Communities and Local Government

The Moroccan Muslim Community in England

Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities

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Contents

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction and context

This report is one of thirteen reports on England's Muslim ethnic communities resulting from a six-month research project commissioned by the Cohesion Directorate of Communities and Local Government in order to understand the diversity of England's Muslim population and enhance its engagement and partnership with Muslim civil society. The primary goal of the research was to detail the main population and community locations, identify denominations and religious practices, and identify the strengths of links with the country of origin. An overarching objective for the project was to identify how government could best engage and work in partnership with specific communities. For many of these communities, there was little existing research specific to the community, for this reason we felt it beneficial to look at other areas such as identity, language use, socio economic situations, and intra-community and intra-generational dynamics. Since the country and migration contexts are important we have briefly detailed the relevant parts of these.

While the research and analysis was approached in a rigourous manner, the scope is broad and the population in question is sizeable. Hence, the findings from these studies sometimes offer first insights rather than firm conclusions about the respective communities. What is evident is that the diversity of these communities warrants further research and particularly a greater need for understanding of England's diverse Muslim communities at both local and central government levels. We recommend that this research is understood as a starting point rather than an end-point.

This report details the research findings for the Moroccan community. Individual reports for the other twelve communities covered by the study as well as a separate report synthesising the overall research findings are available from Communities and Local Government.

This report focuses on the Moroccan community in England and as such those interviewed and involved in focus groups were based in England. However, some of the existing research and data on the community refers to England; England and Wales; Great Britain; and the United Kingdom.

1.2 Migration and England's Moroccan Muslim population

Morocco has one of the world's largest diaspora communities and is the fourth largest recipient of remittances in the developing world. Historically the largest Moroccan diaspora communities have been settled in France and the Netherlands, while Italy and Spain have been the largest recipients of Moroccan migrants in recent years. Moroccans have been living in England since the 1830s, but significant migration to England started in the 1960s. The Moroccan Muslim community in England is relatively small and centralised. There are approximately 50,000 Moroccan Muslims in England, the majority of whom reside in Greater London, mainly in the boroughs of Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster. Other smaller communities exist outside of London, most notably in Crawley, Edinburgh, St Albans, Slough and Trowbridge. The population is younger on average than the rest of the population; in London nearly 60 per cent are aged between 25 and 44, compared to just over 35 per cent of the total London population, and only 3.6 per cent are over 65 years of age compared to 12.4 per cent of all Londoners.[1]

1.3 Socio economic situation

Moroccan-born migrants in London have below average levels of full-time employment (55.8 per cent compared to 63.1 per cent overall), and above average levels of unemployment (12.5 per cent compared to 6.5 per cent). However, Moroccan born migrants are more likely to be in part-time work (16.8 per cent) than other Londoners (12.8 per cent). They are most likely to be working in hotels and restaurants (23.7 per cent), wholesale and retail trades (14.6 per cent) and real estate (13.9 per cent). The first statistic is significant given that only 4.6 per cent of Londoners work in the hotel and restaurant industry. Despite above average unemployment, Moroccan born migrants are more likely to be in higher social grades than the average population. 18.4 per cent of Moroccan born migrants fall into social class A, compared to 17.6 per cent of Londoners overall, and only 17.3 per cent of Moroccans are in grades B and C compared to 32.8 per cent of Londoners. This difference may be due to a more recent wave of migrants that have come to the UK seeking professional work.

1.4 Identity, religion and language

Moroccans have a strong national identity, partly due to the popularity of its Monarch, and because of the unresolved dispute with Algeria over the territorial sovereignty of Western Sahara. This shared national identity is reported to ameliorate any ethnic divisions between the majority Arab population and the Berber population. This may also be due to the significant mixed Arab-Berber population. 99 per cent of Moroccans are Muslim, 90 per cent of whom are Sunni and follow the Maliki judicial school (*madhab*). Religion is an important part of Moroccan identity. A recent poll in Morocco

[1] Giorgio Finella (2005), *London Country of Birth Profiles: The Arab League – An analysis of Census Data*, GLA, p. 22.

found that 70 per cent of Moroccan Muslims consider themselves Muslim first rather than as national citizens, and 75 per cent say that Islam plays a very large or fairly large role in the political life of their country.[2] In the UK, Moroccans are more religiously diverse. According to the 2001 Census, 83.4 per cent of people born in Morocco and living in England are Muslim, followed by 6.8 per cent who are Christian and 5.0 per cent who are Jewish. However, Muslim religious denominations broadly follow those in Morocco as most Moroccans are Sunni and follow the Maliki school, with a minority following the Shafi school of thought. Respondents also reported small communities of Sufis and Revivalists, as well as a small but growing number of Salafis.

In terms of venues of religious practice, the two main mosques frequented by the London based Moroccan Muslim community are the Golborne Road mosque in North Kensington and the Al-Manaar, also known as the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre (MCHC) in Westbourne Park/Ladbroke Grove. These provide focal points for the Moroccan community.

The majority of the Moroccan community in England speaks a mixture of English and Moroccan Arabic (Darija) in the home and when interacting with each other. Many young people speak in Darija with their parents and in English with their siblings and peers. Some respondents also noted that Arabic language ability is in decline among the second generation. Some Moroccans educated in Morocco converse in Modern Standard Arabic with other Arabs. French is spoken widely among more educated Moroccans in England, sometimes mixed with Moroccan Arabic in informal conversation. Almost all members of the community speak English, but with varying degrees of fluency dependent on generation. Some Berber languages were also mentioned as being spoken in the UK but their use is not thought to be widespread.

1.5 Intergenerational dynamics, young people and the role of women in the community

Language, cultural and religious divisions between the young and old have a considerable impact on intergenerational dynamics. According to some younger respondents, Moroccans brought up in Britain are more outward looking than their parents and want to have a positive impact on issues that are of concern to Muslims both in Britain and globally. Younger people stressed that they see themselves as rooted in Britain and engage heavily in debate on issues that affect their day-to-day lives. They contrasted this with the older generation which still perceives its presence here as temporary, and as such has made little cultural adjustment to living in England.

[2] Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics, 17 Nation Pew Global Attitudes Survey, Pew Global, 2005: www.pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/248.pdf
The Pew Global Attitudes Project is a series of worldwide public opinion surveys that encompasses a broad array of subjects ranging from people's assessments of their own lives to their views about the current state of the world and important issues of the day. More than 175,000 interviews in 54 countries have been conducted as part of the project's work.

Older respondents in contrast saw the young as more vulnerable and had great concerns about their ability to successfully manage a triple British, Muslim and Moroccan heritage. A number of older interviewees noted that as a response to such feelings, some young Moroccans may adopt negative 'British' teenage practices such as binge drinking and drug usage, which are seen as leading to poor education and employment achievement. They saw vulnerable young people who, in the absence of positive role models, could be exploited by a wide range of criminals as well as extremists.

There are also intergenerational clashes around what many young people now consider to be 'true' Islam and the traditions and practices of their parents. Islamic identity in this view cuts across ethnic and national affiliations and inherited cultural practices, whereas for older people it is very much rooted in the culture and geography of their place of origin.

In contrast to many of the communities in this research, Moroccan women of the first generation pioneered the community's establishment in Britain by migrating and taking jobs first, and then bringing over and taking care of their husbands, children and other family members. It was reported that there are a small number of first and second generation women now working in professions such as psychotherapy and social work. However, it was also noted that many women have a largely domestic role once married and hence many lack financial independence. Women are also seen as more vulnerable to discrimination in employment as many wear the hijab and are more visible as Muslims.

1.6 Integration and cohesion

Few respondents raised issues of integration and cohesion except in relation to the identity issues. The overall sense is that the community feels itself to be on the margins of British society, and that it has other significant and immediate issues and needs to address such as improving education and employment outcomes, with little scope to reflect on its broader social relations. However, respondents indicated that the community feels neglected and isolated, and that it experiences a considerable amount of racism, particularly directed at women who wear the Hijab.

1.7 Media and links with country of origin

On the whole respondents were less animated about the perceived negativity of the British press towards Muslims than other communities, though some respondents suggested that the overwhelming attitude of the community is nevertheless one of distrust that the UK media will represent a fair and balanced viewpoint on issues relating to Muslims.

Moroccans identify strongly with Morocco and travel for family and business purposes as frequently as possible, and this has increased with the availability of cheaper travel. Respondents suggested that most families go back at least once a year. However, interviewees also noted that young second generation Moroccans are increasingly viewing trips to Morocco as a holiday rather than a trip 'home', and that their engagement with people in the country is limited due to their lack of language fluency.

Morocco is the fourth largest recipient of migrant remittances in the developing world, receiving US$5.2billion in 2006.[3] It is estimated that 4.3 per cent of remittances from the UK are sent to Morocco.[4] Respondents did not refer to any direct links between the community and the politics of Morocco, although there was clearly a great awareness and interest among respondents about what is happening in their country of origin.

1.8 Civil society and civic engagement

Civil society organisations serving the Moroccan and Moroccan Muslim community remain largely under-developed and under resourced. In London there are now fifteen Moroccan community organisations catering for the needs of their local communities by providing advice and support in accessing services. These are particularly focused on the needs of the first generation which still remains relatively isolated because of language barriers and lack of knowledge about how the system works.[5] However, few have the scale or scope to address any of the significant issues for the community identified by respondents in interviews. Many interviewees were particularly keen to see the establishment of a Moroccan community centre in North Kensington, since at present most community interaction in public spaces is currently limited to spaces such as the street, cafes, shops and the two mosques. A wide range of community capacity building needs were identified, including a shortage of venues and facilities, Arabic and English language provision, youth projects and women only facilities.

Respondents found it difficult to single out key influencers and felt that there is a lack of real leaders and significant influencers in the community. These are limited to a small number of individuals who work in the main community organisations. Religious leadership, both international and local, is also deemed important, but respondents stressed the need for more Imams who can communicate with the younger generation both linguistically and culturally.

[3] 'Country Profile: Morocco', International Migration Institute, University of Oxford: www.imi.ox.ac.uk/research/african-perspectives-on-human-mobility-1/morocco

[4] Ninna Nyberg Sorenson (2004), *Migrant Remittances as a Development Tool: The Case of Morocco*, Department of Migration Policy, Research and Communications, p. 7.

[5] Myriam Cherti (2008), *Paradoxes of Social Capital - A Multi-generational study of Moroccans in London*, Amsterdam University Press.

The level of civic participation is high, with the community largely attempting to meet its own needs to date. However, engagement with authorities, and public authority awareness and support in meeting community needs has been quite limited. Authorities are perceived as slow to respond to issues raised by the community, and of not offering culturally appropriate service provision. They are also perceived as having a predilection consulting with larger and more settled Muslim communities, leaving smaller ones feeling even more marginalised.

According to respondents in the study, up until 9/11 there was great deal of trust amongst the Moroccan community towards UK central government. However, this trust appears to have been undermined since then due to counter terrorism laws which they see as impinging heavily upon the freedoms of Muslims and making the community vulnerable to state action, including deportation, with few rights. Finally, the UMEC research was seen to be a positive first step in addressing this concern.

Specific recommendations arising from community respondents include:

- Funding and measures to strengthen the leadership and capacity of community based organisations. Specifically, the provision of training, guidance, support and assistance in running community organisation and enterprises, writing grant applications, financial management and management committee training
- Support for the development of a collective representative forum that can act as an advocacy and consultative body for the community
- Accreditation and further provision of Arabic language teaching to assist young people seeking to explore their faith through the texts rather than potentially having it mediated by others who may have extremist agendas
- Enhancement of established community facilities to cater for the specific needs of women and young people, alongside the establishment of specialist facilities managed and operated by women for women
- Measures to address socio economic deprivation, in particular the obstacles to female employment, including training to enabled employment skills development
- Initiatives by public authorities to pro-actively engage and encourage community participation, including measure to reassure the community about fairness and transparency in immigration and deportation policies/practices.

Other recommendations:

- Further research is needed to understand the specific experiences of young Moroccans in England, particularly with respect to identity and religious dynamics. In particular there is a need to test the hypotheses put forward by some respondents in this research that young Moroccans are increasingly questioning their Britishness in favour of their Muslim identity, and that in the vacuum created by the absence of role models and guidance from parents and elders, young people are seeking support from their peers from other Muslim communities and/or falling prey to criminal and extremist influences from outside the Moroccan community
- Future research projects conducted in boroughs with large Moroccan populations need to ensure that the specific needs and experiences of Moroccans are understood in isolation as well as in the context of other ethnic communities in the borough
- Local authorities with significant Moroccan populations should also ensure that Moroccan community groups and representatives are specifically consulted within the remit of black and minority ethnic consultations, and that they have visible representation in local planning and decision making forums
- Discrimination continues to be experienced by the community and evidence from our research suggests that this often needs to be understood in terms of multiple discrimination rather than simply 'Islamophobia'. The research base for multiple discrimination in the UK should be improved so that the experiences of black and minority ethnic populations can be better understood and addressed.

