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Version: Accepted Version

Article:
McLoughlin, S (2005) Mosques and the Public Space: Conflict and Cooperation in Bradford. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 31 (6). pp. 1045-1066. ISSN: 1369-183X

https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830500282832

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Mosques and the Public Space: Conflict and Cooperation in Bradford

Seán McLoughlin

While there is still some evidence of conflict over the planning and building of mosques in Britain, in this article I demonstrate that this is not currently the case in Bradford. Having first considered issues relating to the status and significance of mosques in Britain, and then the institutionalisation of Islam in Bradford, I suggest that this absence of mosque conflicts has much to do with the social and political implications of a densely populated 'Muslim' inner city. However, the absence of conflict over mosques in Bradford does not mean that the pervasive Islamisation of the inner city is not an issue; quite the reverse. After riots involving youth of Pakistani–Muslim heritage, a dominant discourse has emerged focusing on ethnic and religious 'self-segregation' and the need for 'community cohesion'. Moreover, commentators have identified mosques, and the religious leadership and education they provide, as a part of the problem. My article examines why this might be so and the extent to which Bradford Council for Mosques, and one particular mosque in Bradford, have been able to engage Muslims in cooperative relationships with the public space.

Keywords: Mosques; Muslims; Islam; Bradford; Britain

Introduction

Mosques are the most numerous institutions that South Asian Muslim minorities have established in Britain since first arriving in large numbers during the 1950s and 1960s.[1] In 1963 there were just 13 mosques listed with the Registrar General (Nielsen 1992: 44); estimates suggest that there may now be 1,000, including those that are unregistered (Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations [CSIC] 1997: 1). This mushrooming of numbers since the late 1970s and 1980s indicates that the reuniting of Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi families across continents was decisive in catalysing the reconstruction of Islam in the diaspora. There was a recognition that if British-born and British-

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educated youngsters were going to be socialised in a context where the dominant culture was broadly secularising, and often hostile to minorities, Muslims would have to create spaces for the institutionalisation of Islam within the British nation (McLoughlin 1998).

In this paper I begin with a brief survey of the place of mosques in British society; this involves a general account of mosque numbers and their status, as well as examples of conflict and cooperation in Muslims' relationships with the state. Conflict over the Islamisation of public space often reveals majority fears about the erosion of a 'British way of life' in an age of global migration and ethnic pluralism. However, while Muslims associated with different Islamic movements have themselves been involved in internal conflicts over mosques, these institutions represent perhaps the major investment of Islamic communities in Britain. They have also played a large part in Muslims' social and political organisation, both locally and transnationally. Nevertheless, given their provision of community as well as religious functions in the diaspora, mosques are increasingly involved in cooperation with the state, especially in terms of securing funding. At the same time, in the wake of 'September 11' and now the London bombings of 7 July 2005, mosques are also beginning to confront the reality of much higher levels of public scrutiny than hitherto, including the likelihood of greater state regulation.

While there is still evidence, then, of conflict over the planning and building of mosques in Britain *per se*, this article will show that this is not currently the case in the city of Bradford, West Yorkshire. Having consulted the archives of the local newspaper, the *Bradford Telegraph and Argus*, and the minutes of Bradford Council's planning meetings, and having interviewed two of Bradford's planning officers, and two representatives of the Bradford Council for Mosques (BCM), I am satisfied of this being the case for several years now. Even an isolated dispute between two Muslim sects over the building of a mosque during 1998 did not amount to much more than the submission of petitions for and against the project.

In Bradford there are no fewer than 44 mosques serving a large proportion of the 75,000 mainly Pakistani Muslims who live within just five square miles of the inner city. It is this highly developed ethnic clustering, which has produced secure, institutionally complete and politically assertive communities, which also begins to explain the absence of mosque conflicts in Bradford. However, in his review of 'race' relations published in 2001, Herman Ouseley identified Muslim leadership and institutions in these communities as playing a role in the perpetuation of self-segregation and low levels of integration. His comments represent a renewed willingness to reflect critically on the role of culture, as well as class and 'race', in explanations of social problems. However, in order to cultivate the 'dialogue-driven' leadership amongst Muslim minorities that Ouseley and others seek, I maintain that

the logic of ‘insider’ accounts of ‘ethnic’ and ‘religious’—as well as ‘civic’—forms of ‘cohesion’ need to be taken more seriously. Moreover, despite the silences of ‘political correctness’, some caution when publicly debating the affairs of unequally resourced constituencies is still in order, not least if the space for critical reflection is to be confidently developed.

In brief case studies of BCM and a middle-sized mosque in Bradford, my final aim in this article is to briefly explore the nature of Muslim leadership and mosque institutions, as well as the extent to which Islam suggests a resource for cooperation across religious and ethnic boundaries in the city. As we shall see, since the ‘book-burning’ of the Rushdie Affair the BCM has routinely adopted a more conciliatory approach to political representation and an eagerness to maintain good public relations. However, it has far less influence both amongst Muslims and with the local state than was the case in its heyday of the 1980s. ‘York Road’ mosque serves a Pakistani heritage community and has a history of cooperation with wider society (McLoughlin 1998). However, this cooperation has resulted in only the most surface ‘integration’ of majority and minority ‘communities’. At the grassroots the dominant mode of Pakistani–Muslim adaptation remains the deployment of culture and religion as ‘bonding’ resources to maintain ethnic distinctiveness and so advance subaltern group interests. Nevertheless, I do unravel genuine signs of social change at ‘York Road’. Before reporting on this in any more detail, however, I need to provide some general context regarding mosques in contemporary Britain.

Conflict and Cooperation: Mosques and the Public Space in Britain

Nielsen has observed that ‘Britain has no generally applicable legal framework for religious communities’ (1992: 43). So, while Anglicans and Presbyterians have established status in England and Scotland respectively, most mosques in Britain actually operate under the provisions of the law that regulates charitable organisations. There is no obligation under British law that mosques must register with the Charity Commission, but most have done so because this brings certain material benefits including company tax exemption and reduced local property taxation. The state demands only that planning permission for all proposed mosques is forthcoming from local authorities.

Some purpose-built mosques in Britain more approximately resemble the ‘Oriental’ image invoked by the Western imagination. However, more often than not, mosques are converted nineteenth-century terraced houses—not to mention former laundries, lorry and brush factories, schools, banks, photography studios, churches, caravans, post-office sorting depots, taverns and betting shops (CSIC 1993). Nevertheless, for all this ordinariness, applications by Muslims to

establish mosques have sometimes been controversial. There are certainly examples of co-operation between Muslims, the state and wider society in terms of the gradual Islamisation of public space. For example, the mosque I go on to discuss at the end of this article could not have been established without the intervention of the local Anglican vicar. However, planning law does support the idea of preserving the 'Britishness' of the built environment and, moreover, some members of the ethnic majority tend to read the re-inscription of 'old' spaces with 'new' cultural meanings in terms of an ever-expanding (Islamic) 'threat' to 'the English way of life' (Eade 1996; Werbner 1996a; Runnymede Trust 1997).

