

English Muslims and Ghettoisation: Trends and Consequences

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The main body of this paper comprises a personal narrative of the experience of territorial alienation and issues related to self identity-exclusion from the mainstream which is an all too often phenomenon which British-born Muslim Pakistanis face in their everyday life in the UK. Specifically focusing on the small Pakistani Asian community in Pendle, Lancashire, it gives a detailed account of the continued tensions over residential ownership between the Pakistani Asian community, now having been resident in Pendle for two generations and the local authorities. The experience here is contrasted with the experience of the predominantly Asian Pakistani community in Pollokshields, Glasgow Southside, many of whom moved from the East Lancashire textile areas including areas like Pendle in the late 1970s and 80s, with the collapse of the region's traditional textile industries. The paper concludes by asking how we can work to reduce the alarming rate of exclusion and disenfranchisement felt in many such communities. Case studies of successful and unsuccessful attempts at local stakeholder-inclusive urban regeneration schemes are cited with the key issues and obstacles to their implementation discussed. Ways of working and delivering true consultation and successful urban development outcomes are explored in the light of previous case studies and research.

As a contribution to the symposium conference in Birmingham, the urban regeneration and consultancy group Multicultural Urban Design (M.U.D.)¹ have worked on a joint paper which seeks to explore the issues relating to ghettoization exclusion and issues of identity through a personalised view and narrative of a regeneration project set in East Lancashire. The analysis of this view with reference to similar issues that confront Muslims of predominantly Pakistani-Asian extraction in Glasgow, a community which has a large component derived from families who moved away from the North of England Lancashire textile belt at the collapse of the industry from the late 1960s to the mid-80s. The paper concludes by highlighting key issues relating to the continuing tensions and marginalisation felt by minority communities in urban areas focusing specifically on the unique Asian-Muslim experience. Connections are made from the past to the present in terms of both forms of exclusion and the seemingly intractable problems that even migration and generational change have been unable to transform. It concludes by describing some of M.U.D.'s work in urban regeneration projects which have begun to address this issue.

Whilst this paper focuses on the specificity of development/regeneration relations in a small northern English town, we suggest that issues of exclusion, ghettoization and self-identity, the paper draws on both previous research done by the team Uduku:(1998, 2000, 2003) and by others Appadurai (1996, 1998) Sassen (1998) and Modood (2005). The paper ultimately reinforces the view that, for most of the UK's minority groups who have now lived for generations in different parts of the Union, many having moved, voluntarily or by force of events, to make new socio-economic livelihoods for themselves to areas different from, there has been slow or little change to the racialisation of spatial relations and tensions of social

infrastructure provision and support for these now fully 'British communities' in 21st century cosmopolitan Britain.

The narrative which follows has been written and has been included largely un-edited to provide the first section and setting to the paper.

Living the Experience

"Burnley, Leeds, Oldham, Bradford, Leicester, Liverpool, Birmingham and many other towns and cities are characterised by one common issue; they all are home to significant close-knit Muslim communities who live in areas that are separated from rest of society through culture, social characteristics, and of course religion. The pressure to 'integrate' and get out of this 'ghetto' seems to be overwhelmingly on Muslims. Is this a fair analysis? Maybe it is controversial. However, there is no doubting that as Muslims, there is more reason to feel integrated than perhaps other communities. Coffee, Cheques, Algebra, three-course meals, the gardens that we enjoy in our houses, even the concept of bathing, the guitar, town planning and more are Islamic inspirations. In fact many of the traditionally 'English' habits, customs and urban influences actually were pioneered by Muslims. However, against this backdrop, there is an increasing urgency, in the wake of international terrorism and wars, which Muslims have been the subject of intense focus, scrutiny and sometimes abuse.

Recent backlashes, terrorist incidents and similar events are giving Muslims a compelling need to look into their community. Mosques are being told they need to be more open to society and closed to extremists. The Home Office launches a spontaneous 'Connecting Communities Fund' for faith communities.² Councils begin to develop 'Community Cohesion' policies,³ Police set up Community Cohesion Units, communities within the Muslim areas are told to be vigilant and Muslim community leaders are criticised for being too lax about the threat of terrorism. All of a sudden, an entire community is forced to look into the microscope and integrate; and people become more hesitant to go out in their scarves, traditional attire and fear reprisal if they express their identity through, for example, the urban environment. On several occasions, the Greenwich Islamic Centre was targeted by extremists and windows were smashed and the visibly 'Islamic' building was vandalised only in March this year.⁴ This is a resonance of the deep divide that is fuelling suspicion and debate, mistrust and controversy.

My experience has shown that, on one hand there are the first-generation immigrants; my parents' generation, hard working, tolerant and willing to put up with abuse by putting their head down and working long hours. Then there is the second generation; torn between traditional cultural pressures by parents to adapt to South Asian cultural values mixed with Islam. External influences such as drugs, crime and exclusion have caught up with many in this sometimes-confused generation unsure of its identity. This generation is grappling with its sense of self, to understand whether this is Pakistani, Anglo Asian, British Muslim or Brown English. I know one young man of Pakistani descent, who, when stopped by Police for routine stop and search, declined to be identified under any of the ethnic groups and coined a new phrase; 'Brown English'. The policeman looked amused and wrote down that the individual 'refused to describe ethnicity but appearance is Asian'.

