



Institute of Community Cohesion

## Understanding and Appreciating Muslim Diversity: Towards better Engagement and Participation

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# Contents

Section 1.	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
2.	<b>A Framework for Understanding Diversity</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1	<b>Theological Affiliations: Islamic Sects – Shia and Sunni</b>	<b>6</b>
2.2	<b>Muslim schools of Thought (Madhahib)</b>	<b>6</b>
2.2.1	<b>Shia Denominations and Global Adoption</b>	<b>7</b>
2.2.2	<b>Shia Fiqhs, Branches and Ethno National Adoption</b>	<b>8</b>
2.2.3	<b>Sunni Schools of Thought (Madhahib) and Global Adoption</b>	<b>9</b>
2.2.4	<b>Sufi Orders (Tariqa – Turuq)</b>	<b>10</b>
2.2.5	<b>Sunni Sub Schools (Maslaqain), Ethno National Adoption and Affiliates</b>	<b>11</b>
2.2.6	<b>Sunni Branch, Salafi, Ethno National adoption and Affiliates</b>	<b>13</b>
2.2.7	<b>British Muslims Madhahib Affiliation</b>	<b>15</b>
2.3	<b>20th Century Developments: Modernity, theological Purity and Sufism</b>	<b>16</b>
2.3.1	<b>Early 20th Century: Abul Ala Mawdudi</b>	<b>17</b>
2.3.2	<b>Early 20th Century: Allama Iqbal &amp; Mohammed Ali Jinnah</b>	<b>17</b>
2.3.3	<b>Mid 20th Century: Sayyid Qutub – Abul Ala Mawdudi – Salafi</b>	<b>18</b>
2.3.4	<b>Early 1950s: Sheikh Taquiddin An Nabhani – Islamic Ideology</b>	<b>19</b>
2.3.5	<b>Late 20th Century: Bakar Al Sadaq, Ayatollah Khomeini – Iranian Revolution</b>	<b>20</b>
2.3.6	<b>1980s: Rise of the Taliban</b>	<b>21</b>
2.3.7	<b>The 21st Century: Withdrawal and Emergence of Sufis</b>	<b>22</b>
2.3.8	<b>The 21st Century: 2nd and 3rd Generation British Muslims and Democracy</b>	<b>23</b>
2.4	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>24</b>
2.4.1	<b>Religious: Central &amp; Spiritual</b>	<b>24</b>
2.4.3	<b>Structural: Mosques – Masaajid</b>	<b>25</b>
2.4.4	<b>Masaajid Organisation</b>	<b>26</b>
2.5	<b>Leadership and Representation: Traditional and Cultural</b>	<b>28</b>
2.5.1	<b>Birardari (Brotherhood) and Khandani (Clan) Organisational variations</b>	<b>29</b>
2.5.2	<b>Somali Community Traditional Leadership</b>	<b>32</b>
2.5.3	<b>Emerging Traditions – Newer Arrival Communities</b>	<b>33</b>
2.6	<b>Muslim Groups and Organisations</b>	<b>34</b>
2.6.1	<b>Three Overlapping Categories</b>	<b>35</b>
3	<b>Policy and Practice at a Local Level: Effective Engagement</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1.	<b>Knowing your Communities</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1.1	<b>Data Analysis</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1.2	<b>Engagement Strategies</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1.3	<b>International Context</b>	<b>39</b>
3.2	<b>Tackling Inequalities</b>	<b>41</b>
3.2.1	<b>Women</b>	<b>41</b>
3.2.2	<b>Young People</b>	<b>41</b>
3.3	<b>Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour</b>	<b>42</b>
3.3.1	<b>Gangs</b>	<b>42</b>
3.4	<b>Building Community Cohesion</b>	<b>43</b>
Appendix	<b>iCoCo Team Biographies</b>	

# Section 1

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A lot of the discussion about race and diversity tends to focus on numbers and the subject of migration has, in particular, risen up the political agenda. However, a much more profound change is to be found in the sheer breadth of diversity with, for example, over 300 languages spoken in London schools. A wider diversity is also now found in many market towns and rural areas across the country, where as many as 50 different languages are now spoken. All ethnicities and nationalities comprise many different traditions, strands, and diaspora communities, especially those based upon faith, are especially diverse. We hope to provide an appreciation of all such communities, to enhance understanding and to ensure that we build the widest possible engagement.

Over recent years, a number of international and national events have brought an increased focus on British Muslim Communities, which has made this our starting point. It is also a priority because these communities have often been presented in a homogeneous way and sometimes with an unfortunate association with 'extremism' and even 'terror'. But as awareness has grown it has become increasingly evident that a single uniform approach to presenting, understanding and engaging with Muslim Communities is inadequate and inappropriate. Simply, just as is the case with other communities, Muslims are not a homogeneous community. British Muslims comprise of a complex multi-diverse group of communities and though in the main appear internally cohesive and well organised, are sometimes subject to local, ethnic, doctrinal, political and other rivalries. This is hardly surprising, given that Muslims are drawn from many different countries, spanning several continents and many ethnic and cultural traditions. In Britain, there has been a significant minority Muslim community for several generations, generally of South Asian origin and this has been more recently supplemented by many other ethno-national groups from Africa, Europe and other parts of Asia. There are now at least 15 significant ethno-national Muslim communities in Britain, constituting probably the most diverse Muslim community in the world.

As a response to the above and as a consequence of reviewing and developing community cohesion strategies in different parts of the country, the Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo) has developed a baseline approach to Understanding and Appreciating Muslim diversity underpinning locally based detailed analysis of Muslim communities. This work has been done in consultation with a range of stakeholders, Muslim experts (Scholars, Academics, Leaders and Representatives) and uniquely through information gathered in focus groups and interviews with young people and women. As part of wider community cohesion reviews iCoCo has completed numerous such studies, helping several Public Sector bodies develop strategies to better engagement with their Muslim communities. Below is an outline summary of iCoCo's framework incorporating findings collated from studies of 15 city and borough-wide reviews conducted since September 2006 and involving more than 1000 one to one interviews with key stakeholders and more than 3000 individuals of all ages, from a range of ethnic, faith, political and economic backgrounds who participated in focus groups.

For bodies in the Public and Statutory Sectors in particular, as well as other agencies and organisations involved in service delivery, it is important to understand and appreciate the diversity, needs and expectations of the communities they serve. If services are to be effective and reach those most in need providers must ensure that the interests of those communities are properly represented; and that the members of those communities can participate equally in civic society. Unless this happens, there is a risk that there will be situations where whole sub-sections of Muslim communities are overlooked and or misrepresented.

## Section 2

### 2. A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY

British Muslims comprise a rich vibrant and diverse group of communities. And whilst the majority are born into the faith with origins or heritage in Muslim countries and regions overseas, British Muslims are also represented across all ethnicities including indigenous white English and those of Dual/Multiple heritage. Within these diverse communities there are established communities of second, third and even fourth generation as well as the more recently settled and newer arrivals. As a consequence, there are considerable differences between and within these groups spanning a range of factors including theological affiliation, ethno national/culture, class and generational issues, as is the case, of course, with many other communities in the United Kingdom

Making sense of these variations and complexities requires a locally based approach. We have developed this baseline approach to help local agencies in this process. Local circumstances and conditions, (required an adaptable model) including factors such as educational attainment, housing, policing and crime levels and the extent of involvement of the Voluntary and Community Sectors had a significant influence on our findings. We have drawn out common themes from our locally based work and these are reflected in the model, which seeks to describe the principal components of British Muslim Communities rather than going into comprehensive detail (when done on local level the model is adapted to fit local conditions). The model seeks to highlight religious and ethnic diversity and to illustrate where these intersect to influence the establishment of leadership structures and networks primarily at local level. We also describe how all these are evolving within the current international, national and local context.

In terms of local application, each of the Muslim communities we have worked with across the country has been different. Variations depend on a range of factors, including local circumstances, geography and history. A key lesson concerns the difficulty in the identification of representative community leaders. Given the diversity spanning political, economic, social and religious spectrums, just as with other mainstream groups, local agencies cannot expect a single organisation or spokesperson to represent the views and opinions of all the Muslim communities. We have also been struck by the extent to which Muslim communities are “withdrawing” into ethno-national and theologically based groupings in response to the prolonged focus on extremism at national level. This has had the effect of increasing inter-community tensions, as we discuss below. One consequence of these changes is to make it even more difficult for nationally based organisations to accurately reflect and “represent” community level interests; making locally focused intervention and engagement even more important. Certain elements of this framework will be more or less relevant, depending on the make up of Muslim Communities in the area.

As with other faiths, religious practice for Muslims is a matter of conscience. What is an acceptable level of commitment or compromise for one may be objectionable to another. We must emphasise, therefore, that what follows will not be necessarily applicable to each and every Muslim.

### ***From iCoCo local studies...***

We have found in general that Muslims are relatively more aware of their faith and beliefs than most other parts of British society. The majority of second generation Muslim young people surveyed identified primarily with their Muslim faith as opposed to their specific ethno national identity, even amongst the clearly nominally or non-practicing. Overtime however, we have observed some significant changes, both subtle and stark variations related to locality. For example in one area revisited during a follow-up, there was a clear conscious disconnection with being 'a Muslim' amongst third and fourth generation young people of various ethnicities, who when previously surveyed felt a strong connection with their faith – this they suggested was due to them not wanting to be associated with the negative stereotypes of extremism or terrorism portrayed on the media and by the British and US Governments. Some had connected primarily to new identities ranging from ethnic, neighbourhood level, clan/caste (Birardari) affiliation, with only a very few considering British as an identity.

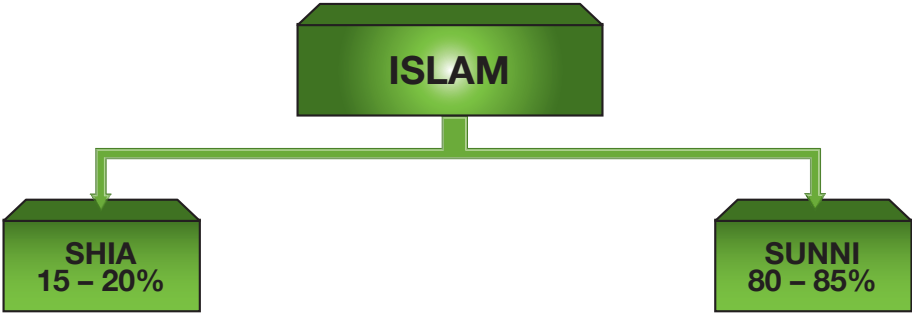
In contrast, there were many young Muslims who had chosen a path of devout worship, who tended to be entrenched with respect to their chosen form of Islamic practice.

Amongst devout first and second generation Muslims there was a sense of an increasing propensity to withdraw into specific theologically based affiliations. This view has been endorsed by several Muslims (stakeholders, Imams, community workers and activists) and it was suggested to us that the negative climate towards Muslims had created a move away from unity, opting for disassociation to avoid being labelled 'extremists'.

We set out below an outline illustration of the main components of the diverse nature of British Muslim communities, examining religious and ethnic diversity, where these intersect to influence leadership structures and networks and how all these are evolving within a contemporary context.

**2.1 Theological Affiliations: Islamic Sects – Shia and Sunni**

Fig 1

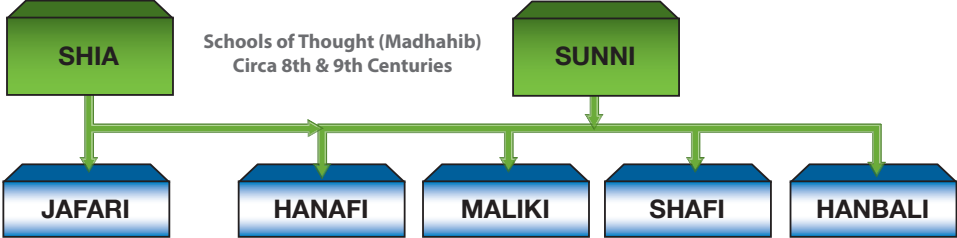


Muslims are generally divided into the two main Islamic sects of Shia and Sunni. The Sunni make up the vast majority with estimates ranging from 80-85% of Muslims throughout the World and the Shia approximately 15-20%. In the UK, Shia Muslims seemingly constitute a relatively smaller proportion of the total Muslim population.

As with other faith communities, both the Sunni and Shia Muslim Sects have many subdivisions, based on a combination of theological and ethno national factors.

**2.2 Muslim Schools of Thought (Madhahib)**

Fig 2



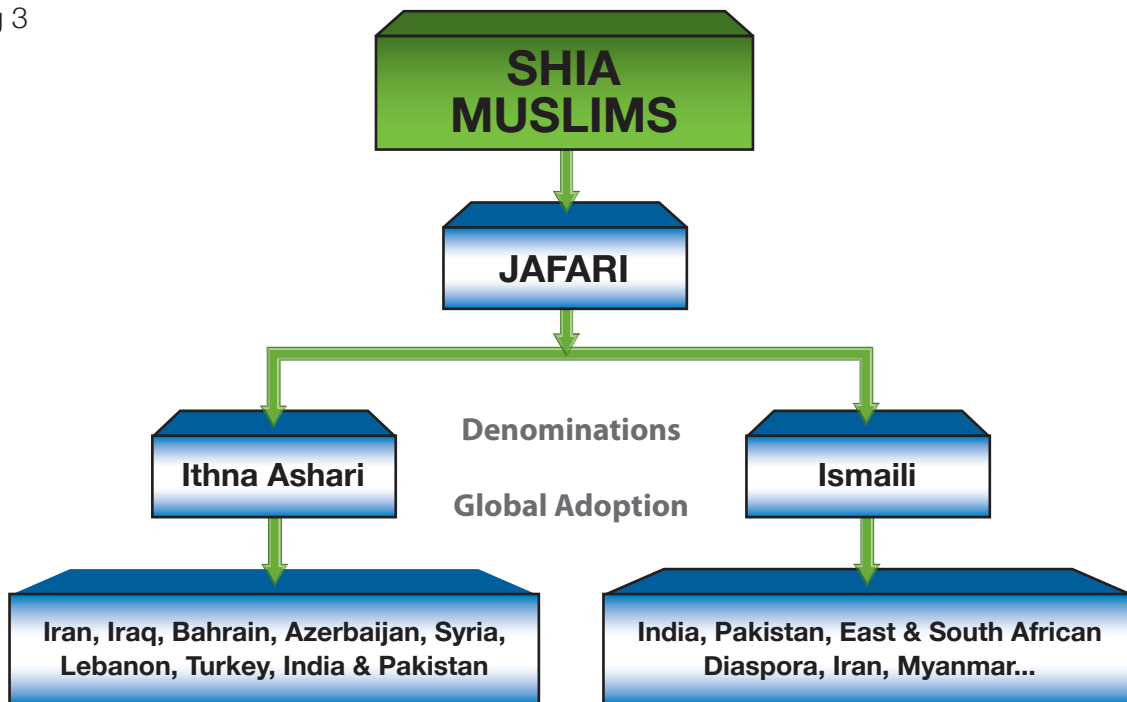
Essentially, there are five main Orthodox Muslim Schools of Thought (known singularly as Madhab and collectively as Madhahib) – Jafari, Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali, named after the Scholars or Imams who founded them circa 8th and 9th Centuries AD. Almost all Shia Muslims are confirmed to the Jafari Madhab, whereas, Sunni Muslim adoption is mainly spread across four Madhahib – Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi and Hanbali. Despite their differences in emphasis and teaching, a principle of mutual respect applies strongly at the Madhahib level of awareness. Notably, we found devout sections of British Muslim communities – particularly those with a high degree of Islamic educational awareness – identifying their form of Islamic practice with Madhab as opposed to the tradition(s) associated with their ethno national heritage, emerging later in history.

