

Portfolio title page:

**Disrupting Constructions of 'Otherness': language, power and  
identity.**

Thesis title: How do Muslim men in the UK talk about their experiences of  
discrimination?

Author: Paul Garden

Qualification: Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology

Institution: City, University of London

Department of Psychology

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To my ever-patient partner, Andres, thank you, thank you, and thank you!

Finally, to the Muslim community, and to all those who are oppressed simply because they belong to a 'minority' group, may there always be a light in dark places for you.

## Declaration

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Linking Statement/Preface

## 1.0 Preface:

This portfolio consists of three pieces of my academic work: My research thesis, a client study/process report, and a publishable paper, which is based on the thesis. I will begin by giving a brief overview of each of these pieces of my work, and then discuss how they are linked, both theoretically and in practice.

### 1.1 The thesis:

The thesis is concerned with discrimination against the British Muslim community, specifically on Muslim males who are an understudied group and the subject of intense scrutiny and suspicion at both national and global levels. The research and the researcher come from a social justice position. The Oxford dictionary definition of Social Justice closely captures the position of my research: 'The objective of creating a fair and equal society in which each individual matters, their rights are recognized and protected, and decisions are made in ways that are fair and honest'.

The interviews that I conducted with Muslim men have been analysed using a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis as a means of identifying and highlighting the discursive climate within which the participants are living their lives. In this way, I aim to speak directly to the impact and consequences of this context, with the aim of informing policy makers. Additionally, the study can inform clinicians who work with Muslim males by offering an understanding of their experiences beyond the phenomenological lens, i.e. by gaining insight into how the internal experiences of Muslim men are brought into being in the social and political worlds that they inhabit.

Throughout the analysis, a picture emerged of the Muslim men in the study working hard to redefine their identity in the face of constructions that 'othered' them, positioning them as suspicious, dangerous and threatening outsiders. The intersection of their identities (e.g. Muslim, Male, Islamic, Asian, British) leaves these men vulnerable to discourses that they experience as questioning and attacking their identity, both externally as well as internally. As such, rather than being the main focus of the study, discrimination became the context within which



the participants did a substantial amount of identity-related discursive work, with important implications for their subjectivity. The thesis describes 6 main themes- or discursive categories- which each highlight and demonstrate the various ways in which Muslim identity is attacked, and how the participants then have to engage with the discourses in order to distance themselves from them.

### 1.2 The publishable paper:

The publishable paper summarises most of what is described above, but rather than elaborate each of the six discursive themes, it focuses specifically on the various ways in which the participants had to work hard to distance themselves from negative constructions of Muslims, and to reconstruct themselves as 'acceptable', and 'not that'. In the paper, I use examples from each of the participants to ensure that they understand that their voices were heard.

### 1.3 The Client Study:

The client study outlines a psychodynamic intervention with a young black female client who I worked with over a 30-week period. This piece of work was particularly interesting for me due to the challenges that it posed both professionally and personally. It centred very much around issues of power that required me to explore and confront my own unconscious at least as much as that of my patient. My struggle was mainly around the way in which the work required me to make myself available for the client to put me in an attacking position in which she might be frightened of me in the transference; to have the option to use me as the 'bad' object in order that she might be able to see her own role in the repeating experiences she had around conflictual relationships.

Given the important differences in our age, gender and ethnicity (i.e. the client aged 20, Black and female, and myself as a much older white male), I took up a rather protective stance with the client. The process required me to deeply reflect on and rethink my values and understanding of what 'a strong and ethical therapeutic relationship' really means, in terms of how I need to be available to both protect and challenge patients whose vulnerability impacts me in particular ways. The client study demonstrates my struggle with the tension inherent within

this dynamic, which confronted me with the awareness that what I offered as support could also be experienced as imposition. It also outlines the journey I made within the therapy alongside my client in order to address those issues.

## 2.0 The links:

There are important epistemological and ontological tensions between the research thesis/publishable paper, and client study aspects of this portfolio, which also highlight the fundamental difference in the positions we must adopt as Counselling Psychologists in terms of being both researchers and clinicians. Through our work as therapists, we construct what it means to be a person, and encourage clients to construct a particular kind of self through our questions and responses, which are all rooted in the epistemological and ontological assumptions of the model we work from (Willig, 2019). It is therefore crucial that I as a therapist am aware of the assumptions that I am making to construct my clients, their issues, and myself, and must therefore recognise that the content of the assumptions I make underpins my way of relating to another person. However, what I actually did with this awareness of the constructed nature of client work, differs from what I did with the analysis of my thesis in important ways.

In all three pieces, of work presented in this portfolio, language was the focus of how people were being constructed. As a researcher I have adopted a lens that critically and explicitly deconstructs how people use language to construct meaning and the effects that meaning then has on people, which demonstrates that I've taken a certain perspective on discourse. However, as a practitioner in the client study, I used a psychodynamic discourse (e.g. Kleinian terminology), and that discourse constructed the client, the issue, and me, in a particular way, with particular consequences in how we related to each other and the direction of the therapy (i.e. these same factors could be constructed differently with a different model). Thus, it is interesting that in the client study I employ a (mostly) uncritical use of scientific discourse that constructs people in specific ways (and is essential to do so), and yet the thesis deconstructs discourse in relation to the

people involved, and it is this very deconstruction that was central to the discursive research process.

That said, in the client study, deconstruction of language and discourse was also important, although approached quite differently. I was attentive to the discourses that I drew from in order to identify myself and my client. The intervention also involved the deconstruction of discourses of (e.g.) love, power, aggression, hatred, life and death. The central aim of the intervention, was the way that I encouraged my client to take up her own power, thereby disrupting the discourse that she did not have any.

### 2.1 Language, Power and Identity:

Thus, the focus on language in all three pieces of work was important. In both the thesis and the publishable paper, the focus was explicitly on discourse and therefore inherently focused on language and how it constructs things and positions people. The Foucauldian perspective used in those two pieces centralises issues of power. In the client study, I talk about issues of power (e.g. discourses of identity around an older white male working with a young black female), and throughout the intervention, I felt those dynamics (i.e. how we constructed each other based on those discourses) needed to be born in mind and addressed as they might shape and affect how we related to and positioned each other.

From a theoretical perspective, Parker (1997) offers a critical account of how psychoanalytic theory has come to seem to be true to people in Western culture. His concept of the 'discursive complex' explicates how psychoanalysis operates as a social construction, and in lived experience. Furthermore, an important theoretical development in contemporary psychoanalysis is the emphasis on the relational field as the focus of study rather than on the individual as a separate entity. Humans are therefore regarded as being fundamentally interpersonal in nature, mind as composed of relational configurations, and the self as constructed in a relational context (Safran, 2003). Further, from a postmodern perspective, analysts are increasingly emphasising the constructed nature of human

knowledge (e.g. Stern, 1997). This analytic shift towards a constructivist epistemology, and the acknowledgement that knowledge is positional is consistent with discursive theory (Safran, 2003).

In the research thesis/publishable paper I talk about how power gets invested in different identities and how those identities and power are constructed, and the centrality of language to these processes. Therefore, in both the client study and the research I am engaging with a very similar and important challenge but in different ways. In the research I deconstruct it and I show it up and explore it. In the client work I needed to work with it rather than explicitly deconstructing it in the same way, which would not have been helpful. However, I still had to work with issues of power, and the way that the two of us are constructed, but I did this in a different way: through the transference and reflecting on my client and on myself; i.e. the relationship. Thus, these three pieces of my work are intimately linked through their shared focus on power, identity and language, and the constructed nature of things. In particular, all three pieces of work were able to destabilise and disrupt constructions of Otherness.

In that context, the thesis, the publishable paper, and the client study, demonstrate the participants to be active and creative in the face of the harsh discursive climate, which therefore speaks to their resilience. These findings could be taken up by policy makers, academics, researchers, practitioners and campaigners as evidence that they are not just passive victims in this situation, but as a group of people who can also be thought of from other perspectives.

### 3.0 References:

Parker, I. (1997). *Psychoanalytic culture: Psychoanalytic discourse in western society*. Sage.

Safran, J. D. (Ed.). (2003). *Psychoanalysis and Buddhism: An unfolding dialogue*. Simon and Schuster.

Stern, D. B. (2013). *Unformulated experience: From dissociation to imagination in psychoanalysis*. Routledge.

Willig, C. (2019). Ontological and epistemological reflexivity: A core skill for therapists. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*; 19: 186– 194.





## Thesis

## Thesis Abstract

### **Title: How do Muslim men in the UK talk about their experiences of discrimination?**

**Objectives:** Intense global scrutiny of Muslims, and rapid socio-political changes have dominated since the events of 9/11, which is flagged as the defining moment where Muslim identity was thrown into question. The purpose of this research was to uncover the way in which Muslim men in the UK talk about their experiences of discrimination. More specifically, the study aimed to explore the discourses that Muslim men draw on when talking about their experiences of discrimination.

**Design:** The research was primarily interested in exploring and understanding the construction of experience by a specific population (Muslim men in the UK) in relation to a specific concept (discrimination). Therefore, a discourse analytic methodology was used to identify relevant discourses and to trace the patterns and consequences of their usage in Muslim men's accounts of discrimination.

**Methods:** Snowball sampling led to the inclusion of six British Muslim males aged between 26 and 36 who engaged in (approx) one-hour semi-structured interviews that were analysed using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA).

**Results:** Six discursive themes were identified which contributed to constructing Muslim men as a suspects, outsiders and potential terrorists. Positioned within these discourses, the participants discursively constructed their identity in relation to a pervasive climate of anti-Muslim discourse.

**Conclusions:** Discrimination was the context within which the participants did the identity-related discursive work. These insights can inform clinicians who work with Muslim males. Furthermore, policy makers may consult with the findings when thinking about obstacles to integration.



### Summary outline to the thesis:

This thesis is made up of four chapters. The first will introduce the topic that the research is exploring (discrimination), and its relevance in the political context, which will set the scene for the discursive environment in which Muslim lives are lived. From this political perspective, the literature review will explore the research that focuses on specific studies that have asked similar questions to that posed by my research. This will lead into the argument I make for doing the research in the way that I have chosen i.e. addressing the research question through a critical realist epistemology using a Foucauldian Discourse analytic methodology.

The methodology chapter will detail the philosophical underpinnings of the study, expanding on the arguments introduced in the literature review, thereby outlining in detail the rationale for the overall methodological approach taken by the research. That chapter will then offer a comprehensive outline of the analytic process that was undertaken, as well as detailed reflexive and ethical information.

The third chapter combines the analysis of the data with an interpretation and discussion of those data. It is divided into six main 'discursive themes', which are intimately linked and tell a story that illustrates the discursive worlds inhabited by the research participants, including a nuanced insight into the context and consequences of that world, including implications for their subjectivity.

Finally, a conclusions chapter brings the thesis together. It will expand in more detail on the wider implications of the analysis. Additionally, a critical appraisal that evaluates the research, will also locate the discourses in the outside world, and include a focus on agency, positioning, and action orientation. The final chapter will also include a focus on the reflexive position of the researcher,

reflections on the implications of the study for Counselling Psychology, and recommendations in the wider social and political world. Finally, it will offer a brief response to the original research question which drove this piece of research.

## 1.0 Introduction and literature review chapter

### 1.1 Outline to the Chapter

This literature review will begin by setting the scene for the hostile discursive environment in which the UK Muslim community live their lives. A brief genealogy of the construct 'Islamophobia' will lead into an outline of the global political climate, with a focus on the proliferation of anti-Muslim discourse by the US presidents, Bush and Trump. This situation will be shown to underpin the way that Neoliberalism has been constructed in the literature as having an anti-Muslim agenda, including in Europe and the UK. The influence of far-right groups such as the English Defence League (EDL) on British political discourse regarding the Muslim community is also a crucial aspect of this story. This nationalist influence includes New Labour (Tony Blair's government), the Coalition government (The Tory/Liberal Democrat Alliance from 2010-2015) and up to the present.

Against this background, the dehumanisation and 'Othering' of Muslim individuals and communities will be demonstrated to be consequences of the political climate, which has given rise to political activism including controversial anti-terrorism legislation here in the UK. In that context, the role of the media will be explored, particularly around the pervasive assumption of radicalisation which permeates public discourse. The topic of radicalisation and the generalisability of these discourses will form a particular focus in this introductory chapter.

