Kingston University London

Towards Engaging with and Understanding Three BME Communities in Kingston: Identity, Interaction, Belonging and Belief

FINAL REPORT
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Executive summary

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of a research project conducted by a research team at Kingston University on behalf of the Metropolitan Police at Kingston borough level to work towards an understanding of and engagement with black and minority ethnic individuals drawn from the following groups (i) Muslims (ii) Tamils (iii) Koreans. While the report has a particular focus on the Muslim community many experiences recounted of their negotiations of the borough and dilemmas of identity, interaction, belonging and belief were common to all three groups. The framing of terms of the report somewhat presupposes patterns between groups and to an extent overlooks the possibility of differences within groups: the biggest internal diversity is within the Muslim group who are the most geographically heterogeneous of the three.

2. Key Findings

2.1 Within the borough of Kingston groups are concentrated in specific areas e.g. Koreans commonly are associated with New Malden and Muslims with the Cambridge and Kings Nympton estates – which are seen as suffering deprivation as was Chessington.

2.2 Survey respondents reported generally good experiences of race relations within the borough and instances of discrimination was generally rare. They were on the whole positive about Kingston as a place to play out their daily lives.

2.3 Generation was a key theme. There is some evidence from the research team's visits to elders groups that the experience for pensioners was potentially more isolating than that of the elderly of the majority host community. The second and subsequent generations of all groups (youth) demonstrated less attachment to the homeland than the first generation of immigrants.

2.4 Language is a key factor in successful integration: this is reflected in the choice of respondents, the majority of whom are UK-born with English as their first and sometimes only language. Language-barriers meant that sometimes interviews e.g. with Tamil elders were conducted through community members who could mediate in English. Whilst this was acceptable such persons were not qualified to translate and there is a danger that data could subsequently have been lost in translation.

2.5 Whilst Islamophobia is a clear problem in wider UK society respondents suggested that it can sometimes be used as a convenient excuse for problems of disadvantage which are endemic to particular locales e.g. deprivation on the two council estates named above affects all residents. It is something of a cliché to refer constantly to 9/11 and 7/7 as turning points for the Muslim community - the former is now almost a decade ago. Many respondents had no real recollection of these events and didn't think it helpful to dwell on the past.

2.6 Context shapes experience: whether individuals came to the UK as refugees or as top executives for international companies will condition their relationship with Britain and use of public services. Some recently arrived Tamils interviewed saw the UK as synonymous with a haven of safety after experiencing war-ravaged Sri Lanka where they were persecuted. South Koreans by comparison were seen to place little burden on the council and to be the most insular of the three relying on internal and informal networks .

2.7 Faith is a constant for these groups. Muslims rated Kingston as an attractive area because of the mosque in the north of the borough and much of our Korean interviewing was done through pastors as initial gatekeepers. There is some evidence that the popularity of Kingston mosque is outgrowing its present premises. Indeed there is a group of individuals who hire a centre in New Malden on Friday lunchtimes to hold jumma prayer services and Eid services when appropriate.

2.8 Respondents felt that the borough's interfaith activities were commendable – when they were aware of their existence. Initiatives such as the Milaap centre, BME Forum and Interfaith Forum do valuable work but awareness needs to be raised if they are to be seen as more than talking shops frequented by the usual suspects.

2.9 There was a sense that there was a politicisation in particular of the UK Muslim and UK Tamil Diasporas in recent years due to external events. This manifested itself in many ways including the assertiveness of both groups who are increasingly seeking election to political office in the UK.

3. Key Recommendations

1. **To afford specific attention to relations and potential tension between long established communities and new migrants who are at risk of being marginalised e.g. asylum seekers.**

2. **To develop activities and create opportunities for elder residents and young people. Tackle the needs of people of different generations and recognise potential intergenerational conflict.**

3. **To work towards more intercultural dialogue to improve understanding between different communities with the launch of projects that bring people together in a literal/ physical sense and can reach out to people (of all faiths and none) rather than the usual more vocal representatives ,which formal settings such as the interfaith forum might only be able to attract. To this end there should be the creation of more social spaces where people are able to find something in common. These need not be new buildings as such but could take place in existing buildings/ settings.**

4. **In order to gain trust, to develop community-specific initiatives in consultation with local residents who can feed into the process rather than adopting a top-down approach in framing strategies of preventing violent extremism and community cohesion.**

5. **To take a long-view of preventing violent extremism as part of the process of community cohesion, particularly with young people.**

6. **Investigate the possibility of approaching associations for the smaller communities to provide advice on setting up a network of support on the model of 'mentors' from within the settled communities to inform and advise new immigrants and refugees on procedures for accessing the different services such as health, police etc.**

7. **Agencies should consider engaging and training community representatives to act as a point of reference for the community in: providing advice on approaching and understanding different agencies and their roles; seeking to work with the community to identify and address issues/problems; training members of the agency to better understand specific community groups, their cultures and practices; working towards improved engagement.**

8. **Develop ongoing police training/courses on broader political and cultural aspects of the different communities and countries of origin – including more attendance at conferences such as the recent Understanding Islam conference at Kingston University in January 2010.**

9. **Consider setting up a regular 'surgery' hosted by the police, by way of invitation through translated 'posters' or through leaflets in strategic venues inviting community members to an initial open discussion. Mindful of the resource and management challenges this ideal model could present then investigate ways to approximate this with the aim of demonstrating transparency and openness in relation to police practice in the borough.**

10. **Seek to approach targeted operations in a more informative manner i.e. weigh up the balance of advantages of operations providing the element of surprise, such as the Kingston station knife arches in 2009, with the disadvantages of longer term effects such as increasing any existing anxieties of targeted communities.**

1. Research Aims & Context

The research aimed to provide a detailed understanding of BME communities in Kingston with particular focus on Muslim Communities, exploring the extent to which they participate in the community life of the borough and exploring barriers to engagement with the Local Authority, services and the Police. The work was undertaken in the context of concern regarding a lack of communication between the Metropolitan Police, the Local Authority and some BME communities in the borough and a willingness to better engage. Although some outreach work has already been initiated in Kingston this is not based on comprehensive knowledge of the Muslim community's wider needs, nor is it integrated into a coherent framework.

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The principal research aims were to provide a more detailed understanding of BME communities in Kingston, exploring the extent to which they participate in the community life of the borough and explore barriers to engagement with the Local Authority and the Police.

The initial 'mapping' of the community in this study was a quantitative exercise about size and possibly location and the research need to provide the context for the emphasis on getting to know more about these communities. In order to meet these requirements the methodology developed combined both documentary research and review with a full process of consultation and dialogue with stakeholders and an extensive phase of fieldwork to conduct interviews and focus groups. Therefore there were two phases of the project which were characterised in general terms by Phase One: Quantitative and Phase Two: Qualitative in terms of the data collection method.

2.2 Phase One: March 2009-May 2009

This briefer part of the study entailed a review of secondary data sources. The first was a critical review of existing socio-demographic data, both at national and local level, to broadly 'map' the BME communities in Kingston. The second element was a review of existing literature and research into BME communities UK-wide to source findings that would be relevant to the Phase Two fieldwork. This review confirmed some of the expected limitations of one-dimensional 'ethnicity' or 'religion' categories in existing official data but provided the basis for a schematic 'mapping' for the Kingston borough. As mentioned it is widely recognised that detailed data to local authority level on ethnicity and religion in England in the UK is limited outside the 2001 Census.[1] In addition to this a review of the utility of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey(APS) for this phase one work was also undertaken. A fuller picture would only be obtained through primary data collection as provided through the interviews and focus groups in the Phase Two fieldwork. Phase one findings are reported here with phase two findings.

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[1] The main census tables used for the study were S104, C0352, C0644 and C1013..

The literature review, which included commissioned research reports, provided some useful detail about the cultural dynamics and demographic profiles of the BME communities that the study would focus on.

2.3 Phase Two – April 2009-May 2010

A purposive mixed with opportunity sample of some 80 individuals were interviewed by semi-structured methods in both detailed one-to-one interviews and focus groups drawn from the three study groups. Stakeholder interviews (14 total) Focus groups (5) Community interviews (40 plus).

The respondents for the purposive sample were chosen as they offered a range of different types of knowledge and perspectives on community issues and dynamics. This extensive phase comprised stakeholder interviews, one-to-one interviews with members of the different BME communities in Kingston and their representatives alongside focus groups of particular cohorts – for example members of an Islamic society, students on an English language course, and a specific elders' group. These three different types of interview meant that information could be triangulated providing internally robust data. Stakeholders would provide particular observations and comments that could be confirmed or elaborated in interviews with community representatives and additionally with those community members in question providing a full perspective on many of the issues raised. In view of the interviews being based on purposive and snowballing sampling, fit for the purpose of this study, it was not intended to provide an analysis of all BME community members outside of Kingston. The findings however mirrored many of the themes and issues identified in the literature review of research into BME communities elsewhere and so provides a strong basis for making some more generalised observations with confidence.

These qualitative methods gathered oral testimonies from respondents. The research team were fortunate to hear dozens of voices explain how they made sense of their everyday life in Kingston negotiating suburban London in almost all cases as part of a wider diasporic community. These interviews were often conducted in context so researchers memorably attended a Tamil elders group where pensioners in saris participated in kick-boxing, spoke to Korean pastors at churches and in November 2009 the team was present at Kingston mosque for the hectic logistical process of Eid services, where clearly the numbers attending have outgrown the footprint of the building on what is the busiest day of the year.

2.3. Fieldwork issues

Given the study's emphasis on vulnerable and hard to contact groups it was expected that identifying key contacts could be a difficult process. However this was in part alleviated by building upon the channels of communication between Kingston's BME communities, the Local Authority and the Metropolitan Police that were already being developed via individual community projects. The initial access and following interviews subsequently identified potential contacts for future outreach programs.

The most prominent issue however was conducting the fieldwork in a highly charged political context given the attitudes and perceptions of the PREVENT programme. Whilst this aroused suspicion with some interviewees in the early stages a trust was developed over time about the aims of the research and led to an enhanced snowball sampling process where respondents demonstrated both openness to interview but importantly a willingness to engage. A good example of this was the willingness of a former extremist to be interviewed – ten years prior – who discussed the context and driving forces that led him into extremism. His observations were mirrored by one of the guest speakers at the Understanding Islam Conference held at Kingston University in January 2010.

2.4 Ethics

The project had the potential to touch upon on a number of sensitive issues. The project was carried out in accordance with British Sociological Association Guidelines in their 2004 Statement of Ethical Practice. As such, relationships with participants were uppermost in the researchers concerns, and responsibilities towards respondents were recognised. Thus no covert processes were entered into to maintain respondent informed consent, the researchers adopted an open and transparent approach regarding the work. Informed consent was sought at the outset, obligations, role and rights of all concerned were clarified. The anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of respondents was guaranteed at all times, with pseudonyms used. Respondents were able to express themselves openly and they were free to exit from the interviews and focus groups at any point.

All data was stored in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and ethical permission to conduct the research was granted by Kingston University Ethics Committee.

3. Findings Part 1: Setting the Scene, the Local and National Context

3.1 Introduction & Context: Muslims in the UK

Despite the fact that this report takes as its subject three distinct BME groups in Kingston, its main focus is on Muslim communities. This section is correspondingly more detailed than the following sections on the Tamil and Korean community. As discussed in Methodology section, there were two stages of the research: quantitative – mapping Muslim communities in Kingston and qualitative - exploring and analysing experiences and concerns of Muslim communities in Kingston. However, before summarising the data which we gathered for the purposes of mapping the BME communities in Kingston, it is important to embed the research in existing research on Muslim communities in the UK. This section will provide a brief overview from other research into the Muslim community in the UK. Although the term 'the Muslim community' is widely used the key finding from this review was the emerging understanding of the diversity and complexity of Muslims as an ethnic group which challenges any notion of regarding 'the' Muslim community as a single homogeneous group.

The national Census of 2001 provided the opportunity to record religion for the first time. This established that there were 1.6 million people of the Muslim faith living in the UK which amounts to 3 per cent of the national population. It also confirmed that the majority are from the Indian sub-continent, with close on 68 percent from Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani backgrounds. It is this numerical dominance of Muslim communities from South Asia which has often obscured the differences within and between communities. The remainder are from North Africa and the Middle East. Additionally eight percent of the UK Muslim population are classified as 'Other White' which includes Turkish Cypriots and other Turks, Bosnians, Kosovans and smaller groups from the former Yugoslavia. But estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) of the Muslim population for 2008 have been as high as 2.4 million.

Macro-level socio-economic research reveals that over half of Muslims are economically inactive compared to a third of all other faith groups. Muslim men are most likely to be in low skilled jobs. Muslim young people aged 16-24 have the highest unemployment rate of all faith groups. However it is important to realise that it is the much larger Muslim ethnic communities of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin or heritage that have informed much of the understanding and knowledge of the Muslim population. A formal definition of an ethnic group is 'one whose members have common origins, a shared sense of history, a shared culture and a collective identity'.

These larger Pakistani and Bangladeshi populations have been recorded in official surveys for a number of years as a discrete ethnic group. Unlike population figures for other communities it includes individuals born in Britain and outside these countries. This is a far broader more inclusive understanding of ethnicity than 'country of birth' or 'religion' as single factor categories:

It is harder to draw as meaningful set of generalisations [with respect to disadvantage and social cohesion] about the Muslim population than about Sikhs and Hindus. The Muslim population is more of a confederation of ethno-religious components. Data are good on large parts of these ethnic components, such as the Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, but poor, so far, on other groups such as Indian Muslims, Afghans, Kurds, Somalis, Bosnians, North Africans and Arabs for example (Beckford et al, 2006)

But there are thirteen distinct Muslim communities in the UK and there is relatively very little understanding of these specific smaller communities as compared with Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims. These thirteen Muslim communities are from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Turkey.

And it is clear from this that Muslims are the most varied and diverse group in terms of their ethnic make-up in the three examples provided here:

Community	Main Ethnicities
Pakistani	Kashmiri, Pathan, Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluchi
Afghan	Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, Turkmen, Aimaq, Baluchi, Nuristani, Farsiwan
Iranian	Persian, Azeri, Kurdish, Lur, Arab, Baluchi, Turkmen, Qashqai, Armenian, Assyrian and Georgians

Research reveals that it is not only this complexity and diversity in addition to religious adherence that presents difficulties in objectively defining 'Muslim'. There is also evidence from different communities that Muslim identity and critically self-defined and subjective identity has and is constantly changing in response to various external factors. For example concerns about the Middle East are believed to have helped bring about the coalescing of a wider Arab Muslim identity amongst people from different Middle Eastern countries.

Even taking the one dimensional factor of 'country of origin' as a starting point there have been considerable political events since the Census 2001 that make a basic task of 'quantifying' extremely difficult. There are likely to be considerably higher numbers of **Afghans** now on account of asylum seekers since 2001. Many dependants were born in refugee camps in Pakistan. Many children of **Egyptian** migrants may not possess Egyptian birth certificates or ID cards and in terms of Muslim identity only 56% of Egyptian-born migrants in England classify themselves as Muslim, 32% are Christian. In terms of classification **Moroccans** are often subsumed under Arab, North African or 'other'. The Migrant Refugees Community say that there are 35,000 Moroccan migrants living in London.

However community interviewees from other sources say it is more like 100,000 – a challenge to official numbers as most don't register with the consulate. The principal settlement area for Moroccans is North Kensington with smaller numbers in Croydon.

The **Iraqi** diaspora is also complex. There are far higher numbers here now, as compared with the 2001 Census, on account of asylum seekers following the Iraqi war in 2003. Many changed their names and nationalities on arrival in England registering as Iranian, Turkish or Syrian. The percentage of Iraqi born population that describe themselves as Muslim in the last Census varies considerably as seen by the following example from three different London boroughs:

Borough	Iraqi-born population	Iraqi- born Muslims	% of Iraqi-born Muslims
Ealing	3,047	1,611	53%
Brent	1,741	1,493	86%
Barnet	932	342	37%

(Source: Dept of Communities and Local Government, 2009)

What is the explanation for this variation? Is it that more Muslim Iraqis have actually settled in specific areas or that some are less likely to self-define as Muslim for a number of contextual pressures experienced in specific boroughs. Until a lot more community based research is undertaken it is difficult to know what accounts for this variation. Some initial interviews in other BME research in London have revealed that Iraqis tend to emphasise their national identity foremost and regard their faith as a private matter. And there is even more differentiation within the Iraqi community in terms of religious identity and geographical distribution. For example in North West London there is a high density of Shi'a Muslim that are more religious and traditional. In South West London there are more Christian, Sunni, secular and liberal Iraqis.

In considering the identity of ethnic communities and Muslims in the UK research has revealed a very clear generational difference. It is that the day-to-day interaction of first generation migrants takes place mostly within ethnic boundaries, whereas interaction among young Muslims in the UK is far more complex and reveals a shift away from ethnic divisions towards a more pan-Muslim (global) identity. This should inform any further research which seeks to engage and understand young Muslims in particular.

Reflecting on the utility of existing national data sets 'country of birth' is a starting point but does not include members of the ethnic group born in the UK. The Census also under-represents some ethnic minority populations on account of self-definition issues and operational challenges. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) provides estimates for ethnicity at the regional level. Though useful for Bangladeshi and Pakistani populations, due to the broad ethnicity categories they are not so useful for smaller communities. Additionally they do not incorporate data on religion.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is conducted far more frequently than the Census – every quarter – but it is only a sample of 50,000 and so the sample size is not large enough to produce valid estimates at regional or ward level. The Home Office provides some useful data in relation to migration. Their reports use data on asylum applications, grants of settlement[2] and awards of citizenship by nationality. All three of these sources present difficulties in terms of their adequacy; namely that the asylum application process is very complicated with lack of documentation and withdrawn cases but also as some asylum seekers may wait up to four years for a decision. Grants of settlement highlight inflows from different countries but the time lag with processing asylum needs to be taken into account. Local authorities know only too well that the inadequacies of capturing the in and out flows of international migrations into the country have affected their ability to deliver quality public services.

Looking forward to the Kingston specific data it is helpful when thinking about 'community' to distinguish between population spread and centres of community or 'community hubs'. In terms of country of origin it is known that there is a notable hub of Iraqis in Kingston upon Thames, as well as growing populations in Tottenham, Enfield and Edgware.

3.2 Minorities in Kingston

Francesco Capotorti's classic 1979 definition of a minority, developed in his role as Special Rapporteur of the UN Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, identifies this as a group numerically smaller than the rest of the population of a state. The members of this non-dominant group have ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics different from the rest of the population and show, even implicitly, a sense of mutual solidarity focused on the preservation, of their culture, traditions, religion or language. This has since been much cited (Henrard 2000, Ringelheim 2010) and adopted in international law and conventions eg by the Council of Europe. In UK public policy parlance the term BME refers to black and minority ethnic. The three groups that this study focuses in on (i) Muslims (ii) Tamils (iii) Korean all fit this rubric. Even before the domestic instances of terrorism in 2005 that became known as 7/7 research reports had claimed that rioting in England's northern cities during summer 2001 and the terror incidents of September 11th resulted in Britain's Muslims facing "unprecedented scrutiny and examination" (Open Society Institute 2002: 71). It was in the context of a heightened sense of interest and willingness to better engage with local BME communities that this report was commissioned in order to provide Kingston-specific data. At the time of writing the report both the Muslim and Tamil communities in particular appeared to feature prominently in the public eye with various failed terror plots coming to trial implicating Muslims and a prominent Tamil rights demonstration taking place in Parliament square. This report attempts to go behind the headlines to look at lived experiences with regards to the multi-faceted question of identity, interaction with public bodies, belonging/ sense of attachment via unofficial/ official networks and religious belief.