Nonetheless, irrespective of Sect or Madhab, British Muslims are more often associated with branches related specifically to either and/or a combination of theological and ethno national/cultural affiliation. Of the two sects, Shia Muslims were found to be relatively less diverse, established as communities and/or represented.



## 2.2.1 Shia Denominations and Global Adoption

Fig 3



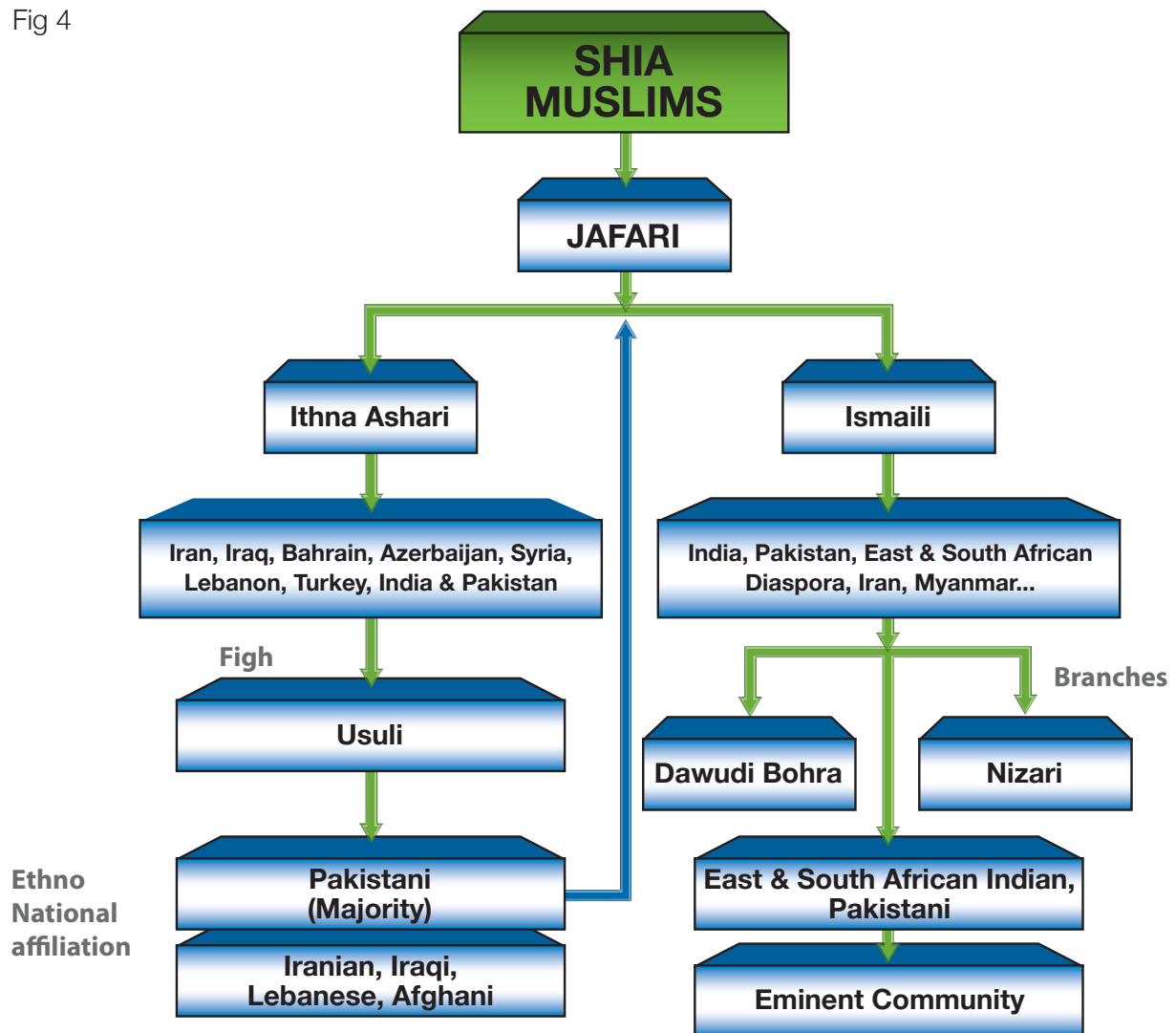
As indicated above, most Shia Muslims are confirmed to the Jafari Madhab (School of Thought), which divides into several denominations. However the only ones with significant representation in the places reviewed were the two denominations of Ithna Ashari and Ismaili.

The Ithna Ashari denomination is predominant throughout the Shia world, constituting majority adoption amongst Shiites in Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria, India, Afghanistan and Bahrain. On the other hand, Ismailis are a relative minority and ethnically less diverse, mainly of Indian and Pakistani heritage and also living across a wide diaspora spanning Eastern and Southern Africa, Arabia, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

Both the Ithna Ashari and Ismaili denominations subdivide further into several Fiqhs and branches, though, again only a few appeared as established communities in some of the areas reviewed; the Usuli Fiqh of the predominant Ithna Ashari denomination and the Nizari and Dawudi Bohra branches of the minority Ismaili denomination. (Significantly, all three appeared as established in Leicester.)

## 2.2.2 Shia Fiqhs, Branches and Ethno National Affiliation

Fig 4



The majority of British Shia Muslims surveyed were confirmed to the Usuli Fiqh and were mostly of Pakistani Punjabi heritage. The Usuli congregation also included established communities of Iranian, Iraqi, Lebanese and Afghani heritage, augmented to some extent by their respective new arrival Asylum and Refugee communities. Understandably, there were notable cultural variations amongst followers of the Usuli Fiqh, for example those of Pakistani heritage preferred to be described as Jafari, caring to emphasise their actually belonging to the first of 'five' Madhahib (Orthodox Schools of Thought), hence being close to their Sunni country folk.

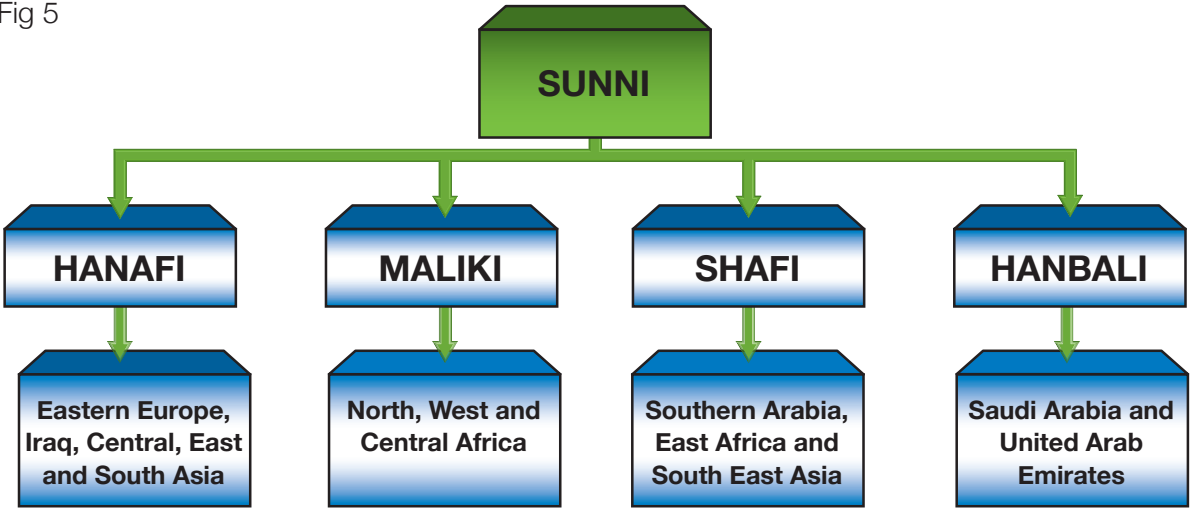
In contrast, Shia Muslim Usulis of Iranian origin were unambiguous in their emphasis of their specific Fiqh of Shia doctrine.

The Ismaili branches of Dawudi Bohra and Nizari constituted a minority of Shiites, mainly of Indian secondary migrant East African heritage and also included significant proportion of Pakistani heritage. Yet, despite their minority status, Ismailis collectively represented a relatively affluent, highly organised, well established and eminent section of the Shia community.

**2.2.3 Sunni Schools of Thought (Madhahib) and Global Adoption**

Generally, British Muslims of the Sunni Sect consisted of a larger, more ethnically and theologically diverse community.

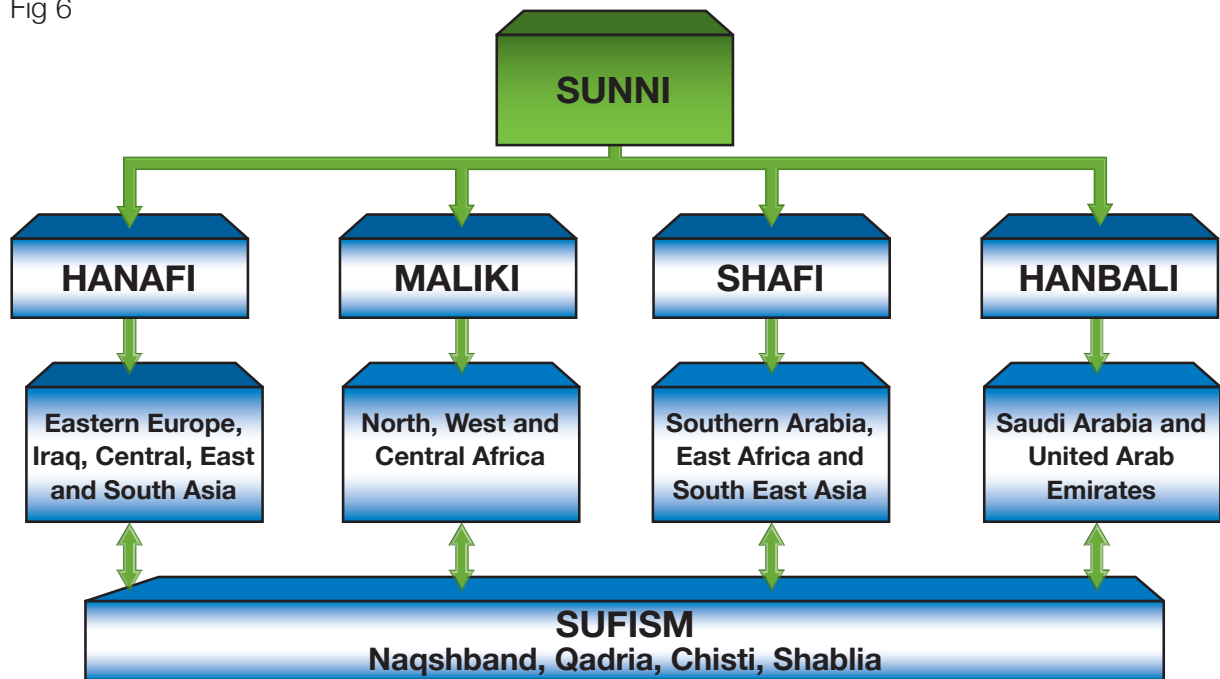
Fig 5



Most Sunni Muslims adopt one of four major Orthodox Schools of Thought (known singularly as Madhab and plural as Madhahib) - Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali. Essentially there are no divisive loyalties specific to any of the Madhahib, nevertheless, Madhab adoption varies and is generally related to global geographic region(s). The Hanafi Madhab is adopted by the majority of Sunni Muslims throughout the world, across Eastern Europe, Iraq, Central, East and South Asia. The Maliki Madhab is predominant amongst Muslims throughout North, Central and West Africa. The Shafi Madhab constitutes majority adoption in South East Asia, Southern Arabia, and East Africa. The Hanbali Madhab is predominant throughout the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Over time – subject to scholarly re-interpretations, regional and cultural variations – these Schools (Madhahib) have become very diverse and sub-divide further into sub-schools (known singularly as Maslaq, dual as Maslaqain and three or more Masaaliq) and many branches. And there is the added complexity that most Masaaliq are interlinked to Sufism.

## 2.2.4 Sufi – Orders (Tariqa, Turuq)

Fig 6

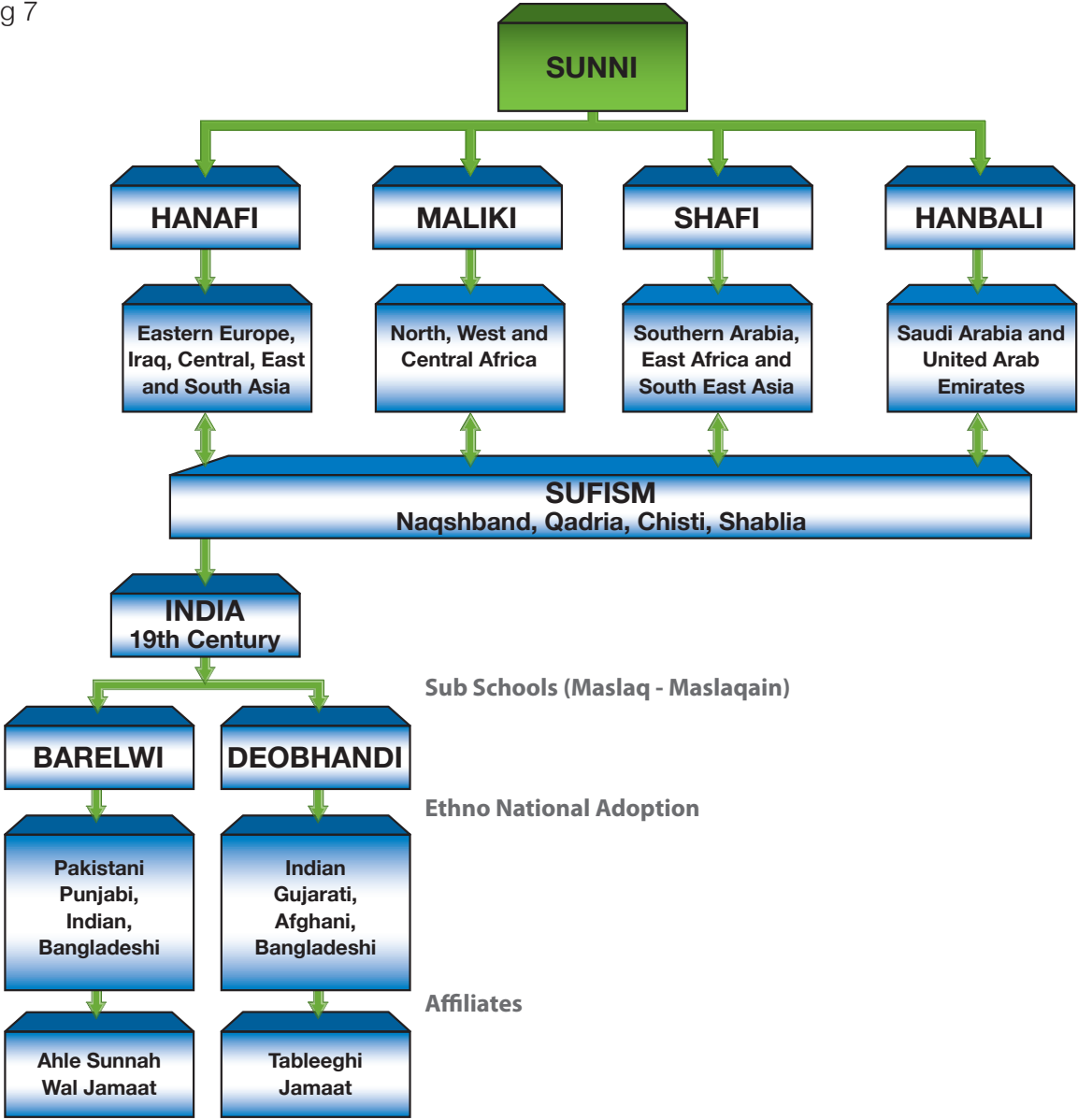


Sufis can belong to any or none of the Madhahib and are organised into orders (known singularly as Tariqa, in the plural as Turuq), grouped around a spiritual leader (Shiekh, Pir or Wali) most often of Prophetic blood lineage. Often referred to as the Mystical component of Islam, there are in fact numerous Sufi Turuq (orders) and practices which vary vastly, ranging from passive meditation to direct action. The most prevalent Turuq in the UK are the Naqshbandi, Qadria, Chistia and Shablia.

