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## Attitudes Towards Muslims and Hindus in England. Are British People Afraid of Muslims?

Summary: According to literature and researches in European society there is a fear of Islam, the intensity of which is usually inversely proportional to the average citizen contacts with this religion. Taking into account the long historical experience of multicultural Britain we wanted to see how it looks like in this society. In 2013-2014, the Inter-Institutes Migration Research Unit, of Cardinal St. Wyszyński University in Warsaw, did a limited research in England: Attitudes towards Muslims and Hindus in the UK. Limited Study. For the purpose of this research 77 persons were chosen by “snowballing method”. They completed questionnaires prepared according to the Bogardus Social Distance Scale. We asked two questions: Are there any significant differences in our respondents’ attitudes to Hindus and Muslims? Can we say on the basis of these differences that it indicates a fear of Muslims? We were interested particularly in the respondents’ attitude to Muslims. Their attitudes towards Hindus were needed only for comparison. This study is treated as exploratory research, that means it does not aim to provide the final and irrefutable answers to the research questions, but merely explores the research topic and shows whether it would be worthwhile to undertake a broader research.

Keywords: Muslim, Islam, Hindu, islamophobia, English society, ethnic minority.

### Introduction

The British Empire grew steadily in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, with several American colonies and the expansion in India. The victory in the Napoleonic Wars allowed Britain to build naval bases and her ability to construct railways helped her to create territories across the world. World War One added more colonies to the Empire and by 1922 it governed 458 million people, one quarter of the world’s population. It could be estimated to cover between a quarter and a third of the globe, at that time, and represented an area of over one hundred and fifty times the size of

Great Britain itself<sup>1</sup>.

The Second World War brought about many geographical and political changes and the Empire began to seriously decline. India gained its independence in 1947 followed by the Middle East and then Africa. Various Caribbean and Pacific possessions held on a little longer but most of them eventually went their separate way although some chose to remain with links to the UK as members of the Commonwealth, continuing to accept the British Queen as their monarch. Hong Kong was the last of the major colonies to be lost in 1997 to China<sup>2</sup>.

As a result of her colonial history Great Britain became a place of migration from former colonies. As Peter Stalker stresses, the migrant's choice of destination is often influenced by historical, and especially colonial-links. Also the United Kingdom has recruited people from its former colonies. During the Second World War the UK not only made use of colonial subjects as soldiers, it also recruited men to work in munitions factories and in the Scottish forests. After the war, the UK continued to recruit from the West Indies, to meet labor shortages in transport and in the National Health Service.

It is important to remember that the first large group of Muslims arrived in Britain almost 300 years ago and were mainly sailors who had been recruited by the East India Company in India. In 1869 after the opening of the Suez Canal a number of Muslims arrived mainly from the Yemen. These were followed by a significant number in the 1950's, who like the West Indians, were recruited to fill the gap in labour shortages<sup>3</sup>.

As S. Gilliat-Ray said: *Looking back on this long history of engagement between Islam and British society, there has no doubt been an under-appreciation of the impact and presence of Islam and Muslims in Britain, perhaps especially in 'remoter' times. It is a history that is largely unknown, at least outside fairly narrow academic circles*<sup>4</sup>.

English society has had unique multicultural experiences for very long period of time. Although many countries in Europe had colonies in the past, they tended to be smaller and some European countries have never had colonies and very few immigrants. In recent years Europe has become more and more uneasy and fearful about the large influx of immigrants to its shores, especially Muslim refugees from the Middle East. In Great Britain there are now about 3 million Muslims and more than 800 thousand Hindus. While in Europe there is a lot of negative feeling towards Muslims it would be interesting to see how ordinary people in England view these

<sup>1</sup> *The British Colonies*, <http://www.britishempire.co.uk/timeline/colonies1924.htm> [18.01.2016].

<sup>2</sup> *The British Empire*, <http://www.britishempire.co.uk> [18.01.2016].

<sup>3</sup> J. Iqbal, The diverse origins of Britain's Muslims, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-33715473> [18.01.2016].