Of course for Muslims everywhere mosques are important symbols of the world of Islam (Joly 1995; Metcalf 1996). However, in the West, they have also come to be seen as 'safe' Islamic spaces, 'havens' in an environment that some Muslim migrants imagine to be bounded in opposition to their faith (Werbner 1996a). Mosques can provide 'secure' religio-cultural continuity for those who have faced the dislocating experiences of migration, and the social exclusion of racism and unemployment (Kalra 2000). Indeed, some mosques in the diaspora could be seen as re-inventing an Islamic tradition by slowly taking on a range of community functions that would be more or less unheard of in Pakistan today. So, while primarily being places of prayer and devotion, since the 1980s at least, some mosques in Britain have also functioned as advice centres for the unemployed, Members of Parliament's surgeries, homework clubs, youth centres, elderly day-care centres, and spaces to prepare food for communal gatherings such as weddings.

There is also an assumption in British society (however unrealistic) that *imams* (prayer leaders) or other mosque officials will be willing and able to make visits to schools, prisons or hospitals, providing advice and ministry rather like Christian chaplains (Joly 1995). However, the reality is that many *imams* are themselves first-generation migrants and do not always have the competence in English or understanding of British society to perform such functions adequately. Notably, as part of the government's 'community cohesion' agenda, former Home Secretary, David Blunkett, called for 'imported' South Asian heritage *imams* to learn English so as to promote the 'integration' of Muslim youth and militate against the appeal of religious extremism (*The Independent*, 31 October 2003). In any case, it is important to understand that it is the committee—usually a select few—who routinely run a mosque, and not the *imam*. Raza (1991) notes that many members of mosque committees see their 'voluntary' activities as expanding their prestige and the prestige of their *biradari* (patrilineal descent group) in particular. Indeed, mosques and their organising committees have often become the main representatives of local and regional Muslim communities in Britain. In centres of significant Muslim settlement, from Bradford to

Birmingham and London to Lancashire, dedicated Councils or Confederations of Mosques have emerged for this purpose.

Mosques have also been important centres for the co-ordination of British-Muslim political activity. In the wake of 11 September 2001, a few mosques, such as the one in Finsbury Park, London, were targeted by the authorities in an effort to clamp down on international networks of radical Islamists. Under rather different circumstances in 1980s' Bradford, the potential of a network of mosques to aggregate Muslims associated with different Islamic orientations in the city was a major feature of mobilisations during the *Halal* meat, Honeyford and Rushdie affairs (Halstead 1988; Lewis 1994). Mosques are not necessarily centres of Muslim 'unity', however. As Werbner (1991a) argues, spaces for associational empowerment are often sites for ideological, factional and sectarian struggle. Shaw (1988) recalls how, between 1982 and 1984, a serious dispute in Oxford split the 1,000-strong community and resulted in the founding of a second mosque. She shows that the mobilisation of the community polarised Deobandi and Barelwi movements in a struggle over the control of the mosque.[2] So, while mosques are theoretically open to all Muslims, they can, in practice, operate all sorts of closures. Male elders tend to claim the mosque, the most 'serious' and 'prestigious' Islamic space, as their own. As Werbner (1996b) argues, they usually leave the celebration of 'fun' spaces associated with South Asian popular culture to women and young men. Attempts by members of these other constituencies to challenge the elders' dominance can be vigorously resisted while some younger Muslim activists, for example the Muslim Public Affairs Committee UK, are resorting to aggressive public criticism, and even ridicule, of conservative mosque elders' leadership abilities (see, for example, www.mpacuk.org).

Most mosques in Britain exist on a self-sufficient basis. This means they have usually been run broadly free from state intervention. However, as tax-paying British citizens, Muslims are increasingly making claims for financial support from the authorities too (Werbner 1991b). A general shift towards explicitly 'Muslim' forms of community organisation in Britain is in evidence since the 1980s. This was a time of a worldwide Islamic revival but also the period during which most South Asian Muslim families were reunited and when many first-generation migrant workers were facing long-term unemployment. In any case, there has been an increased pressure on Muslim institutions to provide services for their growing communities. Recalling the sort of 'community' provision mentioned above, there is evidence that some Muslims would prefer certain welfare services, especially family-related matters, to be delivered in a 'familiar' mosque context rather than in 'unfriendly' government buildings (Joly 1995). In this respect, mosques have the potential to either promote or inhibit the engagement of Muslim

communities in wider society.

While limited state funds have often found their way into mosque coffers for projects such as the teaching of Urdu in supplementary schools or making environmental improvements to buildings (Lewis 1994: 124), more ambitious examples of cooperation have been common for some time now:

> Muslim groups have found it possible to form partnerships with central and local government and with European Community bodies to attract funding for Muslim projects. Incidents include skills training courses which are focused on the building of a mosque, 'Access' courses which have been developed to include an Islamic component and the utilisation of funds for women's projects, all of which have been successfully used by Muslims to assist in the development of their communities (CSIC 1993: 3).

This increasing participation of Muslims in funding partnerships with government must also be seen in the context of a general decline in state funding to the voluntary sector. The voluntary sector was responsible for delivering many minority ethnic projects during the heyday of multiculturalism in the early to mid 1980s. However, mosques, having deeper and more independent roots in minority communities, have often been able to make the most of the inhospitable funding climate since the late 1980s and into the 1990s (Nielsen 1999).

One final point must also be considered here. Britain's public space is still predominantly secular in outlook and the extent to which politicians, institutions and agencies are willing to recognise the importance of faith-based activity varies considerably. In recent years there has been something of a shift with the acknowledgement that religious communities can be important sources of the human and material capital necessary for economic regeneration and social uplift (Farnell et al 2003; Knott, McLoughlin and Prideaux 2003). Nevertheless, while the established church is not funded by the state in any direct fashion, Muslim organisations will often complain that funding is only currently available to them, legitimately at least, if a strict division is maintained between religious and non-religious activities. To Muslims, at least, this still goes rather against the grain.

The Absence of Mosque Conflicts in Bradford

It is only in the last decade that the institutionalisation of Islam in Bradford has been comprehensively recorded. It has fallen mainly to Lewis (1994) to describe in detail how different Islamic movements have developed in tandem with the progressive fission of communities as Muslim families slowly began to reunite during the late 1960s and 1970s. He reports that in 1959 Bradford's first mosque was opened in a terraced house in Howard Street, the area that many male migrants

came to when they first arrived in Bradford. The mosque was established by the Pakistani Muslim Association 'and its trustees included both East and West Pakistanis from a variety of sectarian traditions' (Lewis 1994: 58). It was used mainly on Sunday afternoons for both religious and more practical activities. For example, English speakers among the gathering would translate official documentation for their peers and address their letters home (Kepel 1997).

