labour Party councillor in Southall in the 1960s who accused the new arrivals of 'ruining my native Southall' (Singh and Tatla, 2006: 142). These anxieties are now being translated into local politics and are reflected in the competition for resources and services and in a heightened sense of perceived discrimination or disadvantage.

2.15 Most of the post-war ethnic minorities were economic migrants, and their status in the labour market is a fundamental aspect of their position in British society. The type of work available to them not only governed their incomes, it also determined the areas in which they have settled, where their children went to school, how they interacted with the indigenous labour force and population generally, their chances of participation in civic life, and their overall status in society. Because ethnic minorities were limited to a range of occupations upon arrival, it is natural that they are concentrated in certain industrial sectors and factories, where there were labour shortages (Anwar, 1986: 10-16).

However, since the 1950s and 1960s a considerable differentiation in terms of employment and education has occurred among Britain's minorities. Among the minority religious communities, Muslims have lagged behind the achievements of Hindus and Sikhs. Drawing on the 2001 Census data, Professor Peach of Oxford University noted that 'The Muslim population, taken as a whole, is poor, badly housed, with low qualifications, suffers high levels of male unemployment and has very low levels of female participation rate in the labour market' (Peach, 2006: 637).

2.16 Emigration from areas in South Asia has been heavily localised. As result most Asian immigrants have strong village or family connections in Britain and have settled with other people from their own area for security and support. Among some groups in these communities social contact is limited largely to people from their own area back home, those speaking the same local language and sharing religious beliefs. For example, immigrants having come from within a 30- mile radius of one village in the Indian Punjab can be located in Gravesend, Kent. Similarly, immigrants from Mirpur, Cambellpur in Pakistan have concentrated in Birmingham, Bradford and Luton.

Challenges of Managing Diversity Today

2.17 As noted above, there is a complex set of challenges for managing religious and ethnic diversity in Britain today. In many localities of high or 'super-diversity' they include balancing the need for equality, on the one hand, and the claims of religious, cultural and ethnic diversity, on the other. And these challenges are now set against the background of a national and global recession that is likely to substantially reduce the funding conventionally available to local authorities to meet the service delivery needs arising from the settlement of new arrivals.

2.18 In these circumstances there is a real danger that local and national politics among minority ethnic communities could become highly communalised, leading to zero-sum competition between mobilised communities that see the 'other' community/ies as obstacle(s) to realising its/their objectives.

2.19 The Muslim-Sikh tensions noted above have the potential to intersect and feed on these developments. Where small minority religious and ethnic communities see their religious, political and social aspirations seemingly frustrated by other communities whose agendas appear to be much more of a priority for central and local government, it is more than likely that these communities, such as the Sikhs, will aim to develop new ways of engaging local and national authorities, ways that might well be more communal, separatist and anti-Muslim in their outlook.

2.20 Although such an outcome might produce some political dividends for certain elements (e.g. the BNP), its long-term implications will be disastrous. It will seriously undermine the efforts to build cross-community support to tackle common issues. It will promote minority racism and Islamophobia. And it will have a backlash in South Asia, especially, though not exclusively, in Pakistan and India. Above all, it will substantially undermine the significant efforts at community development since the late 1990s by Sikhs and Muslims themselves.

2.21 The contemporary challenges of managing religious and ethnic diversity require an effective partnership between local and central government and *all* minority religious and ethnic communities. The history of minority communities in Britain demonstrates that they *all* need to work together rather than work against each other. Only by recognising this fact will these communities be able to address effectively and collectively their mutual concerns over discrimination and disadvantage.

2.22 The rest of this report seeks to demonstrate how Muslim and Sikh communities can develop joint initiatives to overcome the tensions that have arisen.

(3) Islam and Muslim Communities in Britain

Islam: Background

3.1 Islam is the world's second largest religion after Christianity. It has 1.5 billion followers and makes up 23 per cent of the world's population. One-third of the global Muslim population lives in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh; Asia as whole accounts for 62 per cent of the community. Indonesia is the most populous Muslim country with 202 million Muslims (Miller, 2009).

3.2 Islam was founded in the Arabian peninsula in the 7th century and spread quickly throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Southern Europe, South Asia and South East Asia. Muhammad, (peace be upon him), as the conveyor of Islamic message, is believed by Muslims to be the messenger of Allah, the one and true God. The defining principle of Islam is that there is no God but Allah, that nothing shares divinity with Him, and that no person and nothing besides Him deserve worship. He cannot be comprehended by human beings and there is nothing like Him (Qur'ān 42:11). The assertions of the absolute oneness of Allah are found in numerous passages of the Qur'ān and constitute the basic tenets of Islamic teaching.

3.3 Muhammad's (pbuh) teachings opposed polytheism, asserted monotheism and rooted his message in equality. By the year 624, he became the leader of Mecca, the sacred city that houses the holy building of the Ka'ba. He died in 632 A.D., and is considered by Muslims to be the final Prophet, the last of the divine messengers who brought Allah's message to guidance and complete perfection.

3.4 For Muslims the Qur'ān (the holy book) contains the holy words of Allah. It is not written by mortals and is the message of God to humanity (Ramadan, 1999). 'Islam is, for its adherents, a way of life; every aspect is covered by religion and nothing is regarded as secular. Islamic moral principles guide social, political, and economic decisions and the goal is a balanced order, in which all are equal before Allah' (Noibi, 1997:151).

3.5 From the oasis cities of Mecca and Medina in the Arabian desert, Islam went forth with electrifying speed. Within half a century of the Prophet's death, it had spread to three continents. This growth was not simply the outcome of coercion or war. Even today religious minorities like the Jews and Christians continue to be important to the social fabric of many Muslims states (Ramadan, 1999). In later centuries the Turks embraced Islam peacefully as did a large number of the people in South Asia and the Malay-speaking world. In Africa also, Islam has spread during the past two centuries, notwithstanding the pervasive power of European colonialism.

A key to the popular growth of the tradition was the role of Sufis. Sufis (Neilson, 1995) were renowned for their mystical talents and scriptural interpretations that were able to negotiate local customs and practices. It is generally acknowledged that the spread of Islam in South Asia and South-East Asia would have been impossible without the exceptional contribution of the Sufi orders. Significantly, Sufi influence remains strong among the nearly 75 per cent of British Muslims who are of South Asian heritage.

3.6 Islam's growth was accompanied by the rise of the Islamic civilisation centred on the Arab caliphates, then Persia, and later, the Turks. After the 13th century, both Africa and India became centres of great Islamic civilization, and soon thereafter Muslim kingdoms were established in the Malay-Indonesian world while Chinese Muslims flourished throughout China (Ramadan, 1999).

3.7 However from the 17th century onwards with the rise of capitalism the Islamic world faced a long-term decline exacerbated by the expansion of Europe. At the height of European imperialism in the late 19th century, most of the Islamic world was under colonial rule or domination, with the exception of a few regions such as the heart of the Ottoman Empire, Persia, Afghanistan, Yemen and certain parts of Arabia.

3.7 Partly in response to colonialism Islamic societies in the 19th century witnessed the rise of revivalist movements. In the Sudan this was led by the *Mahdi* movement; in North Africa the *Sanusiyyah* movement fought wars against European colonizers; in India the 1857 Indian Mutiny was accompanied by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's modernist movement that led to foundation of Aligarh University; and in Egypt Al-Azhar University became the centre of Islamic intellectual thought.

3.8 Given its size and geographic spread, it is important to recognise the diversity within Islam. However this diversity - racial, ethnic, social, caste-based, tribal, linguistic, and cultural - co-exists with a very strong sense of equality and the idea of Muslims as an *Umma*, a universal global community with a shared sense of brotherhood. Indeed, the concept of the *Umma* has been revived in recent times as result of globalisation and new communications technologies that have compressed time and space, enabling individuals and networks to act in real time from wherever they might be in the world. It has also been revived as a *reactive* response to perceptions of a global community under siege because of modernity, globalisation and the 'War on Terror'.

Muslims in Britain: A Social Profile

3.9 The British-Muslim connection is nearly 1300 years old. Sherif (2002) refers to Offa of Mercia (died 796) 'a powerful Anglo-Saxon King who had coins minted with the inscription of the declaration of Islamic faith (None is worthy of worship but God) in Arabic'. According to Ansari (2003), as early as 1627, for instance, there were nearly forty Muslims living in London working as tailors, shoemakers, button makers and one even as a solicitor. A Sake Deen Mohammed who came with Captain Baker of the East India Regiment in 1784 was one of the first to settle permanently in England. He was said to have been appointed 'Shampooing Surgeon to His Majesty George IV'. In the middle of the 19th century the first relatively permanent Muslim populations were established in Manchester, Cardiff, Liverpool, South Shields, and in the East End of London. As Muslims settled in Britain, they gradually established institutions that they hoped would enable them to meet their material and spiritual needs. Yemeni and Somali Muslim seamen set up makeshift prayer rooms in their dockyard communities in Cardiff and South Shields in the second half of the nineteenth century. An interesting example was the complex developed by an indigenous convert, Abdullah Quilliam. The Liverpool Muslim Institute contained a prayer room, an orphanage, a press and a school, and flourished in the 1890s.

3.10 With the construction of the Shahjehan Mosque in Woking in 1889 - the first modern purpose- built mosque anywhere in Western Europe - the centre of the Muslim community in Britain shifted there. A number of prominent converts contributed to its cultural and religious activities (Sherif, 2002).

3.11 At the beginning of the 20th century, there were an estimated 10,000 Muslims living and working in Britain. This figure remained more or less constant until after the Second World War. Thereafter mass migration occurred from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, with the overwhelming number coming from a few localities: Mirpur (Pakistan), Sylhet (Bangladesh) and Gujarat (India).

3.12 According to the 2001 Census there are 1.591 million Muslims in Britain - 51.8 per cent of all the non-Christian religious minorities. Today, it is estimated that there could be around 2.4 million.

3.13 Ethnically, 658,000 (42.5 per cent) are of Pakistani origin, 259,833 (16.8 per cent) of Bangladeshi origin, 131,463, (8.5 per cent) of Indian origin, and 21,653, (5.8 per cent) 'other Asian' origin. The rest comprise 'whites' 179,409 (11.6 per cent), 'mixed', 'black or British' and 'Chinese' or 'other ethnic groups' (14.8 per cent). Muslims accounted for nearly 92 per cent of all those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, reflecting the religiously homogenous nature of these states (Census 2001; Office for National Statistics, 2003, online).

3.14 As with other ethnic minorities, the Muslim population is concentrated in a few areas. This is the result of chain migration informed by kinship and friendship networks. 40 per cent of the community is settled in Greater London, making up 8.5 per cent of the total population of the region. Other regions of concentration include the West Midlands, West Yorkshire, South Lancashire and Glasgow.

3.15 There are significant differences between the various Muslim communities in terms of settlement patterns. For example, while Pakistanis are more dispersed nationally (though with a majority in the north), the Bangladeshis are concentrated in fewer areas, particularly in the East London boroughs of Tower Hamlets (71,000 – 36 per cent of the borough's population) and Newham (59,000 – 24 per cent). Other large Muslim clusters are to be found in Birmingham (140,000 – 14 per cent of the total population of the city) and Bradford (75,000 – 16 per cent) (Census 2001; Office for National Statistics, 2003, online).

3.16 There are 24 local authorities with at least 10,000 Muslim residents. 75 per cent of the total Muslim population lives in these authorities. Table 1 below lists the top 10 local authorities by percentage of the Muslim population in 2001. Of these authorities, the only localities with a significant Sikh population are Slough and Birmingham. However, in some, areas like Hounslow, while the proportion of Muslims in the total population was only 9.13 per cent, it was still greater than that of Sikhs at 8.60 per cent.