<sup>4</sup> S. Gilliat-Ray, *Muslim in Britain. An Introduction*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2010, p. 27.

guests and others from their former Empire.

In 2013-2014, the Inter-Institutes Migration Research Unit, of Cardinal St. Wyszynski University in Warsaw, did a limited research in England: *Attitudes towards Muslims and Hindus in the UK. Limited Study*. For the purpose of this research 77 persons were chosen by “snowballing method”. They completed questionnaires prepared according to the Bogardus Social Distance Scale. In the light of literature and the news media which gives the impression that Europeans and British people are afraid of Islam, we ask a questions: Are there any significant differences in our respondents’ attitudes to Hindus and Muslims? Can we say on the base of these differences that it indicates a fear of Muslims?

Obviously we were interested particularly in the respondents’ attitude to Muslims. Their attitudes towards Hindus were needed only for comparison. This study is treated as exploratory research, that means it does not aim to provide the final and irrefutable answers to the research questions, but merely explores the research topic and shows whether it would be worthwhile to undertake a broader research.

## 1. Ethnic and religious diversity in Great Britain - (2011 Census)

According to the 2011 English/ Welsh Census the Muslim population in the UK is ethnically diverse – 68% Asian (1.83 million of 2.71 million) and 32% non-Asian. One in twelve is of White ethnicity (8% of the Muslim population). Of the 56.1 million population of England and Wales, 48.2 million are in the ‘White’ ethnic category, and 7.9 million in the rest. If the latter is considered as ‘Black & Minority Ethnic’ groups (BME), then almost 1 in 3 are Muslim. According to the 2011 English/ Welsh Census (Table 1) over half the population declared themselves as Christian (59.3%). Approximately a quarter of the population said they had no religion (25.1%), Less than 5% proclaimed they were Muslim (4.8%) and less than 2% Hindu (1.5%)<sup>5</sup>.

Table 1. Religion in the 2011 Census

Religion	Total Population mln	%
Christian	33.243	59.3
Muslim	2.706	4.8
Hindu	0.816	1.5
Sikh	0.423	0.8
Jewish	0.263	0.5
Buddhist	0.247	0.4

<sup>5</sup> Census - Office for National Statistics UK 2011.

Any other religion	0.240	0.4
No religion	14.097	25.1
Religion not stated	4.038	7.2
All	56.075	100

Source: *Census 2011, British Muslims in Numbers. A Demographic, Socio-economic and Health profile of Muslims in Britain drawing on the 2011 Census*, The Muslim Council of Britain, January 2015, p. 22.

It is significant that 33% of the Muslim population were aged 15 years or under in 2011, compared to 19% of the population as a whole. Only 4% of the Muslim population is 65 years or older, compared to 16% of the overall population. In a decade from now there will be approximately 190,000 Muslims in the 65 to 84 year old age. About 73% of Muslims state that their only national identity is British (or other UK identity). Regarding employment - 19.8% of the Muslim population is in fulltime employment, compared to 34.9% in the overall population and 7.2% of Muslims are unemployed compared to 4.0% in the overall population<sup>6</sup>.

The higher levels of unemployment amongst Muslims as compared to the overall population are the outcome of numerous factors, including racial discrimination. The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations introduced in 2003 (and subsequently subsumed in the Equality Act 2010) were intended to address these very issues. The impact of the imposition of positive duty on the public sector needs to be assessed by appropriate stakeholders e.g. the Equality & Human Rights Commission.

There has been a reduction in the percentage of Muslims with no qualifications from 2001 to 2011: from 39% to 26%. The percentage of Muslims (over 16) with 'Degree level and above' qualifications is similar to the general population (24% and 27% respectively). Few young Muslims take up apprenticeships (0.7% of the Muslim population in the 16-24 year old age band; for the population as a whole it is 3.6%)<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> *British Muslims in Numbers. A Demographic, Socio-economic and Health profile of Muslims in Britain drawing on the 2011 Census*, The Muslim Council of Britain, January 2015, p. 16-17.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 19.