**2.2.5 Sunni Sub Schools (Maslaqain), Ethno National Adoption and Affiliates**

Despite all the variety and complexities, two traditional Sunni Muslim sub-schools (Maslaqain) and one branch were commonly found as established within almost all British Muslim communities: the Sunni Barelwi Maslaq; Deobhandi Maslaq; and the Salafi branch.

Fig 7



Both the Barelwi and Deobhandi Maslaqain (Sub-Schools) are derived from the Hanafi Madhab (School of Thought). They are interlinked with Sufi Turuq (Orders), and originated as reformist movements in India during the 19th Century. However they represent two mutually exclusive Maslaqain (sub-schools), with varying degrees of adoption related to a large extent on ethno national heritage. The Barelwi Hanafi Maslaq is predominant amongst British Sunni Muslims with origins from the non-Pakhtun regions of Pakistan (Punjab, Kashmir and Sind), and also amongst some Bangladeshi and Indian (Kutch and Gujarati Baruch) heritage Muslims. Preferring the term Ahle Sunnah Wal Jammaat, Hanafi Barelwi Muslims – by some estimates – make up the largest single block of Muslims in the UK.

### ***From iCoCo local studies...***

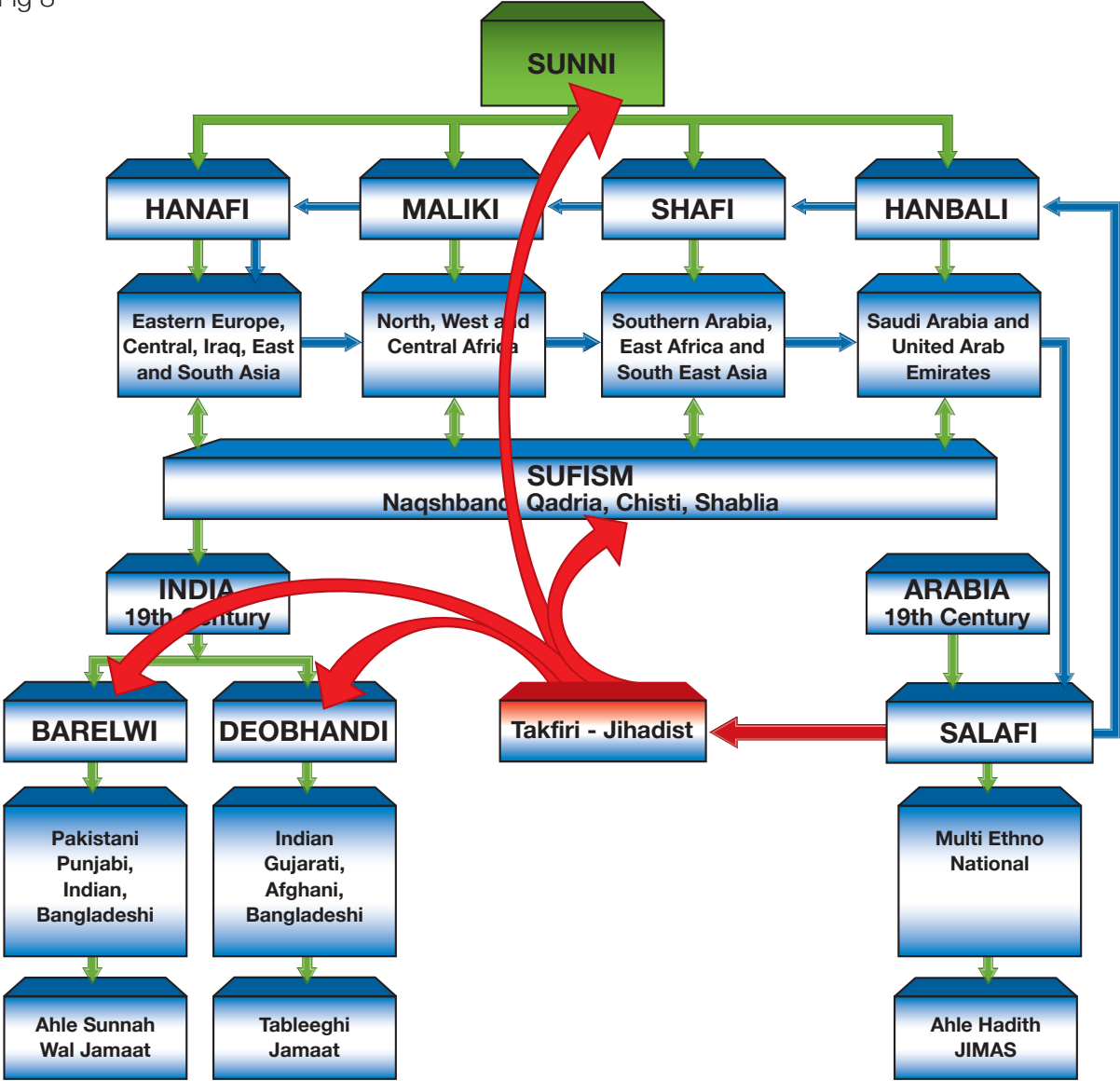
**...at a local level the proportions of those adhering to Ahle Sunnah Wal Jammah varied widely and depended on city, locality and in some cases neighbourhood. There were many areas where Deobhandi Muslim communities predominated, related primarily to the ethnic make-up of Muslims. In some areas, where we carried out detailed analysis, we found distinct residential concentrations on a neighbourhood level.**

The Deobhandi Hanafi Maslaq constitutes majority adoption amongst Muslims from Indian Gujarat, (Surut and some from Baruch), the Northern Pakistani region of Peshawar, throughout Afghanistan, Bangladesh and some Kashmiri. The Deobhandi are renowned for instituting Tableeghi Jammah (Preaching Congregation) – the largest Muslim evangelical group in the world and have a developed proficiency for setting up Mosques and Madrassas.

In addition to what has been described above there are many other variations within and between the Maslaqain of Barelwi and Deobhandi, related to a number of factors including ethno regional heritage related to different theological approaches and perspectives.

2.2.6 Sunni Branch, Salafi, Ethno National adoption and Affiliate

Fig 8



The Salafi Muslim branch, although its theological origins date from much earlier – emerged as an organised reformist movement in the 19th Century in Arabia. Confined primarily to the Hanbali Madhab, and based on teachings that reject the need to be bound by any one of the four Madhahib – propagating calls for a return to the pure roots of Islam – the Salafi inevitably consider teachings from all four Madhahib. The Salafi draw followers from all nationalities and ethnicities but nevertheless, in Britain Salafi Muslims constitute a minority compared to either followers of the Barelwi or Deobhandi Maslaqain. The predominant practice in Saudi Arabia, yet traditionally, the largest following of Salafi in Britain has been associated with the Pakistani based group Jamiat Ahle Hadith (congregation of the sayings of the Prophet) and Jam’iat Ihyaa Minhaj Al-Sunnah (The Association to Revive the Way of the Messenger). Significantly, relative to both the Barelwi and Deobhandi Maslaqain, Salafi followers comprised a generally younger and more ethnically diverse congregation, including North African Arabs, many Somali, African Caribbean and White English converts. Consequently, there are many groups and variations within the Salafi branch. With Salafi Muslims often unduly singled out as emphasising the practice of Takfir (excommunication)

and encouraging Militant Jihad (Struggle), it should be noted however that these tenets also exist within the Maslaqain of the Barelwi, Deobhandi, and within many Sufi Turuq and at the Madhahib level. And similar tenets are found within almost all faiths and beliefs.

It is extremely important, therefore, to avoid generalising or over simplification in this context.

### ***From iCoCo local studies...***

... amongst sections of Muslim communities who possessed more of an awareness of their specific beliefs and practices, there was evidentially more of a preponderance towards divisions on a theological basis. When specific to the Maslaqain of Deobhandi and Barelwi this was also reflected, to some extent, in terms of ethno national divisions.

Although in most cases we found instances where possessing a generally high level of Islamic awareness allowed for unity across ethnic and theological divisions – for example a British Muslim community of Indian Mauritian heritage, through a developed Islamic awareness and cultural tolerance, represented a combination of Deobhandi, Barelwi and Salafi and other Muslim influences having found reconciliation by way of reference to the Hanafi Madhab. This community also considered their relationship with their Hindu country folk as being very amicable and quite significantly, were by all accounts positively integrated and involved with all the communities around them.

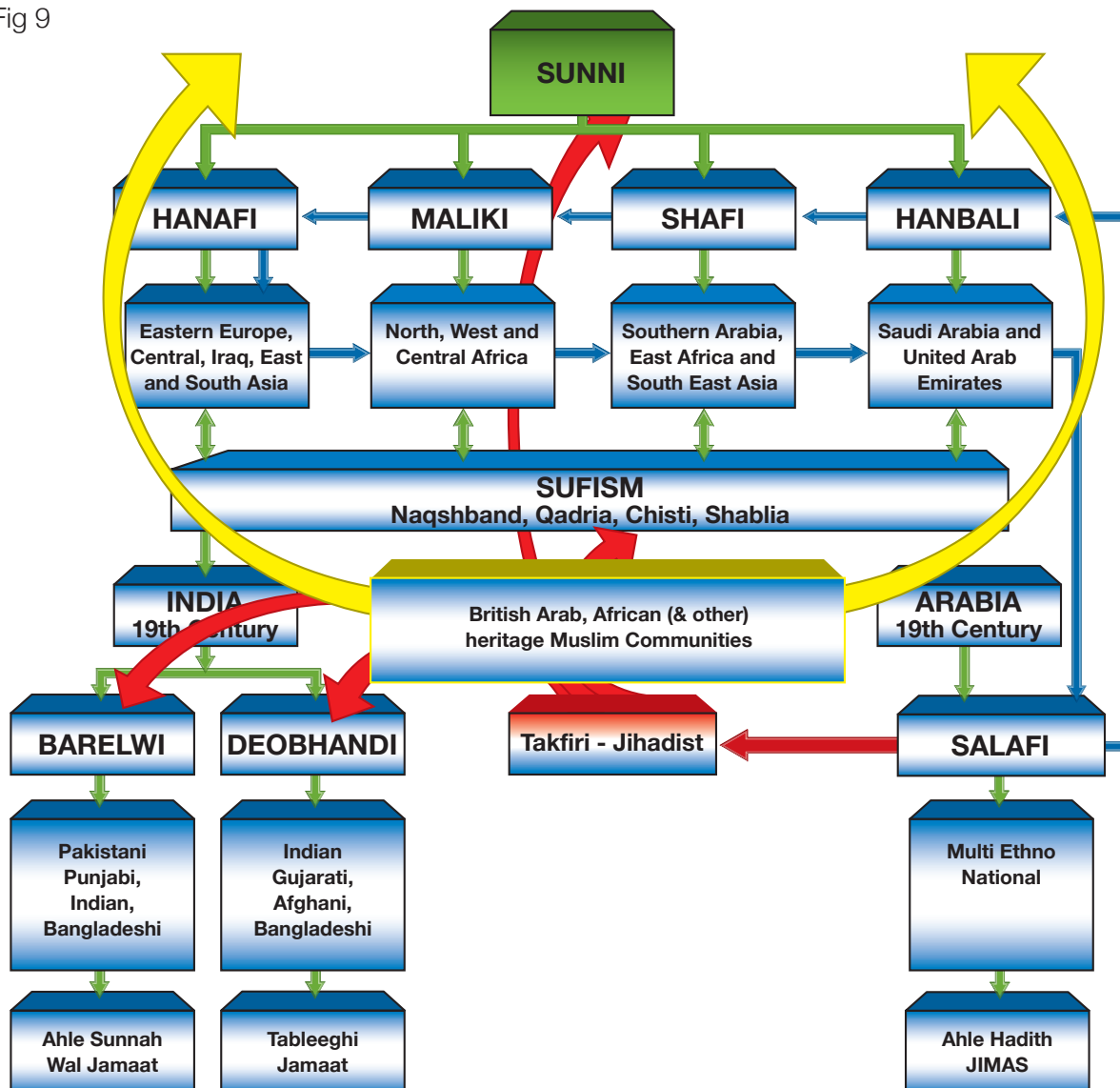
In contrast, we came across many Muslims of various affiliations in positions of influence identifying other Muslims as extremist or militant. Whilst these accusations were not always unfounded, in most cases the sentiments were due to ignorance, prejudice or antagonism between themselves and the groups they were labelling.

Nevertheless, we found across our studies, many Muslims, Barelwi, Deobhandi, Salafi and Sufi – all displaying a proficiency in confronting radical elements within their communities. They were most effective when their approach drew upon their specific theological perspective. A common feature of the successes was the active involvement and leadership by young, devout, male and female members of the congregation.



## 2.2.7 British Muslims Madhahib Affiliation

Fig 9



In addition to the main groupings outlined above, established British Muslim communities of Arab and Somali heritage (subject to cultural variations), generally displayed more of an awareness of, and hence adhered primarily, to their traditional Madhab (School of Thought). A Madhab level of affiliation was also prevalent amongst a cross section of British Muslims belonging to other ethno national heritages, hitherto associated with ethnic specific Maslaq. Significantly, Madhab adoption was more apparent amongst those displaying relatively greater Islamic educational awareness, appearing for example relatively more frequently amongst Converts. We gained the impression that the collective development of these new sections reflected a process of diffusion, influenced by exposure to Muslim diversity within British society.

However, as opposed to representing a community in the traditional sense, these Muslims either practiced their faith on an individual basis or most often tended to be affiliated to Muslim groups and organisations. Nonetheless, represent an important addition to the mosaic of Muslim diversity in Britain and tend to be well organised, accessible, and most crucially, free from ethnic divisions encouraging a collective cohesion and unity by way of a mutual theologically based respect.

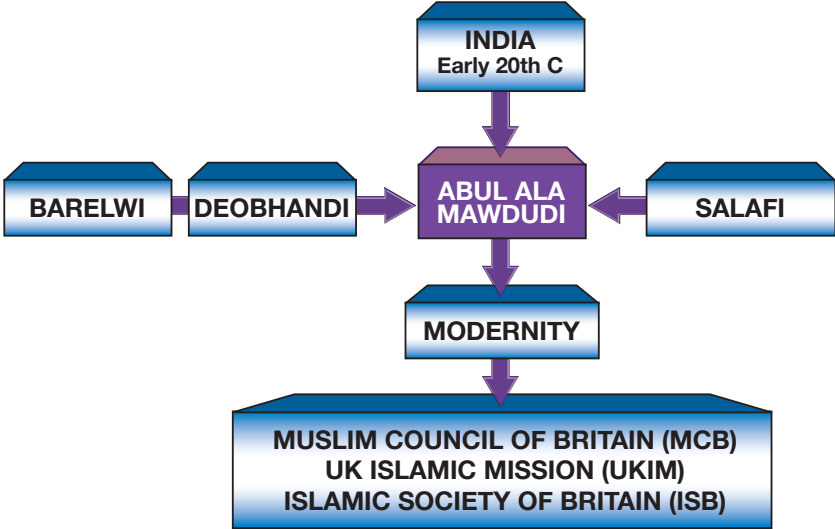
Such diffusions are an integral feature of the changing composition of British Muslim diversity and therefore vital for local agencies developing effective engagement strategies. However this phenomenon is neither unique nor new to Muslims. Similar diffusions have always occurred, precipitated by a range of factors affecting both the Shia and Sunni Muslim Sects. The main Muslim groups and organisations in Britain, are founded on principles developing during the 20th century and more recently, invariably influencing many of the organised representational structures of British Muslim communities. Built on a complex range of factors and connections encapsulating theological, ethno national, historical and politically influenced responses, the most significant in a British context are traceable to specific periods during the 20th century.