However, such ethnic fusion eventually gave way to ethnic fission as the Howard Street mosque saw Pathans and Punjabis from Chhachh take control; in 1968 they installed a Deobandi as their first full-term *'alim* (religious scholar). It was also around this time that another Deobandi mosque was set up by Gujeratis from Surat and the Bengali Twaqulia Islamic Society established a mosque in two houses on Cornwall Road (Barton 1986). Perhaps most significantly however, Pir Maruf Hussain Shah, from a devout religious family in Mirpur, 'Azad' Kashmir, founded the first Barelwi organisation in Bradford, *Jamiyyat Tabligh ul-Islam* (JTI), or the Association for the Preaching of Islam. The association's first mosque was opened in Southfield Square, Manningham, during 1966 and now functions as the organisation's headquarters. The founding of JTI mosques allowed for the performance of a number of Sufi-related rituals associated with devotion to the Prophet Muhammad that the Deobandis in Howard Street were opposed to (Kepel 1997).

As noted earlier, today there are at least 44 registered mosques and Islamic centres in inner-city Bradford (Muslim Directory 2002–03). Indeed, all 44 are confined within just seven inner-city postcode areas, with 30 in just three: BD8, BD3 and BD5. A range of ethnic groups and Islamic movements are still represented in the city. However, Bradford is dominated by the Barelwi mosques of the Pakistanis and especially the Kashmiris, with 15 of 44 currently associated with Pir Maruf's JTI. There is just one reformist Islamist mosque, associated with *Jama'at-i Islami* related movements such as UK Islamic Mission, Young Muslims UK and Islamic Society of Britain.[3] The largest mosque in the city—a JTI mosque in BD3—holds around 5,000 men but only 200 women, and the smallest—Madinatul Uloom and Islamic Centre—just 80 men and no women. A range of functions and facilities are supported by the mosques of the various traditions, from classes in Arabic, Qur'an, *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) and *tafsir* (Qur'anic commentary), to other, more specialised and sporadic forms of support, including academic tuition, advice, circumcision, sports and funeral services.

My contention that none of Bradford's 44 mosques has, in recent memory, been the subject of sustained conflict over planning or building is based on a review of the online minutes of the council's planning committee from January 1999 to May 2003.[4] I was able to find only six references to mosques in total. One of these related to a Muslim

objection to the building of a restaurant, which looked like a mosque, serving alcohol (17 February 2000). Another challenged the effect of a new retail outlet on access to two local mosques (20 April 2000). In both these cases, then, mosques were clearly not the object of concern. Nevertheless, both the desire to i) challenge 'transgressive' commodifications of the Islamisation of public space and ii) defend hard-won existing arrangements for Muslims, are interesting in their own right. Moreover, in the four cases where mosques themselves were a matter of concern, things always seemed to be resolved without a fuss, even though it is possible to envisage hostile or even malicious, as well as simply practical, interventions behind the following.

- allegations that a *madrasa* (Muslim supplementary school) was being used as a mosque with a speaker attached for the *azan*, the result being parking problems; this was investigated more than once with no evidence of the disturbances found (18 May 2000);
- objections to the construction of a mosque because of parking / congestion; the matter was deferred pending the possibility of negotiations with the applicant about a Traffic Regulation Order (19 April 2001);
- a late letter of objection to an application to re-build a *madrasa* as a mosque; a councillor spoke in its favour insisting that users would be local and the application was passed (19 April 2001);
- a petition was received against unauthorised use of an address as a mosque and prayer room; the address was monitored but no additional traffic was observed (18 October 2001).

In none of these cases, then, was a local, non-Muslim, population of a neighbourhood mobilised in opposition to the building or daily operation of a mosque. Even the most interesting hint of dissent in recent years was relatively easily resolved and did not lead to outright conflict. However, the example in question did identify the potential for conflict to emerge *between* different Islamic constituencies—in this case Sunnis and Shi'as—in areas of high Muslim population. What was unusual was that one Muslim constituency—the minority Shi'a—was prepared to represent its concerns to the authorities about the possible detriment to them of a rival (Sunni) Islamisation of public space. Given that this could signal a future trend as the Muslim population of Bradford continues to expand, the story, headlined 'Conflict hits £2m mosque scheme' in the *Bradford Telegraph and Argus*, is worth recording in full.

> Plans to build one of Britain's biggest mosques in Bradford have been hit by religious rivalry. The massive landmark planned for Little Horton would be expected to draw worshippers from across the district. But a rival Islamic sect with different religious beliefs from another mosque nearby says it wants a

> guarantee that there will be 'no trouble' if the £2 million development goes ahead. Khadim Hussain, of the Bradford Council for Mosques, said the rivalry between the two Islamic sectors was similar to that sometimes seen between Catholics and Protestants. 'The conflict is a long historical one based on differences in belief', he said. And the owner of a nursing home just yards away has objected to the scheme on the grounds it will cause serious problems for elderly residents. The scheme has also hit a stumbling block because Council officers say it provides only 220 parking spaces, 93 fewer than they believe are necessary. Bradford area planning sub-committee deferred a planning application by the Suffat Al Islam community for the two-storey mosque and a three-storey community centre. The skyline mosque in Horton Park Avenue would stand in its own grounds with a grand entrance described by planning officers as a 'bold and splendid' building. The community, which is using an old mill building in Sunbridge Road as a mosque, is currently fund-raising and had hoped to start work in December. The mosque would have four gold and green roof domes, reaching a height of more than 90 feet, and four minarets. But Tufial Shah, treasurer of the Hussainia Islamic Mission, which has its mosque nearby, said they wanted a peace guarantee. He said: 'We are not against the mosque but we are two sects with a different way of life. We would want a guarantee from them that there wouldn't be any trouble.' But Jack Sunter, of the Acorn Nursing Home, said: 'The surface area is massive and it would completely dominate the area and change the local environment.' President of Suffat Al Islam, Mohammed Riaz, said: 'We have been in Bradford for 16 years and have never been involved in any trouble. We try to work together.' Taxi boss Mohammed Nawaz, who runs Elvis Private Hire next to the mosque site, said people's fears of clashes were unfounded. 'There is not likely to be any trouble between the two groups in this country,' he said. 'We are not back home now.' (23 October 1998)

Despite the initial objections by the Shi'a mosque (the Hussainia Islamic Mission) and the Acorn Nursing Home, one of Bradford Council's own planning officers, Mr. Muhammad Yusuf, himself a Muslim, informed me (interviewed December 2001) that the application from Suffat Al Islam—a Sunni organisation with a Sufi orientation—had been approved after discussions lasting several months. Certain trees were to be retained on the site to maintain the environment and a Traffic Regulation Order would be enforced to deal with congestion. However, it seems clear that the suggestion of outbreaks of sectarianism highlighted in the newspaper report was not taken seriously despite the fact that Sunni / Shi'a violence is commonplace in Pakistan. Indeed, Mr. Yusuf suggested that one of the reasons for objecting to the proposed Suffat Al Islam mosque was competition for the site itself from the Shi'a Hussainia Islamic Mission. As a footnote to this story, the new mosque is still incomplete several years after the dispute first emerged.