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Muslims in top 10 Local Authorities (2001)

Local Authority	Number	Percent Muslims	Ranking
Tower Hamlets	71,398	36.4	1
Newham	59,291	24.3	2
Blackburn and Darwen	26,674	19.4	3
Bradford	75,188	16.1	4
Waltham Forest	32,902	15.1	5
Luton	26,963	14.6	6
Birmingham	140,033	14.3	7
Hackney	27,908	13.8	8
Pendle	11,988	13.4	9
Slough	15,897	13.4	10

Source: 2001 Census: Office for National Statistics, 2003

3.17 46 per cent of Muslims are British-born. Overall, the Muslim population is relatively young (see Table 2 below): 33.7 per cent are between 0-15 years of age; and 50 per cent are under 24. At the same time, Pakistani and Bangladeshi households are larger, 4.7 and 4.2 persons per household, respectively, compared with the average of 2.3 (Samad, 2004:6).

3.18 Educationally, the British Muslim population is poorly qualified. Although there are interesting variations between Muslim pupils' performance in London and Glasgow, nearly 40 per cent had no formal qualifications. Interestingly this figure was not too dissimilar from that of the Sikhs (Peach, 2006: 641; Singh and Tatla, 2006).

3.19 In terms of employment, Muslims are clustered mainly in manufacturing, distribution, hotels and restaurants. 25 per cent of Pakistani and 66 per cent of Bangladeshi men are employed in the distribution sector which includes restaurants and hotels. Pakistani and Bangladeshi men are over-represented in textiles and clothing; Pakistani men are also over-represented in transport and communication, which includes taxi driving and chauffeuring (Twomey, 2001). In the 2001 census one-third of Muslims of working age were in the long-term unemployed or never worked category; over 70 per cent of women over 25 were economically inactive (Peach, 642). Of all religious groups, Muslims are the least likely to be professionals.

3.20 The combined impact of low- skilled employment and poor educational qualifications is also reflected among Muslims in the housing sector. Muslims have the lowest proportion of owner occupancy with a high dependency on social housing (see Table 2 below). However there is a significant difference between Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, with the latter more likely to own their own homes.

3.21 Taken together large segments of the British Muslim population suffer from indices of multiple deprivation – in housing, employment, and education. 'One third of the Muslim population of England and Wales' concludes Peach, 'lives in the worst areas of multiple deprivation, which account for only 10 per cent of all households. A further 22 per cent live in the next worst decile' (ibid: 649-50).

Table 2

Social Profile of Muslims in Britain, 2001

	% of the Muslim population	% of the National Average	%+/-
1. Ethnic Group:			
White	11.49	91.31	NA
Mixed	4.13	1.27	+2.86
Asian or Asian British	73.82	4.37	NA
Black or Black British	6.76	2.19	+4.57
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	3.81	0.86	+2.95
2 Sex:			
Male	51.70	48.61	+3.09
Female	48.30	51.39	-3.09
3. Age Structure:			
0-15	33.72	20.07	+13.65
16-34	37.25	25.15	+21.10
35-64	25.39	38.81	- 12.95
Over 65	3.63	15.97	-12.34
4. Households with Dependent Children:			
No dependent children	37.45	70.62	-33.17
1 dependent child	18.32	12.40	+5.92
2 dependent children	19.32	11.21	+8.11
With 3 or more dependent children	24.91	5.21	+22.01
5. Household Tenure:			
Social rented	28.0	19.92	+8.08
Private rented	18.0	9.59	+8.41
Owned	52.0	68.29	-16.29
Rent free	2.0	2.19	-0.19
6.Employment: (2004)			
Public admin, education, health	19.6	27.3	-7.7
Banking, finance and industry	14.9	15.6	-0.7
Transport and communications	10.5	6.9	+3.7
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	26.2	20.0	+6.2
Construction	2.0	7.7	-5.7
Manufacturing	11.8	14.1	-2.3
Energy and water	0.6	1.0	-.0.4
Agriculture and fishing	0.1	1.2	-1.1
Other	4.1	6.2	-2.1

Source*: Census 2001, and Labour Force Survey 2003/04, Office of National Statistics.

Muslims in Britain: Religious Diversity, Political Organisations, Islamopohbia and the Islam Generation

3.22 The ethnic and religious differences within Muslim communities in Britain are reflected in their religious institutions. While the Sunni tradition of Islam is predominant, with Shias accounting for only seven per cent of mosques, within the former there are traditionalist and revivalist strands. Of the former the Barelwis predominate, accounting for 46 per cent of mosques , while of the latter Deobandis account for 16 per cent (Peach 640). In addition the Tablighi Jamaat, the Ahl-i-Hadith and the Jama'at-i-Islami have their mosques and centres and are associated with promoting reformist, scriptural Islam. Three per cent of the mosques belong to the Ahmadiyyas, a sect not accepted as Muslim by the orthodox. In addition, Muslims from the Middle East, Turkey, Africa and the Far East have their own centres or mosques. Currently there are 1,700 mosques in the UK (*The Times*, 10 February 2007).

3.23 There are probably around 3,000 Muslim organisations in Britain, of which about half are primarily involved with running mosques and community centres. These organisations have a very important role to play in terms of lobbying, community development and ensuring that Islamic practices and prayers are catered for. Some of these organisations in the past - and in the present - have included: the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS, 1962); the Union of Muslims Organisations (UMO, 1970); the Islamic Party of Britain (IPB, late 1980s); the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA, 1988); the Muslim Parliament(MP, 1992); the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB, 1997) and lists over 500 organisations as affiliates; and the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB, 1997). The MCB has gained a great deal of prominence since 2001. Besides these organisations others include the Council of Mosques, the UK Islamic Mission (a front for the Jama'at-i-Islami) Ahl-i-Hadith, the Muslim Educational Trust and the Jama'at'al-Tabligh Council of Imams and Mosques (Neilson, 1995; Samad, 2004).

3.24 British Muslims are present in Parliament. Currently there are 4 MPs, 9 members of the Lords, 2 MEPs, 230 Councillors, and 1 member in both the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly (Anwar 2008). British Muslims are significantly under-represented at all levels of the political system. As the anti-Rushdie and Gulf War I and II mobilisations demonstrated, British Muslims are able to mobilise effectively around single issue movements.

3.25 Politically, however, British Muslims have suffered serious upheavals in the last two decades. First, domestic and international events – the Rushdie Affair, Gulf War I, the Bosnian crisis, urban unrest in northern towns, 9/11, Gulf War II, 7/7 and the war in Afghanistan/Pakistan - have intersected to mobilise the community around identity issues. Second, the backlash against this development has resulted in a virulent Islamophobia in which Muslims face pervasive discrimination and prejudice, and are regularly portrayed in the media as 'fundamentalists' and 'terrorists'. Third, this phobia has been exploited by the BNP which has specifically targeted Muslim communities, especially in the northern industrial towns. Fourth, these changes occur at a time when there is growing evidence that British Muslims are suffering from multiple deprivation, as noted above. Taken together these changes make the leadership of the community an extremely difficult exercise.

3.26 This task is also made more complex by the many social changes taking place within British Muslim communities. At one end is a new generation which is becoming highly professionalised. In the early 1990s the proportion of individuals of Pakistani origins in professional occupations exceeded that for whites; successful business ventures in property, food, services and fashion have emerged as well as small scale enterprises, in particular Sylheti-owned restaurants (Ansari, 2003). There is also a high proportion of highly skilled Arab settlers and working as engineers, professors, doctors, and business people. Recent research also suggests that there are currently well over 5,000 Muslim millionaires in Britain, with liquid assets of more than £3.6bn (Ansari, 2003).

3.27 At the other extreme are the many sections of Muslim communities locked into a spiral of poor employment, housing, education, health and life-chances. Under these conditions it is unsurprising that families are disintegrating, the divorce rate is rising, youth alienation is increasing, and the percentage of Muslims in prison is greater than that of any other religious or minority ethnic community. Indeed, in 2008, the Department of Communities and Local Government published *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society: Two Years on – A Progress Report on the Government's Strategy for Race Equality and Community Cohesion*. Notwithstanding the progress charted in the report, Muslim communities, including Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and others, are still lagging behind in a number of social and public policy areas (DCLG, 2008).

3.28 Perhaps the most serious challenge for public policy and for Muslim communities is the plight of youth. This area is now under serious review. As Samad (2004: 19) poignantly observes:

> Here we are looking at the majority of young men, from the working class, who are negotiating space for generational debates within a framework broadly defined by the elder generations of the Pakistani/Bangladeshi community. It is about creating space from within. Research evidence suggested strongly that there was a conflation of rural Pakistani/Bangladeshi masculinity with English working class masculinity. This is more pronounced among those living in the north, which is more conservative than the working class behaviour in the south of England. A major characteristic of young men was how they adopted the behaviours and norms of the white working class. They spend a lot of their time 'hanging out' on the streets, this partly due to overcrowding and they participate in various aspects associated with popular culture and are as quick to use violence as their white counterparts. Unlike their elder generation, Pakistani young men not only believe but also feel that they are British and are not prepared to take the abuse or be subject to violence in the meek manner that their elders were prepared to accept because they felt they were interlopers who did not belong. When compounded by the frustration as a result of social and racial exclusion, we have, as one observer commented, 'angry, arrogant young men' with no idea why they are angry. In this context there is a overlapping of being 'hard' and *'izzat'* (honour) as both are related to notions of masculinity. The propensity to violence becomes inherent in this situation and in areas of high concentration such as Manningham/Burnley violence against white residents is rising and cause for concern… young men have a propensity to use Islamic symbols and metaphors to justify their rebellious nature. Many associated with various groups such as Ahle-e-Hadith, Tablighi Jamat, Jama'at-i-Islami or Hibzi-ut-Tahrir without showing signs of religiosity. In some cases young men were far from a paragon of virtue, have so little knowledge of Islam that they did not know who or what were Shias, have criminal

antecedents but yet identify with a religious organisation. Rebellious young men would either associate with a group because of the shock value or out of territorial loyalty…working class men would claim to be associated with Hibzi-ut-Tahrir or daub wall with slogans such as 'Hamas Rules OK' because they know only that it is the most militant of the various organisations and had greater shock value. Similarly, it was also apparent in the mobilizations against *The Satanic Verses* and the Gulf Wars that the youth were pushing the first generation leadership not to back down and compromise. Muslim youth selectively support Islamic organisations depending on the issue, switching allegiance quickly if they are not in agreement. UKACIA drew the youth under their banner on the *The Satanic Verses* issues but their ambivalent response on the first and second Gulf War saw the youth switch support to those Muslim organisations prepared to support the anti-war movement.

3.29 As we shall see, these developments are not limited only to British Muslim communities: since the mid-1970s British Sikhs have also experienced similar trends.

(4) Sikhism and Sikh Communities in Britain

4.1 Sikhism is a major world religion founded by Guru Nanak in the 15th century. Sikhism has almost 20 million followers, most of who live in the Indian province of the Punjab. The historic province of Punjab is the homeland of Sikhism but it has also spread to other parts of northern India, and a significant diaspora of 1-2 million exists in Europe, North America, the Middle-East, Australia and South East Asia. Sikhism welcomes converts but is not a proselytising religion.