Throughout Europe, cultural barriers separate Muslim ghettos from mainstream society. In

general, European Muslims belong to the underclass. British Muslims are mostly Indo-Pakistani; French Muslims are largely Algerian, Belgian Muslims are immigrants from Morocco, etc. In many of these countries where Muslim populations are largely homogenous, the forces of isolation are stronger than the forces of integration. This is because many such communities, due to their socio-economic status, live in areas of high deprivation, which are often set apart from mainstream urban areas. Furthermore the media portrays the community as “the other” with its its ‘Islamophobic’ reporting and coverage of local Asian affairs.

The challenge for policy makers and mainstream British society, is to prevent the stigmatization of people who feel disowned by mainstream Britain. This social ailment should concern all of us who wish to pursue the ideals of pluralism. It is both a law enforcement and a socio-political and economic challenge. The debate continues, but it needs to be followed not by ad-hoc policies and programmes that are reactionary, treating the symptoms rather than the causes, more grounded on what a Muslim MP might feel rather than what communities at the grass roots feel and most importantly, what the ‘gatekeepers’ - individuals who exercise influence in their communities due to their economic or social status, or the credibility or influence the family has in Pakistan or elsewhere - feel. We know that these gatekeepers can be the biggest obstacles in many of these communities, claiming to speak for communities, whilst having their own interests at heart. Effective multicultural regeneration and communication techniques are critical to achieving real community engagement, sustainable communities within Muslim neighbourhoods and the appropriate integration we all ultimately seek.

My experience of working in many Muslim areas is that many Muslims seem to be calling for integration and building harmony. What is missing is the bridge of effective communication. Most of today’s Muslim population arrived in England in the 1950s and 1960s in large numbers from the Indian subcontinent and worked in the cotton mills when work was ample and demand for labour was very high. These immigrants were willing to work long hours and undertake menial jobs for low pay. They also put up with abuse and racism, focussed on their task at hand and aimed to stay here for a few years and then return home to Pakistan, India or elsewhere. There are in addition, large numbers of Muslims living in England who originate from Africa and the Middle East who had arrived much earlier than Muslims from the sub-continent. This earlier Islamic Diaspora to England faced similar issues in terms of working in low pay jobs for long hours.

During the early periods of settlement of English Muslims, little recognition or focus was given to the social and economic issues faced by these communities. In addition, loyalties of these communities were firmly rooted back ‘home’; in the countries where they came from. However, instead of going back to their countries of origin a few years later most Muslims decided to stay in England and brought their spouses over. Subsequently, their children, born and brought up in this country became more accustomed to English values and customs. They were also less willing to accept the norm of racism and abuse as their parents had done. Whilst the first generation of parents had ample opportunities to access employment, this trend declined over time and the first generation of UK-born adults increasingly entered a life of poverty, unemployment, deprivation and social exclusion. Most Muslims now live in the 88 most deprived neighbourhoods in the country and face issues of high unemployment, low education levels and poor health.⁵ The lack of drive, language barriers and cultural challenges, facing this second generation of Muslims, would suggest that education was not afforded the utmost priority for many of their parents, the first generation, most of whom had

been uneducated themselves. This, coupled with low income and deprivation, provided an unhealthy environment for the nurturing and development of Muslim communities in England.

Despite the issues facing English Muslims today, the mainstream agencies have failed to grasp them, and this created ineffective service delivery mechanisms to members of the English Muslim community. First and foremost, the first generation that was made redundant, as a result of a rapidly declining cotton industry was allowed to fall into unemployment and subsequently many of them suffered mental illnesses and other related ailments. Facing severe social isolation in an alien society also implied that this early generation was ill equipped and had limited Western-parenting skills needed to bring up their children in British society. This lack of connectivity between mainstream agencies and English Muslims is very apparent in the health services, police and other services such as local government, particularly in the planning sector, and has caused severe exclusion and marginalisation of these communities.

International events such as 9/11, the ongoing situations in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, and Bosnia and most recently the 7th July London bombings last year, would arguably necessitate a greater understanding of Muslims and Islam. However, the problem has been that much of the 'education' has been passed down from tabloids, which have mainstreamed a few extremist voices to cover the real voices of the Muslim community in England. This has worsened the isolation of the community and in some cases has alienated resources and support for a community that lives in deprivation and disadvantage. Too often mainstream agencies fail to bypass gatekeepers in communities and address the real issues facing them.

