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Muslim Political Participation in Britain

Post-9/11

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is wholeheartedly dedicated to the two who gave me life, thank you for always loving and supporting me.

To my beloved soulmate, Yacine, who has made me laugh, wiped my tears, gave me strength when I was weak, and supported and encouraged me to achieve my goals. Thank you for making me alive. To my sweet brothers and lovely sisters. To my dear friends. Lastly, to our supervisor, thank you for all the remarks and guidance.

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This research is dedicated to o my dear parents who raised me believing that anything was possible. To my two beloved angels Tamer and Mazen and to my family and friends. To our supervisor, thank you for all your efforts and support.

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ABSTRACT

Muslims' involvement in British politics in the last two decades has become increasingly prevalent. Especially after the attacks of 9/11, that was a turning point not only for Britain, but also for the world as a whole. Since the 8th Century, Muslims from different nationalities migrated to Great Britain for different purposes. Obviously, Muslim countries were suffering from many serious issues; conflicts, civil wars, economic problems, discrimination, etc. Thus, they left their countries seeking safety, education, job opportunities, and better life conditions. Therefore, Muslims became a part of the British society. After examining the history of Muslims in Great Britain, this dissertation tends to investigate the political participation of Muslim community in the last two decades, especially, after the events of 9/11, by emphasising the significant political role of Muslims in the British parliament, general election and campaigns. Using the quantitative research method by emphasizing the statistical analysis of the British Muslim community's political participation after the events of 9/11 relying on authentic statistics. The historical approach is also used in the research to review and trace the Muslims' main immigration waves to the United Kingdom and the reasons behind leaving their countries in the first place. Finally, the study ends with the comparison between different Muslim categories, men vs women, young vs old Muslims, graduate vs non-graduate in order to emphasize the difference between them.

RÉSUMÉ

L'implication des musulmans dans la politique britannique au cours des deux dernières décennies est devenue de plus en plus répandue. Surtout après les attentats du 11 septembre, ce fut un tournant non seulement pour la Grande-Bretagne, mais aussi pour le monde dans son ensemble. Depuis le 8ème siècle, les musulmans de différentes nationalités ont migré vers la Grande-Bretagne à des fins différentes. De toute évidence, les pays musulmans souffraient de nombreux problèmes graves ; conflits, guerres civiles, la sécurité, d'éducation, d'opportunités d'emploi et de meilleures conditions de vie. Par conséquent, les musulmans sont devenus une partie de la société britannique. Après avoir examiné l'histoire des musulmans en Grande-Bretagne, cette thèse tend à enquêter sur la participation politique de la communauté musulmane au cours des deux dernières décennies, en particulier, après les événements du 11 septembre, en insistant sur le rôle politique important des musulmans au parlement britannique, élections générales et campagnes. Utiliser la méthode de recherche quantitative en mettant l'accent sur l'analyse statistique de la participation politique de la communauté musulmane britannique après les événements du 11 septembre en s'appuyant sur des statistiques authentiques. L'approche historique est également utilisée dans la recherche pour examiner et retracer les principales vagues d'immigration des musulmans vers le Royaume-Uni et les raisons pour lesquelles ils ont quitté leur pays en premier lieu. En fin, l'étude se termine par la comparaison entre différentes catégories de musulmans, hommes vs femmes, jeunes vs vieux musulmans, diplômés vs non diplômés afin de souligner la différence entre eux.

ملخص

أصبح انخراط المسلمين في السياسة البريطانية في العقدين الماضيين سائدًا بشكل متزايد. خاصة بعد هجمات الحادي عشر من سبتمبر التي كانت نقطة تحول ليس فقط بالنسبة لبريطانيا، ولكن أيضًا للعالم بأسره. منذ القرن الثامن، هاجر مسلمون من جنسيات مختلفة إلى بريطانيا العظمى لأغراض مختلفة. من الواضح أن الدول الإسلامية كانت تعاني من العديد من القضايا الخطيرة. نزاعات، حروب أهلية، مشاكل اقتصادية، تمييز ... إلخ. وهكذا تركوا بلادهم بحثًا عن الأمان والتعليم وفرص العمل وظروف الحياة الأفضل. لذلك، أصبح المسلمون جزءًا من المجتمع البريطاني. بعد دراسة تاريخ المسلمين في بريطانيا العظمى، تميل هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في المشاركة السياسية للجالية المسلمة في العقدين الماضيين، خاصة بعد أحداث 11 سبتمبر، من خلال التأكيد على الدور السياسي المهم للمسلمين في البرلمان البريطاني، الانتخابات العامة والحملات. استخدام أسلوب البحث الكمي من خلال التأكيد على التحليل الإحصائي للمشاركة السياسية للجالية المسلمة البريطانية بعد أحداث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر بالاعتماد على إحصائيات صحيحة. كما تم استخدام المنهج التاريخي في البحث لمراجعة وتتبع موجات الهجرة الرئيسية للمسلمين إلى المملكة المتحدة وأسباب مغادرة بلادهم في المقام الأول. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، اختتمت الدراسة بمقارنة بين فئات المسلمين المختلفة، الرجال مقابل النساء، المسلمون الشباب مقابل كبار السن.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BBC	The British Broadcasting Corporation
BMF	The British Muslim Forum
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
FOSIS	The Federation of Student Islamic Societies
GLA	The Greater London Authority
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISB	The Islamic Society of Britain
MAB	The Muslim Association of Britain
MCP	Muslim Council of Britain
MEND	Muslim engagement and development
MPs	Members of Parliament
ONS	Office for National Statistics
SMC	The Muslim Sufi Council
UK	The United Kingdom
UKACIA	UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UMO	The Union of Muslim Organisations

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Muslim community in the UK is growing faster than any other community. Yet, its participation and influence in British political life is still not studied exhaustively. The Muslims' first interactions with the British started as early as the 8th century; a mutual relationship grew between the two sides due to the travels undertaken by knowledge seekers and traders from the Muslim world to Britain and vice versa. The first large group of Muslims came around three centuries ago; most of them were sailors used to work for the British East India Company.

After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, a new phase of Muslim immigration to Britain began. The Yemenis presented the highest percentage of these immigrants. In 1950s and due the post-war labour shortage, Muslims from Nigeria and African subcontinent started migrating to the UK. Immigrants from other countries such as Morocco arrived around 1960s. Another wave of Nigerians migrated to Britain in the 1990s after the economic crisis that hit their country. The same period saw the arrival of as refugees and asylum seekers. Muslims from other nationalities like the Saudis and Egyptians are also present in the UK since decades, although in smaller numbers. Immigrants from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria arrived recently because of the war and instability ravaging their countries.

Britain's Muslim population has exceeded in 2019 the number of three million. According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) the number of Muslims was about 3.2 million living in England out of the 3.3 million living in the UK; a third of these are aged under sixteen. They make up 5.9% of the 2018 English population (55.16 million) while in some neighborhoods of London they represent almost 50% Islamic of the population according to the ONS.

If the ONS provides enough demographics about Muslims, their political behavior and participation are to be investigated. This research thus tends to investigate British Muslims political participation during the last two decades. In other word, it seeks to understand to what extent these Muslims are involved in the UK politics in the era post 9/11. They study hypothesizes that British Muslims political participation increased after 9/11 as a result of the spread of Islamophobia that followed the attacks. The research also asks some questions in an attempt to find any correlation between Muslims' demographics and their political behavior.

The research relies on the qualitative-quantitative research method tracing the activities of Muslim organizations and associations, analyzing their speeches, declarations, and the statistics clarifying their political involvement in elections, campaigns, and grass-root activities. The comparative historical approach is also used to trace Muslims' arrival in the UK and compare their political participation before and after 9/11 to find any change and/or continuities in their behavior.

The importance of the study stems from the need to highlight the impact of the attacks of 9/11 and the Islamophobia on Muslims' political participation in Britain during the period that followed the attacks. The political involvement of the Muslim community in Britain was rarely discussed especially its participation during the post 9/11 period.

The topic of the political participation of the Muslim community in Britain has been dealt with in a number of studies. The 2015 book entitled *The Political Participation of Muslims in Britain*, edited by Timothy Peace explores the involvement of Muslims in the British political life. According to the author, there is a growing interest in the political participation and illustration of religious and ethnic minorities in Europe. While in many countries this is quite a brand new topic, such studies in Britain clearly dates back to the early 1970s. This can be

explained by the migration waves and the settlement of huge numbers of migrants from its former colonies in the immediate post-war period, which supposed that problems of immigration, race and ethnicity became prominent relatively early. In addition, in contrast to other European nations, which discriminated the migrants and denied their voting rights, many of these arriving migrants in Britain had complete political rights as both citizens of the UK or Commonwealth citizens. It was in this context that Anwar and Kohler (1975) began out their research on political participation amongst minorities in Britain by firstly tracking the participation of Asians in Rochdale in the parliamentary by-election of 1972, and then participation by all ethnic minorities during the 1974 general election.

The journal article titled "Are British Muslims alienated from mainstream politics by Islamophobia and British foreign policy?" examines the political attitudes of Muslims in Britain using data from the 2010 Ethnic Minority British Election Study. It demonstrates the relationship between political alienation and political participation on the one hand, and Islamophobia and opposition to British military intervention in Afghanistan on the other. The principle findings are that Muslims' perceptions of Islamophobia are related to a higher level of political alienation, a greater likelihood of non-election participation, and a lower likelihood of voting. Similarly, disapproval of the war in Afghanistan is linked to greater political alienation and a higher probability of non-electoral activity in certain forms. There is strong evidence that British Muslims are more likely to interpret discrimination on their religion and perceive more prejudice at the group level. Theoretically, these findings have two implications. First, they back up the idea that non-election involvement is motivated by dissatisfaction with the party political system. Second, they argue that perceptions of sociotropic discrimination (toward minorities) and an unusual salient political problem in which both parties are opposed by the majority of voters can

cause negative affects toward the political system and motivate non-electoral participation at the cost of voting.

This dissertation is written in two chapters. The first chapter traces back the arrival of Muslims in the UK and the growth of their community. The chapter also examines their demographics relying on statistics provided by governmental agencies and by Muslim institutions. The chapter ends explaining the concept of political participation and its different manifestations and forms.

The second chapter investigates the extent of Muslims' involvement in the British politics after 9/11. The first section of the chapter investigates the impact of 9/11 on Muslims especially the rise of Islamophobia and the reaction of British Muslims. The second section investigates Muslims participation in politics which can be observed in the number of Muslim organizations and politicians and the figures related to general elections, mainly those of 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2017.