It is worth underlining that large mosque projects can take several years to complete as they are routinely funded from the pockets of ordinary Muslims. Moreover, Mr. Yusuf considers that, while there are still mosque conversions and renovations in Bradford, there is a preference now for purpose-built mosques. However, perhaps the Suffat Al Islam mosque and Pir Maruf's new JTI central mosque are examples of projects too far. With a location in BD1, on the edge of the central

business district, the latter had the potential to represent an important and abiding example of the Islamisation of a public space which has hitherto remained remarkably untransformed by the Muslim presence in central Bradford. It should also have been the crowning glory of Pir Maruf's attempts to formalise the devotional Islam of the Pakistanis and Kashmiris over a period of four decades. Originally proposed to be a red brick construction, the only intervention regarding its appearance was the authorities' insistence that the brick be a golden colour, in keeping with the local Yorkshire stone. However, after 15 years in the planning at a cost of millions of pounds, it does not attract the large congregation that was intended and appears to be something of a white elephant. It has been a considerable drain on the resources of Pir Maruf during a period when JTI has experienced increased competition for translocal religious leadership from other *pir*-based organisations, Suffat Al Islam being just one of these. Indeed, Pir Habib ur-Rehman, the figurehead of Suffat Al Islam, is from the same part of Mirpur as Pir Maruf. So, even if there is an absence of mosque conflicts in Bradford, it is clear that the building of highly elaborate mosques represents an intense (and expensive) form of status competition between Muslim groups and personalities.

For the last ten years, then, the situation regarding 'mosque conflicts' in Bradford has been broadly harmonious, although, according to Mr. Yusuf, that was less the case in the 1980s. At that time Muslims represented a smaller percentage of the population of Bradford than is the case today. We shall say more about this in the next section. However, as Mr. Yusuf suggests, it is also important to understand that until recently there was great mutual ignorance between Muslim communities and planners. Whereas Muslims tended to simply set up a mosque in a couple of Victorian houses, without much thought for the planning authorities, the latter were much less knowledgeable than they are now. After years of experience, the non-Muslim planning officer I interviewed (Mr. Douglas Brooke, December 2001), seemed very well informed about the differences between mosques and *madrasahs*, about the location of the *mihrab* ('niche' indicating direction of prayer) and the giving of public *azan* (which is allowed two or three times a day in parts of Bradford).

The Conflict over 'Muslim Bradford': 'Ethnic clustering' or 'Self-segregation'?

The absence of mosque conflicts in contemporary Bradford can be explained mainly in terms of the social and political implications of a densely populated Pakistani Muslim inner city. The Census reveals that, of around 1.6 million Muslims living in Britain in 2001, about 75,000 were settled in Bradford compared with just under 50,000 in 1991.[5] Outside of

London, which in any case is split into separate boroughs, this makes Bradford the second largest centre of Muslim population after Birmingham (140,000 Muslims). Moreover, unlike Birmingham, numbers of non-Muslim minorities are small. In terms of other South Asian religious traditions, Sikhs and Hindus together have a population of less than 10,000 in Bradford. It is this overwhelming predominance of Muslims which makes the city distinctive, a fact that is also reinforced by ethnicity. In 2001 there were 67,994 'Pakistanis' in Bradford—15 per cent of the population—compared to just 12,504 'Indians' (perhaps one-quarter Muslim) and 4,967 'Bangladeshis' (mostly Muslim). What is more, demographic estimates suggest further increases in the size and proportion of the Pakistani Muslim heritage population. Projections for 2011 are 102,350 or 21 per cent of the district's numbers, with the figures for the number of Pakistani heritage schoolchildren being nearer to 40 per cent (Bradford Metropolitan District Council 2000: 2).

The size and concentration of a newly urbanised Pakistani population in Bradford has allowed this constituency to exert levels of political pressure, and achieve levels of political mobilisation, rarely seen amongst South Asian communities elsewhere in Britain. Given their predominance, Pakistanis have faced less competition for political influence and scarce resources than has been the case in larger and more ethnically diverse cities such as Manchester and Birmingham. Indeed, the relative power of Pakistanis in Bradford must be seen as a key factor in Bradford Muslims' reputation for political mobilisation during the 1980s, led invariably by the BCM. By 2003 there were 13 Muslim heritage local councillors elected from the inner-city wards where Pakistanis are concentrated. In Toller (BD8), University, Little Horton (both BD5) and Bradford Moor (BD3) numbers rise well above 50 per cent of population (Phillips 2001).

Given these figures, and the social, cultural, economic and political transformations that have attended them, it is hardly surprising that the setting up of new mosques is for the most part uncontroversial. Moreover, Phillips (2003) enumerates the reasons why, three decades after 'institutionally complete' Pakistani communities emerged, so many Muslims have remained living within inner-city Bradford.[6] Social class is clearly an issue, with more than 80 per cent of Muslims living in areas classified as 'struggling' (Phillips 2003: 41). This compares with only 45–50 per cent of Hindus and Sikhs, who in turn tend to be more suburbanised. However, recalling the insights of anthropological accounts of the 1970s (Dahya 1974; Saifullah-Khan 1977), Phillips (2003) also suggests that there needs to be greater recognition of the benefits of living within, or close to, ethnic 'clusters', even for more upwardly mobile segments: feeling 'safe' and relatively free of racial harassment; mutual support based on ties of family, kin and friendship; and being well served in terms of proximity to centres of cultural

reproduction and consumption such as places of worship, restaurants, cloth houses, video stores and so on. Clearly, the seeming absence of conflict over the Islamisation (and Asianisation) of public space in Bradford could be added to this list.

Phillips' (2003) account of the positive aspects of 'clustering' for Pakistani Muslims and others in Bradford can be contrasted with Ouseley's investigation of 'community fragmentation along social, cultural, ethnic and religious lines':

> Ethnic groups are increasingly segregating themselves from each other and retreating into 'comfort zones' made up of people like themselves. They only connect with each other on those occasions when they cannot avoid each other, such as in shops, on the streets, at work, when travelling and, perversely, in Asian-owned restaurants... (Ouseley 2001: 16).