In the context of urban design and master planning, my experience shows that in many cases local authorities and consultancies are content with using translators who lack the technical and contextual understanding of regeneration and community development. This has caused significant difficulties when masterplans are commissioned in areas which have large concentrations of Muslim communities. Examples include Brierfield and Whitefield in Lancashire where master plans and urban proposals prepared by large consultancies were rejected by local Muslim residents, even though the masterplans showed consultation with gatekeepers.⁶

There is a significant lack of understanding of English Muslims by mainstream agencies, funders, policy makers and local authorities. This lack of understanding is fuelled by a distinct lack of communication between regeneration agencies and gatekeepers and constant negative coverage by the tabloids in particular and wider media. A large number of Muslims live in wards that are defined as the most deprived in the country, yet it is surprising that responses to tackle the deprivation are ineffective at best in most areas..

For example, each Muslim community has a mosque either at its heart or nearby which is seen as the focal point of the community and to which all Muslims will gather at least once a week, and will try to attend 5 times a day. Many mosques up and down the country have been trying to become more inclusive by delivering regeneration activity for the immediate community including women, elderly and children. However, they face a strong up-hill battle to develop community initiatives. The Government's desire and call for mosques and Islamic communities to be more open is falling way short of any support offered to these communities to develop community provision.

There have been tokenistic gestures. During the last Home Office Connecting Communities grant scheme,⁷ only a small handful were allocated to Muslim community groups. The vast majority of applications by Muslim groups were turned down and rejected. Subsequently, the Government launched another £12,000 grant scheme to 'tackle extremism' in communities. This support again will only go to those groups that have a track record and can write application forms effectively, whereas 99% of mosques and Islamic groups who have never written a grant application before will miss out. This goes against the so-called government scrutiny of Islamic communities and stating that they should be more open. Again, this shows that government policies are reactionary, short term and certainly short sighted. This is principally because the government is listening to gatekeepers and often Muslim MPs who, in all honesty, may not have suffered the deprivation apparent so vividly in Muslim communities. To give an example, one Muslim MP who has lived in a Muslim neighbourhood for a good part of his life, has never visited the local Mosque and never been seen in the 'real community'. People like this are ill-equipped to advise government about issues facing the Muslim community in general. Simply because they are Brown and of an Islamic background doesn't give them the qualifications to advise the government on policies towards Muslims. It is naïve of the government to think otherwise.

The reason why many Asian-English Muslims are living in intense deprivation is that since the first generation was made redundant from the cotton mills and other employment the government left the Islamic community to its own devices. These Muslims set about building their own mosques and community centres in earlier days after they arrived in this country. They have received little or no government support. In reality this group of people should have been supported and up-skilled to find alternative forms of employment. However, they were left to suffer and a great number became ill with many suffering depression and other forms of disability. This community found itself ill equipped and abandoned. My own father used to work 18 hours a day 6 days a week in a cotton mill at Pendle in Lancashire. When he suffered a life threatening accident at work, all he was paid was £200 in compensation.

This example highlights the lack of dignity with which newcomers were treated in the 1950s and 60s. The difference was that at that time the first generation shut up and put up with the discrimination, unfair treatment and frequent abuse that they faced. Once they were abandoned they were seen as a part of history, like the cotton mills, and left to their own communities. This government neglect has a number of repercussions. Firstly, parents were extremely ill equipped to bring up their children in this society, did not understand how things worked and how their children should be supported in school etc. This bred a large cultural, educational and age generation gap that exists to this day and is partly to contribute to the high youth Prison populations from English Muslim communities. This also partly explains why parents and children are so far apart that when it comes to issues like extremism, drugs or poor academic attainment: most English Muslim parents have been in the dark as to how to respond. What has happened is that since the government has realised the seriousness of the problems that deprivation has caused including drug dealing, extremism and other socially unacceptable activities, it has responded with scattered superficial measures.

Today, there is little support for mosques to develop inclusion activities and most struggle to help their communities to tackle the intense deprivation and disadvantage they face due to lack of resources and assistance. Apart from the Mosques, women's groups that aim to help

English Muslim women through counselling, social and economic empowerment find themselves scratching around to continue for a few more months. The government's lack of understanding, and the equal non-engagement of mainstream agencies in providing appropriate support and help, is exemplified by the fact that a large proportion of funding for community activities now comes from the Big Lottery Fund. In many local authority areas, particularly for ones which serve deprived areas with large Muslim populations in England, a common response when Islamic groups want to bid for regeneration activity is 'funded has all been committed for this year' or 'we are not supporting new groups due to lack of funding' or 'sorry we received a large number of applications and although yours was a good one, we could not fund all projects'.

What is the government's response to this? And how can it logically expect English Muslim communities to be more open and inclusive when its words are not backed by its deeds? This attitude reinforces the view in many Islamic communities across the country that they are being unfairly criticised and put under the microscope and that the wealth of contribution they have made to England during the cotton industry and beyond has been undermined. Conversely, government criticism and scrutiny is not being backed by deeds which makes young people in these communities even more adamant that this is a 'war on Muslims and Islam'. This feeling of war is expressed, as the Asian-English Muslim community feels disenfranchised, unwanted, neglected and constantly undermined by the government and importantly by Local Authorities, some of whom have operated with colonial methods.

