

# Religious discrimination in Britain: A review of research evidence, 2000-10

Paul Weller, Professor of  
Inter-Religious Relations Society,  
Religion and Belief Research Group,  
University of Derby



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Paul Weller  
Professor of Inter-Religious Relations

Society, Religion and Belief Research Group  
University of Derby



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*of* DERBY

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Research Team  
Equality and Human Rights Commission  
Arndale House  
The Arndale Centre  
Manchester  
M4 3AQ

Email: [research@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:research@equalityhumanrights.com)

Telephone: 0161 829 8500

Website: [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

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Finally, I am grateful to Karen Jochelson and especially to David Perfect at the Equality and Human Rights Commission for their input, encouragement and patient support.

## Abbreviations

AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
ATLA	American Theological Library Association
BHPS	British Household Panel Survey
BNP	British National Party
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
CST	Community Security Trust
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
EVS	European Values Survey
GHS	General Household Survey
HOCS	Home Office Citizenship Survey
IBBR	Index to Book Reviews in Religion
ICRC	Inner Cities' Religious Council
LFS	Labour Force Survey
NRM	New Religious Movement
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
RIO	Religion Index One: Periodicals
RIT	Religion Index Two: Multi-Author Works
UK	United Kingdom



## Executive summary

In the autumn of 2010, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (the Commission) commissioned Professor Paul Weller to undertake a review of research on religious discrimination in Britain over the decade, 2000-10. The aims were to identify and review:

- quantitative and qualitative evidence of religious discrimination;
- any evidence about whether religious discrimination is increasing or decreasing;
- any differences in evidence between England, Wales and Scotland;
- ‘Islamophobia’ as a frame of reference for discrimination against Muslims; and
- gaps in the existing research and statistical evidence.

## Methodology

The report is based on a desk-based study that focuses primarily on research published between 2000 and 2010. The bibliographical review informing the report used a range of search engines and bibliographical databases. The report also draws selectively upon a survey of recent research on religion, discrimination and good relations carried out by Linda Woodhead through the Commission’s Religion or Belief Network and the email contact lists of the Religion & Society Research Programme.

## Main findings

### *The nature of religious discrimination*

The report explores the contested meanings associated with, and attributed to, the terminology of ‘religious discrimination’. The report:

- Highlights that understandings of ‘religious discrimination’ range from popular understandings through to legal definitions.
- Adopts a working definition for the dimensions of ‘religious discrimination’ which includes ‘unfair treatment’ manifested through the reported experience of: religious prejudice; religious hatred; religious disadvantage; direct religious discrimination; indirect religious discrimination; and ‘institutional religionism’.

### ***Religious discrimination: quantitative and qualitative evidence***

The report notes the varied nature of possible research evidence relating to ‘religious discrimination’ and perceptions of it and shows that more evidence exists for some religious groups (for example Muslims) than others (for example Hindus, Sikhs or Buddhists):

#### *Quantitative evidence on religious discrimination:*

- Only a minority of UK-based surveys have asked questions which might contribute to an understanding of ‘religious discrimination’ and many fewer ask about ‘religious discrimination’ as such. Nevertheless, a number of European Surveys do ask such questions at a multi-country level and include questions and data of relevance to ‘religious discrimination’ in the UK and/or to Britain.

#### *Qualitative research and the perception of religious discrimination:*

- While legal understandings of discrimination might appear to offer a stable framework for an understanding of religious discrimination, self-definition of research subjects and survey respondents is the best starting point to take. This is because, over the period under review, different definitions were operative in relation to different grounds of discrimination and, in addition, social research into ‘religious discrimination’ is not limited to the recording of instances where the legal system has found that discrimination has occurred.
- Much of the research that has been conducted in relation to ‘religious discrimination’ has, more precisely, addressed the perception or reported experience of ‘religious discrimination’. These meanings may be different to legal definitions of discrimination.

#### *Legal definitions and the socially articulated experience of religious discrimination:*

- The research evidence underlines the complex and potentially problematic relationship between legal definitions/outcomes of ‘religious discrimination’ and the socially articulated experience of it. Put simply, not everything that individuals may identify as discrimination can, from perspectives other than the purely private and subjective, safely be presumed to be discriminatory, while unfair treatment does not have to be deliberate, or even detected by the victim, to constitute discrimination.
- From the perspective of those who report ‘religious discrimination’, their subjective experience is very relevant so that suspicion of their reported experience can lead to anguish for those who seek to articulate it to a wider audience, further compounding the pain of the original experience.

***Increase/decrease/difference in religious discrimination***

When considering trends in ‘religious discrimination’ between 2000 and 2010, it should be emphasised that its frequency could increase without its seriousness doing so, or vice versa.

*Increase in tribunal cases on religious discrimination:*

- Since December 2003, when the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations came into force, the number of tribunal cases to do with ‘religion or belief’ has gradually increased. However, it is not clear how far this relates to increased frequency of claims of discrimination or to a greater awareness of potential legal remedies for such discrimination.

*Lack of sufficient time series data to enable trends to be securely identified:*

- At present there is insufficient quantitative and time series data to indicate conclusively whether ‘religious discrimination’ in Britain is increasing or decreasing, taken as a whole.

*Islamophobic ‘spikes’:*

- Evidence exists to suggest that, in the wake of the 9/11 and 7/7 bombings, there have been ‘spikes’ in the manifestation of some forms of ‘religious discrimination’ in relation to Muslims (as well as those perceived to be Muslims).

*Antisemitic ‘trends’:*

- There is specific quantitative evidence that the recorded number of incidents of antisemitism has increased since 2000, with an apparent peak in 2009, falling back somewhat in 2010, though to levels that are still higher somewhat higher than in the immediately preceding years.

*Christian perceptions and concerns:*

- Some emerging evidence suggests the possibility of a changing pattern in relation to at least perceptions of ‘religious discrimination’ and/or readiness to pursue potential issues of such discrimination in which Christians are increasingly highlighting examples and concerns.

***Differences in evidence between England, Wales and Scotland***

- The majority of the evidence base on ‘religious discrimination’ in Britain relates to England and Wales; to Britain (England, Wales and Scotland); or to the United Kingdom (UK) as a whole without differentiation.

*Evidence on England and Wales:*

- The majority of the evidence that refers to England and Wales relates primarily to England. At present there is little distinctive evidence to suggest a substantially different position in Wales as compared to that in England. Because of the relative lack of specific evidence on Wales, it is unclear whether such distinctiveness does not exist or whether insufficient specific research has been conducted.

*Evidence on Scotland:*

- In relation to Scotland, there is a more substantial body of distinctive evidence. This includes evidence about the phenomenon of 'sectarianism' found in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Such evidence includes consideration of the relationship between 'sectarianism' and 'religious discrimination' more broadly understood.

***'Islamophobia' and discrimination against Muslims***

- Social psychological research evidence suggests there is nothing that in principle prevents the possibility, given certain circumstances, of any group becoming perpetrators of unfair treatment on the basis of religion. As well as having identifiable generic characteristics and dynamics, the evidence also indicates that 'religious discrimination' can take specific forms, such as those associated with the concept of Islamophobia.
- A fairly consistent body of research evidence shows that, relative to other religious groups in Britain, Muslims report and experience discrimination of a greater frequency and seriousness than other religious groups. In the second half of the decade 2000-10, this was compounded by the impact on wider public perceptions of Muslims of terror bombings undertaken in the name of Islam and in connection with the security policies and measures that have responded to that and focused primarily upon Muslims.
- By means of comparison and contrast of the evidence overall, it may be possible more clearly to identify and address features that may be specific - in extent or kind - to the experience of particular religious groups. But as large a body of evidence relating to other groups, such as Hindus, Sikhs or Buddhists, is currently lacking.

## ***Gaps in the existing research and statistical evidence***

### *Comparative research:*

- There is relative lack of comparative research on religious discrimination and sectarianism across the parts of the United Kingdom. While Northern Ireland as such is beyond the scope of this review, given the much longer history there of legislation, policy and research relating to these matters, more comparative research could be helpful in better understanding unfair treatment on the basis of religion or belief and particularly in identifying 'good practice' to tackle it.

### *Discrimination between and by people of religion:*

- Excluding the phenomenon of sectarianism, there is a relative lack of evidence about discrimination as it occurs between and by people of religion in Britain.
- The evidence suggests that, within the current human rights and equalities architecture, a number of tensions and emergent conflicts exist between various 'protected characteristics'. In light of this, the enhancement of the evidence base on 'intersectionalities' (especially on religion and sexual orientation and within religion or belief between 'religion' and 'belief') would be beneficial.
- Such research would be particularly helpful if it were able to identify any contemporary good practice in relations between the 'religious' and the 'non-religious', as would research to recover the basis of historical collaboration between 'religious' and 'non-religious' in relation to the removal of religious privileges and disabilities.

### *Invisibility and visibility in religious discrimination:*

- Notwithstanding the emergence of 'religion or belief' as a legally 'protected characteristic', research evidence over the past decade continues to suggest that, relatively speaking, its felt 'invisibility' remains a key concern to many. Such concerns are focused in some legal cases that appear to the claimants, and sometimes also to observers, to have prioritised other 'protected characteristics' over those relating to 'religion or belief'.
- These concerns are also located among Christian individuals and groups who are increasingly pressing the question of whether potential 'religious discrimination' against (particularly) white Christians is taken as seriously as when it is associated with those who may also be ethnic minorities.

- A different aspect of relative ‘invisibility’ is the comparative lack of attention to ‘religious discrimination’ as it may affect Pagans and members of New Religious Movements, a majority of whom are also of white ethnic background.
- At the same time, the research evidence continues to identify aspects of ‘visible religious difference’ being a particularly salient part of ‘religious discrimination’, especially in relation to Muslim women and clothing and following 9/11 in relation to physical attacks on Muslims and others perceived to be Muslims by virtue of aspects of their clothing.
- Research that further explores the continuum of ‘visibility’ and ‘invisibility’ in relation to how ‘religious discrimination’ occurs might be a fruitful focus. Such research might include exploration of the position of Pagans and New Religious Movements in particular.
- More monitoring on the basis of ‘religion or belief’ could help reduce ‘invisibility’ and produce time series data sets to connect with both Census data and the future panel survey proposed by this report (see further, below).

#### *A panel survey*

- The benefit of implementing a panel survey that includes a focus on ‘religious discrimination’ and equity is the central recommendation of this report. Such a survey would help address the current weaknesses in the evidence base derived from the range of questions being asked; their ‘patchiness’ over time; and the unevenness of evidence relating to the four countries of the UK. Such an initiative could be developed to analytically cohere with the data that will become available as the 2011 Census data become available.
- A panel survey planned and conducted in such a way would also assist in navigation of the increasing complexity of intersectionalities around religion or belief and in addressing ‘good relations’ in relation to ‘religion or belief’, while its value would be further increased if it included broader ways in which ‘religion or belief’ groups are facilitated or otherwise in contributing to the wider society.
- To take forward such an initiative in the current fiscal context would likely require collaboration between key public bodies, charitable research organisations and Research Councils - including the possibility of this being a ‘legacy initiative’ for the Economic and Social Research Council and Arts and Humanities Research Council that sponsor the Religion & Society Research Programme.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Aims of the research

In a report based on a series of consultative seminars and published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission under the title of *Religion or Belief: Identifying Issues and Priorities*, Woodhead with Catto (2009: 15) stated that:

A clear conclusion arising from the seminars was that there is still an inadequate evidence base concerning religious discrimination (as well as no evidence whether there is discrimination against secular belief, or at least against secularism).

They therefore also argued that:

There is currently insufficient evidence to draw reliable conclusions about the nature and extent of religious discrimination in the UK.  
(Woodhead with Catto, 2009: iv)

The Commission sought to build on this earlier study, and on past and current ongoing studies of religious discrimination by the author of this paper and colleagues (see Appendices 1 and 2), in order to review the key research evidence that exists from the period 2000-10 concerning religious discrimination in England, Wales and Scotland. The specific aims of the report are therefore to identify and review:

- quantitative and qualitative evidence of religious discrimination;
- any evidence about whether religious discrimination is increasing or decreasing;
- any differences in evidence between England, Wales and Scotland;
- 'Islamophobia' as a frame of reference for discrimination against Muslims; and
- gaps in the existing research and statistical evidence.

### 1.2 Research context

The decade 2000-10 has been a momentous one for the place of religion or belief in public life in Britain. In part, this has been because of the impact on public, social and political consciousness of a number of traumatic events. These include the 9 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the United States (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 2004), the

Madrid Train bombings of 11 March 2004 and, especially for Britain, the London Transport bombings of 7 July 2005 and the attempted bombing of Glasgow International Airport of 30 June 2007.

These events have had a significant impact both on the climate of public debate and on the development of policy and practice in matters that have a bearing on discrimination in relation to religion or belief. However, the decade has also been framed by other less seismic, but nevertheless important, events. These include the 2001 disturbances in the northern mill towns of England, the political response to which led to heightened concerns about 'separateness' and the development of an emphasis on 'community cohesion' (Cantle and The Community Cohesion Team 2001; Denham and the Ministerial group on Public Order and Community Cohesion, 2001).

The decade has also seen the development of law, policy and practice designed to address discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. With the coming into force in 2000 of the Human Rights Act 1998 for the first time in the UK outside Northern Ireland (where such legislation already existed), matters of religion or belief were brought into the sphere of law concerning equitable treatment within the freedom both to hold and to manifest religion or belief. The Act thus brought new responsibilities for public authorities or bodies acting as public authorities to take account of religion or belief as matters in their own right rather than as only a possible dimension of an 'ethnic group' as defined under the Race Relations Act 1976 (see Edge and Harvey, 2000).

Then, in 2003, the Employment (Religion or Belief) Regulations came into force bringing obligations to employers and providers of vocational training not to discriminate, victimise or tolerate harassment on grounds of religion or belief (see Vickers, 2006; 2008). This was followed, in 2006, by the Religious and Racial Hatred Act which replaced the historic common laws of blasphemy and blasphemous libel. Subsequently, there has been the Equality Act 2006 followed by the Equality Act 2010 through which equalities legislation was integrated across all the 'protected characteristics' covered by the Act (age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment). Positive duties were also introduced with regard to religion or belief, including in the provision of goods and services.

In the late 1990s, the Home Office also commissioned the University of Derby under the direction of the author of this report to carry out the first government-sponsored research into the nature and extent of religious discrimination. The resulting report, *Religious Discrimination in England and Wales* (Weller, Feldman and Purdam, 2001),

was based on empirical work in England and Wales only, although it built upon an *Interim Report* (Weller, Feldman and Purdam, 2000) which reviewed a range of bibliographical, legal and policy options and included some reference to Scotland (and Northern Ireland). Further background detail about the project and its terms of reference can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

The author of this report is also Principal Investigator in a current three-year (2010-12) research project on Religion and Belief, Discrimination and Equality in England and Wales: Theory, Policy and Practice, 2000-2010 (hereafter referred to as the Religion and Belief, Discrimination and Equality research project). This project is conducted within the framework of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) Religion & Society Research Programme ([www.religionandsociety.org.uk](http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk)).

The project aims to establish a benchmark in scholarly studies on discrimination and equality in relation to religion and belief (see [www.derby.ac.uk/religion-and-society](http://www.derby.ac.uk/religion-and-society)). In doing so, it will bridge the decade since the publication of the 2001 report into religious discrimination in England and Wales. As well as reviewing that decade, the project will also identify, collect, analyse and evaluate new data and evidence concerning religion or belief discrimination and equality in relation to theory, policy and practice over the same period. The project, which is also limited to England and Wales, will not be completed until December 2012. Its full published outputs are unlikely to be available until well into 2013 and, at the time of writing, it is not possible to report any provisional results. However, given the scope of what the project is attempting to do, full background details on it are included in Appendix 2.

Linda Woodhead has pointed out that an increasing amount of high quality research that is relevant to the focus of this review has been produced. However, much of what already exists is 'insufficiently digested and "used", both within the academic community and beyond' (Woodhead, 2011: 3). There is therefore a need 'to consolidate' and 'to take stock'. The aim of the current report is, therefore, to identify and review research evidence relating religious discrimination produced over the past decade in England, Wales and Scotland and to present this in a form that is accessible to policy-makers and others with a professional interest in the area.

### **1.3 Methodology**

This report is mainly based on a desk-based study that focuses primarily on research results published during the years 2000-10 although in some instances, where the work concerned illustrates a more recent development, or where the research

concerned was particularly seminal and/or has not been superseded by more up-to-date research, reference is also made to older research and publications.

The bibliographical review that informs the report has used a variety of search engines and bibliographical databases. These include Primo Central, a generic cross-disciplinary resource comprising citations to around 400 million journal articles. Specialist databases have also been used, such as the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) religion databases that includes Religion Index One: Periodicals (RIO©); Religion Index Two: Multi-Author Works (RIT©); and Index to Book Reviews in Religion (IBRR©). In total, these provide extensive coverage of over 1.6 million publications on religion.

At the same time, the report has selectively drawn upon a survey of recent research on religion, discrimination and good relations carried out by Linda Woodhead (2011) for the Equality and Human Rights Commission. That survey (see Appendix 7) was conducted primarily by email, mainly through the Commission's Religion or Belief Network and the email contact lists of the Religion & Society Research Programme.

The survey asked scholars for information on their relevant research and publications since 2000, including information about current and still ongoing research. Because of this, not all of the research referred to in this report has yet been completed with outcomes that are known and/or published. However, reference to some of this work is included here because it is important for the reader to be aware of the existence of this ongoing research.