Table 2. Women in Employment

Muslim Women		Age Group	Non-Muslim Women	
Not in Employment	In Employment		In Employment	Not in Employment
71.2 %	28.8 %	16-24	50.7 %	49.3 %
43.3 %	56.7 %	25-49	80.3 %	19.7 %
67.7 %	32.3 %	50 plus	39.6 %	60.4 %

Source: *Census 2011, British Muslims in Numbers. A Demographic, Socio-economic and Health profile of Muslims in Britain drawing on the 2011 Census*, The Muslim Council of Britain, January 2015, p.62.

About 29% of Muslim women between the ages of 16 - 24 are in employment compared to approximately half of the overall population (Table 2), 43% of the 329,694 Muslim full-time students are female; there are a number of local authority districts where the population of Muslim women in full-time education exceeds men. Of Muslim women in the 16-24 age band, 18% are 'Looking after home or family', compared to 6% of the overall population<sup>8</sup>.

## 2. Attitudes to Islam in Europe

In 2008 the Annual Report on the State of Dialogue (World Economic Forum's Islam and the West) showed that there was a growing tension between Islamic and western societies. According to the Report the majority of people believe that understanding and relations between Islam and the West are getting worse. The vast majority of Muslims believe that the West does not respect Islam, while the majority of Europeans believe that Westerners do respect Muslims<sup>9</sup>.

According to T. Abbas: *'Historically, Islamophobia had pro-Christian and anti-Muslim features, namely at the time of the Crusades, empire, and colonialism. In the modern era, religious characteristics have been replaced by secular notions, namely a focus on the ideas of freedom, democracy, and global values. In relation to political discourse, a form of liberal political correctness that does not explicitly target the religion of Islam has been replaced by a fear of multiculturalism. Islamophobia is a complex, multifaceted, economic, political, and cultural phenomenon, and its impact on Muslim/non-Muslim relations will remain an important feature of social life in Britain for some time'*<sup>10</sup>.

The media coverage of Islam in Europe exhibits several general themes and while

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>9</sup> I. Kalin, *Islamophobia and the Limits of Multiculturalism*, in: *Islamophobia. The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. J.L. Esposito – I. Kalin, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2011, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> T. Abbas, *Islamophobia in the United Kingdom: Historical and Contemporary Political and Media Discourses in the Framing of a 21st-Century Anti-Muslim Racism*, in: *Islamophobia. The Challenge of*

most of the mainstream media is not Islamophobic, there are references naturally to the threat of terrorism and extreme examples of anti-Muslim speech. Some news stories are sensational and more often than not, foreign and domestic Islam is mixed together, consequently politically radical Islam is taken to apply to all immigrant Muslims. The Euro-pean news media also has a tendency to show a specific interest in questions of politics and gender power, and often relates these to a cultural flashpoint between secularized Europeans and the generally more conservative Muslim immigrant populations<sup>11</sup>.

Unlike other parts of the world, Europe has a long history of conflict with Islamic politics, and this has clearly influenced the development and evolution of its views of Islam. One incident that has had particular significance in Britain occurred at the end of the 1980s; the anti-Muslim hostility in Britain was given incentive by the Rushdie affair. The events surrounding this affair marked a shift from problems with race and ethnicity to religion and became the core element not just in British Muslim identity but also in anti-Muslim hostility, the emphasis became increasingly expressed in religious rather than racial terms<sup>12</sup>. Shortly after the 9/11 attack in America there was the 7th of July attack in London. However despite that attack, the Pew Research Center shows that anti-Muslim sentiment in the UK is not so high as within other European countries, including Poland which has not experienced any form of 'Islamic' attack (Table 3).

Table 3. Anti-Roma, Anti-Muslim and Anti-Jews Sentiments in Several Nations (%)

	Roma	Muslim	Jews
Italy	85	63	24
France	66	27	10
Greece	53	53	47
UK	50	26	7
Poland	49	50	26
Germany	42	33	5
Spain	41	46	18

Source: *A Fragile Rebound for EU Image on Eve of European Parliament Elections*, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/05/12/a-fragile-rebound-for-eu-image-on-e>

*Pluralism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. J.L. Esposito – I. Kalin, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2011, p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> J. Cesari, *Islamophobia in the West: A Comparison between Europe and the United States*, in: *Islamophobia. The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. J.L. Esposito – I. Kalin, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2011, p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> K. Zebiri, *Orientalist Themes in Contemporary British Islamophobia*, in: *Islamophobia. The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, p. 176-177.

ve-of-european-parliament-elections/ [18.01.2016].