CHAPTER ONE

A Historical and Demographic Overview of Muslim

Community in the UK

Introduction

A number of immigration waves of Muslims from different regions migrated to the UK especially in the last two centuries either for economic, social or political reasons. This chapter traces back these waves showing in addition their ethnic groups and the UK regions they settled. The spread of Islam also in UK is an element which is elaborated in this chapter. The second section in this chapter deals with the multiple reasons that led immigrants to migrate to UK and the largest communities in UK. The education of Muslims too is reviewed; their level of education and educational preferences are shown. Of course without forgetting women role in raising children. Furthermore there is a reference to Family traditions, habits, gender and generation in Muslim community. The third and the last section in this chapter deals with the beginning of political involvement of Muslims in the UK and how they started to mingle in politics. Their experiment and the challenges they faces are explained. This section explores the beginning of Muslim engagement in political life in UK as immigrants, as foreigners, but most importantly as Muslims.

1.1 The Different Immigration Waves of Muslims to the UK

Muslims have been arriving and settling in Britain for over a thousand years, working as traders, bankers, spice merchants, medical students, seafarers, and servants in the economy and society. Already, by the late 1800's a distinctive Anglo-Muslim community had begun to emerge

in Britain. Islam's history in Britain was a continuous involvement with the colonialism of the 18th and 20th century when much of British expansionism came at the enlargement of the Muslim Nawabs and Sultans who were leaders in South Asia, South East Asia and the Middle East, where much of the imperial sectors were established. Yet Britain's interaction with Muslims preceded colonial expansion by several centuries.

England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland were parts of the European trading networks that prospered through the Middle Ages though the existence of the wars and the pandemic which covered the continent during that period (Oliver-Dee 28). Despite the fact that there was a cultural and economic exchange between Europe in general and the British Isles in particular, there were no Muslims settling there. But during the Elizabethan age, interaction became more explicit.

The majority of Muslim immigrants came from South Asia and this can be explained by the active imperial activities of Britain in this region. Upper-class Indians, for instance, immigrated to the United Kingdom for the aim of education and business. The same educational and entrepreneurial goals are shared by current Muslims wishing to migrate to Britain especially from the territory of Azad Kashmir's more destitute areas in North-Western Pakistan, North-Western Bangladesh's Sylhet area, and the Indian state of Punjab.

During the First World War and the Second World War, under the Indian British Army a large number of Muslim Indians fought for the United Kingdom, consequently they settled in Britain. The following decades British Asian from what is known today as Bangladesh, Pakistan and India migrated to Britain seeking for better opportunities.

The first immigrants' waves included males only, but after the Second World War these immigrants' conditions improved and their families joined them to start the first most important settlements in the UK (Knott *Muslims and Islam in the UK* 2).

At the start of the 1960s, aided by a "myth of return," the main goals of South Asian Muslims were to amass as much wealth as possible before returning to their own nations; this, however, by chance or intent, did not happen. Muslim Asians living in East Africa arrived in the 1960s and early 1970s, primarily as a result of the British's "Africanisation" of former colonized nations. Their economic status was that of a middle-class family, and they aspired to be professionals in their societies of origin, and they worked hard to accomplish those goals in Britain. Muslim Asians in Uganda were forcibly expelled from Uganda in 1973, and those who were allowed by the British were advised to relocate away from densely populated South Asian pockets known as "red regions." During the late 1970s and early 1980s, significant economic hardship and a desire for family reunification drove many Bangladeshis to seek asylum in the United Kingdom.

Another wave of immigrants came in UK since the 1980's from the Middle East, South Asia, Eastern Europe and North Africa as a result of political persecution and civil wars. Refugees and asylum seekers including Muslims from Afghanistan, Libya, Algeria, Somalia, Iran, Iraq, Bosnia, Yemen (Knott *Muslims and Islam in the UK* 3).

The large part of British Muslims moved from the British Commonwealth nations and former British Colonies mainly for financial reasons. Since the British Empire extended the British nationality to the Commonwealth citizens, the bureaucratic procedures to obtain the nationality were simple. The attractive element for this movement to Britain was the labour

deficiency caused by the World War II causalities and the progress of the living measures of the working class under labour's welfare policies.

Overpopulation, high rate of unemployment and poverty within the former colonies were strong elements that made the prospect of modest jobs in foreign countries attractive. As a result an approximate 50.000 Indians and Pakistani relocated to the UK (Tatari and Shaykhutdinov 22). Owing to these uncommon openings, certain jobs became undesirable for British white nationals, pulling in newcomers with little preparation and poor language skills.

More recently, thousands of Muslims migrated to Britain as refugees mainly from countries witnessing wars such Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Libya, Iran, Eritrea, and Soudan. According to governmental statistics of immigration the whole number of Muslim refugees given asylum by the end of March 2019 comprises 9.191 awards the refugees (up 34%); 446 Turkish, Afghan 299, Iranian 249, Eritrean 268, Sudanese up 193 and Syrian 145 and Libyan nationals 439. In addition, 5.622 family visas were issued to partners to those who are already allowed refuge or humanitarian protection in the UK ("How Many People").

In regard to Muslims rights in the UK, they, in fact, had practised their religion without restrictions in the beginning because of their small number. Politically, they did not have rights and they did not demand it. In the 16th century, there was a process called "becoming a Turk" referring to "the convert to Islam process". Small number of people of British people converted to Islam as they were exposed to some Muslims; they were influenced by the beliefs and the way of life of Islam and Muslims. In the 19th century, the number of converted British people increased, travellers, administrators, and intellectuals were confronted to Islam in Muslim societies, they decided to be Muslims and adopt Islam religion. A well- known example is Henry Quilliam who converted to Islam in Morocco in 1880's to return to UK to found the first mosque

in the UK. Since then, Islam continued spreading not just by Muslim immigrants but also by convert British such as Lord Headley who was the president of the British Muslim society from 1914, Marmaduke Pickthall who translated the Quran into English in 1930, and Lady Evelyn, a Scottish noble woman who was the first British-born woman to undertake the Pilgrimage to Mecca.

A century later, the number of Muslims in the UK reached approximately 2.8 and in 2018 is was more than 3.3 million according to the ONS. Muslims today in UK have their mosques where they practise their religion freely, they have their social and political rights, they are involved in political life, they vote and they run themselves for political and administrative offices. Many Muslims hold political offices such as Mayors, MPs and minsters.

Immigrants of Britain and UK in general, either Muslim or non-Muslim had to leave their countries because of economic problems, political issues, family reunification, natural disasters, jobs opportunities as well as seeking a better life conditions. At the beginning, Immigrants may face many problems such as language barriers, employment opportunities, housing, access to local services, cultural differences in addition to racism and prejudice.

Many Muslim countries face significant issues, and this obviously lead Muslims from different nationalities to leave their country due to persecution based on their ethnicity, race, politics, or culture. War, conflicts, civil wars and government persecution are also among the key factors of Muslim migration. In addition to that, the majority of Muslims are not free to express their political opinions in their own countries.

How Muslim move and migrate is also influenced by demographic changes. Growing or shrinking populations, as well as aging or youthful populations, have an impact on economic growth and employment opportunities in the countries of origin, as well as migration policies of

destination countries like Britain. Labor standards, unemployment, and the overall health of a country's economy are all linked to demographic and economic migration. Higher salaries, better employment opportunities, a higher standard of living, and educational chances are all pull factors.

People have always avoided natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes. According to the IOM, Environmental migrants are those who for reason of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad.

A recent evaluation was conducted in UK about Muslim migrant population between the late 2019 and the early 2020; the findings were published in two reports, Europe's Unauthorized Immigrant Population Peaks in 2016, Then Levels Off, published by the Pew research center, and London's Children and Young People Who Are Not British Citizens. A Profile, produced for the Greater London Authority (GLA). The result revealed that at the end of 2017 there were nearly 800.000 and 1.2 million Muslim living illegally, without valid papers in UK, which equals to 1.2% to 1.8% of the whole population in UK. That means that the UK had the largest illegal rate of population in Europe. 50% of those illegal Muslim immigrants came from Asia Pacific's region; Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines . . . and 1/5 came from Sub-Saharan Countries; Angola, Benin, Cameroun, Central Africa Republic, Botswana, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, etc. The findings also showed that 58% of the illegal Muslim immigrants were under 35 years old and14% were under 18 years old, besides 36% of them were living at least 10 years in The UK (William Walsh and Sumption).

1.2 The Demographics of Muslims in the UK

Official ONS figures showed that there were 3.19 Muslims living in England in 2019, with over a third aged under 16. English Muslims make up the vast majority of the 3.36 million Muslims currently living in England, Scotland and Wales. They made up 5.9% of the 2018 English population (55.16 million). London was home to nearly 1.26 million Muslims, making up 14.2% of the capital's population.

Today, Muslims are the fastest-growing religious group in the country according to government records which also show that the majority of Muslims live in Greater London, the West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside, the North West, and the major cities of Scotland and Wales (qtd. in Ali 16).

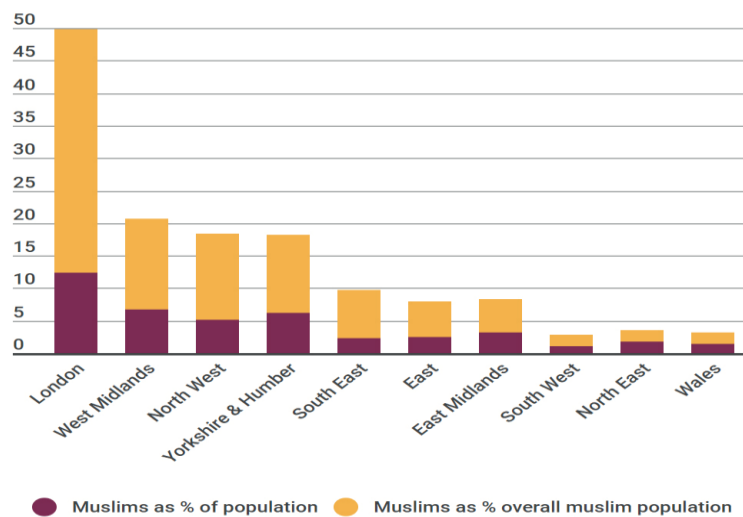**Fig. 1.** The Most Inhabited British Cities by Muslims.