The essence of Sikh theology is to be found in the opening hymn of the *Guru Granth Sahib* (also referred to as the *Adi Granth*), the Sikhs' sacred text:

> There is one supreme eternal reality; the truth; immanent in all things; creator of all things; immanent in creation. Without fear and without hatred; not subject to time; beyond birth and death; self-revealing. Known by the Guru's grace (Singh, 1997).

4.2 Sikhs believe that God (*Waheguru*), who created the universe and everything in it, is omnipresent, immanent as well as transcendent, and omnipotent. Because God is formless, inscrutable, and beyond the reach of human intellect, a relationship with the Creator can be established only by recognizing divine self-expression and truth. This relationship is possible through meditation on God's Name (*nam*) and Word (*shabad*) which are the revelation of the divine instructor (the Guru). Without the Guru's grace an individual is doomed to the perpetual cycle of death and rebirth.

4.3 Guru Nanak's message went beyond personal reflection and mediation to incorporate a new social vision. This was evident in his strong emphasis on social equality, the rejection of all forms of caste distinctions, the collective welfare of all, and the centrality of the concept of *seva* (service) to the community. The present and the divine in Nanak's social vision are linked together in three simple injunctions to his followers: to adore the divine name; to work hard; and to share the rewards of one's labour with others.

4.4 The Sikh code of discipline (*Rehat Maryada*) prescribes the daily routine for adherents. They should rise early (3 a.m. to 6 a.m.) and, having bathed, observe *nam japana* by meditating on the divine name and read or recite the order known as *nit nem* (the daily rule). This is followed by the reciting of the following scriptures: early morning (3 a.m. to 6 a.m.), *Japji Sahib, Jap Sahib,* and the ten *Swayyas*; in the evening and sunset, *Sodar Rahiras;* and at night before retiring, *Kirtan Sohila.* At the conclusion of each selection the *Ardas* (prayer) must be recited.

4.5 As the influence of the Guru's word is best experienced in the *gurdwara,* the Sikh place of worship, Sikhs are required to join a daily *sangat* (congregation) where, as well as listening to scriptures, they must undertake and perform *seva*. A *gurdwara* is entered by removing one's shoes and covering one's hair. Sikhs and non-Sikhs bow before the *Guru Granth Sahib* by touching their foreheads to the ground. The *sangat* are served with

Karah Prashad (sacramental food) at the close of the session. Each *gurdwara* has a *langar* (common kitchen) where the *sangat* are enjoined to share a meal.

4.6 The *Rehat Maryada* also imposes further injunctions: Sikhs are not allowed to eat meat killed in accordance with Muslim custom; the use of all intoxicants is forbidden; they must not cut their hair; and they must be loyal to their marriage partners. For most Sikhs and their families, Sikhism plays a central role in their life cycle. There is a distinctive ceremony for naming the newborn and for baptism into the *Khalsa* (see below); the learning of Punjabi is seen as essential to understanding the scriptures; the marriage ceremony is specifically defined; and, at death, there are prescribed scriptures to be read and procedures to be followed.

4.7 Most Sikh children are considered to be born Sikhs. All Sikhs who follow elements of the code of discipline and are mature enough to appreciate the commitment can undergo baptism into the sacred order of the *Khalsa* ('the pure') established by Guru Gobind Singh at *Baisakhi* in 1699. Initiation into the *Khalsa* follows the ceremony known as *khande di pahul* ('tempered with steel') performed by the *Panj Piare* (the symbolic representation of the five beloved ones who were first baptized, and who subsequently, in turn, baptized Guru Gobind Singh). The *Khalsa* are required to keep the five K's: *kesh* (unshorn hair), *kacha* (short drawers), *kirpan* (steel dagger), *kara* (iron bangle), and *kanga* (comb). In addition they must strictly adhere to all aspects of the *Rehat Maryada*. Baptized *Khalsa* males are renamed as *Singh* and females as *Kaur*. While the majority of Sikhs follow aspects of the *Rehat Maryada* and keep the five K's, those who follow the strict discipline of the *Khalsa* are in a minority.

4.8 The development of the Sikh community has been strongly influenced by the course of historical events. Guru Nanak, a Hindu by birth, was born at the time of religious reform movements in northern India. While his thought shared many of the features of his contemporaries, his religious doctrine nonetheless marked a radical departure and soon attracted many followers. Guru Nanak was succeeded by nine other gurus. Guru Angad (Guru between 1539 and 1552) established the Gurmukhi ('from the mouth of the guru') script in which Punjabi is written. Guru Amar Das (Guru between 1552 and 1574) founded Goindwal where Sikhs were encouraged to gather twice a year. Guru Ram Das (Guru between 1574 and 1581) is remembered for founding the current site in Amritsar of the Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) on land granted by the emperor Akbar. When Guru Arjan Dev assumed the leadership of the community (1581-1606), Sikhism had developed a considerable following in Punjab's central districts. During his Guruship the Darbar Sahib (1604) was completed and the *Guru Granth Sahib* was compiled. Sikhism's increasing influence, however, led the Mogul emperor Jahangir to check the growth of the new faith. This move resulted in the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev in 1606.

4.9 Guru Hargobind (Guru between 1606 and 1644) reacted to these developments by establishing a fortress at Amritsar and the *Akal Takhat* (seat of temporal authority) opposite the *Harimandar Sahib* (temple of God) within the Darbar Sahib complex. The linking of these two forms of authority was further symbolized in his decision to wear two swords that signified the temporal and the spiritual. The leadership of the seventh and eighth Gurus (Guru Har Rai, Guru between 1644 and 1661; Guru Har Krishan, Guru between 1661 and 1664) was largely uneventful as they sought to avoid a direct confrontation with the Mogul rulers, but their successor, Guru Tegh Bahadur (Guru between 1664 and 1675), was martyred after making representations to the emperor

Aurangzeb against the religious persecution of Kashmiri 'pundits' (from Sanskrit *pandit,* 'teachers'). Guru Gobind Singh's Guruship (1675 to 1708) was marked by a growing conflict between the Sikh community and the Mogul and Hindu princely rulers in Punjab. In 1699, at *Baisakhi*, Guru Gobind Singh decided to further consolidate the development of the community by baptizing the *Khalsa.* Upon his death Guru Gobind Singh vested the Guruship in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Thereafter the spiritual and the temporal were embodied in the *Guru Panth* (the temporal Sikh community) and the *Guru Granth Sahib* (which would spiritually guide it).

4.9 With the collapse of the Mogul Empire and the decline of Afghan influence in Punjab, the 18th century saw the rise of Sikhs to political power in the province. During the 'heroic century', against considerable odds, the Sikhs, who were the minority religious community in the province, achieved political dominance in Punjab. This rise culminated in 1801 with the establishment by Ranjit Singh of the 'Kingdom of Lahore', which included Afghan territories to the west, and Kashmir to the east, and extended to the borders of Tibet. Although Ranjit Singh's state was the embodiment of Punjabi identity, its fortunes were largely guided by a powerful military meritocracy that was dominated by the *Khalsa*.

4.10 Ranjit Singh's kingdom lasted until 1849 when it was annexed by the British. During the next century Sikh fortunes waxed and waned as they were first treated with suspicion by the ruling colonial rulers and then recruited in large numbers into the Indian Army. In response to the competitive religious revivalism that took place in Punjab in the late 19th century among the three main traditions (Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh) following the proselytizing activities of Christian missionaries, the Singh Sabhas attempted to reassert Sikh identity by seeking the removal of Hindu influence and ritual that had accreted into the Sikh tradition during the dislocation of the *Panth* in the 17th and 18th centuries. The work of the Singh Sabhas was completed by the Akali Movement (1920-1925), which successfully removed Hindu *mehants* (hereditary custodians) of leading *gurdwaras*, including the Darbar Sahib. This movement established the two premier institutions that have controlled Sikh affairs ever since: the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandak Committee, which manages the affairs of the leading *gurdwaras*; and the Akali Dal (its political wing).

4.11 The Akali Dal opposed the partition of Punjab, but when it became a reality in 1947 the Sikh political leadership opted for the Indian Union. Partition divided the Sikh community into two and precipitated the mass transfer of Sikhs (and Hindus) from West Punjab and Muslims from East Punjab. Almost 1,000,000 people were killed in the riots that followed.

4.12 After 1947 the Akali Dal leadership attempted to preserve the distinctive identity of the community by campaigning for a *Punjabi Suba* (a Punjabi-speaking state). This demand was opposed by the central leadership as communal but was eventually conceded after the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965. Although the linguistic reorganization of Punjab in 1966 created a majority Sikh state (60 per cent) it left many Punjabi-speaking territories outside the new state. Centre-inspired dismissal of the Akali Dal governments (1967-1971) and lingering resentment about linguistic reorganization led the Akali Dal to adopt the Anandpur Sahib Resolution (ASR) in 1973 that called for greater autonomy for Punjab.

4.13 Following the dismissal of the Akali Dal government in 1980 the ASR became the focus of an autonomy movement led by moderate Akalis. However, as this campaign failed to achieve a political settlement with the centre, the militant faction led by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale called for direct action that resulted in the gradual breakdown of law and order in Punjab. On June 5, 1984, the Indian Army, in an operation code-named 'Blue Star,' entered the Darbar Sahib complex in order to evict Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his followers who had taken refuge in the precinct. The clash resulted in deaths of 1,000 security personnel and Sikh militants.

4.14 In the aftermath of Operation Blue Star, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was killed by her Sikh bodyguards. Her death was followed immediately by pogroms against Sikhs in Delhi in which approximately 3,000 people were killed. In 1985 Rajiv Gandhi attempted to restore the political process through the Rajiv-Longowal Accord but his reluctance to make concessions on the main Sikh demands undermined the moderate Akalis and led to the rise of militant groups campaigning for a separate Sikh state of Khalistan. Between 1984 and 1993, almost 25,000 people were killed in Punjab as a result of militant violence and counter-insurgency operations conducted by the security forces. By the end of 1993 the use of overwhelming force by the police, the paramilitaries, and the army succeeded in eliminating most militant groups (Singh, 2000).

4.15 In February 1997, in the first free and fair elections held in the province since 1985, the Akali Dal won a landslide victory in the Punjab Legislative Assembly elections. Although the party is still officially committed to ASR, the campaign for more autonomy has been superseded by efforts to establish a regional power base.

4.16 In India Sikhs constitute less than two per cent of the total population. In Punjab there are 15 million Sikhs with a further 4 million in the adjoining states and territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chandigarh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi. Small settlements are also to be found in West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Most Sikhs are traditionally associated with farming, though urban Sikhs are also renowned for their sharp business acumen. The Sikh community is generally seen by outsiders as industrious, entrepreneurial, and adventurous. The success of the Green Revolution in turning Punjab into the granary of India and the richest state in the Union is mostly associated with the ethic of hard work rooted in the religious and cultural tradition of the Sikh peasantry. These qualities have historically led to heavy Sikh recruitment into the armed forces. Today, Sikhs still constitute a disproportionate share of India's soldiers and officer corps.

4.17 There is a sizeable Sikh diaspora (1-2 million) settled in the United Kingdom (336,192), Canada (300,000), and the United States (100,000). There are also small settlements in most European countries, the Middle East, East Asia, Africa, and Australasia, some of which date from the late 19th century. Overall, the Sikh diaspora has been very active in promoting the interests of the community to a global audience. Within the Sikh diaspora there is strong reproduction of Sikh institutions, creative adaptation to local conditions and influences, and a growing self-confidence and awareness as a world-historic community (Singh, 1997).