#### **1.4 Guide to the report**

**Chapter 2** discusses the meanings associated with, and attributed to, the concepts of religion, discrimination and religious discrimination. Consideration of these concepts is necessary to set in context the discussion of the research evidence relating to them.

**Chapter 3** examines a range of quantitative and qualitative research evidence concerning religious discrimination.

**Chapter 4** looks at the extent to which evidence might support whether there has been an increase, decrease and/or change in relation to religious discrimination.

**Chapter 5** discusses whether there is any evidence to suggest that the nature and patterns of religious discrimination in Wales and in Scotland might be distinctive from

those in England. In doing so, it examines the concept of 'sectarianism' and debates around evidence relating to that as well as religious discrimination in Scotland.

**Chapter 6** examines research evidence relating to discrimination against Muslims and the use, in relation to this, of the concept of 'Islamophobia'.

**Chapter 7** draws together the discussions in Chapters 2-6, in the light of which it identifies gaps in the current research and statistical evidence on religious discrimination and makes some recommendations for reducing gaps in the evidence.

## 2. Nature of the research evidence on religious discrimination

### 2.1 Introduction

The terminology of religious discrimination is used throughout the report to frame the research evidence that is under review. However, both the term itself, and the concepts of religion and discrimination to which it relates, are contested concepts which have different meanings and weightings associated with them in popular usage; in various academic disciplines; and in the law.

Therefore the nature of the research evidence on religious discrimination cannot be considered without discussion of these concepts and contexts. Similarly, while there are generally accepted understandings in both the academic and policy fields of what constitutes research evidence, the nature and relative importance of different kinds of research evidence are not entirely uncontested. Because of this, the opening section of this chapter is devoted to discussion and analysis of these matters. In light of that, the chapter then goes on to examine the quantitative and qualitative research evidence relating to religious discrimination collected in the last decade.

### 2.2 Religion: contested and working definitions

#### ***Religion***

The focus of this report, as commissioned, is on 'religious discrimination'. Current equalities and human rights laws are, however, framed in terms of 'religion or belief'. Within this, the notion of 'belief' is currently undergoing considerable evolution in terms of legal understanding and application, especially following the case of *Nicholson v Grainger Plc, 2009* in which 'environmentalism' was deemed to be a philosophical belief. The subject was also examined in Woodhead with Catto (2009), while current research by Gordon Lynch and Abby Day (see Appendix 7) in the Religion & Society Research Programme on 'Belief as Cultural Performance' questions some of the hard and fast distinctions that are often imputed to these phenomena, and especially in relation to that which is generally distinctively identified as 'religion'.

One of the emergent issues in the continued development of law, policy, practice and research in this area is the relationship between what, in the context of the law, is seen as 'religion' and what is seen as 'belief'. This is not least because, as with 'belief' in this context, the notion of 'religion' is itself not entirely settled. Indeed, prior to the introduction of legislation in this field in England, Wales and Scotland, the lack of a generally accepted definition for religion was sometimes discussed (Hepple and Choudhury, 2001: 25-30) as one of the reasons why it might be impractical to evolve relevant law and policy.

The problem was noted and discussed by Weller et al. (2000: 5-6). To acknowledge the complexity of an issue and the imperfection of any working definition used does not, of itself, constitute a necessary impediment to the making, application and development of law. As with the concept of religion, the meanings of 'race' and of 'ethnicity' (see Bacal, 1981) have also been highly contested in both social science theory and community politics and Parliament did not originally define their meaning in law when race relations legislation was originally passed.

In the academic study of religion, the definitions of religion that exist are various working definitions which tend to reflect the various disciplinary traditions and approaches within which the definitions are made, from the cultural, through the sociological, to the theological. In his classic book *The Meaning and End of Religion*, the theologian and historian of religion Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1978) critiqued the usefulness of the very idea of a religion or religions, arguing that what are today described as these are, in fact, historical constructions superimposed upon what are actually the very diverse experiences of people of 'personal faith' who live within what Cantwell Smith called 'cumulative traditions'. More recently, scholars such as Timothy Fitzgerald (2000, 2007) have argued that the category of 'religion' is not only an 'essentialised' but also a deeply ideologised construction which entrenches a socially constructed division between religion and 'the secular'.

Outside the academic arena, the notion of religion has often simply been assumed according to one or more of its popular senses. Alternatively, as in charitable law, its appropriateness for describing a particular form of corporate life has been evaluated in relation to the kinds of activities of an organisation claiming to be religious. In both usages, religion has often been considered to be something to do with belief in a God or divine being. However, such an understanding does not take account of the world religions of Buddhism or Jainism that are 'a-theistic', let alone the orientations of some so-called 'New Religious Movements' (NRMs) (Barker, 1989; Partridge, 2004). For some of these NRMs – at least in some instances, for example, Scientology (see Lewis, 2009) – the degree to which they should be understood as religions at all has been contested.

Some countries have tried to deal with this difficulty by having a list of religions that are recognised by the state, together with a process and criteria for such recognition. Such an approach has often caused difficulties for religions that are newer to the countries concerned when seeking recognition. In Britain, the tradition has been much more pragmatic, based neither on a generally applicable list of recognised religions, nor on a single working definition of what constitutes a religion. Generally speaking scholars of religion tend to see self-definition as the least problematic

approach towards a working definition of religion. One example of such an approach argues that religion is:

...perhaps best understood as a way of living in which some form of identification (either in a weaker and more general sense, or in a stronger and more specific sense of alignment with particular movements, communities and/or organisational forms) is often (though not always or necessarily) to be found in conjunction with different forms of 'believing' (in various combinations of certain values, ideals and doctrines) and can be expressed through 'practice' (that is related to shared symbols, rituals, observances and ethical orientations).

(Weller, 2003: 66)

Although there are problems with such an approach, it is suggested that for research into religious discrimination, the best starting point to take is indeed that of the self-definition of research subjects and survey respondents.

### ***Discrimination***

At first sight legal understandings of discrimination might appear to offer a more stable framework for understanding. During much of the decade under review, the relatively piecemeal evolution of discrimination law in Britain has meant that different definitions were in operation in relation to different grounds of discrimination. But as demonstrated by Hepple and Choudhury (2001: 33-40; 67-69), legal definitions of religious discrimination are 'system-specific'. Therefore while discrimination law in countries such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia often has a historical and often continuing connection with English law, definitions of discrimination can differ. One of the achievements of the Equality Act 2010 has been the integration of what were separately developed bodies of legislation into what is now at least a common legal definition and understanding of what constitutes discrimination as understood across the 'protected characteristics'. This covers both direct and indirect discrimination which is discussed in the context of religious discrimination below (see pp. 11-13).

However, when reviewing research on religious discrimination, legal definitions do not settle the matter. This is because social research is not concerned merely with recording those instances where the legal system has found that discrimination has occurred. Much of the research that has been conducted on religious discrimination has in fact addressed the **perception** or **reported** experience of religious discrimination. These meanings may be different to legal definitions of discrimination.

One of the terms of reference (see Appendix 1 of this report) for the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project (Weller et al., 2001) asked for an assessment of evidence of religious discrimination 'both actual and perceived'. Such terminology highlights the complex and potentially problematic relationship between legal definitions/outcomes of religious discrimination and the socially articulated experience of it. This problematic is sometimes articulated in terms of the differences between 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity'. Put crudely, not everything that individuals may identify as discrimination can, from perspectives other than the purely private and subjective, safely be presumed to be discriminatory and even a deliberate act which is perceived by others as unfair does not necessarily constitute discrimination.

At the same time, unfair treatment does not have to be deliberate, or even detected by the victim, to constitute discrimination. In addition, from the perspective of those who report religious discrimination, their subjective experience is very relevant. For example, a group of Hindus and Jains who participated in the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project clearly expressed the difficulty and anguish that suspicion of their reported experience can cause for those who seek to articulate it to a wider audience, further compounding the pain of the original experience:

Discrimination is difficult to prove. It can always be said that it was an individual's attitude rather than an inadequate or discriminatory policy; as a result, you can't get action taken. People are laughing in your face: discrimination is an experience, the experience of a slap in the face.  
(Weller et al., 2001: 115)

### ***Religious discrimination, distinctiveness and intersections***

The question of the relationship between religious discrimination and discrimination which is connected with other protected characteristics is also important to bear in mind in relation to what, in academic studies, is identified as the phenomenon of 'intersectionality' (see <http://www.intersectionality.org>). This issue was also an important component of the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project, with one of the project's terms of reference (see Appendix 1) being to give an 'indication of the extent to which religious discrimination overlaps with racial discrimination'.

Within the social sciences, the historically dominant tradition has tended to understand religion as a dependent variable of ethnicity and/or culture. In this tradition, to varying degrees, religion has been seen as certainly a functional and

sometimes an almost instrumental reinforcement of a primary category of ethnicity. Others have argued that religion and ethnicity are to be seen as much more clearly distinct, or in a reciprocal relationship. By contrast, others (Gill, 1975) have argued for the importance of religion itself as a 'social determinate'.

While religion and ethnicity can theoretically, analytically and even legally be distinguished, in the lived experience of actual populations it is not always possible to separate out these factors. Their relationship in a given place and time are often the consequence of the history of when and where religious traditions developed; how people migrated; and where they are currently positioned relative to other religious traditions and social structures. The nature of the relationship between these factors is further complicated because they are evaluated differently both among and between the religious traditions. Some religions (such as, at least in principle, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism) emphasise the difference between religion, culture and ethnicity, while others (Judaism and Hinduism) often see them as closely related.

In reported experiences of discrimination, both religion and ethnicity can be involved, as can other protected characteristics. For much of the period under review when different laws existed for different equalities grounds, one of the difficulties was that individuals had to choose on which ground they might pursue their case when the lived reality might have been much more complex. As illustrative of the difficulties involved in the relationship between ethnicity and religion, in the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project, a white, male, police inspector noted that:

...an incident may start as a road rage incident and then move to racial insults, even if it wasn't initially motivated by race. There's the same problem with religion: it might begin as racial harassment but then elements of religion are brought into it.  
(Weller et al., 2001: 124)

Similarly, a Muslim commented: 'If someone throws two stones through someone's window, that's racism. If they throw two pigs heads [as happened to them], it's about religion.' While an African-Caribbean race equality worker commented: 'I don't care what they threw, but why they threw anything at all - the whole gambit of "ifs". You're usually dealing with a multiplicity of issues.' (Weller et al., 2001: 17).

Therefore, in reviewing research evidence relating to religious discrimination in the last decade, it is necessary to go beyond the current purely legal definitions to

understand the perceived experience of discrimination. This is not least because such definitions were not, throughout the whole period under review, in force in the form that they are now. Moreover, definitions and interpretations of the phenomenon continue to be contested in reported experience, evaluation, understanding, policy and legal development. Indeed, it is precisely because of such contestation that this review of research evidence needs to take a broad approach to a working definition of religious discrimination, in order to inform the ongoing debate and developments in which that contestation takes place.

***Religious discrimination: towards a working definition***

There is no single accepted definition of religious discrimination. Woodhead with Catto (2009: 4) suggested distinguishing between three factors as a starting point: socio-economic or ‘material’ discrimination (for example, in employment); cultural or attitudinal discrimination (for example, ignorance, ridicule, distortion, trivialisation of religious commitment), and religious ‘hatred’ (which is covered by other legislation). An alternative approach was outlined by Weller et al. (2000: 14). Noting that the concept of religious discrimination acted as an umbrella term for a range of types of discrimination, they identified the following six dimensions of unfair treatment on the basis of religion – including in relation to the unfair treatment on the basis of the absence of religion among atheists, humanists and the non-religious:

- ‘Religious prejudice’, which is attitudinal, can wound individuals, and can form a basis for exclusion.
- ‘Religious hatred’, which can be fanned from ‘religious prejudice’ and can result in violent behaviour.
- ‘Religious disadvantage’, which is experienced by all religious groups that are not from ‘established’ churches (see pp. 12-13).
- ‘Direct religious discrimination’, which is deliberately unfair action based on religion.
- ‘Indirect religious discrimination’, which is a consequence of unexamined practices or procedures.
- ‘Institutional religionism’ (see p. 13), which combines a range of factors into a mutually reinforcing environment.

Within such an approach, **religious prejudice** is something that is fundamentally attitudinal. It may not of itself result in discriminatory actions, but it can certainly wound individuals, and can form a basis for exclusion. As with racial prejudice, religious prejudice can translate into behaviour that is **direct discrimination**. Direct religious discrimination is, of course, something that is now legally defined in England, Wales and Scotland as ‘the less favourable treatment of a person compared with another person because of a protected characteristic’ (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011). It can also result in **indirect discrimination** through:

The use of an apparently neutral practice, provision or criterion which puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage compared with others who do not share that characteristic, and applying the practice, provision or criterion cannot be objectively justified. (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011)

Attitudes of religious prejudice, when intense, can spill over into manifestations of **religious hatred** that can result in intimidatory and violent behaviour on the grounds of religion. Religious hatred can also be related to harassment on grounds of religion.

As a result either of historical factors alone, or of historical factors underpinned by specific constitutional, legal and social relationships, a number of privileged alignments exist between a particular religious group or groups, the state, the law and various social institutions (Madeley and Enyedi, 2003). Such religions have traditions of historical presence and rights of access that are not available in the same way to other religious groups. Factors of this kind, as well as particular political and legal interpretations and applications of the contested concept of ‘secularism’ (see research by David Lehmann and Humeira Iqtidat in Appendix 7), can impact significantly upon the possibilities of social inclusion that are open to religious minorities (Weller, 2005) and result in what might be called **religious disadvantage**.

In Wales (as in Northern Ireland), there is no established Church, the Anglican Church in Wales having been disestablished in 1920 (Bell, 1969). In Scotland, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland is sometimes also spoken of as an established Church, although aspects of its relationship with the state differ significantly from the current form of establishment of the Church of England and so others prefer to call it a national Church (Bisset, 1986; Hunter and Mackie, 1986). In relation to the Church of England, despite the existence of the General Synod, Parliament has ultimate powers with regard to church legislation, while 26 of its bishops sit within the current composition of the House of Lords (Cranmer, Lucas and Morris, 2006; Morris, 2008).

Religious disadvantage can also be understood by analogy to social disadvantage. Such disadvantage can be understood as occurring when a particular group or groups of people considered in relation to their religious identification are in a disadvantageous position relative to those of other religions in terms of measurable factors such as employment, housing, education and other similar factors.

Finally, there is what the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project called **institutional religionism**. This admittedly somewhat inelegant phrase was an attempt to describe the endemic, structurally embedded, complex and systematically combined aspects of two or more of the above dimensions of religious discrimination. The phrase was coined by analogy with the Macpherson Report's report's identification of how what it called institutional racism took root in the Metropolitan Police (Home Office, 1999).

Common to all these six dimensions is an approach to religious discrimination in terms of 'unfair treatment on the basis of religion'. The notion of fairness is important here, in the sense that what is deficient is not an impossible to achieve abstract position of mathematical equality, but a sense and expression of basic equity. It should also be emphasised that this approach differs from strict legal definitions.

### 2.3 Quantitative evidence

Purdam, Afkhami, Crockett, and Olsen (2007), who examined equality statistics and evidence gaps in religion, highlight that a number of key surveys conducted in the UK (such as the Census or the British Social Attitudes Survey) ask about religious identity, but not specifically about religious discrimination. However, two (then) ongoing surveys, the British Crime Survey and the Citizenship Survey (see Appendix 4 on the latter) and two ad hoc surveys, the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales Survey and the Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey, did include questions and data more directly concerned with religious discrimination.

In addition, three other multi-country surveys include questions and data of relevance to religious discrimination in the UK, are: the European Social Study (also known as the European Values Survey (EVS)) (see Appendix 5), Eurobarometer research and the World Values Survey. The Eurobarometer (see Appendix 6) is research undertaken across the European Union on a range of topics across the member states of the Union, including the UK. This research includes a number of Special Eurobarometers which have focused on discrimination and equality within and across the member states, including religious discrimination. However, unlike the EVS, its results are not broken down into those for Great Britain and those for Northern

Ireland. Since the research has been undertaken across a number of years, its findings are examined in Chapter 3.

The current Religion and Belief, Discrimination and Equality project will generate quantitative data for direct comparison with the 1999-2001 research findings as well as some new results relating to the social and legislative contexts of the past decade. Specifically it will research the position of those of 'no religion', an important gap in the evidence noted by Woodhead with Catto (2009: 32) and especially necessary since the legislative and policy framework for dealing with religious discrimination is now one that needs to address 'religion or belief' and not religion alone.

#### **2.4 Disadvantage in which religion may be a factor**

In 2006, the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) published a report entitled *Review of the Evidence Base on Faith Communities* (Beckford, Gale, Peach, Owen and Weller, 2006). This reviewed evidence over the previous 10 years relating to Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in relation to a range of ODPM areas of policy and practice (see Appendix 3). The focus of this review was much broader than matters of religious discrimination and, unlike the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project, it was able to draw on data from the 2001 Census, the first to include questions of religious affiliation. Within this analysis of the Census, data on religious affiliation in relation, for example, to data on employment tended to support the findings of the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project that Muslims may disproportionately experience unfair treatment related to religion. Some of the key findings of the ODPM report relating to employment included that:

Nearly 18 per cent of Muslims aged 16 to 24 were unemployed and nearly 14 per cent of those aged 25 and above. By contrast, for Hindus aged 16 to 24 and those aged 25 and over, the unemployment rates were, respectively, 7 per cent and 5 per cent. Among males aged 25 and above in England, at 42 per cent, Muslims have the lowest proportion of men in the four white-collar major groups of the year 2000 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) – in other words among managers and senior officials, professionals, associate professionals and technical occupations, and administrative and secretarial occupations. This compares with the overall England average of 50 per cent, while 63 per cent of Hindu males and 80 per cent of Jewish males are in these occupations. By contrast, 34 per cent of Muslim men in England work in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations compared with 18 per cent of Hindu men and 31 per cent of Sikh men.

