

KIERAN FLYNN

# ISLAM IN THE WEST

Iraqi Shi'i Communities in Transition and Dialogue



Peter Lang

# STUDIES IN THEOLOGY

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## SOCIETY AND CULTURE

This book studies the historical, religious and political concerns of the Iraqi Shi'i community as interpreted by the members of that community who now live in the United Kingdom and Ireland, following the 2003–2010 war and occupation in Iraq. It opens up a creative space to explore dialogue between Islam and the West, looking at issues such as intra-Muslim conflict, Muslim–Christian relations, the changing face of Arab Islam and the experience of Iraq in the crossfire of violence and terrorism – all themes which are currently emerging in preaching and in discussion among Iraqi Shi'a in exile. The book's aim is to explore possibilities for dialogue with Iraqi Shi'i communities who wish, in the midst of political, social and religious transition, to engage with elements of Christian theology such as pastoral and liberation theology.

Kieran Flynn holds a PhD from Trinity College Dublin in Intercultural Theology and Interreligious Studies, with a specialization in Islam and Muslim–Christian relations. He lectures on intercultural theology and Muslim–Christian relations at Carlow College and the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin.



# Islam in the West

STUDIES IN THEOLOGY  
SOCIETY AND CULTURE

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**Series Editors:**

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Volume 9



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Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek.  
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Flynn, Kieran.

Islam in the west, Iraqi Shi'i communities in transition and dialogue / Kieran Flynn.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-3-0343-0905-9 (alk. paper)

1. Iraqis--Great Britain. 2. Iraqis--Ireland. 3. Shiites--Great Britain. 4. Shiites--Ireland. 5. Iraq--History--2003- 6. Refugees--Great Britain. 7. Refugees--Ireland. I. Title.

DA125.I69F59 2013

305.6'9782089927567041--dc23

2013004378

ISSN 1662-9930

ISBN 978-3-0343-0905-9 (print)

ISBN 978-3-0353-0342-1 (eBook)

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Printed in Germany

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## Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my family members for their support and understanding throughout this project. My parents have been both the inspiration and foundation for my world of faith and understanding. I am indebted to them for their generosity and faithfulness to me throughout my entire life.

I am particularly indebted to the members of the Shi'i community, Milltown, Dublin, for their constant encouragement and inspiration throughout this work. I want to thank in particular Sayyid 'Ali Al Saleh and the members of his family, also Sheik Abu Ahmed Khalad, Sayyid Abbas Al Mousawi, Dr. Rafid Al Kashan, Sheik Majid Al Hashim and Ahmed 'Ali.

I want to acknowledge the support and encouragement I received from the Iraqi Shi'i Community living in London. At the Al Kho'ei Foundation I was received with kindness by Sayyid Fadil Al Milani and Mr. Yusuf Al Kho'ei on many occasions. I want to express my gratitude to the entire community of the Dar Al Islam Foundation, Cricklewood for their encouragement and support. I wish to thank all the members of the Ahulbayt Foundation, Kilburn, and particularly Sayyid Fadil Al Mahadi for their hospitality, welcome and encouragement. I wish to acknowledge the members and founders of the Muhammadi Trust, Walm Lane and Dr. Sayyid Majid Raza Abidi for their support and welcome during my visit there. I was received with kindness by the entire community of Abrar Islamic Foundation, Crawford Place, and learned a great deal from Sheik Hassan 'Ali. I wish to thank Sayyid Muhammad Al Musawi and all concerned with the World Ahul Bayt Islamic League for their welcome and encouragement. I wish to thank all the members of the Imam 'Ali Foundation, Brondesbury Park, and Sayyid Murtadha Al Kashmiri for their information about Shi'i Islam in Iraq and Najaf. I wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement received from the Iraqi Association, Palingswick House, and particularly by Mr. Jabar Hassan, the support and encouragement of Dr. Munthir Al Kadami and all the staff of the Iraqi Welfare Association,

Edgware Road. I wish to wish to thank Mr. 'Ali Joudi of the Islamic Unity Society for the generosity with which he introduced me to Iraqi groups and for our discussions on Shi'i Islam.