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[2] refers to the total number of people granted settlement in a given year by nationality

3.3 Muslims in Kingston

We know from the 2001 Census that 3.92% of the borough population in Kingston upon Thames are Muslim. This is derived from the borough population of 147,273 with 5,777 giving their religion as Muslim. But as mentioned in the previous section many communities have increased in number due to in migration but there are also a substantial number who may not state their religion for various reasons. A commissioned Census table providing country of origin by local borough by religion[3] shows that of the 112684 people in Kingston who were born in England 2128 state they are Muslim. But a figure of 8576 appears for 'religion not stated' as distinct from 21758 who state they have 'no religion'. So this represents, for England born residents alone, just over seven percent of 'missing' data on this religion question.

If we look at the same table for the thirteen countries of origin we discussed in Section 1 the figures for Kingston are as follows:

Country of Origin	Kingston population	Muslim
Afghanistan	229	65
Algeria	62	43
Bangladesh	238	202
Egypt	162	77
India	1967	185
Iran	460	256
Iraq	841	675
Morocco	83	64
Pakistan	773	652
Saudi Arabia	64	46
Somalia	30	27
Turkey	184	121
Cyprus	327	39

There are also 202 Kenyan born Muslims in Kingston out of a borough population of 899. This borough level Census data provides a starting point. But many of the shortcomings of

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[3] Table

'measuring' ethnicity are equally applicable to comprehending and learning about the presence of Muslim communities in the UK. One particular difficulty these two 'categorisations' share is the issue of self-assessment in that the classification of the same person can vary in time and space, since perceptions of individual and social identity change over time. Equally:

> ' Taken together, the issues of lack of reflection upon the multidimensional nature of ethnicity, the use of a limited range of pre-defined coarse categories, the variability of self-assignment of ethnicity and the lack of routine collection of ethnicity information, present major shortcomings'
> (Mateos, Pablo, 2007)

Recent ethnicity classification methods have been developed based on name origin analysis, in an attempt to overcome some of these shortcomings. Name origin analysis has the potential to provide information about several dimensions of a person's origins, as names are usually unique to language, a religion, a geographical area, a cultural tradition, a group or kin, a migration flow and so on. One particular project using this name-based classification in the U.K. is Onomap developed at University College, London[4]. In their own words 'Governments and social scientists have struggled to keep track of the reality of rapidly changing populations that are constantly redefining their self-perceptions of their collective identities'.

3.4 Living in the Borough

Kingston is a traditional market town lying in Surrey by postcode but absorbed into the boundaries of Greater London after local government reorganisation in the 1960s, the past two decades have seen a greater diversification in its population than ever before in rapidity and scope. This makes the present study timelier than ever. The initial themes flagged up here at the outset recur in the findings of the focus groups to be presented and discussed in this report which span socio-cultural and demographic considerations. These all cohere around these central themes of *identification, interaction, belonging and believing*.

Kingston, or to give it its full legal-administrative title, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (RBK) is often seen as an archetypally suburban borough. The television, series "The Good Life" was famously set in Surbiton thus the mention of Kingston evokes images of all that suburbia encompasses. This can span both geographic literal spatial and attitudinal/ cultural definitions. Rogers and Power (2001:69) state: "*Suburbs are residential areas built outside the core of the inner city, at distinctly lower density but linked to it through continuous development. They have a simple, repetitive form with single-family, usually owner occupied, semi-detached or detached houses with gardens*".

One of the presumed features of suburbia in most of the writing has been that it is ethnically homogenous unlike the more diverse mix that is to be found in the inner city. The findings of this study challenge this thinking. The research focuses upon those of Tamil, South Korean and Muslim backgrounds. All were asked to describe what Kingston meant to them. There was

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[4]The specific details of Onomap and a critique of the London Profiler maps were provided in an earlier stage of the study

a high degree of convergence in replies. The following is a fairly typical depiction from a student in a focus group:

> T: It's lovely small suburb outside the main sort of hustle and bustle of the city but still quite there's a lot to do there's a lot of shops and shopping centres and nice areas to walk and sort of nice green areas and its, I tell you its' quite a pleasant place to walk around and live in not that I live in, but I still say I'd like to live here... it feels like the countryside

However a councillor also claimed that Kingston's reputation belied a more complex picture than its stereotype suggested:

> RH: Kingston has perception of being an affluent leafy borough.

> JJ: But it is not. I can tell you Kingston has got deprived areas. I can simply tell you... Norbiton is one of the difficult areas and if you look at it all those unfortunate people, a lot of them are there... Cambridge estate and also in Surbiton there's the Alpha Road estate and we never talk about that one...

This respondent who works in grants administration in the council stated that it was worse to be poor in Kingston than in inner London:

> M: People are aware that there's a big Korean community, that's quite visible I think, but otherwise the general perception would be that it's very white and that it's very middle class, and I think that that's a falacy too actually , because we do have huge pockets of deprivation around our estates, and a lot of people who are certainly in poverty, if you look at the numbers going through the job centre, it's increasing. One of the main things is that it's not easy to be poor, or indeed different in Kingston, because you are seeing other people who really have quite a lot going for them, even if they're professionals who have lost their big finance jobs, they're likely to have a pretty nice house, and a car, and that kind of thing. So I think it must be harder than living perhaps in Tower Hamlets or the inner city where you're all up against it really, but around here it's such a mixed bag, even somewhere like Norbiton there are some really nice houses, very close to Kingston Hill which is absolutely top end of the market really. And inbetween that you've got the Cambridge Estate, you've got the Kings Nympton Estate which is actually the beginning of Kingston Hill and backs onto the park, Richmond Park. A lot of people there with a lot of poverty and deprivation. You must feel quite isolated sometimes.

There was an awareness of this complexity from this participant of the BME forum:

> I: I'm very cautious about stereotyping, you know... Even within the Korean community you've got the Buddhists and you've got the – a lot of them are practising Christians, that's why you see most of the churches will have another , you know, Korean cos they do share the premises... So it's very, very difficult to really sort of find a sterotypical answer for anything. With the Muslim community- which Muslim community am I talking about – the Sunni Muslim, the Shia Muslim, the Ahmahdayyan Muslim? These three groups have got their own share of frustrations and difficulties. And then how do you distinguish any problems? Do they have a common problem? What is that common problem, if there is one? Can a local authority deal with that?

3.5 Ethnicity and residential settlement

Much of the sociological literature on the suburbs talks of population displacement and looks at "push" and "pull" factors associated with outlying districts of the cities. Is the move to the suburbs in short motivated by an area's positive attractions (choice) or do people end up there perforce (constraint). Also associated with suburban population dynamic are the terms "sprawl" ie the expansion of the city to absorb areas in its environs and "flight" ie an exodus away from inner urban areas. Indeed the term is often expanded to "white flight" implicating the outward shift and drift of the host community who happen to be a white population. Yet the findings of this study show that we can trace examples of Kingston now as a destination site.

Interviews illustrate different reasons for settlement in Kingston. In the case of this Tamil 23 year old male, his parents who settled initially further towards central London (father arriving first alone) and then as a family unit once the children were born, moved to Kingston because of the pull of its grammar school system.

> AS: My father was here since the 70s late 70s so yeah
>
> RH: And he came straight to Kingston?
>
> AS: No he went to Tooting, my mum came about a decade later...
>
> TH: Was it perceived as a step up to come to Kingston from Tooting?
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> AS: I think they moved because so my sister could go to Tiffin girls and me to Tiffin boys so because we both applied for those I think we moved for that so it would be easier for us

Others had arrived more by luck than judgement although successive generations are now settling in Kingston and areas on its fringes. This Bangladeshi was middle son of a pioneering family in the 1980s when his moved from the more "ethnic" area of Southall.

> AH: It was quite strange how we ended up in Kingston. We were originally from 1982 living with my maternal uncle, he was a single man, in Southall, he spoke to his landlord who was a lovely Sikh man and we lived next door and then my father decided we're going to need a bigger house so my father decided... We lived in Kingston because I had a first cousin who lived in Kingston.

The restaurant trade had been a motivating factor in sustaining growth amongst the Bangladeshi community in Kingston. There was a perception voiced that Bangladeshis in Kingston and its environs were those who had "made it" rather than the more down at heel counterparts in the multiple-deprivation blight districts such as East London's borough of Tower Hamlets.

> AH: When I was growing up it was 4 or 5 families and we were all sort of related. There were other people from our village that were there. Other than that there weren't very many families when I was very young. While I was growing up there were more and more Bengali families came because Surrey is a goldmine for Bangladeshi restaurants and they all do really well because it's a wealthy county and they all like Indian food, blah blah blah so a lot of families started emerging I'd say from mid 90s onwards there was this kind of rush, they'd say, it's too far from east London... well we work in Surrey,

we have a business in Surrey, we might as well move there so people actually moved out from East London and set up businesses in Byfleet, Weybridge, Tadworth, Epsom, places like that... sprang up. Bengalis in Epsom are actually growing to a higher more accelerated level than Bengalis in Kingston but the number of Muslims in Kingston has significantly increased since when I was young.

Another interviewee, a Bangladeshi aged 21 praised Kingston for being ethnically mixed but recognised that there was a degree of conscious or subconscious segregation at play in choice of residential district:

RH: Does that stereotype of Kingston as white leafy suburban borough still hold or is that now outmoded?

Mu: Erm well now I think it is but the values, the white leafy values are still around as you seem to have all the white people live in a certain area, and all the Asians and Africans they all to seem to live in an area like you have all the Koreans live in New Malden, all the Sri Lankans live in Coombe and everywhere, all the Africans seem to be living in Cambridge estate. I don't know if it's a financial thing or cultural thing then you has all the English people tend to be living Kingston Hill or nearer town, the Charter Key development and everything so obviously there are the different sectors but people you know they cope with it, there's no you know difference or resistance or anything.

I was born in 1989. During the early 1990s there were a lot of white people but since the coming of 2000 a lot of people have emigrated to Kingston, a lot of people like Africans, Pakistanis, Bengalis because. The mosque has like a part to play in it because like it's the one that they can find, because there's this madrassa school and everything, a lot of parents are keen for their children to go and it helps with the schools as well because nowadats the competition for schools is so large. With Tiffin, Tiffin girls, Kingston Grammar, a lot of people have come from far so their kids can go to better schools so I think... yeah it has changed.

At a focus group of young Muslims that took place on Eid 2009 the mosque (site of the interview) was cited as a plus point of Kingston:

Z: It's a very nice area, people are welcoming, they do let us practice the religion, and the local mosque is not that far away from the town centre from where the Muslims live

RH: Where do the Muslims live?

Mu: Surbiton, New Malden, Richmond...

Z: Jumma time is when they come from far-away places like Wimbledon

Mo: Kingston is like the centre point for people who... around Kingston borough you have Merton, Richmond, New Malden, Surbiton, Chessington, and Kingston mosque is like the centre point of where it all started.

3.6 Risk and Safety

Almost all respondents characterised Kingston as a "safe" area. Reported issues of discrimination were rare.

RH: Do you think there's any tension between groups or any sort of racism at all?

AM: I haven't experienced it as such but it does exist, it's not as bad as up North places like that. I would say a lot of groups tend to come in from Kingston from outside areas so of university groups and others, for the night life and whatever so sometimes there are problems but I wouldn't say they're as bad as some other areas... I wouldn't say they're ethnic problems I would say they're just normal sort of Friday night coming out of the pub late problems

RH: Not as bad as other places... any places specifically?

AM: I was thinking more of in terms of the night life in Croydon, but not that I go out to Croydon very much but I do hear stories... I think like places like Manchester where you have Asian gangs fighting other Asian gangs white gangs, black gangs, things like that you don't really get that in quantity here, you only get youths hanging out together the rotunda and places like that, it's not that big a problem here.

Areas on the fringes contained within the Kingston Borough boundaries were however mentioned as troubled districts. During Kingston College Focus groups comprised of students learning English for academic purposes Chessington was referred to on two occasions as an area where students (one Chinese and one Iraqi) had experienced low level racial incidents of verbal abuse in the street. Other social housing estates within Kingston were named as areas of comparative material disadvantage: the Cambridge Estate, Norbiton and Kings Nympton near Kingston Hill were the two chief examples.

Interestingly throughout the compilation of research for this project the *Surrey Comet* newspaper reported in July 2009 that Kingston had been named as a hotspot for drink-fuelled closing time crime. A council member for community safety on the borough was quoted as saying "I find it very surprising that Kingston has been identified" the news report quoted Ian Taylorson, chairman of Pubwatch asserting "Personally I don't think Kingston is a dangerous place." In 2008 knife crime across Kingston borough numbered 122 offences. Grove ward, which includes the town centre, there were 105 serious violent offences in the financial year to 2008 - 2009, and so far in the first three months of the following financial year '.

3.7 Ethnicity and Deprivation

While projections for ethnic minority population tend to indicate a growth in this as a proportion of RBK's overall population, there appears to be an acceleration of Kingston's place in the national picture when considering deprivation measures. The Department of Communities and Local Government calculated Index of Multiple Deprivation in 2007 ranked Kingston 245th out of 354 UK boroughs, a rise for Kingston from position 265 in 2004. These figures tell the national picture. Across London Kingston is third bottom of deprived boroughs with neighbouring Richmond-upon-Thames coming second and the largely financial district the City of London least deprived. But caution is needed with these figures as the next National Census due to be collected in 2011 may well indicate further shifting patterns.

Sometimes it was felt that to equate ethnicity automatically with deprivation was an over-crude assumption as the councillor:

RH: The Koreans of Kingston in your ward I don't think are perceived as a "problem community", unlike the Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets who score really poorly on indexes of health, housing, education...

JS: Absolutely not, that said its one of the areas, in fact the only area, where Kingston gets an advantage in the revenue support grant because... in doing deprivation scores ethnic minority level counts as a score of depravation... so our Korean community we get extra money for them... [despite]... the fact that probably the Korean community on average has a higher household income than the British communities... Korean unemployment is very low because mostly they're all executives, senior executives of large companies... the communities supports themselves very well, they are known for [using] social services, the only areas I suppose they are, they're drained on council resources would be refuse collection but they live in the larger houses, so we actually get more council taxes on them, and education so it's only really pressure on the school places, but it's not really an issue at all.

A similar point was made by this officer who named Gujeratis, Tamils and Koreans as the borough's most numerically significant groups:

M: They're [government formulas] making all sorts of assumptions when actually three of the biggest communities we've got here are actually very prosperous. Which doesn't mean they haven't got problems as any have got, and I think some of their problems are probably harder to deal with, you know, language issues and cultural issues, particularly around the role of women, and wanting to keep things within the community. So if you've got domestic violence issues, for instance, and a very male dominated society and culture, quite how people then deal with that within their communities, it's more subtle then deprivation in financial terms, isn't it? But its' certainly disadvantaged of a kind, I guess.

Elsewhere it was recognised that there could be multiple bases of deprivation:

G: We don't talk about disability within the BME community. When you are disabled and within the BME community the disadvantage that you can suffer can sometimes be multiplied ten times more. So if you are a gay within a Muslim community and you are disabled, you know, your disadvantage could be three hundred times more than a gay white man who's disabled.

3.8 Diaspora identity and belonging

The circumstances of people's arrival characterised their attitudes towards their country of origin and new adopted home-country. This respondent, Raj had arrived 7 years ago as a refugee and expressed gratitude to the British way of life for being welcoming and tolerant:

RH: So the adaptation difficult process, I mean do you miss home or have you forgotten about it?

Raj: Not really because... when I came from Sri Lanka it was survival so I did want to be in England I really wanted to move from that country and so I didn't miss Tamil

RH: It must be quite different living here than

R: Yes in Sri Lanka you haven't got the support or facilities or anything where we come from, no definitely not, I lived in Colombo for 3 years, the capital city where the Sinhalese people live... I lived 3 years alone and I was happy there but still I feel I don't want to be there, people get angry and fighting so when I came here I found it very helpful, no fighting

This was a quite different testimony from that of a now pension age Tamil who has carried out decades of community work and originally arrived as a student in the 1960s:

Y: I was 20 and I come here and I had to face the music, nobody liked me, nobody would give me a place. At the time it was very clear, they tell me no blacks no Irish. And I was sitting there crying and telling my dad "you sent me the wrong place, can I come home?" and he said "no chance. Go back there and do it" and you are seeing the end product of it. And I always believed then I had to fight for it, fir equality I had to stand for everybody,

There is an assumption that migrants come to the UK to better their lifestyle some of the interview data shows the reverse. Another participant had grown up in Egypt but attended English schools. On arriving in England at the age of 7 he disliked his surroundings for the lack of home comforts in comparison to his privileged beginnings. The benefits of the UK system were only appreciated once he'd left:

RH: You hated it then?

Ebrahim: I wouldn't say so much hate just unhappy to be here I think it was particularly the fact that we'd gone from a well off style of life, drivers, maids, British National school, I was sort of how do you say cotton wool around me, there was a little bubble around me, I didn't know anything about anything and then suddenly I'm in London and having to walk to school and get a bus and I am being bullied and people don't share stuff, it was just a whole different kind of culture for me and it was a very big shock and I thought that progressed from there and it wasn't until I left that I actually realised how much I also loved London.

3.9 Interactions with Officials

One respondent suggested that sometimes people only experienced services in situations that could colour their perceptions. He gave the example from September 2009 when knife arches were erected at Kingston Station where all passing through had to pass through a weapons detector:

G: Sometimes the visible side of the police service is when something goes wrong, you see that. There's been an unfortunate number of fatalities from knife crime throughout UK, particularly in London or whatever it is, then you get this. Then suddenly at Kingston Station there's the knife arches. 60% of Kingston students are coming through 30% of them who may be from the black community... it's a Catch-22 situation... So how do you ensure that you are getting the message across without any particular identified community that has been targeted or picked upon, or *feel* that they are being picked upon, or whatever it is?

Although ultimately the knife searches had yielded results it could well have added to any feelings of victimisation already felt by some minorities and there was a stated anxiety that official bodies could appear remote from grass roots ground level activity.

There was also a sense that interactions with community groups by council officers and other officials were all too often brokered through unrepresentative sometimes self appointed spokespersons for the community who monopolised consultations:

G: Sometimes you have community leaders, and community leaders can sometimes be gatekeepers. And also... some of the community leaders they can be living in a totally different time zone... compared to their children or their grandchildren or the people within that age group who are – it's not sixty year old Pakistani man who are being stopped for terrorist activities to be questioned or whatever it is. You could have a huge age group that is between fifteen and whatever that is being stopped. But your community are sixty-seven and fifty-seven and eighty-seven and whatever it is.

There was also a need to respond to unexpected, unforseeable events and arrivals which budget setting, linked into the cycle of financial years, could not always anticipate. This grants officer working at the council worried about groups who were to all intents and purposes under the radar of officialdom:

> There are an awful lot of communities, small communities, and that may be makes it quite hard for some communities within the borough where they've not got – the Koreans and the Tamils have got enough people around so they've got specialist shops; certainly the Koreans have got specialist restaurants, they've got places to go and community activity, but you get the smaller communities, Somalis would be a good example really, where they've arrived and one or two people have thought we really need to do something, so people are lonely and got nowhere to meet and don't know how to access services, and so on, so we need to help them.

In some interviews the names of pan-ethnic Kingston-wide groups and services were mentioned by respondents as a good thing – notably the Milap day-centre, a popular and well-attended venue for minority ethnic elders and Global Arts Kingston which had outgrown its remit as an Asian arts form to organise various cultural activities including the annual Kingston carnival.

In terms of faith and culture specific organisations there was a feeling voiced that sometimes the same organisations are approached leading to a repeat process and possibly even consultation fatigue:

> I think we have good ways in to most communities to get people involved, whether you're reaching sometimes the usual suspects, or whether you need to go a bit deeper into the communities is always a tricky one, I think. Cos if you've got people who are helpful from the community who have always been people from the community you've dealt with, there is a tendency to return to them... And we do, we consult endlessly with all our communities until they're fed up to the back teeth with being consulted.