(Weller, 2010: 908-09)

After examining other data relating to health and illness, education and housing, the report concluded that:

Our studies found that Census data reveals that Muslim people are particularly vulnerable in terms of unemployment, life-limiting long-term illness, educational levels, and housing conditions.

(Beckford et al., 2006: 38)

Moreover, while underlining that comparatively more research is still needed in relation to issues that may specifically affect Hindus and Sikhs, the authors nevertheless concluded that:

In aggregate, Muslims are more likely than Sikhs and Hindus to be disadvantaged. They display low rates of labour market participation, the highest male unemployment rate, larger families, a higher percentage in social housing, the highest incidence of over-crowding and are most likely to live in deprived localities. The percentage with higher educational qualifications is low and the percentage working in blue-collar occupations is high.

(Beckford et al, 2006: 10)

At the same time, the report noted the difficulties in drawing from such data, definite **conclusions** about religion as a ground of discrimination, even where data appear to show clear disadvantage relative to other groups. The issue of causality and possible intersectionality and weighting of multiple factors in contributing to disadvantage is a complex one. While religious identity, believing and belonging are of great importance, it is likely that other factors also play a part. Thus, in relation to causality, the report notes with regard to religious, social and economic factors that:

The relative disadvantage of Muslim people also has multiple causes. Among them are a predominantly rural peasant background in the sending areas of Azad (Pakistani) Kashmir and Bangladesh of first generation migrants, poor educational levels, geographical concentrations in English regions of industrial decline and location in areas of multiple deprivation.

(Beckford et al., 2006: 16).

Similarly, with regard to intersectionality, the authors argue that:

Gender issues seem to play a significant part in differentiating the socio-economic outcomes of South Asian components of the Muslim population

from those of the Sikhs with whom they share educational and occupational similarities.  
(Beckford et al., 2006: 16).

Thus the report underlined that it is as important not to reduce all other possible factors to those of religion as it is not to collapse religion into the categories of ethnicity, culture and social class. This is confirmed by Li, Devine and Heath's (2008) research review and analysis of *Equality Group Inequalities in Education, Employment and Earnings* which drew on the General Household Survey (GHS, 1996/97, 2004/05); the Labour Force Survey (LFS, 1996/07, 2004/05); the Home Office Citizenship Survey (HOCS, 2003, 2005); and the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS, 2005). Using 'descriptive and bivariate analysis as well as more complex statistical modelling for multivariate analysis' (Li et al., 2008: iii), the report noted that 'the reported rates for ethnicity, religion and disability groups indicate considerable perceived disadvantage' (Li et al., 2008: 54). It noted that 'religion plays an important role in people's socio-economic life' and that both men and women 'of minority religious identities, particularly Muslim, Hindu and Sikh groups, are much more likely to face unfair treatment in the labour market'. However, after controlling for ethnicity and other socio-economic factors, the authors concluded that:

...religion itself does not entail significant levels of reported discrimination... It is ethnicity – rather (or more) than religion – which acts as a visible and ready conduit for disadvantage and perceived discrimination.  
(Li et al., 2008: 67).

Also relevant is research by Johnston, Sirkeci, Khattab, and Modood (2010) that discusses ethno-religious background as a determinant of educational and occupational attainment in Britain and suggests that, when skin colour and belonging to a religious minority are combined, religion can be significant in disadvantage.

## **2.5 The importance of religion for those who identify with it**

In the EVS, conducted in Great Britain during 1999, a question was asked about the importance of religion (and other factors) to a respondent's life. The results for GB and the full sample of 32 countries are examined in Table 2.1.

<b>Table 2.1: Perceived importance of religion to an individual, 1999</b>					
	<b>Per cent:</b>				
	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Base</b>
GB	12.6	24.8	33.0	29.7	977
All countries	20.9	29.8	28.9	20.5	n/a
Notes:	Responses based on European Values Survey, Question 1_F. The GB results are included with the 'all' figure for 32 countries.				
Source:	Halman (2001: 12)				

This indicates that, even where the respondents in some way identify with religion (for example, in Question 28 (Halman, 2001: 81) where 41.6 per cent from Britain agreed that they were 'a religious person'), religion was either 'not important' or 'not at all important' for a majority of the respondents. But the fact that, as shown in Table 2.1, for 37.4 per cent of respondents in Britain, religion was either 'important' or 'very important' is consistent with other research that shows that religion retains an importance in the lives of a large number of people. This is necessary for understanding the significance of religious discrimination when it occurs.

The EVS also asked whether, if a nurse was asked to help perform a legal abortion, she should be allowed to refuse, on religious grounds, a question that has a bearing on debates around religiously related 'exemptions' in relation to other legislation (Table 2.2).

Here, the data suggest that – at least in relation to the highly charged issue of abortion – there is quite wide support (and stronger than in the other survey countries) for people not being required in their professional life to act contrary to their religious conscience.

<b>Table 2.2: A nurse should have the right to refuse a legal abortion on religious grounds, 1999</b>						
	<b>Per cent:</b>					
	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Base</b>
GB	25.8	42.1	17.6	10.5	3.9	921
All	25.6	34.1	13.8	16.4	10.0	n/a
Notes:	Responses based on European Values Survey, Question 1_F. The 'all' figure includes the responses from GB.					
Source:	Halman (2001: 108)					

## 2.6 Evidence on religious prejudice

Evidence relating to attitudinal prejudice in the UK includes a considerable amount of quantitative work undertaken on a European and/or European Union level. In the EVS, in response to a question, 'On this list are various groups of people. Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbours?', 6.1 per cent identified Jews in GB (12.1 per cent did so in the survey overall) and 13.6 per cent identified Muslims (19.7 per cent did so overall) (Halman, 2001: 40, 43).

Bearing in mind that both among Jews and in the perception of those other than Jews that 'Jewishness' can be understood as both an ethnic and a religious category (Webber, 1994), and in addition that the vast majority of Muslims in European countries are also from ethnic minority backgrounds, the question of the intersectionality of potentially salient factors is once again raised. However, given that neither Jews nor Muslims exist in the abstract but are present in concrete ways, the responses to this question from Britain suggest quite large absolute numbers of the population may hold views that are at least inflected by religious prejudice on the question of who they would not wish to have as neighbours. However, in both cases, a smaller proportion of respondents express this position as compared with the proportion of the population when considered across all the countries surveyed.

From 2007, and continuing into 2008-09, the Network of European Foundations carried out the Initiative on Religion and Democracy in Europe. A report on the Initiative entitled *Religion and Prejudice in Europe* (Küpper and Zick, 2010) was based on the responses from eight European countries including Britain about attitudes to Jews and Muslims (as well as to a variety of other groups). In the report, which presents new findings of 'the extent of individual religiousness and prejudice towards other groups', the authors pointed out that they had avoided using legal definitions of discrimination and they understood religious prejudice to mean 'the negative evaluation of people and groups because of their group membership' (Küpper and Zick, 2010: 13).

The authors identify a syndrome they term 'Group-focused Enmity', according to which:

...different types of prejudice are interrelated in a stable structure over a period of time, even though the acceptability of different types of prejudice can vary across time, cultures and individuals.  
(Küpper and Zick, 2010: 27)

The authors conclude that in Europe, Christian religions ‘typically hold rather more prejudiced views towards a number of groups’, such as Jews and Muslims (Küpper and Zick, 2010: 10). However, they are also very careful to explain that Christians predominated in their study because of the ‘predominantly Christian composition of Europe’ and therefore that:

We do not mean to imply that Christian Europeans are more drawn to a general ideology of inequality than others; it is important to note that we simply do not have sufficient data to report on attitudes of individuals from other religious groups.

(Küpper and Zick, 2010: 10)

Lest their findings about religion more generally also be misinterpreted, they additionally explain that:

Religiousness is certainly not the most relevant or strongest explanatory factor for Group-focused Enmity, but it is not the least important either: it has additional explanatory power alongside other factors.

(Küpper and Zick , 2010: 12)

These results are supported by other previous studies in the field including by Hunsberger and Jackson (2005). Two projects within the Religion & Society Research Programme are also addressing the issue of discrimination by religious groups and individuals (see Appendix 7). A project led by Robert Jackson is investigating whether faith schools produce less tolerant citizens than community colleges in the UK through an examination of the attitudes towards diversity among young people in different kinds of educational institutions. Similarly, Robert Hoffmann and colleagues are using game theory to investigate trust and lack of trust between people of different religions and none.

Finally, of note is also Eleanor Nesbitt’s ongoing work (see Appendix 7) on ‘Negative Stereotyping in South Asian Communities’, which is based on extensive research among Punjabi and Gujarati communities in the UK and has ‘recurrently discerned caste as a persistent factor in cultural transmission and so in inter-group relations’.

## **2.7 Evidence on the relationship between ‘protected characteristics’**

In addition to evidence about religious prejudice, there is also recent and current ongoing work that deals with complex inter-relationships between different ‘protected characteristics’ and the intersecting of various grounds for discrimination.

It has been with regard to the relationship between religion or belief and sexual orientation where tensions have emerged in a particularly acute way, and especially in relation to the law. As part of the Religion and Belief, Discrimination and Equality project, doctoral research (see Appendix 7) is under way by Lisa Taylor-Clarke on 'Religious Freedom, Sexual Orientation and Church-Related Adoption Agencies'.

Gill Valentine has undertaken a range of work, including with Stonewall, seeking to understand and delineate 'Religious Attitudes Towards Homosexuality' (see also Appendix 7). A recent article (Vanderbeck., Valentine, Ward, Sadgrove and Andersson, 2010) examined the nature of the purported 'crisis' from the perspectives of Anglicans in local parishes in three different national contexts: England, South Africa and the United States. Key themes include the divergent ways in which respondents felt (and did not feel) connections to the spatially distant 'others' with whom they are in Communion; the complex relationships and discordances between parish, denominational, and Communion-level identities; and competing visions of the role of the Communion in producing unity or preserving diversity among Anglicans (see the entry on 'Sexuality and Global Faith Networks' in Appendix 7).

In another edited work (Browne, Munt and Yip, 2010), *Queer Spiritual Spaces: Sexuality and Sacred Places*, the authors drew on empirical research from the UK, Canada and the United States to investigate the contemporary socio-cultural practices of belief by those who have historically been, and continue to be, excluded or derided by mainstream religions and alternative spiritualities.

A 2009-11 study by the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University (Yip, Keenan and Page, 2011) on *Religion, Youth and Sexuality* set out to explore the lives and identities of religious young adults, aged between 18 and 25, from Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. The study found that young adults were creating sexual ethics that were informed by their religious faith and that their sexuality informed the ways they understood their religious faith and belonging. It also found that a majority of young people believed that religious leaders did not know enough about sexuality - particularly youth sexuality - while others considered that institutional religion excessively regulated gender and sexual behaviour, without sufficient engagement with young people themselves. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender participants revealed that there were psychological and social costs to living their everyday lives, particularly within religious communities (see also Appendix 7).

## **2.8 Research on religion, discrimination and equality in specific sectors**

As time goes on, research is being undertaken that might better illuminate the nature and extent of religious discrimination in specific sectors of society. One example of this is a cluster of current research activity that has been taking place in relation to higher education. Until recently, following Sophie Gilliat-Ray's (2000) landmark study on *Religion in Higher Education: The Politics of the Multi-Faith Campus*, in comparison with schools higher education had been under-researched in relation to religious discrimination and equality.

Within the Religion & Society Research Programme, Matthew Guest and colleagues are currently conducting research on 'Christianity and the University Experience in Contemporary England' (see Appendix 7). The results of this study could contribute to emergent discussion (see section 3.8 below) about Christians and religious discrimination. The study aims to paint a picture of Christianity on the university campus, including the beliefs and values of Christians when compared with non-Christians, the convictions they bring with them to university and those they take from the university context, and how religious identities are affected by experiences of teaching, learning and involvement in social networks.

More religiously inclusive studies include research by Adam Dinham and Stephen Jones (2010a, 2010b, 2010c) as part of the Higher Education Funding Council for England's Religious Literacy Leadership in Higher Education programme (see [www.religiouliteracyHE.org](http://www.religiouliteracyHE.org)). In addition, Paul Weller and colleagues are currently completing research for the Equality Challenge Unit on 'Religion and Belief in Higher Education: Researching the Experiences of Staff and Students in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland'. This research, the results of which will be published in summer 2011, includes specific research questions on religious discrimination and harassment, as well as on accommodation of religion or belief and good relations on campus (see Appendix 7). It is likely therefore, that the combination of the results of these two projects might contribute significantly to understanding of these issues in higher education.

## **2.9 Summary**

This chapter discussed some of the contested meanings associated with, and attributed to the terminology of 'religious discrimination'.

Comparatively little quantitative research has been undertaken in the UK on religious discrimination here. At the same time, there are a number of European surveys that do ask such questions at a multi-country level and include questions and data of relevance to religious discrimination in the UK and/or to Britain.

Much of both the quantitative and qualitative research that has been conducted in relation to religious discrimination has, more precisely, addressed the perception or reported experience of religious discrimination and these meanings may be different to legal definitions of discrimination.

From the perspective of those who report religious discrimination, their subjective experience is very relevant so that suspicion of their reported experience can lead to anguish among those who seek to articulate it to a wider audience, further compounding the pain of the original experience.

After considering these issues, this report arrived at a working definition for the dimensions of religious discrimination that have been taken as being within the scope of the evidence reviewed in this chapter and in the remainder of the report. This includes 'unfair treatment' as manifested through the reported experience of:

- religious prejudice;
- religious hatred;
- religious disadvantage;
- direct religious discrimination;
- indirect religious discrimination; and
- institutional religionism.

### 3. Religious discrimination: increasing or decreasing?

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines whether there is research evidence that might inform a judgment about whether religious discrimination is increasing or decreasing. One of the aims of the current Religion and Belief, Discrimination and Equality project is to enable a fairly close comparison to be made between its results and those from the first Religious Discrimination in England and Wales project. However, as previously noted, this project will not be completed until the end of 2012 and beyond some provisional findings, the final published results will not appear until 2013. Therefore this chapter will need to review other possible research evidence that may indicate broader trends of increase or decrease in religious discrimination.

In examining this, it is necessary to unpack what might be meant and/or understood by a potential **increase** or **decrease** in relation to religious discrimination. For example, it is in principle possible that while the **frequency** of such discrimination might have decreased, the **seriousness** of it could, at the same time, have increased, or vice versa. It is also possible that, on the basis of the kind of research evidence that currently exists, it may only be possible securely to speak of 'change' rather than of 'increase' or 'decrease'.

The possibility of such change includes what seems to have been the growth of at least concerns and claims about discrimination in relation to Christians. An important question is the extent to which sufficient research evidence on this issue exists and/or if it does exist, the extent to which such evidence supports or does not support such concerns and claims.

#### 3.2 Religious discrimination in the long view

Discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief is, of course, not a new phenomenon in Britain. It is therefore wise to spend at least a little time in setting the last decade within a broader historical context and not only of the immediately preceding years. This is because too much research that is contemporary in focus and certainly too much policymaking does not take the lessons of history seriously enough, particularly with reference to the place of religious minorities in social relations, law and public policy (see Weller, 2009: 184-85). It is therefore salient to note that for much of British history, there were attempts, in England and Wales, and in Scotland, to impose varying degrees of uniformity in the public profession of belief and in participation in religious worship in which the law was itself the medium and instrument of religious discrimination (see Robilliard, 1984).

The amelioration and eventual removal of most of the civil disabilities associated with this occurred only gradually (Jordan, 1932, 1936). For most of the 19th century, issues concerned with the civil and political rights and disabilities of Nonconformist (Larsen, 1999) and Roman Catholic Christians (Norman, 1968), Jews (Salbstein, 1982), Atheists, Humanists, Freethinkers and other groups outside the established religious traditions were at the forefront of social, religious and political debate. The removal in the 19th century of the majority of legally entrenched inequalities for religious minorities and non-believers came about in response to organised struggle and campaigning on the part of those who were affected by them (Larsen, 1999). Numerous bodies were formed which engaged in campaigning against religious privilege and civil disabilities. The legal academic St John Robilliard (1984: ix) identified the origins of the 19th-century movement for religious equality as being grounded initially in the 'struggle for existence' of those religious groups that were concerned with 'establishing an identity of their own', and then passing into the next phase of a 'struggle for equality'.

A key question arising is how far it might be helpful - albeit with changed social actors - to understand such history by way of continuity or contrast with the present. One of the main arguments about not taking discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief so seriously today runs along the lines that, while there may have been substantial unfair treatment in the 19th century, if such unfair treatment exists today, once the sectarian-related religious discrimination in Northern Ireland and Scotland has been excluded, what is now left is much less serious.

But it is at least arguable that, in contemporary Britain, as suggested by Robilliard, a renewed focus on religion as a ground of possible discrimination also began with 'the struggle for existence' and 'establishing an identity of their own' of religious groups of predominantly South Asian and migrant origin. As highlighted by The Satanic Verses (Weller, 2008) and Bhaktivedanta Manor (Nye, 2001) controversies, by the end of the 1980s, these groups were moving into a phase of a 'struggle for equality' as religious minority citizens. In doing so, they perceived themselves as encountering obstacles relating to the manifestation of their religious convictions and identities.