Seven years ago when I was working in Pendle Council, as a new comer to regeneration and renewal, it was an insight to see that I was one of the only few Muslim employees in a staff of 800 plus in an area that had a 14% Muslim population. I witnessed deep prejudices and racism in a council that viewed ethnic minorities, at the time, in the same way as the Colonials viewed India. Ethnic minority community groups were seemingly forced to form a single group and abandon their identities and the mockery which some members of the English Muslim community were subject to, despite their hard work and commitment, was a real shock to my system. Even though much consultation and engagement would be undertaken with the Muslim community, photographs taken of Muslim women looking depressed, and even a faked photograph of an existing Muslim council worker being showed as 'Unemployed and depressed' in a bid for SRB 6 funds from national government, showed to me how the English Muslim community in Pendle were being manipulated and then treated unfairly.⁸ When it came to bidding, it was the usual 'jobs for the boys', the usual suspects; big agencies obtained the lion's share of the funding where as the English Muslim community groups that had helped the council obtain the funding in the first place, had to fight for the scraps.

As a consultant several years on, I revisited Pendle and found that although things had moved on and the council had now developed a community cohesion policy and recruited visibly more members of the Muslim community, their levels of engagement beyond the gatekeepers was still worrying. This was perhaps best highlighted when the council tried to impose compulsory demolition on an entire Muslim neighbourhood (Whitefield) without taking the views, needs and aspirations of the Muslim community on board. Despite protests, the council in a typically colonial fashion was set to bulldoze the entire area against the wishes of the residents of the neighbourhood. To me, this sounded more like Iraq than Pendle. When protests continued and the issue caught national media attention, only with the involvement of Prince Charles who backed the local community and helped fight against the

council plans, were the plans for large-scale demolition cancelled.⁹ Most recently the council had to back down after a long battle, and invited consultants to bid to work with the community and proposed plans to redesign the existing housing stock but with very small scale demolition.¹⁰

Coming back to work in Whitefield in a consultative capacity was an interesting insight; not surprisingly the rigidity of the council had not moved on much at all. After consultation and engagement of the local community, by-passing the gatekeepers and asking 'real' people who lived and worked in the neighbourhood what they felt, we put forward bold proposals which involved accepting the community make up as it is and not trying to impose a new brand of 'colonialism' on the area. Apart from proposals to redesign the houses and neighbourhood, we proposed that the local community - which was predominantly Muslim of Pakistani heritage - should be celebrated as a historically intact Industrial community of Gujrati/Kashmiri Pakistani descent and that the area could be developed for tourism with its links to the canal and close proximity to the countryside. It was also suggested that there could be the promotion of 'Gujrat in the Pennines' to tie in with the 2012 Olympics as the Olympics is not just about London, but the whole country. However, we were informed that the council was clearly adamant that the area should not be seen as an 'Asian' one and that they wanted to encourage white residents to move in, even if this was far from possible. Interestingly, the lead member of our consultancy consortium agreed.. "oh no we can't say it's going to be an 'Asian' area, even though I know it is and white people won't move there".¹¹

My response was that an entirely white neighbourhood in Barnoldswick (a nearby Penine village) has never been told that it should be inviting 'Asian' residents there and that it should be culturally representative, so why is Whitefield being told that it needs to be more diverse? Why cannot a community celebrate its identity? Why are there double standards in how a council views different areas and imposes on one that it needs to be attracting white residents simply because the majority of the residents are English Muslim? After all those years working away from the area and doing regeneration projects across the country, I found that things, after all, hadn't moved on much and the colonial mentality remains. And this was not just in the council. The rigidity demonstrated by a member of our consortium meant that we were fighting a losing battle on two fronts.

Recently, M.U.D. completed a major piece of work in Holbeck Urban Village to promote the proposed Public Realms Works to all communities in the area and particularly in nearby Beeston and Holbeck. Working in the community in Beeston after July 7th bombings was an insight and a real experience. The bombardment of the media and government agencies in this area has created a real climate of fear in Beeston.¹² The way in which 7/7 unfolded and the rapid manner in which an entire community was blacklisted highlights the manner in which Muslim communities are dealt with in many areas. I, for one, refused after 7/7 to allow the media, the police and importantly the government to act as Judge, Jury and Jurisdiction. All too often mistakes have been made and reactionary conclusions based on anecdotal evidence and prejudice reflect the workings of an uncivilised nation living in the Dark Ages rather than 21st Century Britain. The speed at which Islamic communities were held responsible for 7/7 and the amazing manner in which the media, police and government jumped on the band wagon suggest to many Muslims that something strange has occurred. John Charles De Menezes was a guilty terrorist who was about to detonate a bomb on the tube just minutes and hours after he was shot in the head.¹³ Thousands of people in Iraq have

been killed as a result of weapons of mass destruction that never existed. Even Mohammed Abdul Qahar was shot in his chest and we were told by the Judge/Jury/Jurisdiction that they were planning a chemical plot to bomb Britain, and only later it emerged that this was a near fatal error.¹⁴ For many Muslims, the only evidence against the alleged four is that of Mohammed Siddique Khan, appearing on a video in a voice that even his White, non-Muslim friends said wasn't his and using technology today anyone could make a video of someone and make them say things which they haven't. Numerous realistic videos of George Bush saying things that he hasn't said are testimony to this.