Sikhs in Britain

4.18 Sikh settlement in Britain dates from the middle of the 19th century with the arrival of the child prince Duleep Singh, the last Sikh Maharaja of Punjab. In the next hundred years pockets of Sikhs emerged comprising students, workers and ex-military personnel. The Indian Workers Association was founded by early Sikh settlers in Coventry in 1938 and included Muslim and Hindu members. However, most Sikh migration to Britain occurred after the Second World War. Three factors contributed to this development: the demand for unskilled labour, the partition of Punjab which affected all communities equally, and the Africanisation policies of post-colonial states in East Africa. Since 1951, the Sikh population has increased from about 7,000 to 336,179 in 2001. Most of this increase occurred between the 1960s and 1980s (Singh and Tatla, 2006: ch.3).

4.19 Sikhs are concentrated in Greater London, the South East and the West Midlands, accounting for 73.1 per cent of the total community. This concentration is even greater in particular localities: 11 localities – Slough, Hounslow, Ealing (Southall), Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Gravesham (Gravesend), Redbridge, Coventry Hillingdon, Leicester and Birmingham account for 47% of the total Sikh population. Within these authorities, areas of Sikh settlement are often referred to as 'Little Punjabs' and are integrated by Sikh business, social, religious and political institutions.

4.20 Although Sikh presence is evident throughout Britain, with historic settlement of communities in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, for most of the country it rarely exceeds 2.20-5.45 per cent; in large swathes of Britain it is as low as 0.-0.54 per cent. There is a significant Sikh presence in the East Midlands (Leicester, Derby, Nottingham), South Yorkshire and Humberside, but again this is concentrated in particular localities (Singh and Tatla, 2006: 62-63).

4.21 Like all communities from South Asia – Hindu, Muslim, or Buddhist – Sikhs are a diverse community, differentiated by place of birth, ethnicity, and caste. In the 2001 Census 56.1 per cent of all Sikhs were British-born, 34.9 per cent born in India and 7 per cent recorded their birth in Africa. Nearly 60 per cent of the community was below the age of 34, highlighting the fact that it is a very young community in terms of its demographic profile. Ethnically, 90.4 per cent of Sikhs identified themselves as Indian and 4.3 per cent opted for 'Asian or British Asian' (see Table 3 below).

4.22 Sikh communities in Britain are divided by caste and ritual observance of the orthodox *Khalsa* tradition which tends to be identified (although not exclusively) with *Jat* Sikh migrants from Punjab (and elsewhere from the Sikh diaspora) who have traditionally made up nearly two-thirds of the Sikh population and is also often referred to as the 'mainstream'. The overwhelming majority of *gurdwaras* in Britain (83.3 per cent) belong to the mainstream (Singh and Tatla, 2006: ch. 4). The second major cluster of *gurdwaras* is provided by Ramgharias who combine a social identity that draws on their caste heritage with a narrative of Sikh history that underscores their distinctive contribution to the development of the Sikh religion. This consciousness of a separate identity has been consolidated by migration to East Africa and settlement in Britain as 'twice migrants'. Bhatras are also one of the oldest Sikh communities who have remained aloof from mainstream Sikh society with their own

gurdwaras and customs. Bhatra settlements dating from the 1920s and 1940s are to be found in Cardiff, Bristol, Glasgow, Liverpool, Edinburgh, and Manchester.

4.23 Alongside the Sikh mainstream are communities and sects at the boundaries of Sikhism that often share elements of the Sikh universe but retain their distinctive identity. Among these are the former Dalit communities (Ravidasis and Valmiki) who have traditionally drawn on the agricultural labouring castes of Punjab which in the province now constitute almost one-third of the total population. In addition there are reformist and schismatic sects like the Radhasoamis, Nirankaris and Namdharis – all of whom have their own *gurdwaras* or places of worship.

In addition to these groups are *gurdwaras* run by religious leaders, often referred to as 'babas' (revered old ones) that are present across all the sects and caste groupings. These institutions are individual-centred, offer charismatic worship and can be revivalists or iconoclastic (see Singh and Tatla, 2006: ch.5).

4.24 In terms of the socio-economic profile of the community available from the Census 2001 data and other official surveys, Table 3 below provides a snapshot summary. The following facts are worth noting:

- Sikhs are a very young community with 60% of the total population between the ages of 0-34.
- The vast majority of Sikhs in Britain are British-born and the proportion of those who are Indian-born is about a third.
- Geographically, Sikhs are highly concentrated in certain localities. The highest levels of community concentration are in West London.
- Socio-economically, Sikhs are not the UK's ethnic high-flyers but neither are they its significant under-achievers.
- The Sikh family is facing the same pressures as mainstream families with a rising divorce rate, 'out of faith' marriages, and the growth of non-conventional households (nearly 25 per cent in 2001).
- Sikh religious and identity issues are most pronounced in localities of Sikh concentration; in the last decade these areas of historic Sikh settlement have also been under pressure as result of the arrival of new migrants.
- For Sikhs, religion remains a key marker of identity, though this identification is less than for Jews or Muslims but within the community is higher among non-UK born Sikhs than British-born Sikhs. British-born Sikhs identity positively with British identity while the equivalent figure is only about a half among those born outside the UK (Singh and Tatla, 2006: chs. 3, 7 and 8).

Table 3

Social Profile of Sikhs in Britain, 2001

	% of the Sikh population	% of the National Average	%+/-
1. Ethnic Group:			
White	2.09	91.31	NA
Mixed	0.84	1.27	-0.43
Asian or Asian British	96.18	4.37	NA
Black or Black British	0.19	2.19	-2.00
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	0.71	0.86	-0.15
2 Sex:			
Male	50.20	48.61	+1.59
Female	49.48	51.39	-1.49
3. Age Structure:			
0-15	24.53	20.07	+4.46
16-34	34.91	25.15	+9.76
35-64	34.39	38.81	-4.42
Over 65	6.17	15.97	-9.80
4. Households with Dependent Children:			
No dependent children	45.07	70.62	-25.55
1 dependent child	19.46	12.40	+7.06
2 dependent children	21.97	11.21	+10.76
With 3 or more dependent children	13.51	5.21	+8.30
5. Household Tenure:			
Social rented	8.00	19.92	-11.92
Private rented	8.24	9.59	-1.35
Owned	81.97	68.29	+13.68
Rent free	1.80	2.19	-0.39
6.Employment: (2004)			
Public admin, education, health	19.5	27.3	-7.80
Banking, finance and industry	11.7	15.6	-3.90
Transport and communications	12.9	6.9	+6.00
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	26.4	20.0	+6.40
Construction	6.4	7.7	-1.30
Manufacturing	18.7	14.1	+4.60
Energy and water	1.6	1.0	+0.60
Agriculture and fishing	0.0	1.2	-1.20
Other	3.0	6.2	-3.20

Source*:* Census 2001, and Labour Force Survey 2003/04, Office of National Statistics.

4.25 In recent decades, Sikh political organisations have gone through three phases.

4.26 First, from the 1930s until the mid-1970s the space was dominated by the Indian Workers Associations, which were often a front for the Communist movement based in Punjab and India. The IWAs were class-based organisation that campaigned against racism and anti-immigration measures by building broad alliances with other anti-racist groups such as CARD, the Anti-Nazi League and local trade union and socialist groups (de Witt, 1969; Singh, 1994).

4.27 From the early 1980s onwards, and especially following Operation Blue Star (June 1984) that led to the Indian Army's entry into the Golden Temple, the political leadership of the Sikh community in Britain was controlled by the Khalistan movement – the campaign for a separate Sikh state. This movement led by the International Sikh Youth Federation and other groups managed to capture control of the main *gurdwaras*. Although the campaign in Punjab was defeated by using overwhelming force, elements of the Khalistan movement are still very active within the Sikh community.

4.28 Since the late 1990s, with the return of normalcy in Sikh politics in the Punjab, Sikh groups in Britain have tended to focus on issues of identity and discrimination. This was highlighted by attacks on Sikhs following 9/11, but has also come to the fore as result of restrictions on the Sikh dress code, especially the carrying of the *kirpan* and the wearing of the iron bangle, the *kara,* the French ban on wearing the turban, and the community cohesion agenda that is often seen as negatively stereotyping Sikhs as a problem.

4.29 At the national level there are number of organisations that compete with each other for leadership of the Sikh community but none of these commands comprehensive support among the community and most are highly factionalised. These include: The Network of Sikh Organisations; the Sikh Federation (U.K.); Sikh Human Rights Group, and the British Sikh Consultative Forum (see Singh and Tatla, 2006: ch. 4).

(5) Muslims and Sikhs: Shared Past, Common Values and Disjunctions

Common Culture and Experience

5.1 In the 2001 Census nearly 43 per cent of British Muslims claimed Pakistani background. Among Sikhs nearly 92 per cent recorded Indian heritage. Given the localised migration from these two communities, it is reasonable to suggest the most of the Muslim and Sikh migrants have their roots in the historic province of Punjab. Disregarding religion, or imposed ethnicity (Asian/ British Asian), or still, heritage nationality (Indian or Pakistani), it is reasonable to suggest that the largest ethnic group *within* Britain's religious and ethnic minorities consists of Punjabis (and this would also include Hindus, Christians, and Dalit communities as well as 'twice migrant' Punjabis from East Africa). Based on these figures there are probably 1-1.5 million people in Britain today of Punjabi heritage.

5.2 The migration of Punjabis to Britain after 1945 is not surprising. The province of Punjab was the mainstay of British rule in India, providing a recruitment base for the Indian Army which preferred to recruit from the province's 'martial races'. After 1947 the demand for industrial labour to support the post-war recovery was readily answered by the favoured sons and daughters of the empire.

5.3 Most Punjabis today, whether they are born in Britain or overseas, share a common heritage distinguished by a common culture, history, language, cuisine, popular folk music, a love of physical sports and, often, a shared attachment to the land of five rivers (Punjab). Historically, three factors gave Punjab a distinct identity which marked it off from the rest of India.

5.4 First, Punjab was the main land-gate into India. Over a period of three thousand years, the armies of Greeks, Turks, Persians, Mongols and Afghans streamed across the province. Political stability was rare for, as Pettigrew has noted, there has never been 'a period long enough to allow a forgetfulness of the contingent' (Pettigrew 1974: 32). Living on an invasion route, Punjabis were able to develop few social institutions of an enduring nature. The Sikh state which emerged upon the collapse of Mogul power in Delhi disintegrated as spectacularly as it was established. The British annexation of the province in 1849 was followed, almost a century later, by the gruesome tragedy of partition. Post-1947 the Indian Punjab has witnessed the violent uprising of the Khalistan movement (1984-93) while Pakistan has lurched from crisis to crisis and is fighting for its very existence.

5.5 Second, a related feature of Punjab's geographic position was the evolution of a social structure that was in many ways a-typical of the rest of India. There were few pure castes. *Brahmins* constituted a smaller proportion of the population than anywhere else in northern India and did not enjoy an especially favoured status. In modern Punjab the social hierarchy was dominated by the numerically dominant owner-cultivators, the *Jats* among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Representative of sturdy, independent and jealously competitive peasantry, they, more than any other social group, embodied the *zeitgeist* of Punjab.