According to the public opinion research on the integration of citizens of African in Poland, done by Foundation “Afryka inaczej” in 2015, *Muslims are the main threat and subject of strong hatred. Fear of them is strong and takes an irrational form. They think Muslims plan to impose their religion and customs on us. Whereas some individuals of others races may be tolerated to some extent (few and on condition that they work and obey the law), Muslims are lethal threat.*<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Attitudes to Hindu and Muslims in England. Limited Study

#### 3.1. Characteristic of respondents

The limited study in 2013-2014 was carried out in England by the Inter-Institutes Migration Research Unit of Cardinal St. Wyszyński University in Warsaw. Respondents (77 people) were selected via the ‘snowballing’ method. A number of people known to us were contacted and given copies of the questionnaire. They passed those copies on to family, friends and colleagues. In all seventy-seven completed questionnaires were returned from five regions in England – London, South East, South West, Midlands and the North West (Table 4).

Table 4. Area Respondents Live

Area	Response %	Response Total
London	27.27 %	21
South-East	20.78 %	16
South-West	7.79 %	6
Midlands	19.48 %	15
North-East	0.00 %	0
North-West	24.68 %	19
Total	100 %	77

Source: *Attitudes towards Hindus and Muslims in England. Limited Study, The Inter-Institutes Migration Research Unit, Cardinal St. Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Research 2013-2014.*

The respondents were asked where they were born. 67 declared they were born in the UK, while 7 stated they were born abroad (4 in Ireland, 2 in France and 1 in

<sup>13</sup> *Badania opinii publicznej na temat integracji obywateli państw afrykańskich w Polsce. The public opinion research results on the integration of citizens of African in Poland, Fundacja “Afryka inaczej”, Warszawa 2015, p. 101.*

Belgium). Three people didn't answer that question. In all 48 women took part and 29 men.

Of the respondents 8 were aged between 16-24 and 8 between 25-34. Apart from the fact that only 5 were over 75 years old, the other respondents were fairly evenly spread over the various age groups (Table 5).

Table 5. Age of Respondents

Age	Response %	Response Total
16-24	10.39 %	8
25-34	10.39 %	8
35-44	18.18 %	14
45-54	20.78 %	16
55-64	15.58 %	12
65-74	18.18 %	14
Over 75	6.49 %	5
Total	100 %	77

Source: *Attitudes towards Hindus and Muslims in England. Limited Study, The Inter-Institutes Migration Research Unit, Cardinal St. Wyszynski University in Warsaw, Research 2013-2014.*

The participants were asked what was the highest level of education they had achieved. Everyone answered this question. Twenty-two had only completed Secondary level of Education. In England that means they stayed in school at least until the age of 16, although they possibly stayed on and completed 2 years of Sixth Form and left after A' levels at age 18 years. Twenty-four had been to college, 27 to University and 4 had continued with their higher education and completed their Masters Degrees (Table 6).

Table 6. Highest Level of Education Achieved

Level	Response %	Response Total
Secondary	28.57 %	22
College	31.17 %	24
University	35.06 %	27
Masters	5.19 %	4
PH.D	0.00%	0
Total	100%	77

Source: *Attitudes towards Hindus and Muslims in England. Limited Study, The*

*Inter-Institutes Migration Research Unit*, Cardinal St. Wyszynski University in Warsaw, Research 2013-2014.

The Respondents were asked, as well, if they professed any kind of religious Faith. Sixty four proclaimed that they were ‘Christian’, one stated ‘Holistic’ whole 12 said they were ‘non-believers’ with 2 of those stating their Faith as ‘Agnostic’. They were asked what level of faith they had. Ten declared they were deeply religious and 42 just religious. A total of 14 people were either ‘indecisive’ or ‘indifferent’ religious. Eleven declared they were ‘not religious’ (Table 7).