Many people enabled me to visit Shi'i communities in the Middle East. I am indebted to Jeff Hann for his skill and support in arranging my trip to Iraq in 2010. I am particularly grateful to him for his assistance in coordinating my encounter with Shi'i *'Ulama* in Najaf. I am grateful to Muhammad 'Ali for meeting me in Karbala and assisting me there. I wish to thank 'Ali Arabi for enabling me to visit Shi'i shrines and communities in Damascus and Aleppo during my trip to Syria in 2009. I wish to thank Elaine Daly for facilitating my trips to Jordan and the Palestinian territories in 2008 and 2007.

I am deeply grateful to all my Muslim friends too numerous to mention by name, for their support, encouragement and inspiration.

I am deeply grateful to all staff and students of the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin. I am especially grateful to Dr. John D'Arcy May, my initial supervisor prior to his retirement, who encouraged me to begin reflecting on interreligious dialogue. Dr. Norbert Hintersteiner then became my supervisor and I thank him for his support and understanding.

I wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement of Dr. Anthony O'Mahony and Dr. Roja Fazaeli for this project and their insightful and helpful comments on the final text.

I wish to acknowledge the support of my many friends; again, I don't wish to leave anybody out by mentioning names, but wish to acknowledge all who have faith in me and have encouraged me on my journey towards understanding and faith.

## General Introduction

In this work I wish to respond to the task, expressed by Anthony O'Mahony,<sup>1</sup> of developing strategies for entering into the meaning system of another tradition so that one could become familiar with a faith and a faith community different from that of one's own. My interest was to listen and dialogue with the Muslim community of Ireland and Britain and allow my dialogue to be directed by those I encountered. There had been little academic research into the Muslim community in Ireland<sup>2</sup> and I wished to expand the knowledge base of this community in dialogue with similar communities in London and Britain.

The Shi'i community in Ireland and the United Kingdom provided me with a useful and valuable entry-point and sounding-board for the study of Islam. Although there are Shi'i members from Iraq, Pakistan, Iran, the Gulf States and Lebanon in abundance in Ireland, it would be impossible in a study such as this to deal with any more than the Arab Middle East and with one national community in particular. I began my reflection as American and coalition soldiers were occupying Iraq in 2004. The period of my field research from 2004 until 2010 corresponded with the war and occupation of Iraq by American and coalition forces. I decided to reflect almost entirely on the Iraqi Shi'i community during this period. This time was one of obvious transition, turmoil and trauma for many Iraqi refugees

- 1 Anthony O'Mahony, "Interreligious Dialogue, Muslim-Christian Relations and Catholic Shi'a Engagement", in Anthony O'Mahony, Wulstan Peterburs, Mohammad 'Ali Shomali (eds), *Catholics and Shi'a in Dialogue*, Melisende, London, 2004, p. 76.
- 2 Kieran Flynn, "Understanding Islam in Ireland", *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations*, Vol. 17, No. 2, April 2006, pp. 223–238. In University College Cork, in the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, part of the Study of Religions Department has concluded a project entitled "History of Islam in Ireland"; the Principal Investigator is Dr. Oliver Scharbrodt. The researchers have published their findings in the *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 2011.

among them the Shi'a. The period marks the tremendous movement of a nation from dictatorship, war, occupation and insurgency to security and democratic participation. It is this unstable political landscape that frames the background to my reflection and research.

What was immediately obvious was that I was in a Muslim space, a place where Islam was both the dominant "symbol and signification system".<sup>3</sup> As I had completed a thesis on "Understanding Islam in Ireland"<sup>4</sup> which presented an overview of Muslim communities in Ireland, I was now in a position to develop this topic in dialogue with a Muslim community that was open and hospitable to ethnographic research and the exposition of religious, historical and political narratives of emancipation and empowerment. From April 2006 until December 2010 I recorded and transcribed fifty-eight sermons as they were addressed to the community in Dublin and London. Over the period it was possible to identify emerging codes and themes that were of import to the community. In September 2007 and January 2009, I attended *majlis* rituals in London, visiting the Al Kho'ei Foundation, Dar Al Islam and Abrar House, where I gathered sermons and interviewed key personalities.