In a critique of Ouseley, Phillips (2003) provides a useful reminder that 'preference' is always a 'bounded choice' and that ethnic and religious 'segregation' does not necessarily reflect a voluntary desire to be 'separate' from other ethnic groups. However, Ouseley is much more concerned with a different matter—the impact of such 'clustering' on the city of Bradford as a whole: 'if the Muslim community fails, Bradford fails' (2001: 12). Writing in the wake of a second 'race' riot within six years, disorders which saw Pakistani youth confront police and attack non-Asian businesses after it was rumoured that the National Front were in town, Ouseley argues for the need to cultivate civic pride in a common 'Bradfordian' identity.

Ouseley describes Bradford as it is today, without properly explaining how it got to be the way it is. It is only in the supplementary report by a former Race Relations Officer at Bradford Council (Mahony 2001) that one gets a sense of historical context. Nevertheless, his account does draw attention to a conflict that is discernable not in isolated struggles over the establishment of mosques, but rather in the more pervasive Islamisation of the inner city. Ouseley also reports that 'whites' and smaller minority groups such as Hindus, Sikhs and Black-Caribbeans often feel neglected in the city because they perceive it to be 'Muslim dominant' (2001: 10). At a time when 'communities' have to compete against one another for scarce resources, there is an assumption that Pakistanis, especially, 'get everything'. With little opportunity to challenge mutual stereotypes in segregated schools, Muslims too, of course, feel alienated by the resulting hostility towards them. The result, suggests Ouseley, is increasingly entrenched ethnic and religious polarisation:

> A fast-growing Muslim community is, to an extent, resentful of perceived as well as actual unfair and unequal treatment. The Muslim community therefore tends to draw on the comfort and security derived from staying together, retaining its

> strong culture, religious affiliation and identity, to live in self-contained communities and maintain strong links with Pakistan (2001: 17).[7]

Bradford is clearly a city struggling to reinvent itself after the decline of its once world-famous woollen textiles industry. This decline was particularly sharp during in the 1970s and 1980s. Moreover, the youthful and expanding Pakistani Muslim population undoubtedly experiences very high levels of material deprivation and social exclusion in terms of overcrowded housing, educational underachievement, high unemployment and institutional racism (Bradford Congress 1996; Taj 1996). However, having acknowledged these factors, Ouseley goes on to suggest that the question of leadership at institutional, organisational and community levels has been pivotal in Bradford's drift towards religious and ethnic conflict. Amongst all of the ordinary Bradfordians that Ouseley and his team interviewed, one of the most commonly held views was that leaders have contributed significantly to polarisation:

> Political leadership has been weak in kowtowing to community leadership and operating within a 'doing deals' culture to avoid 'disturbances' and to 'keep the peace'. So-called 'community leaders' are self-styled, in league with the establishment key people and maintain the status quo of control and segregation through fear, ignorance and threats. Community leaders tend to retain their power base by maintaining the segregated status quo, even when unrepresentative (2001: 10).

If Ouseley is critical of the local political leadership for failing to make the management of 'race relations' a high enough priority in Bradford, then 'community' leaders (which, amongst Pakistani Muslims, often suggests mosque leaders) are also targeted as having a 'responsibility' for the lack of civic engagement in the city. While Ouseley recognises that 'self-segregation' can be explained by a range of factors, one said to be important in Bradford is:

> the belief that it is the only way to promote, retain and protect faith and cultural identity and affiliation… There is resentment towards the Asian community by sections of the white community who perceive hostile and mono-cultural religious leaders as the advocates of segregation (2001: 10).

Ouseley also mentions 'all-Muslim' (and 'all-white') schools, suggesting that there is a fear in Bradford of challenging them about their contribution (or lack of it) to 'integration'. Religious supplementary schools—of which 63 out of 79 were Muslim, often mosque-based, in 2001—are also seen as 'contributing significantly to the polarisation of the community' (Ouseley 2001: 44).

Ouseley's report is typical of other recent writing about Bradford which suggests that analysis of Pakistani Muslim communities requires explanation not just in terms of social class and 'race' but also with

reference to religion and culture (Lewis 2002; Macey 1999; Mahony 2001).[8] For example, Macey (1999) insists that there is an increasing tendency towards public and domestic violence amongst Pakistani heritage males in Bradford and that this cannot be explained simply in terms of material deprivation and social exclusion. Citing examples such as a vigilante campaign to remove prostitutes from Manningham and the 'policing' of 'un-Islamic' activities amongst young Muslim women by the 'mobile phone mob', she argues that it is necessary to examine the way in which Islam—whether 'orthodox' or not—can be deployed to legitimate such violence. Indeed, in parts of Bradford persons, buildings and other markers of 'non-Muslim' ethnicity are coming under verbal and physical attack.[9] For Lewis (2002), a 'gansta' sub-culture of crime and drugs, as well as educational underachievement and unemployment amongst Pakistani heritage youth, can be partly explained in terms of a dislocation in the transmission of religious and cultural values across the generations. Citing critical voices within the Muslim community such as Taj (1996), he points to the practical and pedagogical problems of rote learning the Qur'an in Arabic at the end of the school day and highlights the fact that many older *imams* are unable to help children relate their lessons (or indeed their religion) to an English-speaking British context.

Like Macey (1999) and Lewis (2002), Ouseley (2001) suggests that, in the past, fears of the charge of 'racism' have tended to silence a questioning of cultural and religious institutions and practices in Bradford. At the same time, religious and community leaders have been very reluctant to openly acknowledge, or engage in public discussion about, these issues. While there is no doubt that many Muslims share these concerns about their 'leaders', such matters can only be truly understood in terms of the multi-dimensional dynamics of communities. For example, in their study of perceptions of 'forced marriage' in Bradford and Tower Hamlets, London, Samad and Eade (2002) shed important light on this question of barriers to critical dialogue between minority communities, the state and wider society. Explaining how attitudes to 'forced marriage' varied amongst different segments of Muslim population, they show that young people often think that such issues are more significant than older or middle-aged groups are prepared to admit; moreover, echoing Ouseley and others, they also have little confidence in the ability of community leaders and *imams* to deal with these problems (Samad and Eade 2002: 97). For their part, elders tend to deny that there is a problem, while the middle-aged believe that intervention is unnecessary, as social change will eventually cause the issue to disappear. However, what also emerges from this report but not Ouseley's is the significant point that exposing marginalised and relatively inarticulate communities to public scrutiny and debate tends to make them more 'sensitive' and 'suspicious' rather than 'self-critical' or 'reflective' (Samad and Eade 2002: 101). In the

current climate especially, then, the state and wider society would do well to understand that, unless dealt withcautiously, the cultural and religious dimensions of conflicts in the public space can mutate into unwanted (and often unintended) arguments about racism and Islamophobia.