The Muslim populace can be assorted ethnically; their countries of origin can dictate their ethnicities (see fig. 2). More than 2/3 of Muslims living in the UK were Asians with leftover portion from White, Arab and Black African backgrounds. Muslims with Bengalis origins formed the biggest number with over one million person. The UK Government's

Department of Communities and Local Government commissioned a series of profiles of Muslim communities originating from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Turkey.

The vast majority of British Muslim in Great Britain are those of Asian origins with a number of 1.13 million which equals 73.7% of the Muslim population; it is mainly constituted of Bengalis, Pakistanis, and Indians 12.60%. These communities made their home in London, the West Midlands, north-west England and Yorkshire, with smaller settlements in Scotland and Wales (Knott *Muslims and Islam in the UK* 2).

The black Africans constituted around 20% of Muslim community. Most of them are from Somali origins and their number is more than one hundred thousand. They constituted the largest refugee population in Britain. After Muslim Nigerians whose percentage is 10% from the whole African population, Kenyans and Caribbeans comes second (Iqbal). North Africans comes last with less than a hundred thousand. They came from Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, Mauritania, and even Egypt. A third of these live in London.

Figure 02: Top 15 Countries of origins for Muslims born outside the UK

Source: BBC. https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-33715473

Most Arab people in Britain are Muslims though there is a tiny number of them who are Christians or other. The Arab Muslim groups represent just 0.4% of the whole population in UK and 7% of the Muslim community in UK. Most of them are from Middle East origins and the descendants of the previous immigrants from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt and many other countries of the Middle East. In addition to the new refugee comers seeking asylum.

The Turkish Muslim community speak to 500.000 individuals in UK between Turkish-born people and migrant ones either from Turkey or from other nations such as Southern Balkans where they shape an inborn ethnic and devout minority dating to the early hassock period especially Bulgaria, Romania, the republic of North Macedonia and from North Greece.

To understand Muslims involvement and activism in politics, a review of their family values and education level is vital in the same way family is vital for religious and cultural socialization, and the home is a place where norms and values, especially those related to gender, who are shared and reinforced. Although kinship patterns and traditions differ depending on the country of origin and exposure to western civilization and culture, tribe and clan arrangements and transnational relationships remain essential, particularly for the first generation of migrants. The migration process was influenced by kinship bonds. They had an impact on where families decided to settle, as well as where men worked and socialized. A 'gift economy' held extended families together through the trade of marriage partners, material gifts, and favors in the UK and back home. In Islam, marriage is a legally binding contract between a man and a woman. Most couples marry in the United Kingdom in both a civil and an Islamic ceremony, with the former being a legal requirement and the latter being a religious and social custom.

Most Muslims in the United Kingdom marry within their own ethnic group, and many South Asian families continue to marry blood relatives. Most young Muslim women, on the other hand, say they want to marry a Muslim from the United Kingdom because they are more compatible. Though parental approval is often sought, fewer weddings are arranged purely by parents. Muslims in the United Kingdom are marrying later than in the past, typically after graduating and star employment, and some are opting for 'Islamic weddings' rather than arranged ones.

Forced marriage and sham marriage have been criminalized, and underage marriage, polygamy, and the role of Shari'ah councils have all received media attention in the UK. Only a small percentage of Muslim households have separate rooms for men and women. When visitors who are not close family connections are present, self-segregation is generally practiced. In contrast to public space, which is perceived as male-dominated, the house is sometimes referred to as the province of women and children. Muslim women of all ages, however, can be found in mosques, Universities and colleges, workplaces, retail malls, public transportation, and mosques.

In the United Kingdom, Muslim women are still less economically engaged than men, despite rising involvement in the labor market and higher education. Muslim women serve as prayer leaders and mentors to other women, as well as active civil society organizers and fundraisers. They have advocated for mosques that are more inclusive as well as for the prevention of violence against women.

Academic research and public debate have focused on Muslim women in the UK, but the discussion of their identities has too often revolved around the issue of veiling. Gender concerns among men are understudied. Various masculinities, based on religion, class, educational achievement, and other factors, are hidden underneath preconceptions of British Muslim males.

In British Muslim communities, there are considerable generational differences. Young people who are religious are often drawn to a culturally pure type of Islam, and often criticize their elders for a restricted focus on.

In certain ways, Muslims in the United Kingdom have done a better job than others in passing down their religious beliefs and practices from generation to generation. Muslims have higher rates of intergenerational transmission than Christians, individuals of other religions, and non-religious persons. Most Muslim youngsters in the United Kingdom learn to read the Qur'an in Arabic, whether at a daily mosque school, an independent teacher's home, their own homes, or even via Skype. Many Muslim supplementary schools teach various parts of Islamic Studies, as well as formal education in an ethnic language and culture, in addition to the Qur'an and Arabic.

Despite parents' requests for a number of public school adjustments related to modesty, food, holidays and timetabling, the curriculum, and the provision of single-sex schooling, local education authorities' responses have been uneven and at times confusing. Despite the fact that the majority of parents send their children to state-run non-religious or Christian schools, some parents prefer Muslim schools that provide a faith-based Islamic education.

In 1998, the first state-funded, volunteer-aided Islamic religion schools opened their doors. In England, there were ten primary and eleven secondary schools of this type by 2015. In total, there were about 150 Muslim schools, the vast majority of which were independent. Between 2001 and 2011, the percentage of Muslims without a high school diploma decreased, while the percentage of women enrolled in higher education increased, and the number of Muslims with a bachelor's degree more than doubled. Young Muslims can experiment away from their families, communities, and mosques and build their own identities in university or college.

Higher education systems all across the world, especially in many Muslim countries, perceive Islamic radicalism on campus to be an issue. While some British Muslim students have expressed worries about student Islamic societies and politics, they have also been pulled out by the government (as a result of the Prevent program) and by negative media and think tank reportage. They have claimed that their constructive contributions, critical judgment, and charitable activity have gone unnoticed, and that they have been linked to the actions of a radical minority. The degree to which university campuses and student societies are vulnerable to radicalization and extremist infiltration is a point of contention. Although there have been instances of Islamic Societies offering outlets for the expression of extremist beliefs, there is little indication that this has resulted in students becoming radicalized.

Some Muslims attend Islamic seminaries, also known as dar al-'ulum. More than twenty-five seminaries are now registered, the majority of which cater to male students, however few are female-only and a few are now co-educational. Many remain conservative and traditional, but others have endeavoured to integrate Islam with modernity and train students for intellectual and religious leadership in secular as well as mosque settings. Imam training has improved, and efforts have been made to connect Islamic seminaries to the higher education sector. Further and higher education are still more expensive than studying at a dar-'ulum.

There is currently no Islamically approved lending mechanism for Muslim students and their families who want not to repay tuition costs through interest-based loan arrangements. (Knott *British Muslims* 5).

On education and employment issues, studies showed that there is a significant improvement compared with ten years earlier, with a reduction in the percentage of Muslims with no qualifications, and a greater percentage of women participating in higher education and

the labour market. However, only 20 % cent of the Muslim population was in full-time employment, compared to 35 % in the population as a whole.

1.3 The Beginning of Muslim Activism

Muslims in the United Kingdom realized that they needed to organize and speak out on a national level. Accordingly, the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs was created in 1988, and the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) was founded in 1997. These were followed by the British Muslim Forum (BMF) in the mid-2000's, as well as The Muslim Sufi Council (SMC).

The BMF claimed to represent a broad range of Muslim bodies, while the SMC insisted to tap into the working class Islam practised by the silent majority, in an attempt to challenge the MCB's supremacy. All of these organizations aimed to represent British Muslims in front of the government and the public. The MCB, which includes more than 500 associated mosques and Islamic organizations, is the largest of these umbrella bodies today.

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is a non-sectarian organization that promotes Muslim engagement in British public life. Despite a slew of setbacks, it continues to thrive. As a result of its public position through the years previously, it had ties to an Islamist group. Jama'at-i Islami has managed to save its reputation. Several other representational organizations have echoed sectarian viewpoints as well.

In 1990, the Islamic Society of Britain (ISB) was created thanks to two Islamist groups: the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-i Islami. It emphasized the promotion of Islamic ideals and involvement with non-Muslims, particularly through the Islamic Scouts organization and the establishment of an annual "Islam Awareness Week." Supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood broke away from the group. In 1997, the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) was created by ISB. Although MAB shared many of the Brotherhood's objectives, it was more concerned with

the active involvement and citizenship of British Muslims, and it wanted to collaborate closely

with the UK government and other public and civil society organizations to achieve this goal.

The Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS) was founded in 1963 by Arab,

South Asian, and Malaysian Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-i Islami students studying in the

United Kingdom. Since then, it has worked to represent the interests of Muslim students at UK

and Irish universities and institutions to organize programs, Qur'an camps, and speaker tours, as

well as to encourage Muslim student involvement and charity activity (FOSIS website). It has

advocated for prayer spaces, freedom of expression, and Muslim students' civil liberties. FOSIS

is linked with a number of University Islamic Societies. FOSIS has been criticised over the years

for its ties to Islamist groups and for giving extremist organizations and speakers, such as Hizb-

ut-Tahrir, a platform.

According to FOSIS, there were around 130,000 Muslim students in universities and

colleges in the UK and Ireland in 2017, with 120 ISocs serving them throughout seven areas.

Concerning the electoral participation of Muslim and the way their organisations in

Britain, they have made interferences in the British political life. Sherif et al. trace the history of

these organisations including the Union of Muslim Organisations (UMO) founded back in 1970.

Its interventions in the political sphere may also have gone largely unnoticed at the time

however. This reminds us that despite the fact that other ethnic or racial labels were more

common in that period, some Muslims were still mobilizing on a religious basis (24). The

authors reveal that there has been a Muslim lobby since at least 1979 when the UMO general

secretary wrote a letter to the leaders of the primary political parties prior to that year's general

election. The list of concerns presented in this letter and the one sent in 1983 was a taste of

things to come concerning Muslim political mobilization at the end of the 1980s, specifically

concerning the supply of halal food and a proposed change to blasphemy laws in the wake of the Rushdie affair. As Sherif et al. explain, the aftermath of this mobilization of the Muslim community was disappointing for its representative organisations as the political establishment was unwilling to take any action to have the book banned. They show however that from 1997 onwards there has been concerted effort by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), and its predecessor the UKACIA, to state what British Muslims count on from their parliamentary representatives by producing a series of policy documents or manifestos. The MCB has been a key participant in driving Muslim voter registration and participation in elections via its website and affiliate network (28-30).