### **3.3 Evidence from the 1990s**

#### ***Commission for Racial Equality***

Although the mandate of the former Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) did not, strictly speaking, extend to religion, following the publication of its *Second Review of the Race Relations Act, 1976* in which it had argued that, 'a law against religious discrimination should be given serious consideration' (CRE, 1992), the CRE tried to collect evidence of cases of religious discrimination from 1992 onwards. In 1994,

it conducted a survey of 2,047 agencies dealing with complaints of religious discrimination, including Race Equality Councils, solicitors, Law Centres, Citizens Advice Bureaux, academics and religious organisations. The response to the survey was low and the CRE subsequently commented that, '...specific information was received about 38 cases of alleged religious discrimination'. However, in the same paper, the CRE also noted that: 'This was not surprising given the lack of monitoring by all the agencies surveyed, and also the lack of any direct legislation on the issue' (reported in Weller, 2006: 305).

In late 1996, the CRE carried out a consultation exercise with religious communities around Britain to explore the scope of the current Race Relations legislation and to debate whether the law needed amendment to make discrimination on the grounds of religion unlawful. It concluded that: 'Neither the consultation nor previous surveys have provided significant new evidence of religious discrimination which is outside the scope of the Race Relations Act.' At the same time, as before, the CRE noted that some held the view that '...because of the absence of an agency with a clear remit for discrimination on religious grounds, very few people are inclined to bring forward their perceived grievances and complaints of religious discrimination' and concluded that: 'The overwhelming majority of those who participated in the consultation believed there was a need for legislation outlawing religious discrimination' (reported in Weller, 2006: 305).

This consultation work was followed by the CRE's production of a leaflet in 1997, *Religious Discrimination: Your Rights*, which outlined, under the terms of the Race Relations Act, ways in which unfair treatment on the basis of religion could be addressed as 'indirect racial discrimination' (reported in Weller, 2006: 305). Meanwhile, the Inner Cities' Religious Council (ICRC), which brought together representatives of a range of religious communities under the auspices of the then Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions to work on urban regeneration, has issued both a leaflet and booklet entitled *Challenging Religious Discrimination: A Guide for Faith Communities and Their Advisers* (ICRC, 1996). These leaflets and booklets from the CRE and the ICRC addressed the areas of housing, education, immigration, prison, police, employment, state benefits, health, home life and transport. They showed the scope and the limitations of race relations legislation when people felt discriminated against on account of their religion.

### ***Work from The Runnymede Trust***

During the 1990s, The Runnymede Trust produced two reports that particularly highlighted the importance of religion as a factor in 'unfair treatment'. The Trust's report, *A Very Light Sleeper: The Persistence and Dangers of Antisemitism*

(Runnymede Commission on Antisemitism, 1994) addressed antisemitism and anti-Jewish attitudes and argued that they should not be underestimated. But of more substantial impact – including the dissemination of the at that point relatively new terminology of Islamophobia which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 – was the Trust's report on *Islamophobia: A Challenge for us All* (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, 1997) and its follow-up reports (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, 2001, 2004).

### ***Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project***

The postal survey in the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project included a question to individual respondents from the organisations surveyed about their perception of whether, in the past five years, problems of ignorance, indifference, hostility, verbal abuse, physical abuse, damage to property, policies of organisations, practices of organisations and general coverage in the media had become 'more or less frequent', being presented with the options of 'more frequent', 'less frequent', 'stayed the same' or 'don't know'. In general, there was a fairly clear differentiation of response from among the religious traditions surveyed, running from those who thought things were generally getting worse to those who detected improvements in every area.

Muslim respondents were the most likely to think that problems had grown worse. In this connection it is perhaps important to note that the research was conducted before 11 September 2001. Even so, the majority of Muslim respondents thought hostility, verbal abuse and unfair media coverage had all become more frequent. Views on indifference, and organisational policy and practice were fairly evenly divided. For other problems, those who thought unfair treatment was becoming more frequent consistently outnumbered those thinking it was becoming less so.

A consistently higher level of unfair treatment was reported by Muslim organisations than by most other religious groups, both in terms of the proportion of respondents indicating that some unfair treatment was experienced, and by the proportion indicating that these experiences were frequent rather than occasional. The majority of Muslim organisations reported that their members experienced unfair treatment in every aspect of education, employment, housing, law and order, and in all the local government services covered in the questionnaire.

Hindu, and especially Sikh, organisations also reported a relatively high level of unfair treatment and tended to highlight the same areas of concern as Muslim organisations.

Christian organisations in the survey were generally much less likely to report unfair treatment than Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, and nearly all the unfairness they reported was ‘occasional’ rather than frequent. However, black-led Christian organisations and those representing groups such as Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses were much more likely to report unfair treatment in nearly all walks of life than organisations in what are often seen as the ‘mainstream’ Christian traditions. In the local interviews, such groups often described overt hostility similar to that experienced by some of the non-Christian minorities.

Pagans and people from ‘New Religious Movements’ also complained of open hostility and discrimination, and of being labelled as ‘child abusers’ and ‘cults’, particularly by the media (Weller et al., 2001: vi-vii).

Since that time there have, of course, been additional major developments in both domestic and international contexts that have had a substantial bearing upon the position of Muslims in British society. These events and some of the key research evidence relating to their impact for the nature and extent religious discrimination specifically with regard to Muslims will be outlined and discussed in Chapter 5, while this chapter focuses on more generic evidence in relation to the increase or decrease of religious discrimination.

### 3.4 Evidence over the last decade: Eurobarometer research

The Eurobarometer research (further details of which can be found in Appendix 6) on public opinion in and across member states of the European Union (EU) includes a number of special reports. In 2007, 2008 and 2009, these included reports of research on discrimination. The 2008 and 2009 reports were based on research conducted in those years while the 2007 report was based on research undertaken in 2006. Table 3.1 reports the findings from these three Eurobarometer reports, in relation to discrimination on the grounds of religion or (what the report describes as) ‘beliefs’:

	Per cent:		Base:	
	UK	EU-27	UK	EU-27
2006	57	44	1,313	26,822
2008	56	42	1,306	26,746
2009	45	39	1,317	26,756
Notes:	EU data for 2006 are for EU-25; for 2008 and 2009, they are for EU-27.			
Source:	TNS Opinion and Social, 2007: 68; 2008: 66; 2009: 100.			

No explanation is offered in the 2009 report for the apparently quite substantial reduction of respondents reporting that discrimination on grounds of religion or belief was widespread, as compared with the previous two surveys. Once the results for the next report are available, it will be interesting to see if this reduction was a one-off result or is either sustained or continued. One possible explanation could be that, as compared with the 2007 and 2008 reports, the 2009 responses could reflect a greater distance in both time and public reaction to the events of the Madrid railway bombing in Spain, the London Transport attacks in the UK, and the killing of Theo van Gogh in Netherlands.

Table 3.2 presents data on the proportion of respondents who affirmed that they had personally felt discriminated against or harassed on the basis of religion or belief.

<b>Table 3.2: Respondents experiencing discrimination or harassment on grounds of religion or belief, 2008-09</b>				
	<b>Per cent:</b>		<b>Base:</b>	
	UK	EU	UK	EU
2008	2	2	1,306	26,746
2009	2	1	1,317	26,756
Notes:	EU data are for EU-27.			
Source:	TNS Opinion and Social, 2008: 70, responses to question A3; 2009: 105; responses to question E3.			

This serves as a reminder that it is possible that there could be a discrepancy between the general perception of (on religious and other grounds) discrimination in society and personal experience of it. It is possible that this relatively low percentage may be a function of the sample relative to the majority and minority populations of the UK and the EU, since the Eurobarometer surveys do not appear to contain any kind of religious or ethnic 'booster'. At the same time, while the results of one per cent and two per cent are not high in percentage terms, if projected into absolute numbers in the UK or EU population as a whole they would represent a substantial number of individuals reporting personal experience of religious discrimination. It should also be noted that as indicated by Perfect (2011: 17), a higher proportion of respondents in the UK (five per cent had witnessed discrimination or harassment on these grounds than had actually experienced it.

Table 3.3 compares the findings on perceptions of discrimination for six protected groups in 2009. As on previous occasions, perceived discrimination was higher in the UK for other forms of discrimination than religion or beliefs; for example, in 2006, the

most common form of discrimination was 'ethnic-based discrimination' (68 per cent), compared with 57 per cent for religion or beliefs.

<b>Table 3.3: Perceptions of discrimination by protected group, UK and EU-27 countries, 2009</b>						
	<b>Per cent:</b>					
	<b>Age</b>	<b>Disability</b>	<b>Ethnic origin</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Religion or belief</b>	<b>Sexual orientation</b>
<i>UK</i>						
Widespread	61	50	58	43	45	40
Rare	33	43	35	50	47	48
Non-existent	1	1	1	1	1	1
Don't know	5	6	6	6	7	11
<i>Base</i>	1,317					
<i>EU-27</i>						
Widespread	58	53	61	40	39	47
Rare	37	41	32	53	53	43
Non-existent	2	2	3	3	4	3
Don't know	3	4	4	4	4	7
<i>Base</i>	26,756					
Notes:	The alternative options were 'rare' or 'don't know'. The non-existent figure is based on the spontaneous responses. The base numbers of respondents for each strand were the same.					
Source:	Perfect (2011, Table 17), citing TNS Opinion and Social (2009), Tables 1.1 to 1.6.					

All three reports also contained data relating to those respondents who have 'friends or acquaintances' who are 'of different religion or have different beliefs than you' (Table 3.4). These data are of relevance to the context for religious discrimination and the Equality and Human Rights Commission's remit for 'good relations'.

<b>Table 3.4: Respondents having friends or acquaintances of a different religion or with different beliefs, 2006-09</b>				
	<b>Per cent:</b>		<b>Base:</b>	
	UK	EU	UK	EU
2006	82	62	1,313	26,822
2008	77	61	1,306	26,746
2009	79	64	1,317	26,756
Notes: EU data for 2006 are for EU-25; for 2008 and 2009, they are for EU-27.				
Source: TNS Opinion and Social, 2007, 7; 2008: responses to question D47.5; 2009: responses to question E16.5.				

The 2008 research also examined the question of ‘how you would personally feel about... Having a person with a different religion or belief than yours as a neighbour’, an issue of relevance to the Commission’s remit for ‘good relations’; the general context for religious discrimination; and the question of religious prejudice. The question was asked on a scale from one to 10 (where one would be ‘very uncomfortable’ and 10 would be ‘totally comfortable’). On this question, the average UK score was 9.5 (compared with 8.5 in the EU27). The reports in 2007 and 2008 also asked about whether respondents were in favour of or opposed to anti-discrimination measures in the field of employment in so far as these relate to religion.

<b>Table 3.5: Respondents’ views of anti-discrimination measures in employment relating to religion, 2006-09</b>						
	<b>Per cent:</b>				<b>Base:</b>	
	UK		EU		UK	EU
	Favour	Opposed	Favour	Opposed		
2006	70	23	70	23	1,313	26,822
2008	76	20	70	24	1,306	26,746
2009	72	20	67	25	1,317	26,756
Notes: EU data for 2006 are for EU-25; for 2008 and 2009, they are for EU-27. The question wording in 2008 was slightly different from that in 2006 and 2009.						
Source: TNS Opinion and Social, 2007: responses to question A9.4; 2008: responses to question A9.4; 2009: responses to question E7.5						

### 3.5 Evidence over the last decade: Citizenship Survey

In 2003, 2005, 2007-08 and 2008-09, the Citizenship Survey (which covers England and Wales alone) asked participants for their perceptions about why they had been refused a job and promotion or progression of grounds on religion or belief (Table 3.6). Muslims were more likely than other groups in 2008-09 to perceive that they

had been refused a job (five per cent) and promotion (four per cent) on grounds of religion or belief (Ferguson and Hussey, 2010: 84).

<b>Table 3.6: Perceptions of being refused a job or promotion/progression on grounds of religion or belief, 2003-08</b>				
	<b>Per cent:</b>			
	Refused a job		Refused promotion or progression	
	All	Base	All	Base
2003	1	909	1	557
2005	2	844	2	497
2007-08	1	913	3	497
2008-09	*	6,000	*	5,813
Notes:	* Less than 0.5 per cent			
Source:	Ferguson, Finch and Turczuk (2009), Table 88; Ferguson and Hussey (2010), Table 90.			

### **3.6 Evidence over the last decade: Employment Tribunals**

The number of Employment Tribunal cases in Great Britain concerned with religion or belief and that were accepted for consideration may provide some indicative evidence of change in relation to religious discrimination (Table 3.7).

<b>Table 3.7: Number of Employment Tribunal cases on religion or belief, 2003-04 to 2009-10</b>							
	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Cases accepted	70	307	486	648	709	832	1,000
Cases dealt with	n/a	n/a	340	498	608	620	760
Notes:	Tribunal cases relating to religion or belief were lower in 2003-04 as the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations did not come into force until December 2003. 2009-10 data were rounded in the source.						
Source:	Employment Tribunals Service, 2006, 2007 and 2008, Tables 1 and 2; Ministry of Justice, 2009 and 2010, Tables 1 and 2.						

However, in 2009-10, only two per cent of the 760 Tribunal cases concerning religion or belief that were disposed were successful, thus underlining that there is a substantial difference between those instances in which the tribunal system sees sufficient prima facie evidence to accept consideration of a claim for religious discrimination and a determination within the law that such discrimination has taken place. At the same time, it should be noted that the success rate for all types of equality is very low; in 2009-10, the highest success rate was in relation to sexual orientation at five per cent (see Perfect, 2011: 18).

### **3.7 Legal developments and the courts**

Woodhead (2011: 2) points out in relation to research related to religious discrimination that: 'In terms of volume, the amount of work by scholars in Law is particularly notable.' Indeed, from the beginning of the period under review, Bradney (2001) had already set out to explore new research agendas for the study of law and religion, including in relation to religious discrimination. These agendas have since been developed – in parallel to the developments in European and UK law and jurisprudence relating to discrimination and human rights on grounds of religion or belief – by many scholars working in law and religion.

In relation to specific cases in Britain there are a number of key websites and databases that track developments and cases in relation to religion and the law. These include Neil Addison's Religion Law website (see Appendix 7 and also his own website at: [www.neiladdison.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/religionlaw.co.uk/](http://www.neiladdison.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/religionlaw.co.uk/)). In addition there is (see also Appendix 7) the Law and Religion Scholars Network Database run by the Cardiff Law School at Cardiff University ([www.law.cf.ac.uk/clr/networks/lrsn09.html](http://www.law.cf.ac.uk/clr/networks/lrsn09.html)).

In relation to what Woodhead (2011: 3) calls the 'emerging patterns' of court and Tribunal consideration of matters relating to religious discrimination - and especially its relationship with other equality and diversity matters - Woodhead's survey points out that:

There is a growing perception that the intended or unintended effect of such legislation is to create a variable geometry in the relationship between citizen and law, whereby some groups (conservative religious ones) enjoy minimal legal protections, others (say women or homosexuals) maximal ones.  
(Woodhead, 2011: 3)

### **3.8 Christians and religious discrimination: changing parameters?**

One of the features of the decade that is under review has been the degree to which claims have started to emerge of 'religious discrimination' in relation to Christians. In relation to this, Woodhead with Catto (2009: 16) state that the '...nature and extent of discrimination against the majority religion (Christianity) has not yet been studied'. In its absoluteness, this was not quite an accurate statement given that Christian organisations were already included in the postal questionnaire survey of the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project, while Christian individuals and groups were also included in its field research. Already in the project

were initial signs of concern among Christian respondents to the survey, which included 'soundbite' quotes such as:

- 'secular governments would love to ethnicise religious groups';
- 'bias of government towards minorities';
- 'there are different dynamics at work for minorities and whites'; and
- 'ethnic and racial discrimination is not connected to religious discrimination'.

In relation to the media, in the project fieldwork a member of an 'independent' Christian congregation stated that he was:

...astonished by the false picture so often painted by the media of Christians and even Jesus, whose name is often used blasphemously... Everyone is allowed to spout their news, but people are affronted when you start talking about being Christian. It's one thing if they don't want to know about it, but when you get to the point where people are gagging every time something about Christianity is mentioned, you have a problem.

(Weller et al., 2001: 91)

Despite the long association between Christianity and the education system in England and Wales, a number of interviewees referred to particular difficulties still encountered by Christian schoolchildren. It was noted that where schools had made efforts to respond to religious diversity, Christians could sometimes feel that their religion was being pushed aside or trivialised by comparison with the coverage of other religions (Weller et al., 2001: 30). A Jehovah's Witness interviewee concluded that there were particular and marked problems experienced by smaller religious groups that are often perceived as being less 'mainstream', but that even pupils within 'mainstream Christianity' can have difficulties within the education system, on the basis that: 'Anyone with a strong identity as a faith, even within Christianity, has trouble' (Weller et al., 2001: 28).

In fact, as early as 1999, the London Bible College had already produced *The Westphobia Report: Anti-Western and Anti-Christian Stereotyping in British Muslim Publications* (London Bible College, 1999). But by the second part of the last decade, a range of Christian organisations had begun both researching and campaigning on claimed discrimination against Christians. A summary of the kind of examples

frequently being cited can be found in the Christian Institute's (2009) report entitled *Marginalising Christians: Instances of Christians Being Sidelined in Modern Britain.*, while a report (Boucher, 2010) produced for Christian Action Research and Education pressed these issues, especially in relation to other proposed 'protected characteristics' in a report that sought to stimulate and contribute to debate on what the report's subtitle termed the 'opportunities and challenges presented by the Equality Bill, 2009-2010'.