5.6 Third, Punjab's distinct identity was really symbolised in its language. Although Punjabi was to become a notorious example of communal appropriation, it nevertheless, was the principal medium of collective consciousness. A mixture of Arabic, Persian, Pashtu, Pahari, Western Hindi and Sanskrit, its slow, indelicate delivery articulated the essence of border-agrarian consciousness – its simplicity, vibrancy, spontaneity, lewdness and directness. Folklore, the culture of Punjabis, was glorified in epic plays like Waris Shah's *Heer*, Pilu's *Mirza Sabhan* and Hashim's *Sassi Punnu* as well as the more popular forms like *lookgeets* (folksongs), village festive and ballads. The violent and romantic emotions familiar to the land of 'five rivers', found a powerful expression in the common idiom of poetry (Singh, 1994: ch. 2).

5.6 Despite the partition of Punjab on religious grounds in 1947, the appeal of *Punjabiat* (a shared common heritage) still remains strong among groups in Pakistan, India and the diaspora. As we shall see latter, there are many professional, academic, voluntary, and advocacy organisations that remain committed to *Punjabiat* as the shared heritage of all communities and peoples that remain culturally attached to Punjab or the Punjabi diaspora.

5.7 Within the diaspora a creative development that has attracted significant following among Punjabi youth of all religious communities in the last two decades has been the reinvention of *bhangra* –traditional Punjabi folk music. Since the early 1980s and the 1990s *bhangra* has become the emblem of British Punjabis, coinciding with the emergence of an identifiable youth culture and the new information entertainment technologies. Emerging from the highly charged conditions of multi-racial inner-cities of the 1970s and 1980s, the growth of the *bhangra* industry, and its global impact, has been hailed as the precursor of social hybridities, cross-over and multiple-identities which explodes the myth of dominant discourses of ethnic and religious identities among Britain's minority populations. *Bhangra*'s success in Britain, the Punjabi diaspora and South Asia has not only provided a distinctive brand of youth culture but has also created a major music industry that now dominates Bollywood and is the source of significant employment (Singh and Tatla, 2006: Ch.9).

5.7 As well as popular culture, it is important is to recognise that many Punjabis today still continue to share - across religious traditions (Hindu, Muslim, Sikh) – syncretic religious practices that rarely get full public recognition. These practices often involve worship at shrines, reverence of holy men (for there are few women!) and modes of pilgrimage that are resented by religious orthodoxies of the three main religions of Punjab – Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. Nevertheless such practices remain very popular and pervasive in the Punjab and in the Punjabi diaspora, and regularly pose fundamental challenges to scriptural traditions by their deconstruction of orthodoxy (Ballard, 1996).

5.8 Finally, from the nineteenth century onwards, as Punjabis began to settle overseas in the Far East, North America, Europe and Australia, Punjabi diaspora communities were established that were, and have remained, religiously plural. Even today, whether it is in the UK, North America or Europe, the major settlements of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh Punjabi diaspora tend to cluster together. These patterns of settlement have not only been influenced by the availability of work; histories of Punjabi diaspora communities across the globe suggest that they emerged as result of collaborative and supportive efforts, especially against host country racism, giving rise to common political and social formations such as the Gadhr Party, the Indian Workers' Associations or anti-racist alliances (Singh, 1994; De Witt, 1969).

Disjunctions: Sikh-Muslim Relations Paradigms

5.9 Although it also important to recognise that many factors ethnically unite Punjabis – language, culture, cuisine, music, shared histories in Punjab and the diaspora, and often common experiences of racism and victimisation in the host country – the history of modern Punjab, culminating in the partition of the province, has resulted in privileging of what is often called 'communal history'; that is, history seen through the totalising perspective of primordial, irreconcilable religious identities. Communal histories tend to minimise or ignore the conditions under which most Punjabis have lived harmoniously for centuries. They also selectively construct 'rhetorical' or 'heroic' histories in opposition to the demonised 'other(s)'.

5.10 Indeed, it is now widely recognised by academic scholarship in Punjab Studies that the encounter with colonialism in the late 19th century with its Christian missionary threat led to the emergence of religious reformist movements among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs which precipitated the communal mobilisation that was to culminate in the partition of India (Oberoi, 1994). The introduction of the decennial census of religious identities and religiously-based political representation by the colonial state hardened previously porous forms of self-identification and introduced the discourse of political majorities and minorities. In this mobilisation, the religious reformist movements (Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha movements) stigmatised the 'other' community while seeking to 'emulate' the methods of the colonial masters, resulting in the creation of hardened communal identities that operated in a triad – Muslims v Sikhs and Hindus; Muslims and Sikhs v Hindus and shifted situationally. Only with partition did the competition between Hindus and Sikhs become bi-polar.

5.11 In general, as Moliner points out, it is difficult to speak of Muslim-Sikh relations without keeping the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh triad in mind and without recognising the importance of the largely under-researched area of Punjabi Muslim perceptions of Sikhs from the time of the Gurus to the present day. Nonetheless, as Moliner (2007) suggests, in the absence of detailed work, it is probably useful to identify two paradigms:

> Sikh religious corpus offers an apt starting point to understand how the Muslim has been historically constructed as the other in Sikh imaginary. Indeed, Sikh religious and historical texts are replete with references to Muslims, Mughals and Afghans but these references convey heterogeneous, equivocal, sometimes contradictory representations, in any case far more complex than implied by later interpretations. Two opposite themes run across this literature: one that insists on the fraternity (*bhaichara*) between Sikhs and Muslims, the other highlighting a supposed hereditary antagonism between them (ibid: on-line).

5.12 The paradigm of fraternity is normally associated with early Sikhism – the life and teachings of Guru Nanak (the founder of the tradition), the Sikh scriptures and the early history of the *Panth* (Sikh community). Nanak's message of oneness of humanity attracted Hindu and Muslims followers both of whom sought to appropriate his teaching. In Sikh scriptures (the *Adi Granth* or *Dasem Granth*), moreover, there is 'no representation of Muslims or Hindus as the Other', confirming that fact there were 'no fixed religious boundaries in early Sikhism' (ibid). In fact references to Hindus and Muslims underscore the oneness of humanity. As a text from the *Dasem Granth* notes:

Some are called Hindus, others are Muslims, members of sects such as Shia or Sunni. Let it be known that mankind is one, that all men belong to a single humanity. So too with God, whom Hindu and Muslim distinguish with differing names. Let none be misled, for God is but one; he who denies this is duped and deluded. There is no difference between a temple and a mosque, nor between the prayers of a Hindu or a Muslim. Though differences seem to mark and distinguish, all men in reality are the same. Gods and demons, celestial beings, men called Muslims and others called Hindus- such differences are trivial, inconsequential, the outward results of locality and dress. Allah is the same as the God of the Hindus, Puran and Qur'an are one and the same… (ibid).

The fraternal paradigm also highlights the closeness of Nanak's message with that of Punjabi Sufis. It emphasises the symbolism of acts such as Mian Mir's role in laying the foundation stone of the Harmandir Sahib (the Golden Temple) at the request of the fifth Sikh Guru.

5.13 In the 17th and 18th centuries as Sikh identity became institutionalised, especially with the initiation of the *Khalsa*, by Guru Gobind Singh, the paradigm of fraternity shifted to antagonism as Sikhs asserted their political power in the central districts of Punjab, a rise contested by the declining Mogul state and by Afghan incursions into Punjab. The 18th century witnessed the rise of *Rehitnamas* (social codes of practice) and *Gurbilas* ('Glory of the Guru') literature and martyrologies. This literature bears

the imprint of the confrontation with the Mughals and contributed greatly to the conflictual narrative that permeates, even till today, Sikh collective imaginary, whereas the *bhaichara* one has remained at the periphery. This rhetoric of confrontation is articulated around what Veena Das calls the 'Hindu-Sikh-Muslim triad'… where the Sikh plays the martyr, the Muslim the oppressor and the Hindu a more ambiguous role, either victim or traitor, at best an unreliable ally of the Sikh against the Muslim (ibid).

5.14 The 19th century witnessed something of a return of the fraternal paradigm. This was in large measure due to the establishment of Ranjit Singh's Kingdom of Lahore in 1801 over a Muslim majority area, and though it is misleading to describe this state as Khushwant Singh suggests as a secular state, the practical necessity of accommodating all his subjects required that Ranjit Singh's governance was a plural enterprise (Singh, K., 1991). Secondly, in the late 19th century, as noted above, the religious revival pitted Sikhs against Hindu assimilationist organisations. This struggle, epitomised in the tract Ham *Hindu Nahin* ('We are not Hindus'), launched the Singh Sabha movement which sought to reform Sikhism and purge it of Hindu accretions. This climaxed in the second 'Sikh war' (1920-25) for the liberation of Sikh *gurdwaras* (including the Golden Temple from the control of Hindu *mehants)*, resulting in the passing by colonial government of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act (1925) which recognised the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (an elected body often referred to 'as the Sikh parliament') as the rightful body for the management of Sikh shrines.

5.15 Sikh reformers' efforts to religiously differentiate Sikhism from Hinduism from the late 19th century onwards resulted in a distinct political and religious identity. But as the departure of the British loomed, faced with a prospect of a majoritarian Muslim Pakistan, Sikhs were once again politically allied with the Congress leadership in Punjab to frustrate this demand.

After the failure of the Cabinet Mission Plan (June 1946), the Muslim League pursued a course of 'Direct Action' that led to a rising crescendo of violence culminating in the August 14/15 1947 transfer of power to the two dominions of India and Pakistan and the division of the provinces of Bengal and Punjab.

5.16 The partition of India led to the transfer of 12 million people and the deaths of almost a million. Nearly 200,000 women were abducted. The violence in West and East Punjab was so systematic that some authors now refer to it as genocide or ethnic cleansing (Brass, 2003). As a recently well-received history of the partition by an Oxford-trained historian notes:

> Individual killings, especially in the most ferociously contested province of Punjab, were frequently accompanied by disfiguration, dismemberment, and the rape of women from one community by men from another. *Muslim, Sikhs and Hindus suffered equally as victims and can equally be blamed for carrying out the murders and assaults*.... A whole village might be hacked to death by blunt farm instruments, or imprisoned in a barn and burned alive, or shot against walls by impromptu firing squads using machine-guns. Children, the elderly and the sick were not spared, and the ritual humiliation and conversion from one faith to another occurred, alongside systemic looting and robbery clearly carried out with the intention of ruining lives. It seems that the aim was not only to kill, but to break a people. A scorched earth policy in Punjab, which today would be called ethnic cleansing, was both the cause and the result of driving people from the land. Militias, armed gangs and members of the defence organisations went on the rampage. All this proceeded and accompanied the migration of some twelve million people between the two new nation states of India and Pakistan (Khan, 2007: 6, emphasis added).

5.17 Given that partition, and the related violence, is a seminal event in the modern history of India and Pakistan it is perhaps inevitable that the national and communal histories have sought to appropriate the events in their own terms and displace blame on to other communities. Thus for Sikhs the events that are remembered are not the wholesale massacres of Muslims in East Punjab, who were ethnically cleansed when the boundary award was announced on 17th August 1947 (Major, 2002), but the 'heroic' defence of community honour as epitomised in the deaths of 105 women at the village of Thoa Khalsa who committed collective suicide rather than surrender to Muslim attackers (Butalia, 1998). Similarly, official Pakistan Studies text books today rarely acknowledge the systematic ethnic cleansing and massacres of Sikhs and Hindus in West Punjab. Rather, they emphasise that:

> The Sikhs were clearing East Punjab of Muslims, butchering hundreds daily, forcing thousands to flee and burning Muslim villages. The Sikhs *jathas* always attacked Muslim migrants on their way to Pakistan…The Sikhs slaughtered the poor men, women, young and old in cold blood. The minor children were killed in a ruthless manner in the presence of their helpless parents. Women were raped and young girls were abducted (Rabbani and Sayyid, 1990:107).