2 Introduction

Communities and Local Government recognises that there is a need to enhance its understanding and knowledge of the diverse Muslim ethnic populations in England, particularly relating to some of the specific smaller communities of African, Middle Eastern and other Asian countries of origin. As such, Communities and Local Government commissioned The Change Institute (CI) to deliver the research project *Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities* (UMEC). The thirteen ethnic Muslim communities that the Cohesion Directorate was seeking more information about were those originating from:

- Afghanistan
- Algeria
- Bangladesh
- Egypt
- India
- Iran
- Iraq
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- Turkey.

Reports have been provided under separate covers for each diaspora community, along with separate synthesis and technical reports.

2.1 Objectives of the research

There were four objectives for the research:

- *Mapping*: Develop population maps for each ethnic community outlining the spread of the population and identification of high density clusters
- *Identification of denominations and pathways*: Collect information on the grassroots institutions/key individuals working with ethnic communities and the breakdown of these ethnic communities by denomination/sect/clan

- *Identifying strength of links and capacity of ethnic communities*: Collect information on the strength of links between each ethnic community and country of origin (including influential institutions/individuals/media channels/religious influences). Also to collect information on the relative strengths and weaknesses of civil society infrastructure for each ethnic community, highlighting where capacities need to be developed
- *Identifying how Government can best engage with ethnic communities*: Develop recommendations on the ways in which Communities and Local Government can best engage with and understand Muslim ethnic communities in England, including recommendations on avenues of communications and delivery to these communities.

These objectives translated into six key questions that the study needed to address:

1. Where are the key ethnic groups of the Muslim population located?
2. What are the latest estimated sizes and demographic make-up of the key ethnic communities?
3. Which denominations and/or other internal groupings do these ethnic groups belong to?
4. How can Communities and Local Government best engage with them?
5. What are the strength of links between the ethnic communities and country of origin?
6. How developed is the level of social infrastructure for each group?

During the course of the desktop research and fieldwork, we obtained data on other facets of the community such as socio economic position and intra-community dynamics. In order to provide additional context to users of the report we have included this information where it was felt this would be valuable to the reader. However, it should be noted a comprehensive socio economic description or analysis of the community was outside the scope of this study. We also took the view that the migration and history of each community's country of origin was important and often offered potential explanations for the location; intra-community dynamics, including political, social and cultural characteristics; and development of the diaspora communities in the UK.

2.2 Report structure

The report is structured to address the key research questions set out previously. Sections 6 and 7 are primarily based on quantitative secondary data. Sections 8 to 12 draw primarily on the qualitative research corroborated by secondary sources where these are available. Finally, Section 13 draws together specific recommendations arising from the research.

3 Methodology

The research questions represented a broad area of inquiry and analysis. While quantitative data about the size, location and other demographic features of the priority communities was a key research need, the study primarily focused on enabling the Communities and Local Government to 'know' these communities in depth.

To fulfil these research requirements, the methodology developed needed to combine documentary research with processes of consultation and dialogue. Data collection consisted of two phases which were consistent across each community.

PHASE	ACTIVITY	METHOD
1	Population mapping	Review of: • Existing literature • National data sources • Local data sources and consultations with Local Authority, other public bodies and community representatives. These were conducted to cover all thirteen communities in this study.
2	Qualitative data collection	Community interviews (205 total, twelve with Moroccan community). Focus groups (30 total including two with Moroccan community and four with Muslim youth from all ethnic backgrounds).

In addition, we conducted 15 interviews with local government and voluntary services stakeholders across England to discuss their existing experiences of working in partnership with and supporting Muslim civil society organisations across all the Muslim ethnic communities that we researched.

3.1 Project phases

Phase 1: Population mapping
The first phase consisted of collecting mainly secondary quantitative data but also some primary qualitative data about locations of Muslim ethnic populations and known civil society organisations. The main method for data collection on population characteristics was through a comprehensive review of a broad range of secondary data sources, including the 2001 Census, the Annual Population Survey, output of migration and population think tanks and academic research centres. This initial literature review assisted in developing a detailed picture of data currently available in the public domain, and in identifying key gaps in the existing knowledge base. It also

helped in identifying key locations for each diaspora to be targeted in the community research which followed as well as identifying key stakeholders and community interviewees.

Robust and up-to-date population data is difficult to obtain outside of the 2001 Census but we were able to obtain some anecdotal information from Local Authorities and community groups about migration since 2001. However, the 2001 Census data still informs the baseline of the population figures quoted in this study. This data has been supplemented where possible by a limited amount of additional Local Authority information or other sources where reliable estimates have been made.

In relation to Moroccans specifically, much of the secondary data available from Local Authorities and government reports subsumes Moroccans under the category of Arab, North African or Other, which makes it difficult to offer reliable figures. An important recent study is Dr. Miriam Cherti's research, *Paradoxes of Social Capital – A Multi-generational study of Moroccans in London* due to be published in 2008 which is the most comprehensive study on Moroccans in London to date and has been a key source of secondary data for this research.

Phase 2: Qualitative data collection
Qualitative data collection has been undertaken primarily through 12 one-to-one interviews with key respondents ('those who might be expected to know'), and two focus groups with individuals from the Moroccan community. This phase of the research was carried out between April and July 2008.

3.1.1 In-depth interviews

The interviews assisted in developing an overview of national and local contexts: the make-up of diaspora communities, key issues concerning violent extremism including perceptions, experiences and activities, current initiatives in place to counter this and existing civil society structures and development needs. The interviews also assisted in identification of further key contacts for the one-to-one and focus group research and covered a range of topics including:

- Key data sources
- Denominations and pathways
- Key influencers and institutions
- Key issues and needs for the specific diaspora
- Links with countries of origin
- Civil society structures and capacity needs
- Current levels of contact and key barriers to engagement with public authorities
- Media consumption
- Appropriate communication channels for engagement and involvement.

The majority of interviews were conducted face-to-face and some by telephone where necessary.

Respondents were chosen on the basis that they offered a range of different types of knowledge and perspectives on community issues and dynamics.

Selection of interviewees involved drawing up a 'long list' of key contacts in each community in consultation with community interviewers, expert advisers and contacts made during the first phase of research. Shortlists were produced to ensure that there was adequate female and youth representation and a regional spread that reflected the distribution of the community in England. Additional names were added on the basis of subsequent recommendations made.

Interviews for the Moroccan community research were conducted by a researcher from the Moroccan community. The researcher was already familiar with many of the civil society organisations in the Moroccan community. This added legitimacy to the process of enquiry that was critical in opening up discussion and enabled us to gather rich and sometimes controversial data.

The profile of the twelve respondents was as follows:

- Nine males and three females
- Three were in the 18-24 age range; four were 25-34; three were 35-44 and two were 45-55
- Five were involved in community or religion based roles, two were in educational roles, two were professionals, two were students and one worked in the public sector.

A quality control process was used by CI to ensure consistency and quality across each community. This involved:

- *Piloting:* Each community researcher was required to carry out two/three pilot interviews in each community to refine approaches and questions where necessary. This included a detailed discussion with each researcher following the pilot interviews, with expert adviser involvement where necessary, as well as a review of the interview field notes to ensure that relevant data was being picked up by researchers
- Each community researcher was assigned to a member of the core research team at CI who reviewed field notes on an ongoing basis, and regular internal team meetings were held to share findings and ensure consistency across the project.

3.1.2 Discussion groups

In addition to the individual interviews, we conducted two focus groups that allowed for collective insights to be generated on community needs and issues, including challenges and practical ways forward. These explored partnership issues, civil society infrastructure and capacity development needs, media and communications. While these focus groups were limited in number, they provided a rich and often diverse set of views that complemented the data gathered in the one-to-one interviews.

Focus groups were designed to include a mix of participants from different community networks and different occupational backgrounds who might be expected to hold a wide range of views. Participants were recruited by the core research team through local community organisations and CI networks.

One male and one female focus group was conducted which were attended by individuals over 35 years of age. The focus groups were conducted in London in July 2008.

	Location	Born in the UK	Born outside of the UK	Age range
Group 1 (Female)	London	2	6	35+
Group 2 (Male)	London	1	6	35+

Language translation was required for some members of the female focus group. Groups were facilitated by CI directors and analysts, with additional support from community researchers.

In addition to the two focus groups for each community, four youth focus groups were conducted in London, Birmingham and Bradford with youth from a range of ethnic backgrounds. The findings of these focus groups are discussed in the summary report.

This report uses selective quotes from the interviews and focus groups to illustrate key recurring themes and issues arising during the qualitative data collection. Where necessary they have been carefully edited for ease of reading, or understanding what was meant.

3.2 Analysis of data

Data analysis involved generating understandable patterns by comparing what different respondents/focus groups said about specific themes or questions. The central question was whether the data and information and the range of views expressed led to the same conclusions. Findings were validated by triangulation of all data and information collected in both project phases so far as possible, and by critical internal reflection and review within the CI team.

The analytical process involved reviewing field notes to develop emerging themes in line with the analytical framework, which was done in collaboration with the field researchers; regular internal meetings to discuss findings from all communities; dedicated internal workshops on the communities to finalise analysis; reviews from expert advisers; feedback from 'community reviewers' and a formal peer review process.

Intercultural understanding of responses and non-responses was also essential in considerations of the data generated. A set of commonly held assumptions and understandings in any cultural group may mean that some things are simply left unsaid – because they are commonly understood in the group and do not require articulation. In addition literal translation or interpretation may simply misrepresent or miss the significance of what is being articulated. In this context in particular there will often be a distinction between what is said, and might be noted or recorded, and what is meant. In looking for meaning, silences and body language were often as important as what was said. A good example of potential misinterpretation that came up many times was body language indicating discomfort and unwillingness to pursue a particular line of enquiry.

Finally, and most importantly, we were *reflexive* in our approach, critically reflecting on the role and influence that our own research intervention may be having on key respondents and focus groups, using critical judgment and being conscious of the need to interpret with integrity in relation to what we were seeing and hearing.

3.3 Limitations of the research

Data analysis represents both general and particular challenges in the current social and political context, as well as specific challenges in relation to some of these communities. These include:

- The sample sizes for each community were relatively small and respondents were not intended to be a representative sample of the relevant communities
- Because the interviews were not based on a random sample, the study does not claim to provide an analysis of the Moroccan population as a whole, nor was this the intention of the study. We have analysed views and comments in the context of existing data, knowledge of the current political and social context for these communities, and the comments of other respondents
- Many aspects of the topic guide were designed to identify the key needs and challenges facing the community.[6] Hence the research tended to generate data on problem areas and challenges, particularly in focus group discussions when respondents felt they had limited time to ensure that their voices got heard. This may not reflect many of the positive and optimistic views of respondents. However, respondents were often aware that the discussions may come across as negative in tone, and were quick to try and balance this by highlighting perceived positive

[6] The topic guide is included in the Technical Report, available from Communities and Local Government.

aspects of both their communities and their lives in the UK. We have endeavoured to set out the 'best' story (in terms of explanatory power) in the context of what is already known about why some of our respondents might express negative feelings

- In the current context, the politicisation of the research field meant that all respondents were conscious of being part of a community under public and government scrutiny. Respondents were made aware of the purposes of the research through a 'showcard' that explained the research as well as possible uses of the research.[7] They were informed that this research would potentially be used to inform a publication that would enter the public domain and would cover aspects such as religion, intra-community dynamics and links with country of origin. A climate of some scepticism within Muslim communities, discrimination, both real and perceived, and awareness of government interest in 'what is happening' on the ground, meant that respondents were often sceptical about the use of the information that they were providing. Many will have had agendas (for positive as well as negative reasons) when asked about issues for their communities, which may have influenced their responses (eg representing their community as having few or no problems, or conversely, as having many or major needs and/or issues with public authorities)
- This also created a number of practical difficulties in research terms, including difficulties in getting interviews with particular types of respondents, hesitancy and caution in some responses, and a closing off of some lines of questioning in relation to religion, identity and differences
- The researchers' analytical response to these difficulties was to be critically attuned to who was speaking, their location in the community, the interests that they may have, and to judge their comments in the light of this context. Researchers were aware that there are dynamic and charged debates and movement taking place within these communities on a whole range of issues ranging from religion, its expression and orientation in the context of being Muslim minorities living in a non-Muslim society, to negotiations about roles, responsibilities, duties, gender relations, and relationships with country of origin. This awareness underpinned the analysis of the data and the conclusions drawn from responses received.

For all these reasons, the research should be viewed as a 'snapshot' in time rather than reflective of the full complexity or range of issues, challenges and changes taking place in these communities (eg, intergenerational relationships, gender roles, perceptions of ethnic and religious identity, changing attitudes among the young (both in liberal and more radical directions) and the levels of integration or tensions within and across communities). We are conscious of the dynamism and the rapid changes taking place in some communities, both positive and negative.