The literature review will then focus on the UK literature that has investigated similar factors to my research. This involves studies that have investigated the Islamic, Muslim, and British aspects of their identity, and the complex interplay and pressures that are placed on Muslim men where these identities intersect in

the context of Islamophobia. There will be a particular focus on 'everyday' discrimination, and the pervasive environment of microaggressions that targets Muslim identity.

Finally, a summary of the reviewed literature will outline and justify the rationale for this study, including a discussion of positioning theory from a Foucauldian perspective, and how this relates to psychology and psychological research, which will provide the rationale for the discursive approach taken by this piece of research.

### 1.2 A suspicious identity

Intense global scrutiny of Muslim people, and rapid socio-political changes have dominated since the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 (9/11) in New York where the Twin Towers (and other significant institutions in the US) were destroyed by planes hijacked by men identifying as Muslim. This, and the 7/7 tragedies in the UK (7<sup>th</sup> July 2005 in London where four suicide bombers simultaneously attacked London's transport system during morning rush-hour) are flagged as defining moments where Muslim identity was thrown into question (Mythen, 2012). Following 7/7, an assumption arose that affiliation outside of the state is evidence of the potential to be radicalized (Lynch, 2013). There have been arguments in the literature that UK Counter-terrorism Policy has created the notion of 'suspect communities', thereby alienating young Muslims at the community engagement level, potentially exacerbating concerns over radicalization and extremism, and raising concerns that such policies are institutionalizing Islamophobia (Abbas, 2015). For Muslim minority communities, the general population's perception of followers of Islam as potential terrorists, is experienced as discrimination and xenophobia (Jamil and Rosseau 2012).

### 1.3 Islamophobia: A brief genealogy

Islamophobia as a construct was first used in a widely cited publication from the Runnymede Trust (1997) to refer to an unfounded hostility towards Islam, and a widespread discrimination against Muslim communities and individuals, and their exclusion from political and social affairs. However, the genealogy of

Islamophobic attitudes can be traced to the encounter between European colonialism and Islam, in which Islam was constructed as the 'Other' by Western culture, including Christianity, Judaism, the Crusades, the religious wars, and Capitalism (Caro, 2019).

The Western representation of the Eastern 'Other' is reflected in the West's political, economic and cultural domination today as it was in the colonial period (Sajid, 2005; Said, 2002). The threat of Islam, or Islamophobia, is the ingredient, that is needed to construct the Western self-identify after the end of the Cold War, which brought in the lack of a singular threat or purpose through which to define, unify, and claim the future for the West (Huntington, 2003). Thus, 'Islamophobia' is the post-Cold War ideology aimed at bringing about a renewed purpose and constructing of the Western self (Bazian, 2018).

As such, Islamophobia is situated within existing power structures and forces that consciously produce anti-Muslim discourses within a broad political agenda (Massoumi, Mills, & Miller, 2017). Islamophobia is a relationship of domination that can only end when the hierarchy that makes it possible dissolves (Sayyid, 2014). This means that the neoliberal context which dominates the present era constructs the hierarchies of religious and racial power that facilitate and propagate Islamophobia. In this context, there have been calls for problematising the discursive claims made by neoliberalism (i.e. freedom, peace, dignity, security, and constructions of Islam as a singular entity antithetical to freedom, peace dignity security etc) so that, for example both groups can begin to understand each other as far more diverse than the singular entity perpetuated by neoliberalism (Waikar, 2018).

#### 1.4 Global Politics

In the context of 9/11, President Bush gave several addresses to the American people. His rhetoric continued building on stereotypical words and images already established in more than 20 years of media and popular culture portrayals of Arab-Muslims as bloodthirsty, evil, animalistic terrorists. Textual-analysis revealed that Bush's speeches, from his public statements on September 11, 2001,

to his January 29, 2002, State-of-the-Union address, reproduced an identifiable model of enemy image-construction that had, and continues to have, important human-rights implications for Arab-American citizens and noncitizens (Merskin, 2009).

#### 1.4.1 Political proliferation of Discourse

Trump's role as a major-party American President constitutes huge political power and reach from a neoliberal point of view. The discourses he promotes through the narratives he draws on likely reflect the dominant anti-Muslim predispositions in neoliberal ideology (Waiker, 2018). Oppressive narratives propagated by Trump highlight the way in which an ideology can be normatively accepted by people through its ideational appeal, which then ensures their participation in the way of life that the ideology sustains. This process is achieved by continually producing and circulating discourses that are ideationally appealing through education, media, government etc until the ideology itself achieves normality. By mobilising it in this way (i.e. normalising) the ideology becomes everyday 'common sense' in a society's cultural norms, values and beliefs. These then become ideas that provide meaning and govern behaviour. This process of propagating discourses that interact with culture to construct dominant ideology that becomes normatively accepted by society, renders it invisible, unquestioned and taken-for-granted (Bourdieu, 1984).

Anti-Muslim invectives and political rhetoric in distasteful discriminatory tones punctuated the presidential elections in the USA in 2016. President Trump promised Americans he would ban Islam (Khan, Adnan, Kaur, Ali Khuhro, Asghar, & Jabeen 2019). He went on to attempt to ban Muslims' entry into the United States (Hussain, 2018). President Obama asked for justice and tolerance towards the Muslim community, emphasizing that the war was against terrorism and not Islam. The day after this statement from Obama, Trump presented his Muslim ban proposal as a response. Trump used discursive strategies based on the dichotomous binaries of self and other, in which the other is delegitimised. In this context, Trump was able to construct himself as an Islamophobe in positive terms (Khan, et al, 2019).

Using a Critical Discourse Analysis, Khan, et al, (2019) focused on the anti-Islam and anti-Muslim rhetoric in Trump's statement on the Muslim ban during the campaign in 2016. They used an 'Ideological Square Model', which allowed them to focus upon the polarizing macro strategy of 'positive self-representation and negative other representation'. I.e. emphasize positive things about 'us'; emphasize negative things about 'them'; de-emphasize negative things about 'us'; and de-emphasize positive things about 'them' (Van Dijk 2006). Trump deployed several discursive techniques to represent Islam negatively, and himself as patriotic. His strategies included victimisation, presupposition, polarisation and populism, with a strong focus on Shariah and Jihad, with Islamic beliefs in general represented as anti-women and anti-American.

#### 1.4.2 Neoliberalism: An anti-Muslim agenda?

Similarly, using a Wittgensteinian discourse analysis of Trump's speeches and interviews, it was found that he regularly states that "Islam hates us" deeming all Muslims as an existential threat to the peace and security of the West (Waiker, 2018). As such, Trump demonstrated neoliberal Islamophobia by characterising Muslims and Islam as a security threat. He discursively conflated both Islam and Muslims with terrorism, repeatedly using the phrase "Islamic radicalism" and "radical Islam" which effectively demonises Islam as a whole and constructs its potentiality for radicalism.

#### 1.4.3 Western Ideology

Against this background, in Europe, political discourses and the media have cultivated a form of unjustified Islamophobia for ideological purposes (Pop, 2016). Pop's study explored the misrepresentation of Muslims and Islamophobic public discourse using a selection of media narratives from the public debates that took shape immediately after the Brussels attacks on March 22, 2016. The study used a critical discourse analysis approach as an interpretative means of understanding how the opinion leaders, political elites and the media in Romania were building an anti-Islamic propaganda. It represented a case study interpretation of the media and political discourses in Romania that referred to

Islam and the threat of Muslim refugees. The author described the dominant rhetoric of conflict between the West and the Muslim world. By highlighting a list of Islamophobic stereotypes constructed in the Romanian mainstream media and by examining the negative narratives disseminated in the public sphere, a case was made against the artificial growth of intolerant attitudes. The central argument of the study was that there is a generalized anti-Islam propaganda, in which a specific religion and its followers are demonized by politicians, opinion leaders and cultural figures.

### 1.5 British Political Discourse

In the UK, Muslims are routinely constructed as a homogenous 'Other' who present a very real, ongoing, and at times apocalyptic threat to 'our' values, democracies, identities, and way of life (Morey and Yaqin 2011). For Ansari (2012), these discourses have been both overt and covert in mainstream-Europe's political spaces over the past two decades. In Britain, she contends that this was particularly evident among the discourses of the far-right, and how groups such as the British National Party (BNP) used these to make inroads into the mainstream. Primarily targeting the White working-class in areas of high social and economic deprivation, not only did the BNP construct the threat posed by Muslims and Islam (through e.g. campaigns titled 'Islam Out of Britain' and 'Islam Referendum Day'), but they also constructed how the Muslim 'Other' was believed to be responsible for many of the social problems people were struggling with. Subsequently, constructions of the Muslim Other became relevant within political discourses in the British setting (Allen, 2010).

The influence on British political discourse of this discursive climate of threat and fear in relation to Muslims and Islam gave rise to the construct of the 'home-grown' radical (Allen, 2010a). His study also reported that the way in which the BNP had grown and gained electoral success was based on overtly anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic political campaigns. Additionally, that this had an influence on the establishment and development of the English Defence League (EDL). Furthermore, he found that the changing discourse of other political actors including the New Labour government highlighted the reduction in the difference

between left and right wings of British political discourse regarding Muslims. In this context, Martin Barker's (1981) theories of 'new racism' were explored in Allen's study to illustrate the consequences of the changes in the British political arena. The study concluded by suggesting a hardening of ideas and attitudes about Muslims and Islam more widely.

#### 1.5.1 EDL and Public Discourse

The influence of the EDL and BNP on political and social discourse cannot be underestimated. Islamophobia explains social problems as resulting from cultural deviance, which not only classifies Muslims as problematic, but also discharges the rest of society of responsibility. This is evidenced in the EDL's constant criticism of Muslims for their lack of motivation or success in challenging extremism, or their failure to see it as *their* problem (Allen, 2017). This also reflects the EDL's belief that the remainder of UK society has no responsibility; Islamophobia has ideological appeal precisely because it finds non-Muslim Britons blameless. The construction of Islamophobia as an emotionally-driven prejudice (a fear of Islam or Muslims) allowed the EDL to exploit the ambiguity of the conceptualisation through their dismissal of the term as nonsense, which disqualifies considering it a shared social narrative (Kassimeris & Jackson, 2014).

Through presenting the non-Muslim ingroup as superior in culture and values, and the Muslim out-group as threatening the privilege and position of non-Muslims, EDL discourse functions ideologically to maintain traditional ethno-cultural privilege, which excludes and marginalises Muslims from the national community. Kassimeris & Jackson, (2014) examined articles published on the EDL website that revealed three central narratives forming the core of EDL discursive representation of Muslims. These were: that Muslims are uniquely problematic, that 'Islamic ideology' is the source of these problems, and that all Muslims share responsibility for reforming their religion, based on its assumed inherently problematic nature.

These narratives were critiqued to identify the contestable claims that the discourse rests upon, demonstrating how EDL Islamophobia functions as a



culturally racist discourse. Muslim culture was constructed as an indisputable obstacle to integration and they used strategies typical of racist discourse construction (e.g. 'Denials' ('I'm not racist but...')) which function in racist-discourse to present the positive self-image of speakers as tolerant and speaking within the boundaries of acceptability (van Dijk 1992, p91-92). Through this, the EDL reconstructed Islamophobia as anti-racism, thereby attempting to normalise it as the expected perspective of anyone committed to liberal freedom. This culturally racist discourse distributed privilege and laid blame through the construction of opposing and irreconcilable subjects; Muslims were blamed for society's problems and obliged to radically reform their religion, and non-Muslims, were considered the blameless victims of Islamic 'extremism' (Kassimeris & Jackson, 2014).

As such, the EDL reduced Islamophobia from cultural racism to individual prejudice, which served to deflect accusations of bigotry. However, as the discourse and narratives employed by the EDL demonstrate, Islamophobia is much more than this. Far from being merely a negative assessment of Islam and a fear of individual Muslims, it is cultural racism: an ideological discourse that demarcates an in-group and an out-group and presents the former as superior and its privilege endangered.

In this context, (Cleland, Anderson & Aldridge-Deacon, 2018) analysed 845 posts within 78 threads on an English Defence League (EDL) online message board over a two-week period in 2013. Using a Thematic analysis, the study examined how online activists construct and develop their racial prejudice. White people were constructed as blameless victims in the posts, which highlighted the presence of hostility towards Muslims and Islam in a clear in-group/out-group racial binary, in which racist comments were never disputed or challenged. Instead, they were wholeheartedly supported, scapegoating and stereotyping Islam and Muslims, placing social and cultural division at the centre of the prejudice. These authors called for broader research that examines and reflects upon entrenched societal and cultural Islamophobia and how this permits movements such as the EDL to continue to exist (Cleland, Anderson & Aldridge-Deacon, 2018).