3.10 The competition for Resources and Recognition

As populations move from immigrant communities to the settled population needs shift. In this respect lengthened periods in the UK will bring further stratification underlining the fact that communities are dynamic as opposed to static:

> G: Yes, just because you have a large population of a particular community doesn't mean that that community is or isn't demanding any services. The classic example of that is the South Korean community... I do not expect to see them in social sector housing in my calculation and estimate for another three years or four years. They have been here for the last fifteen, sixteen years but I don't expect to see them. And the people who are going to push within the Korean community into social sector housing will be the North Koreans becasue they have come as Asylum seekers and refugees so the need for them to come into social sector housing is far greater than the general South Korean community who have come here because a lot of them came here because they have jobs sometimes here, or they became here because they were business people, or whatever it is. That population is slowly beginning to settle in Kingston. As they settle you will see that not every one South Korean is a banker,not every one South Korean is an architect, not every one South Korean is –I don't know-driving a Merc, or whatever it is. So you will have the South Korean who has not succeeded, or whatever it is.

It seemed that there was less of a rush for Tamils to take up British citizenship as they had a commonwealth background unlike the Koreans, growing numbers of whom were undergoing

the citizen testing process. The council had made adaptations within their translation budget so that Korean speakers had an option to receive communications in their own language as this Kingston councillor confirmed.

> JS: They're legally resident, Sri Lankan citizens, a lot of them with indefinite leave to remain they came here as refugees 15 years ago, when the civil war started in Sri Lanka, they haven't taken up citizenship because they're commonwealth citizens [whereas] pretty much all Korean residents who have British citizenship can all speak English and actually there are increased people coming on the electoral roll now who they've naturalised in the last 3 or 4 years and of course they've had to actually pass the test, so [language] is less of an issue, the council send leaflets they all have boxes in Korean saying if you're having problems reading this let us know, we have Korean members of staff as well.

Electoral power and representational politics was another factor that arose in the interviews. It seemed that on Kingston Council of the three groups, the Tamils had been most successful in getting elected with two councillors in place, one of whom we interviewed. The Koreans had not the same ties of commonwealth/ colonisation and thus were not entitled to vote or stand.

> JS: The Korean population is sort of invisible to officialdom. Its visible if you're there on the ground but if you look through the electoral role you don't seem that many Korean names however you do see lots of houses missing as you go down the electoral role because that's where the Korean live but they're not entitled to be on the electoral role

3.11   Summary of Key Findings: Findings Part One

> ➢ Underlying poverty and deprivation exists alongside visible wealth
>
> ➢ Diverse reasons exist for settlement in the borough -whether a 'push' or 'pull' factor i.e. circumstances of arrival has a bearing on attitudes to new country and by implication approaches to engagement
>
> ➢ It's not necessarily 'ethnicity' that accounts for deprivation in the borough as some ethnic groups in Kingston are reasonably wealthy
>
> ➢ Experiences of safety are associated with perceptions of material disadvantage in different parts of the borough
>
> ➢ Some first hand experiences with officials or local services can reinforce already held perceptions of negative discrimination
>
> ➢ Representatives of any community may not actually represent the targeted groups or those in need of specific services
>
> ➢ There are difficulties of providing appropriate services or reaching out to the smaller ethnic communities
>
> ➢ The changing needs related to recent immigrants as contrasted to the more settled population demonstrates the dynamic nature of community profiles

4.Findings Part 2: Community Respondents Views

The interviews and focus groups were carried out in two phases: Stakeholder interviews and interviews and focus groups with local communities (see also Methodology section). The next sections will outline these in turn.

4.1 Stakeholder Perspectives

The organisations approached for the first phase of interviewing included: the Metropolitan Police in Kingston, the Kingston Racial Equality Council (REC), the Kingston Primary Care Trust (Kingston PCT), Royal Borough of Kingston officers, councillors/ cabinet member and Refugee Action Kingston (RAK). This first phase of interviews, which was completed in September in 2009 was designed to identify local concerns and issues, experiences with different local communities and to identify perceived barriers to communication/engagement. This first phase of interviewing thus framed the second phase of interviewing. Therefore, before moving on to discuss issues raised by the Muslim communities, this section briefly summarises the concerns and issues raised by local stakeholders. More specifically four chief concerns were identified amongst local stakeholders.

First: many participants felt that there had been very little engagement with the Muslim community in Kingston. This was down to a perception that the Muslim community was often overshadowed by other, larger, and more vociferous or more organised communities, and sometimes down to the fact that very little was known about the profile or composition of the Muslim community in Kingston, that 'they didn't really know who the Muslims in Kingston are'. **Second:** in so far as relationships had been established, these had been filtered through a few individuals, and mainly through Kingston Mosque. Of course participants acknowledged that this relationship continues to be useful and productive, they were not always sure whether there were not other Muslim communities or sections of the community not represented through the Mosque. **Third**: a few participants mentioned that they were at a loss as to how to engage the Muslim community in Kingston. There have been some projects (e.g. helping one Islamic community group to organise regular women-only swimming sessions). However, there was also a sense that a more general 'cultural' engagement strategy might be difficult. **Fourth**: a few participants noted that there had been a poor response from different Islamic organisations, when invited to join the Prevent Reference Group. In this context there was a more general desire to understand how Muslims feel about the *Prevent* agenda.

4.1.1 Into the field

In the second phase interviews and focus groups were conducted with local organisations, community groups and student organisations. This included Kingston Mosque, the Islamic Resource Centre and its users, Muslim residents and users of the Mosque , Muslims involved in local government, Swimming for Muslim Women, Members of the Ahmadiyya Association, Muslim Students at Kingston University, Islamic Societies at Kingston University and Muslim students at Kingston College.

Participants were recruited and selected through a mixture of purposive and snowball sampling. That is researchers selectively approached organisations whose experience was deemed relevant to the research, the team also drew on referrals from individuals interviewed. In addition to conducting one-to-one interviews and larger focus groups with residents and students the findings were supplemented with a questionnaire survey of mosque attendees, in November 2009 (Eid celebration) which yielded 195 responses. The questionnaires were in part designed to recruit individuals, but also to provide some insight into the diversity of backgrounds that make up Kingston's Muslim community (or rather communities). The findings from the survey are described below in Section 4.2.1 and at Appendix A.

4.2 Muslim identity in focus

The diversity that characterises Muslim communities, in terms of ethnicity, religious denomination has already been established. In the interviews with local Muslims there was some consternation at the fact that Muslims should be grouped together under one broad heading:

> Y: That already makes me angry. So you're looking at Koreans, Tamils and Muslims. So it's specific, specific and really, really broad and diverse. There's so many […]. We are all different. You can't just put all Muslims into one pot.

4.2.1 Muslim communities in Kingston: Mosque Survey

In view of the limitations of the last Census data it was important to get a more current picture of the diverse composition of Kingston's Muslim community, and in particular of those Muslims using Kingston Mosque. To this end a short survey was conducted amongst Kingston Mosque users in November 2009, which collected information about worshippers' country of origin, and from where they travelled. Whilst not yielding a complete picture of diversity of Muslim community in Kingston, the survey does provide a brief overview of the Muslim communities using Kingston Mosque. In particular it illustrates that the mosque is predominantly frequented by Asian worshippers (biggest single group Pakistani, followed by Bangladeshi), but is also attended by worshippers from African countries (e.g. Somalia, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt) and Arab countries (e.g. Iraq and Iran). It is also worth noting that worshippers are predominantly male by a ratio of 3:1 with a mean age of 32. Most had come from local post-codes beginning with prefix KT1 and KT2 with the most common London postcode being SW15 – Kingston Vale. There were a smattering of counter-intuitive postcodes eg respondent from E14 who was commuting from Tower Hamlets to Kingston to work in an Indian Restaurant (See Appendix A for survey results).

4.2.2. Muslim communities in Kingston: Groups and organisations

This study necessarily focussed on the more cultural and lived identities amongst Kingston's Muslims which has a more meaningful bearing on local perceptions of community than the sometimes abstract categories and indicators that appear in surveys.

In the first instance the research team identified and spoke to the two main organisations that cater for Muslim communities in Kingston - the Mosque and Islamic Resource Centre - both of which are notable for the way they welcome individuals from very diverse backgrounds.

4.2.2.1 Kingston Mosque

Kingston Mosque is a mainstream Mosque, mainly catering for Sunni Muslims. Significantly, however, it also prides itself at being open to and encouraging users from other denominations and all nations. The mosque survey confirms that the mosque is indeed attended by Muslims from different background. Nevertheless, amongst some Muslims we spoke to, particulary Iraqi and other ethnic Arab Muslims, Kingston Mosque was seen as a mainly "Asian" Mosque. Interviewees from Bangladesh also saw it as a "Pakistani" mosque. According to the Kingston Mosque committee member not only does Kingston Mosque encourage worshippers from different backgrounds, it is also managed and run by Muslims from different backgrounds:

> H: I stood down as chair of the mosque, the vice chair is a black man and do you know the number of Punjabis who've said 'why have you got a black chairman?' and yet he's far more scholarly than I am.He knows the Qu'ran far better than I do, prays 5 times a day and all that, except a Somali doesn't have a big beard, his hair doesn't grow. On Eid we have a black brown and white Imam, did you know that? It never grows, it's just a growth, it doesn't grow into a busy beard but my health warning I'm an apprentice Muslim, I don't know much about Islam but what I discuss is from my heart.

Nevertheless, such perceptions (of Kingston as an Asian mosque) undoubtedly influences who does or does not attend Kingston Mosque. Thus several interviewees of Arab ethnic origin reported that they and their families felt more comfortable praying at home or attending events in bigger central London Mosques, namely that at Regents Park. This emerged both from the focus group with Muslim students at Kingston University who had grown up in Kingston as well as from the interviews with stakeholders working with Iraqi refugees:

> SK: I don't really go to that Mosque, cause er. I've been twice, and I didn't like the area and I didn't like the whole atmosphere. I don't know why I personally find it more comfortable to pray at home. I think it's I don't know a lot of Arabs who go to the Mosque maybe a little bit. But I don't think there's many, a lot of them are Asian. […] It's not that there's anything wrong with it I just find it more comfortable at home.

> N: I know you're supposed to go the Mosque during certain times but my family just found it more comfortable to pray at home. If we don't pray at home we go to central London ones. Central London ones are known more than small kind of Kingston ones. If there was an event or something, if my dad, there's a really big one in Baker street and my dad travelled up there, and he's been there a couple of times.

This then confirms stakeholder perceptions that Kingston Mosque is not necessarily representative of all Muslims living in Kingston, and that there are groups who are less

affiliated with the Mosque[5]. This is not to say that the efforts by Kingston Mosque to encourage diversity and be inclusive are to be discounted, supporting such efforts are of course an important tool in the engagement process, particularly considering the effort and energy put in by Kingston Mosque and the fact that this policy of inclusion has, as participants noted, sometimes led to internal friction.

4.2.2.2 Islamic Resource Centre

The Islamic Resource Centre is a Charity and voluntary organisation providing free service to the community. Predominantly aimed at women, it provides counselling, support, and advice, as well as offering education support classes for children, ESOL classes for adults, basic I.T and literacy skill classes. It also organises activities related to health and well being. Notably the Islamic Resource centre operates on an ethos of inclusion and attempts to cater for individuals and communities of diverse backgrounds (not necessarily Muslim):

> Y: But you see the thing is, Islamic resource centre is a platform for all the nationalities they know they acknowledge us and they can see this is a Muslim organisation not only specifically targeting Muslims, for everyone, you can be a Jewish woman walking through your door, a Christian, a black, white, brown or orange, we work for the community, any community you see so I think we're going from strength to strength and its been 10 years and its fantastic, I think once you settle down with your English here you'll see, there will be a big difference here you see

This ethos of inclusion makes the Islamic Resource Centre a potentially valuable partner in the engagement process.

4.2.2.3 Other Groups and Organisations

In addition to the Mosque and the Islamic Resource Centre, which are used by, and attempt to be open to, many different communities, there are a number of community groups in Kingston, who cater more specifically for Muslims of particular backgrounds. These include the Iraqi Association, the Somali Association and the Ahmadiyya Association

The **Kingston Somali Community Association** is a community group that aim to work with the Somali Community in Kingston: to address the needs of the Somali community of Kingston Upon Thames and the surrounding area. According to our interviews with Kingston PCT and Refugee Action, the Somali community in Kingston is very vulnerable and many Somali residents face economic hardship and social exclusion. The group has been set up to address some of these issues.

The **Iraqi Community Association** states aim is to provide a friendly atmosphere for the Iraqis in the community and a place for families to meet and socialise. It also aims to provide an informal network which will assist Iraqis to adapt to life within a new community.

The **Ahmadiyya Association**, provides a framework for the many minority Muslim Faith groups. Significantly, however, due to proximity of one of the largest Ahmadiyya Mosque in

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[5] Another group that only reluctantly use the Mosque are Ahmadiyya Muslims (see this section below), who given they their different prayer rituals and their long term experience of not being accepted as an Islamic faith by more mainstream Muslim organisation, prefer to attend the Ahmadiyya Mosque in Merton (Morden?).

neighbouring Morden, there seems to be a larger than usual proportion of Ahmadiyyan Muslims living in Kingston. Moreover, not only does there seem to be a significant presence of Ahmadiyyans in Kingston, the Kingston Ahmadiyya Association is very organised and already very active in engaging with local communities as well as in interfaith and intercultural dialogues. In this context the association would prove to be an important partner in wider processes of community engagement.

4.3 'Informal' communities

The discussion of some of the community groups in Kingston is not intended as an exact or complete 'map' of the Muslim communities in Kingston, but a starting point for engagement. However, it is also important to note that not all groupings or sections are necessarily represented through organised groups, and that boundaries between communities are often transient. Thus there are also more informal networks between Muslims of different background which structure the experience of communities, but which are also very difficult to map. Thus in one of the focus groups students of Arab descent talked about the fact that, even though their family did not attend or belong to any formal organisation (religious or cultural) in Kingston, they nevertheless had always felt part of an 'Arab[6] community':

> HG: Well you see the thing is with Arabs. They always know… If you take my dad if you give him someone's surname, he'll know them. We're all kind of connected in some way. It's really strange. You know I'll meet someone Arab and they'll ask, "oh who's the dad?" and they'll know him from ages gone or the granddad, I don't know.
>
> It's not like you're living in Kingston, it's like living in, cause everyone knows each other. He'll know the uncle or he'll know the dad. I've always known Arabic people, Arabic families, or gone to school with them or something. So I've always been around Arabs. Not just Arabs, I also have other non-Arab friends. But there are a lot of people, in Kingston Hill, in New Malden, but also outside Kingston.

4.4 Is there 'a' Muslim Community in Kingston?

The above discussion highlights an important point about Muslim experiences of identity and community in Kingston. The interviews confirmed that talking about a singular Muslim community in Kingston is in many ways misleading. In the first instance, of course, it is possible to identify many different sub-groupings in Kingston, not all of which are clustered around identifiable, mainstream organisations (such as Kingston Mosque). In addition to this, it is also the case that many Muslims responding did not see themselves as belonging to a single community, whose edges are clearly defined along religious or ethnic lines. Rather it seems communities seem to be held together by more contingent features and less obvious shared experiences.

One participant for example saw the rural/urban divide as the most important divide between communities:

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[6] Which they defined as "the whole middle east and bits of Africa"

I: The majority who came here from the 60s, 70s came here from rural areas of Pakistan and Bangladesh. If they came from a big city say Bombay it would have been different... if they come from rural lands, how do they cope with completely different structures?

4.5 Living in Kingston: Local Experiences

In addition to exploring the configuration of the Muslim community in Kingston, part of the brief for this study was to explore the experience different BME communities had of living in Kingston: the extent to which they related to the local area, used and accessed local services and whether there were any special needs or gaps in the services provided by the council. As we shall see, the fact that Kingston's Muslim community is so diverse makes it difficult to generalise the findings concerning this. Nevertheless despite the often different experiences of individuals and groups we spoke to, we were able to identify a number of common themes that emerged from the discussions in interviews and focus groups, which are discussed in the sections below.

4.5.1 A Good Place to Live

Significantly, many of the participants found Kingston a good place to live, and many had moved here because of its proximity to inner London, but also because Kingston was perceived to be 'safe', 'quiet' and 'nice', with good local amenities. A particularly representative comment about Kingston as a place to live

P: Everything [is good]. We live in the middle of Kingston, so college, the court, hospital, main supermarkets, its very good place it's all local

And a long-time resident for 20 years:

D: Yes I am very happy, I have moved from New Malden, Kingston, Surbiton, but I think they're basically the same you've got your lovely little high street and I am fine here.

On the decision to stay in Kingston a business migrant who has been in the UK for only 4 months:

L: Because it's more clean and it's nice and really people in Kingston are nice they get on nicely with you. I thought it was all of England like this.

4.5.2 Public Services

In addition to describing Kingston as a good place to live, most of the participants were generally positive about the public service offered by Kingston borough. Here responses were generally positive, and the main issues that arose were not necessarily specific to Muslim communities but concerned recent immigrant or refugee communities: communities which hadn't been in the UK long who sometimes found it difficult to access certain services. One exception to this might be the relationship to the police, which in many ways is tarnished by the political context in which some Muslims find themselves.

This section summarises some of the issues that arose out of the focus group discussions around accessing health services and relationships with the police.

4.5.3 Health

An often repeated theme in the focus group discussions was the difficulty of more recently arrived communities experience in accessing health services. This does not so much apply for 2nd or 3rd generation Muslims, or those who have lived here for a substantial amount of time. Rather, unsurprisingly, it mainly affects individuals and communities who are not yet familiar with the health system in the UK and sometimes struggle to understand 'how the system works' and in particular the need to be registered with a GP.

> HS: You're not registered [with a GP]? Is it because you don't have the paperwork?
>
> L: No we have the paperwork but I don't know why, I don't need a doctor […] I brought my file from Lebanon, I brought my file from the hospital because I had 3 big operations […]. I hope nothing will happen. But if something happen I have the file.
>
> HS: You have the file, but you also need to be registered to get proper treatment […] just in case you need emergency treatment, you should register quickly
>
> L: When they see the file they will know what's wrong with me (respondent from Lebanon)

Significantly, many participants who had recently arrived in the UK seemed to be used to a different system and found dealing with a new system quite confusing:

> J: […] in the country we kind of go to the private doctor directly, here we have to reduce that first of all and he decide to go to the specialist doctor that's why its different from the country and buying the communication, in the country we cant buy anything and here we have to go to the GP and they decide to give you the medication is the difference between the country and here

In addition to this there was also the issue of language barriers as individuals had difficulty communicating in English (and were often unaware that an interpreter could be arranged).

> O: The first time I go to doctor he cannot understand me because I am not very fluent and I am crying and I want to change my medicine because I am under depressed that's why I am trying to sit all the night and write what I want to talk to the doctor and then I go to explain it...

In many cases people seemed to rely on informal networks of friends and relatives, who were more familiar with the system and the language to help them access services they needed. Asked whether she had registered with a doctor yet:

> O: Yes. It was easy. Because we know some friends in the area that's why they brought us […] and it's a gentleman doctor

> My husband speaks English very well, and Iraqi people working in this GP. I think Iraqis like to go to Iraqi doctors […]it makes life easier of course, because when you're ill the first thing is you want a doctor who you can communicate with, very important.

It should be repeated that this difficulty around accessing health services is not something that affects Muslim communities generally in Kingston, but affects more recent migrant/refugee communities, and is mainly related to a lack familiarity with the health system and to language barriers . Nevertheless it should also be noted that access *is* an issue for some sections of the community, who have to depend on informal and pre-existing networks of friends and family, who are already familiar with the health system, and doctors or other health workers working in the borough who happen to speak their native language.