[7] The showcard is included in the Technical Report, available from Communities and Local Government.

4 Country Profile and History

The Kingdom of Morocco is the fourth most populous Arab country with a population of around 32 million, and is the most westerly of the North African countries known as the Maghreb.[8] The European presence in Morocco dates back to 1415, when Portugal captured and held the island of Ceuta until 1578. However, the country has retained its borders and its independence since the 9th century, except for a period under French rule between 1912 and 1956. The 1912 Treaty of Fez, a Franco-Spanish Agreement, divided Morocco into four administrative zones: the French Morocco protectorate, which included nine-tenths of the country with Rabat as capital; a Spanish protectorate with its capital at Tétouan; a Southern Protectorate of Morocco, administered as part of the Spanish Sahara; and the international zone of Tangier.[9]

Nationalist movements for independence began in the 1930s and gained strength after World War II. Morocco's eventual independence was precipitated by a number of events in the early 1950s. In December 1952 a riot broke out in Casablanca over the murder of a Tunisian labour leader resulting in the outlawing of the new Moroccan Communist Party and the exile of the Sultan Mohammed V to Madagascar in 1953 by the French authorities. The replacement monarch, Mohammed Ben Aarafa was perceived as illegitimate and subject to a nationalist backlash and opposition from Moroccans who believed in the religious importance of the monarch (the incumbent monarchy has a noble ancestry that can be traced to the prophet Mohammad).[10]

[8] UNSD, Demographic Statistics, 2007.
[9] Country Profile: Morocco, FCO, 2008. www.tinyurl.com/6bm9d6
[10] Federal Research Division (2006), *Country Profile: Morocco*, Library of Congress.

Widespread nationalist sentiments, opposition to Aarafa, deteriorating economic conditions, and tense relations with neighbouring countries (notably Algeria) stimulated negotiations that led eventually to Moroccan independence in 1956.[11]

Since independence Morocco has been a constitutional monarchy with democratic structures, but the monarchy remains the unquestioned centre of power in the country. King Muhammad V was succeeded in 1961 by his son Hassan II who reigned for 38 years. His early years as King were marked by political unrest and a repressive government response. Hassan II drew up a new constitution in 1962, approved overwhelmingly in a referendum, which kept the king as the central figure of the executive but moved legislative power to a bicameral parliament and guaranteed an independent judiciary.[12] Following Morocco's first legislative elections in 1963, Hassan II implemented a 'state of exception' during political upheavals in 1965, which gave him full executive and legislative power until 1970. Further political tensions and complaints of corruption resulted in attempted military coups in 1971 and 1972. Strong opposition and a number of assassination attempts led to a new constitution in 1971 which restored limited parliamentary government and lessened the powers of the king. King Hassan died in 1999 and was succeeded by his son Muhammad VI who is seen as an advocate of social change and economic improvement.

Since his inauguration, Morocco has undergone significant social, economic and political modernisation, and the King has adopted a number of measures to try and correct the violations of human rights which took place during the reign of his father. In 2004 he launched the Equity and Reconciliation Commission (ERC) to research grave human rights violations committed between 1956 and 1999, which included testimony from 20,000 victims. A 2005 report to the King catalogued a number of human rights abuses, and identified over 9,000 people as eligible for compensation. It also made a number of recommendations to ensure that past abuses do not recur, including constitutional reforms and steps to end a culture of impunity in the Security Forces.[13]

According to Human Rights watch, Morocco continues to present a mixed picture on human rights. It has made great strides in addressing past abuses and has allowed considerable space for public dissent and protest. It has a largely free press and has reduced gender inequality in the family code. But authorities, aided by compliant courts, continue to use repressive legislation to punish peaceful opponents, especially those who violate the taboos against criticising the king or the monarchy, questioning the "Moroccanness" of the Western Sahara, or "denigrating" Islam. Controls are particularly tight in the disputed Western Sahara region.[14]

[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] FCO, 2008.
[14] Human Rights Watch (2006), *Country Summary: Morocco*. www.hrw.org.

Moroccan and Algerian relations have remained strained over the question of Western Sahara since Spain's withdrawal in 1975, and the border between the two countries has been closed since 1994. Since a United Nations sponsored ceasefire agreement in 1991, the disputed Western Sahara has been controlled by Morocco with the remainder under the control of the Polisario/SADR backed by Algeria. Its status remains unresolved and the British government regards the sovereignty of Western Sahara as undetermined pending United Nations efforts to find a solution.[15]

The rivalry between the two countries has hampered regional political and economic integration and the effectiveness of the Arab Maghreb Union, which was founded in 1989 and consists of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania.[16] Morocco is not a member of the African Union (AU) because the latter has given membership to Western Sahara as an independent state. It has been noted by some commentators that the objective of securing Western Sahara has unified the Moroccan nation more than any other issue since independence, but the war against the Polisario guerrillas has put severe strains on the economy and sometimes isolated the country diplomatically.[17]

In recent years, the rise of Islamist extremist groups in North Africa has had a considerable political impact in Morocco. In 2003 suicide bombings in Casablanca by members of the Salafi Jihadi group led to arrests of over 2000 suspected militants. Amidst allegations of human rights abuses and hunger strikes a number of them have been pardoned and released,[18] but several hundred continue to serve prison sentences. Terrorism remains a crucial security issue with further suicide attacks taking place in Casablanca in 2007. Moroccans have also been linked to a number of terrorist activities outside the country, most notably, the involvement of at least six Moroccans in the Madrid bombings in 2004.

Morocco enjoys good relations with western allies, particularly because of its support in combating terrorism. The Moroccan-American Treaty of Friendship was signed by Thomas Jefferson and the Moroccan king Muhammad III in 1786 and stands as the oldest non-broken friendship treaty of the US.[19] Morocco was made a non-NATO ally in June 2004 and in the same year signed a bilateral free-trade agreement with the United States.[20] Morocco also has a longstanding relationship with Europe and currently has an association agreement with the European Union which has been in place since 2000. It is the largest beneficiary of its Meda programme and has received over 1.25 billion Euros in grants over the past decade.[21]

[15] FCO. www.fco.gov.uk. On 26 July 2005 the UN Secretary-General appointed Peter van Walsum as his Personal Envoy to Western Sahara. His role is to assist the parties to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. Morocco presented a proposal for autonomy for Western Sahara within Morocco to the UN Secretary-General on 11 April 2007. The Polisario presented their own proposal to the UN Secretary-General on 10 April. UN Security Council Resolution 1754 (30 April 2007) called for the parties to enter into negotiations without preconditions. Four rounds of negotiations under the auspices of the UN were held in Manhasset, New York, in June and August 2007, and January and March this year. Peter Van Walsum chaired the negotiations. UN Security Council Resolution 1813 was adopted on 30 April. It called on the parties to continue to show political will to enter into a more intensive and substantive phase of negotiations.

[16] FCO, 2008.

[17] Library of Congress, 2006.

[18] Country Summary: Morocco, Human Rights Watch, January 2006. www.hrw.org.

[19] *US-Morocco: Longstanding Ties* (Remarks by President Bush and King Hassan II), U.S. Department of State Dispatch, 30.9.1991.

[20] Human Rights Watch, 2006.

[21] The Initiative on Governance and Investment for Development is a regional effort, initiated and led by countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). It promotes broad reforms to enhance the investment climate, modernise governance structures and operations, strengthen regional and international partnerships, and promote sustainable economic growth throughout the MENA region. (Source: OECD, tinyurl.com/55mndv)

According to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, UK/Morocco relations are good:

> *The UK and Morocco share many common interests and a desire to combat shared threats such as [undocumented] migration and counter-terrorism. Morocco has played a solid role in support of the Middle East Peace Process and a number of UN peace keeping operations.*[22]

A recent trip by former Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, in 2006 established a 'Ministerial Dialogue Forum' to discuss political, educational and cultural, economic trade relations between the two countries.[23] There is no UK bilateral aid programme for Morocco, although it contributes a significant proportion of the European Union's development assistance.

The historical context and experience in the country of origin is important in understanding the views and attitudes of respondents and the Moroccan community, in particular those of the older generation. This history and experience is a post-Colonial experience and more recently one of conflict and tension between the state and violent radicals claiming adherence to Islam, with widespread use of state powers to imprison and detain suspected militants. Though improving, coupled with abuses of human rights, limitations on free speech and widespread perceptions of corruption and use of arbitrary power by state authorities, this context will inevitably not only inform the attitudes and perceptions of many respondents and focus group participants, but also the fears and anxieties they may have in relation to engaging with public authorities and living in the UK. The findings of this report need to be understood in this context.

[22] FCO, 2008.
[23] Ibid.

5 Migration History and Trends

Morocco is one of the world's leading emigration countries, with Moroccans forming one of the largest and most dispersed non-western migrant communities in Western Europe.[24] It is also a popular 'transit' destination for sub-Saharan African émigrés on their way to Europe.

Migration to Europe increased significantly following the establishment of the Franco-Spanish protectorate in 1912. During this colonial era many Moroccans were actively recruited to factories and mines and 126,000 were recruited to the French Army.[25] Post-war migration was boosted during the Algerian war of independence (1954-1962) as France stopped recruiting Algerian workers. Between 1949 and 1962, the Moroccan population in France increased from 20,000 to 53,000.[26] Moroccan migration then expanded to other European nations with recruitment agreements with West Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. The Moroccan population in Europe increased to around 400,000 by 1975. The total number of Moroccans in Europe in 2005 was about 2.3 million.[27] Most of the European Moroccans are concentrated in France (47 per cent),[28] with smaller groups in Germany, United Kingdom, Belgium, Spain, and Italy.

Following labour migration in the 1960s there has been continuous family reunion and growth of the population in the receiving countries during the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the arrival of other economic migrants and asylum seekers from Morocco.[29] The number of Moroccans abroad has been on an almost constant and linear rise ever since the 1960s, with a mean increase of 50,000 persons annually, despite increasingly restrictive immigration policies in destination countries. This has meant that there has been an increase in undocumented Moroccan migrants, particularly in Spain and Italy, which have replaced France as the primary destination for Moroccan labour migrants. The combined Moroccan population in these countries increased from 20,000 to 650,000 between 1980 and 2004.[30]

Although the majority of labour migrants ended up staying permanently, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw a peak in return migration, including from the UK. Since 1994 this has fallen again and return migration among Moroccans is now among the lowest of all immigrant groups in Europe.

[24] Hein de Haas (2005), *Morocco: From Emigration Country to Africa's Migration Passage to Europe*, Migration Information Source. www.migrationinformation.org.
[25] de Haas, 2005.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] In 1999, France contained the largest Moroccan population comprising an estimated number of 840,000 individuals of Moroccan descent and 504,000 Moroccan nationals. The second largest community of Moroccans lives in the Netherlands with about 290,000 Moroccan 'descendants' and 104,000 nationals in 2001. According to official statistics, Belgium, Spain, and Italy housed communities of 93,000, 235,000, and 158,000 Moroccan nationals in 2001, respectively. (De Haas, 2005 [No figures for the UK are provided])
[29] Aleya Rouchdy (ed.) (2002), *Language Contact and Language Conflict in Arabic: Variations on a Sociolinguistic Theme*, Routledge Curzon, p. 259.
[30] Hein de Haas (2007), 'Between courting and controlling: The Moroccan state and 'its' emigrants', Working Paper Number 54 – Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford, p. 6.

Since the 1960s the Moroccan government has encouraged emigration on political and economic grounds.[31] Because it was feared that Moroccan migrants may settle into their host community and potentially stop sending remittances, the government actively discouraged Moroccans living in Europe from integrating into receiving societies and sent Moroccan teachers and imams abroad to provide education in Arabic and Moroccan culture.[32] This policy was changed in the 1990s after increasing criticism by European governments which believed it was contrary to their integration policies, as well as recognition that the policy alienated the migrant population from Moroccan state institutions in the new country.[33] In 1990, a 'Ministry for Moroccans residing abroad' was created and in the same year the Moroccan government established the 'Fondation Hassan II Pour les Marocains Résidant à l'Etranger', which fosters links between Moroccan migrants and Morocco.[34]

5.1 Moroccan migration to the UK

Moroccans have been living in the UK since the 1830s. Some Moroccan-British relationships go back to the thirteenth century, reflecting deep rooted economic and diplomatic relations.[35] However, the first and most significant phase of Moroccan migration to Britain began in the 1960s, although the pattern of migration to the UK was distinct from that to France, the Netherlands or Belgium, which was facilitated by bilateral recruitment agreements. In the UK, migration was largely the result of individual initiative, encouraged by social networks of friends and relatives.[36] As with other European countries, the 1970s was mainly a period of family reunification. In the 1980s a low level of semi-skilled migration occurred, and since the 1990s highly skilled Moroccan migrants have arrived and are arriving, many from other countries in the EU where they were raised and trained.