Table 7. Level of Religiosity

Level	Response %	Response Total
deeply religious	12.99 %	10
religious	54.55 %	42
indecisive religious	9.09 %	7
indifferent religious	9.09 %	7
not religious	14.29 %	11

Source: *Attitudes towards Hindus and Muslims in England. Limited Study, The Inter-Institutes Migration Research Unit*, Cardinal St. Wyszynski University in Warsaw, Research 2013-2014.

### 3.2. Results of the research

We looked firstly at whether the respondents considered England to be a multi-cultural society and almost 95% agreed that it was. They were asked if they thought that *the multicultural society in England was a source of conflict*, three quarters (75.33%) said it was or could be. ‘Definitely a source of conflict’ 11.69% and ‘can be a source of conflict’ (63.64%). Only 14.29% thought it was not a source of conflict, with 10.39% unsure.

We wanted an idea of the respondents’ impressions of the number of Muslims in England and their opinion regarding the number of Muslims. The question involved a guess: *What percentage of the English population do you think is Muslim? If you don’t know please guess.* The actual Muslim population in England according to the England & Wales 2011 census was 4.8%. Less than a third (29.87%) of the Respondents knew or guessed correctly when they stated - It was less than 5%. The majority thought it was a larger percentage, with 32.47% estimating the number of Muslims in England was about 10-20% of the population and 27.27% estimating it to be about 25%. Incredibly 10.38% thought it was between 30 and 50% (Table 8). In view of the fact many of the respondents lived in areas with a low population of Muslims perhaps their estimate comes from experience of visiting major cities or the media or perhaps it is the visibility of Muslim women’s dress code that gives the appearance

there are more than there actually are.

Table 8. Estimated Percentage of English Population that is Muslim

	Response %	Response Total
Less than 5 %	29.87 %	23
About 10-20 %	32.47 %	25
About 25 %	27.27 %	21
About 30-40 %	5.19%	4
More than 50 %	5.19 %	4

Source: *Attitudes to Hindu and Muslims in England. Limited Study, The Inter-Institutes Migration Research Unit*, Cardinal St. Wyszynski University in Warsaw, Research 2013-2014.

Bearing in mind that the respondents thought that there were more Muslims in the country than in reality, we look at their response to the following question: *Sometimes people say „too many Muslims are coming to the UK.” Do you agree with this opinion?* A total of 9.09% respondents said there were definitely far too many and 31.17% agreed with them although they didn't feel quite as strongly. Almost 40% found it difficult to come to any conclusion and declared that it was 'hard to say'. While 16.88% said there were 'not too many' and 3.90% 'definitely not too many'.

When the respondents were asked '*Do you think that the Muslim population in the UK is a source of conflict?*', almost 13 % said 'yes, definitely a source of conflict' and 54.55% said that they could be a source of conflict. Some (18.18%) were unsure while a smaller number 11.69% said they were not a source of conflict and 2.60% declared that they were definitely not a source of conflict.

The respondents were given a choice of words and asked to give the *two words that summed up their feelings about Muslims in the UK*. Just under half (42.86%) said they felt '*concerned*'. 27.27% declared they felt '*friendly*', 22.08% felt '*indifferent*', 20.78% felt '*challenged*,' 20.78% felt '*curious*' and 11.69% felt '*anxious*'. Other feelings expressed included afraid, worried, optimistic but these all scored lower than 10%.

The respondents were asked if they saw the presence of Muslims in the UK as a meeting of cultures or a clash of cultures. A slight majority (53.52%) saw their presence as a meeting of cultures, while 46.48% saw their presence as a clash of cultures. Two people (2.60%) skipped the question while 3.90% said it was both a meeting and a clash of cultures and one person (1.30%) said it was neither a clash or a meeting.

Next we compared people's attitude to both Hindus and Muslims to see if there was any significant differences.