### **2.3 20TH & 21ST CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS: MODERNITY, THEOLOGICAL PURITY AND SUFISM**

The early to mid 20th century marked the emergence of several Sunni political movements, distinguishable from earlier reformist movements in that they purported a relative indifference to theological accuracy, developing rather as combinations of definitive Muslim influences responding to the advent of Modernity. Of noted and continued relevance today are the traditions founded on the distinctly different approaches taken by Abul Ala Mawdudi and Allama Iqbal in India during the early to mid 20th century. Equally relevant and distinct are the mid 20th century responses of Sayyid Qutub and Shiekh Taqiuddin Nabhani in Arabia. The latter 20th Century provides apt examples of a resurgence of calls for a return to theological purity in the politicised Shia Muslim led Revolution in Iran, and the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Over more recent years, a number of tragic international and national events have brought an increasingly negative focus on British Muslim communities often in association with extremism and terrorism. This climate has precipitated in some ways a redrawing of existing Muslim structures and a simultaneous emergence of new responses in the form of hitherto under-represented viewpoints of Sufi inspired perspectives. Apart from the theologically confirmed responses, British Muslims are also drawing inspiration from the Democratic principles of lobbying and campaigning.

**2.3.1 Early 20th Century: Abul Ala Mawdudi**

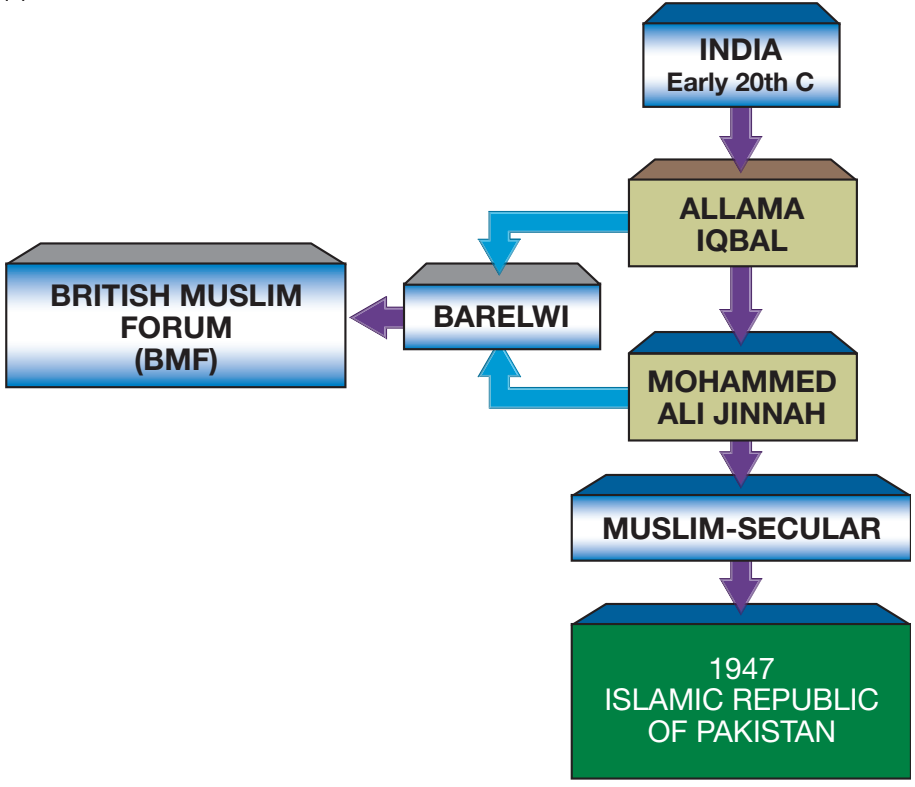
Fig 10



The early 20th century Indian Muslim Scholar Abul Ala Mawdudi, incorporating Barelwi, Deobhandi and Salafi sentiments effectively processed a combined Muslim response to the advent of Modernity, culminating in the establishment of Jamati Islam (Congregation of Islam) in India. The principles of Muslim unity encouraged by Abul Ala Mawdudi lay the originating basis of inspiration for British based Muslim organisations such as the Muslim Council of Britain, UK Islamic Mission and Islamic Society of Britain.

**2.3.2 Early 20th Century: Allama Iqbal & Mohammed Ali Jinnah**

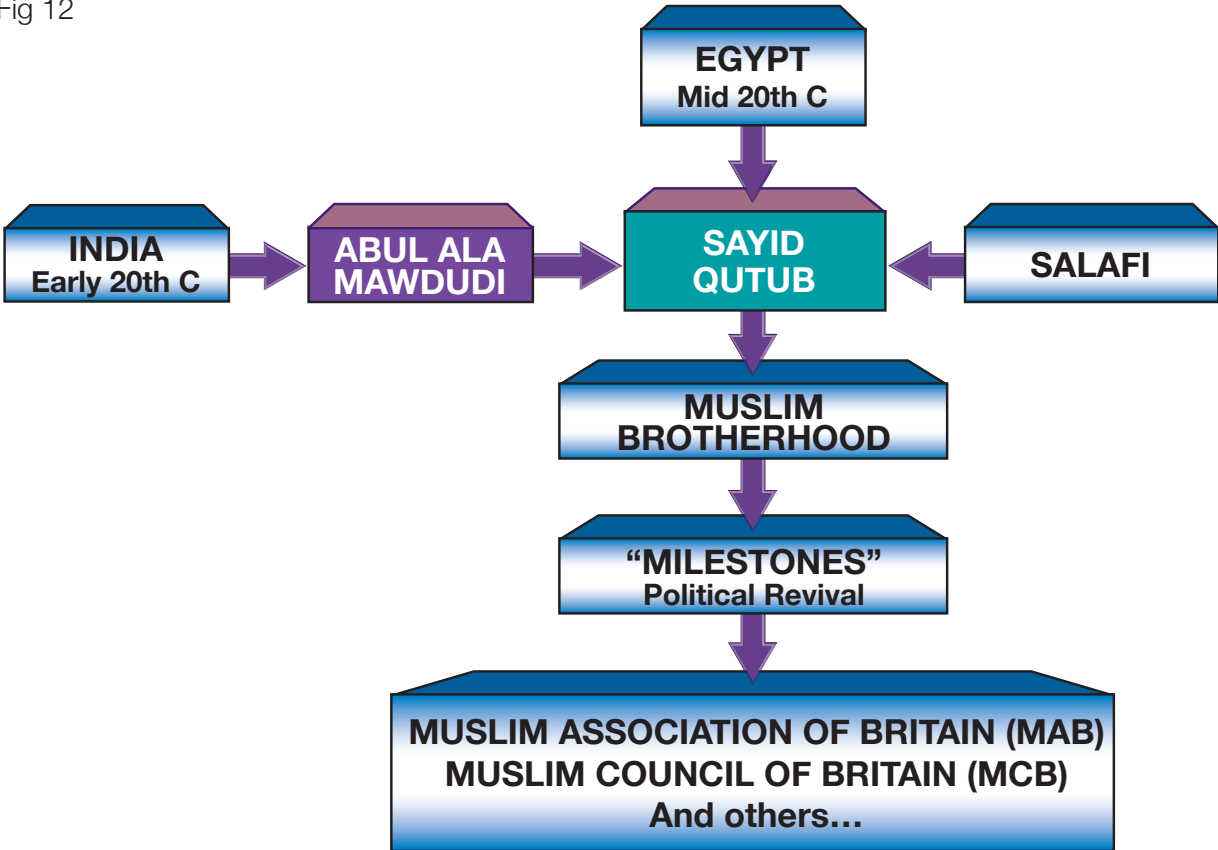
Fig 11



Also during the early 20th century the famed Indian poet and writer Allama Iqbal is noted for the inspiration behind Mohammed Ali Jinnah’s combined Muslim Secular approach leading to the eventual creation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Both Allama Iqbal and Mohammed Ali Jinnah are held in high esteem by first generation Pakistani heritage Barelwi Muslims both in Pakistan and Britain. The British Muslim Forum currently acts as the main representative body for a large section of Barelwi inclined British Muslims.

**2.3.3 Mid 20th Century: Sayyid Qutub – Abul Ala Mawdudi - Salafi**

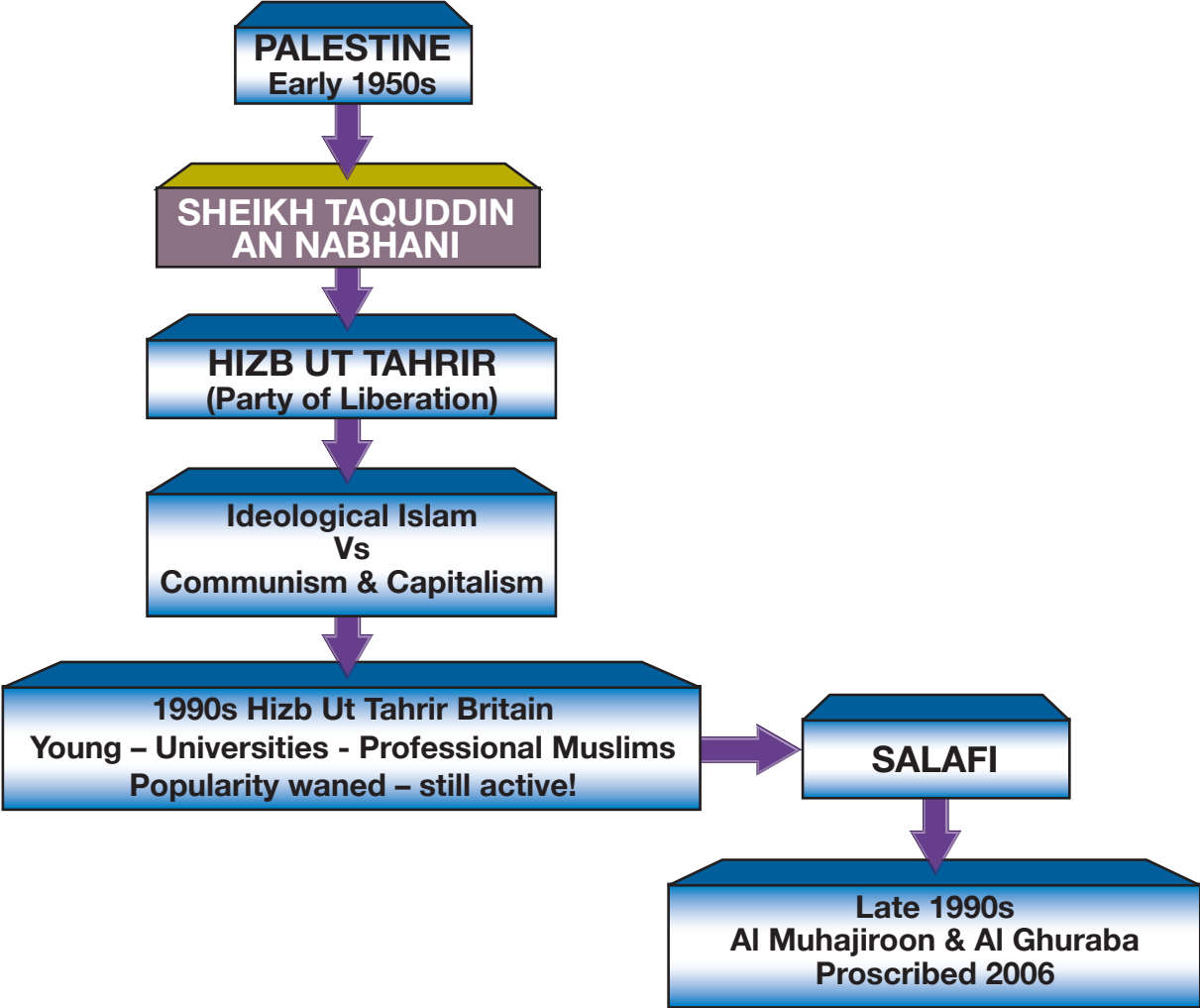
Fig 12



In the mid 20th Century, building on a combination of Salafi traditions and the works of Abul Ala Mawdudi, the literary cleric Sayyid Qutub founded the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Also famed for the political revival book “Milestones” – this and other writings by Sayyid Qutub feature as an inspiration for many Muslim organisations, including the MCB yet most closely associated with the founding principles behind the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) which acts as a representative body for British Muslims of Arab heritage.

**2.3.4 Early 1950s: Sheikh Taquiddin An Nabhani Islamic Ideology**

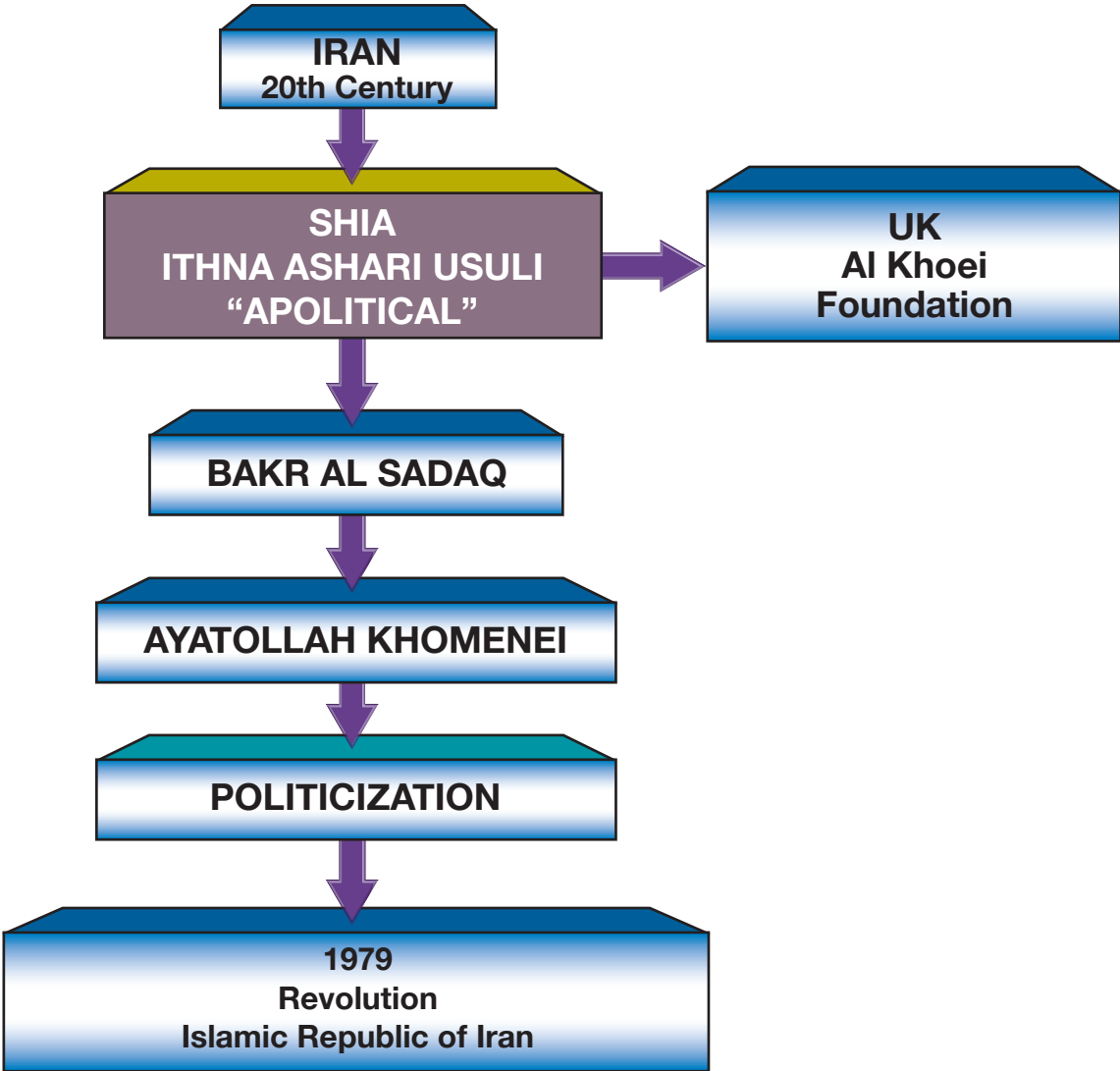
Fig 13



During the early 1950s the Palestinian born Shiekh Taquiddin An Nabhani established Hizb Ut Tahrir (Party of Liberation), presenting Islam as an ideological alternative to Communism and Capitalism. Throughout the 1990s, this group gained increasing popularity amongst young British Muslims, on university campuses and amongst some professionals. In Britain, by the late 1990s, theologically based contentions produced the Salafi inclined break off groups Al Muhajiroon and Al Ghuraba, both proscribed by the government in 2006. Although, support for Hizb Ut Tahrir has declined somewhat over the last few years, active bodies continue to operate with varying levels of support and activity. Similarly, the support and popularity of views expressed by both Al Muhajiroon and Al Ghuraba have all but disappeared from the open debate. However, this is difficult to gauge since former membership continues, yet in a more guarded fashion.