5.18 In short, violence remains at the heart of partition histories. While academic research has demonstrated that the violence was highly localised, and the majority of population transfers occurred without significant loss of life, and *that women of all communities and the weak*

were the main victims of partition violence, these findings, together with acts of communal cooperation and support, have rarely been acknowledged in the public realm (Talbot and Singh, 2009).   One major reason why this has happened is because in post-independence India and Pakistan the nationalist discourses have tended to draw heavily on the communalised 'other', thereby embedding partition violence in idealised forms of nationalisms that see 1947 as the 'end of history'.   Sadly, in the absence of proper memorialisation of the victims of partition, and the continued rivalry between India and Pakistan, these narratives continue to provide a rich ideological resource for communalists and their simplistic reading of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh versions of partition history.

Disjunctions: Muslim-Sikh Relations Paradigms

 5.19 Muslim perceptions of relations with Sikhs remain a largely under-researched topic. Nonetheless it is probably safe to say that they also follow a similar pattern to Sikh paradigms of Sikh-Muslim relations.   Historically speaking, at least, there is a constant oscillation between fraternity and antagonism, with partition in 1947 the high watermark of the latter.

5.20 In the fraternal paradigm Sikhs are often represented as common Punjabi brethren. Even in contemporary Pakistan Punjab today, the representations of Guru Nanak are ones that firmly place him within the established syncretic tradition of the province with widespread reverence for 'Baba' Nanak.   Indeed, this fraternal relationship before 1947 was most marked in rural areas of West Punjab because, among other things, Muslims and Sikhs often shared a common social status as landed communities, who were recruited heavily into the British Indian Army, and who were united by common opposition to mainly Hindu urban commercial classes (Talbot, 2000). The image that emerges in these narratives of rural Punjab – as opposed to Punjabi cities which were hotbeds of communalism – is one of cultural and religious pluralism and harmony underpinned by a strong commitment to the *raj* that mediated between the various religious communities and established effective governance.

5.21 Again as in Sikh 'communal' history, within Muslim communal history there is continuous tradition of antagonistic relations with Sikhs dating from the persecution of Sikh Gurus, the Sikh rise to power in Punjab from the mid-18th century and the establishment of a 'Kingdom of Lahore' by Ranjit Singh in 1801. One of the earliest *jihads* against the latter was undertaken by Syed Ahmed of Rai Bareli between 1827-9 which succeeded in galvanising Muslims throughout India but failed to dislodge Sikh rule in Punjab (Singh, K, 1991: 271-3).

5.22 The antagonistic paradigm is clearly evident in Muslim views of Sikhs' role in the partition violence. After 1947, the government of Pakistan issued several official documents accusing the Sikhs of having organised the massacres of Muslims in East Punjab. The portrayal of Sikhs in these documents is one of blood-thirsty killers who ruthlessly cleansed East Punjab of its Muslim inhabitants(West Punjab Government,1948a; West Punjab Government,1948b).

5.23 However it is necessary to emphasise that while 1947 legitimated the antagonistic paradigm of Muslim-Sikh relations it did not subsequently foreclose a return to a more fraternal relationship. As we shall see below, since the early 1980s as Sikhs have struggled with the Indian Union to establish a degree of political autonomy in Punjab, there has been major improvement in Muslim-Sikh relations in India, Pakistan and the Punjabi diaspora.

Post-1947

5.24 After 1947 the Muslim population of East Punjab was reduced to less than two per cent. With the removal of the triadic relationship between Punjab's three religious communities, political competition between Hindus and Sikhs became the main antagonism. As this mobilisation played out, first in the creation of the Punjabi-speaking province (1966), and later with the Khalistan Movement (1984-93) which campaigned for a separate Sikh homeland following the entry of the Indian Army into the Golden Temple (1984), in Punjab and in the Sikh diaspora there was renewed interest in the fraternal paradigm between Muslims and Sikhs. The Pakistani state's support for the Khalistan movement and the opening up of Sikh historic *gurdwaras* in Pakistan for pilgrimage from the mid-1980s onwards fostered emotional and political ties, especially between diaspora organisations supporting self-determination in Kashmir and Punjab (Talbot, 2010, forthcoming). As the relations between India and Pakistan have improved since 2004, many thousands of Sikhs and Muslims have visited India and Pakistan and organised tours from the Sikh diaspora to Pakistan have become a veritable industry with a World Guru Nanak University planned at Nankana Sahib (the birth place of Nanak). In fact strong cultural and religious ties still link Indian and Pakistani Punjabs and the recent easing of restrictions on travel between the two countries have led to many joint ventures and renewed contacts. These developments are reflected in the comments of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who has expressed a wish that, while the border between India and Pakistan is unlikely to be removed, he hopes that through more people-to- people contact it will become less relevant.

5.25 Alongside these positive developments we also need to keep in mind some contemporary concerns. The Taliban's rule in Afghanistan in the 1990s led to the wholesale exodus of historic Sikh communities that had been settled in Kabul for centuries. (Some of these refugees have now resettled in Southall where they are now a distinctive community). The Pakistan Army's crackdown on the militants in Swat was preceded by the Taliban's imposition of *Jizya* on the local Sikh communities (*The Tribune*, 2 May 2009: on-line). Recently, a number of Sikhs were beheaded by the Pakistan Taliban in the NWFP, creating global uproar among Sikhs, with allegations that that they were executed because they refused to convert to Islam (*The Tribune*, 22 February 2010: on-line). In Pakistan itself the management of *gurdwaras* is strictly controlled by the Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI), and this has led to accusations that *gurdwara* properties are being expropriated by military personnel.

Yet despite these points of friction – and they have their counterparts in the treatment of Muslims in India and the mismanagement of former Muslim shrines in Punjab and India – the mere fact that these issues are now open to discussion or redress demonstrates the distance the Muslim- Sikh relations have travelled since partition.

6. Muslims and Sikhs: Causes of Communal Tensions in Britain Today

6.1 Since the early 1990s, as we have seen in previous sections, the coalition of black and ethnic minority groups that had historically campaigned against racism has disintegrated. The assertion of the term 'Asian' which followed this collapse has now been superseded by 'religion' – a process helped by the 2001 Census which for the first time included the category religion. To be sure, these changes have been intersected by wider developments associated with the 'return of religion' to public life – the increasing self-identification in terms of religion, the demand that the public space should recognise religious claims and religious differences, transnational events such as 9/11, 7/7, the Khalistan movement and the 'War on Terror'. However, clearly 21st century Britain is a very different place from the Britain of the 1960s and 1970s. Not only do ethnic and religious minorities need to understand the nature of contemporary racism and obstacles to the exercise of their citizenship rights, but they also need to address tensions between themselves. Among Muslims and Sikhs in Britain today there are several areas of contestation that have the potential to turn into serious conflict.

6.2 First, Sikh narratives of settlement in Britain increasingly speak of being the 'favoured sons of the empire'. This, it is said, is reflected in Sikhs' ability to work the British state so that key interests of the community are always protected. From turban campaigns to the Mandla Case (1983), from the *kirpan* cases to the *kara* case, the Sikhs, by virtue of their influence with the British establishment, are always able to ensure that their vital interests are protected. Political leadership among the Sikhs is increasingly aiming to emulate the 'Jewish model', and links between it and the Jewish leadership have been established to ensure that the historically distinctive position of both communities in British society is maintained. This posture necessarily pits the Sikhs against other minority religious and ethnic communities because *prima facie* it argues for *differentiated treatment and defence of distinctiveness* (Singh, 2009).

6.2 Second, the demography of the traditional areas of Sikh settlement is changing as result of new immigration from Europe, South Asia, Middle East and Europe. The 'Little Punjabs' identified in section 4 are now being exposed to 'super-diversity', and in particular, an increase in the size and settlement of Muslim communities which, according to the latest Labour Force Survey, are almost seven times more numerous than Sikh communities. This rapid demographic change, especially since 2001, is likely to lead to intense competition over resources such as housing, education, social services and social security. In the past when such competition occurred, for example over public sector housing, it has led to racialisation (Solomos and Singh, 1990). It is extremely likely that in conditions of declining public sector resources competition for local services and community funds will be reflected in communal/religious terms. Such articulation is also likely to become very communal if local resources are distributed proportionately according to community size. There is already some resentment in the public sphere among Sikh groups that public sector resources are being disproportionately allocated to deal with Muslim issues because of the security threat, at the expense and marginalisation of other communities.

6.3 Third, the profile of both Muslim and Sikh communities in the UK is very young. In the past youth groups have been active in the campaigns against racism. The riot in Southall in 1979 was accompanied by the rise of the Southall Youth Movement which later morphed into localised youth gangs (Gillespie, 1995). There is no denying the fact that in urban localities like the West Midlands, West London and Bradford organised gangs of youths from both communities are engaged in social self-policing and illegal activities that include drug dealing, illegal immigration and racketeering. Too often these nefarious activities are regularly cloaked in the idiom of religion to avoid censure or detection. Thus turf wars or conflicts between youth tend to be 'constructed' into a mini-communal war to deflect blame with ready-made stereotypes of the 'other' as the aggressor, rapacious or hell-bent on conversion, while the underlying causes of conflict may often be minor or may be rooted in persistent criminal activities (*The Independent*, 28 April 1997) . Thus small disputes in the playground or college can be converted into a full-scale demonstration against the 'other' community as the perennial aggressor. The nature of events which unfolded between Muslim and Sikh youth in Derby has all the characteristics of minor manageable difficulties translated into a 'communal conflict.'

6.4 Fourth, one of the constant refrains present in contemporary Muslim-Sikh tensions is the theme of 'forced conversions' of Sikh girls. There is no doubt that more and more young people from these communities are going to college and university and more and more inter-religious partnerships are happening – a fact highlighted by the growth of inter-religious and inter-ethnic marriages. Yet some of these alliances are now being politicised as 'forced conversions' constructed against the backdrop of historical antagonisms between Muslims and Sikhs and partition narratives and the aggressively proselytising activities of Islamic supremacist groups such as Al-Majiroun who have been accused of spreading leaflets in universities urging Muslim students to target Sikh girls for 'conversion'. In the autumn of 2008 the website *Sikh4aweek* caused outrage among sections of Sikh youth. The site which appeared to be run by young male Muslims boasts about seducing Sikh women during fresher's week at university. As Jerome Taylor of the *Independent* commented:

> The website contains pictures of at least 25 Sikh women which the site's administrators claim to have seduced alongside highly provocative remarks about the women and the Sikh religion.
>
> Timed to coincide with the start of the university year - described in the site as a time when '[Muslim] soldiers go hunting for Sikh slappers' - the website's creators encourage friends and readers to send in pictures of Sikh women they have seduced during freshers week.
>
> The website, whose address the Independent has declined to publish in order to protect the women's identities, has caused outrage among many Sikhs and risks damaging the historically tense relationship between Britain's Sikhs and Muslims.
>
> Although there is nothing on the site to prove whether the women have been physically involved with Muslim men other than the insulting comments left next to the pictures, the highly provocative site is clearly aimed at stirring up tensions between Muslims and Sikhs.
>
> In some areas of Britain - particularly West London, Birmingham and the North-East

- both communities remain deeply suspicious of each other particularly when it comes to the controversial topic of cross-faith relationships. Young male Sikh and Muslim gangs have in the past routinely accused each other of 'grooming' and 'converting' girls from each other's communities (*The Independent*, 8 October 2008: online).