Many of these developments relate to claims that are being made in relation to white Christians from 'mainstream' Christian traditions. However, as in the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales project, there are also aspects that overlap with ethnicity and this now not only in relation to Christians of African and/or African Caribbean ethnicity, but also in relation to the experience of new European migrants. Thus, for example, within the Religion & Society Research Programme, Pete Ward and Sarah Dunlop (see Appendix 7) conducted a small project on 'Polish Migrants to Britain, Religion and Visual Culture', which uncovered evidence of a considerable amount of discrimination in which religion was a dimension but where, together with kinship ties, it was also a key means for overcoming such discrimination.

### **3.9 Antisemitism in the 2000s**

As noted in section 3.3, the Runnymede Commission report, *A Very Light Sleeper*, examined the persistence and dangers of antisemitism in the 1990s.

Approaches to the relationships between antisemitism, anti-Judaism and more general understandings of discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity and/or of religion have been complex and sometimes contested. Historically, a strain of anti-Judaism was found in substantial parts of the Western Christian tradition, while in modern times this became compounded by 'racial' constructs and conspiracy theories about Jews. Each of these have, to varying extents, informed contemporary manifestations of discrimination and hostility in relation to Jewish people (Almog, 1988; Fineberg, Samuels and Weitzman, 2007).

The Community Security Trust (CST) - an organisation which, as its name suggests, is itself based in the Jewish community – has, since, 1984 been the only organisation in the country dedicated to collecting, analysing, responding to and publishing statistics relating to antisemitic figures, has recorded antisemitic incidents in the UK.

As shown in Table 3.8, the number of antisemitic incidents has fluctuated since 2000 (peaking in 2009), but the general trend has been upwards and the 2010 figure was the second highest recorded since 1984 (CST, 2011: 10). Incidents are categorised

under six headings: extreme violence; assault; damage and desecration; threats; abusive behaviour, and literature. In each year, the highest percentage of incidents involved abusive behaviour, which accounted for 60 per cent of all incidents in 2010. These most commonly consisted of verbal abuse randomly directed at people who were visibly Jewish, usually because of their religious or traditional clothing, school uniform or jewellery bearing Jewish symbols (CST, 2011: 22). A further 18 per cent of incidents involved assault; 13 per cent, damage and desecration, and the remaining incidents either threats or literature. There were no incidents of extreme violence in 2010, although there had been three such incidents in 2009.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Incidents	405	310	350	375	532	459	598	561	546	926	639

Source: CST (2011): 35.

In 2005, the All Party Parliamentary Group against Antisemitism established the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism chaired by Dennis MacShane which reported in September 2006 (All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism, 2006). In line with the CST figures, the inquiry found that there had been a rise in antisemitism in the UK over recent years in terms of violence, desecration of property and intimidation directed towards Jews. It also reported on an increase in what it termed 'antisemitic discourse', the sources of contemporary antisemitism, antisemitism on campus and existing measures to combat it.

The inquiry's 35 recommendations for the government, parliament and civil society included improved reporting and recording of antisemitic attacks; a crackdown on anti-Jewish activity on university campuses, and improved international cooperation to prevent the spread of racist material online. The government has now issued three formal responses, most recently in December 2010 (Communities and Local Government, 2010). These cover five broad themes: antisemitic incidents; antisemitic discourse; sources of contemporary antisemitism; antisemitism on campus, and addressing antisemitism.

### **3.10 Summary**

In considering the evidence for whether religious discrimination might have increased or decreased in the decade under review, it is important to bear in mind that its frequency could increase without its seriousness doing so, or vice versa.

Since December 2003, when the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations came into force, the number of Tribunal cases to do with religion or belief has gradually increased. However, it is not clear how far this relates to increased frequency of claims of discrimination or to a greater awareness of potential legal remedies for such discrimination.

At present there is insufficient quantitative and time series data to enable secure comparisons to be made and trends to be established over time in relation to the question of whether religious discrimination in Britain is increasing or decreasing, taken as a whole.

There may well have been 'spikes' in the manifestation of some forms of religious discrimination and in relation to some groups, as in the wake of the 7/7 London Transport bombings, but this cannot in itself be taken as evidence of an established trend.

Finally, there is some emerging evidence that suggests the possibility of there being a changing pattern in relation to at least perceptions of religious discrimination and/or readiness to pursue potential issues of such discrimination in which Christians are increasingly highlighting examples and concerns.

## 4. Differences between England, Scotland and Wales

### 4.1 Introduction

One of the difficulties in relation to evidence on religious discrimination over the past decade arises from the differential focus of research with regard to the component parts of what the current author elsewhere calls the ‘four-nations-state’ (Weller, 2005) of the UK. As we have seen in Chapters 3 and 4, some research distinguishes between Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) and the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) while other research does not. Some research distinguishes between England and Wales and Scotland. Very little, if any research, really distinguishes between England and Wales.

### 4.2 Religious discrimination in Wales: anything distinctive?

Victoria Winckler’s (2009) edited report on *Equality Issues in Wales: A Research Review* confirms the difficulties involved in identifying research evidence on equality issues in general that is specific to Wales. She reported, with regard to both sexual orientation and religion or belief, that ‘there is almost no evidence’ relating specifically to Wales. In addition, Paul Chaney’s (2009) report for the Equality and Human Rights Commission on *Equal Opportunities and Human Rights: The First Decade of Devolution in Wales* does not highlight anything distinctive or specific with regard to Wales in relation to matters of religious discrimination.

Winckler’s report does, however, refer to what it calls ‘an interesting relationship between religion and ethnic origin’ (Winckler, 2009: 9). In relation to this, it cites a social audit by Lee (2007), to the effect that in 2001 two-thirds of the Muslim population was Asian (a lower proportion than in England), while nearly one in eight Muslims was White and almost half of Wales’ Muslims were UK born. Wales’ Muslims were also reported to be less likely to identify themselves as British or Welsh than the Christian population:

- 59 per cent of Muslims identified as British, compared with 98 per cent of Christians.
- 15 per cent of Muslim identified as Welsh, compared with 69 per cent of Christians.

As Lee showed, among 16-74 year olds, Muslims in Wales are shown to be much less likely (59 per cent) to be economically active compared with the population as a whole (75 per cent). Since Muslim men aged 25-74 are as likely to be economically active as all men in Wales (though those aged 16-24 have lower activity rates), as in

the ODPM report (Beckford et al, 2006: 16) covering England and Wales, the main reason for Muslims' low levels of economic activity was identified as being the very low level of participation by Muslim women. In Wales, just 33 per cent of Muslim women are economically active – less than half the female population.

The Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project included a range of religious organisations located in Wales within the sample for its postal questionnaire survey, while Cardiff was one of the project's four fieldwork locations. The one distinctive feature of 'religious discrimination' in relation to Wales that emerged was connected with anti-Catholicism. Thus, during the field research it was recorded that: 'A Roman Catholic Christian representative noted that in modern Welsh, terminology is used that is associated with the notion of "papist" and that this tends to denote "foreigner". He saw this as feeding into a prejudicial and continuing rhetoric that Catholics are not really loyal to the state' (Weller et al., 2001: 16).

This anti-Catholicism links with the potentially distinctive features of religious discrimination in Northern Ireland and in Scotland and the extent to which those features connect or otherwise with what is usually described as 'sectarianism'.

### **4.3 Sectarianism, religious discrimination and Scotland**

#### ***Religious discrimination in Scotland***

As has already been noted, some research data (and especially quantitative data) do not differentiate results for Scotland from either those for Britain or the United Kingdom as a whole. However, devolution has also brought the need for more Scottish-specific research to inform policy and practice on these matters in Scotland.

Recent research of relevance to religious discrimination in Scotland includes that by Peter Hopkins (see Appendix 7) on 'Muslim Male Youth in Scotland' which explored post-9/11 issues of discrimination and Islamophobia in Scotland, especially in relation to the strengthened sense of Scottish nationhood following devolution

#### ***Sectarianism in Scotland***

When looking at religious discrimination in Scotland, it is important to consider the research evidence relating to the validity and utility of the concept of sectarianism, including the extent to which the concept of sectarianism might overlap with, and/or be differentiated from, that of religious discrimination.

From time to time, journalistic and popular debate in Scotland, coupled with renewed discussion of policy options, flares up around the question of the existence and/or continuing salience of sectarianism. This often occurs in the wake of sporting events

such as the 'Old Firm' derby football matches between Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers, as in the 3 March 2011 brawl that developed involving players and club staff which some see as linked also with a subsequent violent attack (BBC, 2011b) as well as to a later series of parcel bombs and serious threats (BBC, 2011c) made against the manager of the Glasgow Celtic football club.

During the past decade, an academic dispute has also taken place in the pages of the journal *Ethnic and Racial Studies* and beyond, between those who want to emphasise the continuing salience of sectarianism in Scottish society and those who critique this. Patricia Walls and Rory Williams (2003) examined accounts of discrimination in employment against Irish Catholics in Glasgow from both majority and minority ethnic and religious perspectives. Based on interviews, their research revealed evidence of continuing experience of sectarian discrimination in work, in particular discriminatory practice affecting Catholic (Irish-descended) attempts to move up the social scale. Their findings were challenged by Steve Bruce and colleagues (Bruce, Glendinning, Paterson and Rosie, 2005) who criticised Walls and Williams for making inferences about religious discrimination in employment from interview data. On the basis of large-scale quantitative data from two surveys and the 2001 Census, they argued that sectarianism was more a social myth than a social reality. This provoked a further response by Walls and Williams (2005) who criticised Bruce et al. for misrepresenting their views and reaffirmed their original conclusions.

Two reviews carried out by the Scottish Executive (Nicholson, 2002; McAspurren, 2005) also explored the debate about sectarianism in Scotland. Nicholson suggested that there was very little research evidence on these issues in the contemporary Scottish context, with scant research attention to religious hatred/discrimination in Scotland but with a limited focus (mostly historical) on issues of sectarianism. In noting the differences between academic researchers on the extent of sectarianism, McAspurren concluded that:

Few authors would say that sectarian or religious discrimination is entirely extinct, but there is now significant debate around the extent to which it exists in modern day Scotland. There is also debate around how history is relevant to the debate, some believe it is important in understanding perceptions/identities, whereas others argue that reliance on history promotes myth of sectarianism. Overall, the findings from the various pieces cited above indicate that there is indeed a perception of religious discrimination and sectarianism. However, there are conflicting conclusions when discussing what evidences actual 'hard' discrimination. (McAspurren, 2005: 21)

#### **4.4 Summary**

The majority of the evidence base that exists relates to England and Wales, or to Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) or to the United Kingdom (UK) as a whole without differentiation. The majority of the evidence relating to England and Wales relates primarily to England.

In relation to Wales, there is currently little distinctive evidence on religious discrimination that suggests a substantially different position in Wales as compared to that in England. But it is unclear whether this lack of distinctive evidence is because such distinctiveness does not exist or whether there has been insufficient specific research.

In relation to Scotland there is a more substantial body of evidence about the particular phenomenon of 'sectarianism', including in its relationship to religious discrimination more broadly understood, although the interpretation of such evidence relative to both popular understandings of and political programmes to address 'sectarianism' remains subject to at least some academic contestation.

## 5. Islamophobia: a contested concept

### 5.1 Introduction

As noted in Chapter 1, one of the specific aims of this review was to explore the issue of Islamophobia. During the 1990s, individuals and organisations from a variety of religious traditions began to claim that discrimination existed on grounds of religion and that it deserved to be taken as seriously as discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, gender, disability and sexual orientation.

Muslim organisations and activists tended to lead the pressure for legislation to be introduced to deal specifically with religious discrimination, as for example in the report by the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (1993) on *Muslims and the Law in Multi Faith Britain: The Need for Reform*. Since Muslims were ethnically diverse, the provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976 that had, hitherto, provided some protection for the religious identities of Jews and of Sikhs did not cover Muslims as such, but as a group Muslims were claiming to be increasingly experiencing religious discrimination.

These developments took place against a background in which the concept of Islamophobia increasingly became used as a specific and contested interpretive concept for understanding any distinctive and specific aspects of the Muslim experience of religious discrimination.

### 5.2 Muslims and religious discrimination

Evidence across a wide range of research (some of which has already been noted in this report when discussing religious discrimination more generally) suggests that Muslims appear to experience religious discrimination with a frequency and seriousness that is proportionately greater than that experienced by those of other religions. This was certainly reflected in the findings of the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project. In relation to a wide range of social areas, Muslim organisations reported a consistently higher level of unfair treatment than most other religious groups, both in terms of the proportion of respondents indicating that some unfair treatment was experienced, and in terms of the proportion indicating that these experiences were frequent. The project's specific findings with regard to Muslims in particular are set out in more detailed and collated form in a book chapter on 'Muslims and Religious Discrimination in England and Wales' (Weller, Feldman and Purdam, 2004).

Questionnaire respondents were asked for their personal view of how serious were various aspects of discrimination and unfair treatment, including ignorance,

indifference, hostility, verbal abuse, physical abuse, damage to property, policies of organisations, practices of organisations, and media coverage. Only a minority of Muslim respondents said each issue was ‘not at all serious’. Muslim respondents were more likely than those from other religions to identify ‘very serious’ problems in nearly every area. A large majority of Muslim respondents regarded ignorance as a ‘very serious’ or ‘quite serious’ problem (Table 5.1).

	Per cent:				
	Very serious	Quite serious	Not at all serious	Don't know	Base (number of organisations)
Ignorance	42	44	5	9	66
Indifference	30	45	13	12	60
Hostility	37	47	8	8	60
Verbal abuse	35	40	13	13	63
Physical abuse	28	38	16	18	61
Damage to property	30	36	19	16	64
Organisation policy	16	43	16	25	63
Organisation practice	21	43	16	21	63
Media coverage	48	38	5	9	66

Source: Weller et al. (2004): 121.

As noted in Chapter 3, alongside the question of the seriousness of discrimination and unfair treatment in particular sectors of social life, respondents to the postal survey were also asked their personal view of whether, in the five years preceding the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project, problems in areas outlined above had become ‘more frequent’, ‘less frequent’, ‘stayed the same’ or ‘don’t know’. While across all the religions surveyed, there was a fairly clear differentiation of views, running from those who thought things were generally getting worse to those who detected improvements in every area, Muslim respondents were the most likely to think that problems had grown worse. As previously commented on, the majority of Muslim respondents thought hostility, verbal abuse and unfair media coverage had all become more frequent. Views on indifference, and organisational policy and practice were fairly evenly divided. For other problems, those who thought unfair treatment was becoming more frequent consistently outnumbered those thinking it was becoming less frequent.

In relation to the increasing frequency of problems reported by Muslim respondents, it should be noted that these responses pre-dated both 9/11 and the preceding summer 2001 disturbances in the northern mill towns. The events in the mill towns were a warning that when a group of citizens feels that their basic self-understandings are not being adequately addressed by public policy, then social exclusion, marginalisation and disaffection emerge. The involvement of young Muslims in these urban uprisings underlined the urgency of addressing the social position of many Muslims, while the later reports on these disturbances by two inquiry groups brought about a new conceptual and policy repertoire for the political framing of such issues, and engagement with them, in terms of ‘social cohesion’ (Cantle et al., 2001; Denham et al., 2001).

Other more recent evidence indicates that Muslims are more likely than those of other religions to experience religious or racial harassment. For example, the Citizenship Survey showed that in 2009-10, Muslims in England were more than twice as likely as the average to consider that racial or religious harassment was a very or fairly big problem in their local area (Table 5.2).

	Per cent:							
	Christian	Muslim	Hindu	Sikh	Buddhist	Other religion	No religion	All
	6	17	13	14	10	14	9	7
<i>Base</i>	<i>7,725</i>	<i>3,641</i>	<i>663</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>119</i>	<i>278</i>	<i>1,911</i>	<i>8,254</i>
Notes:	Excludes respondents answering ‘don’t know’. As for Table 8, the all percentage is based on the core sample and the column percentages on the combined sample.							
Source:	Perfect (2011, Table 15), citing <i>Citizenship Survey: 2009-10 (April 2009-March 2010, England)</i> , Cohesion Research Statistical Release no. 12, 2010, Table 13.							

### 5.3 Muslims and Islamophobia?

Of even more seismic impact for Muslims in Britain than the mill town disturbances of 2001 were, of course, the events of 11 September 2001. Scholars such as Cesari (2009) problematise the use of ‘Islamophobia’ as an explanatory concept in the post-9/11 context, but the contents of Humayun Ansari’s Minority Rights Group International report on *Muslims in Britain* graphically catalogue and highlight some of the experiences that arose from 9/11 and its aftermath:

Muslim adults and children were attacked, physically and verbally. They were punched, spat at, hit with umbrellas at bus stops, publicly doused with alcohol and pelted with fruit and vegetables. Dog excrement and

fireworks were pushed through their letterboxes and bricks through their windows. They were called murderers and were excluded from social gatherings. One woman in Swindon was hospitalised after being beaten with a metal baseball bat; two Cambridge University students had their headscarves ripped off, in broad daylight, outside a police station; Saba Zaman, who, in July 2001, had her scarf pulled off and two of her ribs broken in Tooting, London, was stopped and searched by the police three times in two weeks following the terrorist attacks in the United States of America. In west London, an Afghan taxi driver, Hamidullah Gharwal, was attacked shortly after 11th September, and left paralysed from the neck down. Sikh men, whose beards and turbans created the impression that they were Muslims, were also abused. Vandals attacked mosques and Asian-run businesses around the country. Nine pigs' heads were dumped outside a mosque in Exeter. Many mosques were said not to have reported attacks because of fear of reprisals.

