



OWENS: What are the biggest challenges to the integration of Muslims in the United Kingdom today?

FALKNER: I think some of the challenges have to do with Muslims themselves and some are to do with public policy. I'm optimistic about Muslims because I think they are beginning to realize that their own destiny lies in their hands, that they have to define the kind of leadership they want, and set about engaging more openly in the public debate through the media. They're also carrying out some of the traditional functions of dissent in democracies, which is to advocate for your cause, to take a prominent role in advocacy and in putting across your point of view.

I think those challenges are the easier ones. I think the more difficult challenges are to do with the shocking socioeconomic factors that still blight Muslims. I'm talking about studies that show that only a few years ago—2001—28% of Muslim households were living in rented accommodation, not owning accommodation, in a country which is largely home-owning. There's exceptional overcrowding; 32% of them live in overcrowded homes. There's very high youth unemployment; 31% of Muslims of working age have no qualifications.

All of those things—the socioeconomic and the mobility for migrants that drives migrants to success, which is the idea of moving up the ladder, capturing the American dream—that seems to be much more ephemeral, and I think

the past. What concerns me in the UK is the very high levels of spatial segregation combined with a very generous family

in public policy the state really has to engage to try and change some of those things, to improve education and take away the factors that keep Muslims back.

OWENS: Do these problems resolve naturally over the course of several generations?

FALKNER: In normal circumstances, it should work itself out over time. That's been the natural course of migration in

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