The way in which media/police/government hype and spin has unfolded and followed a policy of 'Guilty until Proved Innocent' has reinforced the intense ghettoisation of English Muslims. Instead of working in partnership with them, the trio (Media/Police/Government), are actually working against them. Then the question about ghettoisation in Muslim communities in England appears easy to answer. The ongoing exclusion, marginalisation and treatment of English Muslims as colonial subjects rather than as English subjects has resulted in the situation today of deep seated ghettoisation in areas like Bradford, Birmingham, Burnley and Oldham."¹⁵

Making Sense of the Past:

The foregoing narrative and critique we argue, gives a powerful testimonial of the situation and tensions that present themselves in a small town, which ostensibly has had contact with the Asian-Muslim community for nearly two generations. As the adage suggests we cannot plan for the future until we understand the past. In this section we analyse this narrative with the use of past research and case study work to understand what these key situations and issues are which have shaped the tensions which are clear in today's situation in Pendle.

As the narrative suggests, the UK is no stranger to the idea of multiculturalism or indeed plural communities. Aside from being described as a "mongrel nation"¹⁶ the UK has been the recipient of waves of migrants and the influences of non-indigenous cultures since before the Romans were in Britain. Asian migration to Britain also has a long history, there is historical evidence to suggest that some European languages including English have had early influences from the Asian sub-continent. Certainly since the involvement of the UK with the subcontinent from its imperial period, to the rise of the British Raj there has been trans-migration of both peoples and cultures to each continent. The end of the second world war and subsequent clamour for and granting of self rule meant that India became independent in 1947 with Pakistan seceding the same year. Later Bangladesh seceded from Pakistan in 1971. The trans-migration and exchange of initially British protected subjects (whilst much of the subcontinent was still part of the British Empire) and later on free Asian citizens initially tended to be for educational or official purposes as the Raj and upper classes in Asia often sent mainly their sons abroad to acquire a 'British education', which the missionaries and later on the British government had brought with them to the continent.

With the post-second world war industrial boom in the UK, came the need for labour to drive the newly-invigorated British industrial complex comprising shipping, industrial production in the North of England and the West Coast of Scotland, and the revived and modernised textile industry in Lancashire, in North West England. As a result of this the migration of workers from many of Britain's former colonies, from the West Indies to the Asian sub-continent was encouraged as a means of supplying the 'mother country' with the labour that

was desperately needed. Authors, such as Peter Fryer, (1984), Phillips & Phillips (1999) and others, have commented on the conditions and also places in which many of these migrants settled. In the case of Muslim Asians, often they were forced by circumstance to re-create the close knit communities that they had left behind in the 'mother country', as accommodation was often denied them on racial grounds and non-whites were excluded from social housing provision well into the 1970s. Many migrants in such situations had no alternative but to seek to live in areas which had community members who were able to help rent or sublet accommodation to their indigenous colleagues, and over time were able to help with property purchase. This was particularly significant for Muslim Pakistanis who often were unable to obtain mortgages on religious grounds, and therefore had to find or borrow the capital to purchase housing often in poorer areas of the city which in turn often became racially segregated as indigenous 'white' residents moved out of areas they felt were, and sometimes verbalised as, "swamped".

The outcome of this has been in places like Pendle and in areas of the UK's large cities, such as Pollokshields in Glasgow, the creation of virtual and physical racially exclusive areas, which being in deprived locations often have claims to improved social infrastructure, including schools health facilities and access to affordable housing, which local authorities often struggle with – on both socio-economic and, occasionally, political grounds. As residence in these communities has extended beyond the first generation, the younger 'born-in-Britain' inheritors of the new 'multicultural Britain have been more vociferous than their parents in claiming what is rightly theirs, and being unwilling to be cast as second class citizens in their country of birth. The receding "myth of return" that many of the first generation settlers in these communities had, meant that these racialised areas became 'home', as families were re-united and reformed in the ensuing years.¹⁷ Islam, as a binding religion and also a way of life, often was an important provider of support and community identity in areas of tense racial and political relations with the majority community and local authorities.

The riots and related events in Oldham Burnley and Bradford in 2001 bear witness to the effects that these tensions can ultimately produce if left ignored.¹⁸ Two decades earlier, the riots across the African-Caribbean locales of Brixton (London), Toxteth (Liverpool), and Handsworth (Birmingham) should have served as a salutary warning as to what could happen when tensions are high.¹⁹ Pollokshields, home to an Asian community in South Glasgow currently has similar tensions which have yet to be satisfactorily resolved.

