

## SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN BRITISH AND GERMAN CITIES

Despite political and public anxieties, Muslim ethnic minority communities have been achieving integration in British and German cities for some time. That is the central finding of research by Dr **Sarah Hackett**, to be presented to the NORFACE migration conference at University College London this week.

Her study traces the employment and housing careers of Muslim communities in Newcastle upon Tyne and Bremen from the 1960s onwards. The findings show that their employment and housing patterns have often acted as catalysts for instances of cohesion, integration and multiculturalism within both cities' neighbourhoods.

The research finds that Muslim migrants in both cities have long been able to achieve their employment and housing ambitions, often in the form of businesses, owner-occupation and neighbourhood formation. Furthermore, their success has often been the result of an in-depth understanding of and interaction with their local surroundings and the White British or German population.

The research is based on a wide range of government documents and correspondence, census data and oral history interviews. It hopes to contribute to the understanding of the role played by Islam in ethnic minority settlement in Europe and suggests that a re-thinking of what is meant by 'integration' is needed.

Dr Hackett says:

'The debate on the integration of Muslims in Europe is marred by claims of incompatibility and conflict. European Muslims remain at the centre of a vibrant discussion regarding the future of multiculturalism, Islamic fundamentalism and the relationship between Islam and the West more widely.

'Yet my research strongly suggests that Islam should not be seen as a barrier to integration and that European anxiety regarding Muslim communities is greatly exaggerated. It shows that not only is integration possible, but that in Newcastle and Bremen it has been underway for some time.

'An insight into the settlement of Britain's South Asian Muslims and Germany's Turkish Muslims during the 1960s and 1970s, and an understanding of their subsequent behaviour and experiences, highlights the importance of the historical context in today's integration debate.'

ENDS

This research will feature in *Foreigners, Minorities and Integration: The Muslim Immigrant Experience in Britain and Germany*, a book to be published by Manchester University Press in late 2013.

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