(Ansari, 2002: 4)

From within the Muslim community itself, the Islamic Human Rights Commission (2002) published a report on Muslims as 'the hidden victims' of September 11. At the same time, consistent with what was reported by Ansari, a report by Sheridan (2002) highlights the ways in which other religious and ethnic groups also became caught up in the backlash to 9/11. Since then, of course, there has also been the impact of the London Transport bombings of July 2005 and the other attempted bombings in the UK.

In the wake of 9/11, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia produced a Summary Report by Chris Allen and Jørgen Nielsen (2002) entitled *Islamophobia in the EU after 11 September 2001*. The use of the word Islamophobia in the title of that report is, of course, significant for the issue at stake in this chapter concerning the extent to which there is research evidence that Islamophobia needs to be understood as a specific and distinct form of religious discrimination.

The report was based on an overview of country reports provided by the Centre's RAXEN network of National Focal Points in each of the then 15 countries of the EU. The report identified a rise in what it called 'ethnic xenophobia', which it saw as being 'distinctly separate from the xenophobia that exists within both Islamophobia and indeed... anti-asylum seeker sentiment...' (Allen and Nielsen, 2002: 7). Such 'ethnic xenophobia' was linked with a 'greater perceived threat of the enemy within, and an increased sense of fear and vulnerability both globally and locally'. Within all this, 'expressions of Islamophobia' found justification in what the report identified as a

'catalytic justification' with regard to 'both latent and active prejudices'. Instances were also cited with special reference to the UK where 'anti-Muslim alliances have been formed, at least locally, between right-wing groups and immigrant and ethnic minority groups' (Allen and Nielsen, 2002: 54) and in which generally racist agendas appeared to have been suspended in favour of an alliance with extremist groups of Sikh and Hindu backgrounds.

Allen and Nielsen's report was followed by a range of other reports from the Centre including one (European Monitoring Centre for Racism and Islamophobia, 2005) specifically on the aftermath of the London transport bombings of 7 July 2005 as well as broader (2007a and 2007b) surveys of discrimination, Islamophobia and Muslims in Europe, including in Britain. The adoption in these reports of the use of the word Islamophobia reflected a process in relation to the use of that word which has been gathering momentum since the mid-1990s. The Runnymede Trust's report on Islamophobia (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, 2001) stated that the Oxford English Dictionary had noted one of earliest reported uses of this word in the English language as being in the periodical *Insight* of 4 February 1991. In this publication, Islamophobia was cited as a substantial reason for the former Soviet Union's reluctance, at the time, to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan.

Chris Allen (2007, 2010a, 2010b) has produced an extensive body of work on the empirical evidence relating to Islamophobia and its contested conceptualisation in policy and practice. This includes an assessment (Allen, 2007) of Islamophobia 10 years on from the original Runnymede Trust report. In his detailed monograph study of *Islamophobia*, Allen (2010a), reports a number of individuals in Britain who claimed to have coined the term. Allen also points out that among those who use this terminology to describe the experience of Muslims, there are some who see contemporary issues as the latest manifestation of a long cultural history, going back to the time of the Crusades and before, while others emphasise it as a more contemporary phenomenon. In this regard, aspects of debate about Islamophobia are similar to those noted previously on pp. 38-39 about sectarianism in Scotland.

Whatever the emphasis adopted or the precise historical origins of the current terminology, it was The Runnymede Trust's report of this name that brought the terminology into wider public use. In doing so, the authors of that report in brief described (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, 1997: 1) their use of this word as 'a shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam – and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims', or more at length, as follows:

The word is not ideal, but is recognizably similar to ‘xenophobia’ and ‘europhobia’, and is a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam – and therefore to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims. Such dread and dislike have existed in western countries and cultures for centuries. In the last twenty years, however, the dislike has become more explicit, more extreme and more dangerous. It is an ingredient of all sections of our media, and it is prevalent in all sections of our society. Within Britain it means that Muslims are frequently excluded from the economic, social and public life of the nation... and are frequently victims of discrimination and harassment.

(Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, 1997: 1)

The Trust’s earlier report, *A Very Light Sleeper* (Runnymede Commission on Antisemitism, 1994), had set out particular characteristics of antisemitism as a specific form of discrimination against Jews. In some ways, the emergence and use of a terminology specific to the experience of Muslims’ needs to be seen against the background of that earlier terminology. In both of these cases, there is a specific historic fund of stereotypical images through which religious prejudice and hatred is mediated. However, while antisemitism is built on pseudo-science, fantasy and fabrication about the supposed power that Jews in Europe never actually wielded, in the case of Islamophobia, while such elements are also clearly present, it is also informed by a history of actual military conflicts between territories associated with Islam and with Christianity (Daniel, 2000).

The historical reality of military conflict, and the fact that in the contemporary world there have also been high-profile attacks (such as those in the US in 2001, Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005) that are explicitly associated with individuals and groups who understand themselves as having acted in this way in the name of Islam, needs to be stated carefully to avoid too great a risk of misunderstanding. Nevertheless, the historical locus in military conflict, and the association of Islam with recent actions that have been calculated to cause terror in the major cities of states, makes aspects of the inheritance of Islamophobic imagery more complex to challenge.

At the same time, as with antisemitism, there are clear patterns (see Malik, 2010) in many of the key images that appear in prejudice against, and incitement to, hatred of Muslims. These appear to have developed a life of their own that has been reproduced in a variety of different social, historical and political contexts and over a long history, including today, like antisemitism, on both the political Left and the political Right. Reflecting on the historical development of these images, Richard Webster explained in his book *A Brief History of Blasphemy: Liberalism, Censorship and ‘The Satanic Verses’* that:

Christian fears of Islam, then, were based in part on a real perception of its military, political and cultural strength. But the tendency of Christians to demonise their enemies meant that realistic fears of Islam were increasingly overlaid with demonological fantasies in which Muslims in general, and Muhammad in particular, were seen as satanic beings. (Webster, 1990: 37)

Today, and especially in the wake of the 11 September attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and the bombings in Madrid and London, many of these images appear in forms secularised by 'Orientalism' (see Said, 1978). Similarly, the store of classical antisemitic images became secularised through the development of pseudo-scientific theories of racial eugenics.

Media coverage of Islam can often reflect, reproduce, recycle and amplify aspects of these images. Kim Knott's research on Islam and the media in the Religion and Society programme (see Appendix 7) has found that mass media coverage of Islam in the UK has doubled compared with 20 years ago. Moreover, the majority of the coverage is negative, presenting Islam as a problem. The practical use and effects of such images, especially via their reproduction in the mass media after 9/11, led Allen and Nielsen (2002) to identify what emerged during this period as 'the deep-seated nature of Islamophobia and xenophobia'. However, while highlighting the linkages between these phenomena, the report went on to stress that:

At the same time, it is clear that these two concepts are not exactly congruent. Expressions of Islamophobia have certainly in some instances simply been a 'cover' for general racism and xenophobia but also there have been instances in which such expressions have been quite selectively targeted at visibly perceived manifestations of Islam. (Allen and Nielsen, 2002: 54)

Post-9/11, and especially with reference to the UK, such images have been recycled in crude ways in the propaganda of organisations such as the British National Party (BNP) and the English Defence League. In recent years, the BNP particularly targeted Muslims by separating out Muslims as a specific category of 'undesirable other' from among other religious and ethnic minority groups, such as Hindus and the Chinese, who are portrayed as being more acceptable. Moreover, as noted above, (p. 45), local anti-Muslim alliances have been formed between right-wing groups and immigrant and ethnic minority groups.

But the use of Islamophobic imagery is arguably not only a matter of political extremes. It can also be found among the general population, including among those who would characterise themselves as political liberals and would react with horror to being seen as in any way to be bedfellows with such groups. In relation to the general population, Clive Field's (2007) study of opinion poll evidence relating to Islamophobia between 1988 and 2006 shows that, in general, social group C and D white males are the most negative about Muslims. But there is also evidence for what has been called 'sneering liberalism' and an 'Islamophobia of the liberal intelligentsia' (Weller, 2006: 319). All too often this seems uncritically to draw on a store of anti-Islamic images. At the height of the controversy over *The Satanic Verses*, this led the Muslim academic Shabbir Akhtar, in his book *Be Careful With Muhammad! The Salman Rushdie Affair* (1989), to deploy as a chapter title the provocative juxtaposition of the words 'The Liberal Inquisition'.

More recently, the Chair of the Conservative Party and a member of the current coalition government's cabinet, Baroness Warsi, has spoken of prejudice against Muslims as having 'passed the dinner-table test' (BBC, 2011a). By this image she was pointing to what she believed has been its relative 'normalisation' within polite society. At the same time, the issues involved are not only restricted to 'polite society'. As a report by Githens-Mazer and Lambert (2010) on *Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hate Crime* in London and evidence in the Engage (2010) *Briefing Note* for MPs makes clear, evidence of considerable physical violence and attacks appears to be associated with Islamophobic sentiment. Consequently, Engage has called for the establishment of an all party parliamentary group on Islamophobia.

#### **5.4 Islamophobia and the securitisation of Muslims**

In the context of the Labour Government's Prevent initiative, developed in the wake of the 7/7 bombings, Muslims have experienced a considerable amount of 'targeted' attention. This has raised concerns about the securitisation of Muslims in the context of human rights (Edge, 2009; Kundnani, 2009). Joanna Adler (see Appendix 7) has been undertaking an evaluation of the Prevent initiative, which has also been subject to an overall rapid assessment by Pratchett, Thorp, Wingfield, Lowndes and Jabbar (2010). Through this and other work, concerns were identified that, on the one hand, the focus of the 'hard' end of these initiatives specifically on Muslims meant that insufficient account was taken of security threats that might be posed by other groups, including the activities of neo-fascists. On the other hand, the targeted investments associated with the 'soft end' of the initiatives could create tensions in terms of good relations with other religious groups.

Another example (see also section 3.2) of the way in which consideration of historical evidence, when undertaken on the basis of careful critical scrutiny and comparison, can potentially be illuminative of current contexts is the ongoing research by the religious historian John Wolffe. This study, within the Economic and Social Research Council's Global Uncertainties programme, compares historic anti-Catholic phenomena in Britain with contemporary anti-Muslim phenomena (see [www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/RES-071-27-0062/read](http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/RES-071-27-0062/read)). Other research (Weller, 2007a, 2009) has already identified this as echoing aspects of the powerful current of deep-seated anti-Catholicism (Marrotti, 2005) that existed in British history.

Catholics as a group (as distinct from individual Catholics) became perceived as potentially disloyal fifth columnists because of their religio-political allegiances to the Papacy and to other predominantly Catholic foreign powers beyond the boundaries of the national community. Similarly, contemporary Muslims are perceived as disloyal because of their transnational vision of religion and possible support from some foreign governments.

### **5.5 Islamophobia and other discriminations and hatreds**

As in the discussion of antisemitism, a key question arising from the research evidence that is cited in relation to Islamophobia is one of vigorous debate around balance and between religious and racial discrimination. Thus research by Mary Davis and Sukhwant Dhaliwal into *The Impact of Religion on Trade Union Relations with Black Workers* notes that, while 'Religious discrimination was recognised as an important issue in its own right' also 'it is quite clear that the tendency to fuse racial and religious discrimination often serves to mask the former' (Davis and Dhaliwal, n.d.: 53). Specifically with regard to 'Islamophobia', the authors reported that 'whilst some participants argued any distinction between the terms "Islamophobia" and "anti Muslim racism" is mere semantics, several others expressed discomfort with the term and the discourse around it.'

The Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project did not generally use the interpretive category of 'Islamophobia' to analyse and describe the kind of religious discrimination affecting the largest religious minority in the UK. At the same time, its results made clear that it was among Muslims that there was the greatest reported experience of discrimination in terms both of frequency and of seriousness. The current report makes clear that the evidence suggests that Muslims continue to experience a greater frequency and seriousness of discrimination relative to other religious groups in England, Wales and Scotland. Having restated that, it is important to take note of the fact that the ODPM report (Beckford et al., 2006: 88) highlighted that in relation to its concerns, but with more general applicability including to matters

relating to religious discrimination, 'There is... relatively less research in relation to Hindus and Sikhs... than there is with regard to Muslims' – and this remains the case.

Furthermore, in considering the issues involved there appear to be dimensions of Islamophobia that come nearer to 'religious hatred' than to 'religious discrimination' alone. The German word for this, *Fremdenfeindlichkeit* (roughly 'animosity towards strangers') perhaps comes closest to reflecting something of the strongly visceral dimensions of hostility that can, under certain conditions, issue in physically violent attacks, and whose roots lie in attitudes and imagery deeply embedded in history, culture and consciousness. Such *Fremdenfeindlichkeit* can be found in forms that target not only Muslims. Thus, the Community Security Trust (2011) report on *Antisemitic Incidents* shows a continuingly high and alarming kind of hatred also focused on Jews.

Finally, in the context of growing claims of discrimination against Christians, there has been the emergence of the terminology 'Christophobic' – as used by the international legal scholar (and an observant Jew) Joseph Weiler (2003) and cited in Weigel (2005: 19-20), where the related concept of 'Christophobia' is discussed primarily in relation to exclusionary forms of secularism which are seen as being history-denying, rather than to the stances, attitudes and actions of those of other than Christian religion. And in Britain, at least, evidence of physical threat or attack beyond some non-generalised vandalism to Christian places of worship is limited (in comparison to some parts of the Two-Thirds world where such evidence is much more extensive and includes attacks from those identifying with other religious traditions).

## 5.6 Summary

Giving adequate weight to generic characteristics of religious discrimination is a reminder, as suggested by social psychological research evidence, that there is in principle nothing that prevents the possibility, given certain circumstances, of any group becoming perpetrators of unfair treatment on the basis of religion. The dynamics involved in such treatment are, in principle, no respecter of persons or groups or religions, and religious discrimination is religious discrimination whoever it affects and by whoever it is perpetrated, including by religions themselves.

Therefore to frame the issues primarily in terms of religious discrimination rather than Islamophobia is to underline that it is the responsibility of all groups, of good governance in society, and in the ultimate interests of all, to tackle such phenomena whenever, wherever, and under whatever guises they appear. In addition, given that

the general approach in the UK to frame policy and law on a more 'universal' basis, rather than having special policies or special laws for particular groups, a generic approach can help to overcome the kind of initial antipathy that can otherwise be found in relation to what can sometimes be seen as 'special pleading' by one group for 'special treatment'.

At the same time, it may be possible, by means of comparison and contrast, more clearly to identify and address any features that may be specific - in either extent or kind - to the experience of particular religious groups or communities. Such an approach needs to give due weight both to the generic features of religious discrimination and to the specificity of the forms that it takes in connection with Islamophobia (and, in principle, other specific forms). But as large a body of evidence in relation to other groups, such as Hindus, Sikhs or Buddhists, is currently lacking.

## 6. Conclusions and gaps in the research and statistical evidence

### 6.1 Introduction

In the light of the preceding chapters, this concluding chapter is concerned with identifying what further research and statistical evidence may be required to address any gaps that may exist in the evidence base on religious discrimination.

### 6.2 Sufficiency and adequacy of religious discrimination research

One of the starting points for this report was to evaluate Woodhead with Catto's (2009: iv) argument that: 'There is currently insufficient evidence to draw reliable conclusions about the nature and extent of religious discrimination in the UK.'

This report has set out a range of potentially relevant evidence from the last decade. **That a reasonable body of evidence exists** can be seen from the report. Whether, using Woodhead with Catto's terminology, there is enough **sufficiency** or **reliability** about such evidence for **conclusions** to be drawn is a matter of judgment over which one might hesitate, especially in relation to the word **conclusions**. If one takes that word in a definitive sense this report suggests that one would have to agree with Woodhead with Catto.

This is not because there is no relevant evidence. In particular, the present review might question Woodhead with Catto's claim that:

This means that it is impossible to gauge the level and types of discrimination currently experienced by religious individuals and groups in the UK, and to discern which religious communities, and sections within them, are worst affected.

(Woodhead with Catto, 2009: 15)

While this review would suggest that the 'level' of discrimination is hard to be confident about, with regard to 'types' of discrimination related to 'religious individuals and groups', the existing evidence base would appear already to provide a **clear pattern of evidence** – certainly with regard to 'which religious communities... are worst affected' although very little about the further question of which 'sections within them'.

One of the difficulties is that the evidence is patchy in the sense that the research on which it is based has taken place in a wide variety of ways. In relation to quantitative data, this has often been as part of wider EU and/or European referenced research and therefore has either been determined more by broader research questions and

themes than those which necessarily reflect the specificities of Britain, the UK or its constituent countries, and/or the research has varied in its coverage as within the UK, Great Britain, or Great Britain and Northern Ireland researched separately. This review would therefore certainly agree with Woodhead with Catto (2009: 32) that ‘the evidence base on religious discrimination needs to be improved’.

### **6.3 The distinctiveness of England, Wales and Scotland**

One of the key ways in which the evidence could be improved is with regard to the potential commonalities and distinctiveness of different parts of the UK. Thus this review has noted, in line with Winckler (2009), that there appears to be very little, if any, research evidence that specifically addresses religious discrimination in Wales. Therefore, regardless of the evaluative judgment made about the sufficiency or reliability of such research evidence that exists in relation to England or Wales, or to Great Britain as a whole, it is arguably important to undertake specific research in Wales. This bears in mind that Wales has distinctive national, cultural, linguistic and religious features; that there is now a Welsh Assembly with significant devolved powers affecting a range of areas of governance and policy; and that the religious diversity of Wales and the issues and challenges arising from it, are likely to continue to increase. This is given the strong likelihood of a further increase in diversity in Wales over future decades, as noted by Winckler (2009: 18).