## 1.6 Dehumanisation

In the current political context, the derogation and dehumanization of Muslims uniquely predicts support for aggressive policies proposed by Republican nominees, and is highly associated with supporting Donald Trump (Kteily and Bruneau, 2017). The proliferation of research on subtle dehumanization originated from the introduction of the notion of infrahumanization (Leyens et al., 2000). The central finding from this program of research is that individuals frequently withhold a human essence from outgroups by selectively denying them emotions that distinguish humans from animals (i.e., secondary emotions, like embarrassment and elation) but not those emotions shared with animals (i.e., primary emotions, like fear and excitement). It is important to note that infrahumanization research shows that individuals attribute more of both positive (e.g., compassion) and negative (e.g., bitterness) secondary emotions to the ingroup relative to outgroups, suggesting that infrahumanization is not merely an expression of dislike.

From this perspective, Kteily, Bruneau, Waytz & Cotterill (2015) used online surveys to examine social and political attitudes around immigrants. They found that British and American participants explicitly rated Muslims as less 'evolved' than their own groups.

Their study implemented a measure designed to capture blatant, explicit forms of dehumanization, which used the popular graphical description of the "Ascent of Man," (the name of their paper), with five silhouettes depicting the physiological and cultural evolution of humans, from early human ancestors reminiscent of modern apes, through to more upright ancestors with a capacity for primitive culture (depicted by a spear over the shoulder), and on up to culturally advanced modern humans. On a practical level, the Ascent measure of blatant dehumanization is brief, face-valid and intuitive. It represents the overt and direct denial of humanness required of blatant dehumanization (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). From a Theoretical perspective, Ascent captures a number of important characteristics of blatant dehumanization. The images summon an explicit animalistic distinction (from

quadrupedal hominid ancestors to bipedal modern humans) and is used colloquially to highlight a salient distinction between early human ancestors and modern humans; i.e. the full realization of cognitive ability and cultural expression. These characteristics combine to make the measure inherently hierarchical, with each silhouette representing an advance (or ascent) over the previous one.

Participants were asked to indicate their perceptions of the “evolved-ness” of a number of groups listed below the image through the following statement: “People can vary in how human-like they seem. Some people seem highly evolved whereas others seem no different than lower animals. Using the image below, indicate using the sliders how evolved you consider the average member for each group to be”.

The study also examined right-wing authoritarianism (RWA). High scorers on RWA tend to perceive the world as dangerous, follow social norms closely, submit to authorities, and aggress against individuals who threaten norms and social order (Altemeyer, 1996). To the extent that high scorers hold their own group’s norms and traditions as an ideal of ‘civilized’ behaviour, they predicted that those individuals would be more likely to perceive groups whose social norms and traditions were distinct from their own not simply as different, but also less human (see also Jackson & Gaertner, 2010). The Kteily et al study also used the social dominance orientation (SDO), which is an individual difference measure that indexes support for hierarchy between social groups (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994).

They observed significant dehumanization of Muslims on all measures. There was substantial Ascent Dehumanization of Muslims by non-Muslim British participants following the murder of Lee Rigby (i.e. perceptions of Muslims as less evolved relative to British people). These predicted greater aggressive attitudes and support for anti-Muslim policies. Specifically, Ascent dehumanization predicted support for drone strikes, militaristic counterterrorism policies affecting Arabs and Muslims, and punitive reactions toward the suspected

perpetrators. Better understanding of minority group responses to feeling dehumanized, and the *contexts* within which this occurs has important theoretical and practical implications (Kteily et al, 2015).

### 1.7 Political activism in Britain

Given its historical context and the emergence of the 'War on Terror', there has been an intensification of a discourse on Islam that incorporates historical associations between the Islamic religion, terrorism, violence, misogyny, anti-modernity and the Middle East more generally (Caro, 2019). Following the 9/11 attacks, the concept of Islamophobia entered the academic debate and international organisations that opposed hostility towards Muslims. The Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (2004) introduced the construct of 'Institutional Islamophobia' to describe practices, customs and laws that systematically produce and highlight inequalities between Muslims and non-Muslims.

In 2011, Baroness Warsi's (the then conservative party chairperson) 'dinner-table test' speech (e.g. Allen, 2013) was seen as a signal of intent. Her construction conveyed the belief that hostility to Muslims had become socially acceptable. Her Islamophobia was undoubtedly particularistic; targeting the middle classes via the 'dinner-table' reference, she reproached them for being the very same people who would normally challenge racism and other forms of discrimination. For Warsi, they were now the ones normalising Islamophobia, meaning that ordinary British people were increasingly comfortable to say things about Muslims they would feel uncomfortable saying about other religions and their communities. By prioritising Islamophobia in this way, Warsi garnered immediate traction, prompting the Coalition government to back the creation of the All People's Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Islamophobia, while also establishing the Cross-Government Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred.

#### 1.7.1 Coalition Discourses

Despite these initial positive advances from the politicians, there was a marked shift in the Coalition's government discourses about Muslims and Islam over its

five years in government (2010-2015), which had an impact in terms of addressing Islamophobia. Initially, the Coalition's political discourses were overwhelmingly positive and acknowledged Islamophobia (i.e. that Muslims were being unfairly targeted). However, in the government's latter years, this changed to the extent that their discourses became indistinguishable from their New Labour predecessor (Allen, 2017).

While Theresa May (the then Home Secretary) proposed that the Coalition government would require the police to record Anti-Muslim, Islamophobic hate crime in line with Antisemitism (McIntyre, 2015), what became apparent was that in line with its New Labour predecessor, the Coalition's discourses began to increasingly conceive Islamophobia as something rather more symptomatic and consequential of terrorism and extremism than the particularistic discrimination it previously had (Allen, 2017).

### 1.8 Prevent

In that political climate, the Coalition Government implemented an initiative called 'Prevent' which was aimed at identifying people at risk of radicalization. This ongoing program involves having Prevent officers situated inside schools, as well as the enrolment of teachers, University lecturers, students and parents to remain vigilant and to report anyone suspected of being 'at risk' of radicalization. Within Prevent there is little evidence of educational processes that explicitly build youth resilience against extremism. Instead, Muslim youth are viewed as both a risk to society and at risk of catching the 'terrorist disease', with the contested model of 'radicalisation' and child protection concepts utilized to portray risks of exploitation by Islamist extremists that necessitate a deepening process of education-based surveillance (Thomas, 2016).

In its latest form, "The Prevent Strategy" (Home Office, 2011) Theresa May (the then Home Secretary) writes this in her Foreword (opening and closing paragraphs):

*“Intelligence indicates that a terrorist attack in our country is ‘highly likely’. Experience tells us that the threat comes not just from foreign nationals but also from terrorists born and bred in Britain. It is therefore vital that our counter-terrorism strategy contains a plan to Prevent radicalisation and stop would-be terrorists from committing mass murder. Osama bin Laden may be dead, but the threat from Al Qa’ida inspired terrorism is not.”*

*“Finally, we will do more than any other Government before us to **promote integration**, but we will do so **separately and differently from Prevent**. As the Prime Minister declared in his Munich speech, the combined effect of this work and of the new Prevent strategy will be an **unyielding fight** against extremism. And as the Deputy Prime Minister said in his Luton speech, we will use smart engagement to take on extremist ideas alongside a **ruthless determination** to find and punish those who promote or take to violence.”*

It is clear from Mrs May’s opening paragraph that this government initiative is aimed at the Muslim community, rather than at a broader and more generalised ‘radicalised’ target, which the policy purports to target. In the final paragraph her use of language constructs a situation in which the consequences for integration cannot interfere with the “unyielding fight” and “ruthless determination” that are the hallmarks of the Prevent program. Prevent can thus be thought of as illustrative of the political and media context within which we find ourselves. In the analysis chapter of this thesis, Prevent is focused on in detail.

### 1.9 The Assumption of Radicalisation

Against this background, since 9/11, and in particular since 7/7, British perpetrators of Islamic-inspired terrorism in the United Kingdom have been constructed as “home grown terrorists”, and the (undefined) process by which they became terrorists was constructed as “radicalization” (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2008). The then British prime minister, David Cameron, spoke of Muslims needing to embrace British values (Kirkup, 2011). This construction of radical Muslim youths was extrapolated to the broader Muslim youth population, whereby loyalty to the state was questioned with calls for youths to demonstrate

loyalty, adopt British values and prioritize a British identity (Mandeville, 2009). Muslim youth then became a major priority in terrorism research due to their presumed susceptibility (Mandeville 2009; Hopkins 2004, 2011; McDonald 2011).

Further complicating the situation, state security *and* terrorist recruiters have identified fitting-in, belonging, and loyalty to vulnerability to radicalization and terrorism (McDonald 2011). Normal identity processes are thus pathologized, closing down and limiting the options for identity flexibility and negotiation, creating security driven narratives of in-group and out-group. As such, oppositional thought and low-level activism have been associated with radicalization, even though there is no reliable evidence that supports the link between the pursuit of political reform by people of Islamic faith, and radicalization towards terrorism (Lambert & Githens-Mazer (2010). Furthermore, these 'either-or' binary processes do not capture the complexity of Muslim youth identity (or youth identity more generally) as something situated and interacting in multiple locations. Rather, the process of exploring a personal and situated identity is pathologized (Jamil and Rosseau 2012).

In the context of suspicion of radicalisation, (Lynch, 2013) sought to understand the experiences of Muslim youth in terms of their perceptions of events as a way to understand the process of being a young Muslim in that environment of suspicion. The study investigated issues of belonging, integration, Britishness, and being Muslim. It investigated the lived experience of Muslim youth, in the context of the War on Terror, their experience as children and grandchildren of immigrants, their place in British society and their construction as dangerous and potentially radical outsiders in the public sphere. Through participant observation and semi-structured interviews, the study looked at the experience of 66 youths (60% female) aged between 18 and 25, youth and community workers, police, and community leaders. The research was conducted between 2006 and 2009 and the data were analyzed using a grounded theory framework. It demonstrated conceptual weaknesses in the associations between 'identity crisis, identity, disenfranchisement, British Islam, transnationalism, intergenerational conflict',

and a process of radicalization. What emerged was not a picture of radicalism or the rejection of British ideal and values, but rather a conscious effort to embrace their Britishness in a unique way; the construction of a British Islam.

Another study described the 'semantic drift' of the concept of radicalisation and also highlighted the flawed indicators used in its operationalisation (Hope & Matthews, 2017). They explored the online response of young Muslims in Western countries to anti-radicalisation strategies. They found that their participants used humour as a powerful political tool that developed resistance through satirically attacking racists 'truth' claims, while at the same time nurturing a shared sense of identity. These studies suggest that the hostile and oppressive climate is impacting on Muslim identity in a variety of ways.

The issue of the radicalisation of Muslim youth in the UK, led the Home Office to commission a review of the radicalization literature (Bouhana and Wikstrom, 2011). The review included just 15 studies from 16,582 possible articles due to the scientific weakness of the evidence-base on radicalization. Due to this methodological weakness in the literature, the researchers developed a Quality Assessment Tool specifically for that study, which set the bar slightly lower than for a systematic review. They found the evidence base to be exploratory instead of explanatory (hypothesis-testing). They reported a distinct absence of interlinking levels of explanation; i.e. a lack of theoretical frameworks linking levels of explanation (individual, ecological, systemic) to outcomes (radicalisation) by way of explicit mechanisms. There was no evidence to support a 'youth vulnerability profile' and the notion of 'identity crisis' was found to be a poor predictor of radicalization. Nevertheless, political and social stereotypes emerging from the post 9/11 narratives (e.g. radicalisation, terrorism) have transformed Muslim youth experiences of belonging and exclusion.

#### 1.10 Media perpetuation

Intimately linked to this is media complicity in perpetuating adverse social conditions, prejudice and discrimination against British Muslims (e.g. Hargreaves, 2016). A content analysis of British newspapers (Moore et al 2008) showed that



the most common nouns used alongside 'British Muslim' are 'terrorist', 'Islamist', 'Suicide bomber', and 'militant'. Consequently, a process of generalizing from a tiny proportion of violent Muslims, to suspicion of particular radical sects of Islam, to the potential of all Muslim Youth to become radicalized underpins a process where UK Muslim youth have been portrayed as threatening, untrustworthy and dangerous (Lynch, 2013).