Since 1991, the UK Home Office has made 8,525 grants of settlement to Moroccan nationals. Inflows have been relatively consistent apart from a small increase between 1998 and 2003 before returning to previous levels as illustrated in Chart 1, and British citizenship acquisition by Moroccans has remained stable since 1990 (as illustrated by Chart 2). In 1998, Morocco's first 'opposition led' government came to power, which could possibly be responsible for a small drop in emigration, while the UK government's Highly Skilled Migration programme, launched in 2002, might be responsible for the increase in Moroccan migrants that same year. However, given that the actual fluctuations are relatively low it is possible that these deviations are random.

[31] de Haas, 2007, p. 4.
[32] de Haas, 2005.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Fondation Hassan II Pour les Marocains Résidant à l'Etranger: www.alwatan.ma
[35] Cherti, 2008.
[36] Ibid, p. 77.

Chart 1: Moroccan grants of settlement 1991-2006 (Source: Home Office)

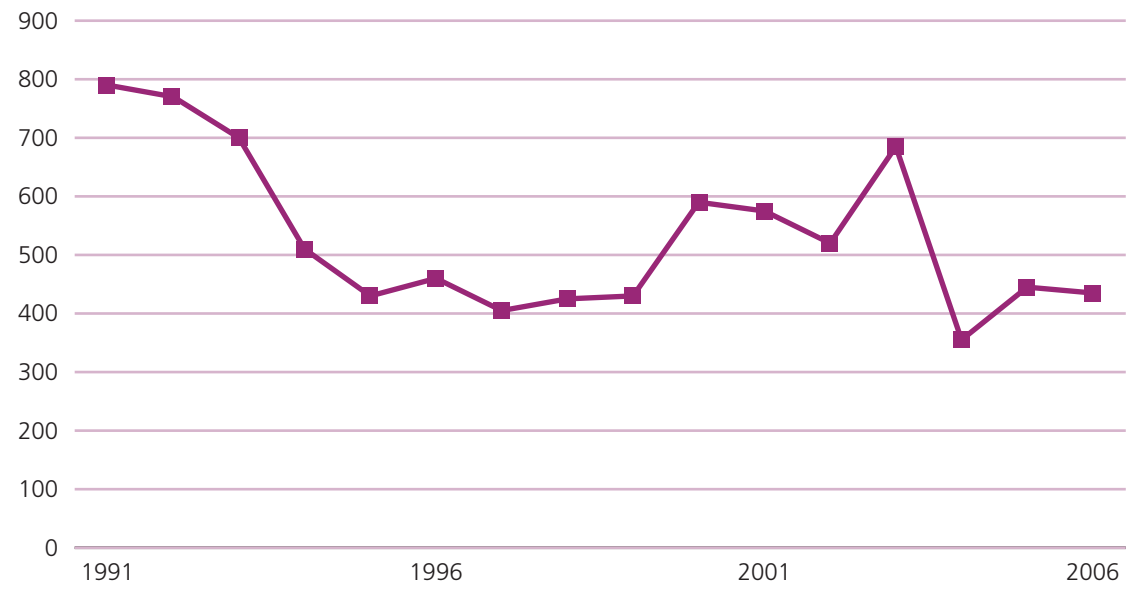
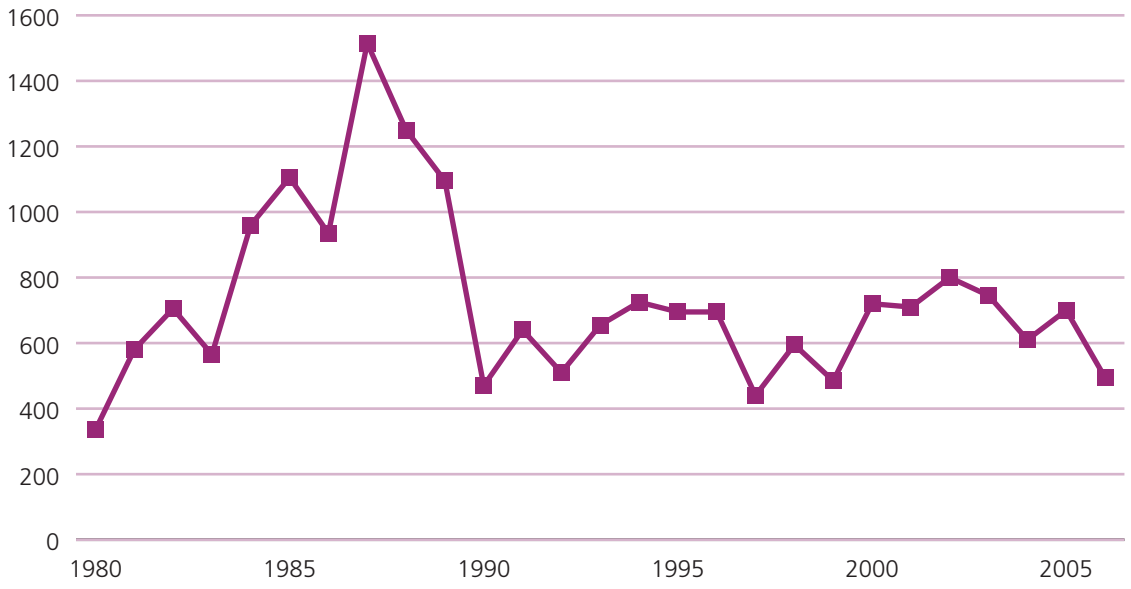


Chart 2: Citizenship acquisition by Moroccans in the UK 1981-2006 (Source: Home Office)



6 Community Demography and Key Locations

Census 2001: Morocco-born Muslim Population in England: 9,166

The UK Census records Moroccans by country of birth only, which excludes many people who may consider themselves 'Moroccan', such as people born to Moroccan parents in the UK and those born in France who have migrated to the UK. These individuals are often subsumed under categories such as Arab, North African or Other. There are also very few academic or policy research studies available about the community and hence there is a lack of quality data about Moroccans in the UK. The population estimate stated in this study is based on estimated numbers from academics and the actual number could be higher or lower.

The 2001 Census indicates that there are around seven thousand Muslims born in Morocco living in London and 9,166 in England. However, other official and community organisation estimates are significantly higher. There were 30,000 Moroccans registered with the consulate in 2004 but the overall official residence figure cited for the UK by the Migration Information Source is approximately 50,000.[37] According to the Migrant Refugees Communities Forum (MRCF), which is currently undertaking an oral history project on Moroccans in the UK[38], there are approximately 35,000 Moroccan migrants living in London.[39]

According to some respondents who took part in interviews, this does not reflect the actual number of Moroccans in London, which some estimate as high as 100,000. The reasons they give for challenging the official numbers are that most Moroccans do not go to the consulate to register. One respondent noted that:

> *The consulate is seen as an extension of the Moroccan government which most Moroccans in the UK do not trust. Those who do register with the consulate are mostly those who have families and who need a travel or other official document. The majority of single people do not register.*[40]

In addition, there are thought to be substantial numbers of undocumented Moroccans in the UK, who for obvious reasons do not appear in any population estimates. All these factors contribute to the difficulty in obtaining a firm number on the current population. While community estimates may be inflated and unreliable, it is likely that

[37] Collyer (2004) in de Haas, 2005. The consulate no longer provide an updated figure and refer enquiries to the UK Home Office.
[38] *Moroccan Memories in Britain – An Oral and Visual History* (2008): www.moroccanmemories.org.uk
[39] 'London unveils untold Moroccan stories in London', Heritage Lottery Fund Press Release, 28 June 2006.
[40] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 40s.

the actual population size will be higher than the number registered but lower than some of the higher estimates.

The predominant destination for Moroccans in England has overwhelmingly been London with 69 per cent of the total Moroccan-born population – see Table 1. Outside of London there are significant communities in Crawley, Edinburgh, St Albans, Slough and Trowbridge with the second largest cluster in St. Albans[41] mostly originating from North East Morocco. Those living in Crawley originate mainly from Meknes, those in Slough primarily from central and Southern Morocco and Moroccans in Trowbridge are known to originate from Oujda in the North East.[42] Stakeholder respondents also reported small Moroccan communities in Burnley, Peterborough, Brighton, Manchester and Liverpool, although most of these were said to consist of extended families and were seen as satellite communities due to their small size and less established nature. Table 1 lists the distribution of Moroccan born Muslims across Government Office regions in England.

Table 1: Distribution of Moroccan born Muslim population in Government Office Regions in England (Source: 2001 Census, commissioned table C0644)

GO Region	% of Moroccan born population who are Muslim	Number of Moroccan born Muslims	% of total Moroccan born Muslim population in England	Moroccan born Muslims as % of total Muslim population
London	80%	6,365	69%	1.2%
South East	70%	967	11%	1.2%
East of England	74%	606	7%	1.0%
North West	73%	343	4%	1.7%
South West	73%	277	3%	0.2%
West Midlands	71%	229	2%	0.1%
Yorkshire and Humberside	70%	179	2%	0.3%
East Midlands	71%	150	2%	0.1%
North East	63%	50	1%	0.2%
Total	**77%**	**9,166**	**100%**	**0.6%**

The most popular area of settlement in London is North Kensington, as reflected by Census data provided above.[43] Most of the migrants in this area came from Larache

[41] Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum: www.mrcf.org.uk/
[42] Ibid.
[43] Cherti, 2008, p. 78.

and Tangier in the north of Morocco. Respondents also referred to there being a sizeable number of Moroccans from central Morocco including Fez, Casablanca and Rabat. This settlement has contributed to the creation of a dense network of Moroccan associations,[44] and what is commonly known in the community as "Little Morocco" with Moroccan-owned cafes, restaurants, grocery stores, mosques, supplementary schools and community organisations.[45] There are also some smaller communities in the Boroughs of Westminster, Hammersmith, Lambeth, Barnet and Croydon. Table 2 lists the largest Moroccan born Muslim populations in London boroughs.

Table 2: London Boroughs with the largest number of Muslims born in Morocco (Source: Census 2001, commissioned table C0644).

Borough	% of Moroccan born population who are Muslim	Number of Moroccan born Muslims	Moroccan born Muslims as % of total Muslim population
Kensington and Chelsea	87%	829	6.2%
Westminster and City of London	85%	802	3.7%
Brent	88%	446	1.4%
Hammersmith and Fulham	80%	343	3.0%
Southwark	82%	292	1.7%
Tower Hamlets	88%	279	0.4%
Ealing	83%	275	0.9%
Lambeth	85%	260	1.8%
Camden	72%	259	1.1%
Islington	88%	222	1.6%

The Greater London Authority (GLA)'s analysis of London migrants born in Morocco based on 2001 Census data found that the Moroccan community is younger than the London average. Nearly 60 per cent were aged between 25 and 44, compared to just over 35 per cent of the total London population,[46] and only 3.6 per cent were over 65 years of age compared to 12.4 per cent of all Londoners. Moroccans in London are also less likely to live alone. 62.7 per cent of the Moroccan born population live in a couple compared to 39.9 per cent of Londoners, and 11.6 per cent live alone compared to the capital average of 14.8 per cent.[47]

[44] Ibid, p. 21.
[45] Ibid, p. 73.
[46] Finella, 2005.
[47] Ibid.

7 Socio economic situation

Most available sources of data on socio economic indicators focus on Moroccan born migrants and omit British born Moroccans, providing an incomplete picture of the socio economic dynamics within the community. The limited amount of data that is available highlights significant deprivation within the community. A report carried out by Westminster City Council found that Moroccans are one of the most deprived Arab groups in the borough with some of the highest levels of unemployment.[48] An analysis of Moroccan born Londoners in the 2001 Census by the Greater London Authority found that, on average, Moroccan born migrants fall below the average in the capital on a wide range of socio economic indicators:

- Only 31.9 per cent are owner/occupiers compared to 58.4 per cent of all Londoners.
- Moroccan-born migrants have below average levels of full-time employment (55.8 per cent compared to 63.1 per cent overall), and above average levels of unemployment (12.5 per cent compared to 6.5 per cent). However, Moroccan born migrants are more likely to be in part-time work (16.8 per cent) than other Londoners (12.8 per cent).
- Moroccan born migrants are more likely to be living in council rented (32.4 per cent) or social rented (18.7 per cent) accommodation than the London averages of 16.7 per cent and 8.8 per cent respectively.
- 48.2 per cent have no qualifications or level unknown and 22.2 per cent have higher level qualifications. The London averages are 29.2 per cent and 31.0 per cent respectively.
- 43.2 per cent are without a car compared to 29.1 per cent of all Londoners.
- Despite above average unemployment, Moroccan born migrants are more likely to be in higher social grades. There are 18.4 per cent Moroccan born migrants that fall into social class A, compared to 17.6 per cent of Londoners overall, and only 17.3 per cent of Moroccans are in grades B and C compared to 32.8 per cent of Londoners. This reflects migration patterns to the UK whereby early semi-skilled migrants were followed by a cohort of highly skilled professionals from Morocco in the 1990s.