If we refer to the electorate of Muslim communities, the religious variable must prevail: but the success of specific lists characterized in this way has been inconsistent to date and the degree of identification poor. The basic illusion of these parties is that of the very existence of homogeneous religious communities: it does not take into account the fact that many presumed Muslims are often not Muslims and if they are, they are Muslims in a highly diversified way. In addition, there is often only an instrumental use of the Muslim reasoning by leaders, with the aim of achieving some visibility, thus producing Islamisation of a debate which, up to now, has only tenuous religious characteristics and which is often short lived (qtd. in Peace 7).

The main reason for Muslim migration was the need for laborers in the post-war economy. Furthermore, economic and educational conditions in newly decolonized areas of the world were not satisfactory. This resulted in a "push-pull" impact that brought a significant number of Muslims to the UK over two decades, mostly from rural areas of Pakistan and Bangladesh. A number of Muslims from various parts of the Arab world came for educational purposes, in addition to the south Asian presence. These groups have been joined over time by

Muslims from Africa, Europe, and Far East Asia, as well as converts from the United Kingdom, to form an ethnically diverse community currently numbering about 1.8 million People. Many of the problems and difficulties that the Muslim community faces are shared by all migrant communities in the process of settlement and acculturation. Concerns about education, family, identity, and discrimination are among the major issues, and Muslims organisations and groups have attempted to influence and persuade the government to address these concerns, and local government authority in their favour.

The Muslim community seems to be coming of age in its dealings with the "establishment," as their participation in the British political process has grown slowly but steadily. This has not, however, been a simple procedure, and the degree of involvement with the state continues to be influenced by a variety of factors. The climate of co-operation, which may be influenced by local and international politics, as well as the degree of acculturation or integration of the Muslim community, are among these factors.

Muslims have entered politics in a variety of ways, such as candidates for political parties, lobby groups entering in dialogue with parties, and the formation of an alternative political party. There are also cases of people who have tried to find a political niche outside of the mainstream political system, in addition to these 'engaging' approaches, and those who have fought very hard against any effort to deal with the state, including voting (Hussain "Muslim Political" 376).

The Islamic legal opinions that lie behind socio-political engagement in a non-Islamic political system, as well as debates about Muslims' participation in modern, democratically organized states, have been widely debated within contemporary Islamic thought, with some scholars also questioning the validity of Muslims living outside Muslim countries. Despite

theoretical disagreements, there appears to be an increasing consensus that Muslims are now permanent citizens of plural, Western nation-states, and that they must assert themselves confidently in order to secure their future.

The acculturation process and the debate over theoretical legal among Muslims appear to be related to a cycle of influence. whereby the acculturation process enables for a more nuanced and pragmatic view of the world, allowing Muslim jurists to have more confident and exploratory discussions and vice versa. External factors such as the climate of political apathy in Britain and Europe, which naturally affect the British Muslim community, are another sign that it is not only the legal and legalistic debates relating to the Muslim community that have determined how engaged British Muslims are with the nation's politics. Apparently, as is the national trend, the younger Muslims are less interested in voting than their parents.

International events that have placed the Muslim religion into the spotlight are also important external influences, such as such as the 1973 Oil Embargo, the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the ethnic cleansing of Muslims in Bosnia, and the Gulf Wars in the 1990s, the September 11th attacks, the Afghanistan war, and the Iraq war in 2003.

The Muslim community in the United Kingdom practice their daily activities normally. These activities include the political participation. The term "political participation" refers to those activities by which members of society participate in choosing their representatives through voting in general election, campaigns, holding discussions, as well as getting involved in political parties and holding significant political positions. As a part of the British society, the Muslims have to be involved in politics in order to integrate and blend within this society.

1.4 Political Participation: Some Definitions

People develop and express their thoughts about the world and how it is controlled through a variety of activities, and they try to participate in and change the decisions that influence their life through political engagement. These activities range from developing individual or family-level thinking about disability or other social issues, joining disabled people's organizations or other groups and organizations, and campaigning at the local, regional, or national level, to formal political processes such as voting, joining a political party, or running for office. Ordinary people may participate in politics, and everyone, including individuals with disabilities, has the right to do so. "States Parties shall ensure to individuals with disabilities political rights and the chance to enjoy them on an equal footing with others," states Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on participation in political and public life (Khasnabis et al. 5).

Citizens' acts that influence politics might be informally characterized as political engagement. Politicians and intellectuals have emphasized the unique character of democracy by emphasizing the involvement of ordinary citizens in political events since Pericles' famous funeral speech (431 BC). Voting, demonstrating, contacting public authorities, boycotting, attending party rallies, guerrilla gardening, blogging, volunteering, joining flash mobs, signing petitions, buying fair-trade items, and even suicide demonstrations have all been included to the list of participatory activities.

The growing salience of government and politics for everyday life, the blurring of distinctions between private and public spheres, the increasing competences and resources (especially education) of citizens, and the availability of an abundance of political information resulted in a continuous expansion of available forms of participation. While the political nature

of the activities is immediately clear for elections, demonstrations, or letters-to-the-editor, this is much more ambiguous if we are dealing with the purchase of sneakers manufactured under specific conditions, the secret planting of public green spaces, or clicking "like" on the site of a group advocating the protection of whales in the north Atlantic. The list of these last examples can be extended simply—and with each additional form the problems of demarcating political participation become more evident (Jan and Deth).

Election campaigns are a strong index of political participation. They are the process by which candidates and political parties prepare and promote their ideas and proposals to voters in the months leading up to election day. It is also a sequence of democratic activities that involve moving from one location to another and using various media to promote and sell a political party or candidate in order for the voters to support and vote for them. Campaigns for elections are an important component of the democratic process (IGI Global).

Candidates and political parties run electoral campaigns with the goal of gaining voter support in the run-up to an election. Candidates employ a range of strategies to reach out to voters, including using the media to spread their message. Access to the media may be defined in electoral legislation to guarantee that broadcasting time is distributed evenly across candidates and parties. The public publication of poll results may also be regulated by law in order to avoid any integrity issues and ensure that voters receive the most balanced information available.

The formal campaign dates are frequently defined by the electoral calendar. This normally occurs in the month running up to election day. Although actual campaigning may begin much earlier, political parties and candidates are only eligible for special perks or privileges during the period stipulated in the electoral calendar. (For example, they are only

guaranteed media access during the formal campaign period.) Early campaign actions often cause perceived integrity issues, though these are not always prohibited.

Election campaigns are becoming increasingly costly. The requirement to collect enormous sums of money creates severe issues about integrity. The sources of these donations, the amounts that can be received, and the lack of equitable resources all pose risks to voting integrity. Most nations have implemented campaign finance rules that limit allowable contributions and expenditures and compel political parties and candidates to publicly reveal their funding sources, as well as the kind and quantity of their spending, in order to ensure honest campaigns.

Campaign finance enforcement is also required for law measures to be effective. Most election systems attempt to reduce the effect of political contributions, and others use public cash for campaigning. Public funding serves as a counterbalance to private political finance, providing significant support to parties and candidates in meeting campaign expenses. Voter confidence in the political process may be boosted as a result of public investment.

Legislation must specify access to information on political finance, including campaign contributions and expenses. These safeguards are necessary for maintaining integrity because they increase transparency and public trust in the voting process ("Election Campaigns").

Electoral campaign are eventually crowned with voting. According to Collins English Dictionary, voting is "the action or process of indicating choice, opinion, or will on a question, such as the choosing of a candidate, by or as if by some recognized means, such as a ballot." In a democratic society, voting is an essential procedure. It is an opportunity for citizens of a country to have a say in who represents them or on a topic that affects them. Citizens have a responsibility to vote informedly and participate in elections. The voting procedure is quite

simple. An eligible voter must first register to vote, then research the candidates and issues, locate their polling location, then vote during the election.

Elections are a critical component of democratic administration. Because direct democracy, a form of administration in which all competent voters make political decisions directly, unworkable in most modern nations, democratic government must be conducted through representatives. Elections allow citizens to choose their leaders and hold them accountable for their actions while in government. Accountability can be harmed when elected officials do not care if they are reelected, or when one party or coalition dominates for historical or other reasons, leaving voters with little option among alternative candidates, parties, or ideas. Nonetheless, the ability to regulate leaders by compelling them to participate in regular and periodic elections aids in the solution of the problem of leadership succession and thus contributes to the survival of democracy. Furthermore, elections function as forums for the discussion of public issues and allow the expression of public opinion where the electoral process is competitive and pushes candidates or parties to reveal their past and future intentions to public scrutiny. Elections thus offer citizens with political education and ensure that democratic administrations respond to the will of the people. They also help to legitimate the actions of those in positions of authority, a function that is fulfilled to some extent even by non competitive elections.

Elections also help to maintain the political community's stability and credibility. Elections, like national holidays remembering similar experiences, connect citizens to one another and thereby guarantee the polity's survival. As a result, elections aid in the social and political integration of citizens.

Finally, elections perform a self-actualizing function by validating individual citizens worth and dignity as human beings. Whatever other demands voters may have, election involvement helps to boost their self-esteem and respect. Voting allows people to have their say and express their partisanship, which satisfies their need for a sense of belonging. Nonvoting, too, fits some people's desire to proclaim their disconnection from the political community. For these reasons, the protracted struggle for the right to vote and the demand for political equality can be understood as the embodiment of a deep human desire for personal fulfilment ().

The UK has come into contact with Muslims since ancient times and their links go back to the Middle Ages. Large numbers of Muslims have arrived in the UK in the years 1960, coming from former colonies, in order to find work. Many have come from South Asia to form permanent communities which grew over time. Today, 50% of the Muslim population was born in the UK. Muslims large communities originated from Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and the Balkans. And the 2011 census showed that a third of Muslims were aged under 16. Statistics also showed high levels of unemployment, low levels of skills and a low rate of home ownership compared to Whites. Muslims prefer to settle in large cities, such as London and Birmingham, among others.

UK Muslims have belatedly claimed their religious identity. In the early days of their settlement, they were identified according to categories first based on racial relations, then according to ethnic qualifiers, Asians, for instance, referring to their region of origin, which were then classified to their ethno-national subdivisions such as Pakistani, Bangladeshis, etc. These categories corresponded to the formulation of public policies as well as to the modes of mobilization that took place.

As for Muslims, they first built networks and institutions that reflected their ethno-national and theological differences without formulating any common project or identification, while public policies did not distinguish them as such. At the present time, on the contrary, Muslims and Islam has been in the center both because of their growing organisations and demands and the attention granted to them by the state especially after the attacks of 9/11.