Clearly, these are important issues that require careful consideration by both political and community leaderships as Bradford attempts to come to terms with the findings of Ouseley's report. While Ouseley himself puts forward a number of recommendations including 'citizenship education' in schools and 'diversity competency in the workplace', it is the need for a 'dialogue-driven' leadership that he sees as key. He summarises the benefits of interaction as he sees them, although not in any detail or especially convincingly: 'improved community relations and conversely, reduced conflicts, less social exclusion, decreasing fragmentation and a reversal of self-segregation trends (2001: 41).More clearly needs to be said about why::

> too many people … do not see the need for integration or wider interaction. They have yet to be convinced about the benefits to be derived for themselves from a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-faith and multi-lingual society or community (2001: 8).

In the sections that follow I want to explore something of the reality behind such remarks in terms of the leadership and institutions associated with Bradford's mosques.

Representing Muslims: Bradford Council for Mosques (BCM) Today

In the wake of the 2001 riots, mosque representatives were vocal in denying 'any rumour that the youngsters were being urged to participate in the violence on religious grounds'.[10] *Imams* were said to have condemned 'these acts of criminality', disowning the rioters and chastising them for departing from norms of Islamic behaviour. In a refrain that would become all too necessary to repeat after 11 September 2001, Young Muslims UK stressed that 'The Muslim community of Bradford cannot and will not condone racial violence. Islam, in fact, is a religion of peace and harmony'. Many suggested that the rioters were not regular mosque attenders but few publicly entertained the suggestion that the Muslim leadership or its mosques were part of the problem. However, as the body representing Muslims in Bradford for over twenty years, the main burden of responding to the challenge of 'self-segregation' and 'community cohesion' has fallen on BCM.

As we shall see now, BCM's approach to political representation since burning a copy of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* in 1989 has been

consistently conciliatory. Particular use has been made of inter-faith alliances between well-placed individuals who have built up personal relationships in Bradford over the years. For example, when a Bradford church was attacked by young Pakistani heritage Muslims who racially abused the vicar and dragged rubbish inside before setting it alight, members of BCM sought to defuse any sense of conflict between Muslims and Christians by meeting with the Bishop of Bradford and agreeing to attend a service at St. Philip's Church in Girlington and 'apologise' to the congregation (*Bradford Telegraph and Argus*, 7 November 2001). Similarly, one of the executive members of BCM I interviewed (June 2003), related that since 2001 BCM has also been involved with the Christian Churches in promoting the following: an Intercultural Leadership School for young people of different faiths; the Bradford Afghan Appeal which was a joint effort between Christian and Muslim charities and schools; the Stop the War Campaign which saw Muslims, Christians and others demonstrate their opposition to the invasion of Iraq on a common platform; and finally, a series of colloquia, 'Can God and Caesar Co-Exist Peacefully in a Democratic Society?', held at the University of Bradford.

Such headline-making activities represent good public relations for Bradford, in general, and Muslims in particular. However, in reality, respondents engaged in this work suggest that it is often the Christian Churches, committed to retaining a presence and 'mission' in the inner city and with the structures and resources to support their engagement, that have led the way in creating the opportunities for Muslims to publicly commit themselves to 'community cohesion'. Perhaps, given this imbalance of resources, that is as it should be but there is growing frustration that BCM has been willing to put its name to projects but has not always found it easy to take the initiative or generate enthusiasm amongst Muslim communities at the grassroots. The organisation employs a skeleton staff including a couple of young development workers and runs an elderly day care centre. However, apart from this and providing a 'reasonable' and 'moderate' public face for Muslims, it is not at all clear that BCM really has much influence anymore in Bradford, either in wider society or with its member mosques. It is not clear what sort of leadership it can provide.

In the early 1980s BCM was funded from the public purse and able to mobilise the Muslims of Bradford over key issues such as *halal* meat, Honeyford and Rushdie (Lewis 1994, 1997; Samad 1992, 1997). However, at a time when the financing of multicultural initiatives was being wound down anyway, the book-burning saw funds withdrawn and BCM is not privileged as a partner of government agencies in the way that it was. The authorities are more likely to consult with other, regeneration-led, minority ethnic organisations such as Quest for Economic Development (QED). BCM has come to rely almost entirely

on the subscription fees of its member mosques. However, unlike the Irish Catholic immigrants with whom they are sometimes compared (Lewis 1997), Muslims in Britain have no ecclesiastical hierarchy or system of trained parish priests. Therefore BCM has no special authority over Bradford's mosques and its leadership works on a voluntary basis. BCM's leaders are all major players in the affairs of Bradford's various ethnic and sectarian communities, but the city's 44 or so mosques are independent institutions, mostly run by committees of first generation migrants with their own power bases and agendas.

So it is then that while members of BCM might offer guidance on matters such as the recruitment of *imams* and their training (e.g. in child protection matters) or on the content of supplementary education, mosques are under no obligation to take up such issues. However, this sort of attitude has not helped to endear community leaders to British-born youth. Moreover, another executive member of BCM (interviewed December 2001) acknowledged that, on the whole, mosques are not attracting a new generation of leaders from one traditional recruiting ground, the local business community. Younger Muslim businessmen in Bradford are demonstrating a reluctance to get involved in mosque committees because they perceive them as introverted and unproductive. There is a desire for engagement but, as mosques are not sending out the right signals, many are getting involved in other spaces. After 'September 11', businessmen have also been reluctant to sponsor 'Muslim only' charity events for fear of alienating non-Muslims—still an important part of their customer base (e.g. restaurants).

However, for BCM, as the public face of these institutions, opting out is not an option; nevertheless, prioritisation is a necessity. With limited financial and human resources, I was told by the representative of BCM (interviewed December 2001) that efforts are being concentrated on a handful of mosques where there is a will to take on the risk of change. However, echoing Samad and Eade (2002), he insisted that what the grassroots needed was 'encouragement not criticism…anything that is positive needs to be encouraged, otherwise the community will become completely isolated'. In the next section I explore the limits and possibilities of Muslim cooperation in the public space with a case study of one of the mosques with which BCM is working.

'York Road' Mosque: The Limits of 'Cooperation'

'York Road' mosque serves a middle-sized Pakistani and Kashmiri heritage community in the neighbourhood of Manningham.[11] It is one of the Barelwi mosques associated with Pir Maruf's JTI network mentioned above. While a stink bomb was thrown into the mosque in the wake of 'September 11', York Road has never been a focus for conflict either with non-Muslims or other Muslims. Muslims are in a majority in

Manningham, so most local people would probably agree with one of my respondents that the area is ‘safe for Pakis’. Moreover, the existence of so many mosques in Bradford makes sectarian disputes over a single mosque very rare: each Islamic movement has at least one mosque to its name.