Identity is a crucial aspect of cultural and physical self-expression. Being 'British' carries with it an assumption of similarity with others who are British, behave so, and seem themselves as this. In the second generation Asian scenario however this is more complicated. Firstly this generation has to grapple with the fact that being "British" has until relatively recently been associated with traditional, white middle class, social mores and values as eloquently described by John Major in his "warm beer" speech.²⁰ Ideas and expressions of the "other" were not on the cultural agenda outside of specific racialised spaces in large cities.

Furthermore, as evidenced from the findings of classic American socio-ethnographic research,²¹ it is clear that the second generation has been more interested in expressing their difference and identity than their parents who had sought to conform to the cultural lifestyle and social mores of the dominant community. Spatially this is demonstrated clearly by the relatively recent construction of mosques and visual references to Islam that, twenty years

ago, either did not exist or were given very little visual prominence in even major cities and towns. The Liverpool Central Mosque was only completed in the late 1980s (Uduku, 1998), whilst Pollokshields main mosque was completed in the 1990s (Uduku, 2004). The bustling district of Levenshulme, with the acronym 'Banglatown' is still a work in progress in downtown Manchester.

Probably the most contested issue that affects the community today is the lack of access to consultants and planners involved in regeneration and upgrading projects that directly relate to local livelihoods. Occasionally there are self-appointed or non-representative community spokesmen, who claim to speak on behalf of ethnic groups but rarely do have either the authority or knowledge to do this. More often development and regeneration takes place with no consultation or a token attempt to fore-guess what local needs and wants are. As the sums of money involved in such regeneration efforts are often considerable there is an understandable level of hostility and suspicion of such regeneration moves that are being carried out "in the name of the community". On the official planners and regeneration teams side there community is seen as ungrateful or incapable of co-operating with the development process thus ensuing a stalemate or in worst case scenarios a cancellation of the project.

We would suggest that these three issues:

1. *Access to adequate infrastructure*
2. *The acceptance of ethnic identity; comprising its culture; music, food, etc physical icons and symbols; mosques, Islamic schools by mainstream society as an equal part of today's diverse British culture.*
3. *Having a voice, and being consulted on, local community development-related matters*

have been the most crucial problems that the Islamic Community in the UK, specifically England has had to confront in the last few years. The resulting effects of the socio-political events in New York, on the 9th September 2001, and London on the 7th July 2005, have combined to further strain these issues, as tensions with the outside community have heightened with heightened levels of Islamophobia and the tensions it brings being felt in ethnic enclaves, which have begun to take on the attributes of the ghetto – where the feared "other" resides.

Turning the Tables

How do we deal with this seemingly intractable situation? The socio-political and increasing economic world events that have enabled the rampant Islamophobia in many areas to emerge remain with us and can flare up with unpredictable effects at without warning. The last section of the paper describes two projects involving M.U.D. as consultants which sought to develop local community links and involvement in the development process.

Whitefield

Whitefield, as described within the narrative, is a neighbourhood within Pendle in Lancashire, which has over the past 40 years incorporated a significant Pakistani Asian residential population, historically associated with the now defunct textile milling industry which provided employment in the area. The subsequent deindustrialisation of the north of England

had the impact of leaving this working class neighbourhood in need of regeneration and development funding. Despite its rich multi-cultural make up, initial council plans took limited viewing of local views or wishes and sought to develop a new image for the neighbourhood which would in effect have no recognition of its Asian-Muslim culture. M.U.D worked as consultants to put forward proposals which would ensure that local voices (and not only those of those who felt themselves as representatives for the views of the community or gatekeepers) were heard and incorporated into the regeneration project. Whitefield also had the high profile support of the Prince's Trust, which also ensured that the media interest remained high. The resultant regeneration planning review, had already acknowledged the local Pakistani-Asian community, recommending more sensitive upgrading of existing properties – and not the wholesale demolition the original plan had called for. Despite M.U.D.'s consultancy approach, that had been essential to getting the voices of the local Pakistani Muslim population heard, its proposal for regeneration came second, and arguably the final proposal although acknowledging the existence of a significant Muslim population in the neighbourhood took a more conservative approach to the development of a multicultural brief.

Holbeck Urban Village

Holbeck, near Leeds city centre, and has been a multi-cultural neighbourhood for decades, home to an Asian-Muslim community as well as once an area of industrial production near the Leeds Manchester Liverpool canal adjoining the city centre. M.U.D. worked with other consultants to consult local communities on the regeneration brief and subsequent plans for the area. There is an opportunity to celebrate its diversity and nearness to the city as an urban site-space-neighbourhood to live work and play in. But its proximity to Beeston, the neighbourhood of two of the young Asians identified as being involved in the 7th July bombings in London in 2005, has not had an effect on its regeneration or marketing. M.U.D.'s work in partnership with an exhibition "Spaces and Light", curated by the Culture Company, celebrated the potential for diversity in the newly styled "Holbeck Urban Village" in a consultation event called "What Kind of Place?"²² By bringing large numbers of Asian residents into the area, the event demonstrated how good consultative planning initiatives can put integrated regeneration which both celebrates local diversity, and also promotes the positive attributes of living within a multi-cultural society, onto the agenda.