Consequently, Muslims have managed to get involved in public and political life. Nineteen deputies were elected in the 2019 general election. Baroness Paula Odin was the first Muslim woman to sit in the British Parliament and Sadiq Khan, the current Mayor of London, was elected in 2016. In 2010, Former Prime Minister David Cameron appointed Saida Warsi as first woman Muslim member of the British government. Majid Javed, of Pakistani origin, has also served as Minister of the Interior (2018-2019) and Minister of Finance 2019-2020).

CHAPTER TWO

Political Participation of UK Muslims after 9/11

Introduction

Beginning with the earliest days of their settlement at the turn of the nineteenth century, Muslim individuals and community organisations have been involved in British political life and elections frequently. More significant involvement began in the post-World War II era, as the population of Muslims in the United Kingdom increased. After the events of 9/11, which were a turning point in international and political issues, UK Muslims became the center of attention mainly because the perpetrators were allegedly identified as Muslims. Therefore, this chapter in its first part investigates the impact of 9/11 on British Muslims and on its impact on their political activism. One of the direct consequences of 9/11 was the spread of Islamophobia which pushed Muslims into isolation and alienation from political life before they found themselves compelled to participate in politics as a defence mechanism.

The chapter concludes with Muslims and electoral politics in UK, which tries to shed light on the authentic political activity of Muslims, as well as mentioning real examples of Muslims who succeeded to be involved in the UK politics, as well as Muslims' participation in voting and campaigns; starting with The May 2005 general election till 2019 general election. Finally, the role of British Muslim women in politics and lastly a brief comparison was made between men and women, young and old and graduate and non graduate.

2.1 The Attacks of 9/11 and Muslims' Political Participation

In her article "What is politics", Professor Christina Boswell says "politics is about who gets what, when and how. On this view, politics is essentially about settling contestation over the distribution of material goods." This may have been a fair characterisation of politics in the post-World War II era, an era that saw the rolling out of progressive taxation and welfare provision by a relatively centralised state and a party political system based on a traditional left-right ideological cleavage. The political participation is a tool used by individuals to express their opinions and to choose their representatives. Vibrant democracies are those, which are characterized by a variety form of participation. A narrow definition of political participation refers to the activities of individuals by which they express their opinions and choose their representatives.

The events of 9/11 cast a spotlight on Muslims in the UK and elsewhere as it had never been seen before. It affected the daily lives of people, families, and entire communities in the United Kingdom, as well as how they viewed themselves and others. According to Timothy Peace, the September 11th terrorist attacks had a deep and long-lasting impact on British political life, particularly in relation to Britain's Muslim population. As a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, rapid changes occurred in the global and domestic arenas. The United States and its allies initiated a "war on terror" that would drastically alter international politics. Both the government and Muslim community organizations in the United Kingdom faced severe issues as a result of the necessity for securitization. The government felt the need to act quickly in response to the threat of modern terrorism, and Muslim organizations were tasked with opposing it while also defending their communities from racial retribution (Peace 87).

While anti-Muslim prejudice has existed in Britain since at least the 1990s, two incidents in particular had a significant effect on Muslim's experiences and engagement: the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11) and the London suicide bombings of July 7, 2005 (7/7). Tony Blair and his government completely supported George W. Bush's "War on Terror" in 2001, and participated militarily in both Afghanistan and Iraq. On a global scale, this represented a significant offensive against Muslims. Internally, anti-terrorist laws, policies, and propaganda, as well as their repressive paraphernalia were introduced and activated. This began in the aftermath of 9/11 and was reinforced dramatically in 2005 after 7/7. Immediately after 9/11, menacing rumours spread, and a sense of fear prevailed among British Muslim communities, who were terrified of what could happen to them. Physical and verbal assaults against them and those who were mistaken for them, such as other South Asians, increased dramatically (Joly 179).

New chances for interaction with the government arose as the general climate shifted toward a restriction of civil freedoms and new counter-terrorism laws was rushed through Parliament. While there has been a well-documented rise in Islamophobia among the broader population, there have also been increased opportunities for dialogue between faith and cultural institutions, individuals, and communities. According to the Interfaith Network UK, the number of interfaith organizations has risen dramatically since 9/11. Because of many of those left-wing affiliations, partnerships between Muslims and non-Muslims have been strengthened as a result of movements such as the "Stop the War" actions and now the rising involvement of Muslims in the anti-globalisation movement. Opinions, however, have changed in more "extreme" ways. Seeing how the world reacted to 9/11, particularly the attacks in Afghanistan and Iraq, has caused some Muslims, particularly the youth, to feel increasingly isolated and alienated. They

become even more alienated when they witness other Muslims dealing with the institution that has "betrayed" them rather than seeking radical alternatives outside of both the state and the conventional Muslim community's "systems" (Hussain "The Impact of 9/11" 1).

According to Khadijah Elshayyal, the level of Muslim political agency and the intensity of community organizing have both risen dramatically over this period. Much of this growth was a direct result of the quick changes that occurred in the global and national arenas in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks. During this time, second and third generation Muslims became more involved in broad-based social and political coalitions (such as the anti-war movement), as well as the emergence and development of develop new and innovative modes of Muslim self-expression to complement existing ones (Elshayyal 43).

Asifa Hussain and Bill Miller in a study found that Muslim support for Labour was as high as 73% in the general election of May 2001. By May 2003, when the Scottish elections were held, it had fallen to 27%. These findings prove that Muslims' social and political life had been sharply changed after the events of 9/11, which was a turning point not only for Muslims, but also for the world as a whole (Hussain and Miller).

Civil liberties also were impacted as a policy a Muslim securitization began. According to Mythen and Khan, the national security issues have become a central political priority in many Western countries after the 9/11 attacks. Since then, a group of political elites, security professionals, policymakers, and academics have argued that the potentially catastrophic nature of Islamic Fundamentalist networks' "new terrorism" needs pre-emptive legislation, surveillance, and policing. The emergence of future-based risk analysis methods such as horizon scanning, scenario testing, and simulated disaster management has been resulted from the constellation of ideologies surrounding the "new terrorism" (1).

The "before" and "after" comparisons that may be made with British Muslims are numerous. The attacks were treated with extreme sensitivity from the very beginning, both as a reaction to their occurrence and in response to the widespread linkage (whether implicit or explicit) made between them and the Muslim faith. The most urgent and pressing worry for the government was, obviously, national security, and an urgent response was immediately required. The British national security was highly threatened, and this potential threat was clear and pressing. Since the attacks were done by Muslims, the British government had to deal with racism and discrimination against Muslims, who were suffering from hate crimes as well as being considered as terrorists.

After the increasing levels of hate crimes against them, British Muslims were pushed into the margins of the society, as it acts as a barrier to participation in social and political life. While political resistance is a process of spatial reorientation that seeks to move Muslims into more public and visible spaces to challenge the marginalization of Islamophobia. Many ethnic and religious groups have been the target of hatred and vilification over the centuries since in some way they have posed a threat to British identity.

In fact, racism, bigotry, and discrimination against Muslims have long been a source of concern for Muslim civil society. Three out of five Muslims believe that Muslims face more prejudice than other religious groups, a perception that is especially prevalent among young Muslims and graduates 15 and 70% of Muslims have experienced religion-based prejudice in the past few years (Gulamali 25).

At the political level, as the general atmosphere moved toward a constriction of civil liberties and new counter-terrorism laws was rushed through Parliament, new opportunities for engagement with the government were also created. While there was a well-documented increase

in Islamophobia at the level of the general public, new opportunities for dialogue between faith and cultural institutions, individuals, and communities were also created. The number of interfaith organisations has increased significantly since 9/11, according to the Interfaith Network UK. Partnerships between Muslims and non-Muslims have also been strengthened as a result of movements such as the "Stop the War" actions and now the increased involvement of Muslims in the anti-globalisation movement, thanks to many of those left-wing affiliations. However, opinions have shifted in more "radical" ways (qtd. in Hussain "The Impact of 9/11" 2).

A growing body of work has examined at the different forms of political participation that young Muslims engage in across a variety of Muslim-minority contexts. The factors that shape Muslim political participation, however, are frequently overlooked, with the focus primarily on the various types of participation. Given that the lived experiences of young Muslims are often marked by distinctive challenges, including a variety of discriminations, there is a need to investigate how such factors influence political participation.

According to Robin Finlay and Peter Hopkins whose primary emphasis was on how Islamophobia intersects with other forms of prejudice concerning young Muslims' political engagement in Scotland. The authors define Islamophobia as a type of governmentality and build on existing debates by emphasizing how Islamophobic governmentality shapes political participation and how space plays a key role in its operation. When Islamophobia comes in contact with political participation, it has the potential to both discipline and marginalize political agency, however it can also engender political and activist resistance (1).

Individuals who have had repeated experiences of prejudice and exclusion from the political process may feel as though they are no longer a part of the larger political community. Discrimination can be a driver of political involvement among ethnic minorities insofar as it

leads to higher group identification, according to international studies, especially for non-electoral participation. An alarming and dangerous rise in Islamophobic acts and anti-Muslim sentiments among political parties has occurred. The MCB has been keeping track of such incidents and reporting them to the appropriate political parties. This is not a problem limited to a single political party, but has been discovered across the board, though it is more prevalent in some than others. The Muslim Council in Britain (MCB) has raised concerns over Islamophobia in the Conservative Party, Labour Party, Liberal Democrats, Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Change UK, UK Independence Party (UKIP), and Brexit Party. Islamophobia appears to be systemic and institutional in the Conservative Party, with anti-Muslim views apparent at every level, including Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Cabinet members, the London Mayoral candidate in 2016, MPs, councils, and ordinary party members.

Because of Islamophobia, religious hate crime in England and Wales increased by 40% between 2017 and 2018. Muslims were no longer able to practice their normal life, which led them to be more isolated and less active. In addition to this Islamophobia has been linked to political alienation among Muslims, as well as a higher likelihood of participating in non-electoral politics and a lower likelihood of voting. According to a study done by Nicole Martin, University of Essex likewise associated with greater political alienation among Muslims, and a greater likelihood of some forms of non-electoral political engagement, but not protest attendance or voting.

2.2 Mosques and Political Participation

Paradoxically, mosques which are supposed to be separated from politics in a secular state play a an important role in the politicization of Muslims. Throughout Islamic history, the mosque has been an important cultural and social institution. The mosque served as a focal point

for Muslims activities and its uniqueness is directly related to Islam's worldview. As a result,

rather than being viewed as a simple set of rules, Islam is viewed as a way of life. The mosque is

at the heart of the community because of its beneficial and constructive activities. The mosque

has spiritual, educational, social, governmental, administrative, and preventative functions.