4.5.4 The Police

Respondents generally reported positive experiences with Kingston Police:

> FG: They are very kind, I tried them […] there was a problem with my son and his friend so we called the police and they were very kind and solved the problem

> HS: So you found it easy to talk to them

> FG: Yes they're very kind

More generally, however, especially younger respondents admitted that such relationships could also be difficult, as younger respondents mentioned that they sometimes feel they get treated with suspicion and whilst not many had experiences of their own most knew someone (often a cousin or friend) who at one point or another had felt unfairly questioned or stopped and searched. In this context the recent emphasis on preventing radicalisation and extremism was experienced as a strain on relationships with the Police. However, Kingston Mosque always has retained good relations with community police who the researchers witnessed patrolling the area on the day of Eid to a good reception.

4.5.5 Other services

Other services that got a positive mention were the Refugee Action Centre, which was perceived as very helpful by Iraqi refugees we spoke to in the focus groups.

FG: I go to the refugee action centre its very nice, (name) she is helping me the important things they help and they read all the letters and they can do every application to you and help you if you need any telephone call

4.6 A multicultural borough

Significantly, what many participants seemed to appreciate most about living in Kingston was its 'multiculturalness', which they defined not as a large concentration of ethnic groups, but as a very diverse mix of small BME communities. It was as a result of this they argued that they came into contact with 'people from all sorts of backgrounds' and which facilitated a relatively tolerant atmosphere in Kingston.

R1: It's very multicultural here, it's very nice. It's more […] not so much tolerant, but people appreciate each other more here. More so than in other areas. […] you feel safe here. You know you're not the only person who is different. There are lots of sort of people from other worlds.

R2: Yes it's very multicultural. I think that helps a lot so *you're* not just a Muslim on your own, with all the whites on the other side. Because then you feel intim… <u>they</u> feel intimidated probably, if you're wearing the headscarf or whatever.

SK: I was in Coombe Girls. I went to Coombe sixth form. At school it was always very mixed. Some Koreans, Asians, Arabs. I didn't every feel that I was in an area were there were a lot of Koreans or a lot of Arabs, just that that it was a real mixture. I felt really comfortable with that. I didn't really like being just with Arabs or just with a particular kind of ethnic group. I really liked the mixture.

Interestingly the multiculturalness some of the participants described, was only perceived by those living in the borough, and those participants who only commute to Kingston for their studies tended to describe Kingston as relatively mono-cultural and life-less compared to the vibrancy of other West or central London neighbourhoods.

L: Commute in from central London. I like the fact that I knew people here in the university. Didn't know much about the area, but were I come from there's so much more Muslims, around that area Shepherd's Bush. There are so many Arabs and Muslims. I felt like I wasn't different in that area. When I came here there was less of that feeling, because I, Kingston am so much quieter. You don't see Muslims really, only at the University and then they belong to ISOC. You see someone wearing the actual Muslim outfit and I thought that was just the Muslims in ISOC, but other than that I don't feel like there's really a culture.

SK: I suppose outer Kingston, is perhaps a bit less cultural in some way. I mean of course there's culture. It's just as in less umm...less ethnic minorities. That's what I meant, not as diverse. It's also more middle class than working class.

L: I wouldn't voluntarily come here after uni; unless I really need to. The furthest I get is Marks and Spencer, that's it.

SK: I dunno though. It's kinda nice. I used to have a friend who I visited in Kingston, she is very involved with the community. So I think perhaps there is like a…I wouldn't say big, but there is a good strong community relationship, within Muslims, not just Pakistanis but also Arabs. But we just don't see it.

In other words whilst Kingston may in many ways appear to be a typical white, middle class suburb, it also has a distinct multicultural dimension.

4.7 Muslim activities

Some participants noted that Muslim communities do lose out in terms of community projects aimed at them, because other BME communities overshadow Muslim communities, who are in many ways diversified or concentrated in the borough. However, others noted that there were plenty of activities for Muslims to join in with.

Z: It's a good area to Muslims because they are many Muslim activities here and there is a Mosque and it always brings people to activities, it's a very suitable area to Muslim people that's what I see.

4.8 Experience of Racism

Participants did recount some limited experience of racial abuse and/or discrimination they had experienced in Kingston.

Generally, however, participants found that Kingston compared well with other places, and that they experienced less racism here than elsewhere, this was often related back to the fact that Kingston has a more diverse mix of different BME communities (rather than having a large concentration of 1 or 2 BME communities):

Y: Because I actually lived in Bradford for 8 years, I suffered more racism in Bradford than I did in London because its very Asian and English, you see so its 2 cultures, where here its such a mixture it doesn't matter, but where you've got 2 camps it causes more friction than when you have like 10 or 15, 20 communities living together, it became a very black and white issue in Bradford for me, not so much here, I am much happier here actually. I thought there was a lot of racism there.

4.9 General issues affecting Muslims' experience

This research is in many ways aimed at local issues and experience. However, in the conversations we had in interviews and focus groups it was often impossible to clearly separate local from, national or international issues. Indeed, particularly at the moment, the everyday life and experience of many Muslims we spoke to was always framed by international issues and politics. These formed a silent context to the experiences of Muslims. Issues that stood out in particular and which are discussed in the following sections include an

increase as well as a qualitative change in the experience of discrimination or racism and the politicisation of cultural or religious dress.

4.9.1 Experiences of 'Islamophobia'

The demonisation of Muslims in the public eye has been labelled Islamophobia in a landmark report by the Runnymede Trust (2000). This is explained as Islam and Muslims being scapegoated as a new threat to the west following the fall of state communism. The process has been seen by commentators to have accelerated since 9/11. According to Phillips (2006) this has been fed by anxieties about terrorism, particularly following the London bombings of 2005, and the growing numbers of asylum seekers in the population at large. Here localised events were shaped by broader geopolitical happenings as can be seen in the following exchanges.

> P: It's got worst because of what's happening in Iran, Iraq and also since 9/11. Many are anti Muslim because of terrorism. Do you know what, do you remember 9/11 do you remember the twin towers, I went to shopping in Kingston everybody was giving me dirty looks, it was horrible to be Muslim after 9/11.

> D: You know America, New York when the twin towers we were here […] the next day everybody was looking at you, I got dirty looks even from Afro-Caribbeans, I got dirty looks, non-Muslims giving me dirty looks, it was horrible and then you had the July bombings was that 2005 in London

Significantly, as well as experiencing an increase in discrimination many participants also reported a qualitative change in the type of racism they were experiencing. Thus, whereas beforehand, their experience of racism tended to be focused on their ethnicity, it was now quite clearly focused on religion and its perceived association with terrorism.

> P: Before it was racism now it's become anti-Muslim. As you were saying before it was from you were from Pakistan […] about where you're from and the colour of your skin and now it's about being a Muslim. Its not so much about which country you're from, I think its about whether you are Muslim or not.

> There was another time in Sainsburys, when I was waiting to put my food on the belt. And the lady was standing at the end of the till and there was a big gap, but she was still preventing anyone from going in. So I said "Excuse me", and she said. "No what you have to do is wait until I finish, only then can you put your shopping on". And I told her not speak to me in that patronising tone. And she was shocked that I could speak English. […] And she said, "I will not forget what you people did to us!" And I said our people, what people? But then I just thought I just don't want to get into this conversation, so I ignored it. I even moved to another till. And I thought OK fine, I condone something that I don't even know what you're talking about.

> (Focus Group October 2009)

P: My children now [since 9/11 & 7/7] come home from school and say: so-and-so has called me a terrorist. I never would have imagined that they would have to face this. I thought they would be completely integrated. My parents came here in the 50s and we had a lot of racism then […] We seem to have taken a step back.

It is worth repeating that many participants did not see this as a particularly local problem. Rather, as mentioned above, whilst most participants had experienced some form of racism at some time or another, Kingston as an area was often favourably compared to other areas in London, where racism seemed more endemic. Nevertheless, negative portrayal by the mass media of the Islamic faith formed a persistent background which framed many Muslim's day-to-day life. Many participants reported that they felt constantly aware of the media image of "Muslims as intolerant" or "Muslims as terrorists" and some reported that they often worried about how Muslims were being perceived by wider society.

P1: Because of what you hear on the news you become conscious of yourself, your identity more.

P2: You're always aware of the fact that you're a Muslim.

P1: Although things are lovely in Kingston, it's a very nice place to live but what you hear in the newspaper can come into your living room and make you a bit more paranoid. If I go out what will people think because of another terrorist attack, if I go out. Do you have that fear? For example something, there was a suicide bomb and then you go out, there's a suicide bomb in London and you go out, do you feel people are looking at you thinking it was a Muslim involved in the suicide?

P2: Yes, yes!

P1: Do you feel conscious?

P2: Yes I feel conscious!

P1: Although everybody is very nice in Kingston.

4.9.2 Politicisation of Attire

Recent years have witnessed much debate around the headscarf with a former government minister Jack Straw calling it a barrier to communication. It is worth highlighting how this debate is perceived from the other side and to note how this item is worn in different ways and for different reasons:

Y: I wear it and I don't wear it, I am not too bothered with the headscarf, I wear it sometimes, I don't it depends how I feel, if I feel I want to wear a beautiful headscarf with my make up I wear it, if I don't want to I just leave my hair open and I'll go, enjoy

However, what most participants had in common was that they reported increased experience of discrimination when wearing a headscarf.

GK: You get comments and name-calling, especially when you've got your hijab on it and I live in Surbiton where its predominantly English people, I think I am the only one with the headscarf sticking out there.

SY: Another time was on the bus. I was just doing my A-levels. There was a time when I wore the Jilbab for two and a half years and this lady looked at me and said, in a very patronising way "Are you not hot, wearing that?" And I said "No I'm not, but even if I was it's something for me to be bothered about and for you to just ignore, you just mind your own business. And to be honest the Jilbab, it's like this light material. And just you get this assumption that I'm being forced to suffocate myself in the way I dress. And I said no I'm not sweating. There's nothing wrong with me. And she said oh god, I don't know how you put up with it. Luckily it was my stop, so I got off.

In particular participants resented its interpretation as a sign of oppression:

Y: I do feel sometimes, other women when they look at you, they feel oh you're oppressed, your husband keeps you covered up, you don't have any freedom. Do you get that? […] Because in the media women think if you wear a scarf your husband is making you and you don't have any rights, you are chained to the kitchen

FK: In western countries people think that headscarf is a sign of oppression. But I mean you can see, look at this young girl (wearing a headscarf). She is an accountant and I am sure she must be […]. Well we're all very intelligent women here [participating in the focus group].

Again, many participants felt it was mainly since 9/11 and the portrayal of Muslims as potential terrorists, that Islamic dress had been particularly politicised and had become an excuse for discrimination and racist abuse:

Y: I know that a lot of women have taken off their hijabs, because they're afraid, or worried about being attacked, racially attacked. One lady, I know stopped wearing it because she has three children and she once got verbal abuse while she walking with her three children. And after that she just said I'm taking it off for the sake of my kids, in case someone attacks me while I'm with my kids. Her kids never wore it, but there came a time in her life, where she dedicated her life, dedicated herself to wearing hijab, and she compelled to take it off.

4.9.3 General Issues: Political context

What is important to consider is not only the increased experience of discrimination of racism and discrimination, but also how the general political context often affects the lives of some Muslim communities in a very direct way. Thus in the focus groups many participants spoke about, how their everyday life was being affected by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Particular issues that were raised included the mental health of those fleeing those countries and seeking asylum (and then being treated with suspicion upon entering the UK), the ongoing concern about family and friends in those countries, and having memories of and identities tied to places that no longer really exist.

SK: I remember Iraq really clearly, even though it's such a long time ago. I do miss Iraq. My mum went back recently and she said: it's really good that you have all those memories in your

head, because you wouldn't want to see it now. And I don't think I want to go back unless it properly recovered. If you have something in your head and all your memories are of that, if you go back will get ruined, because it's completely different.

N: It's weird like on the news, I know it's Iraq and that all this stuff is gone. It doesn't feel like it's about Iraq, I know it's at war, but it doesn't seem to be the place I remember. I know that a couple of places in my area happened. Yeah, I lived in Baghdad. Around my grandmother's house, a bomb happened right there, and all the glass windows in my grandmothers house broke, but nothing happened to my family. And I was told about it but nothing I don't know, because I'm not there. I haven't been there for a long time, it doesn't feel like the place I grew up in. It's like Iraq is like a different Iraq.

(Focus Group, October 2009)

Such experiences, can make engagement difficult, as the experience of witnessing the destruction of their home countries as well as a degree of suspicion and hostility towards them, might result in some reluctance to participate in an engagement dialogue ,particularly when the dialogue is presented within the 'Preventing Violent Extremism' context.

4.10 Young People

In the initial discussions the team was asked to particularly consider the issues faced by more vulnerable groups and more specifically young people. Indeed what emerged in the course of the research was that many of the more general themes and issues we identified above seemed to take on a particular relevance in the conversations and focus groups with young Muslims. In this context the below sections will discuss the complexities surrounding young Muslims' experience and construction of identity.

4.10.1 Young Muslims and Identity: Redefining Culture and Religion

The difficulty of identifying a single Muslim community or indeed a common identity has been discussed, given the different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds of Muslims living in Britain. This difficulty is in many exacerbated when it comes to considering young Muslims. Thus, significantly one of the more common issues to emerge was that the process of identity-construction was one which was much more complex for young Muslims, who often tried to combine competing religious and cultural values and beliefs:

FK: I grew up in West London. My dad is Egyptian and my mum is from Pakistan. I grew up with my Dad's Middle Eastern culture. I also grew up with Islamic values, not to wear short skirts or sleeveless tops. Not too close a relationship with the opposite sex. When I was young when there were kissing scenes on TV, I had to cover my eyes. I don't know if I was told, I don't remember being told, but it became an expectation.

Many of the young people responding mentioned how difficult it was to combine the cultural and religious values with the values, customs and habits they were exposed to in the UK.

> P: I found that difficult sometimes. You know "it's not fair, all my friends get to do this" and he just said "We're Muslims we don't do that". Things like going to a dancing concert. "But all my friends are going" – "We are Muslims we don't do this". So it was non-negotiable. It became an expectation.

> FK: Another issue I had was with food. With Haribos, cause I love and love them and love them. But of course they have gelatine in them. And my dad said you're not allowed to eat gelatine and quoted the relevant verses from the Koran. And I was so young and so irrational, and so tempted and when my friend used to offer me one. It was difficult. Also things like Christmas dinner, when my friends used to go running to the canteen in the school, and I'd be sitting in the corner.

These difficulties in combining competing cultural and religious values often involved young Muslims in a constant process of questioning and reinterpreting their faith in order to fit with their everyday experiences:

> N: There is the issue of clothing. Because in Islam, you're meant to dress modestly and you're not meant to wear short clothes, or clothes that show your skin or see through. So basically, the issue with my mum, I mean I never used to mind, I never had a problem with covering up. But my mother would always enforce, that you have to wear like the cultural dress, which is you know s*halwar kameez*. And I used to say, if the guidelines are there just to wear loose and modest, it doesn't matter what that is. It doesn't specify what type of clothes. It just specifies the kind of conditions. And I always used to argue that point. It was clear that in Islam the definition was broad, you know you can make your own interpretation of it. So I could wear English clothes and be decent, but then my mother would never want see that and say, "yes, but this is our way", and would say but it's not my way and this is an Islamic way as well. So it's like, it doesn't say you have to wear a *jilbab* or whatever, every culture has its own clothing style, so I'm like this is my clothing style, as long as its like with the guidelines I'm fine with it, you should be too. […]My mum always saw it under a cultural view and followed it as a cultural thing. It's not necessary. I've seen loads of Muslim girls dressing decently in English clothes. It can be done. You don't have to be restricted to a certain kind of dress and styles.

Some respondents related this questioning of Islam to their experience of the British education they had received:

> SK: With our parents, the educational system never influenced them into questioning what they are learning, Whereas we, cause we're disciplined from a young age to apply parameters to subjects, like what, where, when and how, we've grown up to apply that to our religion and to the things and values they give us. We don't just take things for granted, so we question. Our parents can interpret that in terms of arrogance and disrespect towards me. They don't always seem to understand that for us, that in order to apply what they are saying to us, we need to be convinced and to be convinced we need to question. So therefore we need to understand.

To what extent the questioning of parental values is a result of young people's educational background or results from the simple fact that young Muslims in Britain often find

themselves surrounded by competing values is difficult to gauge. What is, however, worth noting is the fact that rather than leading to a rejection of the religious values more particularly and Islamic faith more generally, it seems that young people's critical attitude towards the values and beliefs passed down from their parents involved them in a search for what we might call a purer form of religion, i.e. one that was uncontaminated by what young people saw as the cultural values of their parents.

> Z: There were cultural expectations when I was growing up, that had nothing, well I wouldn't say nothing to do with Islam, but they do sometimes resemble, but they [parents] do try to improvise that link when it really does not fit whatsoever. For instance, I'm a smoker, and my dad would explain how it's indecent of a <u>woman</u> to smoke. And my dad smokes himself. And I'm like "Dad, I know it's wrong, but not because I'm a woman. I know it's wrong because in Islam it's my body has a right over me, that's one of the sayings of the prophets. If he'd explained it like that I might not have argued back, but because of the explanation he provided, I felt a need to back up Islamic evidence, and say no what you're saying is wrong.

> FK: I can relate to that if my husband I have an argument, and my dad got involved. If I would tell him, then he would preach to me the Egyptian expectation of what a good wife is, but its cultural, rather than religious. And then I would have examples of what the prophet did and how he treated his wives, in response to the scenarios as such, he came up with. And I would get the response he [my husband] is not the prophet, no one can be like the prophet. And I'm like, "but he is an example". And he would say "look if you want a successful marriage, you've got to do dududu", and he'd give me all these steps of what to Egyptian wife would do. And it's just very Egyptian. I've seen lots of Egyptian films, and you get this as a familiar scene was the father gets involved to calm the wife down. […] So some of the values he wants to pass on are often more cultural, but then again my dad hasn't lived in Egypt for 24 years. Well he does go back every summer, but there has been a lot of social change going on there as well. In terms of women smoking, how women dress, in terms of marriage as well. And the woman's status in marriage […]

In other words, many of the focus group participants described how, growing up in the UK, their parents' cultural or national background had become increasingly irrelevant. Instead many seemed to make sense of their experience of identity and difference by embracing religion (sometimes devoting themselves to their faith more than their parents' level of observance).

> P: When I was younger, my family wasn't that religious, it was more they took the cultural approach – I'm Pakistani. Nothing was prohibited, although they would bring up the values whenever we did something, this is how things are done or not done. But it was up to us to follow, but there were boundaries which we were told. But over the years I became more religious myself. I mean my whole family became more religious over the years, but that wasn't an influence on me. I was an influence on them. So it was a bit different, everyone started to look towards religion more, rather than culture. It's kind of funny now, the values that beforehand were all cultural. They try to interlink them with religion, which some do. But some really aren't, they're just cultural.

4.10.2 Experience of Difference: Racism, Discrimination and Politics

This report has described the way in which many Muslims had experienced an increase in discrimination and racial abuse since 9/11. It seems that this experience was even more acute amongst the young people responding. From the interviews it is difficult to conclude whether this was due to the fact that young people experienced more racial abuse or whether they experienced it more acutely. What is, however, noteworthy in this context is that young people did seem to struggle more with the experience of difference. Thus, many participants described how the experience of difference and the lack of understanding their peers at school or university had of their culture and religion, could in itself be difficult to deal with:

> HG: At school there was only me and a Somalian girl and an Asian boy, it was three of us. And when it came to things like fasting, my friends would always be shocked and say "oh my god, are you not going to eat". At Xmas: "oh my god, you don't have a Xmas tree, you don't get presents". This was when I was young, when you obviously have lack of understanding, so they didn't know. But when I was young I used to interpret that as a form of bullying, and there cam a point were I just didn't want to go to school.