In the West Midlands a Sikh Awareness Society has been established. A voluntary organisation, it lists among its objectives addressing the growing concerns about the 'grooming of our youth in Britain today [who] are still actively targeted on the basis of their religion and history' (http://www.sasorg.co.uk/media.html).

6.5 While no case of forced conversion has been recorded by the police so far, Katy Sian, a specialist researcher working on the topic, has concluded that the narrative of forced conversions by Muslim males has become fixed in Sikh imaginations. According to her it is a

> a tale which has become so deeply embedded within the Sikh imagination, a myth which continues to resurface within the public eye, readily consumed by the diaspora (Sian, n.d.).

The structure of the narrative uses the binary between the brave and the oppressor, with the Muslim men generally described as 'predators', 'rapacious' and 'lustful' while Sikh young women as depicted as 'vulnerable', 'innocent' and 'beguiled' girls. At the same time Sikh girls are also presented as outgoing, sociable and modern, and as such, are depicted as being more 'accessible' to Muslim Punjabi men who have restricted access to their own young women because of the strict codes of behaviour. These conversion narratives inevitably draw on the antagonistic paradigm of Sikh-Muslim relations in the 17th and 18th centuries and selected incidents of forced conversions during partition, overlooking the fact that many Muslims were also forcibly converted to Sikhism if they wanted to stay in East Punjab.

6.6 The narrative of forced conversions combines the potent cocktail of communal histories, the representation of the female body as a symbol of community honour with the heightened threat of Islamic extremism. When this is also set against the backdrop of increasing competition between Muslims and Sikhs in particular localities and social changes taking place within these communities, the outcomes can be lethal. Needless to say these conditions provide ideal opportunities for mobilisation, especially where personal dilemmas are transformed into public problems. And as in the communal riot in India, rumours play an important role in stoking up the flames of hatred (Brass, 1997). Rumours of forced conversions have long been circulating among the Sikh community and are still prevalent in Britain. In August 2007, these reached a new intensity. The controversy was centred on claims that a young Sikh woman from the West Midlands had been groomed for conversion to Islam. Reports of that allegation led to a protest by over one hundred Sikhs outside the headquarters of the West Midlands Police demanding that it deal with the alleged perpetrators of so-called forced conversion to Islam. Whilst individuals within the Sikh population often target Muslims with the accusation that Muslim men are grooming Sikh girls, this same accusation is also levelled against the Sikhs by Muslims. Such mutual accusations are especially prevalent in West London, Birmingham and the North East where they are tied to suspicion and the controversial issue of inter-faith relationships between young Muslims and Sikhs of the opposite sex.

6.7 Fifth, following 9/11 and 7/7 many turban-wearing Sikhs became victims of hate crime as they were targeted by racists who made no distinction between Sikhs and Muslims Restrictions were placed on Sikhs carrying *kirpans* on airlines; a Sikh was murdered in Arizona; and *gurdwaras* in North America and United Kingdom were attacked. Some Sikhs tried to distinguish themselves from identification with Muslims by, for example, wearing tee-shirts on the Underground proclaiming 'Don't freak, I'm a Sikh [i.e. not Muslim]'. At the same time many progressive Sikh groups have vigorously opposed the growing Islamophobia in wider society and actively campaigned against the Gulf War and the anti-Muslim backlash that occurred, particularly after 7/7. Nevertheless, despite the fact that Sikhs have also been victims of Islamophobia and racism, the political leadership of the community, which is now very fractured, has increasingly articulated mixed messages in identifying with Muslim communities in the struggle for equality and justice. Again this represents a trend to *differentiate* British Sikhs from other minority religious and ethnic communities that are identified in the popular imagination as economic and social under-achievers or as harbourers of Islamic extremism.

6.7 Sixth, an extreme form of differentiation among British Sikhs has led a few Sikhs to support the BNP. Shere-e-Punjab (the Lions of Punjab) was formed in Handsworth, Birmingham, in the mid-1980s, in response to growing street crime aimed at Asians. It quickly developed an anti-Muslim agenda, exploiting historical divisions between the two communities. Branches now exist in the West Midlands, West and East London, Slough and Derby. Much of its propaganda is based on claims that Sikh girls are being picked up by Muslim boys and converted to Islam. Other leaflets assert that Sikh girls are being drugged and spirited away to Pakistan and forced into prostitution. While there were a few publicised cases of this in the late 1980s, no one has been able to prove that these were anything other than isolated incidents or that it is still going on.

6.8 For some Sikhs hatred of Muslims is so strong that for them the BNP is seen as a potential ally. The bridge-building between BNP and Sikh extremists is to be understood and contextualised through the new BNP political rhetoric and strategy initiated by Nick Griffin. Post 9/11, the party has opened discussion on accepting in its ranks 'non-white' members and have tried to instrumentalise Sikh grievances to isolate Muslims and to portray the BNP in a more respectable light. Indeed, for some years now, the political focus of the BNP has been on Islam as public enemy number one. On the party website, Nick Griffin claimed to be

> bringing together white Britons, Sikhs and Hindus, in a common effort to expose and resist the innate aggression of the imperialistic ideology of Islam. Yet again, we give the lie to those who fanatically claim that we are 'racists' or 'haters' (Lowles, 2002).

6.9 In the light of this new strategy, the BNP has been using grievances within the Sikh community to strengthen its anti-Muslim propaganda and legitimise the party's racism. This has resulted in negotiation with Shere-e-Punjab on its propaganda. In 2001, the BNP worked with two Sikhs connected with Shere-e-Punjab on the production of a CD called 'Islam - a threat to all of us'. In this anti-Muslim audio tape, the Sikh contributors call for the BNP to be applauded. It proclaims that in Islam:

> Women are forced into oblivion and the men get high, very high, on doing to secularism what the Taleban did to the two Buddhist statues in Bamiyan. The Muslim extremists now plan to turn Britain into an Islamic republic, like Libya, Iran, Pakistan

and Afghanistan, by 2025, using a combination of immigration, high birth rate and conversion.

Who will stop them and save the rest of us? Ironically, the party labelled by the media as 'the Nazis'. Therefore, let us join to salute the British National Party.

6.10 One of the anonymous Sikh contributors has been identified as Rajinder Singh. Today, Rajinder Singh is set to become the first non-white member of the British National Party and his hatred of Islam stems from the fact his father was killed in the partition violence. 'I come from partitioned Punjab,' he has claimed, 'that saw a lot of bloodshed in 1947. Anyone escaping that genocide would pray to God [and say] never again and vote for BNP (Quinn and Jerome, 2009).'

6.11 Although the BNP has singularly failed to attract significant support from either Sikhs or Hindus, the issue remains that the discourse of Islamophobia among religious minorities in Britain has the potential to breed political extremism, whether or not it is reflected in the votes for the BNP.

6.12 Seventh, in internet discussions young Sikhs like to draw a sharp contrast between Sikhism's view of women's rights and those under Islam, often in derogatory communal caricatures. In fact historically for Punjabi Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs attitudes towards women are remarkably similar because of the patriarchal nature of traditional rural Punjabi society.

6.13 Among Sikhs the normative religious ideal of gender equality has tended to be tempered by virtual non-property rights, the control of women by men and of the dominance of males and elders. Normatively speaking, the Sikh religious tradition prides itself on the idea of gender equality which is said to have its roots in the teaching of the Gurus. However, this ideal needs to be set alongside the historical development of Sikhism within the culture of Punjab, a province renowned for its agricultural and martial traditions.

6.14 Nearly all accounts of the status of women in Sikh society begin with a verse from the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak (1469-1539):

> From women born, shaped in the womb, to women betrothed and wed;
> We are bound to women by ties of affection, on women man's future depends.
> If one woman dies, he seeks another; with a woman he orders his life.
> Why then should we speak evil of women, they who give birth to Kings?
> Women also are born from women; none takes birth except from a woman.
> Only the True One, Nanak, needs no help from women.
> Blessed are they, both men and women, who endlessly praise their Lord.
> Blessed are they in the True One's court; their faces shall shine (*Adi Granth*: 437*).*

6.15 For most Sikhs, this verse neatly embodies the idea of equality between men and women within the Sikh *Panth* (community). Against the prevailing customs at the time, these injunctions were drawn upon to oppose such practices as the exclusion of women from the *sangat* (congregation), the condemnation of *suttee* (self-immolation on the death of the husband), the right to read the Sikh holy scriptures, female infanticide, and the wearing of the veil. Women were also allowed to be initiated into the *Khalsa* (the Sikh brotherhood).

6.16 Although the Sikh normative ideal appears to establish equality between men and women, historically at least the realities of Sikh society have had an impact on Sikh ideals. As a leading authority on Sikhism has observed:

> The Gurus conferred an equality of opportunity for both men and women, but it was *equal opportunity of access to spiritual liberation*. It was not equality in the sense that women might do everything that might be open to men. *A woman's place was in the home, sheltered there by the caring and devotion of an upright husband. Patriarchy has certainly been deprived of its domineering aspects, but patriarchy was still intact. Although women deserve every respect, it is nevertheless the duty of men to protect them and in so doing men must assume the role of leaders in the affairs of family, locality and nation...*This equality certainly marked a considerable step forward, but we mislead ourselves if we see in his (Guru Nanak) teachings and those of his successors a reordering of society. Patriarchy remained intact (McLeod, 1997: 243-4, emphasis added).

6.17 Indeed, patriarchy within the *Panth* was further strengthened in the 500 years after the founding of the faith by Guru Nanak. Not only was the lineage of Gurus by the male line, but the historical evolution of Sikhism in Punjab consolidated the subordinate status of women. In the 17th and 18th centuries the conversions to Sikhism in large numbers of *Jats* (peasant cultivators), who now make up nearly two-thirds of all Sikhs, transformed the faith. *Jat* Sikh values almost succeeded in becoming coterminous with Sikh values (Helwig, 1986:7).

6.18 *Jat* Sikhs have traditionally divided and passed ancestral property down the male line, with the daughter's share accounted for by dowry, cash and movable property. For *Jats*, and, indeed, non-*Jat* Sikhs, social standing in Punjab (and India) is normally determined by their ability to maintain their *izzat* (family honour), a concept intimately wound up with a family's social status, wealth and power, and women's purity. *Izzat* provides a moral code the transgression of which can invite complete social rejection. Unsurprisingly, therefore, women's chastity is central to *izzat,* and this is seen in the necessary requirement of modest behaviour and dress and the strict taboo on adultery. Women's place is defined primarily within the home – as the mothers and carers of children, a status further underpinned by the social pressures against divorce and virtually non-existent property rights (Singh and Tatla, 2006: ch.2).

As Professor McLeod concludes:

> …the sociological patterns governing the beliefs and behaviour of most Sikhs do not permit the equal treatment of men and women. Within the greater part of Jat [and Sikh] society, the issue of gender has to be decided unquestionably in favour of the male. Women may be kindly and respectfully treated, and their lives may be rendered thoroughly satisfactory by the consideration which may be shown them, but power rests with the males and patriarchy indisputably rules (McLeod: 249).

6.19 As well as the social and historical conditions that have consolidated patriarchy and the subordinate status of women within Sikh society, the norms and values governing behaviour between men and women as outlined above have been further underpinned by the *Sikh Rehat*

Maryada (the Sikh code of conduct (1950)). Although this code marks a significant progress over previous codes, for example those of the 18th century, it emphasises Sikh tradition's attachment to life as a householder, the importance of modest behaviour, of respect for elders and the extended family, and the symbolic pre-eminence of the male in the marriage ceremony. In short, it reasserts the view that men are expected to treat women with respect, dignity and honour as well as act as protectors and guardians of their welfare.