Furthermore, praying in a mosque as a congregation teaches people unity. The mosque also acts

as a gathering space where people may discuss their issues and seek answers. (Abdel-Hady 5-6).

The mosque is regarded with suspicion in Europe and North America since it is closed to

non-Muslims and associated with foreign leadership, and it is always seen as a

dangerous place that terrorist networks and extremist ideologues would use them to embed

themselves in Western countries. Despite the fact that the majority of Islamic sources suggest

that active citizenship within a democratic system is permissible, if not desired, these perceptions

persist (Peucker 553)

Though the links between the mosque and political or social integration are complicated,

authorities recognize the mosque's central role, and use a variety of strategies to either control

mosques or harness their potential for the nation's purposes, thereby increasing resident Muslims'

sociopolitical integration. The mosque has an essential role in developing social cohesion by

connecting Muslims with other people in their society, both inside and outside of the religious

institution (Westfall 680).

Different dynamics could emerge as a result of the central mechanisms that link mosque

attendance to political participation. The first is in the way that religious leadership uses the

mosque as a source of information and mobilization. Most European state intervention in

mosques has been on religious leadership, reflecting a desire to strengthen the presence of local

European imams over foreign imams who are allegedly traditionalist and culturally informed.

The French government, for example, has formed partnerships with Muslim councils to offer training programs for homegrown imams. The Netherlands has established an Islamic chaplaincy certificate program, as well as a mandatory acculturation curriculum for imams, in which they learn the language and Dutch law related to their role.

Sweden, Belgium, and Spain, for example, have contributed funds for mosque building and imam wages. However, because most governments do not want the public to think they're encouraging Islam, most of these activities are small-scale. Of course, some government intervention is more hostile than others. Denmark has barred foreign imams from entering the country, while Germany has targeted Salafi mosques and organizations (Erasmus).

When compared to ethnic minority Christian adherents, mosque attendance by ethnic minority Muslims in the UK is connected with increased self-reported rates of electoral and non-electoral political activity, such as protesting or signing a petition. According to numerous studies, Muslims who frequently attend mosques do not live separate lives from the rest of society.

At mosques, Imams often deliver speeches discussing different social problems and persuading Muslims to the wright things. When it comes to politics, Imams have the ability to convince people to be politically involved. For instance, in the 2015 general election, British Imams encouraged Muslims to vote. In his "khotba" entiteled "O Muslim! Cast your Vote! It's a Trust!": Shaykh Muhammad Imdad Hussain Pirzada said:

> We are British Muslims. Great Britain is our home and that of our coming generations. Our bond with Great Britain is exactly the same as that of any non-Muslim citizen. Here we enjoy the freedom to worship, and there are no obstacles before us in performing our prayers and building our mosques. The opportunity to benefit from the provisions and

facilities offered to us by the government of this country, such an opportunity can never be imagined in the countries from where the first generation came from.

By delivering such speeches, Imams are able to change the minds of Muslims who are not interested in politics, and indirectly push them to participate in the political life.

2.3 Muslims, Electoral Campaign, and Voting

According to the Muslim Council of Britain, during the May 2005 General Election, there was widespread resentment and discontent among Muslim communities toward the Labour government over what is called "War on Terror," anti-terrorism laws, and police use of stop-and-search powers. The 2005 General Election was held at a difficult time for British Muslims, who are clearly dissatisfied with the Iraq war, the application of draconian anti-terror laws, and the way in which the media has utilized sensationalism to stigmatize our entire community. Regardless the tough circumstances, British Muslims continue to be a significant participant in the in the civic and political life of the country to work for the common benefits. The election results illustrate that no single political party can take the votes of the Muslim population for granted any longer. The Muslim electorate has gotten more discerning, which is wonderful news for the health of the nation's democracy.

According to the electoral commission website, The results of the 2005 General Election were analysed to obtain an estimate of Muslim voting strength, for example in the case of Birmingham Sparkbrook:

(a) 2005 turnout – 51.8%

(b) 2005 Eligible electorate – 73,721

(c) 2005 Total Population – 117,507

Therefore Total votes cast – (d) 38,161 [(a) x (b)]

Therefore if Total Muslim Population is 57,354 (from 2001 Census), Muslim voter estimate is 32.38% of 57,354 i.e. 18,629.

In 2005, a conference was designed to help Muslims determine how to vote in the general election was interrupted by Muslim fundamentalists. They condemned all voting as an "apostasy" and considered each one votes as "kaffir". The Muslim Council of Britain's press conference was planning to launch a 10-point question card for Islamic voters to quiz candidates on, when around 15 men burst into the meeting at the Central London Mosque in Regents Park. They condemned the council as a "mouthpiece" for Tony Blair and George Bush, the US president. After a short period of time the MCB responded by publishing a statement on its website:

Just forty eight hours before the nation goes to the polls, leading Islamic scholars and prominent community leaders will be urging the British Muslim community to do their citizens duty and to take the fullest part in the General Election on the 5 May 2005. There has arguably never been a more important time for British Muslims to engage in the mainstream political process. We know there is a lot of disaffection in the community particularly with the way the anti-terror laws have been applied and with respect to the war against Iraq as well as concerns on inclusion and equality. We believe that by not participating in the political process we will only be further marginalized. ("Muslim Vote 2005").

The MCB tried to explain that the political participation of Muslims in May 2005 election is very important, especially at that period of time, which was the post 9/11 era, and that despite all of the surrounding circumstances such as the Iraq war as well as the concerns on inclusion and quality, Muslims should be politically active in order not to be marginalized.

In the general election of 2010, Muslim impact grew even greater. According to Anas Altikriti whatever the outcome of the election on May 7th, Muslims across the country were likely to have a major impact on the outcome of dozens of seats, as HA Hellyer noted on Cif. The country's second-largest religious community, which accounts for less than 4% of the population at that time, has matured and grown rather at handling elections according to their interests, objectives, and values.

The 2010 General Election also provided an excellent opportunity, while it was unclear if a hung parliament would result in minority government or a coalition of Labour and Conservatives with the Liberal Democrats at the time, the general opinion throughout the Muslim community towards the end of 2009 was that such an outcome was one worth working for. This was due to the fact that a minority or coalition administration would be obligated to listen to all voices in society, including Muslim concerns about domestic and foreign policy (Peace 10).

For the elections of 2010, a number of campaigns have emerged to provide voters with all the information they need and to encourage them to register and vote. The YouElect and Muslim Vote are among the things that all the campaigns agreed on. The YouElect project was initiated in July 2009 by a network of Muslim civil society activists in anticipation of the 2010 general election. Its distinct features were the pooling of resources and expertise of a number of community bodies and the forging of stronger links between a central coordinating team and local grassroots activists. It was a modestly resourced, volunteer-driven venture that came into being at a unique moment in British political history. (Peace 11).

YouElect has gone further in organizing, supporting, and publishing a number of hustings across the country to poll Muslims' opinions on a variety of themes and issues. Foreign policy,

according to the Muslim community, remains crucial, with topics such as Palestine and Afghanistan at the top of the priority list. This project was both a result of the unusual circumstances of 2010 and a continuation of the community initiatives detailed above during past general elections. It was nonpartisan, but it attempted to teach voters about who was devoted to common principles such as social justice, using a variety of methods (questionnaires, hustings, and local feedback) (Peace 12).

In three cities, Birmingham (on Unity FM, a not-for-profit service), Bradford, and Leicester, the YouElect message was broadcast on community radio stations. A 30-second advertisement was also created for ethnic and religious media channels as well as social media. Moreover, YouElect subscribed for an email management provider and used it to send general election news, including reminders for voter registration before the deadline, to a large Muslim address list. As Polling Day approached, the e-mail communications went from weekly to twice-weekly. Details of hustings, links to items on the YouElect website, and any major political news were among the contents. SMS broadcasts were made to access to a database of mobile phone numbers.

In the General Election of 2015, the Muslim community in the United Kingdom could decide a quarter of the seats. Approximately 2.7 million Muslims live in the United Kingdom, accounting for 4.8 percent of the population, and yet they have the youngest age profile of all religious communities, with 48% of Muslims aged 24 and under. Historically, Muslims who are eligible to vote have voted at a lower rate than the general population. According to a survey done by the Electoral Commission by Ipsos MORI, 53% of Muslims did not vote in the 2010 general election, the highest percentage of any religious group. The study also found that 15% of Church of England Christians did not vote (*A Review of Survey* 40).

During the 2015 UK general election, over 90 voters took part in 23 focus groups across England, Scotland, and Wales. These individuals represented a diverse variety of political party supporters and independent voters, as well as various age groups and economic groups.

According to MEND analysis, using ONS Census and Electoral Statistics data, Muslim voters make up an estimated 10% or more of the total number of voters. The conservative Party won a majority of seats; it has been found that 64% of Muslims voted for Labour while 25% voted for the Conservatives.

In 2017, nearly 60% of Muslims in the UK were from Pakistan/Azad Kashmir, with the rest coming from India, Bangladesh, the Middle East, North Africa, European origin, and converts. In 2017, there were more than 1000 Muslim voters registered. The Labour party was defending 27 seats and the Tory party was defending 12 as other major political parties have failed to attract Muslim voters (Shah and Khatana).

Bradford, which is known as "little Pakistan," has a large number of Kashmiris, who are mainly from Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The Bradford West constituency of Naz Shah has more Muslim voters than any other place in the UK. Bradford has a total of 40,290 registered voters, with 20,669 of them being Muslim voters, accounting for approximately half of all Muslim total votes. The Bradford East constituency has the second highest number of Muslim voters. There are 41,406 registered voters, and 15,299 of them are Muslims, making up 37 percent of the vote (Shah and Khatana).

Luton South is the third constituency in the country with the largest percentage of Muslim voters, with 25%. It has 42,216 registered voters, including 10,680 Muslims. In 2015, Labour's Gavin Shuker won Luton South by a margin of 5,711 votes. With 22 percent of voters

being Muslim, Luton North is another constituency where Muslim votes can make a difference. The overall number of votes cast is 42,571, with 9,526 of them being Muslim votes.