I seek to express the foundational religious, historical and political narratives of a particular community, Iraqi Shi'a, in the context of the war and occupation from 2004 until 2010. I wish to give voice and intelligibility to their religious, political and social concerns, so that they may recognize themselves in the narratives and that others in the West may understand and appreciate their perspective, which I believe is unique and significant for the larger Islamic community. The Iraqi Shi'i community in the West is the lens through which I view all Iraqi Shi'a and the means to interpret the larger Shi'i Middle East. There is a distance between what the community in exile reflects and the reality in Iraq and the Middle East, yet I believe that they offer a unique lens from which to reflect on the foundational narratives of all Iraqi Shi'a as they seek empowerment and liberation.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

4 Kieran Flynn, "Understanding Islam in Ireland", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 17, No. 2, April 2006, pp. 223–238.

## Overview of the Study

This study is divided into seven chapters. From an introduction to the specific community, namely, the Twelver Shi'i exiles in Ireland and the United Kingdom (UK), I move to a presentation of the religious foundation and subsequent developments that have produced this community, so that the reader is prepared, first, for this community's self-presentation, and, second, for a discussion of the dialogue of this community with so-called western issues, both secular and religious. Chapter 1, then, presents the settlement history and migration of Shi'i Muslims into Ireland and the United Kingdom. I introduce the Iraqi Shi'i community as situated within the broad Muslim and Arab communities that are found in the West. I introduce the specific communities that I have been in dialogue with, their social context and their particular concerns. From the outset there is an emphasis on the political dimension of the community and its political expression as part of its particular identity.

Chapter 2 explores Shi'i Islam as such and the main narratives of Shi'i doctrine and history, these include emancipation and empowerment. The history of the succession to Muhammad and the Imamate are among the most popular topics in Shi'i preaching and ritual. This history is both the mythic and primordial narrative of identity for the Shi'a. Children and adults are aware of stories and narratives associated with 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, Hussein and the remaining Imams. Consciousness of these characters and their place in history forms the basis of Shi'i spiritual life and religious ritual. I introduce the *Ashura* narrative which is central to Shi'i religious ritual, theology and self-understanding.

In Chapter 3, I examine narratives of empowerment among Shi'a in Iran. Shi'ism is overshadowed not only in Iraq but throughout the world by Shi'i Iran and, in particular, by developments leading to and following the Iranian Islamic Revolution. Although political Shi'ism has a long history in Iran, the developments and personalities of revolutionary Iran have an enormous influence on Shi'ism through the world. The intellectual and political leaders of revolutionary Iran continue to provide an important foundation for all the serious study of Shi'ism today.

Chapter 4 looks at the history and development of the Shi'a in Iraq, particularly in the twentieth century. Throughout modern Iraqi history the Shi'a have played a significant role as both a religious and political minority. We recognize within Shi'ism in Iraq a history of opposition, liberation and political emancipation. These roots early in the twentieth century provide the foundation for the emergence of Iraqi Shi'a in political participation following the fall of Saddam Hussein. Iraq's recent history of dictatorship, occupation and war is enmeshed in a larger narrative that has its roots in colonial history and the formation of the state. The development of political participation, the commitment to emancipation and liberation, the focus on human rights and democracy form a recurrent theme in this study, and its roots in Iraqi Shi'i communities are evident well before its present expression.

Chapter 5 looks at the developments that have taken place in Iraq throughout the years 2004–2010. The context of transition has been one of war, occupation, violence and insurgency. The Shi'a in exile have taken a great interest in developments in their country, assisting and providing insight where they can, and building bridges of reconciliation and understanding in the West and in Iraq. This chapter sets the immediate context for listening to the voices of Shi'a themselves. The Shi'a in exile have contributed and continue to contribute a great deal to political, religious and cultural development in present-day Iraq. They provide a contact with the western world and an insight into western scholarship and discourse.

The sermons and narratives that have made up much of my conversations and interviews with Iraqi Shi'a form, as mentioned above in relation to issues of methodology, the core of Chapter 6. I include nine sermons and an analysis of each. Each sermon reflects an aspect of the life of the community and its concerns. Together they provide an insight into the religious and political life of the community. The themes express the concerns and appreciations of the community at this particular moment in time. They reflect internal hopes and concern of the community, the problems of integration and living in the West, religious and political themes of memory and identity, the centrality of the Imamate and the foundational narratives to Shi'a, the hope for transparent political representation and the desire for dialogue with all sectors of society.