> HR: The high school I went to, lots of the girls used to be Muslim, at Ramadan the canteen used to be empty, we used to sometimes get official Eid vacations. […] I felt very comfortable there. The canteen was Halal, we had an Islamic teacher at the school, on Saturday, there had Arabic school. So I felt quite comfortable, but then that's only a part of London. But when you go out of that part, when you go out with your hijab and there's all these regulations you have to apply to your life and wider society doesn't seem to understand that. You know and the stereotypes that are attached towards you, and the way people respond to you, and the way people make assumptions, it can be difficult.

In particular young Muslims described the way they struggled with the 'assumptions' that their peers made about them and their faith:

> P: Everyone always makes these assumptions: Like when I got married, everyone immediately assumed that it was an arranged marriage. And everyone assumed that I got to see him on my wedding night, everyone assumed he was my dad's friend, therefore he was my dad's age. Well not everyone, I'm just generalising, but a lot of people did. And I've grown up with all these assumptions.

It was these sorts of experiences, the focus group participants reported had become much more acute since the 9/11 and 7/7 bombings, to the extent that where young Muslims had previously felt accepted by their (non-Muslim) peers, such relationships had now changed and become quite difficult:

> SK: There was a time, although because we were also friends before. After 9/11 there was some friction, at least for a small period of time. I think I was year 9 at school. What happened, we came into school. I specifically remember that morning. They had all come to school and they had newspapers, saying it was him, it was him "bin Laden", and the only thing they could associate between him and us, was that we were Muslims, but it very quickly became "oh it was

your people". And I was like, "we don't even know him, who is he?" We were kind of defensive as well, saying "what are you talking about you, why are you trying to accuse us, we haven't done anything. It's just obviously this group, which has nothing to do with us". But they had that, I don't know what they thought. There was definitely friction after that, it was not necessarily racist remarks, but they were a bit distant. They were suddenly a bit wary of "who are they, what do they think?". It was a bit scary at the time because, the impact it had, we didn't actually realise the impact it had on us, but obviously it did. It was a shock to us as well.

P: Touch wood I have never heard any derogative terms used against me or my children, calling me Paki or this or that, but now that the boys have grown up at uni and so on they do face racism in a sense oh you've got to watch it he is Bin Laden and he's a Muslim and you know things like that.

It is perhaps worth noting, that in recounting her experience at school it is only once she starts talking about the period post 9/11, that this particular respondent specifies a distinction between them/us. Beforehand when she talks about her friends at school she uses the pronoun 'we' (e.g. "we were all mixed, but we all but got along"). This clearly illustrates the dynamic nature of identity.

Another significant issue raised by young people was not only that particular age groups (especially older teenagers and younger adults) were particularly exposed to prejudice against Muslims, but that this experience seemed to politicise young people and affect the way in which they could explore their faith. With regard to the former, many young Muslims reported how the constant confrontation with such issues has made them much more politically aware:

HG: So when the whole 9/11 thing happened I went up to my dad and asked him dad, what's going on so he talked to me and I got his perspective on it. Then I started buying newspapers, I started reading, I started looking, I started looking at history, started researching on imperialism and colonialism, and thinking about possible interpretations of why this could have happened. Just so that I could have an answer for those who came up and asked me questions, like "why do you lot hate the British system, why do you hate us", which of course I don't, but I have to try and explain things.

FK: I think Muslims are now compelled to have an awareness of politics as well, because of the questions we always have to answer. Such as "why did 9/11 happen, why did July the 7th happen?" And I feel that if Muslims don't research these questions, and have answers to these questions prepared, it's almost like people are going to continue with the stereotyping, what they've got in their mind.

Mu: You kind of have to become political. I was never political, but people expect me to have an opinion on what happened.

In addition to this, such experiences also hampered young people in the exploration of their faith, they reported being afraid of being classed as extremists. Young people and in particular young men tended to self-censor the events they went to or the people they became involved with:

HG: I'm not involved in any of the groups [Islamic groups] at Kingston. I sometime go to talks and lectures, and I go to like the Islamic week. But I'm not really part of the society. That's like, I think mum would be very worried about extremism, she's always saying don't get too involved with any group, do what you need to do, you know go and pray or, OK, go to some talks if you want to. But even if I go to a talk I have to tell them what it is.

E: My mum was more worried about my brother, when he started at university. She was like much more worried about him getting involved than me. So he didn't really go to talks or even pray. But he isn't really religious, so it didn't matter. But it was still funny that my mother was so worried that she'd rather have him out of that scene altogether. Even if it was a talk, she'd ask him like a 100 questions, like what is it about, who is he, do you really know who he is, where is he from, what's his background? So before he answered all these hundreds of questions he'd just rather just not go. He is a more religious now. But my mum was fine with that, because it happened after uni, and in a more private way, so that was fine.

4.11 Evidence of Opportunities for Engagement

Many of the participants were open to engagement. Aware of the negative image of Muslims that exists, they were keen for opportunities to counteract this and create a positive image:

> W: I think we should do something like Halloween all the kids come and, you know I open the door, I put a lot of sweets and chocolates to give them good idea about Muslims that we are not terrorist, like this, I think we should do more, we should be kind take part more in activities with other people.

Of course it was also the case that participants often felt alienated by the negative images that they were being exposed to, and felt that projects targeted at Muslims (particularly if funded under *Prevent*) implicitly reproduced such images and consequently were more reluctant to participate . Nevertheless, the fact that participants were generally open and keen to reverse negative image might constitute a starting point for dialogue.

A recommendation therefore could be that in addition to strengthening ties with organisations there should be attempts at perhaps bringing them together rather than maintaining separate relationships and remembering the importance of approaching smaller groups e.g. Somalis , Iraqis.

4.11.1 Religious festivals

Many engagement strategies are based on celebrating shared culture. However, the diversity evident in the research means we must consider whether 'culture' is necessarily an appropriate strategy for engaging "the" Muslim Community as a whole? Cultural strategies are much more suited to engage particular subgroups (e.g. Iraqi). However, if the borough seeks to engage Muslim communities as a whole, it might be worth considering how religious or faith-based activities can be supported/incorporated into an engagement strategy. The following discussion in one of the focus groups highlights that there might be some unexplored opportunities here.

R1: I think we should do something for Eid, to Muslims' Eid. In the High Street? Like at Christmas, maybe? It's one or two times a year, we can do some activity for Muslim people? Because every Muslim has to feel its Eid, like at Christmas.

R2: They have a Korean Festival every year. So if we could… . The highest faith group in Kingston is…

R3: … is Korean.

R2: …no Muslim. Faith group. So they have a Korean festival every year, so we should at least have something for Eid.

R4: It's difficult isn't it because Korean is one culture so you can have a festival…

R2: Yes, Muslims is [sic] lots of different cultures.

<div align="right">[Focus Group, December 2009]</div>

Maybe you can make some activities to Muslim children and for Eid in the high street, you know everybody here is celebrating Christmas but Muslim people just have Eid, maybe we can do some activities by council in the high street in Kingston to Eid, just 2 or 3 hours.

4.11.2   Engaging with Communities from Different Backgrounds

Given the fact that it might be difficult to formulate an engagement strategy that addresses all Muslims, it is worth bearing in mind the possibility of more specific strategies aimed at Muslims from particular backgrounds. This could include cultural strategies aimed at particular ethnic/cultural groups, e.g. an Arabic festival or similar, or it could it be aimed at communities with particular political/social background. Here the authorities should particularly consider the different issues faced by for example the refugee community, whose experience is very different from the experienced economic migrants, who in turn have different needs than second or third generation Muslims. The following discussion extracts highlight different issues faced by these distinct groups:

Y: I went to the Dewsbury hospital and I think in the morning I think half past 8 and my son was maybe 1 year or something and I took with him and I gave the paper to the receptionist lady and she said take a seat and wait, I waited, waited for 1 hour and nobody responded to me, everyone come and go inside for x-ray and one hour I sat and my son was crying, crying, crying and […] I asked excuse me I came 1 hour before and you said sit down and wait but nobody calling me, my son is crying, why am I sitting here, she said excuse me what are you talking about you didn't have any appointment, you didn't give me any letter, I said what, what are you saying and you know I couldn't talk in more English so I am surprised and I don't know what I am saying. But a Pakistani lady [came] she said don't worry you sit and I'll go and have a look and after 10, 15 minutes she said ok, and they look you know the papers and everything and then everybody come to me oh sorry excuse me madam, we apologise and we lost your paper and everything, everybody apologise and I said ok no problem.

One young woman whose parents immigrated to the UK in the 1950s told us:

P: when I went to the hospital, […] they mistreated me because they thought I couldn't speak English but little did they realise I was born here […] so because of the colour of my skin they thought they were dealing with newly arrived communities.

So in the first instance the respondent faces a language barrier that is not effectively dealt with, whilst in the latter instance the immediate assumption that the participant was not familiar with English language or culture meant she felt alienated. In other words, in each case different considerations are necessary in order to engage different sections of the community.

In this context it should also be noted that refugee communities in particular still face very different issues which are very particular to the political situation they've escaped from and, which create barriers which cannot necessarily be overcome with a general engagement strategy.

O: I came […] as an asylum seeker because I am threaten in Iraq, that's why I am coming here. I have some depressed. […] I am crying all the time because I cannot understand […]. I am waiting to court on the 18th December because my story is you know I live in the Jordan with my family and […] I am an accountant [in Iraq]. I was threatened in Iraq because […] I am working with a company that is working with American armies […] I left that company and after that they threaten me. […] I cant go back to Iraq and I cannot stay in Jordan because I threat for my family there, my dad and Iraq is very close to Jordan whoever is threatening you in Iraq maybe he came come to the Jordan. That's why I live and come here and go to the solicitor and ask him about, because I want to be legally here. And when I come here when I go to the Home Office they ask me why you don't submit in the airport I tell them I don't know procedure so I, I am an asylum seeker and I am under procedure with the solicitors and I am still waiting he court, what the judge say because they took all my documents and I stay here alone with my friends, but I miss my family. In Jordan my family is safe, because I am threaten only, but I am crying all the time.

The above experience highlights the important point that unlike settled communities refugee communities can have a very difficult experience, which needs to be acknowledged when thinking about the process of engagement. There is possibly a mismatch or at least sense that individuals who are dealing with such difficult experiences such as the destruction of their homes and leaving their families in war–torn areas, might be less open to engaging with the Prevent agenda.

4.11. 3 Feelings about Prevent

Given this context many participants are somewhat suspicious and see attempts at engagement under this heading as a further example of "labelling all Muslims as terrorists" (Interview December 2009).

T: I've refused to have anything to do with that [Prevent funding]. It's just an excuse to come here and check us out. To see that we're not extremists. We just want to meet and create a sort of Muslim space[…] It's always that assumption that people now make. Oh they're a Muslim group, we'd better have a look. Community funding is OK, but not like that.

Of course, whilst some participants had initial trepidation, this is not to say there is not an opportunity to use this funding to engage different communities. However, it seems that this requires trust to be built. The following comment from one of the interviewees who was initially very sceptical of the research and of the agenda of the Prevent Reference group, shows how suspicions and fears might be overcome, if communities could be made aware of the potential benefit of future projects.

> Z: It's difficult, but I suppose it is good that the money is being used to look at the different Muslim communities in Kingston, and look at the concerns they have. So that we can feed back our needs and you know. We're always overshadowed by the Koreans and the Tamils, because there's so many in Kingston. It's not really seen as a Muslim area. […] We do sometimes get forgotten in this sort of thing.

4.12 Notes on Extremism

An interview was conducted with a 28 year old male who has grown up in Kingston on the Kings Nympton Estate and then left at the age of 18 to go to the University of London. For four years he had been a key member of the radical Islamist group Hiz But Tahrir: a development that occurred while he was living in Kingston. He has since denounced the group. The data represent the views of one person and may not be representative. The following points emerged from the interview:

- Hiz But Tahrir at the time of the individual's involvement (late 1990s to early 2000s) tended to operate by recruiting new young members in further education and higher education

- There is a two year apprenticeship period before one can be a full member

- Commentators who portray the BNP as a mirror image of radical extremist groups, because they play on feelings of injustice and general grievances, overlook the divine dimension; the interviewee had wanted to leave when he questioned the group's motives earlier but was afraid of the reaction of God

- Hiz But Tahrir operate in a "pseudo-intellectual" manner with persuasive arguments linking philosophy to religion, their followers are educated people. They are non-violent and aspire to a Muslim brotherhood.

4.13 The Tamils in Kingston: A Community in Transition

4.13.1 Context

Interviews with the Tamil community took place in a number of settings. The Tamil Information Centre in Norbiton is a national, indeed international organisation, based in Norbiton with a human rights agenda and the Tamil Elders Empowerment Group meet at the Shiraz Mirza community centre in Norbiton. Both were attended and officers and members

spoken to. The researchers also spoke to a councillor of Tamil background who has been in Kingston since 1968 and a Kingston College student who was born in London in 1989 and lived in Kingston since his primary schooling. Interestingly Kingston is now a destination for Tamils as a point of arrival unlike the traditional template of suburbanisation whereby people follow an outward drift from inner city locations in later life due to embourgeoisement reasons. The work here was 'new' as Tamils are often absent from other academic accounts of even "Asians" in Britain at large. There is for example no mention of them in one much-cited volume (Ballard 1994:viii) which claims at its outset to be "a reasonably comprehensive picture of the quality and character of the self-created worlds of South Asian settlers and their British-born offspring, and of the changes and developments which are taking place within them" and concentrates on Pakistanis, Indians and Bangladeshis.

Although one can trace waves of Tamils in the UK back to the partition of India (Valentine Daniel and Thangaraj 1996), the community have largely settled since the 1960's from what is now Sri Lanka. There was then and still continues political and ethnic conflict against the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. Tamils (a community defined by language) were forced to learn majority Sinhalese language and excluded from University admission and employment opportunities. Numerically Tamil migration to the UK accelerated since 1983 as an exodus took place as a result of civil war and what might not be too dramatic to describe as ethnic cleansing. "Tamil" is not a separate census category and therefore the precise number in Britain is unknown. Estimates put numbers at roughly 150,000 to 200,000 Tamils currently living in the UK, among which is the subset of over 2,500 Tamil doctors employed in the NHS (Dissanayake 2008). Members of the UK Tamil diaspora have often lived through extreme traumatic conditions, this then characterises some of their responses to the questions as they left as a refugee/ asylum seeking population seeking comparatively greener pastures, not only to the UK but to Germany, Norway and Canada amongst others. The Tamil population in UK is particularly concentrated in London Boroughs including of Brent, Wandsworth (Tooting), Newham and Kingston.

What sets apart the Tamil community from the others in this study then is that they are a definable population constructed among linguistic lines who are persecuted in their homeland. Refugee conditions such as war and ethnic cleansing can result in trauma amongst those who have lived through them. This was reflected in the sometimes almost "matter of fact" way on which matters of violence of some gravity were spoken of.

In a focus group at Kingston College for example with no Tamil members present a young Polish student living in Croydon remarked:

> V: There are some Tamils in Croydon, I know a guy who is an ex Tamil soldier... they killed the people in town and he told the story... [they] said remove the family from there we're going to kill this whole town tomorrow so he moved here

During the visit to the Tamil Elders Empowerment Programme conversation with those present who had been resident in Kingston for some time were largely conducted through the group's facilitator Mrs S who translated. At one point a respondent put her hand up. Mrs S

prefaced the translated remarks of her intervention (on a visa/immigration issue) with "her husband was shot in Sri Lanka then she came here afterwards".

A councillor with a long involvement in community groups that we spoke to referred to his native land's former title when he was interviewed, which is what it had been known as in the late 1960s when he arrived.

> JJ: I come from Ceylon, not Sri Lanka, 42 years ago I came as a student with one bag. I was at Kingston Polytechnic, now called university.

In some sense then new identities have been forged in diaspora creating alliances that might not have happened under any other circumstances except migration.

> RH: So it's a mixture of social classes then, I mean back home these people wouldn't necessarily associate together is that right?

> Mrs V: Yes you're quite right. There's another thing that you could know, people who came here from Sri Lanka at least who came here before the 80's were all professional people, those who came afterwards who came as refugees they are people around the shops. Those who do no business and are without jobs they come here and find whatever they can do, work in shops work late night shifts

Education seemed to be a driver in the choice of Kingston for residential settlement occurring regularly in response to the question as to why people had chosen to settle in Kingson.

4.13.2 General Issues

The question "what would you say were the big issues for the Tamil community, locally or nationally?" prompted a range of responses. The Kingston college student had a vague awareness but as a second generation he felt not directly involved enough to give a comprehensive answer:

> AM: I don't take a big interest in the active Tamil community as such but I know that there's a rally to get the council, get like a private institution for Tamils, I know my mum went to a peaceful protest a while ago, my father is against it though he just thinks it's going to cause more trouble with the government and make them think of us more of a problem than a help...

The two elected councillors answered in a more resource allocation focused way:

> JJ: The Tamil community has done very well again. You see the Kingston Tamil school, yesterday they get the STT grant, third year one because it's been agreed three years back. As a part of the whole budget balancing in spite of the cut by the central government we are looking at areas how to save and how to reduce the council tax.

A second councillor representing a ward with concentrations of Koreans and Tamils remarked of this second group of constituents:

> JS: They are a poorer community, they're a refugee community so yes in crude terms they are bigger users of social services. That said they're actually very well established now, we're second, third generation in some instances. The second generation are totally British... no trace of [an accent],

probably a higher than average number went to... the local grammar school... Bilingualism is meant to help your brain with lots of other issues

Although the research took place at a time when Tamils were greatly in the public eye with civil protest in Westminster Mr P of the Tamil Information Centre saw these high profile demonstrations as atypical or unrepresentative of the average Tamil:

> Mr P: The majority of the community are dormant they are not particularly active but whenever there is a political requirement they will join 1000 people marching in London so as and when there is a need they will join but other than that they are dormant... the children are the most priorities... [pressure to study] medicine ... so [in response to that] we inform the parents that there are other opportunities they must look for, even the children they don't want to do many things they are forced so its conflict within the family as well. There are a number of people women particularly are suffering from domestic violence, it is an issue [but] it's not spoken about.

He also saw shifts in the issues associated with Tamils and their geographical dispersal from London and a range of unspoken issues that were beneath the surface:

> Mr P: Now because of the asylum there are small numbers in Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham they have been settled there rather than the London boroughs. Usually the Tamils living in all parts of these boroughs they're prosperous, they're employed and we have the own businesses and so on, but there are areas where there are violence taking place, mostly East Ham, East Ham is a well known area, Tooting is another area.

> Mr P: ...there's murders 2 weeks ago there was a murder... 2 people were seriously injured 1 died in a shooting incident, the problem we are seeing with the violence and also the loneliness and things like that also access to services... where people can come together and see how they can resolve, mental health, teenage pregnancy, drugs so these are all spoken about but there are not clear statistics.

4.13.3 Tamils as an ageing population

Much research on ethnic minorities seems to presuppose culture clash and a conflict between generations but this is usually manifested in (first generation) parents v their (second generation) UK born offspring. With the Tamil community however there have been different phases of settlement so temporal-time markers can apply to when people arrived rather than friction within one family. There seemed to be a discernable difference in attitudes and experiences of the wave of migration that occurred from the 1970s onwards often from professional classes (and their offspring who were UK born) and those who had migrated from the 80s and 90s as refugees. In addition to this there is a thriving elder generation who we accessed at the Tamil Elders Empowerment Programme on a day in which an exercise class was running and some 30 members aged from their 60s to their 90s attended, facilitated by a respondent in her 50s.

The facilitator at the Tamil Elders Empowerment Group, explained the pattern of generational migration:

> Mrs S: The Sri Lankans generally the older people have come because the children started coming, their children started moving out of Sri Lanka from 75... the rest came after the riots in 83 so when they came they settled in these towns, you know most of the London... and obviously they are being looked after by

the council also so there is no need to move out from the place. Because most of them they have got flats of their own, plus they settled with the children and they moved out because they get their own flats. And compared to other places Kingston borough is very safe place, we are very safe here.