2.3.5 Late 20th Century: Bakr Al Sadaq, Ayatollah Khomeini – Iranian Revolution

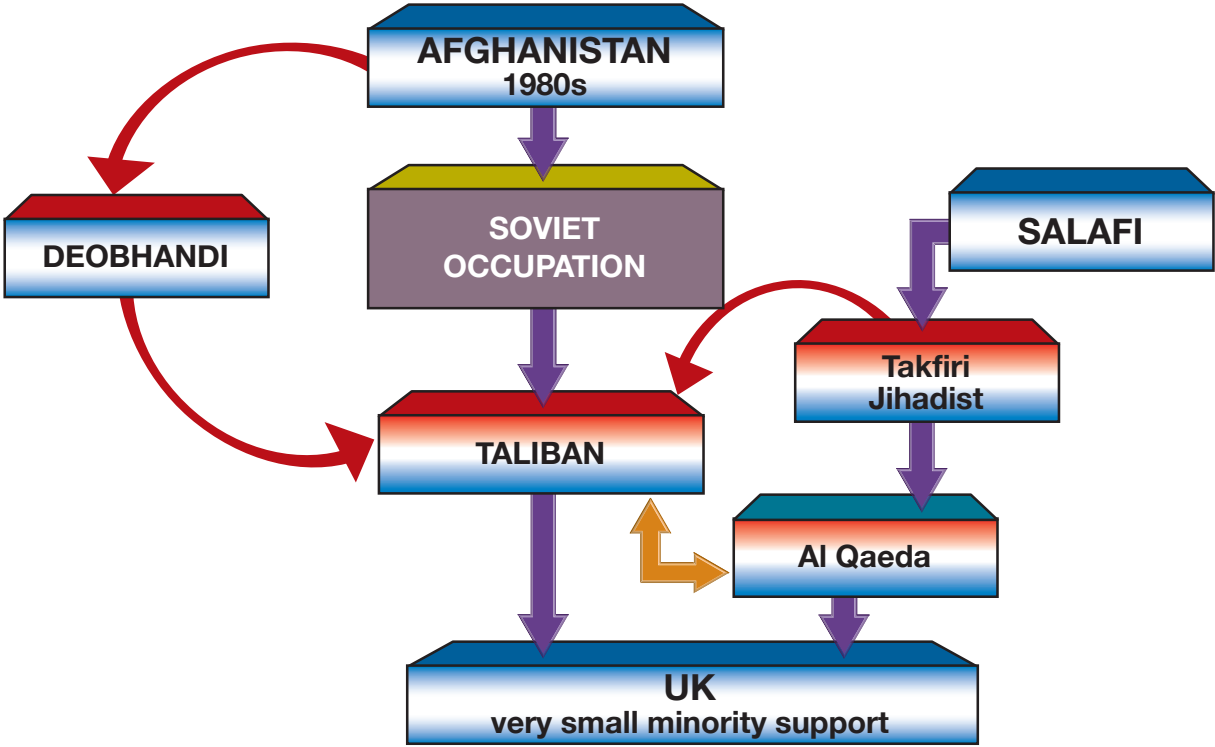
Fig 14



The Shia Muslim world experienced similar developments to Sunni Muslims during the 20th century. Essentially apolitical, the Shia Ithna Ashari Usuli majority in Iran, inspired first by the works of renowned cleric Bakr Al Sadaq, later developed on by Ayatollah Khomeini effectively amassed a politicised collective call for a return to theological purity in government culminating with the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The largest Shia representative organisation in Britain is the Al Khomei Foundation, based in London.

**2.3.6 1980's: RISE OF THE TALIBAN**

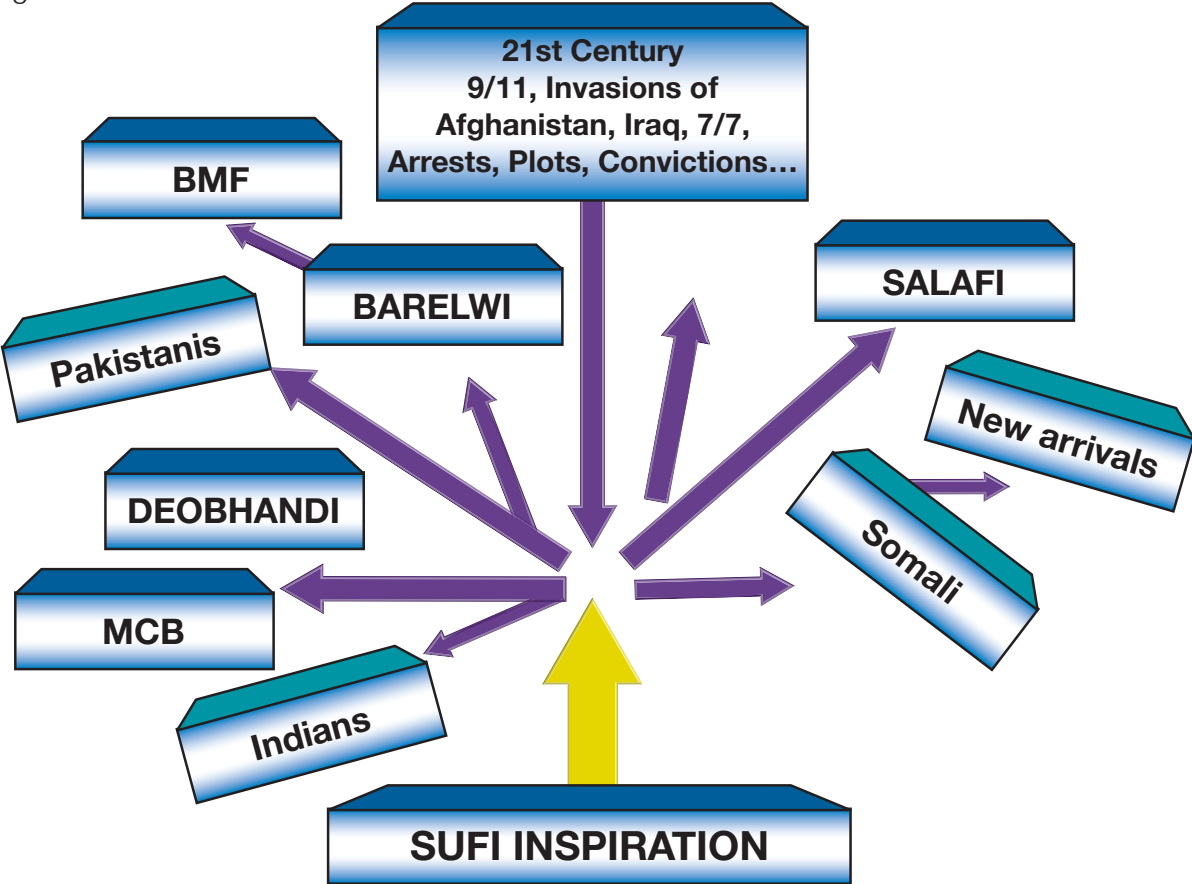
Fig 15



The 1980s struggle to free Afghanistan from Soviet Occupation marked the Taliban's rise to prominence. However, unlike other Sunni movements emerging in the 20th century, the Taliban strictly adhered to a doctrine founded on theological purity. Many Taliban are graduates of Deobhandi Madrassas (Schools). However the Taliban actually represent a process of combining a stringent cultural variant of their indigenous Deobhandi Maslaq with similarly puritanical variations from the Salafi branch. Their shared calls for a return to the pure roots of Islam in part explain the Taliban's relationship with the Salafi inspired Al Qaeda. It is important to note, however, that neither the Taliban nor Al Qaeda enjoy other than a very small minority of support amongst British Muslims.

**2.3.7 The 21st Century: Withdrawal and Emergence of Sufis**

Fig 16

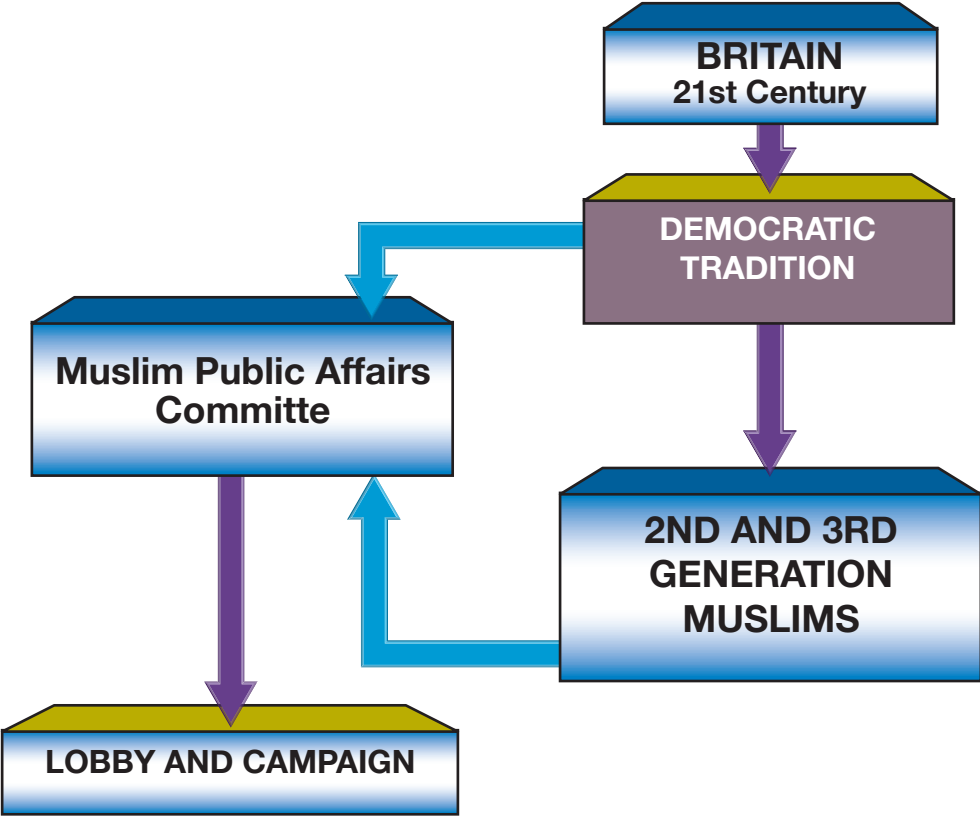


The horrific events of the 21st century, both abroad and in Britain have had a profound effect on Muslims and brought about significant change - precipitating a general withdrawal of existing structures into their individual theological and ethnic groupings. Whilst, in the main British Muslims retain a united and cohesive front, we have come across some examples where the pressure on Muslim communities to present a moderate face and to distance themselves from “extremism” has had the unintended and unhelpful consequence of increasing tensions and in some cases conflict between groups which had hitherto co-existed without difficulty. New and emerging Muslim responses to these recent developments have been enhanced by a hitherto minority and under-represented section of British Muslims with the emergence of a Sufi inspired riposte. Yet on a community level we found the Sufi based responses have yet to make a significant impact.



2.3.8 21st Century: 2nd and 3rd Generation British Muslims and Democracy

Fig 17



Outside the theologically based responses many second and third generation Muslims have set up organisations to represent their interests in accordance with the British democratic principle of free speech and lobby. One of the most active and well known of these organisations is the political lobby and campaign group Muslim Public Affairs Committee (MPAC UK), which addresses issues of concern for young Muslims from all backgrounds, encouraging the use of the ballot box to make a change.

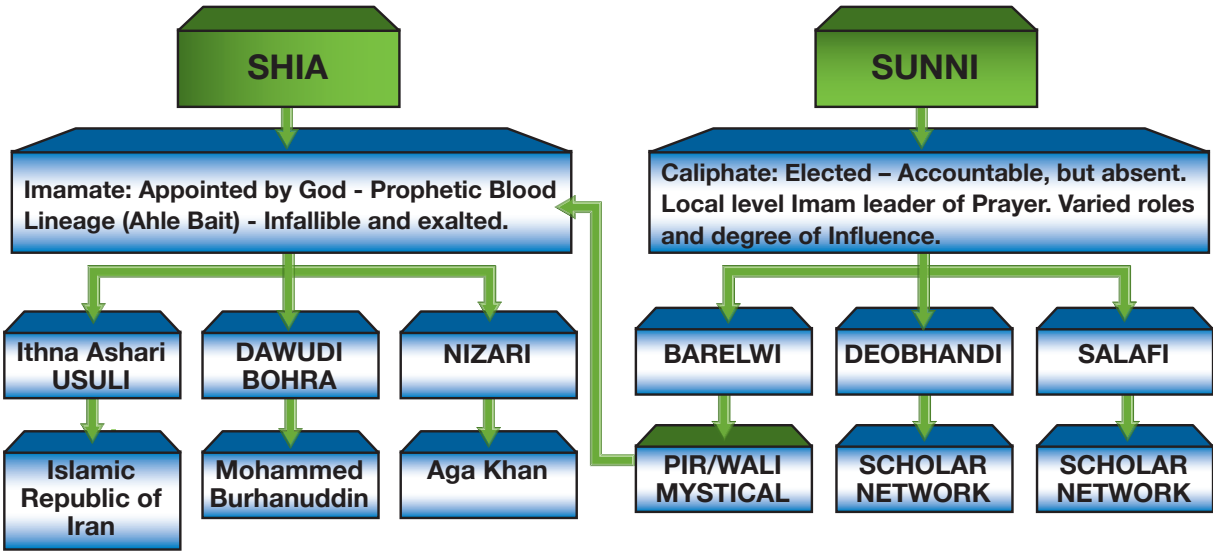
There are of course many other variations and strands of Political thought related to British Muslims. The outline above is meant merely as an illustration of the rich and diverse political heritage of British Muslim communities. On the whole across all the areas reviewed Muslim communities related strongly to a British identity albeit changeable and interconnected – as with all communities – varied and distinct, shaped by ethno national origins, faith, local conditions and cultural histories.