The pervasive environment of generalized suspicion, focus on foreign heritage, with loyalty to Britishness and the state in doubt, and their 'otherness' highlighted (Mandeville 2009), has resulted in Muslim identity becoming a public commodity where identity is used interchangeably with loyalty, and features in top-down security-driven policy (Abbas, 2015). Processes of surveillance, securitization and stigmatization have marked impacts on notions of the self, identity management and everyday cultural practices. Young British Muslims have thus had to negotiate and maintain their identities in an environment in which they have been defined as a threat to national security whilst simultaneously being pressurized to align with 'core British values' (Mythen, 2012).

### 1.11 Othering

The 'Other' is a complex and multi-layered figure who deserves to be studied (through language and social interaction) in order to contribute (in)directly to more social justice, as well as equality and equity in our increasingly unfair worlds (Dervin, 2015). 'Othering' is not an innocent act. It can encompass many and varied strategies, including homogenization which corresponds to the act of reducing individual characteristics to a stereotypical description, for example, the view of Muslims who tend to be depicted as having only one way of behaving in society. Importantly, discourses of tolerance aimed at fostering an understanding of difference and otherness are limited when the *context* that supports Othering is left unexamined (Weply, 2018).

Forms of implicit discrimination towards Muslim children in children's discourses of 'Otherness' were examined by Weply (2018). Findings drew on qualitative data exploring the discourses of 17 children from a Year 6 class in a culturally diverse

primary school in the East of England. Building on Critical Race Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis, the study demonstrated that children's discourses of Otherness acted in tacit discriminatory ways by constructing difference as problematic, which positioned Muslim children as the 'bad other'. These findings show that the discriminatory discursive climate is experienced by Muslim children at school and offer a reflection on the role of multiculturalism in schools and the limitations of unexamined discourses of tolerance.

### 1.12 Microaggressions

This implicit and pervasive Othering implies frequent experiences of microaggressions. Comparable to the particular discrimination suggested by Baroness Warsi's 'dinner table test', the expanding field of microaggressions research, has demonstrated the damaging impact of subtle discrimination committed by well-intended, egalitarian dominant-group members towards members of non-dominant groups (Hwang & Goto, 2009; Nadal, 2009; Sinclair, 2006; Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2009; Sue, 2010). Microaggressions make dominant discourses vividly discernible to non-dominant groups, although they tend to be invisible to members of society with dominant social identities (McIntosh, 1992). Dominant discourses reinforce systems of privilege and power by justifying cultural and institutionalized forms of discrimination such as racism, able-ism, classism, sexism, and heteronormativity (Smith, Foley & Chaney, 2008). These social constructions are assimilated into society and maintained through discourses that position individuals and groups in power-relations with each other (Winslade, Monk, and Drewery, 1997).

Racial microaggressions are subtle insults directed towards minorities, automatically or unconsciously in the form of (e.g.) degradations and putdowns. They can be verbal, nonverbal and/or visual. The cumulative burden of a lifetime of microaggressions can contribute to diminished mortality, augmented morbidity and flattened confidence (Pierce, 1995). Findings from a meta-analysis (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009), confirmed that the mere perception of discrimination was negatively related to well-being across a range of stigmas, which includes minority groups within this context. Overall, the meta-analysis

demonstrated that perceiving pervasive discrimination (i.e. microaggressions) negatively affected well-being but perceiving isolated events as discrimination was less likely to harm well-being.

#### 1.12.1 Microaggressions and religion

In a review of the psychological research literature on microaggressions (Wong et al 2014), all included studies were focused on microaggressions from a race/ethnicity perspective, highlighting a gap in research around religious microaggressions. However, one other study (Nadal et al 2012) (not included in that review), did examine microaggressions towards Muslim Americans. Their aim was to validate or enhance a religious microaggressions taxonomy by Nadal et al (2010). Using directed content analysis, they developed a framework for exploring microaggressions that could distinguish between religious and racial/ethnicity microaggressions. Given that UK Muslims are generally identified as belonging to both religious and racial/ethnic minority groups, this distinction is highly valuable as a means of isolating religious discrimination as a research focus. The authors noted the difficulty in definitively attributing particular discriminatory behaviour to religious prejudice because of the potential that racial or ethnic prejudice are also involved. As such, they developed a taxonomy aimed at identifying the types of microaggressions experienced by religious minorities that contained six major categories based primarily on religion and likely independent of race, ethnicity or other variables. These were:

1. Endorsing Religious Stereotypes: statements or behaviours that communicate false, presumptuous, or incorrect perceptions of certain religious groups (e.g., stereotyping that a Muslim person is a terrorist or that a Jewish person is cheap).
2. Exoticization: instances where people view other religions as trendy or foreign (e.g., an individual who dresses in a certain religion's garb or garments for fashion or pleasure).
3. Pathology of Different Religious Groups: Statements and behaviours in which individuals equate certain religious practices or traditions as being abnormal, sinful, or deviant (e.g., telling someone that they are in the "wrong" religion).

4. Assumption of One's Own Religious Identity as the Norm: Comments or behaviours that convey people's presumption that their religion is the standard and behaves accordingly (e.g., greeting someone "Merry Christmas" or saying "God bless you" after someone sneezes conveys one's perception that everyone is Christian or believes in God).

5. Assumption of Religious Homogeneity: Statements in which individuals assume that every believer of a religion practices the same customs or has the same beliefs as the entire group (e.g., assuming that all Muslim people wear head coverings, or that all Muslims are anti-Western and/or radicalised).

6. Denial of Religious Prejudice: Incidents in which individuals claim that they are not religiously biased, even if their words or behaviours may indicate otherwise.

### 1.13 Religious identity

Muslim minorities are subject to racism by virtue of their real or perceived 'Muslimness', and this is met with much less sympathy in society than the other religious group minorities (e.g. Jews) who can also be the victims of racism (Meer & Modood, 2009). Despite large-scale survey evidence that demonstrates widespread attitudinal hostility towards Muslims- expressed by one in four Britons- (Pew, 2008), such evidence is frequently met with derision by otherwise self-avowedly anti-racist intellectuals or politicians, who either remain sceptical of the scale of the problem, or of its racial content altogether (Hansen, 2006). Meer & Modood (2009) investigated and delineated four tendencies that underpin the difference in conceptualization of Muslims compared to other minorities, highlighting the way that the minority status of Muslims discursively differs from that of other religious minorities.

The first 'tendency' is the conceptualization of racism that assumes that the protections afforded to racial minorities usually conceived as involuntarily constituted should not

be extended to Muslims because theirs is a religious identity and is therefore voluntarily chosen. The second is that the way that religion in general is frowned upon by contemporary intelligentsia, and as such invites the ridiculing of Muslims as being constructive for intellectual debate and therefore not an issue of

discrimination. Third, while ethnic identities are welcomed in the social world, there is much more unease about religious minorities. Fourth, some individuals struggle to sympathize with a minority that is perceived to be disloyal or associated with terrorism. This view then leads to a perception of Muslims as a threat rather than as a disadvantaged minority, subject to increasingly malicious discourses of racialization. Meer & Modood conclude by recommending that each of these four tendencies could benefit from further study, and by underscoring the importance of a greater exploration of anti-Muslim discourse.

#### 1.14 'Everyday' discrimination

In this framework of microaggressions, the literature reports that in addition to violent and criminal hate crimes against Muslim's, there is also an insidious and pervasive form of discrimination that is experienced by Muslim people on a day to day basis. Hargreaves (2016) examined 'everyday' experiences of discrimination and victimization by asking: "to what extent does 'everyday' hate crime inform the daily lives of British Muslim communities"?

Thirteen Focus groups in seven locations around England and Scotland were asked questions around community well-being, personal safety and relationships with the police. Using Grounded theory their article captured the concepts, categories, hypotheses and theory relating to 'risk and resilience' among the participants. Topics discussed included local, national and international issues, although the conversation centered invariably on the localized risks of hate crime and discrimination. It argued that non-criminal discrimination impacted more Muslim lives than physical violence. The authors strongly emphasized the importance of their findings around resilience and agency in the face of everyday hate crimes; constructing the participants as not just passive victims within powerless communities. They note that discrimination does not necessarily create passive states of being, but rather that the presence of resilience assumes the presence of agency, personal strength, choice and meaning making, suggesting that resilience has an ontological reality worthy of further examination.

#### 1.14.1 British Islam

Similarly, British Islam has been found to be emerging as a framework for integrating the often-conflicting elements of identity into a coherent personal world, and not merely a reaction to the influence of two seemingly opposing worlds (Lynch, 2013). One manifestation of how suspicion of radicalization and terrorism can impact on Muslims' sense of identity is where British Muslims find themselves in a situation where they must question their 'right' to 'Britishness'. Reporting British Muslims' own perspective of the subgroup and super ordinate identifications, Hopkins (2011) aimed to develop theorization of dual identities through focusing on Muslim accounts of their national and religious identifications and how they interrelate to inform social psychological models of dual identity. They used a sample of politically active UK Muslim youth (expected to include people who have reflected on the meaning of their dual identities, and the meaning and significance of the recognition of religious and national identities). The interviews took place one year after the London bombings (i.e. 2006) and were analysed using thematic analysis.

Hopkins (2011) reported the emergence of a 'British Islam'. Some constructions in the study portrayed Britishness as contributing to Muslims' religious identity and as giving it a local 'home-grown' British flavour. They discuss the complex relationship between the experience of commonality and diversity and found that UK Muslims assert a commonality with British non-Muslims whilst asserting their religious subgroup's distinctiveness. In other words, there is no single way to be British, which challenges the idea that there was any necessary tension between being British and Muslim – one can be British in different ways, including in a Muslim way. Similarly, participants in the study reported being 'Muslim in a British way', and that the construction of positive-sum relationships between both identities depicted Muslims as able and willing to contribute to Britain as Muslims.

#### 1.14.2 Islamic Identity

Related to this, Mythen (2012) explicitly explored the idea that a new identity is emerging for young Muslims. Using grounded theory, the study examined the experiences of British-Pakistanis living in the North-West of England, looking at

the political potentiality of and the limits to hybridic identities in this group. It reported that dominant media and political discourses were seen to perpetuate the idea of a culture clash between British and Islamic values. Islam was identified as the primary source of identity for the participants; an anchor identity, though the imposition of narrow either-or identity choices was resisted. Religious identity was found to be becoming more significant than any ethnic affiliations, with participants speaking of a strengthening of their Islamic faith and identity.

The politicization of identity was a feature of the study findings, with participants reporting feeling 'more politically Muslim than religiously Muslim'. Consequently, Mythen (2012) alluded to the maturation and preservation of resilient identities among participants in the study; negative experiences channelled into positive resistance; Muslim identity deployed responsively to counter experiences of victimization, suspicion and hostility, and to develop solid identities. In the context of resilience emerging from the oppression, the participants were said to be negotiating difference and constructing hybridic identities and exasperated at having to self-identify as either British *or* Muslim. Thus, they rejected prescribed racial and ethnic classifications.

The findings also inferred something of a return to the principles of religious faith as a means of rejecting the secular gaze and shoring up the self. As such, the study found that Islamic identities were being given primacy. It focused on the resilience in identities by detailing examples of 'mask-wearing', 'circumnavigation' and 'deflection of the suspicious gaze of society'. Mythen concluded by reporting that 'discursive boundaries police the limits of expression' of their participants, and that the space in which they locate their identities is subject to configurations of power and bound by socially prescribed norms.

#### 1.14.3 Social Class

Also focused on their Muslim identity, Mac-an-Ghail & Haywood (2015) explored the concepts of 'Muslim', 'Islamophobia' and 'radicalization' in a group of working-class Muslim males from Birmingham. The study was interested in how the young men in the study critically engaged with the contextually-based local meanings of

Muslim, Islamophobia and racialization to secure complex masculine subjectivities. The data were collected from a series of interview groups, conducted between 2008-2010, made up of youth who shared intimate friendships and strong community links. Group interviews were supplemented by a range of other research strategies that included observations, informal conversations and interviews with parents and local community representatives as part of a wider critical ethnography on the impact of globally-inflected change upon the local formation of diasporic young men's subjectivity and identity. The datasets from each of the methods was subject to thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) that enabled an exploration of 'the underlying ideas, constructions, and discourses that shape or inform the semantic content of the data' (Ussher et al., 2013: 902).

