

# From Multiculturalism to Integration: The Role of Muslim Women in the Implementation of Ethno-Religious Minority Policies in the UK (2001-2016)

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## Introduction

This book is written in the context of the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005 suicide attacks on the London underground train and bus transit system, which have come to be known as the 7/7 bombings, and were the only major terrorist attacks that have affected London during this century. Three British-born Muslims from Pakistani immigrant families, and one Jamaican who converted to Islam, were involved in these events. Since the incident, prejudice has been held towards Muslims, and the British government then decided to review its counter-terrorism policy, which had focused on foreign threats earlier.

This book entitled ‘From Multiculturalism to Integration: The Role of Muslim Women in the Implementation of Ethno-Religious Minority Policies in the UK (2001-2016)’ authored by Abeeda Qureshi, presents a comprehensive analysis of the role of Muslim women activists and their engagement with political and governance processes in the UK between these dates. It also examines the coordination of the government with Muslim women during the formulation and implementation of the post-9/11 and 7/7 Preventing Violent Extremism policies (PVE). The role of Muslim women was considered necessary regarding policymaking toward the Muslim community living in the UK. Scholars have mostly overlooked the involvement of Muslim women in public policies; however, this book highlights the positive role of non-elected Muslim women activists in countering extremism and radicalization.

All the chapters are thematically arranged and well-illustrated, set in a historical context and a contemporary scenario. It is written as a formal piece of scholarly research writing. The arguments are well structured and offer a comprehensive account of the role of women in peace and security.

Following the introduction, the second chapter proposes the theoretical framework and highlights its relevance and implications. A ‘de-centered’ approach was taken for the policymaking process with the combination of two theoretical frameworks: the ‘hybrid’ model for policy implementation, to explain the role of Muslim women and local actors in interpreting the national policy to suit local needs,

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and the 'representation theory' to describe the active involvement of Muslim women activists in the policy process. These theories are applied to explain the national, local and individual levels of analysis.

The third chapter discusses the key terms and concepts such as multiculturalism, integration, and inter-culturalism used by different theorists to manage socio-cultural diversity in response to large-scale migration to Europe during the post-second world war period. The 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US, the riots of the summer of 2001 in northern Britain, 7/7 in London, and the fact that the people involved in the terrorist acts were the products of multicultural societies, raised a new debate about the relevance of multiculturalism in the changing socio-political environment.

The fourth chapter traces the policies in the UK toward its minorities and discusses the development in the history of race relations. It examines the measures taken by the government to integrate its ethno-religious minorities and further discusses Britain's response to the post-2001 riots. Since the 2001 disturbances, a new policy was adopted, named 'community cohesion,' while in response to the London bombings in 2005, PVE was introduced as a counter-terrorism strategy aimed at addressing the issues of extremism and radicalization.

The fifth chapter investigates and examines the engagement of elected and non-elected women representatives at the national level in informing and implementing the PVE policies introduced by the British government. Muslim women activists were seen to be in a much better position, and their involvement in the policy process has become more systematic and institutionalized. The sixth chapter examines the policies and cooperation between the government and Muslim women activists at a local level. To analyze policy execution at local levels, the author selected the town of Luton as a suitable case study because extremist tendencies had been found there, and it is the largest Muslim-populated area in the UK. The seventh chapter traces the history of the political representation of Muslim women in the British parliament and further highlights the descriptive and substantive representation of Muslim women. The last chapter presents the conclusions, summarizes the discussions, and highlights the key findings of the study.

The vital role played by elected and non-elected women representatives belonging to ethno-religious minorities in the policy process will encourage other communities to participate in the policies actively. Women activists or non-governmental organizations have the access and knowledge to understand the problems of the community concerned compared to elected representatives. The government should consult the respective community before taking any policy decisions because imposing laws from the top is ineffective. Policymakers in Pakistan can follow the policy model as explained in this book for the success of any policy.