## 2.4 LEADERSHIP

A feature common to most Muslim political movements emerging in the 20th Century was a call to Unity, appealing to the concept of Ummah (global communion) – often drawing inspiration and emphasising the Madhahib level of mutual respect whilst aspiring to a central leadership structure. However, amongst all the diversity outlined above there are equally diverse leadership structures.

### 2.4.1 Religious: Central & Spiritual

Fig 18



All Muslims hold the same fundamental beliefs, however, in terms of central leadership Shia Muslims have the distinctive institution of the Imamate. This is essentially a centralised authority exercising both spiritual and temporal leadership based to some extent on hereditary rites linked to Prophetic blood lineage. Shia Imams are believed to have been appointed by God and therefore considered sinless and infallible in matters of faith and morals and thereby held in high esteem and reverence.

For many Sunni Muslims central authority and ultimate allegiance is reserved for the Caliph, being the title given to the head of the Islamic State (Khilafah). In contrast to the Shia Imamate the Caliph is elected and not considered sinless nor infallible. In essence, neither the Imamate nor the Caliphate are in current existence.

For some Shia Muslims, particularly of the Ithna Ashari denomination, the Islamic Republic of Iran provides a temporal focus of central leadership. Within, the Shia Ismaili denomination there exists a clearly defined leadership; for Dawudi Bohra the current leader is Mohammed Burhandin, and for the Nizari, the Aga Khan, both residing in India. Amongst, British Sunni Muslims, however, much debate and disagreement exists between the Maslaqain and branches in relation to the definition and need for a Caliph or an Islamic State, as is the method with which the leader is appointed or established.

On a more localised level, compared to the Shia Imam's esteemed role, Sunni Imams do not hold such an exalted position. The training regime for Shia Imams in general is considerably more prolonged and intense than that of Sunni Imams, who are traditionally trained to act merely as leaders of the prayer and Madrassa teachers. However, roles, responsibilities and degree of influence vary depending on the individual's level of knowledge, skills and abilities. There are also notable variations related to the Maslaqain, branch of practice and ethno national cultural heritage.

Although there are distinct differences in terms of central leadership between Shia and Sunni Muslims, there are some subtle overlaps and similarities. Followers of the Barelwi Maslaq – in line with their Sufi origins - practice a type of reverence for Mystical Holy Men (Shiekh, Pir or Wali) qualified through Prophetic blood lineage, denoted by titles such as Syed or Shah. This is similar to the Shia Imamate, who likewise are appointed through Prophetic blood lineage. However, Barelwi reverence for Holy Men is generally confined to spiritual and/or mystical matters only, with their respective and relative popularity amongst followers (Mureeds) based to some extent on a combination of charisma and specific ethnic heritage as opposed to scholarly qualification. By contrast, the Deobhondi Maslaq possesses the largest network of Scholars based and/or trained in Britain, and whilst drawn mainly from their respective ethno national heritages, this network includes young and old, male and female, providing access with relative ease to both spiritual and temporal guidance.

Some Salafi Muslims, in a subtly similar context to the Shia Ithna Ashari connection with Iran, view Saudi Arabia as representing a centralised religious authority. But more specifically, religious guidance is most often assigned to a wide network of qualified scholars, significantly ranging across ethnic and national heritage, including African Caribbean and white English converts. Other British Muslim groupings involving different ethnicities and affiliations or related to their respective Madhahib tend to be associated with like minded groups and organisations. Access to spiritual and other guidance is provided in different ways including attending talks and lectures across Masaliq, branches, groups and organisations. However, these organisations, have tended not to aspire to setting up of local Mosques (or to use the correct term Masaajid). Yet at a local level, we found Masaajids forming the bedrock of British Muslim communities, hence none of the Muslim national and political movements appear as widely represented or connected at the community level as the three main traditional groupings of Barelwi, Deobhandi and Salafi. These collectively form the basis for the vast majority of Sunni Masaajid throughout the UK.

### **2.4.3 Structural: Mosques – Masaajid**

Overall, the many complex differences outlined above tend to be accepted and tolerated. Indeed Muslims of various ethnicities and practices can often be seen worshipping together in the same Masaajid. However, we found Muslims were more often likely to worship in a Masaajid with others from similar ethnic background and religious practice. Accordingly, most Masaajid and likewise Madrassas (Muslim Schools) are established and administered along theological and most often corresponding ethnic lines.

## From iCoCo local studies...

... in many of the places reviewed, there were examples of established Masaajid serving different ethnic and religious groupings sometimes within a few yards of each other.

The establishment of new Masaajid is a continuous phenomenon – following ethnic and religious lines, with new communities also beginning to establish their own ethnic specific places of worship, including in a few cases White English Muslim converts.

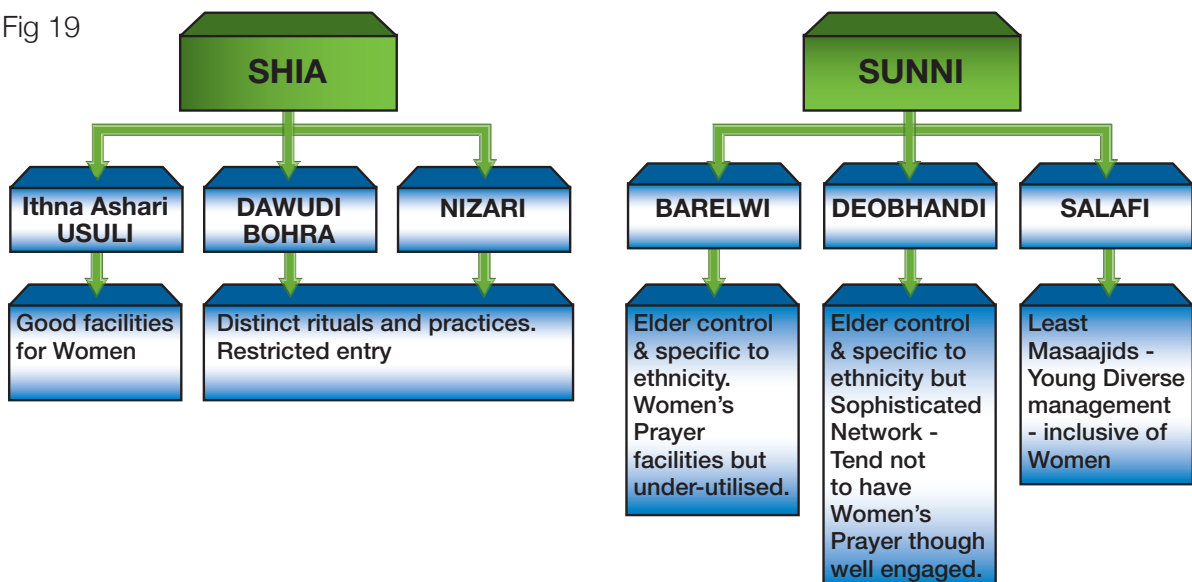
We also found in many instances, where Masaajid constitutions were apparently drawn-up to intentionally prevent the appointment of Muslims from other ethnicities and/or religious practices onto their Management committees.

It was common to find – within sections of every Maslaq and branch of Muslim practice - worshippers refusing, as a matter of religious orthodoxy to pray behind an Imam from another branch or Maslaq.

Essentially places of worship, Masaajid are generally considered an important focal point for Muslim communities. Although they are regularly frequented only by more devout Muslims, congregational prayers such as the Friday (Jummah), Eid (Festival) and Janazah (Funeral) prayers have very high attendance rates, even amongst nominally practising Muslims. The range of services offered by Masaajid varies widely. Some are small places used only for worship, while others are almost like community centres that offer educational support, pastoral care, hall hire and even sports facilities.

### 2.4.4 Masaajid Organisation

Fig 19



In terms of ritual worship, Shia Ithna Ashari and Sunni Muslim practices of prayer are indistinguishable and given that there are fewer Shia Ithna Ashari affiliated Masaajid as compared to Sunni, we have found Shia Ithna Ashari Muslims will use Sunni Masaajid for prayer and though far less frequent the reversal was also true. Whereas Shia Ismaili Muslims perform ritual worship in a distinct way and restrict entry to their places of worship. Specific to the organisational arrangements within Shia Masaajid are the impressive facilities and provision for female worshippers. These included regular activities which extended to key involvement in decision making processes related to Masaajid administration and management.

Whereas, typically, Sunni Barelwi and Deobhandi Masaajid are mostly run by elderly all-male management committees that represent the predominant ethnic group and Maslaq upon which the Masaajid is established. However, we found signs of change in a few Barelwi though more so amongst Deobhandi Masaajid in the appointment of younger trustees sometimes of various ethnic backgrounds onto their management committees, though in general exclusion of Muslims of other ethnic groups persists. Within both the Barelwi and Deobhandi Maslaqain Masaajid, control of the management committee is often the subject of rivalry and dispute. Since, these types of Masaajid predominantly serve specific communities, competition for appointment onto the management committee is often contested on the basis of traditional and cultural leadership structures generally known as the; Birardari (brotherhood) and Khandani (clan) systems (explored in more detail below). In contrast, Masaajid aligned to both the Salafi and Madhahib levels of practice tended to be administered and managed by a range of trustees including young professionals, often of various ethnic backgrounds and included active female involvement. Yet across all Masaajid there are only a few exceptional cases where female trustees have been appointed, though most often as part of separate sub-committees.

The establishment of Masaajid requires organisation, funding and a level of consolidated community support. In this respect Barelwi and Deobhandi communities are particularly apt at accessing their established traditional ethnic specific community networks (Birardari and Khandani). Increasingly, there are other newer settled communities also using similar networks, particularly Muslims of Somali heritage. Nationally, the Deobhandi Maslaq forms the basis for the most sophisticated and largest network of Masaajid, closely followed – in terms of numbers – by those affiliated to the Barelwi Maslaq. Masaajid affiliated solely to the Salafi branch of practice represent the fewest of the three main groupings. However, Salafi Muslims are inclined to worship in either Deobhandi, and/or those affiliated to Madhahib including Arab and Somali based Masaajid. Nevertheless, on a local level the nature and number of Masaajid vary, primarily according to the ethnic make-up of the Muslim communities.

Identifying Masaajid affiliation by location can provide a good illustration of Muslim diversity specific to city, area and in some cases on a neighbourhood level. This can help gauge levels of representation and potential gaps in terms of engagement channels. Generally, in our experience, Masaajid have provided an effective initial point of engagement for local agencies.

There are further differences between Masaajid dependant on and related to Maslaq and/or branch. For example, wherever possible Salafi, Barelwi and Madhahib based Masaajid provided prayer facilities for women. We found, however, in general the facilities provided by Barelwi Masaajid were poorly maintained and under-utilised. In, contrast women's prayer facilities in both the Salafi and Madhahib affiliated Masaajid were well used, maintained and included a range of regular activities. Significantly, many Deobhondi Masaajid do not provide prayer facilities for women. This is due to a theologically based assertion that the most appropriate place for women's prayer is in the home. To compensate, women are given access to the Masaajid outside prayer times and often catered for by extensive CB radio systems which transmit key sermons and lectures into the homes. Hence, women followers of the Deobhondi Maslaq generally appeared to be relatively well engaged with and involved in organising Masaajid activities and significantly, possessed a high-level of Islamic educational awareness. There were also examples of Barelwi Masaajid making use of similar approaches particularly those managed by Indian Gujarati Baruchi Muslims.

As indicated above Masaajid are typically established along religious and ethnic lines, in the same way traditional leadership and representational structures within Muslim communities are most often religiously and ethnically based.

## **2.5 LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION: TRADITIONAL AND CULTURAL**

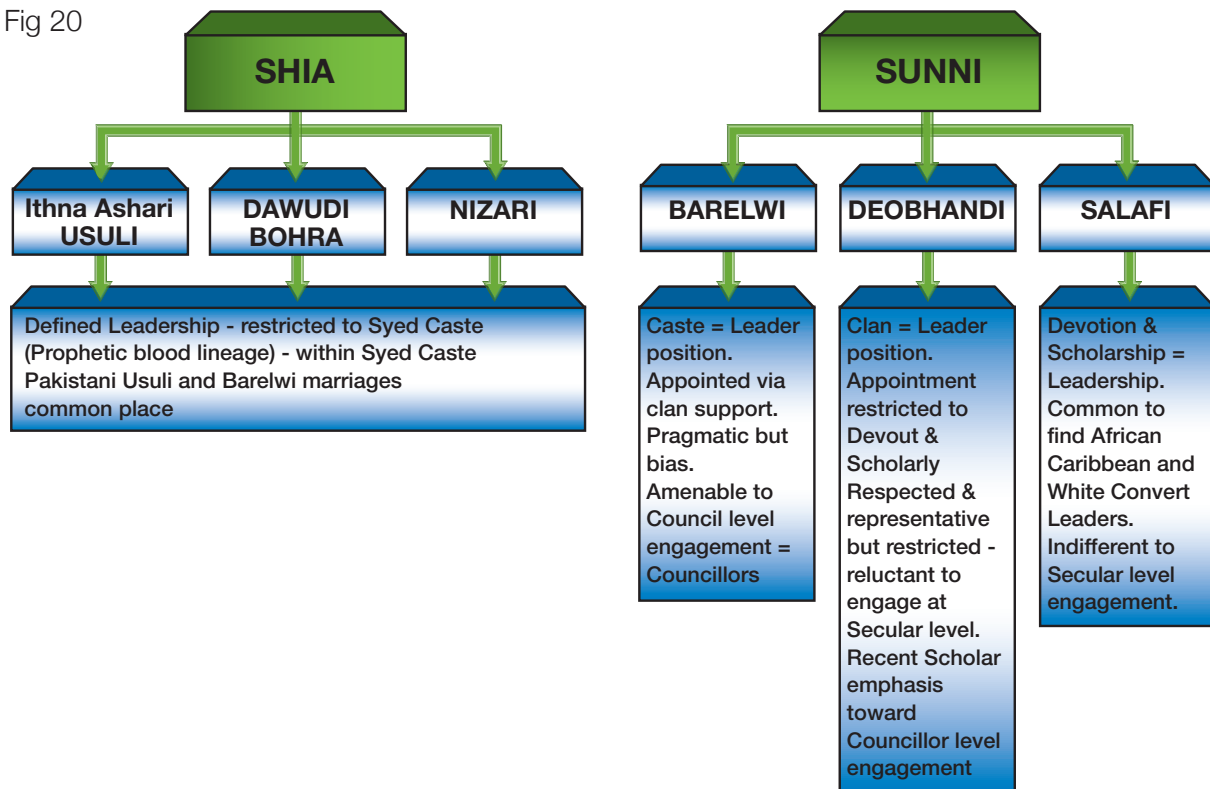
All societies and communities have hierarchical leadership structures. However, as highlighted earlier, responses to recent events within Muslim communities have exacerbated difference and division. This has raised issues of contention within Muslim communities with respect to leadership and representation. The following outlines the ethno national traditional structural arrangements most prevalent amongst British Muslim communities.

At a local level, many Muslim community leadership structures operate within traditional extended family, tribal/clan networks and allegiance systems, usually transposed from the cultural norms of their respective countries of origin. Common in established British Muslim communities of Arab, African and Indo-Pakistani heritage, these systems tend to be organised with male elders at the helm, often with progression along nepotistic blood lineage and ancestry. The degree of influence, adherence to, and level of social control is dependant primarily on the population size and residential concentration of the respective community.