The report also found that Moroccan born migrants in London are most likely to be working in hotels and restaurants (23.7 per cent), wholesale and retail trades (14.6 per cent) and real estate (13.9 per cent). The first statistic is significant given that only 4.6 per cent of Londoners work in the hotel and restaurant industry. Anecdotal evidence from respondents supports these statistics, with interviewees noting that significant numbers of Moroccans are likely to be working in retail and hospitality service industries, either for Moroccans or other Arab employers, or are employed as taxi drivers.

[48] Imperial College, 2007, p. 12

Many of the interviewees emphasised that poverty and deprivation are the root cause of some of the problems in the community. For example one respondent noted that:

> *Financial insecurity is a significant factor impacting negatively on the Moroccan community in the UK. Due to the high level of unemployment reflected in the majority of the community renting accommodation there is no significant upward social mobility as might be measured in terms of economic consumption.*[49]

A 1998 report by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBK&C) recommended that urgent action was needed to address the high levels of unemployment and economic deprivation in the community. It noted that:

> *There is a need for a concerted effort from all interested parties to find solutions to unemployment and to think about initiatives and schemes that will help the Moroccan community overcome the handicaps of poor literacy skills and lack of proper qualifications, which will lead individual members of the Moroccan community to better jobs in the future.*[50]

The report stressed that the development of the community is hampered by the lack of English language capacity, which has led to many economic and social disadvantages:

> *Difficulty of communication in the English language seems to be the common factor in the isolation of the Moroccan community, as the community tends to live in a close knit network that doesn't involve wide interaction with English speaking neighbours and mainstream organisations.*[51]

The report found that that the need for ESOL provision was an urgent concern among both the community and voluntary support agencies, and essential to improving social mobility in the community. This finding and concern is still important a decade later and was raised by female and male focus group respondents in our research as a pressing concern when asked about the key challenges facing the community.

Myriam Cherti suggests that in order to fully understand the Moroccan community's aspirations, outcomes and achievements, we need to first consider where the vast majority of first generation Moroccans migrated from. The first wave came in the 1960s and consisted of unskilled workers, mostly from northern Morocco, specifically the Jbala region, especially Larache, Tetouan, Tangier and the surrounding areas, with smaller communities from Meknes and Oujda.[52] This context was also emphasised by one of the focus group participants who noted that:

> *A lot of Moroccans who have settled here have come from very deprived areas of northern Morocco. They had very little sense of achievement or confidence and we have to measure their achievements in light of the background they came from.*[53]

[49] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 50s.
[50] Imperial College, 2007, p. 12.
[51] Ibid, p. 20.
[52] Cherti, 2008.
[53] Focus group participant, female.

Another respondent contrasted the background and experience of Moroccan migrants in the UK with their peers on the European mainland:

> *Unlike the Moroccan communities in France, Holland and Belgium, the Moroccan community in the UK has no authority. There are various reasons for this. Migration to the UK begun in the 1960s in bits and bobs. People who came into the UK predominantly worked in hospitals and as cleaners. Families that came to the UK had low aspirations such as wanting to become a bus driver. English language skills were not high and as a consequence people lacked confidence. In the other European countries Moroccan migrants aspired to be professionals ie doctors and teachers. They went to high school, received degrees and professional positions. They were able to organise themselves and create platforms for themselves from which their voices could be heard.*[54]

However, anecdotal evidence from some respondents suggests that second generation Moroccans may be achieving better standards of living than their parents. Upward social mobility was felt to be on the increase since more Moroccan children are now growing up with parents educated in the UK school system and finding it easier to aspire to and achieve greater socio economic advancement. Despite this, there are concerns among respondents that many Moroccan children are still under-achieving at school. One respondent suggested that this was because they were forced to send their children to 'failing' schools as good schools where they live are either of Christian denomination or fee-paying and unaffordable.

[54] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 40s.

8 Key characteristics

8.1 Identity

A number of factors impact on identity formation amongst Moroccans, including generational and gender differences, regions of origin in Morocco, levels of religious practice, socio economic status, educational attainment, and recent legislative changes in the UK.

In common with British-born Muslims in other ethnic communities, young Moroccans are particularly concerned with issues of identity. While respondents were specifically asked about identity, it was a subject that elicited long responses from interviewees and identity issues permeated other topics of discussion. As a generation born and growing up in the UK, it has a vested interest in considering what it means to be British. However, this can often cause conflicts within families, with parents often attempting to promote a culture and identity that may be at odds with the broader cultural norms that young people are exposed to outside the home.

A report commissioned by Westminster City Council, highlighted a prevalent dilemma among Moroccan youth who are negotiating multiple identities; Moroccan and British, Muslim and Arab/Berber.[55] According to the report, older generations express concerns about the diminishing connection and respect that Moroccan youth have with their Moroccan culture, particularly as many families have stopped the practice of sending children back to Morocco for summer breaks. The report suggests that this is compounded as young Moroccans become increasingly integrated into mainstream urban UK youth culture, and the exposure they have to norms and values that are different to those from their country of origin.

Most young Moroccans are familiar with the broader urban UK youth culture and identify with their British peers from different national and cultural backgrounds. However, similar to other communities, it is often the negative aspects of other cultures that are perceived to have the greatest influence. For example one respondent noted that:

> *Basically, home and school have hugely different standards of normality. For example, a young Moroccan's school friends may have exposure to drugs and alcohol at a young age and this is a publicly accepted youth culture. This exposure could take place when hanging outside a newsagent with non-Moroccan friends, or be seen from afar on a Friday or Saturday night. Young people do not have the education or awareness to deal with such differences between home and British society.*[56]

[55] Imperial College (2007), Westminster Ethnic Minority Needs Audit (WEMNA) - Making People's Voices Heard, Westminster Council, p. 139.

[56] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 30s.

Many older Moroccans also face the problems and dilemmas of being caught between two cultures and homelands, albeit in different ways to the younger generation. Whereas young Moroccans have to try and reconcile different aspects of their identities with being British, older Moroccans may face the problem of feeling that they do not belong in any particular place. They are: *Migrants everywhere and belong nowhere*.[57] Whilst many long to go to Morocco, and take advantage of cheap flights to travel back frequently, the actual experience of returning 'home' may often not live up to their expectations. A number of respondents suggested that a few weeks after arriving in Morocco, many want to return to the UK because they considered it too as their home.

While identity for many Moroccans is primarily linked to family, region and country of origin, respondents reported that there is an increasing focus on religious identity, particularly among the young. The increased media attention on Islam, the growing number of active organisations, and wider events with specific salience for the whole Muslim population have been identified by some respondents as having had a significant impact on reinforcing a more global identity, one that is linked to being Muslim or Islamic rather than nationality defined. As one respondent suggested, these high profile events have:

> *Brought them together with other young Muslims, and when they come to the mosque with other Moroccans, they are more aware of their [Muslim] community and therefore their Islamic identity.*[58]

Events such as 9/11 are also perceived to have contributed to the desire of the younger generation to separate their national, ethnic and religious identities. In the light of media and legislative responses that followed, many have felt compelled to make a choice and to protect parts of their identity that matter the most to them. A perceived lack of acceptance by wider society is thought to have had a considerable impact on young people's sense of belonging, leading them to question their 'Britishness' and adopt a more overtly Muslim identity. This widely held view is illustrated by this comment by one respondent:

> *Whereas before they were considered and saw themselves as Muslims who were integrated within the British system, now many are trying to replace their 'Britishness' with a Muslim identity that is unknown to them. This is a response to what many young people see as a lack of acceptance of their 'Britishness' by wider society.*[59]

These dynamics among young Moroccans are compounded by recent and proposed changes in citizenship legislation, which many respondents saw as having made their status as citizens questionable. Such changes include those outlined in the Home Office document *Paths to Citizenship*, which proposes changing the minimum residency period prior to obtaining citizenship from five years to ten years, additional

[57] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 40s.
[58] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 30s.
[59] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London 40s.

annual fees/taxes, and individual qualification rather than family qualification. Other existing changes that were perceived to impact negatively include new requirement for English language skills. While respondents recognise that fluency in English is important to participating in economic and social life, the demand is seen to be particularly hypocritical in the light of a widespread perception that the government is simultaneously reducing financial support for English language classes. Some respondents expressed doubts about the rights that they still have as British citizens, since they feel that they are no longer protected by their legal status, and could well be deported to their country of origin at the first sign of misconduct.

8.2 Ethnicity

The Moroccan population consists predominantly of people of Berber, Arab and African heritage. Most sources estimate the population of Morocco as 99 per cent Arab-Berber.[60] Estimates of the Berber component varying between 30 per cent to 80 per cent, depending on whether they are defined by language use or by ethnic descent, with concentrations largely in the northern regions of the Rif, the middle plains of the Atlas, and the Sous Valley. The Arab population is primarily concentrated along the Atlantic coastal plain and in the cities. There is a small Jewish population of approximately 0.2 per cent and the remaining 0.7 per cent is made up of a number of groups that include French, Spanish, Italian, and Algerian nationals living in Morocco.[61]

It is unknown what the percentage of Moroccans in London are Berber or of Berber descent. Some respondents said there was a higher percentage in England than in Morocco while others disputed this claim. In common with Morocco, in the UK there is a close intermingling between Berbers and Arabs through marriage and family ties and shared religious practice. A sense of Moroccan nationhood is thought by respondents to be significant in minimising segregation between different ethnic groups, and geographical proximity is seen as more important than ethnic differences. Respondents, particularly first generation migrants, stressed the importance of Moroccan history, its monarchy and a shared sense of national awareness as strong unifying factors:

> *People see themselves as overarchingly 'Moroccan' and identify their leader as the King of Morocco who is very popular – the community is very proud of this identity.*[62]

[60] CIA World Factbook; UN Country Profile: Morocco, 2007.
[61] Library of Congress, 2006.
[62] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 50s.

8.3 Religion

8.3.1 Religion in Morocco

Islam is the official religion of Morocco. Muslims constitute 99 per cent of the population and approximately 90 per cent of Muslims in the country follow Sunni Islam.[63] The majority of Moroccan Sunnis follow the Maliki judicial school (*madhab*)[64] , developed by the followers of one of the most significant scholars that emerged during the Umayyad era, Imam Malik (d. 795). This judicial school is the third largest of the four schools of *fiqh* (religious law) within Sunni Islam and is followed by many Muslims in Northern and Western Africa. The unique aspect of the Maliki School is its inclusion of the customal law and religious practices of Medina as recorded in Imam Malik's *al-Muwatta* as a primary and comprehensive source of knowledge, with less of an emphasis on the hadith.[65]

Islam is an important part of Moroccan life and Moroccan social and political identity. The 2005 Pew Global Attitudes survey, conducted in Morocco, found that 70 per cent of Moroccan Muslims consider themselves Muslim first rather than as national citizens, and 75 per cent say that Islam plays a very large or fairly large role in the political life of their country.[66] The survey also found that 84 per cent of Moroccans believe that it is important for Islam to have an influential world role, but also that 60 per cent perceive Islamic extremism to be a major threat to world affairs.[67]

8.3.2 Religion in the UK

Evidence suggests that the Moroccan population in the UK is more religiously diverse than in Morocco. According to the last Census 77 per cent of people born in Morocco and living in England are Muslim followed by 6 per cent who are Christian and 5 per cent who are Jewish. However, Muslim religious denominations broadly follow those in Morocco as most Moroccans are Sunni and follow the Maliki school, with a minority following the Shafi school of thought.[68] Respondents also reported small communities of Sufis, Salafis, and what they described as a 'revivalist' current within the community.

[63] Library of Congress, 2006.

[64] School of law attributed to Malik ibn Anas al-Asbahi in the eighth century in the Arabian Peninsula. Predominant in North Africa, with significant presence in Upper Egypt, Sudan, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait. Originally referred to as the 'School of Hejaz' or the 'School of Medina', it is characterised by strong emphasis on hadith; many doctrines are attributed to early Muslims such as the Prophet Muhammad, wives, relatives, and Companions. A distinguishing feature of the Maliki school is its reliance on the practice of the Companions in Medina as a source of law. Additionally, Malik was known to have used 'ray' (personal opinion) and 'qiyas' (analogy). Source: John L. Esposito (ed) (2004), *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, Oxford University Press.

[65] Imam Malik believed that the practices of Medina preserved the original *sunnah* of the Prophet's community.

[66] Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics, 17 Nation Pew Global Attitudes Survey, Pew Global, 2005. www.pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/248.pdf. The Pew Global Attitudes Project is a series of worldwide public opinion surveys that encompasses a broad array of subjects ranging from people's assessments of their own lives to their views about the current state of the world and important issues of the day. More than 175,000 interviews in 54 countries have been conducted as part of the project's work.