Social class was a central construct in the findings around experiences of exclusion. The young Muslim men in that study noted that state and public institutional figures had little understanding of their community, of inter-generational changes or, perhaps most significantly, the changing morphology of western urban sites, such as Birmingham, in which new identities, both minority and majority ethnic, are being manufactured. Their study also highlighted that Young Muslim men are an under-researched field of enquiry.

### 1.15 Gender

In general, the UK literature has made loud calls for the study of Muslim males. For example, most accounts of resilience in the Hargreaves (2016) study were offered by female participants and further research of Muslim men was recommended. Similarly, in the Lynch et al (2013) study, 60% of the sample were female, which may have impacted the findings given that the study set out to investigate identity construction in the context of radicalization towards terrorism- a construct largely associated with males. Furthermore, there are suggestions that reports in the literature of positive coping strategies may be a gendered response (Rousseau, Jamil, Bhui and Boudjarane, 2015). Rousseau et al reported that young Muslim women have a strong moral responsibility to present a positive image of themselves and their communities, and to protect their families



from knowing about the discrimination they have experienced, and as such, this may have impacted their responses. Much of the literature reviewed in this introduction chapter pointed out difficulties in engaging young Muslim men in research. As such, research specifically aimed at investigating the perspective of young British Muslim males in the current political climate is needed.

#### 1.16 Identity: A psychological perspective.

There are a range of widely used psychological theories of identity. For the purposes of this study, I will introduce one model that looks at identity from a developmental perspective, another that considers the construct of 'social identity', and finally a theory of the role of narratives in identity formation.

First then, Erikson's (1963, 1968) construct of identity has become the principal tool for understanding the development of identity from adolescence into adulthood. He says: "*The wholeness to be achieved at this stage I have called a sense of inner identity. The young person, in order to experience wholeness, must feel a progressive continuity between that which he has come to be during the long years of childhood and that which he promises to become in the anticipated future; between that which he conceives himself to be and that which he perceives others to see in him and to expect of him. Individually speaking, identity includes, but is more than, the sum of all the successive identifications of those earlier years when the child wanted to be, and often was forced to become, like the people he depended on. Identity is a unique product, which now meets a crisis to be solved only in new identifications with age mates and with leader figures outside of the family*". (Erikson, 1968, p. 87).

Erikson's statement illustrates the key features of identity as being its developmental nature; as something that is experienced by the individual both as a 'progressive continuity' which suggests the sense of inner identity as a consistent 'thing', and at the same time, the way in which identity is impacted and shaped by the world around it, suggesting its inherently changeable nature. Experiencing the self in this way leads to the development of new identities and

new value systems within individuals and within groups. As such, identity can be thought of in both an active and a passive form; how others define us and also how we define ourselves (Macionis & Plummer, 2008). Situating identity development as also impacted by the social world likewise highlights the role of language in 'molding' identity (Goffman 1999).

#### 1.16.1 Social Identity Theory:

According to Tajfel and Turner's (1979) widely cited 'Social Identity Theory', in order to increase our self-image, we divided the world into "them" and "us" based through a process of social categorization (i.e. we put people into social groups). Social identity theory states that the in-group will discriminate against the out-group to enhance their self-image. The central hypothesis of social identity theory is that group members of an in-group will seek to find negative aspects of an out-group, thus enhancing their self-image. According to the theory, the group membership is not something foreign or artificial which is attached onto the person, it is a real, true and vital part of the person.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) proposed that stereotyping (i.e. putting people into groups and categories) is based on a normal cognitive process: the tendency to group things together. In doing so we tend to exaggerate the differences between groups, and the similarities of things in the same group. They proposed that there are three mental processes involved in evaluating others as "us" or "them" (i.e. "in-group" and "out-group") and that these take place in a particular order.

The first is **categorization**. We categorize objects in order to understand them and identify them. Similarly, we categorize people (including ourselves) in order to understand the social environment. We use social categories like black, white, woman, man, Christian, Muslim, student, and taxi driver because they are useful. In the same way, we find out things about ourselves by knowing what categories we belong to. We define appropriate behaviour by reference to the norms of groups we belong to, but we can only do this if we can tell who belongs to our group(s); an individual can belong to many different groups.

The second stage is **social identification**. Here, we adopt the identity of the group we have categorized ourselves as belonging to. If for example a person has categorized themselves as a student, the chances are they will adopt the identity of a student and begin to act in the ways they believe students act (and conform to the norms of the group). There will be an emotional significance to their identification with a group, and their self-esteem will become bound up with group membership.

The final stage is **social comparison**. Once we have categorized ourselves as part of a group and have identified with that group, we then tend to compare that group with other groups. If our self-esteem is to be maintained our group needs to compare favourably with other groups. This is critical to understanding discrimination and prejudice, because once two groups identify themselves as rivals, they are forced to compete in order for the members to maintain their self-esteem. Competition and hostility between groups is thus not only a matter of competing for resources like jobs but also the result of competing identities.

#### 1.16.2 Narrative Identity

In the context of the above two perspectives on identity formation, I turn now to consider the role of narratives in relation to a person's sense of themselves. As already seen, Identity theory fundamentally focusses on questions around how individuals attempt to make meaning of their lives; how people understand themselves as unique individuals and as social beings who are defined in many ways including life-stage, gender, ethnicity, class and culture (Singer, 2004). Narrative memory and life-story construction are at the core of these efforts at self-understanding and identity construction (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Therefore, the process of identity formation can be understood from the way that individuals craft narratives from their experiences, and apply these stories to knowledge of self, other and the world around them (Singer, 2004). This again emphasizes the way in which an individual's personal sense of self (or identity) can be experienced both as something quite 'fixed', and at the same time, as something that can be influenced by the world around it, including social interaction and constructions imposed by the social world. Narrative identity

formation is also understood from an 'avowedly lifespan developmental approach' (Singer, 1996), which again speaks to its capacity for change. This then further underlines the capability for the re-invention and re-authoring of identities throughout the course of our lives.

### 1.17 Intersectionality

The intersection where several social identities overlap (e.g. Muslim, British, Islamic, Male, Asian etc) in which multiple forms of discrimination, oppression, domination and disadvantage interrelate, places individuals in very situated positions. Intersectionality proposes that all aspects of one's identity simultaneously interact with each other affecting one's privilege and perception in the social world. It posits that these facets of identity cannot simply be observed separately. Therefore, intersectionality is not just a view of personal identity, but an overarching analysis of power hierarchies that are present within identities that aims to make visible the multiple positionings that constitute everyday life and the power relations that are central to it (Crenshaw, 2016). Intersectionality is considered an instrumental tool to study the reciprocities of categories of difference and how these are created and perpetuated as part of systems of power and inequality that sustain privilege and disadvantage in everyday life (Anthias, 2013; Winker & Degele, 2011).

By adopting an intersectional way of thinking regarding the issue of sameness and difference and its relation to power, and by thinking about categories as always permeated by other categories, always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power (rather than as distinct) we are able to explore what it is that intersectionality *does* rather than what intersectionality *is* (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013: 785). As well as gender and race, this 'intersectionality' includes bigotry directed as a person's religious beliefs. Inclusion of faith and religion within intersectional frameworks is not a discussion of what Islam *is*, but how it is *lived* and *made* in ever-changing ways (Weber, 2015); how it is constructed through discourse and how this then positions the various actors involved.

### 1.18 Positioning Theory, Discourse and Foucault

From the perspectives of intersectionality and microaggressions, as well as the notion of Othering, positioning theory allows the study of how conflicts are exacerbated, how alliances are formed, and what factors strengthen or disrupt them (Moghaddam, Harre, & Lee, 2008). In this framework, language is an historically and ideologically contextualised social action (Foucault, 1969). People's talk helps to situate and define the 'other', and simultaneously to situate and define the speaker. This gives rise to a system of rights and responsibilities between the "I" and the "other". Discourses then, are social practices. Their rules are historical, anonymous, fixed in space and time, and- for particular communities at a particular time period- discourses define the conditions within which they can act, orientate themselves, and the various positions that are opened and closed to them. The analysis of such discursive practices constitutes a diagnosis of the present, of the rules and guidelines of social relationships (Tirado & Galvez, 2007). The many different interactive sequences in which people are immersed in the day to day mean confronting many different positions. Thus, there is a 'permanent game' of positioning and being positioned. It is a slow process resulting from forces that confront and define each other, which makes it especially sensitive to the topic of conflict, and in particular discrimination. Positioning in this sense can be thought of as relationship; socialization itself (Tirado & Galvez, 2007).

### 1.19 Psychology and psychological research

Despite being a globally prevalent discourse, Islamophobia does not appear to have been made explicitly conceptually relevant to psychological theory. Prominent approaches appear to be sociological, postmodern, postcolonial, and more recently, international relations theory, which widens the Islamophobia discourse from a hegemonic racist discourse to one that is specifically relevant to the global capitalist international system (i.e. neoliberalism) (Waiker, 2018).

Despite many speculative claims about how young British Muslims view themselves and the world they inhabit, there is a paucity of empirical work in this area (Mythen, 2012). Although Islam is the second largest religion in the UK, the

emerging literature on Muslims in the UK, while growing, does not provide a level of psychological specificity and clarity that racism literature does for say, African-Caribbean communities. Consequently, there is need for empirical data that includes the psychological experiences of Muslims (Zaman, 2009). Zaman's study, identified the internal psychological struggle experienced by a group of Muslim Americans, shedding important light for the profession of counselling psychology. The research reported depressive symptoms around sadness, loss, shame and guilt; anxiety and hypervigilance, anger and frustration, powerlessness and identity distress. Zaman recommended that functioning and social outcomes, as well as the psychosocial antecedents and consequences of their situation should be given more importance in the evidence-base.

In addition to this, a systematic review by Rousseau et al (2015) looked at the consequences of 9/11 on children and young people's mental health. They highlighted that the majority of studies for the mainstream community (i.e. non-Muslims) were quantitative and assessed through a psychological framework, while evidence from studies on Muslim communities was represented in qualitative studies in terms of belonging, identity negotiation, and social relations. This contrast may illustrate an inequity in researching and reporting the effects of adversity on mental health for Muslims. Three major themes emerged from the review: (1) increased negative stereotyping, discrimination and marginalization; (2) the challenges of identity negotiation as youth; and (3) the coping strategies of individuals and communities to live within this socio-political context. They emphasize the crucial need for research aimed at understanding the impact of the terror context on Muslim children and young people, through an appraisal of the social context to support the development of prevention and intervention intersectoral programs.

### 1.20 Review summary

The literature has underscored the need for greater exploration of anti-Muslim discourse (Meer & Modood, 2009). It has called for the discursive claims made by neoliberalism to be problematised (Waiker, 2018), and for broader research that examines and reflects upon entrenched societal and cultural Islamophobia and

how this permits movements such as the EDL to continue to exist (Cleland, Anderson & Aldridge-Deacon, 2018). Furthermore, the evidence base highlighted that better understanding of minority group responses to feeling dehumanized, and the contexts within which this occurs, has important theoretical and practical implications. (Kteily, 2015). Similarly, Rosseau et al (2015) recommend an appraisal of the social context to support the development of prevention and intervention intersectoral programs. Moreover, functioning and social outcomes, as well as the psychosocial antecedents and consequences of the Muslim situation should be investigated (Zaman, 2009). Additionally, the discursive boundaries that police the limits of expression of Muslims urgently need to be identified and challenged (Mythen, 2012).

Research on Islamophobia has used a range of methods outlined above to look at Muslim experience. However, although the methodologies used (e.g. Thematic, Grounded Theory, and Critical Discourse analysis) have been able to speak to context- including politically- they have not been able to theorize how that experience is produced through discourse. A Foucauldian discourse analysis approach, focusing on issues of power and positioning, its impact on what can and cannot be said and done, and the implications of this for Muslim subjectivity, does not seem to have been applied to analyse how Muslim men themselves talk about the discriminatory context within which they live their lives. This thesis seeks to contribute to that methodological gap by adding a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of data collected from an entirely male group of participants to the existing evidence-base.