6.20 In concluding this section it is important to recognise that we have provided an extended note on gender in Sikhism to underscore the point that religiously sanctioned ideal visions are rarely rooted in social reality. Society, history, traditional customs and practices have always heavily qualified gender roles in Punjabi society, and surprisingly, despite the efforts of communal ideologues to draw sharp differences among them, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh Punjabi males, both in Punjab and the diaspora, share many aspects of a common social universe in their attitudes towards women and the socialisation of girls.

(7) Conflict Resolution, Inter-faith Dialogue and the Way Forward

7.1 It is evident that in some localities in Britain there are serious underlying tensions between some segments of the Muslim and Sikh communities, especially the youth. It is also clear that these two communities share a common heritage, culture and political experience as racialised minorities in post-war Britain. Despite the efforts to construct sharp religious differences, the bonds that unite the two communities are equally firm, if not more important, in the long-term. Creatively used these resources have the potential to transform Muslim-Sikh tensions as well as provide a new model of community relations with far-reaching consequences for the prospects of a tolerant society in Britain and South Asia.

7.2 Participants in the Corrymeela project recognised some commonalities between their traditions and areas of common interest for collective action. Both communities believed that their belief in 'One God' encouraged adherents to follow a spiritual path; both communities felt proud of their respective religious identities and believed that their religions represented peace, equality, selflessness, social justice and a faith-inspired respect for humanity and the environment. They also stressed that the core principles of their respective faiths were based on family life, faith, humanity, work, modesty and monetary help to the poor and needy. The participants strongly believed that their ancestors have made substantial contributions for the benefit of humanity and to Europe. For example, Muslim participants highlighted the various inventions and discoveries that provided Europe with innovation in the Dark Ages and the Renaissance through Islam in Spain, Portugal, Eastern Europe and other countries. Among the innovations cited were the introduction of coffee, scientific medicine, engineering, surgical tools, agricultural progress and environmental protection schemes. The Muslim contribution to mathematics, particularly algebra, and to science, especially in astronomy and navigation was substantial as was the Muslim role in the development of the humanities. Sikh participants highlighted their awareness that their community had served 'Queen and the Country' in the First and Second World Wars where 83,000 Sikh men died and thousands more were wounded. Equally, Muslims participants also expressed the view that many hundreds of thousands of Muslims died in the mountains, fields and sands of France, Italy and North Africa in the two World Wars.

Participants also expressed concerns about negative projections by the media, for instance over the wearing of the *Hijab* or the *Kirpan* and highlighted the rising levels of Islamphobia where attacks on Muslim communities were described. Concerns related to racism and issues of modern life affecting young people i.e. drugs and unemployment, were also discussed. Sikh participants believed that 9/11 had some very strong adverse impacts on the Sikh community which led to global misunderstandings around Sikhism and actual physical attacks on Sikhs who were perceived to be Muslims.

Finally, it is heartening to learn that representatives of both communities expressed a desire to build upon a 'global vision' and a 'big idea' for peaceful co-existence between faith communities. Some younger participants also expressed their desire to see a return to more spiritual values and to break away from the bondage of those elements of society which promote the illusion of happiness through power and wealth.

7.3 We believe that this 'big idea' is to be discovered in the rich, shared common heritage of Muslims and Sikhs and the common concerns of these communities in Britain today. These concerns, we suggest, have the potential for incubating a new model of community relations, one based on genuine trust, reciprocity, critical self-awareness about one's own faith tradition, and respect and recognition for the other. It is an idea that arises from the contemporary realities of managing religious and ethnic minorities in Britain in which there is an urgent need for responsible, self-managing, and self-reliant communities. It is also an idea that could radically transform communal relations in India and Pakistan by acting as a beacon of good practice.

To realise this goal, the communities need to engage in the following activities

7.4 First, there is a need for a sustained inter-faith dialogue between Muslims and Sikhs. Most localities today have inter-faith forums which could be used to develop these dialogues. It now generally recognised that such dialogue can help to reduce tensions, resolve conflicts and promote peace (Neilson, 2000). However, to be successful such dialogue must take place in a carefully controlled environment where both parties are familiar with rules and objectives of the exercise. Above all, the dialogue must avoid merely expressing good sentiment, a confrontational approach or preach to the converted while excluding militants and extremists (Armstrong, 2008).   Inter-faith dialogue needs to be inclusive and must include women and young people. The danger that interfaith activities only involve those least in need of its positive effects must be avoided

7.5 Apart from the immediate need to reduce Muslim-Sikh tensions, such dialogue, if taken seriously, should also engage all religious communities of Punjabi heritage – Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, Dalits, and marginal traditions that are rarely recognised in formal institutions. This inclusive approach will highlight the commonalities between these traditions and help to build effective inter-faith networks to combat militancy and violence. Limiting dialogue to Muslims and Sikhs only in the long-term would seriously overlook the other Punjabi communities who are also victims and perpetrators of communalism.

7.6 Second, both communities need to rediscover their common Punjabi heritage, which has been lost or is disappearing because of generational change. In Britain today there are many organisations that have promoted interest in this common heritage. They include: the Indian Workers' Associations; the Punjab Research Group, an academic organisation that has functioned since 1984 to promote interest in the 'three Punjabs' – historical, East and West, and the Punjabi diaspora; the myriad of associations of Punjabi Writers that keep the interest in *Punjabiat* alive; South Asia Solidarity Group; and the Southall Black Sisters' Group that has been involved in cross-communal advocacy work for women for nearly two decades. The number of and range of these groups is far more extensive than those listed above (Singh and Tatla, 2006).

7.7 Third, linked to the above, Muslim and Sikh community leaders should draw on the substantial expertise on Punjab and South Asian Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism that now exists in British institutions of higher education for a programme of lectures, discussions and talks at school and sixth form level to make pupils aware of non-communal and non-essentialised versions of their tradition. There is a great deal of ignorance among Punjabi youth not only about their own tradition, which is often reduced to a number of clichés, but those of others and the fact that religion is very much a lived experience. De-essentialising

communal visions of religion will enable it to be more receptive to the needs of contemporary society which requires the acceptance of gender, cultural, ethnic and sexualities equality.

7.4 Fourth, funding by statutory and voluntary organisations for Muslim and Sikh community projects should be made conditional on providing conclusive evidence of cross-cultural outcomes. Such funding should be especially targeted at projects that aim; (1) to establish networks and organisations among the Muslim and Sikh youth where there is a history of conflict between them; (2) women's groups to develop a common perspective on gender issues that would combat community stereotypes; and, (3) the 65+ generation of Punjabis who still share the composite culture of united Punjab and have much to offer a new, globalised generation of British-born Punjabis who have largely lost this heritage.

7.5 Fifth, there should be effective monitoring of media (mainstream and ethnic) and the internet to ensure that incidents such as *Sikh4aweek* are not repeated. Offenders should be prosecuted and given exemplary punishment. The police should make more effective use of the incitement to religious hatred legislation to prosecute those intent on inflaming passions among ethnic and non-ethnic communities.

7.6 Sixth, both communities need to make a serious effort to learn from the experience of the other and to understand that their fortunes are inseparable. Thus the experience of British Sikhs provides valuable lessons for stigmatised minorities such as British Muslims to address concerns of disadvantage and discrimination. It seems to be forgotten that in the 1980s and 1990s the archetypal religious terrorist was not the Muslim but the turban-wearing Sikh who brought down the Air India flight off the coast of Ireland and caused havoc across British cities (Singh and Tatla, 2006: ch.5). Today, whilst the heat is on British Muslims it would be naïve to hold that other minorities such as Sikhs can negotiate separate 'social contracts of integration'. The history of Jews in Britain – and, indeed, Sikhs themselves – suggests the minorities must respect Benjamin Franklin's dictum that 'We must indeed all hang together, or most assuredly we shall hang separately.'

7.7 Seventh, community leaderships should be *proactive* in condemning violence against other religious minorities, both in Britain and overseas. Equally, the right to religious and citizenship rights in Britain, India or Pakistan also carries the moral obligation to protect the rights of other minorities, religious or otherwise. It is unreasonable for Muslims and Sikhs to claim 'victimhood' while prosecuting or systematically indulging in acts of violence against other minorities. Nor is it acceptable to rationalise the misdeeds of elements from one's own community by citing the crimes of others

7.8 Eighth, both communities should aim to work in mainstream political parties, trade unions, the voluntary sector and business associations to address common interests and concerns. Support for extremist parties such as the BNP is unlikely to further the interests of these communities and may well result in increased racialisation in Britain that would have seriously negative consequences for *all* minority religious and ethnic communities, and indeed the British people as a whole.

7.9 Finally, the leaders of both communities should be open to learn from good practice, whether from Britain or overseas. Corrymeela was a promising start; its objectives now have to be realised in practice.

(8) Need for Further Research and Work

8.1 Our report has demonstrated that there is a clear need for further research and training into this sensitive subject which could have widespread ramifications in the future.

8.2 We believe it is crucial to get to the root of real causes of tensions between Muslims and Sikhs before they reach the level of a sustained conflict. For this to be realised urgent research is therefore required into the subject of 'forced conversions'. This research should provide a solid evidence base into the reality -or otherwise - of the prevalence of the phenomenon. It must tackle once and for all the veracity of such claims by Sikh groups. Without such research relations between segments of the two communities will remain mired in distrust, suspicion and hatred.

8.3 In addition, we suggest the following:

(1) Documentation of shared heritage, common values and similarities in theological belief systems, and shared religious practices in Punjab. The work should include practical examples of Muslims and Sikh communities living side-by-side with each other and projects that are helping to get both faith communities to interact.

(2) A tool-kit that look towards the future and addresses how: (i) how social and cultural interactions may develop; (ii) issues around inter-marriage with comments and thoughts from Muslim-Sikh couples; (iii) case studies around joint business ventures and political participation, as well as joint mobilisation which can effect change on policies and practices.

(3) Support for projects that: (i) to establish networks and organisations among the Muslim and Sikh youth, where there is a history of conflict between them, and where any such conflicts can still be pre-empted (ii) encourage women's groups to develop a common perspective on gender issues and help combat community stereotypes; and, (iii) engage the 65+ generation of Punjabis who still share the composite culture of united Punjab and have much to offer a new, globalised generation of British born Punjabis who are rapidly losing this heritage

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(10) Appendix

<u>Joint Sikh and Muslim Statement on Membership of BNP</u>

Resham Singh Sandhu, Chair of the Sikh Culture and Welfare Society and Suleman Nagdi, Public Relations Officer of the Federation of Muslim Organisations said, "We are deeply distressed by the publicity accorded to the individual who claims to be Sikh and is rumoured to be about to join the BNP. Sikhism is a faith, which prides itself on equality and justice. Everything the BNP stands for does the opposite.

Resham Singh Sandhu added, "I and others in the Sikh Community are very upset and very sorry for the way this issue has developed and how it has been publicised. We have to put on record that the view held by this individual is only a reflection of an absolute minority and does not reflect the view of the wider Sikh community. I have already had dialogue with senior Sikh leaders, both local and national, regarding this issue and how to best deal with the situation"

Suleman Nagdi said, "This is a time when all faiths must stand united and protect our communities from being influenced by the negative and divisive opinions of extremist political parties. We have very good links between the Sikh and Muslim communities, which must be strengthened. I am very grateful to Resham and the Sikh community for their stand and their most valued support. I urge every citizen to stand against the views of extremism and extremist political parties and to cherish the freedom we all enjoy as a nation."

FAITH MATTERS