This group member illustrates this trajectory:

RH: When did you come to Kingston?

Mrs J: First in [19]80, when I was 55 I came to look after my grandson.

Many have got their own accommodation as a unit with their spouse away from their children provided by the council care services. Interestingly residential independence was described by many as a positive thing.

Mrs S: Some of them live with their children but some of them they want their independence so they like to live on their own, everything is provided to them so why not instead of being a burden to the children? That lady there, she lives with her children they look after her very well.

Mrs V: I am living in luxury

In a prior interview with Mr K of the Tamil Information Centre "elder abuse" was identified as a hidden problem. As a matter of domestic abuse this has a high burden of proof as it is conducted behind closed doors. The most that the people in the Empowerment Programme would admit to was disagreements over whether to put the television on Tamil or English language channels.

4.13.4 Tamil youth in Kingston

There was a distinct contrast between one student in the focus group who was born in South London and another who had arrived 7 years ago in terms of their level of competence in English and general reference points in conversation. One for example was a native English speaker who had attended local schools. The other contrastingly saw a debt of gratitude towards the UK as his migration had been for "push" rather than "pull" factors.

The question of marriage as answered by the longtime Kingston resident showed self-containment but a slow breaking down of old orthodoxy

AM: Within the Tamil community I think it's like that, most of my relations and everything Tamils and they're all marrying Tamil brides and most sadly some of it is still arranged and [increasingly] people are against that, but I don't know how it's going to work out in the future... My parents had an arranged marriage and my generation isn't going to want one, because when you grow up in British society you grow up in a lifestyle and you find the idea of that quite absurd but my parents didn't.

In seeking verification of generational divisions:

AM: Yeah it is because you want to follow our tradition but at the same time you can't, well you can but it's not socially acceptable in a lot of societies so... I don't have any facts to support this but intermarriage has been on the increase.

The Tamil information centre too puts on a number of youth focused events including guidance for A level medicine applicants. "Independence" often cherished by adolescents to mark them as distinct from their parents, but pensioner age Tamils too are valuing this as a concept as desirable in relation to their own children. Mrs S at The Tamil Elders Empowerment Programme saw the practices of her members as being a fundamental break from the accepted ageing processes in Sri Lanka which would rupture further with successive generations:

> RH: Is it interesting that people are choosing to move away from their children
>
> Mrs S: That is which is very true because back home you wouldn't do that. So like us even the older generation have become very self-centred, they're talking about independence but I am surprised how when we talk about independence... the children want total independence like ythe age [30s] and the older people want total independence where do we go? Third generation you absolutely understand there is no way they're going to look after you

4.13.5 Maintaining Cultural Practices

According to Mr P of the Tamil Information Centre trajectories were sometimes via European nation states, commonly via Colombo to Germany where asylum seeker status could be sought then to the UK/ Kingston. There is a constant in all settlements:

> Mr P: Everywhere the Tamils go and settle they try to maintain their culture that means their language schools dance classes, instrumental classes, even in Kingston one school which is one of the oldest schools in London, children in Tolworth on weekends but they've had some problems I am told and divided there's a school in New Malden... even if they split there will be some lose connections, [the division is] basically personality not anything to do with concepts.

The British born Kingston College student recounted how often this cultural preservation, insisted on by his parents, had become something of a chore. His parents speak to him in Tamil but he replies in English.

> AM: Yeah I was there [the Tamil Saturday school] until I was about 12 so when I started going to secondary school, I had a lot of work and a lot of extra curricula activities that I didn't want to do it anymore. At the start I didn't like it but I did like the making friends and everything but some of the things we had to play Tamil instruments and Tamil songs things like that and it wasn't my thing. I like some of the aspects of Tamil culture but some of them is not made for me I was forced to do it.

4.13.6 Community Involvement with other agencies

The Tamil Information Centre advertises in the independent Tamil language press where the dissemination of NHS policy takes place in pull-outs. They also run several community activities open to Tamils and non-Tamils.

> RH: You mentioned parenting workshops, who runs them?

Mr P: We have volunteers who are carers, who run some of the sessions. We get health workers coming and talking about health initiatives and also people talking about children segregation and also sometimes we do mock sort of training for those who are wanting to go into medicine so we have got academies and also one or two of the examiners for weekend sessions, mock training, how we are supposed to face the interview

RH: Are the teenager A level ones well attended?

Mr P: Oh yes and not only for that we don't restrict to Tamils normally what happens is they bring their friends also some of them are Chinese, we have to achieve, 23 of them got into medicine.

4.13.7 Barriers to Engagement

Previous generations had been educated in English which was an advantage when joining British society but those presently entering the UK had not as explained by Mr P:

Mr P: For most of the refugees the language of learning is in Tamil so when they come here they're exposed to English and those who are migrating from Germany also have problems with language so language is one aspect which is a barrier for the engagement of the Tamils.

RH: What about council-run free language classes, that type of thing would you advertise it?

Mr P: We advertise and we even organise some of the classes here but the thing is some people are now beginning to do English classes but there again we found that the elderly people that is people that are grown, children when they go to school they automatically learn English so you don't have to worry about that but the parents feel uncomfortable to expose themselves as somebody who is learning English... The other thing is there needs to be some kind of awareness as to this we found also researching in Newham... we found that Bangladeshis in particularly because it's a large community they have all the facilities, they don't need to learn English to survive

RH: You mean they can be self contained to Bangladeshi shops?

Mr P: Yes post office you name it, even in the hospitals and so on and so forth its only when you want to fill up forms or something then they will get the children to do it, so that is common here also, if you got to Burlington Road you've got all these shops and hospitals also, we had [a lady] she was admitted in the hospital all day the people rang around and managed to find 2 nurses and 1 doctor so they had to go and see her and tend to whatever she required so, you can see people can get around but on the other hand when it comes to the question of life and also fitness and intellectual development then you need to instigate something which we are...

One of the consequences of the Cantle Commission and their 2001 report has been the advent of citizenship testing. A constituent part of this has been the requirement for new settlers to have a more detailed knowledge of Britain's institutions, traditions and heritage in return for legal leave to remain. This additional mode of citizenship is transmitted via local government structures (town hall ceremonies with oaths of allegiance for newly granted British citizens on passing a citizenship test). The former Home Secretary David Blunkett comments in the introduction to the course-book (TSO 1996:11): "We want British Citizenship to embrace positively a diversity of background, culture and faiths that living in Britain involves". From interviews conducted at the Tamil Elders Empowerment Programme it seems that this has

provided an impetus in encouraging recent younger Tamil refugee population in Kingston to take English language lessons:

> Mrs S: it was probably only the people who come after 2003, 2004 as a requirement they are learning and I think it's good... citizenship nowadays, I came in 1968... [in] those days it was not a requirement but see I am 54 when I left the basic education was in English... so that is why these people are finding it so difficult to get into the system

A respondent who had arrived a month earlier and was catering in a hot meal to the event told us through Mrs S that she had not taken up language lessons:

> Mrs S: Because as the time factor she hasn't been able to attend English classes so she is unable to get the citizenship because she is not eligible

> RH: You should probably do that, is that an isolating factor if you don't know the language

The reply was that for the moment her support networks did not make it an absolute necessity

> Mrs S: I think because she has got enough people in the community [there is no immediate need]

4.13.8 Day to Day Support – Official and Unofficial Networks

The Tamil Information although primarily an archive run by documentalists performs an outreach service helping UK Tamils navigate themselves around issues including heath services and the education system. Interaction with the council services and welfare state was mentioned at the Tamil Elders Empowerment Group, members of whom were in sheltered Accommodation and warden assisted housing:

> Because of the difficulty in Sri Lanka once we came here... and from there we joined some of these societies and we came to know things, the rights that you can get a house, you can get some government help and things like that, so we started from there and once you got the house and things and we get income support here

There are also less institutional channels for help where longer resident Tamils help out more recent arrivals as this exchange with a Kingston-raised student whose parents came in the 1970s demonstrates:

> RH: I wondered also if there's mixing between the more established people like the parents and the new.

> AS: Oh yeah they help them out a lot because one person who goes to this college she's actually on a lease I think she is in her 40's but she originally moved here about 5, 6 years ago and my mum always helps her with things and we are very helpful to each other, sometimes they live in our house that's how helpful my mum is to them so we treat each other like brothers and sisters

> R: Right now it's the same in my house we've got 2 family friends recently they came like 5 years now and they always come and ask us, especially me to do the paperwork for the councils and everything even tomorrow I go there one of my aunt is coming to make the statement, we help people a lot.

The study of Van Hear (2004) looks at the contribution of the Tamil Diaspora in poverty reduction with their practice of sending remittances to their country of origin, another

transnational channel. As the project was not really in this area, the subject did not arise during the interviews however it is unlikely that the second generation will continue with this practice.

4.14   The Korean Community in Kingston

4.14. 1 Background and Context

The last few decades have seen a steady rise in Korean immigration both in the UK in general and in the Royal Borough of Kingston in particular, where Korean immigration has been concentrated in and around New Malden. Before going on to discuss the particular issues facing different sections of Kingston's growing Korean community, it is worth establishing context by briefly outlining the recent history and origin of Korean immigration. Thus whilst there has been an increased influx of expats as well as language students from South Korea over the last two decades, there are also a number of political refugees from North Korea seeking asylum in the UK.

It is important to note that despite sharing a language and having a shared cultural heritage, North- and South Koreans not only face quite different issues in the UK (mainly as a result of their political and historical circumstances), but also see themselves as relatively separate communities. Of course, as we discuss below, they are some limited signs that at least in Kingston both communities are to some extent reintegrating. However, this is not always straightforward, particularly given the fact that the South Korean community is in many ways more established in parts of UK.

4.14.2   South Korean Immigration
South Korean immigration has seen a steady increase throughout the 1990's and 2000's. Whilst in 1997 the Overseas Korean Foundation (OKF) recorded only 11,330 South Korean citizens living in the UK, eight years later in 2005 this number had risen to 40,810 (OKF 2005). Other sources tell a similar story: thus the 2001 census reports only 12,310 British residents born in South Korea (ref.), whilst a 2009 report from the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT), records 45,295 South Koreans living in the UK. Significantly the figures from MOFAT imply that the South Korean community in the UK is now one of the largest overseas Korean communities in Europe (after Russia) and the 12th largest overall.

What is interesting is not only the growth in immigration in itself, but also the status of South Korean residents in Britain, who are mainly business immigrants, but also includes a significant number of students. According to Korean sources, about 18,700 are here for the purpose of study (MOFAT, 2009).

4.14.3 North Korean Immigration
Although they do not make up as significant proportion of the Korean community in Kingston, it should be noted that the number of political refugees from North Korean is also rising

(source Refuge Action and Kingston Primary Care Trust). However, given that the Home Office refugee statistics only specifies numbers for larger grouping it is difficult to give an exact estimate of North Korean Immigration.

4.14.4 Koreans in Kingston/New Malden.

According to the 2001 Census there are 1663 residents in the Borough of Kingston who recorded the Republic of Korea as their country of origin. Of these 1124 are Christian and 128 Bhuddist. The relatively high concentration of South Koreans in Kingston and New Malden was attributed by the interview participants to different reasons. In particular, they mentioned the good educational provision in the borough and the importance of education in Korean culture, as well as the fact that they felt drawn to the area by an already Korean community, which offered an immediate social support network, as well as providing a familiar cultural and linguistic environment. The relative proximity of the companies LG and Samsung was also mentioned by an interviewee as a reason as these firms needed company executives.

The Christian background of the respondents was notable in the fieldwork. In the interviews with Korean community representatives and particularly with church ministers it emerged that very tight informal networks exist around Korean churches. Thus ministers described how they gave not only spiritual support to parishioners, but were also called upon for more general advice relating to life in the UK. One minister, having lived here for 15 years, even described himself as a sort of bridge between the two cultures. Moreover, several churches (most notably Chessington Methodist Church and Kingston's United Reform church) have Korean Ministers and Chessington even conducts dual language services in order to aid integration.

4.14.5 Stakeholder Perspectives: Why focus on the Korean community?

The purpose of this section is to highlight the different needs and issues faced by the Korean community in Kingston, focusing in particular on Koreans' experience of living in Kingston: a) the extent to which they integrate with other local communities, b) their relationship to local service providers and c) the difficulties they face in making use of public services. To this end we conducted a series of focus groups and interviews with local community leaders, community representatives and local stakeholders (see Methodology section). Most notably these included interviews with local church ministers, a Korean councillor, a Korean translator, representatives from the Korean Residents Association, the North Korean residents association and public service providers currently working with and engaging with the Korean community in Kingston. Interviews with the latter group (local stakeholders and public service providers) provided a framework for the areas and themes we focused on in the subsequent interviews and focus groups with local Koreans. Thus before discussing the findings regarding the concerns raised by Koreans living in Kingston this section summarises some of the issues flagged up by public service providers, which include representatives from Royal Borough of Kingston, the Metropolitan Police in Kingston, the Kingston Primary Care Trust (PCT), the Refugee Action Kingston (RAK), and the Kingston Race and Equality Council (REC).

The Korean community is one of the most significant BME communities in Kingston, both in the sense that it constitutes one of the largest BME communities in Kingston and the largest

Korean community in the UK. Nevertheless, many stakeholders felt that despite the fact that it constitutes one of the largest BME communities in the borough, it was one with which they were least engaged.

> FS: We have the largest Korean population in Europe outside Korea. [...] I felt, even before I came to Kingston, people used to tell me: Oh big Korean population in Kingston [...] So, you come here thinking, oh blimey, must be well engaged with the old Korean population [...] . Then a few weeks ago I had a meeting with the owner and one of the reporters from the East newspaper, a large Asian magazine with a national circulation, that locally wrote an awful lot around the Korean community, and the Korean community are very quiet, they're very frightened to come forward [...] I was flabbagasted really.

It is also necessary to briefly summarise the kind of difficulties which, according to the sample of participants, public service providers experienced when engaging with the Korean community more particularly.

Most notably in the interviews and focus groups participants described the difficulties they experienced when dealing with the very different social structure and set of cultural attitudes which seemed to define the Korean community, and was often described as more 'hierarchical' and formal than the ones they were used to:

> PT: So, we can't talk to the Koreans because it's too difficult. Well I've tried the last ten years engaging and trying to. [...] the process is different from the one that you just phone me up and say, look I'm doing this research, I want to come and see you at one o'clock today, you know, then as you come in the colleague will give you a cake because they saw you waiting, you know what I mean.
>
> [...] so they don't have the capacity to talk to the Koreans because they can't pick up the phone and have a direct conversation with the leader or the Chair of the Korean UK Residence Association or Society because that's how they do business. [...]
>
> But there is plenty of people [contacts], there's the older people's group, there's some of the Korean churches. The Korean Residents' Society who you will struggle to get in touch with. But it's very, very difficult. […] The Korean Residents Society for example, they're a political organisation they're there for their community. They want to show their community that they are an organisation that's very similar to our mayors and councillors and what have you. So they're responding to local needs, so they'll come along to official events, like this thing where we're improving health access and they'll come for that, and for the photograph and for the group. That particular organisation is quite political […] But there's not much mixing, Koreans standing as local politicians, there's only one member of the Korean churches who has even come on our interfaith forum. […] He's the only one that comes to that, and when you think there's 30 odd Korean churches.

In other words many of the participants found the Korean community difficult to engage with because they felt communication had to be filtered through formal channels and representatives. In many cases this meant that, despite the fact that a few individuals had good contact and were in the process of building partnerships with representatives from particular organisations (most notably from the Korean Residents Association) other

participants noted their frustration that that they were not able to directly engage with particular sections of or groups within the Korean community, which in this instance particularly included women and young people[7]:

> HD: Sometimes people will act as gatekeepers and not let you beyond that, and that can be very much the case with say the Korean community. The Korean Resident Society which has always been our main group, it runs the Korean Festival, it does quite a lot of the partnership, the liaison with the local authority, with their own ambassador, it's made up of a lot of high powered businessmen really. And because of the cultural thing with women within the community, the women don't get much of a look in. They may be helping in the office but they're not necessarily coming to meetings and really participating. Sometimes we'd like, to really reach out to some of the women who are often quite isolated in the community, and maybe not be working, at home with small children and they're the people actually we'd like to filter some of our support to, but it has been a bit of a struggle to get beyond the gatekeepers.

The fact that engagement is often channelled through particular individuals who then also act as gatekeepers – thereby effectively barring direct communication with other sections of the community – may in part be an inevitable by-product of the way community representation works. Nevertheless, in this instance this seemed to be more than a by-product of the engagement process but a result of number of factors, including intercultural differences and language barriers.

4.14.6   Issues faced by the Korean community in Kingston

The issues raised in local stakeholder interviews were instrumental in guiding the direction of the research questions in face-to-face interviews. In particular, following the stakeholder interviews, one of the main issues that needed unpacking was the Korean community's perceived segregation from the local community in Kingston, and how this might be explained with reference to differences in customs, habit, cultural background and practice.

The fact that with reference to Kingston's Korean community there exist certain cultural barriers to communication and engagement is hardly in any doubt. Significantly in the interviews and focus groups with Korean residents in Kingston one of the main topics was invariably the difficulty of understanding taken for granted cultural norms and 'ways of doing things' in the UK, which were perceived as very different from what Koreans were used to and often very challenging to deal with.

> OK: The other reason is I think the culture. I'm still struggling with the British culture [*after living here for 10 years*], food or way of thinking. The way of thinking is totally different, system is different. So the main problem that some Korean people are not satisfied with the services in this borough is that there is just assumption the British local government, particularly the borough, or Kingston borough has the assumption that Korean people can understand what we are talking about. But I think more than 50% of that communication could be not understood […] not just because of language, but because of cultural differences. (Interview, Korean minister)

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[7] Although it should be noted that there has been some support in setting up a young people's group.

Significantly, the cultural knowledge we rely on in day-to-day life is not always entirely conscious. As a result of this, in many cases the participants had some difficulty explicitly expressing or describing the sort of cultural differences that made communication difficult, how exactly they affected engagement or how they might be overcome. Nevertheles it was possible to isolate some shared general themes, as well as some more particular ones, which are discussed in turn.

4.14.7 Language

To some extent the problems faced by members of Kingston's Korean community can be put down to language barriers. Korean and English are very different languages, grammatically, syntactically and phonetically. This means that learning (conversational) English constitutes a challenge for many Koreans, even where a prior knowledge of English exists.

Unlike some of the more subtle and less tangible cultural barriers, the 'language' barrier is something that could be quite straightforwardly worked on. In the discussions, however, it wasn't so much English language courses or instructions in Korean language that were asked for. Most of the participants were generally satisfied with the extent of provision in this area, (although there were some requests for including Korean language instructions on official forms such as secondary school applications). Rather what was discussed was ways of dealing with the continued difficulty they experienced in conversing in a foreign language after a level of proficiency had been achieved. Here participants noted that they often found it easier to read or write in English than to have a verbal conversation.

> OK: Although, because of the higher educational system in South Korea, they can understand how to read English, so written English is no problem, but spoken English is totally different. Although they are well educated in that country, when they come to this country, the English can be totally a strange language to them.

In this context it was suggested that widening the opportunities to communicate in writing:

> CR: There's some way we can lessen the difficulty of the language barrier if you use the email system even though some of the Korean cannot speak any English verbally but they can type the email and they can read it they can understand, its easy to communicate with them. […] [It's] much easier most understand what they are talking about in writing but when you hear some accent from different region.

The fact that written communication would be much easier to follow for many Korean residents was partly put down to (a) the way English is and used to be taught in Korea (where there is an emphasis on written English rather than spoken English), (b) the phonetic differences that exist between Korean and English which can make it difficult to understand spoke language and (c) the quite obvious difference in the speed of reading/writing on the one hand and writing on the one hand.