The main ethno-cultural specific leadership systems encountered during our studies have been associated with the Muslim traditions of Pakistani, Indian, Somali and amongst sections of the newer arrival communities. Probably the most sophisticated, widely used and certainly most influential are the traditions associated with the Pakistani and Indian Muslim communities. Generally referred to as the Birardari (Brotherhood) or Khandani (Ancestral Clan) systems, there are many complex variations, overlapping affiliations and intricacies in relation to Sect, Maslaq and ethno national/regional heritage.

## 2.5.1 Birardari (Brotherhood) and Khandani (Clan) Organisational variations

Fig 20



Within the Pakistani Shia Birardari system, hierarchical position is – in line with Shia doctrine (as described above) – clearly defined with leadership being restricted to those of the Syed caste i.e. possessing a Prophetic blood lineage. Similarly, within the Pakistani predominantly Barelwi community, hierarchical position is also based on caste, and the Syed Caste is highly regarded, with marriage between Shia Syed and Sunni Barelwi Syed quite common. However, a different, less restrictive tradition operates within the Birardari System of Pakistani Barelwi Muslim community. In these communities the lead position is most often assigned according to ancestral economic caste and assumed by whoever has the strongest clan base support; and although is more open to competition and dispute, excludes those with lower ancestral economic caste.

However amongst Indian Gujarati Deobhandi communities, the element of Caste is rejected as being an un-Islamic practice. Although hierarchical position is traditionally based on Khandani (Clan), leadership tends to only be attributed to those with Islamic knowledge and/or a degree of devoutness.

Other variations are influenced by ethno national culture: for example the system operating amongst the Indian Gujarati Baruchi Barelwi resembles the Khandani system in that leadership is accorded to the devout, yet practices of reverence toward those of the Syed caste also align them to aspects of the Pakistani system through shared Barelwi Maslaq traditions. Quite significantly, amongst Pakistani heritage community affiliations linked to Birardari can cross boundaries – for example ranging across Barelwi, Deobhandi Maslaqain and even Pakistani Salafi of the Ahle Hadith branch.

Both the Birardari and Khandani systems are highly sophisticated and play a dominant role in arranging marriages, organising joint commercial activities, selecting community and Masaajid leadership, and vitally harnessing political support for sponsorship of Local Councillors.

Overall, leadership in the Barelwi Pakistani community tends to be the most pragmatic and amenable to civic level activity and engagement. Indeed, across the areas reviewed, the majority of Muslim councillors were drawn from the Pakistani Barelwi community, mostly sponsored and elected through Birardari based support however, due to primary alliances toward the Birardari structure, many were accused of being self-serving and misrepresentative. It was also noted in a few areas that some council leaders had taken advantage of the Birardari system in order to secure otherwise non-winnable seats. In this sense some younger Muslims blamed the Council for supporting and appointing an inappropriate, weak and incapable Muslim leadership.

### ***From iCoCo local studies...***

In one area it was noted that there were 12 elected councillors of Muslim heritage spread across two political parties. However, all were of one ethno national heritage and apparently aligned to one particular Barelwi Masalaq affiliated Masaajid (or not observant) and/or confirmed devotees to a local influential Pir (see section above on religious leadership). However, the majority of Masaajid in the area were aligned to the Deobhandi Masalaq and predominantly administered by Indian Gujarati heritage Muslims. There was also a significant network of Salafi based Masaajid in the area. The issues of representation and engagement were of a particularly acute and sensitive nature due to a number of terrorist related arrests and a history of activity by radical groups. By identifying the various religious and ethno national based structures – the Council widened engagement to include the full spectrum of Muslims living in the borough via non-traditional channels beyond the traditional political structures.

In contrast, within the Indian Gujarati Deobhandi community, since leadership is assigned to the devout, although commanding wider trust and representation, it has traditionally led to a general reluctance to enter the secular political realm. However, the recent negative focus on Muslims has brought about a shift amongst Deobhandi scholars towards encouraging a need for political representation. In consequence there has been, over the past few years, a sharp increase in the relative number of elected Muslim councillors from the Deobhandi Masalaq.



### ***From iCoCo local studies...***

... whilst previously all the Councillors of Muslim heritage and of Pakistani descent with Barelwi Maslaq origin had been elected under the banner of one political party, following local council elections shortly after the invasion of Iraq, there had been a marked shift with the majority of newly elected Muslim councillors being members of a rival political party and of Indian Gujarati heritage with Deobhandi Maslaq origins.

Similar examples were noted in other areas with significant Indian Gujarati Deobhandi communities putting forward potential candidates as Councillors.

However, the Indian Deobhandi Khandani system is also prone to dispute and contentions, with leaders often criticised by younger members of the community and members of rival Khandanis for misrepresentation, abuse of position and discrimination.

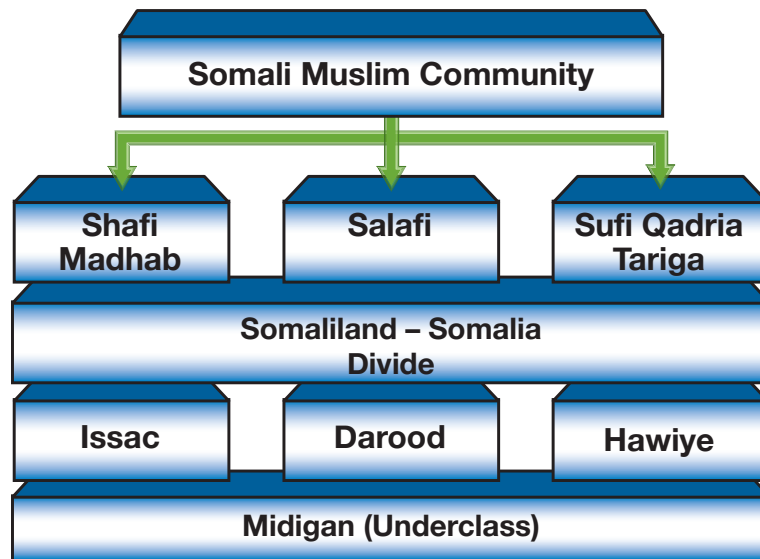
For Salafi Muslims leadership is based strictly on devoutness and intellectual Islamic capacity, totally rejecting all ethnically based and discriminatory hierarchical systems. It is common to find young leaders as well as African Caribbean and/or White European converts in highly respected and prominent leadership positions amongst Salafi Muslims. Generally, Salafi Muslims tended to be indifferent to secular political engagement, nevertheless are generally supportive of community engagement and activity.

### ***From iCoCo local studies...***

... Masaajid aligned to Salafi branch, established and administered by a young ethnically diverse (Bangladeshi, Sudanese, Somali, African Caribbean and Pakistani heritage Muslims) Management Committee drawn from various professions ranging from surgeons, IT specialists and business entrepreneurs... actively engaging young people in the community, providing a range of activities from football tournaments to homework classes and mentoring.

## 2.5.2 Somali Community Traditional Leadership

Fig 21



Somali Muslim community leadership traditions – though not as influential as either those associated with the Pakistani and Indian Gujarati communities – are equally as sophisticated and complex. Somalis generally affiliate to the Shafi Madhab, with a significant proportion following the Salafi branch and a small minority belonging to the Qadria Sufi Tariqa. Leadership structures within the Somali Muslim communities essentially reflect national boundaries of dispute. Somali elders traditionally affiliate to either North or South Somalia (Somalia – Somaliland) and then according to structures associated with their tribal affiliations (the three most influential/political tribes are the Isaac, Darood and Hawiye) combined with variations related to religious adoption. There is also a distinct minority group referred to as the Midigan, which have traditionally represented an underclass within the Somali community. In addition there are clear variations related to patterns of immigration. Although there has been an established Somali community in Britain since the 1940s, it constituted a very small minority settled only in a few areas. However, the majority of Somali immigration into Britain has been more recent, occurring to a large extent in three waves; beginning in the 1980s with the onset of famine in Somalia, then in the 1990s mostly fleeing unrest and the most recent migrants have been of a secondary nature from EU countries such as Holland and Scandinavia. There was suggestion that each wave had represented distinctly different community settlement and other characteristics.

### ***From iCoCo local studies.....***

Reportedly, the first wave of Somali new arrivals were relatively content to be absorbed into the existing and established religious and BME structures already in place.

Following unrest in Somalia during the 1990s, Somali Asylum and Refugee communities fleeing persecution, once granted stay and settled, were more keen to establish, businesses, community centres and eventually Masaajid which were representative of their traditional religious practices.

The most recent Somalia heritage inflow has been largely from the EU member countries such as Holland and parts of Scandinavia, bringing with them a new cultural variation.

Now, there are of course many Somali Muslim communities established and well settled across Britain with second and third generations born here.

### **2.5.3 Emerging Traditions – Newer Arrival Communities**

With respect to other newer arrival Muslim communities, as the number of specific ethno national groups have grown in concentration and numbers, traditional leadership structures transposed from their respective country of origin have begun to appear. We have been given some details of structures associated with both Albanian and Bosnian heritage Muslims, for example, these having been established and operating with respect to the selection of community representatives and though with more limited roles for women of their community.

Traditional Muslim community leadership systems are typically headed by Male elders, organised around specific ethnic groups and generally governed by cultures that dictate the elder's word is final. It is these very features that have consistently received the harshest criticisms from Muslim women, but also from young people in general and under-represented Muslim minority groups. However, a further observation not often revealed is that all the systems outlined above also operate amongst women of Muslim communities, organised in an identical manner along caste, clan and tribal structures relative to specific ethno national heritage. These are becoming more apparent as British Muslim women from the various communities are increasingly attaining positions of leadership within their communities.

It should be noted, that equally, we heard from many who commended their elders and traditional established structures as providing essential leadership, representation and for a proficiency in settling disputes and conflicts. In addition, there are signs that traditional systems are undergoing change and adaptation, no longer entirely dominated by elders. There is a new generation of Muslim leaders associated with these changes and some have been keen to widen participation to include all ethnicities, young people and women.

### ***From iCoCo local studies.....***

A former senior Police Officer recounted several incidents where serious conflicts were averted due primarily to the intervention of local Birardari appointed representatives.

Many young Muslim men and women spoke to us about the respect and adoration they had for the achievements of their elders, of how they had established Masaajid and community centres with meagre financial resources and limited education, through an unrelenting commitment and perseverance and crucially the support networks provided by their respective traditional leadership structures.

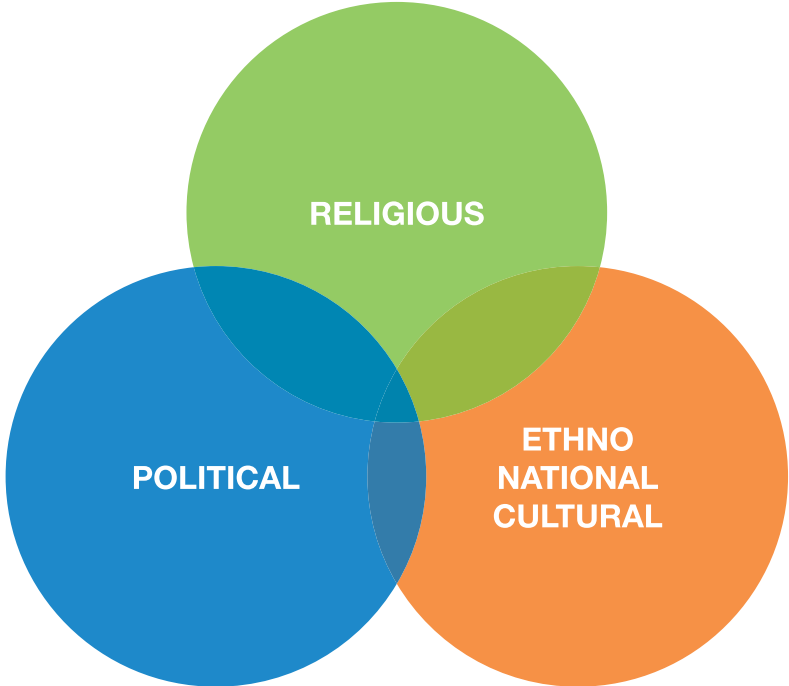
## **2.6 GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS**

Just as all cultures and traditions throughout history alter, adapt and are influenced by exposure to new ideas and environments, Muslim culture in Britain has changed and is changing. British born Muslims possess multiple identities, practising and understanding their faith in a different context to their parents. There has been a diffusion of ideas and a growth in confidence relative to first generation elders. An illustration of this change in a contemporary British context is the array of Muslim Groups and organisations active and originating in Britain: their aims, objectives and relative popularity.

There are many such organisations with various objectives and aims. In making sense of the complex factors related to the diversity evident in British Muslim communities and the innate nature for human cultures to adapt and change, it is not possible to position Muslim groups and organisations neatly within distinct categories as, in reality, they overlap and are inwardly diverse.

**2.6.1 Three Overlapping Categories**

Fig 22



To aid in understanding the specific affiliations, representations aims or objectives of Muslim groups and organisations we have developed an adaptable approach incorporating overlapping categories, (adding or omitting as appropriate). As an illustrative example and considering the picture of British Muslim Diversity outlined earlier, many Muslim organisations can be grouped into the overlapping categories of: Religious affiliation, Ethno-national/Cultural representation and Political aims or objectives. When applied to a Local Authority area, using locally sourced knowledge gathered from interviews and focus groups across the full spectrum of community diversity we have found this approach most useful in helping unravel the many complexities related to identifying representative Muslim organisations within all the areas we have reviewed.

This section on Muslim Diversity would not be complete without mentioning aspects of those differences that Muslim communities share with all other communities of economic class, gender and generational. Whilst these will all be addressed in the next section, special note should be taken of the changing socio-economic class position. Most surveys and reports have focused on deprivation within Muslim communities but there are also increasingly sections which are affluent and built upon professional occupations. Increasingly, we have found, Muslims both within the business sectors and of professional status who are keen to make a contribution to Muslim community and wider development, which is in itself a vital resource for agencies and organisations to harness.

## Section 3

### 3. POLICY AND PRACTICE AT LOCAL LEVEL: EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Our experience is that our local studies have been particularly useful in:

- Improving and understanding demographic data and profiles
- identifying needs and developing appropriate responses/interventions avoiding “one size fits all” solutions
- increasing the scope for working in partnership with a wider range of leaders and members of communities;
- building support/commitment to tackling issues of common concern

and have helped to focus on a number of key issues, for example:

- **inequalities** in areas such as education and health,
- the specific concerns and needs of **women** and **young people**
- **crime and anti-social behaviour** issues, e.g. gangs, drugs,
- **tensions** associated with immigration/new arrivals; and reducing the extent to which people lead “parallel lives”.

### 3.1 KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITIES

#### 3.1.1 Data analysis

iCoCo has already illustrated how locally available data can be used to increase understanding of population changes (see for example the iCoCo COHDMAP project and iCoCo’s report Estimating the Scale and Impact of Migration at the Local Level, for the LGA – on our website). We have found in our local reviews that local authorities and their partners do have significant amounts of data, which can augment Census data, but is often collected for other purposes and not used systematically across departmental and partner boundaries. For example school census data (PLASC), which is one of the few sources which includes data on ethnic origin (and, potentially religious background) is often an under-used resource.

### 3.1.2 Engagement strategies

Local agencies need to be able to communicate with all of the communities they serve. Our work with Muslim and other communities has emphasised the importance of effective engagement strategies to achieve this end. Local reviews, based upon the above model should help to establish the diversity within the Muslim community. But it is also essential to understand the key role that community leaders play – as in any community - by the identification of both the “gate keepers” and the “gateways”. Essentially we see the distinction as follows:

- ‘gatekeeper’ community leaders – a dominant style, with communications, finance and representation maintained and controlled by them
- ‘gateway’ community leaders – an empowering style, encouraging the widest participation and involvement from all sections of the community

We have also found in a number of areas that local officials (often working for the local authority) have been expected to take the lead in engaging with Muslim communities, usually because of their own Muslim heritage, but have in practice provided a relatively limited and partial picture of the local Muslim community.