In Chapter 7 I present a dialogue between Shi'i and Catholic theology, feminist discourse, liberation theology and Christian political theology. I have identified areas of common concern and possible future collaboration. Shi'i scholars likewise can draw on the rich Christian heritage of political theology to form a particular Shi'i political theology, which takes account of the centrality of the Karbala symbolism in modern Shi'i life and devotion. The central themes of suffering, liberation and memory which are central to understanding Karbala and are foundational to the Christian political and liberation theology, particularly the theology of Gustavo Gutierrez and Johann Baptist Metz. These could provide Shi'i scholars with valuable insights for further collaboration with Christian scholars.

In sum, then, the structure of the study follows the exigencies of identifying and introducing for western scholars and Christians these Iraqi Shi'i communities who have migrated to and settled within Ireland and the United Kingdom. They are my principal dialogue partners and it is their foundational story that requires articulation in the West. They form a specific social, religious and ethnic group, though they share much in common with other migrants, particularly Muslim migrants. However they occupy a unique narrative within Arab settlement in western society.

The narrative history of early Islamic community is foundational in the memory and imagination of Muslims. This is the religious and symbolic narrative through which Muslims understand and appreciate their Islamic identity. For Shi'i Muslims, their interpretation of the early history of Islam and the foundations of the Islamic community are at the heart of what it means to be a Shi'a, what it means to be a follower of Ahul Bayt and the Imams. They have a particular reverence for Imam 'Ali ibn Talib and identify a unique relationship between the Prophet Muhammad and 'Ali. They see in the history of Islamic empire<sup>5</sup> an alternative leadership to

5 There have been many books written which describe the golden age of early Islam and particularly the 'Abbasid Empire: Amira K. Bennison, *The Great Caliphs, The Golden Age of the 'Abbasid Empire*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2007; Hugh Kennedy, *The Court of the Caliphs, When Baghdad ruled the Muslim World*, Phoenix Books, London, 2004; Andre Clot, *Harun Al Rashid and the World of the Thousand and One Nights*, Saqi Books, London, 2005.

the golden age of the Caliphs and a legacy of suffering and lament, denial of political participation, minority opposition, integrity in guidance and divine designation. These themes are dominant themes today for Iraqi Shi'i communities, for whom early Islamic history and the Imamate are alive, relevant and vibrant realities.

Iraqi Shi'a are situated within the larger story of Shi'ism in the Middle East. Iran has a long history of Shi'ism and has exerted much influence on the Iraqi Shi'i community over its history. There have been close contacts between Iranian and Iraqi *'Ulama* over centuries but in the twentieth century there has been a flourishing of intellectual and religious activity culminating in the Islamic Revolution of 1979. This has the effect of promoting an Iraqi Shi'i religious opposition to the state and fomenting a vibrant grassroots movement in Iraq. There are many parallels between Shi'ism in Iraq and in Lebanon and there has been much sharing of ideas among intellectuals. Shi'ism in the greater Middle East has contributed much to understanding the larger international context of Iraqi Shi'a today.

Iraqi Shi'a have faced a long history of religious and political oppression in their history. It is out of this context that a narrative of emancipation and empowerment emerges. It is this I believe that has given Iraqi Shi'a their distinctive political theology. In the twentieth century Iraqi Shi'a faced the opposition of the state on many fronts, culminating in their opposition to the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Over the last hundred years they developed strategies and resources to fuel this opposition and to define their specificity.

The Iraqi Shi'a have been in a dramatic transition in recent years; hence the framing of this study on the years 2004 to 2010. These years were among the most devastating and transformative for Iraq as a nation. Over this period, Iraq was subjected to war, occupation, sectarian terrorism and violence on an unprecedented scale due to the employment of modern methods of war. Yet there has been a slow and difficult political and religious emergence. Many Iraqis were forced to flee their country and seek refuge abroad; they went on to form Iraqi communities in exile. Others already in exile sought to participate in the political emergence that was taking place in their home country under the direction of American rule.

The developments over these years form the basis for much of this research and the narratives affecting Shi'i Iraqi communities during this time.

Central to this research are the sermons, interviews and conversations I conducted among Iraqi Shi'i communities. Here the religious, political and social narratives of the community are expressed and made intelligible in a ritual space. The themes of exile, displacement, religious memory, suffering and loss, political awakening and leadership (among others) are expressed as religious concerns. The sermons give voice to the deep felt concerns of the community, the search for identity and the desire for reconciliation. In a new context of empowerment lies the possibility of recovery from the trauma of terror, violence, displacement and division. Furthermore I trust that a Christian political theology, which acknowledges the centrality of recalling and attending to suffering in history, will assist my dialogue partners in continuing to build their own specific political theology relevant to their needs.