Slough, on the other hand, is ranked fourth. It has a total of 48,275 eligible votes, with Muslims accounting for 11,503 of them, or nearly 24% of total votes (Shah and Khatana).
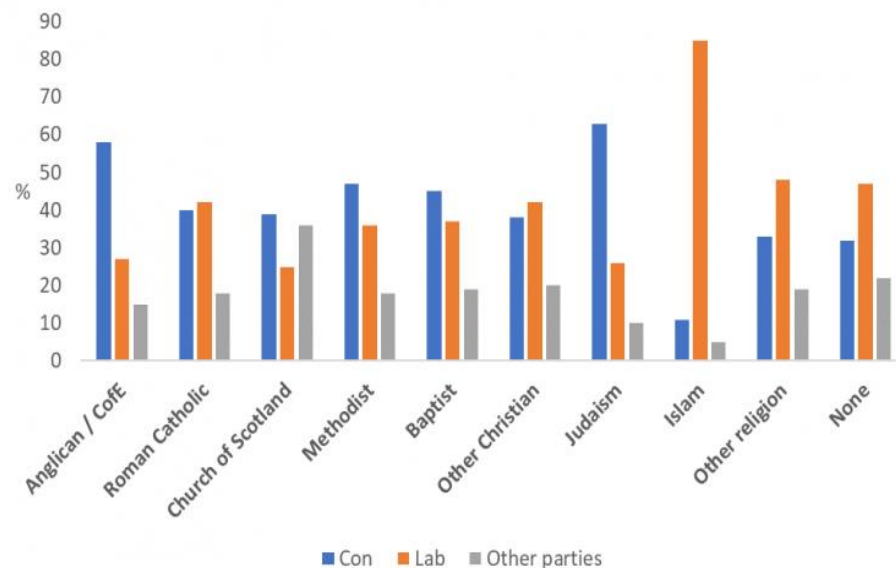

Fig. 3. Voting at the 2017 General Election by Religious Affiliation.

Source: Author's analysis of British Election Study Internet Panel 2014-2018, wave 13.

Figure 3 shows the statistics of voting at the 2017 general election by religious groups. The results shows that 85% of Muslims voted for the Labour Party while 11% voted for Conservatives, and 4% voted for other parties.

In the research titled "British Muslim Perspectives at the 2019 General Election" the Muslim Council of Britain remarked that the 2017 General Election delivered a record number of Muslim MPs in the House of Commons, with 12 Labour MPs and 3 Conservative MPs. This only constituted 2% of Parliamentarians, even though the UK's Muslim population stands at 5% (MCB 9).

No party won a majority in the House of Commons in the 2017 General Election, leaving the result inconclusive. With 317 seats, the Conservative Party won the most seats, although it was still 9 seats short of a majority. Despite the fact that no political party received a majority of votes in the 2017 General Election, it appeared to demonstrate the strength and influence of Muslim populations voting.

This strength of influence was to be tested just two year later. According to the BBC, the general election of 2019 was described as Britain's most diverse parliament. The group of MPs elected in 2019 is the most varied in terms of gender, race, and sexuality, yet women still have a long way to go in terms of equal representation in the House of Commons.

This General Election was an opportunity for British Muslims to make their voices heard by exercising the civil obligation to fully engage and participate in the political process. It is important for Mosques and Islamic Centers to work with their communities to play an active role in the elections, by helping their congregations ensure they are registered to vote, and emphasising the importance of political participation.

2.4 Muslim Women and Political Participation

The attacks of 9/11 made a significant change in the British Muslim community, and it was a pivotal point in their lives, as well as in the development of their political awareness and activism. Most had participated in a general and local election, and some had also participated in political and civic action prior to 9/11. British Muslim women were participants/activists and they were engaged in several political activities. There are three main types of these activities among the Muslim women: stay-home political activists, civic activists and intense political activists.

The stay-home activist had a little or even no involvement in politics prior to September 2001, voted only when they were persuaded by extended family or friends. They believed that politics was a man's world where only a few outstanding women could succeed. For the first time since 9/11, many women have felt a real and deep concern about their presence in British society. The events of 9/11 and London 7/7 made them visible outside of their houses and family in a way they had never known before. Women who wore non-western clothing felt more exposed, while those who wore hijab were very concerned about their safety (Peace 85).

They were forced to explain to people they had known for many years that they did not support Al-Qaeda or the London 7/7 attackers. When their children's friends asked what they thought about the terrorists, they had to coach them on what to say in school. It was considerably more challenging for individuals who lived in the regions where the 7/7 bombers or terrorism suspected originated. In addition, many women were exposed to hate speech in public for the first time. While they were always conscious about racism in British society, they felt safe and protected from its worst outcomes in their close-knit families and communities. Racism and hate crime had previously happened to others, but now they were the direct target on a nearly daily basis. As a result, it was impossible for women who claimed to know nothing about politics and current events to continue doing so. Many felt obliged to learn about British politics and the rest of the world in order to make sense of events and counter the hostility they encountered; as a result, they began to closely follow radio, television, and print news and gained enough confidence to discuss current events with family and friends (Allen 6).

During the post-9/11 era, involvement in politics among women in the category of "stay-at-home political activists" increased from the more passive end of the scale – wearing political badges, donating money to political campaigns, signing and sharing petitions – to the more

active end of the scale – contacting politicians, boycotting products for political or ethical reasons, and so on. While stay-at-home political activists with internet access found it easier to 'do politics' at home, as internet activism became restrictive and the need to be part of an activist group grew, others were drawn to action outside the home. As a result, it looked that some women had outgrown this category and desired to do more things outside their houses (Peace 87).

The second category of British Muslim women are labelled as civic activists. Before 9/11, these women were involved in voluntary activity outside the home, these activities were in ethnic or migrant community organizations or at their mosque. Children's education, domestic abuse, poverty, and aid to poor countries, particularly where they had family ties, were all topics that pulled them into these local structures. Women who worked in the public sector, particularly in health and social welfare, as well as women who did not work, fell into this category. These women, despite their civic involvement, considered themselves as non-political. Following 9/11, a widespread opinion among this group of women was that they should use their positions in the community and in the public sector to combat unfavorable. Preconceptions about Muslim populations. The events of 9/11 and 7/7 led to an increase in civic engagement as well as participation in political activity that they would not have considered otherwise: marches, demonstrations, and political rallies against the wars in Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003), and Gaza (2007) and (2009).

Mosques and Muslim community organizations, which organized coaches to national anti-war demonstrations in London, made this possible for many. As with the first category, it is important to be cautious of considering the category of "civic activists" as completely separate, as many of the women who fall into it are involved in broader political activism at times. They

were also ordinary voters who came into contact with political institutions as a result of their civic action on topics such as poverty, homelessness, and so on.

Women of the third category are described as intense political activists. This category includes women who have gained high public attention at a local or national level following the events of 9/11. Almost all of the respondents in this group were involved in politics before 9/11, whether as a student, a member of a local party, or a member of a social movement. Their engagement grew out of a family history of political and/or civic activity, going to university and becoming involved in student politics, or personal experiences such as being racially assaulted. None, however, had achieved a considerable public prominence before 2001. The journey of these women from unknown political activists (and, in one case, not politically active at all) to known political activists (and, in one instance, not politically engaged at all) is fascinating (Peace 90)

The majority of women in this group were more involved in clearly political institutions and processes (whether conventional or unconventional) and self-identified as "political." They also believed that unless certain circumstances prohibited them from doing so, they would always be politically involved.

2.5 Gender, Age, and Education in Relation to Political Participation

Except for the rights they obtained because of natural differences, Islam equated men and women in terms of duties and rights. In Islam, women are given complete rights, their standing is increased, and their financial independence is acknowledged. The woman's independent legal acts were well confirmed by Islam. These acts are granted according to the women's legal rights along with their right to practice all their civil rights, which are in harmony with their God-given

nature. One form of equal rights that Islam gave to women is the right to express their opinions freely as well as exchange them with men in different matters.

In practice, however, the British Muslim women still face a lot of obstacles and issues. These issues include the rise of Islamophobia (fear or intolerance of Muslims based on their religion); the persistence of rigidly patriarchal structures and attitudes within Britain's Muslim communities; and a lack of public resources, exacerbated since 2009 by public funding cuts in the context of the financial crisis (*A Review of Survey* 40).

Unlike women from other religions. Muslim women are more likely to be economically and politically inactive, and this may be due to many reasons such as Islamophobia, prejudice, etc. According to a Demos analysis of the 2011 Census, 65 % of economically inactive Muslims in England and Wales over the age of 16 are women, compared to 59 % for other religious groups. In a European country like Britain, this percentage may be considered very high; however, the majority of these woman choose to stay home and take care of their families and children. At the political level, British Muslim women are less active and interested than men are like shown in fig. 4.
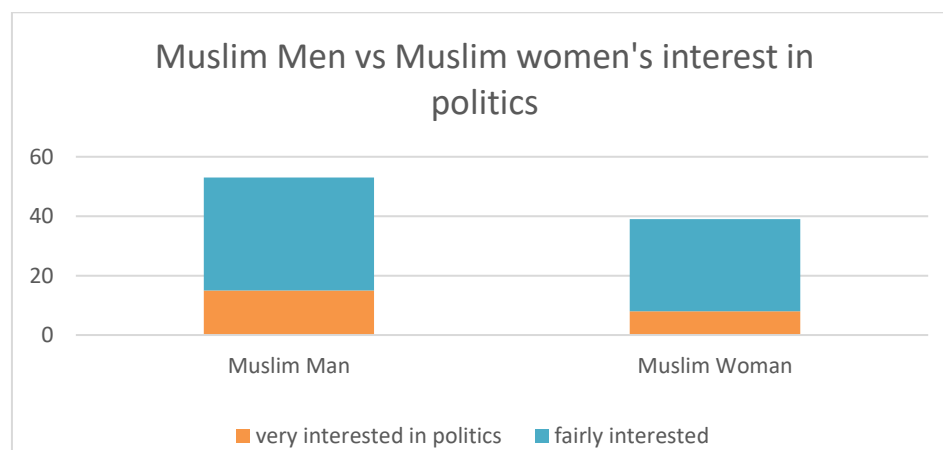

Fig. 4. Muslim Men vs Muslim Women's Interest in Politics

Source:

According to the findings of the 2014-16 wave of the Understanding Society survey, out of the overall population, 15% of men and 8% of women are very interested in politics, while 38% of men and 31% of women are fairly interested (*A Review of Survey* 40).