4.14.8 Intercultural Issues: Social Structure

In addition to the language barrier engagement is also hampered by the quite different cultural frameworks, beliefs and habits, and in particular by the difficulty some Koreans reportedly experience in their attempt to understand UK social structures. In particular some of the participants pointed out that whilst the 'more democratic' way of doing things in the UK was in many ways appealing it also made its social structures and practices more complicated, and created a social context that some found hard to decipher.

> DS: But this is very difficult because of language but also because of different cultural background. […] I'm still learning, it's very slow sometimes. This is a very democratic system. It's OK. But the democratic system can be also understood in different way. There's a huge gap and we are now trying to fill the gap.

Notably, the difficulty in understanding British social and organisational structures seemed to be particularly focused on the way local administrative structures work or organisations (such as churches) are run. Thus, some of the participants described what they felt to be a perplexing complexity and lack of transparency in organisational and administrative structures.

> KO: The system in Korea is 100% different although they often use the same word, one word, but we have different understandings about that. The council for example here, there is a mayor. Mayor-system! We, however, don't understand what mayor means here. Mayor means in South Korea is an acting mayor. He or she has a [unclear] right to run, like a president or like that. In this country, mayor is sometimes an honorary position, there are also council members to run all things, but we don't understand.

In other words, it seems that the layered administrative structures and processes which are seen as necessary to safeguard official accountability and enable democratic participation in the UK, are difficult to decipher for individuals and communities used to a different system. Significantly, this difficulty in understanding or deciphering 'the British system' is not confined to those that have recently arrived in the UK, but Koreans who have lived in the UK for ten or fifteen years, and had successfully applied for citizenship still reported a general confusion over how 'the system works'.

> DS: I live here (in Kingston) for 6 years, 10 in the UK. And I still don't know everything. This is normal. There are people. Some Korean people, who acquired citizenship and have lived here for more than 10 years, 15 years, but they don't always understand.

Unsurprisingly the difficulty members of the Kingston's Korean community experience in deciphering the meaning of organisational/administrative structures impacts on the community's ability to participate and engage locally. Thus several participants recounted how their confusion over 'the system' often made it difficult to fully participate in British society, and in rare instances even meant that individuals unwittingly broke the law.

> LO: Many people want to get citizenship […] Citizenship is very important for people, when people have their citizenship it means that they can vote. But there is not any information about voting system here. There are records or documents saying you

have a right to vote: but how or who. The British people or people born in this country can understand everything, but for us it's a totally different system, we don't understand. How to vote or other things, very specific guidance and information is necessary. Having a view in *their* position rather than *my* position is very important to provide better services to the Korean people.

DS: Some people do business here, but they don't know how to pay tax, they don't understand tax system. […]Even though they want to pay tax, they don't want to be illegal person, they really want to follow the British system, but because of lack of understanding,

4.14.9 Intercultural Issues: Building relationships

A further, in many ways related aspect that was mentioned in the discussions with Korean residents concerned the difficulty of building relationships. Here there seemed to be a general agreement that communicating or building relationships was difficult because interaction, communication and relationships simply "worked differently" in the UK. In particular the participants noted that building relationships with public service providers (doctors, police etc.) was in many ways *more* difficult, than they were used to.

> LO: ...there's some difference between what we feel in Korea when we meet our doctor or police officer. Once we know each other we feel there's something we can build in meeting after the meeting. What we feel in this country its more, it takes more time it's more difficult to build up some foundation for the relationship […].

What is interesting here is that rather than being reluctant to engage with local community or public service providers, some members of the Korean community felt that this was perhaps less appropriate given the fact that relationships to public service providers lack a personal foundation. This was put down to a general experience that personal relationships and social interaction was less 'direct':

> CR: [it] might be the etiquette of the British people because they are a little bit not directly or not open.

Significantly it was the ability to form personal relationship that the participants felt was important to them when using public service and engaging with the local community.

> ME: We can talk sometimes officially but sometimes in private, personally then we can each change our feeling more often more easily, but they need to initiate the next level so we can build up the relationship. But that's what I am missing in this country.

The reliance on building personal relationships in order to facilitate official or functional relations, seemed one of those cultural differences affecting engagement, and the lack of it seemed to be missed by participants, who described both the importance of the relationship in their everyday interaction with service providers and also the importance of 'taking time' and 'building trust' in such interaction.

> ME: Maybe that's from the universal general attitude from the British people or the atmosphere of this country, but that's what I felt. […] What I thought its not easy to open our mind each other and exchange our feeling in our heart that's what I thought, maybe if I were in Korea if I meet somebody in Korea we can easily talk and probably through the several meeting we can exchange our feeling in the heart, then it can give us some feeling, it will build up to some relationship with this guy so we can go on a little bit more and more like that

4.14.9 Intercultural Issues: Self-reliance

Another issue that was very prominent in the discussion was the fact that Koreans often felt reluctant to seek help from outside their community, but preferred to seek help from within their community.

> HS: So where do you seek help if you do have a problem or need something?
> CR: So first of all its kind of solve it within […] Yes within their own community yeah like a neighbour, do you have something for my stomach ache, there maybe something wrong but they just take it, because the medicine that they take solve the problem.

In the interviews, participants related this reluctance to seek help from outside to 'a sense of pride', 'respect for individuals of a particular' as well as just not wanting to 'bother' anyone with small or not so important problems.

> DS: In Korea we are bought up not to step on our teacher's shadow, so its very different how we feel towards our senior members or superiors, we have a lot of respect for them, which is very different.

Interestingly despite the fact that the participants reported that they missed the more personal relationships they were used to from home, these relationships were also twinned with a sense of respect, which sometimes hinders individuals seeking from 'outside' sources.

4.14.10 Impact: living and working in Kingston – health and policing

The intercultural issues discussed above pose specific barriers to the engagement process more generally and the take-up of local services more particularly. More specifically the two areas which were flagged up in the conversation with Korean community representatives (as well as local stakeholders) were (a) health and (b) policing. With regard to the former, in the stakeholder's interviews local healthcare providers had already mentioned the Koreans' seeming reluctance to use local health care services:

> HD: The Koreans don't access health and mental health services and when they do they are very, very coy. And we only see them when it gets to the latter stages when it's

really, really very late. Too late. Which is a real shame because other communities come and engage earlier, but they are very reluctant to seek help?

The participants reported that they were confused by the bureaucratic process surrounding health care (exacerbated by the language barrier), and particularly by the GP system here, and they missed a more personal approach to healthcare:

> KR: He has a case of his children was quite sick and he had to go to the doctor service. And then a doctor said that you have to list and you have to write down the details: like address and telephone numbers etc., but he didn't […] understand what they are asking […] It seems to him the doctor wasn't concerned how serious the baby is rather than the procedure. So for him why is it important you have to see my children first, emergency or not, he mentioned maybe it would have been much easier just to call 999. […] Because of this a lot of contact to make an appointment to wait, if it's a minor problem rather than contacting GP and then making an appointment and going there […] So it's quite a complex system and you're not used to that.

> HS: In Korea you expect more of a personal relationship and here you don't?
> CR: Yes and if you know each other we don't need to explain everything, once we go through the initial matter from the second meeting he notice me and (inaudible) we saved a lot of procedure and we can build it up? (Korean Focus Group, December 2009)

> CR: They [most male Korean immigrants] have to learn English for business but [the wives of Korean immigrants] have more of a language barrier that's why they prefer to go to the Chinese doctor […] you just ring them and tell your problem and these doctors even if its not their specialty but because they're ill they say please come and then they do it.
> I: Do you know that when you ring an appointment for a doctor and you want, he has money he can get a free interpreter a Korean interpreter to come in?
> CR: It would make it easier but […] We don't know about this service but even if they have but I don't think we will use because health is our privacy. (Korean Focus Group, December 2009)

Similar attitudes could be found in the context of the services provided by the Metropolitan Police in Kingston. Thus, in the focus groups and interviews, we found that not only was there a similar pattern of self-reliance, but in many cases the participants reported an even greater reluctance to contact or seek help from the police, stating that they would contact the police only in very serious cases:

> LO: Talking about the police it's a totally different issue than with the medical, if you have to contact the police then mostly you are in *serious trouble* […]What I am saying is you don't need to contact the police unless you are a victim of a crime or unless you have some issues to contact the police.

In some cases the reasons behind this increased reluctance were difficult to penetrate, particularly as most participants reported that their relationship to the police was generally good. However, there seemed to be a shared belief amongst focus group participants that the police would not take their problems seriously or be able to deal with them in a satisfactory

way. More specifically, several respondents' recounted stories or examples were, having been the victim of a crime, the police seemed unable to help them:

> DS: Let's say one example, I know this gentleman from the Korean church that I go to, he runs about 2, 3 different stores in the UK […] One time his shop has been burgled and then he was selling some leather coat a few hundred pound for one, and he lost some and several months later the guy has been caught up by the police and now they went there, this person went there and noticed his leather suit and asked the police to get those leather suits confiscate from his house, to return to this shop owner but the police said no it might be that he paid the money and bought it, then they said no so this person said this is the person in the UK but if the same thing would have happened in Korean they can check whether he has income, unless he had the proof that he paid for it then they would draw in favour of the shop owner not in the criminal so there's a very big difference.

> CR: Somebody broke into [my] car. […] then one month later I could hear from the police that the criminal had been caught and they will do a ruling or whatever then they said if you want compensation from the damage of your car you can fill out this form and send to them and you will hopefully get compensation, but I asked my neighbour and they said even if you fill out a form the chances of you getting a penny will be nearly zero.

Members of the Korean community in Kingston have very different expectations as to what the police can and cannot do when dealing with crime as a result of the different policing system in Korea. Assuming police power to be greater, most participants seem to expect more rights as a victim to be compensated once a crime has been solved, as well as expecting suspects to be more severely dealt with. Another reason that they did not report crime was because they were not always sure who to contact, and that it involved too many 'forms' and it was not always clear what function they served. This, together with the disappointment resulting from the mismatch between the Korean community's expectation and the services that Metropolitan police can in reality deliver seemed to be main culprit behind the Korean community's reluctance to seek help from police in all but serious cases:

> TJ: If you tie their hand to their body and then they will obviously have to come to the police otherwise if it's something that has been lost then, even if you contact the police you have to go through the filling out a form as you say and at the end of the day you get nothing.

In addition to the social and cultural misunderstandings that hamper engagement and participation, there are concerns specific to the North Korean community. Given that the North Korean community is less established, it is perhaps difficult to get views from this section of the community but based on the limited discussions we had it seems that the North Koreans experience in this context is very much framed by their experience of dealing with the police in North Korea, as well their often uncertain legal status as political refugees or asylum seekers.

LO: He is from North Korea he said he didn't like the police even when he was in Korea, I don't know the culture in this country but most of the people don't like this all the law thing, the police, the military, everybody, the people will be contacted by the police, go to the police station only when there is a problem, where there are a victim. When he was in North Korea the police used to dictate even if you don't do anything wrong you could appreciate you did this wrong and they have to just follow the police opinion even if we didn't do anything wrong if the police say you did wrong then you did this wrong.

4.14.11   Intra-Community Tensions: North and South

Another issue that was flagged up in the stakeholder interviews was a concern over the relatively vulnerable status of North Koreans in Kingston and the perceived tensions between the North and South Korean communities:

G: The North Koreans are a very, very vulnerable group. They really, really struggle. And they are very recent. In the last 2 years, just suddenly, there's been an influx of North Koreans. And of course they aren't integrated with the South Koreans. There is a lot of hostility. [..]There is perhaps some mixing. There's a few groups, there's some individuals who have been incredibly supportive and outspoken about the needs of North Koreans and who've wanted to support people to engage at different churches and things. But I've known North Koreans to deny that they are North Korean in a South Korean group.

HD: There are a lot of issues Refugee Action and PCT are very concerned about. Because we do think people are being exploited again in businesses, we're not sure, around accommodation, around employment. In some of the restaurants. Because they are asylum seekers or refugees and they don't have some of the support networks, they don't speak the language. They don't have any English when they come at all. And it's quite unusual for a refugee community to come and not have any English, have any links with anyone who has English.

Unfortunately, given the sensitivity of these issues it was difficult to properly explore these concerns, not explicitly dedicated to the North Korean community. However, in the interviews and focus groups (one of which included representatives from both the South and North Korean Residents Association) it was possible to establish, that despite ongoing tensions community organisations were in the process of building relationships between the two communities. The participants in the focus groups saw tensions between South and North Korean communities as mainly economic:

TJ: We were one country people maybe 40 years ago so we should be united like Germany but its just […] in the South Korea point of view they're [the North Koreans] are normally poor people so they come and its like everything go down because we have to feed them so for the younger generation they don't want the unification. […] Even my daughter is saying why should we get united because North Korean people are all poor people and we are hard working and why do we have to pay for them.

However, participants also felt that amongst Kingston's South and North Korean communities such tensions were slowly being resolved.

> LO: But the people living in this society in London most people we don't care, at the end of the day they're my same people give them some chances why not because we are in a different country, we are in England […] we should help each other but as long as we can afford to.

> RM: North Korea they live close to the South Korean they know more the South Korea community in general Korean community we have the same culture obviously, same food, same rice, same language. […] so they feel more friendly so it's not like the same family but it's like a cousin.

> DS: With the Korean residents society we are slowly building communication. We're living in the same community. And they [the North Korean Community in Kingston] will have the same building process as us, so they are thinking its more like one community

4.15 Summary of Key Findings: Part Two

Muslim Community:

➢ the use of the Mosque is diverse but viewed by some Muslims
as 'Asian' i.e. for some Arabs and Iraqis. Therefore the Mosque is not necessarily representative of all Muslims in Kingston

➢ the Islamic Resource Centre ethos of inclusion targeting women and providing support classes for children means it brings together more of the hard to find members of the community

➢ there is a need to cater for the smaller groups within the community, this has already begun with the Kingston Somali Community Association and the Iraqi Community Association helping more vulnerable to adjust

➢ The Ahmadiyya Association provides a reference point for many minority Muslim faith groups and is very organised and active in the borough

➢ different experiences of service provision is linked more to recent immigrant or refugee communities, not specifically the Muslim community

➢ the level of destruction or violation of a homeland can have differing effects on the readiness to engage particularly with a PVE policy in place i.e. many are already making immense adjustments to settle and have a heightened sense of anxiety

- general advantage perceived of Kingston being made up of smaller ethnic groups, rather than one or two large ones, leading to less experience of racism or tension compared to other cities in the UK

- however many have experienced or tell of a new form of racism due to 'Islamophobia' which emphasises the physical indicators or aspects of the Islamic faith such as the hijab/headscarf and attendance at a Mosque

- the previous point is experienced more acutely by the younger Muslims who are already trying to assimilate their family and cultural values with the experience of living in the UK.

- these negative experiences, particularly growing intolerance of being Muslim from their peers at school has often resulted in a reassertion of their Muslim faith

- this realignment and reassertion often results in increased devotion to their faith which differs markedly from their parents' general observance practices

- the increasing exposure to prejudice has politicised some younger Muslims

- stop and search operations, as in the setting up of the knife arches at Kingston station in 2009, are seen to further increase these tensions. Those who experienced this felt it would have been better to have been informed and had time to consider and appreciate the police need for this

- despite some of these negative experiences and criticism of the PVE agenda most respondents were keen to work towards reversing this negative image and understood the principles behind an engagement strategy – but critically as a two-way process

Tamil Community:

- Tamils in Kingston are a community underscored by internal difference and positioned between tradition and transition

- there exist marked differences in occupational type and educational background between those that came to the UK before the Civil War – 1960s and 1980s – and those from the 1980s onwards

- Tamils have become more assertive politically in the last decade

- The Tamil community have increasingly acquired social capital, for example the 'know-how' to access council services for housing

Korean Community:

➢ The Korean community in Kingston is the largest in the UK

➢ North and South Koreans see themselves as separate communities and a the tensions between them is a new phenomenon.

➢ Koreans are drawn to specific areas within the borough by their educational requirements – education is extremely important in this culture. The proximity of certain employers is also a draw

➢ there exist very tight informal networks around the Korean churches with some Ministers already providing advice on settlement and integration issues

➢ Stakeholders felt very little engagement with the Korean community, which in general terms is described as more hierarchical and formal than other communities in the borough.

➢ this could be accounted for by the following experiences and difficulties expressed by the respondents:

1. As the UK culture is so different it is very hard to understand and challenging to deal with;
2. Although there are no general difficulties experienced in accessing language classes or provision the very different features of the two languages make progression from writing and reading to conversational English a major problem for interaction;
3. In Korean culture there is a more personalised relationship with service providers – that you really had to get to know individuals – and so some felt that this cultural difference would militate against the acceptance of community engagement.
4. Added to this previous point Koreans tend to be very self-reliant not wanting to seek help or advice until it is often very late in terms of healthcare;
5. This personal aspect also has a bearing on relations with the police only seeking help or advice in very serious circumstances;
6. There are raised expectations of what the police can do for victims and equally how perpetrators of crime are dealt with on account of the very different police forces in Korea

5.Conclusion

The concept of "flight" ie an exodus away from inner urban areas is associated with suburban population dynamic. However there is evidence of this study that groups such as Tamils and Koreans are arriving in the UK directly to the suburban location of Kingston as a point of arrival rather than making an outward journey from the inner city. Their circumstances of entry to the UK also shape their experiences with the authorities eg refugee status people will be bigger users of social services. In the findings for example it was the Tamils who used elderly sheltered housing most.

There is a presumption that minority ethnic populations are synonymous with what are referred to as multiple deprivation districts yet across London, Kingston is third bottom of deprived boroughs with neighbouring Richmond-upon-Thames coming second and the largely financial district of the City of London least deprived. The Tamils and Koreans of Kingston are generally comparatively materially comfortably off – contradicting assumptions of ethnicity and deprivation.

At first sight the three populations of this study could all be described as "Asian" although for reasons of colonial history the UK definition of this word has always been rather peculiar to Britain. In the late twentieth century the term "Asian" was commonplace to describe people of origins in what was essentially the Indian sub-continent but following a general widening understanding of the diversity of peoples under the bloc term "Asian" by the host community there appears to be a greater emphasis on differences such as religion and arguably in the context of wider geo-political events (eg September 11th US terrorist attacks 2001, London bombings 2005) a sharper focus on Muslims who are posited with non-Muslims.

The events of 9-11 have been seen as a trigger for religion (and Islam) as a fault-line. Consequently a range of negative stereotypes are now attached to Muslims revolving around terrorism (when describing young men) or oppression and the veil (when describing women). It was interesting to see differences within and between groups. The "Muslim" sample was comprised of Shi'as, Sunnis. Ismailis, Ahmadayyans etc. Tamil people also can be Muslim in faith-background as the word Tamil is a language. South Korea is a nationality but there was some evidence of North v South Korean difference. Policy-makers need to take account of such difference. Future research could also include looking at Muslims from Eastern Europe and Muslim converts – these are essentially minorities within minorities.

The importance of generation should also not be understated. Edmunds and Turner (2002) have claimed that generations are sociologically significant groups because their different cohort experiences give rise to a shared identity that means that they can act in historically significant ways. The findings demonstrate that this can be cross-cut by ethnicity. It was clear in speaking to first and second generation respondents that there are different cultural markers between the two. Remittances i.e. the practice of sending money "back home" has been

identified by researchers as a practice of BME groups but the second generation have different notions of belonging to the first.

The contents of this report arising from the voices of the interviewees demonstrate that the question of BME communities in Kingston span numerous policy and practice areas. Identifications, interactions, belonging and belief across the three groups studied here may be shaped by events, places and people far beyond Britain's boundaries let alone the borders of Kingston. Tensions exist between cultural difference and the long stated aim of governments to achieve integration. Social and cultural processes are always multi-directional processes affecting people and location with an impact on new arrivals and the settled population. In the case of the Tamils in Kingston for example successive generations are in an ongoing process of negotiation whereby they constantly acquire social capital.