# Shi'i Muslim Migration and Settlement in Ireland and the UK

## Introduction

Little attention has been paid to the settlement histories of those Muslim communities in Britain and Ireland who subscribe to non-Sunni traditions. The reason for this is largely due to the public face of Islam in Britain having remained almost exclusively associated with South Asian Sunni dominated Islam.<sup>1</sup> In most academic discourses Islam in the West seems to be equated with Sunnism. This monolithic view has obscured the proper recognition and understanding of the religious and social experience of a significant religious minority in the West. There is no significant study of Muslim minorities in Britain or Ireland.

I am particularly concerned with the Shi'a of the Twelver, *Ithana Ashari*, denomination and within that denomination those who have come from the Middle East, especially Iraq. This is essentially a minority nationalistic community within an already identifiable Muslim minority in exile.

- 1 Humayun Ansari, *The Infidel Within, Muslims in Britain Since 1800*, Hurst and Co., London 2003, p. 380. Philip Lewis, *Islamic Britain*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1994. Lewis presents an overview of religion, politics and identity among British Muslims, particularly those living in the Bradford and Midlands regions. In Philip Lewis, John Snow, *Young, British and Muslim*, Continuum International Publishing, London, 2007, Lewis presents an overview of emerging trends in Islam in Britain in the first decade of this millennium. In Tahir Abbas (ed.), *Muslim Britain, Communities under Pressure*, Zed Books, London, 2005, Abbas edits a series of essays that present the challenge facing Muslim communities in Britain in recent years.

Identifying this community alone involves clarifying particular theological and historical narratives within a larger tradition and history that has deep theological and political roots.

A diverse range of historical, social, cultural and theological factors determine the ways in which minority Muslim communities come to terms with British and Irish society. I seek to examine the early history of Shi'ism as it impacts upon the contemporary religious, social and political experience of this Shi'i community. This is a process of identity building which takes account of the particular history of this community as it has evolved in recent decades. There is a constant interplay between past and present realities. The situation in the Middle East is a gathering place of diverse political historical and theological traditions.

The recent history of Iraq, including the American war and occupation, the overthrow of Saddam and the establishment of a National Government is but the end of a much larger history that begins with the birthplace of civilization<sup>2</sup> and covers twelve centuries of Islamic history before we see the arrival of colonialism and the emergence of a nation state. The recent and modern history of this state is tied closely to the experience and development of these communities in exile. It has been an experience that has been tainted with violence and tyranny, exile, the hope of return, state building and democratic participation. It has seen the arrival and importance of civil rights and organizations that reflect these concerns.

It is possible for those in exile today to travel to Baghdad, maintain contact with family and community and to access Arab television channels and newspapers. It is possible to have a role in religious and political life of that nation while continuing a life in exile. The experience of exile by this community in a globalized and multicultural European society is directly tied to and reflects the present reality of their home Middle Eastern culture and current, social, political and religious realities.

There are significant links between the Iraqi Shi'i London community and the Shi'i community in Dublin. These communities share a common contemporary history of exile and integration, common social, religious

2 William Polk, *Understanding Islam*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2006, pp. 13–34.

and political heritage. These communities are engaged in frequent dialogue and have shared religious and social leaders in recent times. There is much communication between these communities and with the ease of conventional air travel, there is a constant exchange of experts, ideas and information. There is however a significant difference in size, the London community consisting of a much larger number of members and with a greater diversity of services and organizations. There are particular national communities and organizations that are only represented in Ireland. Yet in Ireland, leaders and social activists of note have emerged that have played a significant role in the London community.