[67] Pew Global, 2005.

[68] School of Islamic law founded by Muhammad ibn Idris ibn al-Abbas ibn Uthman ibn Shafii in the eighth century. Prominent in Egypt, Palestine, and Jordan with a significant number of followers in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Hejaz, Pakistan, India, and Indonesia and among Sunnis in Iran and Yemen. Official school for Ayyubid dynasty in Egypt, and prominent during the Mamluk regime that followed. Displaced by the Hanafi school there when the Ottomans occupied Egypt in 1517. Combined knowledge of fiqh as practiced in Iraq with that of Hejaz. Considers hadith superior to customary doctrines of earlier schools in formulation of Islamic law. Denies preference (istishan) as source of law. Source: Esposito, 2004.

Respondents suggested that there are considerable differences between the broadly traditional Moroccan religious practices of the first generation and the second generation. The influence of the Maliki school, for example, is thought to be lessening due to a number of factors, most notably the exposure of young Moroccans to the wider Muslim community in the UK and to different schools of thought. Many older people in the community feel that the younger generation is living in a 'religious void',[69] and that the absence of clear religious guidance from parents has triggered their interest in learning more about Islam from others. Respondents reported that some Moroccans now simply refer to themselves as Sunni Muslims, while others are trying to seek further knowledge about their traditional Maliki school.

The geographical origin of the UK Moroccan community was also seen as influencing the dynamics of the transferral of religious practices between generations. According to some respondents, religious practice in the north of Morocco is stricter and more orthodox compared to the central and southern parts, but transmission of both types can be problematic for young people. They believe that the rigid enforcement of the former can lead many young Moroccans to rebel, whilst the lack of enforcement or guidance for those from the South may result in a lack of strong role models or perceived respect for elders.

Cherti's study on Moroccans found evidence of young people questioning whether some 'religious' practices are primarily cultural inheritances and going back to the sources of religion (Quran and Sunnah) for guidance, rather than accepting practices that they inherited from their parents.[70] Similarly, respondents in our research reported that many younger Moroccans are increasingly making a distinction between 'culture/tradition' and 'religion' or Islamic teachings, and seeing 'Muslim' and 'ethnic' identity as separate entities. In the words of one respondent, the community is becoming 'more Ahlus-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah'[71] and share a growing tolerance towards other Muslims.

This trend is not uncommon among Muslim youth from other ethnic backgrounds, particularly those from the second generation. Research by Yunus Samad and Jessica Jacobson found that among young Muslims, there has been a shift away from the oral traditions of parents and a de-emphasising of regional identifications – however, this is not necessarily aligned to an increase in religiosity.[72] Jorgen Nielsen asserts that encounters between Muslims of different ethnicities often lead to a reassessment of what is understood as truly 'Islamic' and what is perceived as 'tradition'.[73] As a result, there is a growing tendency for young people to reject customs that their parents have sought to enforce in their British homes in favour of more universal forms of Islamic practice derived directly from religious sources.[74]

[69] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 50s.

[70] Cherti, 2008, p. 249.

[71] Ahlus-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah are defined as those who adhere to the Sunnah and who unite upon it, not turning to anything else, whether that be in matters of belief or matters of actions which are subject to Islamic rulings. Hence they are called Ahlus Sunnah because they adhere to it (the Sunnah) and al-Jamaa'ah because they are united in following it. Ahlus-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah is the name also notably being used by the successor to the proscribed Islamist group Al-Mujaharoun.

[72] In Nasar Meer, 'The politics of voluntary and involuntary identities: are Muslims in Britain an ethnic, racial or religious minority?', *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 42, No. 1, 2008, pp. 65-66.

[73] Jorgen Nielsen, 'Transnational Islam and the integration of Islam in Europe' in Allevi, S. and Nielsen, J. (eds) (2003), *Muslim Networks and Transnational Communities in and across Europe*, BRILL.

[74] Ibid.

Younger parents appear keen to assist their children in learning more about Islam as a religion and way of life, and to fill the religious void that the parents themselves may have experienced while growing up. In Cherti's study, respondents felt that these parents believed that if their children were brought up on stronger religious foundations from an early age, they would feel more confident about themselves as British-Muslims.[75] This was seen as enabling the striking of a better balance between faith and notions of citizenship, which could be complementary and not necessarily conflicting poles of attraction.[76]

In terms of venues of religious practice, the two main mosques frequented by the community are the Golborne Road mosque in North Kensington and the Al-Manaar, also known as the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre (MCHC) in Westbourne Park / Ladbroke Grove. These provide focal points for the Moroccan community and were mentioned by all respondents. According to some respondents the Golbourne mosque is popular with older Sufi Moroccans as:

> *The older generation will go there to recite the 'hizb' (*special prayer[77]*) because other mosques catering for a more general Arab audience or congregation will not allow such Sufi practices.*[78]

The Golborne Road mosque has no facilities for women, who are only allowed to pray there during Eid and Ramadan. Al-Manaar has made space for women to pray on a regular basis and is more popular with younger Moroccans. According to Cherti:

> *There is a generational divide between the two mosques. The one in Golborne Road is mostly attended by first-generation Moroccans, while Al-Manaar is visited by second-generation Moroccans as well as other Muslims from different ethnic and social backgrounds, including new converts. The facilities that exist in the second mosque, such as IT and language training, also explain why it is more appealing to the younger generation.*[79]

The Regent's Park Mosque was also mentioned as popular by a small number of respondents, although Moroccans attendees are in the minority. One respondent reported that predominantly Pakistani and Bangladeshi mosques were less likely to make Moroccans feel welcome, however this was not mentioned by other interviewees so it is unclear whether this feeling is widespread.

[75] Cherti, 2008, p. 250.
[76] Ibid.
[77] The *Hizb* is a special invocatory prayer particular to Sufis and is recited at set times. Popular examples include the *Hizb ul Bahr* (Incantation of the Sea) which is said to have been communicated by the Prophet himself and have special protective power.
[78] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 20s.
[79] Cherti, 2008, p. 94 – 95.

8.4 Language

Classical Arabic and French are the official languages of Morocco. However the Arabic form commonly spoken by the majority of the population is Darija. There are also three dominant Berber dialects spoken, and a sizeable Spanish speaking community in the Northern region due to its proximity to Spain, and the former colonial presence. While French is spoken by almost half the population, its use in daily interactions is mostly confined to those with higher levels of education, or those working in business and government administration.

The majority of the Moroccan community in the UK speaks a mixture of English and Moroccan Arabic (Darija) in the home and when interacting with each other. Many young people will speak in Darija with their parents and in English with their siblings and peers. It is commonplace for parents to speak to their children in Darija, with the children replying in English.[80] Some Moroccans educated in Morocco converse in Modern Standard Arabic with other Arabs. French is spoken widely among more educated Moroccans in the UK, sometimes mixed with Moroccan Arabic in informal conversation. Almost all members of the community speak English, but with varying degrees of fluency dependent on generation. Some Berber languages were also mentioned as being spoken in the UK but their use is not thought to be widespread.

[80] Ibid, p. 250 – 251.

9 Intra-community Dynamics

9.1 Intergenerational dynamics

Language, cultural and religious divisions between the young and old were highlighted by most respondents when asked about intergenerational dynamics. According to some younger respondents, Moroccans brought up in Britain are likely to be more outward looking than their parents and want to have a positive impact on issues that are of concern to Muslims both in Britain and globally. The following quote is typical:

> *There is a definite gap. The way the older generation does and sees things is different to that of the younger generation. The older generation derives its behaviour from a Moroccan upbringing focusing on respect, modesty and generally being more discrete about doing things. The younger generation is slightly different in that they are more open about their views and behaviour. They behave like their English peers.*[81]

Younger respondents stressed that they see themselves as rooted in Britain and engage heavily in debate on issues that affect their day-to-day lives. They contrasted this with people from the older generation who they felt perceived their presence here as temporary, and who were seen as having made little cultural adjustment to living in the UK.

Older respondents in contrast saw the young as more vulnerable and had great concerns about their ability to successfully manage a triple British, Muslim and Moroccan heritage. This sense of dislocation was echoed by some of the younger respondents who spoke about feeling increasingly isolated. One young respondent stated:

> *There is a real emptiness found within young people. It is a part of growing up as the second generation, learning about the self and searching to find out who you are. There are very few youth centres and even fewer that will cater to young Moroccans.*[82]

A number of older interviewees noted that as a response to such feelings, some young Moroccans may adopt negative 'British' teenage practices such as binge drinking and drug usage, which were seen as leading to poor education and employment achievement. Some felt that in the absence of positive role models, vulnerable young people can be exploited by a wide range of criminals as well as extremists. The fear of negative influences from outside the immediate community that was expressed by a number of people is illustrated by these words of one of the interviewees:

[81] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 20s.
[82] Moroccan community respondent: Female, London, 20s.

> *The extremists can be from Albania, they can be Muslim, it doesn't matter. They can teach our children to defraud anything. The warning signs are there and we would rather tackle it now before anything happens. Young people in the UK lack role models. There are now more educated Moroccans coming from the EU but no-one is highlighting these people to our young so that they can see that there are Moroccans from the diaspora making a difference.*[83]

As highlighted earlier, there are also intergenerational clashes around what many young people now consider to be 'true' Islam in contrast to the traditions and practices of their parents. Islamic identity in this view cuts across ethnic and national affiliations and inherited cultural practices, whereas for older people it is very much rooted in the culture and geography of their place of origin. According to one respondent, the issue is not just a theological one, it is also about how to manage this gap so that intergenerational tensions do not translate into serious friction between the young and the old.[84]

Young Moroccans are also reported to live distinctly different lifestyles from their parents which can often cause other problems. As the second and third generations grow up in a culture different to that of their parents, the multiple tensions and conflicts are increasingly leading to family breakdowns. The economic pressures on first generation Moroccans mean that many have to work shifts and long hours and are unable to spend time with their families. These pressures were thought to have adversely affected the relationship between generations, and younger parents were concerned that these work pressures will similarly impact on their relationships with their own children.

9.2 Women

In contrast to many of the communities in this research, Moroccan women of the first generation pioneered the community's establishment in Britain by taking jobs first, and then bringing over and taking care of their husbands, children and other family members, and it was reported that there are a small number of first and second generation women working in professions such as psychotherapy and social work. However, it was also noted that many women have a largely domestic role once married and there is a lack of financial independence. Women are also seen as more vulnerable to discrimination in employment as many wear the hijab and are more visible as Muslims. On the whole, women respondents reported good relations with their spouses and suggested that in the UK they are more involved in sharing domestic responsibilities.

[83] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 40s.
[84] Moroccan community respondent: Female, 20s.

Places to interact and socialise in wider society are limited for women, although some support is available through Al Hasaniya Women's Centre in Golborne Road. Other issues mentioned by women in the female focus group included the need for better exercise and fitness facilities in RBK&C, since there were few women-only sessions in public facilities. This is an important issue for the community and is recognised by RBK&C as problem. Its 2004 report notes that:

> *The issue of women only sports or swimming sessions is a very delicate one as more and more women and young girls are not subscribing to any sporting activity, and it seems there is a breakdown in communication with leisure services in agreeing the need for women only sports sessions.*[85]

9.3 Cohesion and integration issues

Few respondents raised issues of integration and cohesion except in relation to the identity issues discussed earlier. The overall sense was that the community feels itself to be on the margins of British society, and that it has other significant and immediate issues and needs to address such as improving education and employment outcomes, with little scope to reflect on its broader social relations. However, when asked about relationships with other ethnic groups, focus group respondents were more vocal about issues of integration and social cohesion. Some pointed out that they live in very mixed areas with Somalis, Afghans, Indians and Africans, with whom they get on well regardless of their religious beliefs. However their experiences with white British communities were less positive and various people spoke about encountering problems in the form of verbal abuse or having their cars and homes broken into. This hostility is thought to be linked to their colour and/or Muslim identity, and is a common experience shared with other communities in this study.[86]

Some said that they felt neglected and isolated as a community and that they experience considerable amounts of racism, particularly directed at women who wear the Hijab. Women in particular felt that people assume that they cannot speak or understand English because of their dress, and often engage in bullying and harassment by openly mimicking their Arabic speech. Children were also reported to face bullying by their white peers outside of school. Some respondents thought that many parents do not send their younger children out to play due to the fear that they might be assaulted.

[85] Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (2004), *Moroccan Youth in Kensington & Chelsea,* p. 4.