According to the same previous mentioned survey "The 2014-16 wave of the Understanding Society survey," more than half of Muslims (54%) were very likely to vote in the general election (2017 general election). The results show that as people get older, they are more likely to vote

	All	16-24	25-34	35-54	55+
All adults	58%	32%	43%	57%	72%
Muslims	54%	38%	47%	59%	71%

Source: Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16 (32,530 UK adults including 1,551 Muslims)

Fig. 5. How Likely People Would Vote in the Next Election

Fig. 5. Shows that 38% of 16-24 year olds, 47 % of 25-34 year olds, 59 % of 35-54 year olds, and 71% of those aged 55 and beyond. This pattern can be found in all modern voting studies in the United Kingdom.
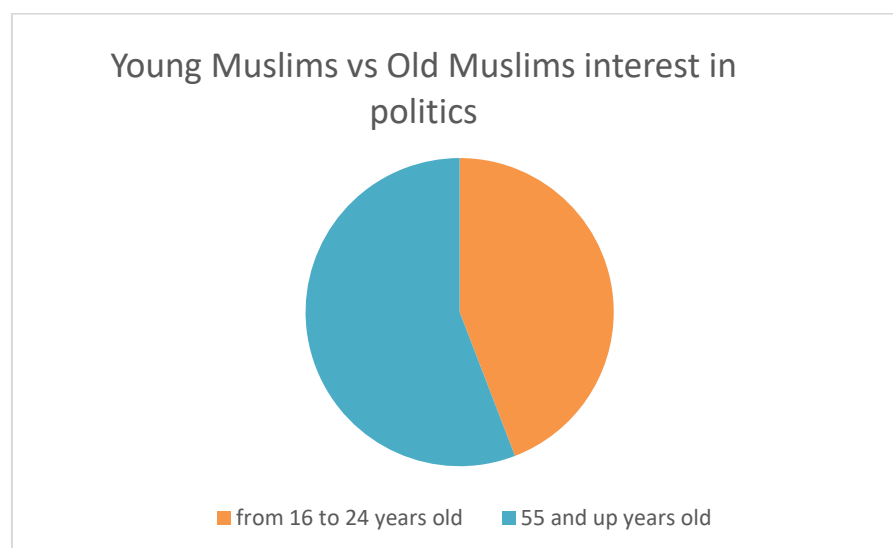

Fig. 6. Young Muslim vs Old Muslims Interest in Politics.

There are also differences by age, but they are less (34 percent of 16-24 year olds are extremely or very interested, compared to 43 percent of those 55 and up).

Unlike Muslim men, here are many challenges facing Muslim women in Britain. Especially With the head veil, their integration with the British society becomes more difficult than that of men, and they sometimes find obstacles, especially at work, because their appearance make them prejudged and sends some negative thoughts to the minds of those who meet them, and already have a negative picture of Islam and Muslims (*A Review of Survey* 41).

Education is another indicator of political participation. Graduates are much more likely than non-graduates to be highly interested (16% vs. 5%), to the point that a majority of those who are highly interested are graduates, despite the fact that graduates make up less than a third of the entire Muslim population (*A Review of Survey* 41).
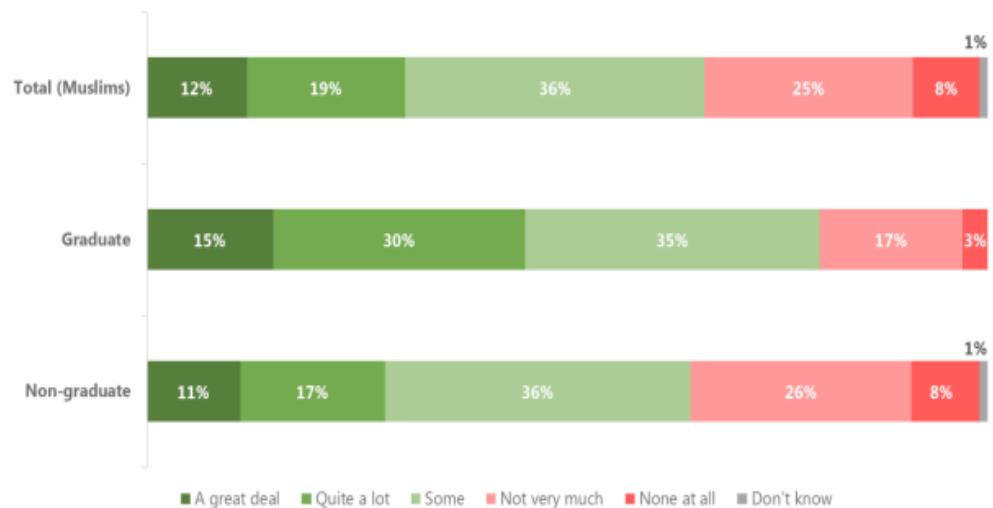
Source: Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+

Fig. 7. Graduate vs Non Graduate Muslims' Participation in Politics

In the 2014-16 wave of the Understanding Society survey, 64% of Muslims were found to be satisfied with the way democracy works, while 28% were dissatisfied. This is, however, a considerably lower than the 76% satisfied and 20% unsatisfied number found in a 2010 survey asking the same thing. Muslims, as a whole, appear to be more satisfied with the democratic process than the British people are. In the same 2014-16 survey, 45 % said they were satisfied with the way democracy works, while 47% said they were unsatisfied. For Muslims, this was significantly lower than it was during the 2010 general election.

In brief, Muslims should continue to be involved in politics at all levels in order to promote justice and the common good, whether through grassroots campaigns, voting, or standing as candidates for local or general election. Political engagement, according to Islam, is a way of achieving the common good. The previous findings and statistics prove that British Muslims are involved in the British political life, they are always present in general election, they participate in campaigns, and they hold important political positions.

2.6 Prominent Muslim Politicians in the UK

Muslims in the United Kingdom have been involved in a variety of political processes, starting from grassroots activism to higher levels of government. This segment starts with Muslim MPs and continues with journalists, activists, and community leaders who have all left their "political fingerprints" in society and strongly contributed across the UK.

Labour has the most Muslim MPs (12), followed by the Conservatives with 2 MPs, and the Scottish National Party losing their only Muslim MP, Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh, in the 2017 UK General Election. Eight women and 6 men are among the 14 Muslim MPs. Muslim MPs have risen from 12 to 14. If we take the 2015 and 2017 elections, we will notice that there is a significant number of Muslims elected as MPs.

Sadiq Khan, the London Mayor, remains perhaps the most prominent Muslim politician in the UK. He was elected in May 2016 after defeating the incumbent Prime Minister Boris Johnson in a leadership election. He is the first Muslim mayor of a big Western capital and London's first ethnic minority mayor. From 2015 to 2016, he served as the Member of Parliament for Tooting in South London. He was also the first Asian or Muslim to serve in the Shadow Cabinet as an MP. He was the youngest councillor and the most senior Muslim in Labour's 116-year history when he was elected in 1994 at the age of 23. Sadiq has also served in the Departments of Transport and the department of Communities and Local Government as a Minister. Sadiq worked as a human rights lawyer before becoming an MP, representing clients in a variety of landmark cases in major courts and tribunals.

In the House of Lords, there are ten serving Lords and Baronesses. Others are members of a political party, and others sit on the Crossbench. The crossbencher is an independent or minor party member of some legislatures that is not linked to any political party. The House of Lords has eleven members, including five Baronesses and six Lords. Among these is Rt. Hon. Baroness Sayeeda Warsi who has worked as a lawyer, businesswoman, and campaigner, as well as becoming the first Muslim to serve in the British cabinet. She was co-chair of the Conservative Party from 2010 to 2012, and served in David Cameron's cabinet as Senior Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Minister of State for Faith and Communities. She resigned from her position in August 2014, citing her disagreement with the government's policy on the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. She is also known for saying that Islamophobia had passed the dinner table test.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The participation of citizens in the political life has become a pivotal tool in contemporary societies as it accommodates multiple dimensions and different facets affecting citizens' life that include issues of a social, economic, religious, intellectual, and political dimensions. The reasons for immigrant and their descendants' participation in politics of the host country are not much different from those of original inhabitants of country. They seek to primarily achieve gains, public or private, moral or material, and aim at changing their living situation to the better.

On the other hand, many factors stimulate or discourage the participation of citizens, immigrant and non-immigrant, in politics. These are related to the nature of the existing political system and the state preferences and its interest in citizens' participation in addition to some parameters like the economic and learning level of citizens and their age, etc. British Muslim political participation is subject to cultural and religious beliefs and values leading sometimes to clashes between what Muslims aspire to achieve and what the British state and society allow; in this case isolation and rupture develop as an alternative to participation.

The interest of Muslims in politics and their political awareness of the necessity for a political integration were developed over stages. With the emergence of a second and a third generation of immigrants' children, Muslims moved from the status of mere immigrant workers disinterested in public affairs into active syndicalist citizens interested in new issues and in community work due to the fact that the factory, the mosque, and school formed the first preoccupation of Muslims in the British Society.

After that, Muslims moved to a more important stage trying to enter politics out of a growing political awareness, relying on campaigns seeking to motivate Muslims to participate in elections and cast their vote and convey their concerns to the candidates, in addition to running for elections and forming political parties that express their aspirations and particularities.

Despite the efforts made by Muslims to reach an efficient political participation in society and their efforts to urge the political authorities to meet their various demands, their success was only relative and their role remained marginal or absent in many issues. Even if such a result is partially due to the configuration of the British state and society, Muslims themselves bear the major responsibility in their failure. Muslims seem still struggling to find the right mechanisms to effectively employ their strength as other ethnic groups do.

The cultural and ideological differences between Muslims and British society led often to a mutual rejection that resulted in a Muslim abstention from political participation in the first generations of immigrants. Later generations were faced a growing Islamophobia especially after 9/11 and 7/7. Muslims who had started to gradually participate in political life suddenly found themselves the subject of hostility, accusations of terrorism, and doubts concerning their loyalty. Both British society and government adopted many exclusion policies targeting Muslims. Muslims, as a first reaction, consolidated this exclusion adopting a passive approach and retreating from public life. With time, however, Muslims started to realise that the best way to face Islamophobia is to participate in political and community life. The Government also, as a strategy to combat radicalism among Muslims, encouraged the Muslim community to participate in politics as one way of achieving integration.

Muslims relying on their community organisations and even on mosuqes started campaigns aiming at increasing Muslims' awareness about political participation, voting, and

standing as candidates for the different official positions. This, seems to be relatively successful given the statistics of the last general and local elections and the increasing number of Muslims elected to the different councils. Political parties on their part started realizing the weight Muslim vote can play in any election. Consequently, they are adjusting their electoral manifestos to answer the expectations and aspirations of Muslims. This being said, the influence of Muslims in British Politics does not reflect their real size, and if they want to score more they need more organization, coordination, and especially politicization.

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