The Respondents were asked firstly *how often they met Hindus and secondly how*

*often they met Muslims in England.* It appears the respondents met Muslims more often than Hindus. Every day 19.48% met Hindus and 25.33% met Muslims, but it is important to remember there are significantly more Muslims in England than Hindus. The same percentage was shown for meeting Hindus and Muslims a few times a week. Hindus (29.87%) met once per week or less and Muslims (34.67%). Almost a third (31.17%) said they did not meet Hindus and 14.67% stated they did not meet Muslims. If they did not meet either Hindus or Muslims they were to ignore the next question.

In the following question the respondents were asked *where they met Hindus and Muslims.* They could give more than one answer. The results show that the respondents met Hindus (62%) and Muslims (50.82%) most and more often in shops and offices than public transport or anywhere else. They declared that they met more Muslims (39.34%) than Hindus (24%) while travelling on public transport. They met an almost equal number of Hindus (46%) and Muslims (45.90%) in the local area where they lived. It is interesting that they appeared to meet more Hindus (40%) at their workplace than Muslims (32.79%). A few of the respondents met Hindus and Muslims at College/ University or their child's school. However it is important to note that 35.1% skipped that question about Hindus altogether (Remember 31.17% had said they did not meet Hindus in the previous question) and 20.8% skipped that question regarding Muslims (14.67% had declared in the previous question that they did not meet Muslims). Four people made comments about where they met Hindus – a family friend, friend of friends, socially through friends and leisure activities such as cinema and sports centre. Four people made comments regarding Muslims. They met them at their workplace - an opticians, leisure activities, best friend is a Muslim, met Muslims in the city centre.

The respondents were asked if they would mind *if their boss was a Hindu or Muslim.* There was a strong consensus with 84.42% declaring they wouldn't mind if their boss was a Hindu and 77.92% agreeing they wouldn't mind if their boss was a Muslim. A small number found it hard to decide 12.99% regarding a Hindu boss and 18.18% regarding a Muslim boss. Only 2% of the respondents would not want their boss to be a Hindu and slightly more (3%) would not want their boss to be a Muslim.

When asked if they would mind if their *child's teacher* was a Hindu, people tended to feel more strongly against the idea or were more uncertain of their feelings. 68.83% were happy for their child to be taught by a Hindu. Whereas only 63.64% were content for their child to have a Muslim teacher. The response 'hard to say' was given by almost a quarter (24.68%) regarding Hindu teachers and 22.08% for a Muslim teacher. More respondents would not want to have their child taught by a Muslim (14.29%) than a Hindu teacher (6.49%).

However it seems to be less of a problem for *their children to have Hindu or Muslim friends* with 85.71% of respondents not minding if their child had Hindu friends and 76.63% not minding Muslim friends. A few respondents however did mind, with 6.49% objecting to their child having a Hindu friend and 11.69% objecting

to their child having a Muslim friend. Two of those respondents felt very strongly and declared ‘they would mind a great deal if their child had a Muslim friend’ (Table 9).

Table 9. Attitude towards my child’s friends were Hindus/ Muslims

	Hindus		Muslims	
	Response %	Response Total	Response %	Response Total
I definitely would not mind.	48.05 %	37	44.16 %	34
I would not mind.	37.66 %	29	32.47 %	25
Hard to say.	7.79 %	6	11.69 %	9
I would mind.	6.49 %	5	9.09 %	7
I would mind a great deal.	0.00 %	0	2.60 %	2

Source: *Attitudes towards Hindus and Muslims in England. Limited Study, The Inter-Institutes Migration Research Unit, Cardinal St. Wyszynski University in Warsaw, Research 2013-2014.*

Friendship was one thing but going a step further and their child marrying a Hindu or Muslim was quite another thing. When asked *would you mind if the husband/ wife of your child was Hindu/ Muslim?* Less than half (44.16%) would not mind if their child married a Hindu and just over a third (36.36%) would not mind if their child married a Muslim. Approximately a third were undecided with 33.77% saying ‘hard to say’ for Hindus and 35.06% for a Muslim bride or groom. Many respondents did indeed mind, with 22.07% not wanting their child to marry a Hindu and of those 6.49% feeling very strongly about it – ‘I would mind a great deal’. As for marrying a Muslim over a quarter (28.57%) of the respondents said they would mind and of those 11.69% ‘would mind a great deal’ (Table 10). One wrote an appendage that not minding if their son married a Muslim they would object strongly to their daughter doing so.