### 1.21 Discursive Methodology

Entrenched discourses become so accepted and taken-for-granted by society that challenging them is difficult. An investigation of the discourses around discrimination towards British Muslim males, including in the context of microaggressions, is timely. Identifying these discourses is a necessary and valuable first step in mapping out the environment in which Muslim communities are living at this time. This will contribute to the profession of counselling psychology in several key ways, in particular by expanding psychology's

knowledge through constructing the issue of discrimination as something situated in the social world, rather than simply placing the issue within the person as is commonly found within phenomenological psychological research. This understanding will enable practitioners to better 'step into' and empathise with the context within which Muslim people are living their lives and experiences. This will also increase clinicians' awareness of their own biases and stereotypes about Muslim people, enabling them to recognize the types and impact of microaggressions in everyday lives, as well as in therapy. Additionally, it will provide an important perspective for those involved in integration initiatives; for informing policy makers (e.g. Prevent) and public sector organizations such as the Police, challenging existing power structures and taken-for-granted assumptions.

The main aim of the research was to investigate what characterises the discursive worlds inhabited by UK Muslim males in relation to their experience of discrimination, by addressing the main research question: *'How do Muslim men in the UK talk about their experiences of discrimination?'*



## 2.0 Methodology:

## 2.1 Chapter overview

The aim of this chapter is to provide an in-depth account of the research process of the study. To begin with, I will summarize the aims of the research, which contextualises the main research question. Next will be a detailed look at the theoretical underpinnings of the study in terms of its epistemology and ontology, and the assumptions that the research is making about knowledge production. Methodological procedures around recruitment, interviews, transcription and analysis will form the following section. After that, will be a detailed description of the methodological procedures used to conduct the analysis. This will lead into a section on ethical issues and how the validity of the study was established before finally focusing on the reflexive considerations of the study- including the main challenges.

## 2.2 Research question and aims

The purpose of this research was to uncover the way in which Muslim men construct their experiences of discrimination in the UK, by asking: ***'How do Muslim men in the UK talk about their experience of discrimination?'*** More specifically, the study aimed to explore the discourses that Muslim men draw on when talking about their experiences of discrimination. Within that framework, the research also focused the role that *context* plays in terms of situating the discourses, and the potential *consequences* of this for the subjectivities of those experiencing discrimination based on their Muslim identity. Closely linked to this, was an interest in identifying *power relations* resulting from the discourses, i.e. how Muslim men are *positioned* in relation to their experiences of discrimination. In this way, the study aimed to identify what characterises the discursive worlds inhabited by UK Muslim men.

## 2.3 Research design:

### 2.3.1 Qualitative

In order to address the main research question and aims, the study employed a qualitative design, which allowed meaning and sense-making for the target population to be illuminated (Larkin, 2015). Qualitative approaches permit detailed, complex interpretations of socially located phenomena by focusing on

the subjective experience of each individual. Given that I am primarily interested in exploring and understanding the construction of experience by a specific population (i.e. Muslim men in the UK) in relation to a specific concept (discrimination), qualitative methodology allowed these non-observable processes to be studied, as well as the development of a co-constructed observation between the participants and the researcher (Kasket, 2013).

#### 2.4 Theoretical assumptions of the research:

##### 2.4.1 Social constructionism

Discourse analysis is classically social constructionist, which comes under the umbrella of post structuralism (Wetherell, 2001). In contrast to phenomenology, social constructionism as an epistemological stance suggests that subjective reality exists through a process of communication with others. This assumes that internal experience is shaped and influenced by external social constructs, institutions and pressures (Eatough & Smith, 2008). Constructionism is relativist in the sense that it conceptualizes language as a form of social action that constructs *versions* of reality; here, it is discourse that constructs reality rather than reality that determines how we describe or talk about it.

However, the social constructionist paradigm exists on a spectrum: i.e. there is a continuum between extreme/pure relativism and critical-realist social-constructionism, which permits gradations of relativism (Sims-Scouten, Riley and Willig, 2007). Pure relativists do not acknowledge that there is a reality beyond meaning-making and would view discrimination as existing only insofar as it is given meaning through language. On this basis, my study asked several ontological questions, which underpinned its theoretical approach: Is discrimination something that happens to the participants regardless of how they talk about it? Do they have a relationship with a reality that is beyond discourse? i.e. is there a realist basis to their experiences of discrimination in a structured reality?

##### 2.4.2 Critical realism

The moderate social constructionist position has an affinity with the critical-realist position (Sims-Scouten et al, 2007), which is well suited to addressing

these important ontological questions. Critical realists believe that an experience or discourse is not just constructed in an individual's mind, but that there are pre-existing realities (e.g. social, environmental, political, physical-body) that individuals attempt to make meaning around (Willig, 1999, 2012). Furthermore, that they are doing this meaning-making within particular contexts and structures that can include discrimination and disadvantage.

Critical-realism has been advocated because it allows analysts to theorize why people draw upon one discourse and not another and allows examination of the conditions that give rise to the constructions upon which people draw (Willig, 1998). The critical-realist position therefore necessitated attention being paid to which institutions were supported by the discourses that were drawn upon by the participants when constructing their relationship with discrimination, what power-relations were reproduced by the discourses, and what ideological impact the discourses have (Parker, 1992). By grounding discourses in social, cultural, economic, and material structures, more moderate social constructionist researchers can make reference to something outside of the text, allowing access to a reality that pre-exists and indeed shapes the ways in which individuals construct meaning within particular *contexts*. Therefore, we can consider that real *consequences* emerge, which have material effects on people.

As such, whilst discourse analysis is classically regarded as a relativist approach, once the *context* and *consequences* of discourses are considered, it opens up a critical-realist dimension. Therefore, this study takes the position that there is a material dimension to the participants' lives that is partially non-discursive; certain factors are treated as having an *extra-discursive* ontology and are understood as producing a *context* in which particular discursive constructions are more easily enabled or disabled than are alternative constructions. The critical-realist position is saying that when someone is stepping into a discourse and constructing meaning in a certain way, they then experience themselves in that way; through engagement with the discourse. This approach aligns with discursive theorists (e.g. Parker, 2011) whose research is politically driven, and concerned with what actually happens in the real world. This is a position that I

felt could allow a more ethical analysis in the sense of doing justice to the lived experience of the participants' lives by situating their sense-making in the materiality that they have to negotiate and manage.

The critical realist stance, then, allows consideration of agency and subjectivity within the discourses. As a counselling psychologist (CoP) this is fundamental, both to the axiology of the profession, and aligned with my own values around social justice and 'giving voice' to marginalised groups (Ponterotto and Grieger, 2007).

#### *2.4.3 Epistemological/Ontological Summary*

Discourse analysis and a social constructionist stance holds a central position in the research. However, as has been outlined, the study also focused on the *consequences* of the discourse (i.e. agency and subjectivity), as well as the *context* (i.e. the preconditions for constructing the discourse). My position is that critical-realism is talking about both ontology and epistemology: I understand that there is a world 'out there', (e.g. social and political structures, physical bodies, etc.) not just because they are thought and spoken about, but that there is a reality to them. As such, the 'realist' aspect constitutes the ontology of our study. The 'critical' aspect is the epistemology, because I am saying that we are not able to access the reality directly just by looking at it (naïve realism). Rather, we are able to access it indirectly through creating discourses and trying to make meaning about it. In this way, the assumptions about what there is to know about the world, and the way in which we find out about them (the epistemology and ontology of the study) are completely interdependent.

#### *2.5 Choosing a discursive methodology:*

The strength of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is that its focus is on the subjective experience of the individual. However, it does not consider how these subjective experiences are constructed (i.e. the various discourses and narratives out in the social world that feed into and construct the subjective experience). The main interest of my research is not in the inner phenomenological experience of the participants. Instead, it is interested in how

they construct their experience through discourse. It is these discourses and the way in which they are analysed that adds an important political element to this study: Discursive approaches focus on the construction of experience out in the social and political environment. Identifying these constructions can influence and promote the reframing of policy around (e.g.) inclusion, challenge existing power-structures, and support ambitions around social justice.

### 2.6 Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA)

FDA fits well with the theoretical underpinnings of this study. Foucault (1988) states that power is constituted through discourse, and is implicated in what is constructed as knowledge, as well as having an impact on the way that individuals define themselves and behave. FDA considers that knowledge itself is socially constructed and aims to highlight the ways in which this knowledge construction occurs through discourse (Holt, 2011). Its underlying ontology is that everything is constructed through language, and it aims to highlight the constructedness of existing assumptions. It is not concerned with producing a true versus false account, but rather in how 'facts' are constructed, and the consequences of these constructions (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). FDA is also concerned with the way in which discourse plays out in broader social processes of power and legitimation (Willig, 2013). As such, FDA is suitably placed to explore discourses that facilitate, limit, enable and constrain what can be said, by whom, where and when (Willig, 2012).

Although Discursive Psychology shares an interest with FDA in the way that individuals use language to make meaning, it is primarily concerned with how people use language to manage and negotiate social interactions in the context of personal objectives, whereas FDA focuses on locating language within a larger social and political context. FDA goes further than discursive psychology by considering the social, psychological and physical effects of discourse. Using FDA rather than Discursive Psychology allowed consideration of the discursive construction of the relationship between UK Muslim men and discrimination; what this means for the subject-positions they can adopt; and which actions and subjectivities are therefore made available to them. FDA allowed production of

knowledge about the discursive climate that Muslim men in the UK found themselves within, and what this meant for their sense of self, subjectivity and their experiences (Willig, 2003). Finally, in line with the main aims of this study, by mapping the discursive worlds inhabited by young Muslim men in the UK, FDA allowed investigation of possible ways of being afforded by these discourses, and the subject-positions that arose from this.

#### 2.6.1 Discourse

Discourse was understood as a pattern of ways of talking that seems to both create and exist through social consensus. Discourses are socially active and available for use in language and have a creative capacity by means of social practices. This highlights the centrality of language to this study and to addressing the research question and aims. From a Foucauldian analysis perspective, I understood discourses to be those patterns that create clear possibilities around how the speaker can understand themselves, as well as “truths” regarding social realities in which those discourses act. In this context, Foucault links the notion of ‘truth’ to the explicitly political notion of ‘regime’ to demonstrate the political control of truth. I.e. Foucault argues that a new “regime of the truth” emerged (Foucault 1975, p. 30; 23). This particularly relates to the role of language and what it does, and the way that discourse can oversee what’s Okay to say and do and what cannot be said and done i.e. Power.

#### 2.6.2 Discrimination

In this study, ‘discrimination’ has been used as an umbrella term to capture experiences of being perceived negatively, including prejudice and stigma. I did not engage with the semantic differences between such concepts during the interviews, but allowed the participants to speak about whatever the construct of discrimination brought up for them, and continued with this rationale throughout the analysis.

## 2.7 Procedure:

### 2.7.1 Recruitment

Participants: 6 British Muslim men, aged between 26 and 36 were recruited through the researcher's network, social media, and by approaching local Mosques, and London-based University Islamic Groups (See appendix 1A: Recruitment ad). Potential participants were invited to express their interest through emailing the researcher, which led to a brief telephone call for screening purposes before the interview. Snowball sampling allowed well-informed (Muslim) friends, colleagues and acquaintances to help me recruit others, accessing a hard-to-reach, tight-knit community. This snowball sampling led to an interesting demographic in terms of responses and inclusion. Given that those who had helped me to recruit participants for the study were contacts I knew through professional and/or academic contexts, it turned out that those individuals who they reached out to with invitations to participate in the study were similarly educated and employed.

### 2.7.2 Interviewees:

All participants were active professionals with higher education, including extensive professional training to management level. The Cambridge dictionary defines this section of society as 'middle class': 'The middle class are the people in society who are not working class or upper class. Business people, managers, doctors, lawyers and teachers are usually regarded as middle class'. On that basis, the participants in this study could be said to be representative of the British 'middle class' of Muslim men.

Homogeneity of data is not a concern for FDA (Taylor, 2001), so a relatively broad sample is possible. However, this research aimed to illuminate discourses impacting UK Muslims' subjective experience and was particularly interested in how discrimination is constructed by young adults who have lived during the era of the 'War on Terror' and 'Islamophobia' for most of their lives. Given the relevance of the events of 9/11 in 2001 as a turning point in attitudes towards Muslims, we collected data from UK Muslim men aged between 26 and 36 whose life experience will have been largely within this context. Participants were



required to be born Muslim into a Muslim family so that they are able to speak to a range of potential discriminatory experiences. Similarly, being born in the UK was also important in terms of feeling the connection to the wider culture and discourses. One participant who was from Scandinavia but had been here in the UK throughout his education was included on that basis.

### 2.7.3 Interview setting

We had initially proposed to conduct the interviews at City University or a local Mosque. However, following feedback from others involved in promoting the study, it was decided in supervision to include Skype as a means of conducting the interviews. This adjustment meant that logistical and potential time-barriers were reduced, as evidenced by the increase in participant response rates.