### 1.1 Islam in Ireland: A General Outline and History<sup>3</sup>

The Irish Muslim community is of relatively recent origin. The first Muslims arrived in Ireland in the early 1950s coming mostly for education. Many came to study medicine, particularly at the Royal College of Surgeons. The first students were from South Africa but were followed by students from India, Malaysia and the Gulf States. By 1969 numbers had risen to 100 and the Dublin Islamic Society was established. With the assistance of the government of Abu Dhabi a permanent address at 7 Harrington St. was established. By 1983 the facilities in Harrington Street were no longer adequate for the needs of the growing community. With assistance of the Qatar and Kuwaiti authorities the property at 163 South Circular Road was

- 3 Kieran Flynn, "Understanding Islam in Ireland", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 17, No. 12, Birmingham, 2006, pp. 224–233. This article gives an overview of the history and development of Muslim history and migration in Ireland. It identifies the early development, the central institutions, the recent developments and the present challenges facing the Muslim community in Ireland. *The Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 2011, was compiled by a group of researchers focusing on Islam in Ireland. This was part of project undertaken by the Study of Religions Department at University College, Cork and completed in 2011.

acquired. Sheikh Abdullah and Sheikh Yahya M. Al Hussein were among those appointed as trustees.

Dublin City Mosque is the oldest-established mosque and Muslim community in Ireland. It is the headquarters of the Islamic Foundation of Ireland. Every Muslim is an honorary member of the Foundation. The Foundation owns a shop for the sale of halal meat and a restaurant which caters for the growing community. The Dublin Mosque attracts Muslims from all over the Islamic world and has members from at least fourteen different states. Due to its centre city location it is extremely popular with students in the nearby colleges and those engaged in city-centre service occupations.

In 1992 Sheikh Hamadan Ben Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Governor of Dubai and Founder of the Al Maktoum Foundation agreed to finance the construction of a Muslim primary school and Islamic Cultural Centre at Clonskeagh, Dublin. The centre was opened in November 1996. Sheikh Halawa from Egypt is the present Imam. Each Friday this mosque attracts over 1,000 Muslims for prayer. There are among others, growing Libyan and Egyptian communities attending Clonskeagh Centre. This community attracts many middle class and professional Muslims living and working in the southern part of the city. It is a valuable resource for the whole Muslim population, a centre of excellence in hospitality providing many forums for discussion on integration and multiculturalism. This is also the site for the well established and government funded Muslim primary school and other educational activities.

With the increase in the arrival of Muslims in Ireland in the 1990s there has been a growth in the establishment of Muslim communities throughout the country. This is most evident in Dublin; at present there are significant communities gathering in Blackpits, Moore Lane, Lucan, Castleknock and Tallaght. There has been the emergence of a growing South Asian community, with many young men arriving from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India preferring the economic and social climate of Ireland to London or the United Kingdom.



The Irish Muslim community has been described as “coming of age”.<sup>4</sup> Presently there are active Muslim communities in many large towns in Ireland and a growing population of over 30,000. The first generation of migrants have set down roots here and there is a growing population of youth and children of the second generation attending schools here. While maintaining strong links with their home countries Muslim families are developing strong attachments to Irish Society and setting down roots in their adopted home. There is a gradual movement towards participation and integration into civil society with Muslims seeking employment at all levels of society and engagement in government, religious, cultural and civil bodies devoted to integration, settlement and security. With the formation of the Council of Imams in 2006, Muslims from diverse and minority communities now have a common voice and platform for articulating their hopes and aspirations within Irish Society. The Muslim community is no longer trying to survive or establish itself; it now has established permanent administrative and organizational structures for integration, development and dialogue. This community plays a valuable role in the wider society articulating a new religious reality in this part of the world. Despite problems in representation and a dominance by Arab issues and concern in the past, Irish Muslims feel at home here and are being challenged to express their religious beliefs and practices within a society that has shown itself open to and tolerant of diversity and difference.

4 Kieran Flynn, “Understanding Islam in Ireland”, 2006, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, pp. 223–233.

## 1.2 Shi'i Islam and the Ahul Bayt Centre<sup>5</sup>

Like the Islamic Foundation of Ireland, the foundation of the Irish Shi'i community was laid by a few medical students during the 1970s. Many of them came to study at the Royal College of Surgeons and the Department of Medicine, University College Dublin. As students they rented a small house in the Portobello area of South Dublin and when this was unable to accommodate them they moved into a bigger house in Rathgar. With the arrival of other members in the 1980s there developed the need for a more permanent site and centre for the expanding community. Tapping into their own resources, the community decided to build a proper centre and in September 1996 the present Hussania, Ahul Bayt Shi'i Islamic Cultural Centre was officially opened in Milltown, Dublin. The Ahul Bayt Cultural Centre is situated at Milltown Bridge and is the only Shi'i Muslim Islamic centre for the whole of Ireland. It aims to serve social, cultural and spiritual needs of the entire Shi'i Muslim population of Ireland and draws Shi'i members from throughout the country, particularly at festival and during Ramadan. At present there are over 3,000 Shi'a working, studying and living throughout Ireland with the majority coming from Dublin although there are sizeable communities in Galway and Belfast. The Shi'i community reflects the diversity of the Shi'i world with members coming from all over the Middle East and Pakistan and a large number from Iraq and Iran. The Iraqi community plays a significant role in community affairs: it accounts for about 55 per cent of the Shi'i population. There is considerable interest in Iraqi affairs and Iraqi members are most involved in the running of activities at the centre.