[86] Multiple discrimination is a complex area, and the data gathered from this study does not provide enough evidence to provide firm conclusions. However, there appeared to be differences experiences of discrimination depending on the individual's race, sex and religion. For example 'Black' Muslims, from Somalia and Nigeria were more likely to report discrimination based on race or double discrimination with religion, as opposed to other communities such as the Turkish speaking community, Algerians and Moroccans. For more information on multiple discrimination see: Danish Institute for Human Rights (2007), *Tackling Multiple Discrimination : Practices, policies and laws,* EC.
www.ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/publications/publication_en.cfm?id=125

10 Media

10.1 Perceptions of the British Media

On the whole respondents were less animated about the perceived negativity of the British press towards Muslims than other communities, though some respondents suggested that the overwhelming attitude of the community is nevertheless one of distrust that the UK media will represent a fair and balanced viewpoint on issues relating to Muslims. Younger people, who are more likely to watch a wide range of mainstream channels compared to older generations, tended to describe the UK media as heavily biased. It was suggested that Moroccans are generally wary of British news sources, which has led to widespread viewing of alternative international Arab channels such as Al Jazeera, which is considered more trustworthy. As one older respondent noted: *Moroccans think the UK media doesn't tell the whole story. They think Al Jazeera goes into more depth and the news is more real and strong.*[87]

10.2 Media consumption

The study identified a clear generational difference in the use and preference of media channels. The older generation rarely watches British TV channels or reads UK newspapers, while young people mainly access the mainstream UK media. Older people tend to watch Al-Jazeera, Iqra, Islam Channel and Moroccan satellite channels, including Moroccan TV, 2M Maroc and Al-Maghribya, although some also watch BBC World or listen to the BBC World Service News.

Older people in the community also tend to prefer the Moroccan written media to British newspapers. Those born here tend to read English newspapers, while others who were educated in Morocco and then came here read a mix of French, English and Arabic papers. Maghrib News was the most popular Moroccan news web site in English, though people also widely access IslamOnline, AlJazeera English and the Arabic version, and the BBC News web site.

Web sites, which were used particularly by the younger generation, include Maghrebia (www.magarebia.com), Maghreb News (www.news.marweb.com/), IslamOnline (www.islamonline.net), Al-Jazeera English and Arabic versions (www.english.aljazeera.net).

[87] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 20s

11 Links with countries of origin

11.1 Travel

Moroccans identify strongly with Morocco and travel for family and business purposes as frequently as possible, and this has increased with the availability of cheaper travel. Respondents suggested that most families go back at least once a year. In 2006, 20,700 Moroccan nationals were admitted to the UK. 8,560 were returning after a temporary leave of absence, 6,600 on visitor visas, 510 on student visas and 2,640 on business trips.[88] However, interviewees also noted that young second generation Moroccans are increasingly viewing trips to Morocco as a holiday rather than a trip 'home', and that their engagement with people in the country is limited due to their lack of language fluency.

Older people in particular keep abreast and are acutely aware of the political and economic situation in the country with a view to judging whether it is feasible to return to settle permanently. Many wish to return but are hindered by various constraints and considerations. This tension between 'home' and habitat is often described by academics as the 'myth of return', referring to the desire to suspend total immersion in the host country yet longing to be anchored there.[89] The wish to return expressed by most of the older respondents, together with their fears about whether this would work out for them in reality is described in these words by one interviewee:

> *Many Moroccans identify strongly with Morocco and hope to return there at some point. The question when watching the Moroccan news is Are we needed? Is there a chance to return home? In the last three years this has been given new vigour as people see small changes by the government. As a consequence some individuals with businesses have returned to Morocco. Some have been successful others have not.*[90]

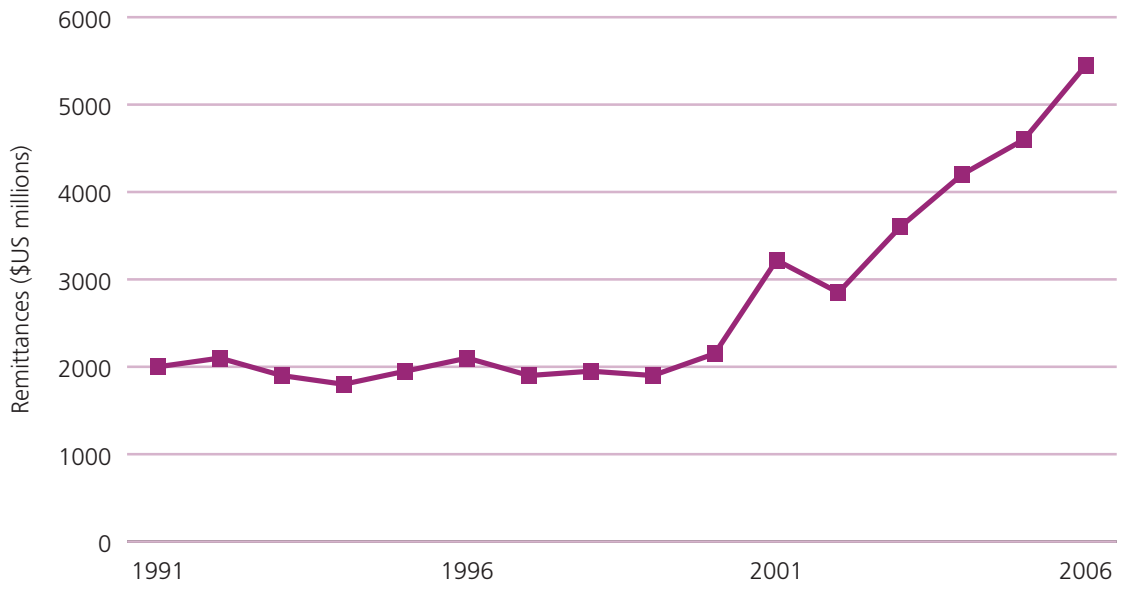
As highlighted by this respondent, a return home for permanent settlement is not an easy option given that many people born in Morocco, and who have lived in Britain for a long time, now identify Britain as their primary home. They are also wary about the social and cultural difficulties British born Moroccans might face. Some respondents also considered return as difficult or impractical because government corruption remains a major problem in developing their lives. Some also suggested that non-Moroccans who reside in Morocco have fewer rights and opportunities, particularly in terms of job opportunities.

[88] Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, 'Control of Immigration Statistics, United Kingdom, 2007', Home Office Statistical Bulletin, 2006.
[89] Tania Ghanem, *When Forced Migrants Return 'Home': The Psychosocial Difficulties Returnees Encounter in the Reintegration Process*, RSC Working Paper No. 16, University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre.
[90] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 40s.

11.2 Remittances

Morocco is the fourth largest recipient of migrant remittances in the developing world, receiving US$5.2billion in 2006.[91] It is estimated that 4.3 per cent of remittances from the UK are sent to Morocco.[92] Migrant remittances from Europe to Morocco have shown an increasing trend over the past decades (see Chart 3). The solid flow of remittances can be explained by the persistence of migration to northwestern Europe, new labour migration towards southern Europe, and the durability of transnational and transgenerational links between migrants and those who stay behind.

Chart 3: Official worldwide remittances to Morocco 1991-2006 (Source: World Bank)



Since 2001, there has been an increase in remittances, with some commentators hypothesising that this might be partly explained by the effect of 9/11 and many Moroccan migrants generally feeling less secure about their future in the destination countries. This may have encouraged Moroccans to remit money "to ensure better security in the country of origin".[93] The fact that the highest 2001 increase occurred in the US, where remittances were 152 per cent higher than in 2000, seems to support this hypothesis. However, data from 2002 and 2003 show that this peak also conceals a structural increasing trend.[94]

[91] International Migration Institute, 2007.
[92] Sorenson, 2004, p. 7.
[93] de Haas, 2007.
[94] Hein de Haas and Roald Plug, 'Cherishing the goose with the golden eggs: Trends in migrant remittances from Europe to Morocco 1970-2004', *International Migration Institute*, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. 603-634, 2006.

11.3 Political links

Respondents did not refer to any direct links between the community and the politics of Morocco, although there was clearly a great awareness and interest among respondents in what is happening in their country of origin.

12 Civil Society

12.1 Overview

Civil society organisations serving the Moroccan community remain largely underdeveloped and under resourced. Few have the scale or scope to address any of the significant issues for the community identified by respondents in interviews. Many interviewees were particularly keen to see the establishment of a Moroccan community centre in North Kensington, since at present most community interaction in public spaces is currently limited to spaces such as the street, cafes, shops and the two mosques.

12.2 Types of organisation and services offered

In London there are now fifteen Moroccan community organisations catering for the needs of their local communities by providing advice and support in accessing services. These are particularly focused on the needs of the first generation which still remains relatively isolated because of language barriers and a lack of knowledge about how the system works.[95] Low educational and skill levels have created additional barriers for the Moroccan community in establishing a strong civil society structure, though as Cherti's (2008) examination of the community shows, these factors have not stopped individuals and informal groupings from setting up organisations. There are varied types of organisations, many of them small associations.

Cherti provides a useful typology of the range of Moroccan associations in London and sees them as primarily:

- Governmental organisations
- Small self-help associations, usually with an educational focus
- Welfare associations
- Philanthropic 'elitist' organisations; or,
- Associations of students and professionals.[96]

[95] Cherti, 2008, p. 88.
[96] Ibid, p. 156

12.3 Key organisations

The following organisations were identified as important by respondents and focus group participants:

Al Manaar – Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre: provides the Muslim and wider community with a focal point for a range of spiritual, social, cultural, economic, educational and training activities. Al-Manaar mosque has been cited as a place where young people and women are able to meet and discuss their problems in a supportive environment. Many of the one-to-one respondents commented on the positive impact the centre has made on the community and on young people in particular. It is said to have provided them with a safe environment and given them a sense of direction. In the words of one respondent:

> *When young people are bored, it can focus their energy and it is nice to experience the community's excitement over speakers coming to visit. The opportunities for that place are endless as it is a central location for the community.*[97]

Another emphasised the key role it has played in enabling the civic engagement of young people by describing his own experience and involvement with the Centre:

> *I used to come to this area just briefly, but then between 1990 and 1992 I came back to live in the area and started to meet up with young people in the mosque. The community was seriously lacking role models and supportive institutions in the area. We used to discuss the problems of the community and ways of helping the community out, as I believe this is a duty that any Moroccan has towards his community.*[98]

British Moroccan Society: aims to raise awareness and knowledge of Morocco in the United Kingdom, fostering commercial and economic links between the two countries, as well as promoting tourism and cultural exchanges, encouraging greater social contact between the peoples of the two countries, and raising money for Moroccan charities.

Moroccan Community Welfare Group (MCWG – also known as Dar Al Arqam): During the 1980s, there was increasing awareness of issues concerning young people and underachieving Moroccan children. This awareness led to the establishment of two youth organisations, the Moroccan Community Welfare Group and Al Noor Youth Association, which secured funding from various sources and have made a significant impact on the community.[99] MCWG is a user-led voluntary organisation and offers a range of services for the Moroccan and wider Arabic speaking community in Kensington and Chelsea area and has a specific focus on Moroccan youth, in particular organising events and trips.

[97] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 30s.
[98] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 50s.
[99] RBK&C, 2004, p. 4.

The MCWG Youth Activity Centre has been running since January 1995. Its main objective is to provide young Moroccans and Arabic-speakers with a positive environment, various educational activities, and courses and recreational activities for character building. The Centre also provides informal educational and sports activities to enhance young people's personal development and focuses on discouraging anti-social behaviour and providing culturally appropriate and accessible youth work. It provides accredited IT courses for 14-21 year olds to give them essential skills recognised by employers. In 2002, a purpose built study library room was set up, consisting of literature relevant to the National Curriculum and academic subjects, as well as internet facilities.

Al-Noor Youth Association: Al-Noor provides supplementary school teaching of English, mathematics, Arabic and sports. It also runs parents classes and regular social events.

West London Moroccan Widadia (WLMW): WLMW is a voluntary self-help group which provides information and advice to Moroccans living in the RBK&C. It aims to offer educational facilities, visit the elderly and prisoners, and organise sports activities for Moroccan youth. It also provides classes in Arabic language, religious studies, the British political system, French, mathematics, physics and chemistry for 5 to 18 year olds.

The Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre: is a grassroots organisation that provides advice and assistance for Moroccan and Arabic speaking women and their families on benefits, housing, homelessness, domestic violence, education, health, and mental health. The organisation also runs social and cultural activities and offers English and Arabic classes, as well as specialist activities for young people and the elderly.[100] The Centre aims at providing referral advice and information to enable clients to access mainstream services. Most users are residents in Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster but the organisation also serves women and families from other areas. The organisation accepts self-referrals and referrals from other voluntary and statutory agencies.

12.4 Key influencers

Respondents found it difficult to single out key influencers and felt that there is a lack of real leaders and significant influencers in the community. The King of Morocco was singled out by many as a key international influencer, but locally influencers were seen as limited to a small number of individuals who work in the main community organisations. The response from this respondent was typical:

> *The community does not have a leader. The local Imams who are Moroccan provide some leadership on religious civil issues. On a civic level there is an overriding referral to families. Moroccans do not seem to recognise the Muslim bodies in the UK, with few probably knowing about them or feeling any part of them.*[101]

[100] Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre: www.al-hasaniya.org.uk/
[101] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 30s.