### 2.7.4 Interviews

Given the sensitivity of the topic, and my non-Muslim status, I aimed to create an open, safe, and non-judgemental environment. In order to maintain as even a playing-field as possible, I consciously avoided 'active listening' or summarizing what participants said. Within this stance, I was able to maintain a sense of connection with the participants while leaving them free to speak about their experiences in whichever way they preferred. Before the interview, participants were briefed about the aims of the study and invited to read the participant information sheet (appendix 1B) and then to complete the informed consent form (appendix 1C). Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the content of these forms and any information they were given. Following successful completion of consent procedures, individual semi-structured interviews lasting 60-90 minutes (Interview schedule appendix 1D) were recorded digitally in secure encrypted format. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and annotated using the Jefferson 'light' system (Jefferson, 2004) (Appendix 1E). Participants were made aware that they could ask questions at any point before and during the interview itself, as well as to stop the interview process. Participants were debriefed at the end of the interview (appendix 1F).

### 2.7.5 Semi-structured interviews versus focus groups

When researching how ordinary people construct meaning in relation to a particular topic, working with transcripts of semi-structured interviews or focus groups is feasible; they allow the investigation of how people construct meaning in relation to discrimination (Willig, 2013). There appear to be pros and cons to data collection from both approaches: Focus groups allow more naturally occurring discourse to be gathered (Onwuegbuzie, et al, 2009). However, Speers (2002) questions the utility of distinguishing between natural and contrived data. Kidd and Parshall (2000) (in Willig, 2013) point out that individuals in groups do not answer questions in the same way that they do in other settings. For example, the contributions of domineering group members can be problematic (Willig, 2013). Whereas focus groups provide access to wider discourses and allow them to be mapped, individual, semi-structured interviews allow access to more nuanced accounts of discriminatory experiences, and more subtle positioning that allows the exploration of subjectivity-within-discourse in more depth.

#### 2.7.5.1 *Semi-structured Interviews*

Semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, providing participants with some guidance on what to talk about, but also allowing the interviewer and interviewee to focus to a greater or lesser extent on a particular topic. The clear research question underpinning the interview, steered the types of questions asked. As such a balance was maintained between allowing the participant sufficient freedom to redefine the topic under investigation- and thus to generate novel insight for the researcher- and maintaining control of the interview and where it was going (Gill et al., 2008).

### 2.7.6 Pilot Interview

In order to refine the data collection methods, and to ensure that the interview schedule was appropriately sensitive, and sufficiently comprehensive, a pilot interview was conducted with a person matching the inclusion criteria for the study. His reflections offered a valuable insight into how the material might be received by participants and offered reassurance that the question list was comprehensive. Additionally, the recording of the pilot was used in supervision to

reflect on where interviewing skills might be improved. In particular, it provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on and notice the tension between the role of interviewer/researcher versus that of the clinician/therapist, which allowed necessary adjustments to the researcher's (my) interview stance to be made. An example of the tension between the two roles was where I noticed that I was empathising with the participant's experiences, and summarising some of what he said in order to communicate my understanding to him in an empathic manner.

### 2.8 Analytic Methodology

Analysis is concerned with the meaning-making process and is at the heart of qualitative research. Qualitative data never speak for themselves. Post structuralism, of which social constructionism is part, states that the process of analysis is always interpretative, contingent, and a version or a reading from some theoretical, epistemological or ethical standpoint (Wetherell, 2001a). In contrast to the empathic interpretive stance of phenomenological approaches, discourse analysis requires a suspicious interpretation; a top-down approach, which seeks to reveal the hidden meaning by digging below manifest content.

In FDA, there is a delicate balance between prescribing a method for analysis that might imply a neutral scientific method that is capable of producing an 'objective truth' (Graham, 2005), and the antipathy arising from Foucault's (1994, 288) statement: "I take care not to dictate how things should be". Nevertheless, there are a number of guides to conducting FDA. Parker (1992) gives a 20-step guide, the first 15 of which are concerned with marking out discourses. The final five are involved with the relationship of the discourses to institutions, power and ideology, as well as how to think about the social, cultural, historical and political implications of discourses. Willig (2013) sets out a six-stage procedure for analysing discourse, which allows mapping of the discursive resources used and the subject positions they contain, as well as exploring the implications for subjectivity and practice. Willig's approach allowed me to address the research question and accommodated all the aims of the study. The six-stages serve as an introduction to the 'analytic procedure' section of this chapter, and will now be outlined:

- Stage 1: Identification of the different ways in which the discursive object 'discrimination' was constructed in the text. Highlighting all instances of both implicit and explicit references, including where the text may not contain a direct reference to the discursive object, which can also reveal valuable information about the way it is constructed.
- Stage 2: Focus on the different ways that the object is constructed in relation to wider discourses.
- Stage 3: Attribution and justification: Examining the contexts within which the different constructions occur; the action orientation i.e. what is gained and what is the function of this particular construction, at this particular time, and how does it relate to other constructions in the surrounding text?
- Stage 4: The way in which discourse constructs subject and object positionings. Identifying the positions within networks of meaning that people can take up or place others within.
- Stage 5: Maps the possibilities for action contained within the constructions identified within the text, by examining how discursive constructions and the subject-positions contained within them open up or close down opportunities for action.
- Stage 6: Participants' subjective experience in the context of their subject positions- what can be felt, thought, and experienced- is the focus of this final stage. The ways-of-seeing and ways-of-being made available by discourses construct social as well as psychological realities. This stage allowed important issues- such as agency and subjectivity- to be brought back to counselling psychology.

#### 2.8.1 Status of the Data versus status of the Analysis

In this research, an important distinction exists between the status of the data versus the status of the analysis, which illustrates the way in which the researcher is positioned in relation to the research. The data themselves, are understood as not being a direct description of reality, but a construction on the part of the participants, and therefore, the data have a relativist, constructivist status. However, in the analysis, I am writing about how people are constructing stories

about their experiences, and as such, I am making claims about what is going on in the data. So, in contrast to looking at the data as a construction, the analysis claims to be telling a story that knows what the participant is doing (i.e. constructing). I.e. they are giving constructions of meaning, which I try to make sense of within the bigger picture, from a scholarly point of view. I am therefore adopting a realist position in relation to analysing relativist data.

## 2.9 Analytic Procedures:

### 2.9.1 Transcription and Familiarisation

All six semi-structured interviews were transcribed by the researcher using the adapted 'Jefferson light' system (Potter and Wetherall, 1987). This began my familiarisation with the texts. It also deepened my immersion in the data by allowing me to notice and highlight (e.g.) pauses, emphases, laughter etc that emphasised the function of the participants' talk. Transcription in this way was in itself a reflexive act (Bucholtz, 2000) that gave me a sense of what might be going on in the data; familiarizing myself with it and allowing myself to experience the discursive effects of the text (Willig, 2008). As such, the first step of the analysis was a process of capturing the effect of the discourses in terms of my responses and queries. Familiarizing myself with the texts in this way also allowed me to get a sense of the data as a whole.

I read through each of the transcripts, without taking notes, but allowing any mental associations and emotional responses I was experiencing to emerge. I kept a reflective diary which enabled me to track how I engaged with the discursive activity in the texts. Various associations came to my mind in response to the reading (around (e.g.) injustice and oppression) which I understood to represent discursive action of various kinds, and which I kept in mind, though without defining anything concretely at that stage. I was aware that the formation in my mind of various associations and images etc, and my ability to recognise patterns in the data, was informed by my own position within macro-level discourses. This of course is indicative of my own interpretative process in the analysis and highlights the need for reflexivity. At this phase of the process, I was aware of my

struggle to not think of the text in terms of the six-stages, given the strong pull to gauge my capacity to engage with them.

### 2.9.1 Stage 1

The next phase was a more active interpretation of the data. I returned to each text and, line-by-line, mechanically identified and highlighted instances where the discursive object of interest (discrimination) appeared, either explicitly or where it could be inferred through the discursive action of the speaker. At this stage, I erred on the inclusive (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Ideas, themes and questions (doubts) related to the construct under investigation as well as the research question were noted on the transcripts in the colour appropriate to the particular stage of the analysis. Appendix 2 offers an example of the analytic system I used across the texts for the first phase of the analysis (i.e. the colour coding system for the initial deployment of each of the six-stages). Appendix 2 also demonstrates the Jefferson light system used to transcribe the interviews.

### 2.9.2 Stages 2-4

After going through the first interview transcript in its entirety at stage 1 (Willig, 2013) I then moved on to stage 2, then stage 3 and so on. For stage 2, the discursive construction (discrimination) was located within wider discourses, which meant I had to draw on my own repertoire of political, cultural, social and religious knowledge, and was aware of how this firmly entwined 'me' with the research analysis. For stage 3, I paid attention to *how* discrimination was spoken about, and then how these discourses *positioned* people (both the participant and others in the text) (stage 4). In stage 4 I was again aware of how much my own relationship to discrimination was informing my understanding and therefore my interpretative and analytic process.

### 2.9.3 Stage 5 and 6

In that context, the discourses identified were also explored in terms of their implications for practices and power in wider society (stage 5). They were then analyzed for subjectivity, i.e. what could be felt and experienced by participants, on an individual and community level (stage 6). At this point, I felt I was able to

partially re-introduce my psychologist hat. I.e. having had to bracket my 'psychologist' hat in order to think and work discursively, I had to step back into a more phenomenological /curious role that allowed me to bring back my own thinking about emotional constructs such as guilt, anxiety, shame, anger etc.

### 2.10 Modifying my approach

The process of moving along the first four stages; of identifying the discursive object, and deconstructing it, and then of identifying the discourses, action orientations and positioning was systematic and quite linear, in that each stage seemed to make the next one possible. However, the final two stages, (i.e. stage 5, Practice: what can be said and/or done from the subject positions; and stage 6, Subjectivity: what can be thought, felt and experienced from the positioning), were not so linear, and instead they required more cross-referencing. I.e. the ideas and images that came to my mind would form themes that would only crystallise after identifying multiple related constructions or action orientations. For the analyses of the first three interviews I stoically looked for something to say about each of the six stages, for each line of text.

However, as this process evolved, and my insight into analysing discourse increased, I realised that it felt more congruent to approach each line and comment through the lens of each of the 6 stages as a whole to begin with, allowing flexibility around stages 5 and 6. In this way, as I moved through the texts, I was able to think about how each construction and comment related to one another in terms of the 6 stages. There was a lot of moving back and forth between and within the texts, which meant that the analytic procedure was inherently iterative, involving several readings and re-readings in light of my developing understanding. Overall, the analysis was guided by immersion in methodological texts, and the stated epistemological/ontological position of the research.

After reviewing the initial analyses of the first three interviews, I understood the need to focus on the *how* in terms of the construction of discrimination, and also how the participants were constructing themselves. I went back and reviewed the first three interviews in light of this and also kept stage 3 (action orientation) in

mind in terms of how my presence as a white non-Muslim man might influence the deployment of available discourses by the participants. As my capacity to analyse discourse developed, I also paid more attention to the positioning (Stage 4) of the analysis.

### 2.11 Integrating philosophical and theoretical understanding with six-stages

It was very clear to me early on in the research process that I needed to develop a good understanding of the complex epistemological issues involved in social constructionist research, in particular where the research is also concerned with subjectivity and experience. During those early stages of the analysis, the discursive perspective required me to learn more than a methodological technique. It also necessitated me taking on a rather radical shift in perspective, in terms of looking at the concepts of 'the construction of meaning', and 'the social-construction of reality'. I had to learn about the discursive paradigm, which is a considerably different view of the world to what I'm used to. Understanding and applying the philosophical underpinnings of the methodology (Epistemology/Ontology) was a huge academic challenge, which was overcome through reading, reflection and supervision. I focused in depth on the epistemological and ontological stance of the research. In particular the tension between pure relativism and critical realism, and how the political leaning of our social-justice oriented research impacts on this. As well as being a discourse analysis, the study is also about the social and political worlds that give it a realist dimension, which meant that I had to seriously unpack the philosophical underpinnings of these theories in order to fully understand how I could address the research question appropriately.