There is a sizeable Iraqi Kurdish community in Ireland with 200 refugees arriving in 2006 alone. In the past there was a Kurdish association but this has been allowed to lapse. Even though these Kurds are Sunni, they

5 Oliver Scharbrodt, "Shaping the Public Image of Islam, The Shi'i of Ireland as 'Moderate' Muslims", *The Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 518–533, Routledge, London, 2011.

rather gather in the Ahul Bayt Centre for occasions of marriage, funeral and remembrance of deceased ones. This centre offers a place of hospitality and prayer where they can express their Muslim faith without difficulty. They regard this centre as part of their Iraqi home and heritage and there are strong links with the Shi'i community and leadership.

Although there is a proportionately large number of doctors from within the Iraqi community, many of the members are working within the service industries in Dublin city. There are business men, academics, restaurant owners, I.T. specialists, security guards and nurses among the employed. There are a number who are dependent upon social welfare living as refugees and a large number of students. Most of the men arrived here within the last twenty years, leaving behind for the most part the repressive regime of Saddam Hussein and a futile Iraq–Iran War. Almost all of the eligible men have married wives from their home country although some have married Irish women and established young families here. The average age is forty-five and the average family size consists of three children.<sup>6</sup>

There are a small per centage who come to Ireland on contract work, foreign affairs or for study leave. During their time here for the most part, they develop strong ties with the local Shi'i community and participate in communal activities faithfully. In subsequent years they often return on holidays to Ireland or maintain contact with their friends here.

The centre is a wonderful resource for Shi'i Muslims in Ireland particularly in the Dublin area. It is independent of foreign Foundations and Institutions and self funding through the generosity of its members. It is an active and vibrant Islamic institution. It is open each day for afternoon and evening prayers with *du'a kumayal* every Thursday and regular lectures. Each Saturday there are prayers, lectures and meals together to help inform the community and build relationships. There is a strong commitment to build and foster community through mutual support. Friday prayers are well attended even by those living far from the Dublin area, and the community conscientiously gathers to mark the various observances set down

6 During the *Eid Al Fitr* Celebrations 2002, a survey was carried out to account for new arrivals to the country and the number of their children.

in the Shi'i calendar. Unlike similar centres in the UK, the Shi'i Hussania in Dublin is served by a fulltime Imam, Dr. 'Ali Al Saleh, who is in residence to meet the needs of the community.

### 1.3 Britain's Muslim Population<sup>7</sup>

#### 1.3.1 *British Muslim History and Migration*

Muslims began arriving in Britain from the beginning of the nineteenth century; from that time there were a small number of Muslim seamen and traders from the Middle East who began settling around major British ports. Arab Muslims settled in South Shields and began a community there. Similarly communities grew up around the ports of Liverpool and Cardiff. However, the vast majority of Muslim immigration dates from the post-war immigration of Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Indians who came to fill the labour shortage in London and in the Midlands, and in the former textile cities of Yorkshire and Lancashire. The post-1945 migration of Muslims to Britain can be divided into two main phases. The first phase from 1945 to the early 1970s corresponds to a period of immigration through economic motivation on the part of migrants, employers and governments, following lines build up from the colonial period. The second period began with the oil crisis of 1973 and lasts to the present. A number of factors contributed to the overall trend in migration to Britain. The partition of India in 1947 and that of Cyprus in 1974 had major repercussions for the migration of Muslims to Britain. The building of the Mangla dam near Mirpur in 1960 also had a marked impact on the migration of Mirpuris. In 1961 the announcement of the forthcoming Commonwealth Immigrants Act triggered an enormous rush to "beat the ban". Contrary to the expected result the rate of immigration from India, Pakistan and

7 Humayun Ansari, *The Infidel Within*, Hurst and Company, London, 2004.