Occupying a former Anglican church hall, the mosque was born in 1985 of a friendly relationship between its future president, ‘Shabbir Ahmed’, and the local vicar (McLoughlin 1998). Shabbir and two other Muslim men wanted Muslim children to be given religious instruction within the immediate vicinity of their homes and it was the vicar who came up with the suggestion that the Muslims could use his under-used and rather run-down church hall for teaching. In 1989, four years after these events, the church hall was put up for sale by the vicar as his predominantly white Christian congregation no longer had the numbers to warrant maintaining even the church. Shabbir and his associates were given first refusal on the purchase of the hall. The sale was agreed. However, Shabbir also envisaged extending and refurbishing the mosque so that, in the long term, a multi-functional centre serving the diverse needs of the expanding Muslim presence in the neighbourhood could be developed.

Mosques like York Road are typical of ‘ethnic’ institutions (Dahya 1974) in that they are vehicles for the dynamic reconstruction of tradition and culture so as to advance subaltern group interests in contexts of rapid social change. While the state and more upwardly mobile Muslim activists today see this only as a ‘problem’, this should surprise no one. Many if not most first generation peasant and working class immigrants, ranging from East European Jews to Irish Catholics, have adopted this same strategy of survival in Britain. Mosques provide an important space—for first-generation immigrants especially—to resist assimilation, navigate social exclusion (including the experiences of racism and unemployment) and organise self-help. York Road mosque does this by creating continuity of experience in terms of its institutional form, its religious rituals and specialists, and its social relationships.

The Pakistani and Kashmiri Muslims who attend York Road mosque usually follow a Sufi-oriented devotional Islam with its own distinctive cosmology populated by a hierarchy of charismatic saints. This does not provide a basis for political organisation or even encourage political engagement, however. Instead, a majority of Pakistanis and Kashmiris have traditionally mobilised resources along kinship lines, most especially in terms of *biradaris* (inter-marrying patrilineal caste groupings). Nevertheless, Islam is still seen as an important form of social legitimation, so that *biradari* networks were a very effective means of raising the £100,000 or more required to purchase and then refurbish York Road mosque. Moreover, any intending local councillor in the York Road area—often a *biradari* candidate—would inevitably be well-known

at the mosque and take care to discuss policies with Shabbir and other committee members.

York Road's mosque committee is not elected on a democratic basis. Rather, it is made up of representatives of the two main *biradaris* represented at the mosque—the Choudhrys and the Rajas. Men like Shabbir, who actually lead mosques like York Road in Britain, therefore tend to combine good family connections with respect as a strong character, and some general education including competence in English. However, even for the most enlightened of mosque leaders like Shabbir, there is a general difficulty in responding creatively to the pressing social needs of the community, most especially in terms of provision for the youth. Even if they have the cultural capital themselves, their main constituency still tends to be the first generation of migrants—the *babas* (the old men)—whose primary orientation is still very much towards the Indian subcontinent.

The *babas* tend to colonise the mosque as their own space and attempts to open it up to other constituencies are often resisted. The mosque is jealously protected as the only public space in Manningham where the *babas*' honour is truly acknowledged. 'Imtiaz', a community worker at York Road's elderly day care centre, told me (interview, June 2003) that when they visit Pakistan and Kashmir—perhaps for up to six months of the year—'the *babas* have the status of their land, houses and contributions to local charitable concerns'. However, in Britain they are often seen as 'nobodies'. They have begun to see the disjunctions of the transnational life they lead—especially its impact on their children—but 'they are unsure how to solve their problems. They feel incapable of contributing'. Much of this is compounded by the experience of long-term unemployment. Indeed, an important function of York Road is that it fills a gap in the state's provision for the jobless, helping to temper—both spiritually and socially—the more negative aspects of joblessness. The mosque has provided a framework within which they have begun to adapt to their changed circumstances. It is not simply that the *babas* have nothing better to do, having lost their jobs in the local mills and factories. Rather, spending time at the mosque gives them a chance to get out of the house and, for those involved in committee work especially, an opportunity to take some satisfaction in using their free time productively.

While there is a general lack of conflict in the history of York Road mosque, and one of its main functions would seem to be to maintain ethnic and other boundaries, there is some evidence of cooperation with wider society. Apart from its early association with the local Anglican vicar, the mosque welcomes visitors and has happily participated in the dominant 'multicultural' discourse about social harmony in Bradford for several years. Much of this is down to the personal commitment of Shabbir who is also a past-president of Bradford Council of Mosques.

For example, back in 1996 Shabbir was pictured in a national newspaper wearing a *shalwar qamis* (baggy Punjabi suit), a *topi* (hat) and a Bradford City Association Football Club scarf around his neck. He had one fist clenched and another clasping a flag, which announced that 'Bradford' were off to the national stadium at 'Wem-b-ley' to take part in the 'play-offs for promotion to the First Division'. The article 'Mosques and churches echo high hopes of Bradford's faithful football fans for vital Wembley win', explained how Friday prayers at York Road mosque, witnessed by Bradford City's shoeless chairman, Geoffrey Richmond, had been punctuated by 'unexpected words' urging Bradford to beat Notts County. In the same way, Christian churches around the city would do the same: 'this is an excellent way of expressing the city's unity', said the Provost of the Cathedral.

Shabbir and the mosque committee have also been keen to cooperate with the local authorities in respect of securing limited funds to help support a number of 'community'—rather than explicitly 'religious'—initiatives. These have included a homework club for teenagers underachieving at school, a day care centre for elderly men and an information technology suite. Small amounts of financial support have been forthcoming for heating bills, payment of tutors and a community worker, as well as furniture and equipment including computers worth £30,000. However, such initiatives at York Road mosque represent a form of 'cooperation' limited almost entirely to transactions at the 'ethnic' boundary, exchanges between the local authorities on one side and minority leaders such as Shabbir on the other.

In Bradford, Muslim leaders like Shabbir have usually been required only to 'translate' accounts of the distinctive needs of their encapsulated 'communities'. Moreover, initiatives tend to be *ad hoc* and their success rather limited. For example, there was little or no monitoring of how York Road mosque used funds or managed resources once they had been secured. It seems that there is very little expectation of accountability either to funding bodies or, more importantly, to the community at large. The 'doing deals culture' that Ouseley (2001: 10) describes has meant that mosque leaders have not been forced to develop new skills and competencies for themselves and their communities in dealing with the authorities and wider society. Rather, the autonomy of the mosque has remained largely unquestioned and there has been little encouragement to move beyond a position of mere self-sufficiency, however safe and fruitful a strategy this has been in the past for the first generation.