Although Northern Ireland is beyond the scope of this paper, relevant research into sectarianism and discrimination on the grounds of religion has been conducted there for much longer than in the rest of the UK. This reflects the earlier introduction of legislation that recognised and was designed to address the issues in these terms. Because of this, there could be value in undertaking more comparative research, especially between Northern Ireland and Scotland, but also more broadly across the United Kingdom as a whole. Such comparative research could be particularly useful when trying to identify ‘good practice’ in tackling unfair treatment on the basis of religion or belief.

### **6.4 Relative gaps in the evidence**

#### ***Religious discrimination between and by people of religion***

There is one aspect of ‘religious discrimination’ where very little research evidence has been identified in relation to Britain. And that relates to the question posed by Woodhead with Catto (2009: 32) as to whether religions discriminate against their own members. This is important because, as noted in Sellick’s (2004) study of Muslim housing experiences and needs, larger faith communities should perhaps be regarded as ‘confederations of smaller segments’.

Of course, in a broad sense, it could be that the phenomenon of ‘sectarianism’ informed by the Catholic-Protestant binary might be understood as an example of such ‘internal’ discrimination if Christianity is viewed as being the broader framework within which the phrase ‘own members’ might be considered. But there are other possible instances of such issues, where both research and policy attention is only now beginning to emerge in the UK, although there has been a much longer history in other parts of the world. These include, for example, the question of whether ‘casteism’ may have dimensions that overlap with ‘religious discrimination’.

***Intersectionality of religion and belief and with other ‘protected characteristics’***

Another aspect that may relate to the question of ‘internal discrimination’ on the grounds of religion or belief is the agenda of intersectionality in terms of other diversity strands within religious groups and the ‘conflict of rights’ that can occur in connection with these. As the ODPM report concluded:

The outcome of this review underlines that there is a need for new research to enhance the evidence base specifically in the areas of religion and disabilities, and religion and sexual orientation.

(Beckford et al., 2006: 88)

Given the kind of tensions between different rights evident in a range of legal cases, it is important that future research relating to discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief more fully explores the intersection between these grounds and others.

Furthermore, given the evidence of increasing tensions in relation to ‘religious’ and ‘non-religious’ interests, including around law and policy in relation to discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, it could be of importance to undertake research into relations between ‘religious’ organisations and ‘belief’ groups such as the National Secular Society and British Humanist Association. Such research could be particularly beneficial if it were able to identify any contemporary good practice in such relations. But also, given that during the 19th century there was a history of practical and political collaboration between the organised ‘religious’ and ‘non-religious’ groups in relation to the removal of both privileges and disabilities relating to religion, the inclusion within this of some historical research could lead to the recovery of aspects of the British historical inheritance. This might prove helpful in the development of more positive contemporary relations.

***Visibility, invisibility and monitoring of religion or belief discrimination***

Finally, a strong theme that emerged from the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project was that individuals, organisations and communities in

England and Wales who saw their primary identity in terms of religion had, prior to the introduction of law on religious discrimination, frequently experienced a sense of their 'invisibility'. Such 'invisibility' - manifested in instances of the continued failure of individuals and organisations to take account of the needs, experiences and expectations of individuals, communities and organisations that define themselves primarily in terms of religion or belief - might still lie at the heart of the experience of 'religious discrimination' in terms of unfair treatment in various fields.

However, such 'invisibility' can also relate to the failure of organisations and public bodies 'positively' and 'proactively' to take account of such dimensions in relation to the provision of goods or services, as will now be implemented through the Equality Act 2010. It is also worth noting that the evident growing concern of Christians about whether their experience of religious discrimination is taken seriously enough relative to that of other religious groups may also be connected with the question of relative 'invisibility' in terms of the lack of alignment between visible minority ethnicity and religious identity. In other words, is potential 'religious discrimination' against (particularly) white Christians taken as seriously as discrimination in its own right, as compared with such discrimination when it is associated with those who may also be members of minority ethnic groups?

With a clearer perception of the role and significance of religion or belief in the lives of individuals, communities and organisations, actions can be taken that will result in both a challenge to, and remedy for, unfair treatment on the basis of religion. Positive measures can then be taken at all levels of society to promote greater inclusivity, in which the distinctive contributions represented by all of its religion and belief traditions and communities will be welcomed and valued for the contributions that they can make to the common good.

At the same time, the Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research report and other subsequent research has identified aspects of precisely the opposite – namely of what has sometimes been called 'visible religious difference' being a particularly salient part of 'religious discrimination'. And the importance of this has arguably grown via the physical attacks carried out after 9/11 on Muslims and some others who were assumed to be Muslims, as well as the contested nature of 'visibility/cover' in relation to Muslim women and the wearing of the hijab, burkah or jilbab. Thus research that explores the continuum of 'visibility' and 'invisibility' in relation to how 'religious discrimination' occurs might be a fruitful focus. In relation to the whole issue of 'invisibility', as highlighted in the ODPM report:

There is a need to consider monitoring by religion and belief in assessing the extent to which strategies and policies are being implemented in ways that are inclusive of religious diversity.

(Beckford et al., 2006: 88)

Thus taking higher education as one example, in comparison with the current position where not all higher education institutions undertake such monitoring, the desirability and acceptability of implementing this across the sector is one of the issues being addressed by the Equality Challenge Unit commissioned research into religion and belief in higher education. If such monitoring were to take place more widely, that in itself could produce important time series data sets to connect with both Census data and the proposed future panel survey (see section 6.5) on religion and society (including religion or belief discrimination). This would help inform the evidence base in relation to religious discrimination overall.

Finally, bearing in mind the overall theme of ‘visibility’ and ‘invisibility’ in relation to religious discrimination, it may also be important to consider again the question of religious discrimination in relation to New Religious Movements (NRMs). The Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project (2001) highlighted considerable intensity of hostility in relation to Pagans and people from NRMs. Therefore in the more general shift of focus that has taken place within the study of religion from the study of more socially marginal religious groups to world religious traditions with substantial communities in Britain (such as Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs), it is important not to lose sight of the experience of others where, generally speaking, ethnicity does not play a part. A number of scholars have continued to work in this field: this includes the longstanding work of Eileen Barker (see Appendix 7) and of INFORM (Information Network on New Religious Movements). But if quantitative evidence relating to religious discrimination in Britain is generally patchy, there is even less of it in relation to these religious groups.

### **6.5 Reducing gaps in the evidence: a panel survey?**

Part of the way forward advocated by Woodhead with Catto involved the further examination of existing datasets. This is something that, for example, the ODPM-commissioned Review of the Evidence Base on Faith Communities to some degree undertook, albeit only with regard to Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. However, Woodhead with Catto also advocated new research while underlining that ‘careful research design will be needed to generate new data’ and advocating that ‘one possibility is a panel survey’ (Woodhead with Catto, 2009: 32).

The present review underlines the potential benefit of this as its central recommendation, given the weaknesses in the current evidence base that come about through the range of different questions being asked; their 'patchiness' over time; and the unevenness of evidence relating to the four countries of the UK. The importance of this is further underlined by the planned ending of the Citizenship Survey, albeit that study only covered England and Wales and not Scotland. Such an initiative could be developed to cohere with the data that will become available as the results of the 2011 decennial Census start to be published. This will update the fundamental information base on the religious landscape and composition of the population of the UK and its component parts, in correlation with other important data provided by the Census.

Within any such development it would be beneficial to take account not only of the 'deficiencies' but also of initiatives to develop 'positive equity'. It would be important for this not to be restricted to the liberal rights of individuals, but for it also to extend to the relative positions of groups and organisations and to the ways in which religion and belief groups might contribute positively to the wider society.

Therefore instead of a panel survey focus only on religious discrimination/equity, it would be of optimum value for such a survey to cover a range of issues across the broad field of religion and society, while within that specifically including that of unfair treatment on the basis of religion or belief.

Such an approach would also assist in navigation of the increasing complexity of intersectionalities around religion or belief, race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and disability matters, and in addressing 'good relations' in relation to religion and belief. Finally, and especially in the light of current questions and debates about the future of the decennial Census, unlike a population survey which would require sample boosters for minority religious groups, a panel survey can be selected to ensure the diversity of religious groups is covered, while its existence over time means that change can be monitored.

The current fiscal context and its consequences for public funding of research (as, for example, seen in the rationale for discontinuing the Citizenship Survey) mean that this is not an ideal time to propose new research. Thus in order to take such an initiative forward, key public bodies, charitable research organisations and other bodies might need collaboratively to address this matter. If, for example, the Research Councils (the Economic and Social Research Council, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council) that sponsored the Religion & Society Research Programme were to play a substantial part in establishing something of this kind,

it might enable them to demonstrate a 'legacy' initiative of the Religion & Society Research Programme. This would ensure that the investment in the programme does not risk becoming dissipated and can be built on positively as a future inheritance.

## Appendix 1: Religious Discrimination in England and Wales research project

The project, which was commissioned by the Home Office, was conducted between 1999-2001. The terms of reference given by the Home Office specified that the project was:

1. To assess the evidence of religious discrimination in England and Wales, both actual and perceived.
2. To describe the patterns shown by this evidence, including:
  - its overall scale
  - the main victims
  - the main perpetrators, and
  - the main ways in which the discrimination manifests.
3. To indicate the extent to which religious discrimination overlaps with racial discrimination.
4. To identify the broad range of policy options available for dealing with religious discrimination.

The project was based on a national questionnaire survey of religious organisations which took place during the year 2000, and to which 628 organisations responded (representing a response rate of between 34 and 42 per cent); and on fieldwork conducted during 2000 and 2001 in Blackburn, Cardiff, Leicester and the London Borough of Newham involving 318 individuals across a total of 156 meetings. For full details of how the research was conducted see the Technical Report chapter of the project final report (Weller et al., 2001: 147-96).

An *Interim Report* of the project was published in 2000 (Weller et al., 2000) and the empirical results in Weller et al. (2001).

## Appendix 2: Religion and Belief, Discrimination and Equality research project

The Religion and Belief, Discrimination and Equality in England and Wales: Theory, Policy and Practice (2000-2010) research project ([www.derby.ac.uk/religion-and-society](http://www.derby.ac.uk/religion-and-society)) is located within the Religion & Society Research Programme ([www.religionandsociety.org.uk](http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk)) sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council. It is based at the University of Derby and its Principal Investigator is the author of the current report, Paul Weller, in the Faculty of Education, Health and Sciences. Co-investigators include Kingsley Purdam (Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research, University of Manchester) and Nazila Ghanea (of Kellogg College and the Faculty of Law, University of Oxford); with Sariya Contractor (both of the Faculty of Education, Health and Sciences, University of Derby) undertaking, respectively, project field research and related doctoral research. The project aims to:

- Establish a contemporary benchmark in scholarly studies on ‘discrimination’ and ‘equality’ with regard to ‘religion’ and ‘belief’, with implications especially for relevant bodies of data and theoretical understandings in the study of religion, social and legal/human rights studies.
- Assess change over the decade under review (2000-2010) since the first government-funded study of Religious Discrimination in England and Wales (1999-2001) by comparing broad findings from the original study (see Weller et al., 2001) with the new project findings. This will be partly achieved by means of longitudinal and comparative components. But it will also make a substantially new contribution through going beyond the methodological, contractual and policy-related limitations of the original study, and by taking account of subsequent developments in the religious, social and legal fields and in relevant studies as well as theoretical perspectives in relation to them. Specifically the project will:
  - Review, analyse and evaluate developments in the role of ‘equality’ in relation to ‘discrimination’ on the grounds of ‘religion’ and ‘belief’ through appropriate scholarly literature, case law in England and Wales, European Union policy developments, and relevant international instruments.
  - Identify, analyse and evaluate any significant changes in the reported pattern and incidence of ‘discrimination’ on the basis of ‘religion’ (types of unfair treatment; frequency and seriousness; groups primarily affected; areas of social life) through comparison of longitudinal quantitative data derived from a questionnaire survey that revisits the organisations that responded in 1999-2001. Respondents will be asked the same questions in the context of 2010, as well as some additional ones about any perceived changes related to the changed religious, social and legal context.
  - Identify, analyse and evaluate data from directly relevant surveys (for example, the Home Office Citizenship Survey, the British Social Attitudes Survey and the European Values Study) that now ask about religious

discrimination in order to explore how both reported experience and perceptions of this may have changed.

- Review the use made of patterns of association between various data (for example on 'religious affiliation' and 'no religion' with ethnicity, educational qualifications and employment) derived from the results of the 2001 Census with a view to improve understanding of the 'explanatory' relationships between these data, in the light of the new project findings.
  - Collect, analyse and evaluate qualitative data on developments in the role of 'equality' in relation to 'discrimination' on the grounds of 'religion' and 'belief' through fieldwork with people identifying as 'religious' and 'non-religious'.
  - Coverage of the 'non-religious' group is a new contribution in relation to emerging recognition of both the conceptual and practical policy difficulties relating to this 'group' and the legal category of 'belief'.
- Make an impact that, on the basis of an enhanced evidence base and better understanding achieved through establishment of a contemporary scholarly benchmark study will, through knowledge transfer and exchange:
    - Inform the general public and make a difference to public debates around 'equality' and 'discrimination' in relation to 'religion' and 'belief'.
    - Equip potential opinion-formers and policymakers in public, private and voluntary and community sector organisations (including among religion and belief groups themselves) to develop their understanding, policy and practice on 'equality' and 'discrimination' in relation to 'religion' and 'belief' in a more evidence-based way.

In terms of methods, issues arising from the original project survey having been one that surveyed religious organisations rather than individuals are recognised. These were discussed in the Technical Appendix of the original project report, where what could be nevertheless be achieved through such an approach was articulated. In the context of the present project, where appropriate for longitudinal comparison, the research methods used will replicate those of the 1999-2001 project. But the new project will also go beyond the original project's contractual restriction to pre-set and directly policy-related terms of reference, while also taking account of what is now a different evidence base and also emergent religious, social and legal questions and issues.

The detailed original results and research design of the 1999-2001 project are archived at the University of Derby. Findings from that study will be compared with new findings to inform conclusions about how far patterns in reported religious discrimination (type; frequency; seriousness; groups affected; areas of social life) might have changed. This will be achieved through some substantial replication of methods and longitudinal comparisons, as follows:

- *A systematic review:* as in 1999-2001 the project will be informed by a systematic review of relevant published/grey literature (Weller), statistical and secondary data sources (Purdam) and relevant UK and international legal cases (Ghanea), but now focusing on 2000-2010.
- *A postal questionnaire survey:* from a sample frame of up to 2,000 national, regional and local faith organisations, the project will recontact those organisations that responded in 1999-2001, asking the same questions in the 2010 context, as well as some new questions. This will facilitate the comparison of longitudinal quantitative data from the original study, but also inform a more qualitative understanding of how far circumstances and reported experiences might have changed.
- *Qualitative field research:* the project will revisit the 1999-2001 project locations (Blackburn, Cardiff, Leicester and Newham) and conduct up to 200 semi-structured interviews with people from faith groups, public, private and voluntary sector bodies, as well as five focus groups with people defining themselves as 'non-religious'.

There will also be additional methods, appropriate to the extension of the project's scope:

- *Secondary data analysis:* since the original study was undertaken, religion and belief data from the 2001 Census can be associated with other Census data (for example on ethnicity, educational qualifications and employment), while more directly relevant body of survey data (for example the Home Office Citizenship Survey) now exist. In the light of the project findings, the project will review the use that has been made of these data.
- *Additional questionnaire sample:* as well as recontacting original respondent organisations, the project will extend its survey also to include other local, regional and national organisations on the basis of an organisational database (also held in the University of Derby) that can be found in the CD-ROM listings of organisations and places of worship that accompanies the Religions in the UK directory (Weller, 2007b). Over the past two decades, this project's publication has become an established work of reference on religions in the UK and their organisational forms.
- *Additional fieldwork sample:* however, to try to take into account the experience of less urban areas affected by new developments related to the recent labour migration of people from European Union accession countries to the UK, Norwich is added as an additional area for fieldwork.

### **Appendix 3: Review of the evidence base on faith communities**

The review focused on the evidence base on the demographic, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the 'emerging' faith communities, together with an assessment of likely future trends. This was conducted with reference specifically to Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and in relation to the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) strategic priorities of Housing Supply and Demand; Decent Places to Live; Tackling Disadvantage; Delivering Better Services, and Promoting the Development of the English Regions. The report also reviewed evidence bearing on the relationship between faith and other equalities strands in terms of ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability.

The review was conducted between January and July 2005 and is based on an examination of relevant publications and 'grey' literature produced during the previous 10 years. The project team also manipulated and analysed available data sets drawing, in addition, on some of their own primary research. The report is also informed by a small number of semi-structured interviews that were conducted with key community informants and academic experts.

The report's outcomes were published as Beckford et al. (2006).

## **Appendix 4: The Citizenship Survey**

This survey, which has been conducted biennially since 2001, was formerly known as the Home Office Citizenship Survey or HOCS (and more recently commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government).

It has been a face-to-face household survey and has covered a representative core sample of almost 10,000 adults in England and Wales each year, plus a minority ethnic boost sample of 5,000 and a Muslim boost sample of 1,200. The 2003 survey also included supplementary booster samples of 20 local areas and eight- and nine-year-old children and of 10- to 15-year-old young people.

From 2007, the survey was conducted in a more continuous way enabling quarterly headline findings to be issued. Following the election of the coalition government, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government undertook consultation on the future of the Citizenship Survey in the light of which it was decided that the survey would be cancelled on the grounds of its complexity and cost.