Table 10. Attitude towards child marrying a Hindu or Muslim

	Hindus		Muslims	
	Response %	Response Total	Response %	Response Total
I definitely would not mind.	22.08 %	17	16.88 %	13
I would not mind.	22.08 %	17	19.48 %	15
Hard to say.	33.77 %	26	35.06 %	27
I would mind.	15.58 %	12	16.88 %	13
I would mind a great deal.	6.49 %	5	11.69 %	9
		77		77

Source: *Attitudes to Hindu and Muslims in the UK. Limited Study, The Inter-Institutes Migration Research Unit, Cardinal St. Wyszynski University in Warsaw, Research 2013-2014.*

When it came to answering if they would mind if their *neighbour was a Hindu or a Muslim*, 90.1% would have no problems with a Hindu. Slightly less (84.41%) were sure that they would not mind a Muslim neighbour. A few were unsure with 5.19% for a Hindu neighbour and 9.09% for a Muslim. A very few (3.90%) would mind having a Hindu neighbour and 6.49% would object to a Muslim neighbour. One person felt very strongly 'I would mind a great deal.'

When the respondents were asked if they would mind if their *business partner* was a Hindu or a Muslim, the majority did not mind with 77.93% declaring they would not mind if their business partner was a Hindu. Slightly less people (71.43%) thought it acceptable to have a Muslim. Around 20% were undecided, with 2.60% saying they would mind if their business partner was a Hindu and 5.20% of respondents saying they would mind having a Muslim.

The respondents were asked if they had any *Muslim or Hindu friends*. Only 19.48% said they had more than one Hindu or Muslim friend. A total of 14.29% declared they had one Hindu friend and 16.88% one Muslim. A large number of respondents (66.23%) did not have any Hindu friends and slightly less (63.64%) did not have any Muslim friends.

The question: *Would you mind if your husband/ wife was Hindu?* proved to be a difficult question to answer with 38.96% unsure if they would marry/ have married a Hindu and 32.47% unsure whether they would marry/ have married a Muslim. Whereas 35.06% said they would not mind if their husband/wife was a Hindu and 33.76% would marry a Muslim. A quarter (25.98%) would mind if their wife/ husband was a Hindu and over a third (33.76%) would mind if their husband/ wife was a Muslim.

The respondents were asked as well if they had ever met with any forms of discrimination from Hindus or Muslims. Regarding Hindus 83.12% of the respondents said they had never met any form of discrimination from Hindus. However there was a big difference regarding Muslims with only 67.53% declaring they had never experienced any form of discrimination from Muslims. The respondents said they had 'Yes, occasionally' met with discrimination from Hindus (15.58%) and almost a quarter from Muslims (25.97%). A small percentage had experienced discrimination many times from Muslims (6.49%) and Hindus just (1.30%).

## Conclusions

The task of our study was to answer the question: Are there any significant differences in our respondents' attitudes to Hindus and Muslims? Can we say on the base of these differences that it indicates a fear of Muslims?

The respondents in our research represented different regions across England and the numbers were quite evenly dispersed across the country. They were also fairly evenly spread over the age groups with slightly less respondents in the age groups 16-34. Likewise the level of education was fairly uniformly distributed between Secondary, College and University. The majority were Christian with fifty-two declaring they were religious, the remainder were either indecisive, indifferent or not religious. Regarding the comparison between attitudes to Hindus and Muslims concerning many of the questions there was only a slight difference.

A small difference could be seen regarding their child having a friend belonging to one of those Faiths with 66 not minding if their child had a Hindu friend but 59 not minding if their child had a Muslim friend. Only 5 said they would mind if their child had a Hindu friend whereas 9 would mind if their child had a Muslim friend but only 2 of those felt very strongly about it.