Conclusions

The absence of mosque conflicts in Bradford is interesting in its own right. However, while this is an indication of the security that Muslims enjoy in the ethnic geography of Bradford, it can not mask the conflict

over the pervasive Islamisation of the city. While issues of migration, history and social structure go a long way to explain this situation, commentators are increasingly returning to religion and culture in search of explanations. Indeed, religious leaders and mosques are coming in for significant scrutiny. While, in theory, mosques have great potential to support 'active citizenship', at present they tend to be overwhelmingly concerned with self-help and the particular 'good' of Muslims rather than any 'common good'. This reflects the ethnicity, social class, gender and generation of the main constituencies being served. However, following the events of 'September 11' and now 7 July 2005, the authorities are asking questions of mosques in ways that are likely to bring their autonomy into question as never before.

The sketch presented here of the reality, as well as the rhetoric, of both the BCM and York Road's cooperation with the public sphere begins to illuminate why both 'insider' accounts of 'segregation' and an awareness of the cultural-capital of many Pakistani heritage Muslim constituencies need to be taken more seriously in current debates about 'community cohesion'. At the same time things within mosques are changing slowly. Shabbir Ahmed's son, an Oxbridge-educated teacher, is one of new body of young educated professionals who are beginning to think about genuine dialogue and cooperation with civil society in Islamic terms. As part of the curiously-named Community Safety Education Group (CSEG), he and around 20 young professional Muslims of Barelwi background have begun to organise a number of projects reflecting a 'traditional' Sufi ethos. While they are playing an increasing role in the IT suite, homework club and elderly day care centre at York Road mosque, via a global network of Islamic scholars they are also connecting to a classical Sunni heritage which has much to say about Islamic 'manners' and 'etiquette' (*adab*) and is positive about the possibility of peaceful coexistence with non-Muslims. Perhaps their greatest success to date has been in inviting the American Sufi convert, Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, to speak to nearly 6000 people in Bradford during February 2003.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank members and officers of Bradford Council's Planning Department, Bradford Council for Mosques and 'York Road' mosque for their help during the process of researching this article. I also benefited from conversations with Dr Philip Lewis of Bradford University and two of my research students, Muzamil Khan and Dominic Moghal.

Notes

[1] However, it was in 1889 that Britain's first mosque was established in Woking, London, for British converts and Indian students, with funds provided by the ruler of Bhophal in India. See Nielsen (1992).

[2] The Deobandis were the first of a number of Islamic movements, including the Barelwis, to emerge in response to the challenge of accommodating Muslim society to British colonial rule in nineteenth-century India. Taking their name from the town of Deoband, in which a *madrasa* (Islamic religious school) was founded in 1867, theirs has overwhelmingly been an emphasis on literacy and education, scripturalism and individual responsibility. The Barelwis, by contrast, use the Sunni scholarship of Ahmad Riza Khan (1856–1921) of Bareilly to defend the customary Sufi beliefs and practices of Muslims from the Indian subcontinent, including the intercessionary power of *pirs* (Sufi saints) and visitation at their shrines. Their main detractors claim that Barelwi practices must be seen as *bid'a* (heretical innovation).

[3] Since Sayyid Mawdudi (1903–1979) founded *Jama'at-i Islami* (JI) in India during 1941, it has become one of the most prominent and influential Islamist movements worldwide. For Mawdudi, Islam was a comprehensive political ideology to rival capitalism or communism; it has its own distinctive vision for the transformation of society. In Britain, as in Pakistan, JI related organisations have accommodated themselves to the prevailing political conditions. However, most have also developed distinctive trajectories in a new context. For example, it is organisations such as the Islamic Society of Britain that have taken up debates about community cohesion and citizenship most enthusiastically.

[4] The online minutes of the Bradford Council's planning committee can be found at www.bradford.gov.uk/minutes/MINUTES.home.

[5] Census data can be found at www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001. A profile of Bradford is available at www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/00cx.asp.

[6] Of course, the origins of Bradford's ethnic and religious 'colonies' can be traced back to the 1940s and 1950s when the first Indo-Pakistani labour migrants arrived in Bradford (Dahya 1974; Saifullah-Khan 1977).

[7] However, having identified the particular valency of Muslim ethnicity in Bradford, Ouseley (2001) is rather vague when it comes to providing further contextualisation. He mentions that Bradford is home to 'one of the largest concentrations of Muslims [in Britain], mostly originating from rural Pakistan' (2001: 16) but adds nothing more. It is well-known that 60 to 70 per cent of 'Pakistanis' in Bradford are actually of Kashmiri heritage, tracing their roots to the economically underdeveloped and politically

marginalised district of Mirpur in the disputed territory of Pakistani-administered 'Azad' Kashmir (Ballard 1983; Saifullah Khan 1977: 57). Often sharing a peasant farming background, and having migrated with little education and few technical skills, first-generation Mirpuri migrants have often tended to rely upon intense networks of kinship and religion for survival in the diaspora. However, while representing high social, economic and political value in terms of sustaining a life-world that encompasses Bradford within a complex set of transnational relationships, it is also a 'capital' that rarely meets with the formal expectations of a modern British bureaucracy and its institutions. As the history of Pakistani Muslims in Bradford illustrates so sharply, this has proven to be both an advantage and a disadvantage.

[8] In the early 1980s, any suggestion of the explanatory power of culture or religion by anthropologists was sure to be met with retorts about an essentialist pathology of 'blaming the victim' from neo-Marxist sociologists concerned with accounts of state power and social structure (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1982). However, by the 1990s, scholars like Werbner (1987, 1991b) and Brah (1993) were both arguing, from different starting points, for more nuanced accounts of social structure and culture as 'mutually constitutive'. In this tradition it seems legitimate, therefore, that Ouseley and others should seek to explain the situation of Pakistani Muslims in Bradford with some reference to what Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) would call 'cultural capital', but only so long as there is careful discussion of this dialectic between culture and social structure.

[9] For example, Hashmukh Shah, spokesman for the World Council of Hindus in Bradford, has been vocal in the national press claiming that Hindu families are being driven out of some areas of the city (BBC News Online, 15 May 2001). Muslim leaders dispute this. After the riots in 2001 he 'pinned the blame for the unruly behaviour of Pakistani youths partly on the mosques… "They are less religious centres, more like training grounds for the Taliban"'. The highly charged nature of these comments reflects the intensity of tensions between ethnic and religious minorities in general and a desire amongst 'Asian Hindus' to disassociate themselves from 'Asian Muslims' in particular.

[10] See undated *Bradford Telegraph and Argus* article, 'Muslim leaders unite to condemn "acts of crime"' www.thisisbradford.co.uk/bradford_district/bradford/riot/tue01.html

[11] The true names of 'York Road' mosque and its officers have been anonymised.

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