We hope that our model will help all those working in local agencies to use such advisors more effectively, by “demystifying” Muslim communities and identifying the range of potential contacts in any local area, thus reducing the dependence on more traditional community leaders, so often described as the “usual suspects”, and who often represent the views of only a limited section of the Muslim communities in an area.

## ***From iCoCo local studies.....***

In many parts of the country, Local Authorities have tended to treat Muslim Councillors as “representatives” of the local Muslim Communities. This in itself should be challenged as all councillors should be seen to represent the whole constituency and typecasting should be avoided. However, in the majority of areas reviewed, Muslim Councillors were drawn from one heritage community (Pakistani), tending to represent only one section of the Muslim Community with limited contact, or interest in other parts of the community. Indeed, in some cases there is clear rivalry between such groups. A clearer understanding of the composition of their Muslim Communities has permitted the local authority leadership to establish a wider range of contacts within the communities and gain a better appreciation of the issues affecting them.

In one area a Council of Mosques was dominated by a section of another heritage community, and the Local Authority had relied on this organisation as the sole channel of engagement and consultation into their respective Muslim communities. Many from within and outside this community felt their interests were being overlooked. As a result of the mapping work based on our model, the Council were able to develop new channels of engagement into the communities, especially those at most risk from deprivation and disaffection. This included developing detailed spatial data to identify where the different ethno-national communities lived and encourage representative leaders to engage with the various communities.

Effective engagement strategies will, depending on local circumstances, often include:

- Developing relationships across the local communities with Masjaaid leaders (Imams, other relevant leaders) as well as more secular leaders. This needs to be handled sensitively to avoid exacerbating any inter-community tension (likely to reflect ethnic and theological affiliation as discussed above);
- developing relationships with women’s groups – either via Mosques or other parts of voluntary and community sector, depending on local circumstances (see more detail on issues affecting women on page 41);



## ***From iCoCo local studies.....***

We found many instances of innovation and change with, for example, some BME organisations now providing specific services to all in need locally and who took pride in demonstrating to us that staff and management committee members from other ethnic groups are part of the team. With the objective of being more open and inclusive, a few BME voluntary sector organisations have chosen not to name their project after the ethno-national category of their group. We were also encouraged by a Muslim Resource Centre where the entire Management Committee is made up of women. Indeed many of the groups we spoke to were willing to consider some change along these lines and agreed that more could be done to build bridges between different communities through joint projects. It was stressed however, that individual BME groups are at different stages in meeting the needs of their own communities and any policy in this respect should be flexible.

- going to where people are, not relying on conventional meetings in Town Halls or other “official” environments;
- recognising the importance in certain circumstances (eg working with disaffected young people) that using trusted intermediaries (especially those working in VCS) may be more effective than relying on Council or other officials; and
- taking account of the historical/cultural heritage of local Muslim communities using existing traditional structures such as Birardari and Tribal affiliations associated with Pakistani and Somali heritage communities
- including the impact of international developments (discussed below).

### **3.1.3 International context**

International developments can have an influence – both positive and negative – on inter-community relations – for example events in Kashmir and Pakistan more generally, Israeli/Palestinian tensions, Somalia, Balkans, and the Sudan. For many British Muslims, the political situation in their “home country” is of great significance.

### ***From iCoCo local studies.....***

We were struck by the extent to which overseas events had a profound effect on Muslim communities. For example, the US backed Ethiopian invasion of Somalia led to a significant increase in tension within the Somali community in the area where we were working at the time. From a situation of relative indifference to international events, four Somali boys from the area went to Somalia to fight: two were killed, one was missing presumed dead, and the fourth immediately arrested on his return to this country. Understanding and predicting the impact of international events therefore seems crucial and, as each local authority does not have sufficient resources and expertise, some sort of national co-ordination would appear necessary.

Many members of British Muslim communities in the UK demonstrate their commitment to their countries of origin through remittances, with some deriving higher personal and social status in their country of origin, rather than in the UK. There are also many Muslims with wider affiliation demonstrated by charitable donations to crisis regions across the Muslim World. In a positive context – as highlighted at the outset – Britain is home to probably the most diverse group of Muslim communities in the western World, with many examples of Muslims living in harmony within a cohesive community. We need to realise this potential and capitalise upon our world-wide links.

### ***From iCoCo local studies.....***

In a number of areas we found strong cross-ethnic friendship bonds amongst second and third generation Muslims young and old, male and female including Somali, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Dual and Multiple heritage. The key more often was attendance at wholly inclusive Masaajids, organising regular events including single-gender swimming lessons, children's crèche, trips and excursions.

## **3.2 TACKLING INEQUALITIES**

We refer above to the importance of developing local data. It is equally important to use such data at the appropriate level of aggregation. Whilst it is indisputable that, in national terms, Muslim Communities experience significantly higher levels of deprivation and inequalities, more detailed local analysis, including relevant ethnic/cultural dimensions, will identify specific regional and local priorities.

### **3.2.1 Women**

Many factors will be relevant to local agencies in terms of finding the most effective ways of engaging and working with women. Local agencies will need to identify where cultural traditions in a particular community may make it difficult for women to get involved directly with local agencies. Issues to consider in developing ways of communicating with and reaching women in different Muslim communities will include:

- the practice of local Mosques and how they involve the women in their communities;
- feedback from schools (especially Primary schools about extent to which parents, particularly mothers, are involved in the school);
- identifying where male elders act as gate-keepers;
- the significance of women's role in families; and
- issues of language.

### **3.2.2 Young People**

Young people are frequently amongst the most difficult to reach by the statutory sector. We have found in our work in some parts of the country strategies initially designed to tackle issues such as gang culture Working with and through credible intermediaries, drawn from particular minority communities and not formally identified with the local authority or other statutory agency, can apply equally effectively in a wider context.

More detailed understanding of the circumstances of local Muslim Communities can assist the identification of the most appropriate potential intermediaries from the voluntary and community sector. It may also help local agencies get a clearer sense of how best to develop strategies aimed at tackling crime/anti-social behaviour, such as gangs, as well as educational underperformance.

### ***From iCoCo local studies.....***

In a number of areas, whilst engaging with youth criminal gang elements it was found that high regard was given to Islamic approaches. For example; we were able to help the council facilitate issues of youth disengagement within a small tight knit Bangladeshi community by providing an understanding and appreciation of the high-level of respect attained by a group of young local British trained Imams. The issues were bridged by way of appealing to Islamic teachings of respect for elders.

In another area during a focus group involving boys and girls (age group 15 to 16 years) expelled from school, a Somali boy felt inspired by our approach of 'understanding and appreciating', as it provided a fuller picture within which he could now fit and soon after approached his local Masaajid for guidance following which he enrolled onto a course to retake his GCSEs and now has plans to continue on to Further and Higher Education.

In other parts of the country, we have found a combination of Birardari and territorial dynamics creating tensions amongst the youth.

## **3.3 CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

### **3.3.1 Gangs**

In many respects, the religious and cultural leadership structures described above (e.g. Imams, Birardari, Khandani) have served as a positive and constructive role within Muslim communities. And in the context of crime and anti-social behaviour, families who have been, supported by religious and traditional networks often succeeded in discouraging young people from illegal activity.

However in some of the areas we have worked young Muslims had become involved in a combination of ethnic and faith based gang culture. This seemed to have developed where there had been a continuous tradition of support within local White English communities for extreme far right groups. Significantly, this development was also reflected in the gang and community political structures of other BME and faith communities.

### ***From iCoCo local studies.....***

In one particular area a prolonged tradition of extremist Far Right activity had seemingly precipitated reactionary effects in almost all the main BME communities resident in the borough. For example Sikh gangs had formed with inspiration from Sikh extremist groups such as proscribed organisation Babar Kalsa. Similarly, though not on a street gang level, there was reportedly regular seminars, talks and physical training classes held at a number of Hindu Temples (Mandhirs) by the Hindu extremist organisation the RSS. In addition gangs had formed in the Muslim communities grouped around views associated with radical Jihadist groups.

We aided local agencies to plan strategies to tackle such situations which ultimately required a multi-faceted approach. For example a general appreciation of the circumstances and conditions under which such gang structures had developed allowed effective engagement with the aid of appropriate intermediaries within the relevant communities.

### **3.4 BUILDING COMMUNITY COHESION**

Our principal aim must be to develop a broader understanding and appreciation of all communities. We have commenced with the Muslim community, but many of the intricacies and divisions apply to most communities.

As well as supporting more targeted locally based approaches to tackling inequalities, an analysis of local data provided an understanding and appreciation of the complexities individual communities can play in building community cohesion. For example, associating information about residence, schools and ethnic composition can give a fuller picture of the extent and role, if any, that segregation between communities plays and provide the basis of possible interventions to tackle any problems identified. In addition, such analysis can help ensure that initiatives such as Building Schools for the Future, house building programmes and planning policy can support, rather than undermine, community cohesion in a particular locality.

The concept of community cohesion is a significant theme in central Government policy following the disturbances in Northern Towns in the summer of 2001. Subsequent inquiries into the causes of these disturbances highlighted the extent to which different communities were divided by ethnicity, religion, culture, geography, employment and a range of other factors – in essence leading ‘parallel lives’ with little interaction between each other. But the lessons learnt were not just about divisions across ethnic or faith lines. Attention was also drawn to the need to actively promote a sense of belonging, to tackle inequalities and to promote interaction at all levels. We hope that the various Muslim communities will be better understood and appreciated and more able to work alongside all other communities and to build mutual trust and respect.

# Appendix 1 iCoCo Team Biographies

## **NADEEM BAKSH**

Nadeem Baksh is a Principal Associate with the Institute of Community Cohesion specializing in engaging with Muslim Communities across all strands working with a wide range of organisations within the public and private sector.

Nadeem is highly experienced in all aspects of community cohesion and has been involved in over 15 borough wide reviews across the country.

An Alumnus of The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) Nadeem is skilled in research and analysis methods across several social sciences.

In addition, Nadeem has an in-depth academic knowledge of Islamic History, Perspectives, Politics and Principles, and has an objective and intellectual appreciation for all faith, cultural and political perspectives.

For a number of years Nadeem has played an instrumental role in initiating, facilitating and chairing numerous focus/discussion groups and forums. This work has in total included participants of over 22 nationalities, of various faiths, cultures and political persuasion. Nadeem continues through extensive and frequent travel to maintain dialogue/discussion with an expanding network of contacts nationally and internationally.

## **TED CANTLE, CBE**

In over 30 years in public service, Ted has held a wide range of senior positions at a local level and has served on a number of national bodies focussing, in particular, on urban regeneration and key social and economic problems. He has been responsible for many action research projects, a wide range of development programmes and has helped to establish a number of new policy frameworks. He regularly contributes to many journals and publications and speaks at seminars and conferences.

Mr. Cantle was the Chief Executive of Nottingham City Council between 1990 and 2001. He was Director of Housing in Leicester City Council (1988 to 1990) and in Wakefield MDC (1979 to 1983) and was Under Secretary at the AMA (1983 to 1988) and has also worked for Manchester City Council.

In August 2001, Ted Cantle was appointed by the Home Secretary to Chair the Community Cohesion Review Team and to lead the review the causes of the summer disturbances in a number of northern towns and cities. The Report –known as ‘the Cantle Report’ was produced in December 2001 and made around 70 recommendations. The concept of ‘community cohesion’ was subsequently adopted by the Government and Mr. Cantle was asked to chair the Panel which advised Ministers on implementation. Ted Cantle is presently Associate Director at the IDeA. He is also a member of the Board of the Environment Agency for England and Wales.

He established the Community Cohesion Institute, iCoCo in 2005 which is supported by four Midlands Universities and a range of other partners, and is presently conducting research in this area, sponsored by governmental and non-governmental departments and agencies.

Ted has contributed over 200 articles and publications on a wide range of subjects including, 'social capital', 'housing defects' race and housing' 'sustainable development' 'leadership' and 'community cohesion' – which is the subject of his book: Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity .

He graduated in sociology (1972) and has been a member and Fellow of the CloH for 30 years. He is a visiting professor at Nottingham Trent University and Professor and Chair of the Institute of Community Cohesion, supported by Warwick, Coventry, Leicester and Leicester de Montfort Universities.

He was awarded the CBE in 2004.

### **Judith Lemprière**

Judith is a free lance consultant and Associate of the Institute of Community Cohesion, following a career in the University Sector, Local and Central Government. Her work for the Institute has focused on young people and extremism, as well as wider issues of Community Cohesion. Until July 2006, Judith was a Senior Civil Servant in the Home Office, where she was head of the Cohesion and Faiths Unit, which works to bring communities together and tackle inequalities. Her previous roles include working to deliver the Government's National Drug Strategy, focusing in particular on strengthening local delivery and performance management.

Judith also held a number of senior positions in the Cabinet Office. And, prior to joining the Civil Service she worked in HR –in local government and the university sector in generalist roles, focusing in particular on equal opportunities. She was a fellow of the CIPD. She is also a Governor and Chair of Personnel for a Community Primary School in Islington.

### **Recent projects**

iCoCo Reports:

- Sharing the Future: Young People in Hounslow – a study of identity, social pressures, extremism and social exclusion (2006/07)
- Breaking down the 'Walls of Silence': supporting community engagement and tackling extremism in the London Borough of Waltham Forest (2007)
- City of London Corporation: Community Cohesion (2007)
- Young People and Extremism – Some reflections from our local studies (for IDeA – 2007)

## **DALJIT KAUR**

Daljit is Director, Service Development where her key role is to work with the public, private and voluntary sector organisations to provide practical solutions to the Community Cohesion Agenda.

Prior to this Daljit has 20 years work experience in Training and Development, Organisational Development, Human Resources, Equalities and Diversity from Sheffield City Council and 17 years experience of working across the voluntary, community and faith sectors across South Yorkshire.

Daljit was also a member of the Cattle Review team in 2001.

Daljit was also an integral part of the IDeA's Community Cohesion team in Leicester, and assisted the IDeA's work with Blackburn with Darwen, Tameside, Plymouth, Redcar and Cleveland, Middlesbrough, Swindon, Brent and Sunderland in identifying strategic priorities and action planning for community cohesion. She also assisted in delivering Modern Member modules on community cohesion and leadership.

She was also the IDeA's advisor for Beacons on the theme of supporting the Social Care Workforce and worked with Westminster, Tower Hamlets and Gloucestershire Council. Daljit also as part of a team assessed and advised the ODPM on the Race Equality Beacon's theme.

In a voluntary capacity Daljit for the last 15 years has been a strong activist in Sheffield in the following organisations:

- Chair Black-CARD (Community Agency for Regeneration and Development)
- Secretary Roshni Asian Women's Resource Centre
- Treasurer Ashianna
- Board member of VAS – Voluntary Action Sheffield
- Chair of Association of Languages Sheffield
- Transnational European UDIEX member/advisor on social inclusion on behalf of SPAT-C (Sheffield Positive Action Training Consortium)

Her particular interests are in community cohesion, equality and diversity in service areas such as education, employment and housing and in broader areas of social and economic regeneration. She is experienced in community involvement, policy development, service delivery in the area of employment programmes, facilitation and training and development.

She is a graduate of the Common Purpose and 20:20 programmes, Matrix and Power Dynamics.









**Futures Institute**  
**10 Coventry Innovation Village**  
**Coventry University Technology Park**  
**Cheetah Road**  
**Coventry**  
**CV1 2TL**  
**Tel 024 7679 5757**  
**[www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk](http://www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk)**

**iCoCo Team**  
**Nadeem Baksh**  
**Ted Cattle**  
**Judith Lempriere**  
**Daljit Kaur**