As we saw above, friendship was one thing but going a step further and their child marrying Hindu or Muslim was quite another thing and the differences were far greater. Less than half would not mind if their child married a Hindu and just over a third would not mind if their child married a Muslim. Many respondents did indeed mind, with 17 not wanting their child to marry a Hindu and of those 5 feeling very strongly about it. As for marrying a Muslim, 22 of the respondents said they would mind and of those 9 would mind a great deal.<sup>7</sup> A similar number were undecided for both Hindu and Muslim.

The question: *Would you mind if your husband/wife was Hindu?* proved to be a difficult question to answer over a third of the respondents were unsure about marrying a Hindu and less than a third regarding marrying a Muslim. Whereas an almost equal number said they would not mind if their husband/ wife was a Hindu or a Muslim. However while only a quarter would mind if their wife/ husband was a Hindu, a third would mind if their husband/ wife was a Muslim.

Regarding having a Hindu or Muslim neighbour, 70 respondents would have no

problems having a Hindu neighbor while slightly less, 65 were sure that they would not mind a Muslim. A few were unsure with 4 for a Hindu neighbour and 7 for a Muslim. A very few 3 would mind having a Hindu and 5 would object to a Muslim neighbour. One person felt very strongly 'I would mind a great deal'.

Looking on these results we could say that while on one hand we can see there are differences in attitudes towards Hindus and Muslims in every question, on the other hand the differences are very small. Even though our research was limited, it seems that it is parallel to other researches (for example Table 3) and every day observations. There are 13 Muslim members of the UK Parliament, 8 of whom are women<sup>14</sup> and Sadiq Khan would not have been elected Mayor of London on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2016 if the majority of people were fearful of Muslims.

Of course everyday life shows that there are sometimes problems in a multicultural and multi-religion society. For example, in a mixed marriage where the mother and father have a deep faith and believe in a different way is bound to have an effect on the children. A first Communion catechist in London had a problem with a child not believing in Jesus as God. On talking to the child it transpired that the child's mother was a Catholic while the father was a Muslim. He had taught his child that Jesus was a prophet but not God.

Possibly English society finds it easier to deal with members of other religions than with members of Islam, because Islam appears to be so different. No doubt Britain's colonial past has an influence and although almost half of the respondents expressed feelings of concern, very few expressed fear, regarding the presence of Muslims in England. Looking at British policy and everyday life in England it is possible to prove the thesis that English society is much more open to Muslims' presence in England than other societies in Europe.

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## Postawy wobec muzułmanów i hindusów w Wielkiej Brytanii. Czy społeczeństwo brytyjskie boi się muzułmanów?

Streszczenie: Według literatury i badań w społeczeństwie europejskim panuje lęk przed islamem, którego natężenie jest zwykle odwrotnie proporcjonalne do kontaktów przeciętnego obywatela z tą religią. Biorąc pod uwagę długą historię doświadczeń wielokulturowych Brytyjczyków postanowiono sprawdzić, jak to wygląda w ich społeczeństwie. W latach 2013-2014 Międzyinstytutowy Zakład Badań nad Migracją UKSW podjął w Anglii ograniczone badania stosunku do muzułmanów i hindusów. Przeprowadzono je przy pomocy ankiety na próbie 77 osób wybranych metodą „kuli śnieżowej”. W kwestionariuszu użyto skali dystansu społecznego Bogardusa. Badanie było zorientowane na muzułmanów, postawy wobec hindusów służyły jedynie do porównań wyników. Okazało się, że wprawdzie występowały różnice między stosunkiem do hindusów i muzułmanów, ale tak niewielkie, że na ich podstawie nie można wyciągać wniosków o lęku przed muzułmanami. Pozwała więc to przyjąć tezę, że doświadczenia wielokulturowości z czasów Brytyjskiego Imperium mogą mieć wpływ na obecne społeczeństwo. Były to jednak tylko badania eksploracyjne, co oznacza, że ich celem nie było uogólnienie wyników na całą populację ale raczej pokazanie, że warto ten problem bardziej zgłębić.

Słowa kluczowe: muzułmanin, islam, hindus, islamofobia, społeczeństwo angielskie, mniejszość etniczna.