Pollokshields

Pollokshields, in the Southside district (South of the inner-city) of Glasgow, is used as a case study of an existing live community, yet to have been subjected to the full urban regeneration process, although being transformed at the edges by increasing values on real estate and the council's efforts to pursue its own socio economic development ideals. It is of interest to this paper because as commented earlier it not only has a large Pakistani Asian community, but it also has links with the former textile industrial areas of North England, and so to our first case study Pendle. With the collapse of employment in that part of England the dispersal of Asian families initially settled there spread them to the West of Scotland and to other parts of Britain with better economic prospects and importantly with links to existing Pakistani communities in such areas. Pollokshields became the recipient area for some of these dispersed, Pakistani Asian groups as its pre-1970s, small Pakistani Asian population had links with the Lancashire area Pakistanis, and were able to inform them of the business opportunities and conditions in the Glasgow region and the West of Scotland.²³

These networks thus were able to provide support, advice and an existing community network for these new migrating families from the North of England. Interestingly, most of these coping networks were formed by Pakistanis who can trace their origins from a specific region of Pakistan. Arguably these networks provided more support and in effect a re-enforcement of Muslim-Asian community identity.²⁴ This can be viewed in direct contrast to the local Pollokshields community authorities, who might be viewed as having been less than fully welcoming or accepting of the Muslim presence which has transformed the community over the past two decades. There remain problems with access to basic social services such as adequate health care, and interpretation services for the community, problems with educational services which do not provide the necessary support for students with English as a second language, and access to housing via Housing Association networks. Although the Asian MP Mohammed Sarwar represents the community there is limited representation on the local council, especially to respond to the specific needs of Asian Women's and religious groups. An example of this lack of adaptation related to a meals on wheels service which expected to deliver set meals to older residents' homes, not taking into account that Asian elders often spent the day in Asian built community centres, and these centres should have been involved in the delivery and preparation of these meals. The service was stopped due the council claimed to poor uptake.

Pollokshields thus presents a "double-transitional" link for its now second-generation Scottish-Asian-Muslim residents; to both a part of Pakistan and to the North of England. This effect on personal identity, both by its inherent hyphenation, and self realisation we suggest could potentially be either a positive background for creating a truly cosmopolitan urban area drawing on influences from all cultures which it interacts with and contributes to. This true cosmopolitan identity it is argued is crucial to the success of world cities; such as parts of London, the UK's only contribution to the group, New York, Sydney, and increasingly Southern cities such as Johannesburg, and Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago).

On the other hand the inability of "mainstream" society to deal with inter-cultural difference, and for relationships to be built between different parts of the now established local communities of Asian, White and more recent residents could push the neighbourhood towards the fragmented, "ghettoes", with Asian and other minority residents withdrawing into enclave-communities, defending themselves against perceived and real prejudices they confront within the wider community. These spaces of territorial tension have become an ugly feature of many of Britain's post industrial cities.²⁵

We use the examples given in this section to draw our conclusions about the issues and trends that are apparent in the evolution of future multi-cultural residential areas in the UK in general and England in particular.

Conclusions: *Achieving Cosmopolis?*²⁶

Our research and practice suggests that there is good practice, examples of which are few to show that there are ways of creating urban sites where multi-culturalism is not a purely applied layer or tick box approach to development. There are ways and means, shown by the Holbeck Urban Village project by which this can be achieved. However there needs to be the time, investment, and most importantly underlying impetus at administrative level and within the community to have this take place. True local consultation at neighbourhood level, which

bypasses those who claim to speak on behalf of community groups, the “gate keepers”, is hard work, but often delivers results.

There is no doubt that there are both political agendas and economic realities; as we can infer from both the Whitefield and Pollokshields case studies, that may serve to stall the consultative process and thus ensure the deterioration of neighbourhoods of ‘cultural difference’ into competing ghettos of deprivation. Arguably however, as the Whitefield case, shows, minority groups, are becoming more able to organise and use their skills to sue for consultation and representation on planning and regeneration issues related to their community. Currently this may be seen to be the exception to the rule, however there is evidence that there are more groups linked to community networks, which serve to provide the necessary skills and training needed to demand consultation and access to local planning processes. Furthermore, the incorporation of new forms of communication technology and the increased transparency required of processes with the freedom of information act and other will serve to make this more likely.

The British government’s continued concern and pre-occupation with improving community relations, in the wake of 9-11 and more recently 7 -7 should also further serve to focus communities on change. Despite the currently low level of real funding that has been invested in working together in a consultative fashion that deals with the core problems and issues related to exclusion and need, there is the realisation that without this being resolved soon, the alternative scenarios could become a nightmare to deal with. Like it or not, the United Kingdom, particularly England with a significantly higher proportion of the State’s population the largest urban conurbations, with the most culturally mixed neighbourhoods, is already cosmopolitan in most everyday encounters at urban level.