Religious leadership, both international and local, was deemed important by most respondents. A number highlighted the role that Imams play in the community and the need for more Imams who can communicate with the younger generation both linguistically and culturally:

> *Generally, the community comes into contact with Imams who don't have good English, but have brilliant Arabic. Arabic is fine for the Arabs who speak it, but for the young people this leaves them thinking there is no-one who actually understands them or that they understand.*[102]

12.5 Civic engagement and participation

The level of civic participation is high, with the community largely attempting to meet its own needs to date with variable success. A report by RBK&C stated that:

> *The community's strength has shown in its self-containment, its natural support networks and its ability to face up to its difficulties of displacement and migration. The community has struggled hard to establish its own religious and social facilities, mosque, Quranic and mother tongue Arabic classes for younger generation.*[103]

However, engagement with authorities, and public authority awareness and support in meeting community needs has been quite limited. This common perception amongst respondents is corroborated by a report on the Moroccan community in Notting Hill which noted that the community is still struggling for identity and recognition. The report sees the community as disoriented in terms of its relations with local authorities, central administration and support services, as well as in terms of its integration as a minority within the body of London.[104]

When asked about the key barriers to engagement the community faces, focus group respondents claimed that while people may contact the police and local authorities about issues of concern such as crime and housing, the authorities are slow to respond and do not prioritise their needs. Many said that they had reported incidents to the police but that beyond being sent some paperwork to fill out, nothing was done about their complaints. One participant described finding herself living in 'temporary accommodation' for ten years. Participants also highlighted what they saw as inappropriate provision in health services, amounting to what they believed to be institutional racism.

According to respondents in the study, up until 9/11 there was great deal of trust amongst the Moroccan community towards UK central government. The UK's reputation for a democratic system and fairness in treatment was said to be envied by Moroccans, many of whom saw it as a system to aspire to. However, this trust appears

[102] Moroccan community respondent: Male, London, 20s.
[103] RBK&C (1998), 'Map of Social Exclusion of the Moroccan Community', p. 2.
[104] Karima Rhanem, 'Darija in London's Notting Hill: Moroccan community in GB struggle for recognition', *Morocco Times*, 21.6.2005

to have been undermined since then. Firstly, many respondents felt that the government has contributed to the rise of Islamophobia post-9/11, particularly through counter terrorism laws which they see as impinging heavily upon the freedoms of Muslims. Secondly, they felt that there have been changes in policy and practice which have made members of the community more vulnerable to state action, including deportation and loss of rights. Finally, there was thought to be a predilection for public authorities to consult with larger and more settled Muslim communities, leaving smaller ones feeling even more marginalised. The UMEC research was seen to be a positive first step in addressing this concern.

12.6 Community issues and capacity building needs

The RBK&C is aware of many of the pressing needs of the community and has been active in commissioning research on the community in the past, as well as running workshops with the active individuals in the Moroccan community on issues of education, youth, police, safety and women. It has financially supported activities such as Moroccan national days and summer activities for children who do not go on holiday. It has also both directly and indirectly funded research into the Moroccan community, producing the following reports:

- A Map of Social Exclusion (1998), Community Relations Section RBK&C
- Young Moroccan men in Golborne (1999), Moroccan Community Welfare Group/Golborne Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)
- Opportunities 2000, Conference 1997, Community Relations Section RBK&C
- Raising Educational Achievement (1999), Al-Hasaniya
- The Moroccan Health Survey (1998), Dr. Ghada Karmi
- Understanding Muslim Housing needs (2004), North London Muslim Housing Association (NLMHA).

Between 1985 and 2000, the RBK&C Community Relations Service (CRS) had one officer dedicated to support the Moroccan community and this presence is reflected in the level of research that was conducted during that period. The officer provided interpretation, translation and advice to the Moroccan community and voluntary and statutory agencies in the RBK&C.[105] In 2000 the post disappeared and the remit of the role was changed to that of Community Information and Initiatives Officer (CIIO) based within CRS. The CIIO no longer works exclusively with the Moroccan community but with all BME and Faith communities in RBK&C. The CIIO has however maintained close contact with Al-Hasaniya, MIAAC, MCWG, West London Widadia and Moroccan professionals working in various agencies within the RBK&C.[106]

[105] RBK&C, 2004, p. 4.
[106] Ibid, p. 5.

Community needs identified by respondents fall under two broad categories:

Venues and facilities

- A shortage of community centres and the need for a *large space where all Moroccans can go. The community needs a place with a large hall, where the community as a whole can come together and deal with what the community needs.* There was no indication that this space needed to be religiously orientated, the main priority was seen as a space for the community
- A shortage of mosques. Respondents felt that there was often an assumption that Moroccans can make use of other communities' facilities without this being the case. For example, a Pakistani-run mosque will have cultural and language differences, giving the *khutbas* (sermons) in Urdu rather than Arabic
- A shortage of appropriate facilities for Moroccan weddings or large scale events
- A need for women only facilities. There is currently only one Women's Centre catering for the specific needs of women
- Young people highlighted the lack of both mainstream and Moroccan specific youth centres and activities for young people
- A need for more halal supermarkets within some areas. In some areas there are none (eg Dollis Valley in Barnet). This raises issues about the enterprise development needs of communities.

Education and employment

- There is evidence of a significant need for English language provision, particularly for older generations
- A shortage of Arabic language classes. Respondents felt that these should be available in more locations and be more widely available, particularly as young people are more interested in learning Arabic
- The general climate of hostility towards Muslims was felt to be affecting their employment prospects. Respondents highlighted the need for discrimination in employment to be addressed alongside the development of employment training provision for adults and young people.

In relation to capacity building, respondents working in community organisations expressed a need for guidance, support, help and assistance on how to run an organisation, how to write grant applications, and on the logistics of running an enterprise. They also wanted support and training that would enable them to tackle unemployment and work in different fields.

It was reported that there are few significant leaders or role models in the community. This is thought to have significant adverse impacts on the employment and educational outcomes of the second generation. A specific initiative proposed by a community stakeholder involves support for training up to 200 Moroccans in community and youth work skills so that they can help in developing civil society organisations and in assisting the community to address issues concerning young people in the community.

Some respondents also expressed a need to bring together differing groups under one umbrella organisation. Respondents felt that while there is occasionally a coming together of people and organisations in the community with differing perspectives and viewpoints on specific issues or incidents, at present there is no sustainable structure for a collective voice for the community.

13 Conclusions and Recommendations

The Moroccan community has been present in significant numbers in the UK since the 1960s. Whilst it has become well established in some parts of London, the community has remained quite invisible in official research and civic engagement to date. It still retains a great deal of suspicion about state authorities based on its experiences in Morocco, and has tended to rely on self dependence rather than make demands on public authorities for recognition and support.

However, this is changing and the community now wishes for better engagement and participation, particularly for recognition of its distinct needs and characteristics as opposed to being subsumed under the broader BME umbrella in terms of statistical data collection and community consultation and funding approaches.

The community suffers from high levels of socio economic deprivation, compounded by its experiences of discrimination on the grounds of religious and ethnic identity. Although there is a growing professional and managerial class, particularly spearheaded by mainland Europe born Moroccans, their successes remains invisible to the majority of British born young, people who continue to suffer from low educational achievement and unemployment. As with young people in all communities, the lack of opportunities and facilities leaves many young people vulnerable to negative influences and criminality.

Young women are accessing education and professional careers in increasing numbers, but there are still many who remain housebound and financially dependent on men for their livelihoods. Venues and facilities for women to participate in public life or to access support for issues that affect them remain extremely limited.

The lack of leadership within the community is also a key issue, both in relation to the lack of role models within families to guide and direct young people, but also at the level of the wider community, which has in part contributed to the lack of effective community structures for advocacy, civic participation and political engagement.

Whilst there are some well established civil society organisations, civil society structures on the whole are under developed and under resourced. Organisations have many capacity building needs and further community development hinges on the strengthening of civil society organisations. Proactive efforts are necessary both from within the community as well as from public authorities to develop appropriate partnerships and forums for ongoing engagement, consultation and dialogue.

13.1 Recommendations

This research has provided many insights into the Moroccan community in England, particularly the 77 per cent who are Muslim and the 69 per cent of the population that live in London. Subsequently, many areas were highlighted as community concerns but require further enquiry to draw firm conclusions. The UMEC reports should be seen as a starting point in the process of understanding England's diverse Muslim and ethnic minority communities in greater detail. There has been very limited research on the Moroccan community to date; Dr Myriam Cherti's recent work no doubt adds weight to this evidence base.

The UMEC Overview report provides detailed recommendations for engagement with and development of Muslim civil society organisations. The following specific recommendations for public authorities are in relation to responding to the Moroccan community:

Specific recommendations arising from community respondents include:

- Funding and measures to strengthen the leadership and capacity of community based organisations. Specifically, the provision of training, guidance, support and assistance in running community organisation and enterprises, writing grant applications, financial management and management committee training
- Support for the development of a collective representative forum that can act as an advocacy and consultative body for the community
- Accreditation and further provision of Arabic language teaching to assist young people seeking to explore their faith through the texts rather than potentially having it mediated by others who may have extremist agendas
- Enhancement of established community facilities to cater for the specific needs of women and young people, alongside the establishment of specialist facilities managed and operated by women for women
- Measures to address socio economic deprivation, in particular the obstacles to female employment, including training to enabled employment skills development
- Initiatives by public authorities to pro-actively engage and encourage community participation, including measure to reassure the community about fairness and transparency in immigration and deportation policies/practices.

Other recommendation:

- Further research is needed to understand the specific experiences of young Moroccans in England, particularly with respect to identity and religious dynamics. In particular there is a need to investigate the hypotheses that young Moroccans are increasingly questioning their Britishness in favour of their Muslim identity, and that in the vacuum created by the absence of role models and guidance from parents and elders, young people are seeking support from their peers from other Muslim communities and/or falling prey to criminal and extremist influences from outside the Moroccan community
- Future research projects conducted in boroughs with large Moroccan populations need to ensure that the specific needs and experiences of Moroccans are understood in isolation as well as in the context of other ethnic communities in the borough
- Boroughs with significant Moroccan populations should also ensure that Moroccan community groups and representatives are specifically consulted within the remit of black and minority ethnic consultations, and that they have visible representation in local planning and decision making forums
- Discrimination continues to be experienced by the community and evidence from our research suggests that this often needs to be understood in terms of multiple discrimination rather than simply 'Islamophobia'. The research base for multiple discrimination in the UK should be improved so that the experiences of black, Asian and ethnic minorities can be better understood and addressed.

14 Glossary

Ahlus-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah': Ahlus-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah are defined as those who adhere to the Sunnah and who unite upon it, not turning to anything else, whether that be in matters of belief or matters of actions which are subject to Islamic rulings.

Berber: Ethnic group from North Africa.

CI: The Change Institute.

CLG: Communities and Local Government.

Darija: Modern standard Arabic.

ERC: Equity and Reconciliation Committee.

Hizb: The Hizb is a special invocatory prayer particular to Sufis and is recited at set times.

Madhab: Literally "school" or "orientation," usually meaning one of the schools of Islamic law.

Maliki judicial school: School of law attributed to Malik ibn Anas al-Asbahi in the eighth century in the Arabian Peninsula. Predominant in North Africa, with significant presence in Upper Egypt, Sudan, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait.

Shafi judicial school: School of Islamic law founded by Muhammad ibn Idris ibn al-Abbas ibn Uthman ibn Shafii in the eighth century. Prominent in Egypt, Palestine, and Jordan with a significant number of followers in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Hejaz, Pakistan, India, and Indonesia and among Sunnis in Iran and Yemen.

Salafi: Name (derived from salaf, "pious ancestors") given to a reform movement led by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh at the turn of the twentieth century. Emphasised restoration of Islamic doctrines to pure form, adherence to the *Quran* and Sunnah, rejection of the authority of later interpretations, and maintenance of the unity of ummah.

Sufi/Sufism: Spiritual aspect of Islam. Sufi has a range of meanings deriving different interpretations of the word's etymology but generally refers to those who are interested in inner knowledge and practice towards spiritual awakening and enlightenment. There are a number of Sufi orders or 'paths' (*tariqas*), including the *Tijaniyah* and *Qadiriyah*, many which developed between the 9th and 12th centuries.

Sunnah: customary practice or way of life. *"al-Sunnah"* refers to the approved standard of practice established by Muhammad and early Muslims.

Sunni: Muslims who emphasise the importance of the actions and customs of Muhammad and the first generations of Muslims, viewing as legitimate the establishment of the caliphate, in contrast to Shi'i beliefs. About 85 per cent of all Muslims are Sunnis.

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This report presents a picture of the Moroccan Muslim community in England. It is one of a series of thirteen reports on different Muslim communities in England.

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