## Appendix 5: European Values Survey

The European Values Survey (EVS) is a longitudinal research programme that was conducted for the first time in 10 West European countries in 1981. Other European researchers then joined the project resulting in a 26-nation study. A second wave of surveys covering more countries was conducted in 1990. A fourth wave was begun in 2008 and by 2010 included 47 countries, with the Great Britain survey taking place in 2009-10 and the (separate) Northern Ireland one in 2008.

The third wave (carried out in 1999-2000) is the most recent for which, at the time of writing, comprehensive results are published. Those results are based on a total of 39,797 respondents across 32 countries and are published in Halman (2001). The report explains that:

EVS is a well-established network of social and political scientists. Its main purpose is to empirically uncover basic values, attitudes, and preferences of the European population and to explore the similarities, differences, and changes in these orientations... The project provides standardized cross-national measures of people's perspectives and views in a broad range of important areas of life  
(Halman, 2001: 1, 3)

Its results for Great Britain are based on 1,000 respondents, with fieldwork being undertaken in October-November 1999 by Helmut Anheier and Stephen Harding. Its results for Northern Ireland (which are reported on separately) were also based on 1,000 respondents, with fieldwork being undertaken in July-November 1999 by Bernadette Hayes, Tony Fahey and Richard Sinnott. The survey in Northern Ireland was financially supported by Economic and Social Research Council (research grant number: R000222959).

## **Appendix 6: Eurobarometer research**

Eurobarometer is a programme of cross-national and comparative social research carried out for the European Commission that has been conducted since the early 1970s and is designed especially to monitor social and political attitudes. From the early 1990s onwards, special surveys have also been conducted, including the ones referred to here in relation to religious discrimination.

The basic sample design for all three special research reports was that of a multi-stage, random (probability) sample. In each case, the research was based on face-to-face interviews with residents of the member states, aged 15 and over, conducted in people's homes and in the appropriate national language.

The 2007 Special Eurobarometer Special Research Report on 'Discrimination in the European Union' is based on fieldwork conducted in June-July 2006. The 2008 Special Eurobarometer research on 'Discrimination in the European Union' drew on fieldwork undertaken in the period February-March 2008. The 2009 Special Eurobarometer research on 'Discrimination in the EU in 2009', was based on fieldwork conducted in May-June 2009. Across the 27 member states of the EU the fieldwork involved 26,756 interviews, while in the UK it consisted of 1,317 interviews.

## Appendix 7: Survey of research on religion, equality and discrimination

The descriptions of research that follow are, with kind permission, taken selectively with particular reference to work directly concerned with religious discrimination, from the text of Woodhead's (2011, forthcoming) report on *Recent Research on Religion, Discrimination and Good Relations*. The descriptions include research that is still in progress as well as work that has already arrived at published or unpublished findings.

Woodhead's report also included references to published research. Where discussed in this review, such references have been included in the main body of the text of this report and in its concluding reference list. The text of the descriptions of research projects and/or areas of research work that follow appear as in Woodhead's report, except that in what follows it is organised in alphabetical order by name of researcher for ease of cross-reference from the main text of this report. The research instrument that secured these descriptions is set out at the end of these descriptions.

The information below was largely obtained from a survey of members of the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Religion or Belief Network carried out in November 2010. The survey asked respondents:

- 1.] Have you been involved in any research which touches on discrimination and unfair treatment on the basis of 'religion or belief'?

YES NO

If YES, please give brief details:

- 2.] Have you been involved in any research which touches on the issue of 'good relations' (or bad ones!) between people of different religious conviction and/or religious and secular groups.

YES NO

If YES, please give brief details:

- 3.] Have you been involved in any other research which may be of interest to the EHRC? e.g. on religion and human rights; religion, equality and the law etc.

YES NO

If YES, please give brief details:

Data from the survey were supplemented by information about Religion & Society Research Programme projects collated by its Director, Linda Woodhead.

**Neil Addison, Barrister**, [www.religionlaw.co.uk](http://www.religionlaw.co.uk)

**Religion Law website and blog**

The Religion Law UK website, run by Neil Addison, monitors case law concerning religion with personal commentary in his Blog.

<http://www.religionlaw.co.uk>

<http://religionlaw.blogspot.com>

**Joanna Adler, School of Health and Social Sciences, Middlesex University**

**'Securitisation of Muslims'**

An evaluation of the 'Prevent' Initiative, including looking at claims of discrimination against Muslim communities.

**Eileen Barker, Department of Sociology, London School of Economics / INFORM (Information Network on New Religious Movements)**

**Cults and Anti-cult Movements**

Research into minority religions - especially 'cults', 'sects' and New Religious Movements (NRMs) - and the reactions to which they give rise. Eileen Barker is a founder of INFORM which is a longstanding organisation which collects, assesses and diffuses objective information about NRMs, their treatment and their relations with other religious groups.

**Cardiff Law School, Cardiff University**

**Law and Religion Scholars Network, Case Database**

Lists judgments delivered by domestic courts, the European Court of Justice, and the European Court of Human Rights concerning law and religion. See:

[www.law.cf.ac.uk/clr/networks/lrsncd09.html](http://www.law.cf.ac.uk/clr/networks/lrsncd09.html)

**Michela Franceschelli, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion**

**Discrimination and Young British Muslims**

A Ph.D. at the University of East Anglia that explores the formation of faith and national identities in the context of South Asian Muslim families in the UK. Religious discrimination and unfair treatment are addressed in the first stage of the research which consists of an in-school questionnaire conducted with young people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds aged 14-18 years old in secondary schools in London (Newham) and Oldham.

***Matt Gibson, Liverpool Law School, University of Liverpool*****Religious Liberty and Religious Exemptions**

Ongoing Ph.D. that addresses religious exemptions which exist to types of civil and criminal laws and human rights provision. It investigates their existence and operation to help inform an accurate conceptualization of religious liberty in the UK. Recent controversies, where unsuccessful religious exemptions have been claimed outside the existing express exemption provisions, are also considered. Suggestions are made about how the doctrinal limits of religious freedom may be expanded by creating new religious exemptions to types of existing domestic laws.

***Mathew Guest and Sonya Sharma, Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University; Kristin Aune, School of Education, University of Derby; Rob Warner, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Chester***

**Christianity and the University Experience in Contemporary England**

Religion & Society Research Programme large project. Completion date: 2011.

This is a major study run collaboratively by academics from the universities of Durham, Derby and Chester. Central to the study is a national survey of undergraduates, administered via a secure online questionnaire. The questionnaire is sent to a random selection of students within each participating institution, producing a window on to student values and attitudes, including moral issues (such as assisted dying, the undergraduate drinking culture, abortion, gender equality and homosexuality); attitudes towards religion; religious practice, and levels of social capital, including volunteering. Basic demographic data on educational and social class background, ethnicity, gender, national identity and current field of study are also collected to allow significant correlations to be explored at the analysis stage. A final section explores patterns of religious practice among self-identifying Christians. While this allows the research team to ascertain distinguishing features of this subgroup, the bulk of the questionnaire covers students across world faiths, and of none (initial findings suggest around 35 per cent fall into the latter category). As such, the survey offers for each university insights into the values of a diverse student body, and hence enables a better understanding of how agendas of equality and diversity might be advanced, as well as generating potentially essential marketing data on the divergent perspectives of students from different ethnic, social class and religious backgrounds. Given the recent changes in the way course fees will be dealt with, such issues could prove crucial for universities seeking a better understanding of their student body and its motivations.

For further information, see [www.cueproject.org.uk](http://www.cueproject.org.uk)

***Robert Hoffmann, Swee-Hoon Chuah, Jonathan Tan and Simon Gaechter,  
Nottingham University Business School, University of Nottingham***

**Religion, Religiosity and Pro-Social Behaviour in Cross-Cultural Interactions**  
Religion & Society Research Programme large project. Completed.

A project using incentivised laboratory experiments with over 300 human subjects in Malaysia, China and the UK to assess the impact of religious affiliation and individual religiosity on inter-personal trust. It was found that individuals of different religions, Protestant and Catholic Christians, Muslims and Buddhists as well as non-religious people, do not differ in how much trust they invest in anonymous others. On the other hand, how much the trust of others is repaid is sensitive to religious affiliation. In terms of religiosity, all people invest more trust in others of the same religions and higher religiosity. However, higher religiosity individuals do not receive a greater return from others for their investment of trust in them. Overall, a greater effect of religious affiliation than individual religiosity on trust is found, raising the possibility that religion can be a group identifier than can create well-known effects such as in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination.

***Peter Hopkins, School of Geography, Politics and Sociology, Newcastle  
University***

#### **Muslim Male Youth in Scotland**

A study which highlighted concerns around issues of racism, discrimination and Islamophobia, particularly after the events of 9/11. Other issues included their sense of being excluded from belonging within the Scottish nation as a result of assumptions about appropriate gendered behaviour as well as stereotypes about the drinking culture in Scotland.

***Robert Jackson, Leslie Francis, Julia Ipgrave, Elisabeth Arweck, Ursula  
McKenna and Jen Croft, Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit,  
University of Warwick***

#### **Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity**

Religion & Society Research Programme large project. Completion date: 2012.

Using interviews and a survey, conducted in the four nations of the UK, plus London as a special case, this study investigates whether there are correlations between types of school and outcomes in terms of the attitudes towards diversity amongst young people in the UK, e.g. do faith schools produce less 'tolerant' citizens than community schools?

Among the findings emerging from this ongoing project is the inequality in young people's experience of religion according to geographic and demographic factors. This means that there are high degrees of religious illiteracy in some areas which are hindering young people's understanding of the religious lives of others. In these contexts, religiously committed young people may feel constrained from expressing their religious perspectives freely, or experience teasing.

**Saffron Karlsen, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London**

### **Religious Discrimination – Evidence from National Surveys**

Research exploring differences in forms of racist victimisation by ethnic and religious affiliation, gender, age, migration and socioeconomic status, and how this has changed over time. The study uses data from a follow up to the Health Survey for England, called EMPIRIC, conducted in 2000, and the Citizenship Survey 2008/2009.

**Kim Knott, School of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds**

### **Media Portrayals of Religion**

Religion & Society Research Programmen large project. Completed.

The replication of a study first carried out in the 1980s that examines coverage of religion by major TV channels and newspapers (UK). Analyses cover all forms of religion (popular religion, spirituality and new religions as well as conventional ones) and the 'secular sacred' (e.g. freedom of expression, the value of equality, and human rights as sacred concerns). A key finding is that coverage of Islam has almost doubled, but Islam is generally framed as a problem in relation to terrorism, extremism, attitudes to women, or failure to integrate. Christian identity is presented as 'under threat', particularly in right wing and tabloid media, because of political correctness and the equality agenda. Strong atheist and secularist voices have emerged since the 1980s, though their media portrayal is contentious. Identity issues are commonly presented in the media, but there is frequently a difference between media portrayals and the self-identities of religious and secular groups. Equality, multiculturalism and discrimination continue to be discussed. Their treatment needs to be understood within the editorial context and rhetorical style of the newspaper or TV channel in which they appear.

**David Lehmann and Humeira Iqtidar, Department of Sociology, University of Cambridge**

### **Secularism: a Reappraisal of Institutional Arrangements for Religious Regulation**

Religion & Society Research Programme network. Completed.

A series of seminars and workshops brought together academics from different countries and disciplines and representatives of NGOs to consider how 'secularism', understood as state management of religion, or the regime of state-religion relations, varies among countries in Western Europe and the Americas as well as between these regions and Asia. The countries covered included Pakistan, France, Uganda, Israel, Indonesia and Russia. The findings show that although strict separation functions well in Latin America, the USA, and Africa, the social and cultural conditions in Asia and the Middle East oblige us to recognise that state involvement in religious institutions cannot be dismissed as a violation of universal rights.

***Gordon Lynch, School of European Culture and Languages, University of Kent;  
Abby Day, Department of Anthropology, University of Sussex***

### **Belief as Cultural Performance**

Religion & Society Research Programme network. Completed.

A series of seminars exploring critiques of the concept of 'belief' (as an integral component of religion), which also used a series of case studies of young people and religion from across the world to examine whether 'belief' still has any value as a concept, and how we might expand our understandings of the nature of 'belief' in people's lives.

***Eleanor Nesbitt, Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, University of Warwick***

### **Negative Stereotyping in South Asian Communities**

Extensive research among Punjabi and Gujarati communities in the UK, which has recurrently discerned caste as a persistent factor in cultural transmission and so in inter-group relations. There are resulting publications on the Valmiki and Ravidasi communities' experience of negative stereotyping.

***Lisa Taylor-Clarke, Faculty of Education, Health and Sciences, University of Derby***

### **Religious Freedom, Sexual Orientation and Church-Related Adoption Agencies**

Religion & Society Research Programme Ph.D. studentship. Completion date: 2013.

This doctoral studentship forms part of the large AHRC/ESRC project on 'Religion and Belief, Discrimination and Human Rights'. The aim of the research is to examine how Church-related adoption agencies negotiate their responses to the relevant legislation and social policies in relation to religious freedom, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and same-sex couple adoption. This will be accomplished through a documentary analysis of publicly available material and semi-structured interviews of adoption agency employees and associates.

***Gill Valentine, Robert Vanderbeck, Johan Andersson, Joanna Sadgrove, School of Geography, University of Leeds; Kevin Ward, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds***

### **Sexuality and Global Faith Networks**

Religion & Society Research Programme large project. Completed.

This interdisciplinary project focused on debates over homosexuality within the international Anglican Communion. Drawing on research in UK, USA, South Africa and Uganda, it has examined how churches within the Anglican Communion are responding to shifting public attitudes about homosexuality; how new transnational networks of actors are forming to respond to developments related to homosexuality;

and how discourses about homosexuality in one context have been circulated, mobilized, and/or transformed within other contexts. In doing so, the study addresses the issue of discrimination and good/bad relations between people of faith and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals and communities in local, national and transnational contexts.

***Gill Valentine, School of Geography, University of Leeds***

#### **Religious Attitudes to Homosexuality**

Work with Stonewall exploring people of faiths' attitude to homosexuality (including focus groups with people from Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Jewish faiths).

***Pete Ward and Sarah Dunlop, Department of Education and Professional Studies, King's College London***

#### **Polish Migrants to Britain, Religion and Visual Culture**

Religion & Society Research Programme small project. Completed.

The research used photo-elicitation to explore Polish migrants' experience, including religious and other attachments. It discovered widespread experience of discrimination and that relationships with religion and kin were often used to counter this. Through photographic exhibitions, the project was able to bring these experiences to a wider public.

***Paul Weller, Tristram Hooley, Nicki Moore, John Marriott and Kieran Bentley, Faculty of Education, Health and Sciences and International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby***

#### **Religion and Belief in Higher Education: Researching the Experiences of Staff and Students in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland**

Commissioned by the Equality Challenge Unit, this study commenced in Spring 2010 and is due to complete and publish in July 2011. The project aims to develop an evidence base for understanding the experience of staff and students in higher education with a religion or belief. Methods included an on-line survey; case studies in a number of institutions; and a bibliographical review.

For more project details and interim findings see: [www.derby.ac.uk/religion-and-belief-in-HE](http://www.derby.ac.uk/religion-and-belief-in-HE)

***Andrew Yip, School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Nottingham; Michael Keenan, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nottingham Trent University; Sarah-Jane Page, Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University***

#### **Religion, Youth, and Sexuality**

Religion & Society Research Programme large project. Completed.

An investigation of how young people in Britain, aged 18-25, from the major religious traditions negotiate their religious and sexual identities, and the role of peers, the media, families, religious tradition etc. in informing such negotiations. The study includes heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth. Among other findings, the study shows that more dialogue needs to be held among religious young people - and between them and religious authority figures - on sexuality issues, particularly those regarding sexual difference and diversity.

## Appendix 8: Religion and democracy in Europe

From 2007, and continuing into 2008-09, the Network of European Foundations carried out the Initiative on Religion and Democracy in Europe. The UK's participants were the Barrow Cadbury Trust assisted by Professor Miles Hewstone from the Oxford Centre for the Study of Intergroup Conflict at the University of Oxford.

The Initiative resulted in publication of a number of reports including one by Beate Küpper and Andreas Zick (2010) on *Religion and Prejudice in Europe: New Empirical Findings*.

The research covered citizens from eight European countries including Great Britain (the others being France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal). One thousand citizens of over 16 years old from each country were identified within a 'probabilistic sample' (Küpper and Zick, 2010: 13) and were interviewed by telephone in relation to their attitudes to a number of matters including, for example, ethnic minorities, women, homosexuals and disabled people – and specifically in relation to the focus of this report, Jews and Muslims.

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# Contacts

## England

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline

FREEPOST RRLG-GHUX-CTRZ

Arndale House, The Arndale Centre, Manchester M4 3AQ

Main number: 0845 604 6610

Textphone: 0845 604 6620

Fax: 0845 604 6630

## Scotland

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline

FREEPOST RSAB-YJEJ-EXUJ

The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DU

Main number: 0845 604 5510

Textphone: 0845 604 5520

Fax: 0845 604 5530

## Wales

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline

FREEPOST RRLR-UEYB-UYZL

3rd Floor, 3 Callaghan Square, Cardiff CF10 5BT

Main number: 0845 604 8810

Textphone: 0845 604 8820

Fax: 0845 604 8830

Helpline opening times:

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This research review explores various approaches to defining religious discrimination, provides a working definition of it and examines the nature of the research evidence. It then considers whether religious discrimination has increased or decreased in Britain over the past decade, drawing on key qualitative and quantitative data sources. It assesses any differences between England, Scotland and Wales, and explores the contested concept of Islamophobia as a frame of reference for discrimination against Muslims. The report concludes by outlining the main relative gaps in the research and statistical evidence and suggests ways in which these might be filled.