We surmise therefore that there is the implicit knowledge, at administrative levels from policies at local to national government level, that there is a need to adapt to change, the foregoing events signalling the all too possible gruesome effects of taking an ostrich-like stance to the need. The cost of consultation and subsequent active engagement in regeneration and the redressing of years of under development in infrastructure might be high, both economically and socio-politically, but this is insignificant in comparison to the costs associated with the aftermaths of riots to which England is no stranger, or the more recent London bombings.

We all aspire to become more cosmopolitan in both outlook and existence, British Muslims are no different in this wish; to be genuinely connected to the urban existence which they for generations now have been only a part of, despite their significant socio-economic and cultural to all levels of British urban life. We suggest that neighbourhoods such as Holbeck, which demonstrate that the acknowledgement of the “multi-cultural” element to a community is both good for business and socio-cultural relations, will need to become the trend and not the exception to the rule. Segregated development is not a 21st century urban regeneration option for English cities, nor is denying legitimate claims to development by groups who have every right by both residence and nowadays birth, to be recognised as first class citizens of a diverse country. We firmly believe that the trends towards ‘multi-cultural living’ are a celebratory and part of 21st century urban life; the alternative scenarios do not bear contemplation.

Notes

¹ See www.mudonline.org

² See website: http://www.a4e.co.uk/Public_Sector_Connecting_Communities_Plus.aspx

³ www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/policies/community_cohesion.asp

⁴ http://www.thisislocallondon.co.uk/news/topstories/display.var.701392.0.islamic_centre_torched_in_racist_attack.php, March 8th 2006, *Islamic Times*, March 6, 2006

⁵ National Census records 2001

⁶ See: <http://www.pendle.gov.uk/downloads/ebd-final-presentation.pdf>, Whitefield Regeneration Enquiry, by Design, Nov. 22nd – 25th, 2004 and also http://www.pendle.gov.uk/downloads/Whitefield_EBD_Final_Report_28.02.05.pdf, Whitefield Nelson Enquiry by Design, Final Report 2004

⁷ See reference 1.

⁸ SRB stands for Single Regeneration Budget, which was funding given to areas deemed and proved to be the poorest and most needy, thus bids were made to show that certain communities were the poorest.

⁹ See: <http://www.pendle.gov.uk/downloads/ebd-final-presentation.pdf>, Whitefield Regeneration Enquiry, by Design, Nov. 22nd – 25th, 2004 and also http://www.pendle.gov.uk/downloads/Whitefield_EBD_Final_Report_28.02.05.pdf, Whitefield Nelson Enquiry by Design, Final Report 2004

¹⁰ See “Pendle Borough Council - New dawn for historic Whitefield”, http://www.pendle.gov.uk/site/scripts/news_article.php?newsID=184 (Th., 20th, April 2006)

¹¹ As evidenced on the local govt. webpages, there are few Asian faces to be found in the information about the Whitefield regeneration.

¹² <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4687897.stm>

¹³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/attackonlondon/story/0,16132,1550815,00.html>

¹⁴ Sir Ian Blair, commissioner for police, after it was found that the claims were false defended police actions by stating: "The raid itself I am perfectly content was justified and the raid was carried out extremely well by the Metropolitan Police," - June 18th ITV News.com. This was despite the brutal treatment of the brothers during arrest.

¹⁵ See the following reports: “Community Pride not Prejudice,” the report produced by Sir Herman Ouseley (2001) – on Bradford, <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2001/12/11/communitycohesionreport.pdf> (the Cattle report on all riots in 2001) and on Oldham: <http://www.oldham.gov.uk/cattle-review-final-report.pdf>

¹⁶ Attributed to the writer John McIllvanney, when speaking of Scotland’s ethnic make up ‘*it is a "mongrel nation." Its people were made stronger because of their diverse bloodlines -- not weakened by inbreeding or ethnic purity.*’

¹⁷ In migration theory, the “myth of return” refers to the viewing of most new migrants that working and living in a foreign land is a temporary situation and there is always the aspiration to make enough money to ‘return’ home – this becomes a myth s the conditions mean that this doesn’t happen and new family networks form in the new “home” abroad.

¹⁸ See reference 13.

¹⁹ These also produced a set of reports; including the Scarman Report, (1981) with findings that were not full acted upon.

²⁰ Attributed to a speech made by John Major in 1994 “Fifty years on from now, Britain will still be the country of long shadows on cricket grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs, dog lovers and pools fillers.” (<http://www.number10.gov.uk/output/page125.asp>)

²¹ See for example Gans, H, *The urban villagers* (1982)

²² See: http://www.holbeckurbanvillage.co.uk/about/documents/HUV_brochure_cc.pdf

²³ Interview with son of Pakistani-Muslim now resident in suburban Glasgow whose family moved from Lancashire in the 1970s.

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ Uduku report, Interview (3rd July, 2006)

²⁶ Adapted from the book titled, *Towards Cosmopolis*, (Sandercock:2001)

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