Kingston despite its image as a sleepy suburb or dormitory town is an area with influence that spreads further afield due to its commuting pull and strong global connections e.g. with firms that have attracted Koreans such as Samsung and LG. Ethnic diversity needs to be viewed as an asset rather than a threat in the borough, not just for intangible reasons of multiculturalism being celebrated as an inherent good but also for reasons of commerce as well as culture.

The majority of respondents were positive about their depiction of (and place within) Kingston whilst also maintaining a sense of belonging to their country of origin and to their religious background. Racism, discrimination and the more specific variant of Islamophobia were not common/ frequently occurring experiences for respondents.

There was a tension identified by some respondents regarding the PVE agenda, some felt at odds with attempts to further community cohesion under this banner. Dialogue needs to tackle sometimes potentially tough questions which should not be shied away from e.g. matters like stop and search and anti-terror legislation. If there had been for example some clarification on the need for the knife arch exercises at Kingston station in 2009 there might not have been such a negative response. Diversity should be recognised within BME communities, as well as between them – this can take many forms with different subdivisions including geographical and generational e.g. the concerns of Tamil elders are quite dramatically different from UK born Tamil sixth formers.

There needs to be further account taken of the motors of extremism; in particular the local and national impacts that government foreign policy may indirectly have at local level. This type of long distance grievance seems to have gained some traction in both groups and needs monitoring to ensure that it does not spill out into violence and terrorism. Areas of BME settlement should not always be automatically equated with poverty as the experience of South Koreans demonstrates. There needs to be more intercultural conversation both between and within broad BME categories eg within Muslims there are Somalis, Bangladeshis, Arabs who may rarely interact with one another. Most of those interviewed have constructed their own versions of identity which accommodate the reality that it is possible to inhabit and drawn on multiple identities and belongings simultaneously

6.Recommendations

1. To afford specific attention to relations and potential tension between long established communities and new migrants who are at risk of being marginalised e.g. asylum seekers.

2. To develop activities and create opportunities for elder residents and young people. Tackle the needs of people of different generations and recognise potential intergenerational conflict.

3. To work towards more intercultural dialogue to improve understanding between different communities with the launch of projects that bring people together in a literal/ physical sense and can reach out to people (of all faiths and none) rather than the usual more vocal representatives ,which formal settings such as the interfaith forum might only be able to attract. To this end there should be the creation of more social spaces where people are able to find something in common. These need not be new buildings as such but could take place in existing buildings/ settings.

4. To facilitate and encourage interactions between the police, council officers, local councillors and residents. There is in some degree a sense of alienation which needs to be dealt with that stems from the perception that there is presently only limited interaction between these parties.

5. To make sure that authorities have a regular audit of organisations that they consult with to avoid a culture of patronage where consultation fatigue sets in/ the same names get automatically repeatedly asked with no review process or space for newcomers and innovation.

6. In order to gain trust, to develop community-specific initiatives in consultation with local residents who can feed into the process rather than adopting a top-down approach in framing strategies of preventing violent extremism and community cohesion.

7. To take a long-view of preventing violent extremism as community cohesion as a process.

8. To sensitively address tensions in the Borough in "problem areas" mentioned by respondents (e.g. Chessington, Kings Nympton) with future policy formulation at both local and central government level.

9. Investigate the possibility of approaching associations for the smaller communities to provide advice on setting up a network of support on the model of 'mentors' from within the settled communities to inform and advise new immigrants and refugees on procedures for accessing the different services such as health, police etc.
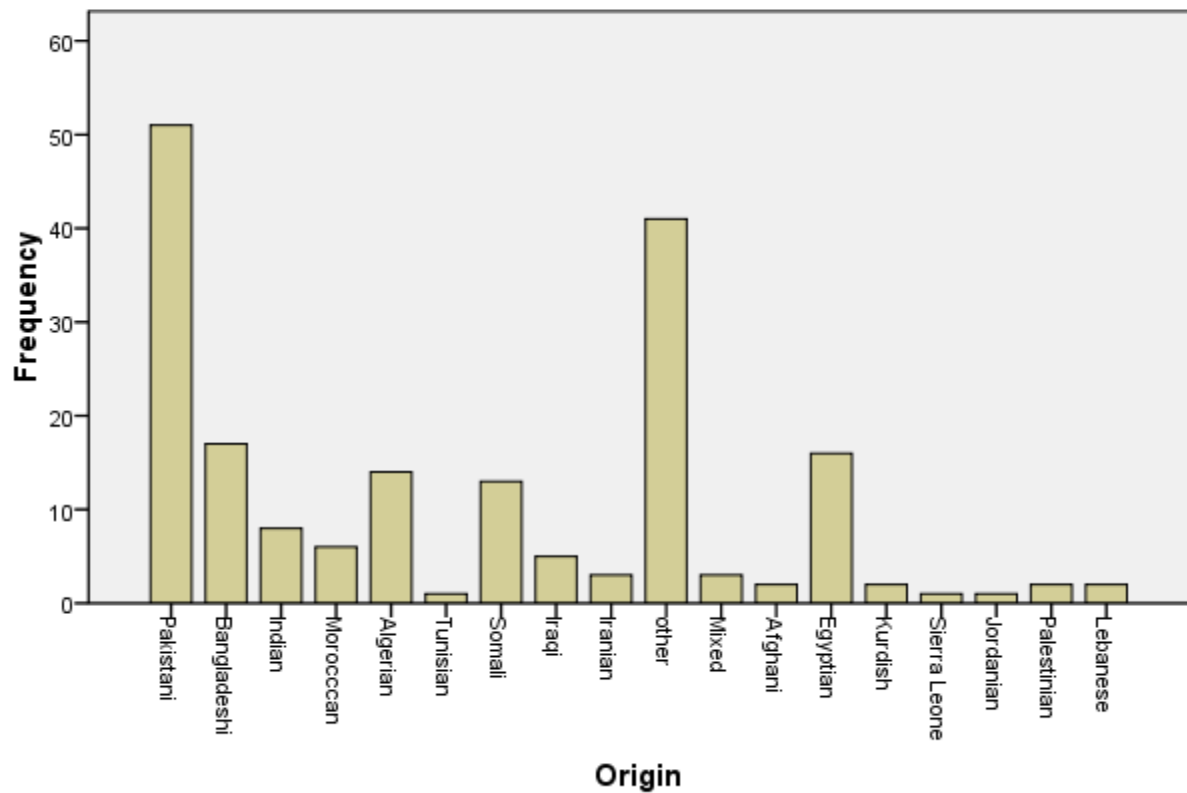
10. Consider the use of translated introductory or 'welcome' packs describing the different services – these to be placed within different organisations around the borough that currently support new immigrants and refugees.

11. To engage and train community representatives to act as a point of reference for the community in: Approaching and understanding different agencies and their roles; seeking to identify and address community issues/problems; training members of the agency to better understand specific community groups and their cultures; working towards improved engagement.

12. Provide space and time for public celebration of Eid and other key religious festivals, for example, as an important date.

13. Consider tailoring methods of approach to different communities. For example difficulties in engaging the Korean community have shown to be contingent on, for example, more formal relationships. Added to this conversational style is harder for many, so consider only letter or email approaches rather than the telephone.

14. Develop ongoing police training/courses on broader political and cultural aspects of the different communities and countries of origin – or more attendance at conferences such as the recent Understanding Islam conference at Kingston University in January 2010.

15. This to include language courses for specific officers in Arabic to provide more representation of all possible languages spoken by the Muslim communities within the borough.

16. Consider setting up a regular 'surgery' hosted by the police, by way of invitation through translated 'posters' or through leaflets in strategic venues inviting community members to an initial open discussion. Mindful of the resource and management challenges this ideal model could present then investigate ways to approximate this with the aim of demonstrating transparency and openness in relation to police practice in the borough.

17. Seek to approach targeted operations in a more informative manner i.e. weigh up the balance of advantages of operations providing the element of surprise, such as the Kingston station knife arches in 2009, with the disadvantages of longer term effects such as increasing any existing anxieties of targeted communities.
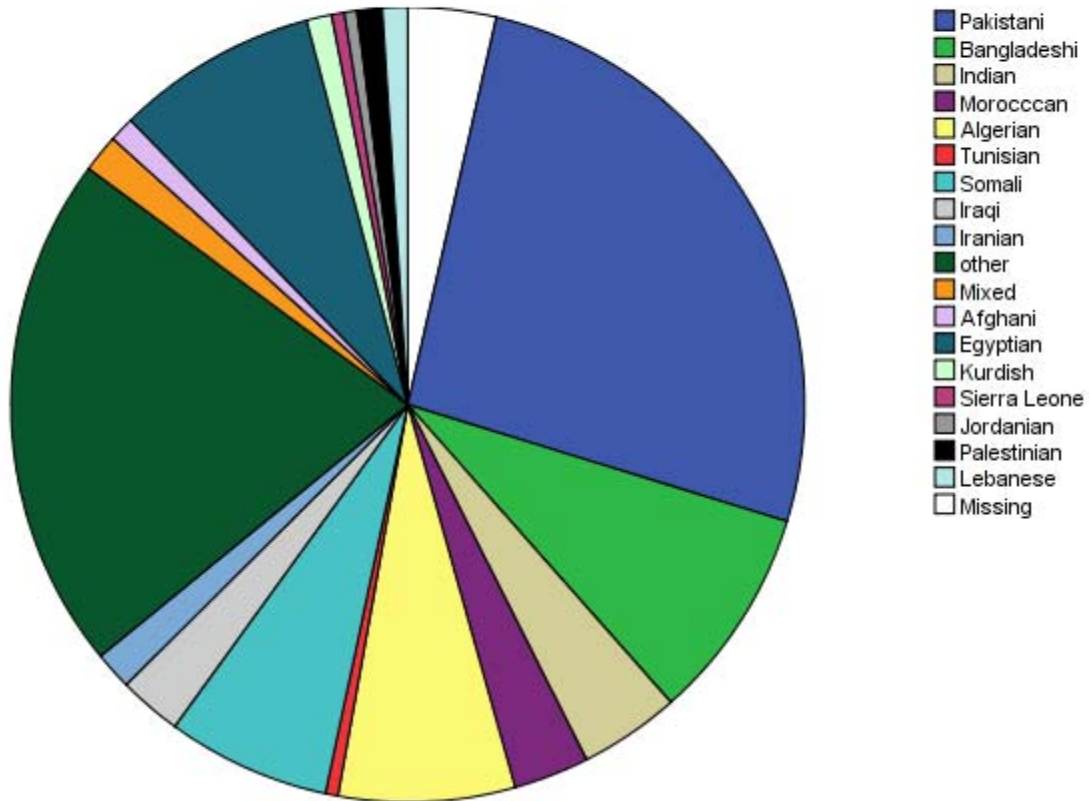
Appendix A: Mosque Survey SPSS output

Travel

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Driving	73	37.4	37.4	37.4
	passenger	31	15.9	15.9	53.3
	public transport	55	28.2	28.2	81.5
	foot	32	16.4	16.4	97.9
	other	4	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	195	100.0	100.0	

Origin

Origin

Legend:
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Indian
- Morocccan
- Algerian
- Tunisian
- Somali
- Iraqi
- Iranian
- other
- Mixed
- Afghani
- Egyptian
- Kurdish
- Sierra Leone
- Jordanian
- Palestinian
- Lebanese
- Missing

NB: The "other" category included – missing data and people who had misunderstood the question and answered a language eg Urdu, Punjabi. As it was impossible to conclusively state country of origin they were collapsed into this bracket. There were also Yememi, Saudi Arabian, Danish, Tamil and English with this broad total

Gender
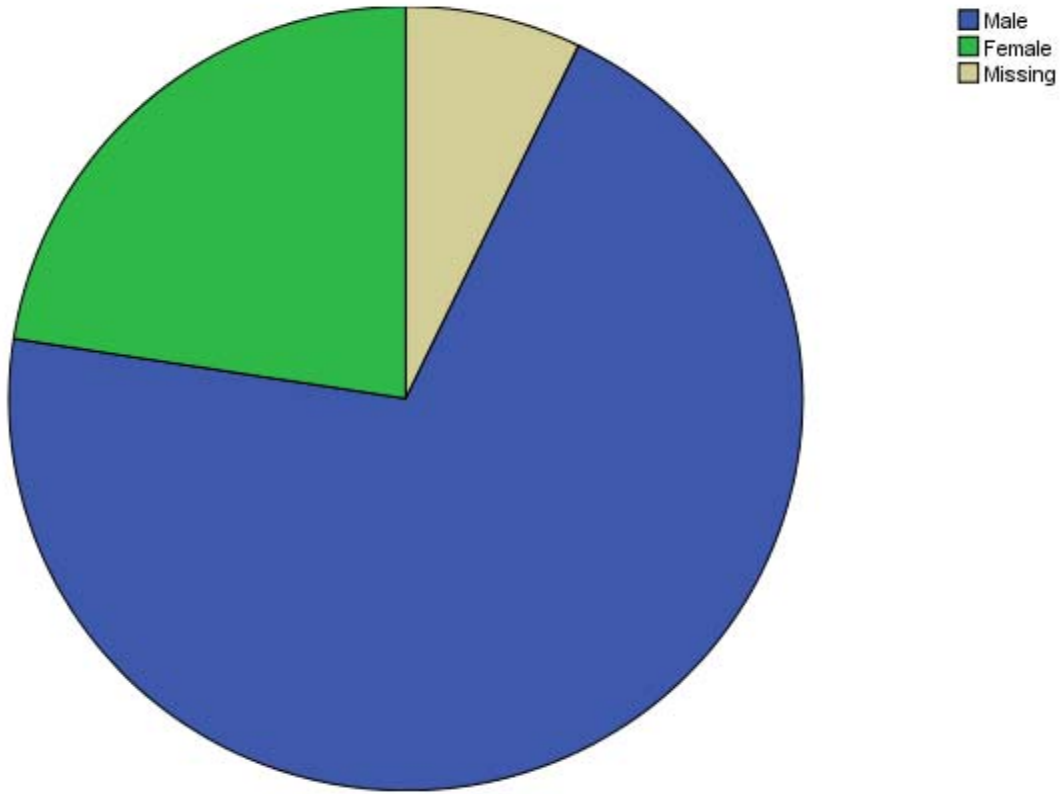
Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	137	70.3	75.7	75.7
	Female	44	22.6	24.3	100.0
	Total	181	92.8	100.0	
Missing	System	14	7.2		
Total		195	100.0		

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	189	10	79	32.17	14.111
Valid N (listwise)	189				

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	137	70.3	75.7	75.7
	Female	44	22.6	24.3	100.0
	Total	181	92.8	100.0	
Missing	System	14	7.2		
Total		195	100.0		

Statistics

Gender

N	Valid	181
	Missing	14

Age

Mean =32.17
Std. Dev. =14.111
N =189
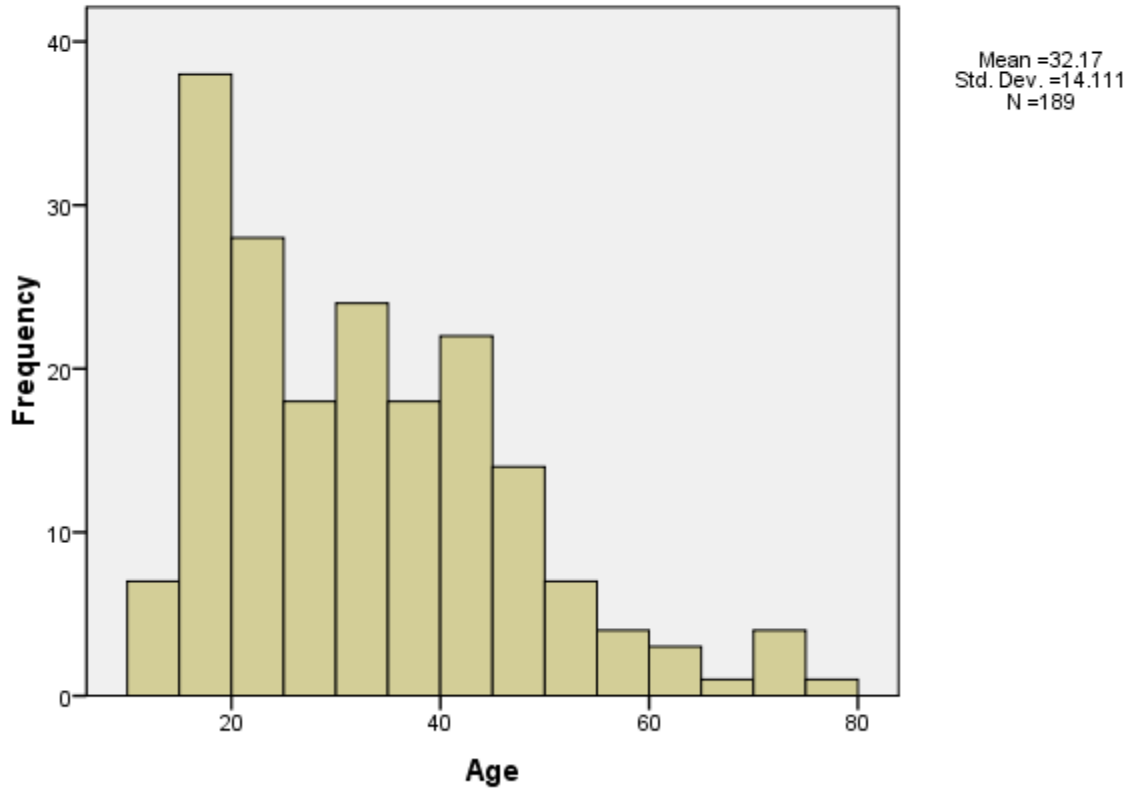
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List of Interviewees (in order of appearance)

T: Tahir, Male student in Kingston College focus group of Pakistani origin

JJ: Councillor RBK, Tamil ethnic origin

JS: Longstanding RBK councillor, represents a New Malden ward

M: Council officer, RBK working with voluntary sector

I: Member of BME forum

AS: Tamil sixth former

AH: London University student who grew up in Kingston

Z: Zahir – secondary school student, lives on Cambridge estate, Somali origin

Mu: Muhammad - London University student lives with parents in Kingston

G: Senior Council officer, brief includes diversity

R: Raj, Tamil student at Kingston college, arrived in UK 2003

H: Kingston Mosque committee member

N: Young woman, Iraqi descent interviewed in Focus group November 2009

Y: Yasmin, volunteer for Muslim women's groups

SK: Young Iraqi woman, living in and studying in Kingston

HG: Student, female lives with parents, studies at Kingston University

P: Woman of Pakistani origin, 2nd generation Focus Group November 2009

D: Woman Bangladeshi origin, lived in UK for 20 years, Focus Groups November 2009

L: Woman from Lebanon, Focus Groups November 2009

J: respondent from Jordan

O: Young woman from Iraq, language student

FG: Muslim Refugee action centre attendee

R1: Language student focus group participant, Muslim

R2: Language student focus group participant, Muslim

GK: Hijab-wearing female undergraduate, like in Kingston with parents

FK: Focus group member, Egyptian origin

SY: Hijab-wearing female undergraduate, lives outside Kingston borough

L: University undergraduate, Egyptian origin, commuted in for studies

V: Polish member. Kingston College focus group

Mrs V: Tamil elder's empowerment group member

Mrs S: Tamil elder's empowerment group member

Mr P: Spokesperson, Tamil Information Centre, Norbiton

FS: Senior officer, RBK

PT: Member of the Police Service

HD: Senior council officer, RBK

OK: Korean church minister

KO: Second Korean church minister

CR: Korean focus group member and Kingston resident

DS: Korean focus group member and Kingston resident

LO: Korean focus group member and Kingston resident

HD: PCT official, Kingston

RM: Korean focus group member and Kingston resident