### 2.12 FDA versus IPA

As such, I had to get to grips with the discourse analytic perspective and work hard to shift my perspective from the familiar phenomenological view to the new discursive lens. I did this by learning to scrutinize the text and to look for constructions of meaning through language. As well as being a considerable challenge, it was also a fascinating new lens through which to view the world. The conceptual differences between discourse and phenomenology were particularly



highlighted when focusing on positioning in the research, and what this meant about the model of a person from a discursive perspective, and the wider implications this had for my development as a psychologist too. The development of my understanding around Second Order Positioning (Harre, 2009) greatly helped me to integrate this distinction as to the particular importance of FDA in relation to our participants and research question compared to other types of analysis (i.e. IPA).

As I performed the analysis, I gradually became aware that, given that there are such rigid and concrete constructions available of who our participants are, they then *have* to interact with those constructions by either rejecting or otherwise *doing* something with the positioning that emerges from the constructions. The existence of constructions of who our participants are, are so concrete (i.e. taken by other people as 'givens' in the social context, and therefore difficult for Muslims to ignore) that they have to do something with them, they can't just ignore them; it is how they experience themselves. It is the discursive environment in which they find themselves that other people do not have to negotiate that has this impact on their sense of themselves; their identity. I was aware that a White heterosexual male does not have to deal with a construction that precedes him in which people make assumptions about who he is in quite the same way, and to which he must justify himself in the face of fundamental (and pervasive) questions about his identity as something inherently threatening etc. Becoming aware of this gradually demonstrated to me what the important nuances that examining subjectivity from a FDA perspective compared to IPA were.

### 2.13 Analytic Process

Throughout the analyses, I colour coded each of the six-stages directly below the relevant comment and line for easy cross referencing (see appendix 2). I also produced detailed summaries of each interview, focusing on the main discourses and constructions that had emerged as a means of developing a macro view of the micro analysis of the interview data (See appendix 3). Once this was completed for each interview, I then analysed the summaries across interviews to look for prominent topics and discursive 'themes' (See appendix 4), which I noted by

writing on the colour coded texts, and underlining information which felt important.

With this information, I revisited each of the interviews from the beginning, analysing them in light of the emerging themes. This stage of the analysis allowed me to begin to identify the way in which all the participants appeared to consistently be *doingsomething* with their identity. This consistency made it seem analytically quite important. Once this was established, I once again analysed each of the interviews in order to home in more precisely on what it was that might be happening with their identity. I did this by gently re-reading each of the interviews without taking notes or looking at my previous analysis, but rather, just holding in mind the idea that *identity* work was being done. From this, I took bullet-point notes that summarized what I thought the main findings were in terms of discursive themes (See appendix 5), which allowed me to begin to construct an outline of what seemed important and how it might be presented.

A rethink to the approach to the summaries of each interview, allowed me to expand on and include a wider range of discursive 'themes' as a means of cross referencing the interviews once the micro analysis was complete. This new approach to the summaries was in itself another stage of analysis, as I found myself cross referencing the entire micro analysis in considerable depth in order to categorise the various discourses that were emerging. This necessitated me thinking more deeply about what was being said and how it was being constructed etc. It allowed me to begin to explore the wider context of the data and how they might link. I thought about the final summaries of the analyses and began to consider ideas about how I might approach organising the data, and to start to think about the 'story' that might be told from the them (see Appendices 5a, 5b). I then reread each interview and noted line by line where these discursive categories/themes were talked about (Appendix 5c). I also read other doctoral research theses in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of how I might structure and present the work, as well as helping me to think more politically about the what my data might be saying.

The analysis had by then reached the stage at which it was beginning to move beyond the identification of discursive constructions and the subject positions they contain and to focus on discourse dynamics (such as the use of the available discourses in the quest to construct an acceptable/serviceable identity). In this context, I also thought about the idea of agency which felt important to the analysis, and I was aware of the need for me to think more broadly about the complexities of agency in relation to discourse. This proved to be a very interesting aspect of the analysis in terms of the added lens I was able to work with. In order to develop the focus around this, I listened to all of the interviews, and slowly read through each of the analyses again, with a view to noticing the main discourses/themes/topics in relation to identity, positioning and agency that emerged. This had the effect of focusing the analysis into something more macro.

Having identified some discursive themes that seemed to incorporate much of what was going on in the data, and could tell the story that was emerging, I then went through each interview, my initial analysis and the summaries again, in order to extract everything that was relevant to each emergent 'theme'. From this I produced individual hand-written documents that related to each theme, thus, transforming the data from individual participant/interviews into discursive themes (see Appendix 6). This again felt like another level of analysis. Each theme was then digested and edited individually through the epistemological lens of the study, and also through the lens of identity construction and what the participants were actually *doing* with their talk (Appendices 6a and 6b), which became the overarching idea of the thesis. Several initial attempts at beginning to write the analysis section allowed me to further refine and focus that chapter.

Once the emergence of an 'overarching' theme of the analysis became apparent, I could address the discourses that appeared to be important. At this stage, the crucial nature of reflexive thinking became even more important, particularly when deciding what constituted 'important' in terms of which material was reported on and which was not. An example of this was the notable presence of the action orientation of the participants within the discourses in terms of how

they were often using the very discourse that they wished to distance themselves from in order to make sense of their experiences. From this I also considered various political discourses which might explain the subject positions within the data.

The plan of dividing the analysis chapter into six main sections emerged from having identified six main 'categories' or 'discursive themes' which had emerged within and across each of the interviews, and that seemed to capture the discursive climate that was being illustrated in the interviews, within which the participants were doing all of the identity-related discursive work. These discursive themes were: Discourses around the existence of discrimination; 911 and the War on Terror as a turning point; The role of the Media; Politics; Islamic Religion; and Integration. Thus, began the process of developing a framework for integrating and presenting the findings in the write-up.

At this later stage of the analysis I was able to think further about how my contribution as a researcher was constricting the findings. I asked myself, what about *me* has seen *this* (i.e. these themes and their implications) in the data. What was instantly present for me was my long-standing relationship to social justice and being keenly aware through personal experience of what it means to be positioned as an excluded 'other' in a political and social context. Thus, I was able to maintain a reflexive focus on where I was- and indeed am- coming from in terms of the topic of discrimination and looking at marginalisation and what that means in terms of it being my 'take'; my contribution. Ian Parker's idea of critical psychology elaborates this idea in which I am somebody who came into this research with a particular lens that allowed me to be critical about taken-for-granted ways of viewing others, while wanting to look at what that means in terms of injustice, discrimination and so on. As such, I own my political/social justice position, and acknowledge how my sense of wanting justice and fair treatment has helped me to see something that others might not, but how it also necessarily blinds me to other positions.

#### 2.14 Ethics and permissions:

Ethics Application form (Appendix 1).

Due to the degree of interaction between researcher and participant when conducting qualitative research, psychologists are faced with an ethical dilemma associated with being both a researcher and a clinician, which provides the context for boundary issues to arise (Thompson and Russo 2012). Given that the participants in this study only have contact with the researcher in the context of the interview, the blurred lines between roles were minimised. The balance between using communication skills to elicit information while managing the affect of participants and being sensitively aware and respecting privacy boundaries in the context of research, was at the forefront of the researcher's mind while conducting the interviews. The needs and well-being of the participants were prioritised over the wish to collect data. Issues of power and status in informed consent were further addressed by making clear the nature, duration, purpose and consequences of research and plans for dissemination.

The fundamental themes of confidentiality and privacy, informed consent, harm, dual-role, over-involvement and politics and power (Graham, Lewis & Nicolaas, 2006; Allmark et al. 2009), and the four BPS principles (BPS, 2009) of Respect, Competence, Responsibility and Integrity, were paramount in the research at all times. As well as adhering to guidelines (e.g. BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 2009, 2010), each ethical dilemma was carefully considered as being unique to the social, theoretical and political milieu within which the research was situated (Thompson and Russo, 2012).

Given the sensitive nature of the subject under investigation (which potentially underpinned the problems with recruiting for our study), confidentiality was given particular attention by the researcher when first meeting with the participants in order to minimise the potential for them to feel constrained in their talk for fear of incriminating either themselves or their communities. Foucault (1976) constructs the idea of surveillance by the state and talks about the way that this kind of power in which a person feels scrutinised and suspected, can significantly limit what can be said.

In addition, the following points underpin the ethical stance of our research:

- BPS (2009, 2010) code of ethics for Human Research, and HCPC (2016, (1) and (2)) was be adhered to.
- All participants were adults.
- No harm was anticipated for participants in this study, though their well-being and safety were monitored throughout. For example, there was the potential for an emotional impact on the participants of talking about their experiences of discrimination.
- The research aims were explicit, and individual written informed consent was obtained from each research participant.
- In order to comply with BPS (2009) guidelines around psychological distress, delicate topics were approached in a supportive and sensitive way, while maintaining the researcher/clinician boundary.
- Privacy around sensitive topics was respected i.e. participants were asked to say if anything is off-limits.
- Confidentiality was paramount. Names and other identifying features were changed to assure anonymity.
- Recordings were encrypted and securely stored.
- Participants were fully debriefed and offered the opportunity to ask questions.
- Their right to withdraw from the research at any point was made clear.
- Researcher welfare was maintained through the use of supervision and personal therapy. Additionally, there were no anticipated risk concerns as recruitment was via recommendations through the researcher's own network.
- A responsible third party was informed of the date, time and location of each interview and the expected completion time.

#### 2.14 Methodological reflexivity:

As with most qualitative research, FDA emphasizes the central role of reflexivity in terms of designing the study as well as the analytical process. This has particular

implications for me as the researcher. As a non-Muslim, I had reflexive conversations with Muslim colleagues and acquaintances to help me identify how recruitment documents and the interview schedule might be perceived. This led to adjustments around tone and language. Similarly, as mentioned above, the pilot interview brought insights in my approach to the topic and helped me distinguish between being a therapist and researcher, allowing my understanding of the aim of the interview- and the precise nature of the data- to become clearer to me.

I kept a reflexive journal throughout, which allowed me to scrutinise the integrity of my research and the decisions I made, specifically focusing on my own inner processes. In particular how my perspective of the scope of the study in terms of what it hoped to achieve- as well as my own position within the research- shifted over time. For example, my relationship with social justice and marginalisation became increasingly present to me as I moved deeper into the analysis. I was aware of how my own emotional responses to the material impacted on the types of discourses that I drew on in order to understand what was going on in the texts. Similarly, my understanding of how participants and others in the text were being positioned was impacted by the emotional response I had to the data, and this in turn was intimately linked to the discourses I had available to me during the analysis. This awareness allowed me to step back and carefully examine the source of my interpretations during the analysis of the data and to consider my preconceived ideas of how the research might proceed, and therefore to remain open to what emerged from the data. Additionally, I had to thoroughly engage with the topic to produce the literature review and research proposal. These both inevitably impacted my understanding of the topic/data/material, and the impact it had on the analysis right from the transcription phase.

#### 2.14.1 Subjective Reflexivity:

My own subjectivity in this process was a highly engaging personal revelation. Through my journal and supervision, I reflected on my assumptions and expectations, the discourses that I drew on, the impact of my own beliefs and values, and the context in which this was happening (e.g. an ongoing climate of

'terrorism'; myself situated within a university context), at every stage of the research.

The process was both introspective and intersubjective between me and the participants. Social constructionism allowed me to name and address issues around integrating my non-Muslim, white-male status and how this impacted the research, both in terms of my interpretation of the data, as well as how I was perceived by the participants. In that context, I was confident that, as recruitment came about via recommendations through my own networks of Muslim acquaintances, the important issue of trust in the research interview context was somewhat addressed.

As well as the potential emotional impact on my research participants, there was the likelihood of the research having an impact on me in terms of affect. As a result of the research process, I have noticed in my day to day that when I see Muslim people I feel a strong sense of compassion that emerges from the insight I now have into their plight, particularly around the microaggressions and hypervigilance and expectation they have around feeling suspected and marginalised by the White majority.

I have strong moral feelings around equality and social justice. As such, the profession of Counselling Psychology appeals because of its platform to affect individual, and wider, social change. I have personal experience of belonging to a minority group and the impact of marginalization. This exposure has given me an experiential insight into the impact of global narratives and discourses that affect identity and sense-of-self. It is my experience that Muslims from Western countries are living through a similarly overwhelming assault on their identity as individuals, and as a community, as well as an unprecedented attack on their religion.

Furthermore, I spent several years living in Asia, including Muslim countries such as Pakistan and the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan, in Malaysia, the Middle East, and Muslim majority areas of India such as Kashmir. The contrast between



being a Muslim living in the UK and living as a majority in a Muslim nation is tangible to me in terms of oppression. I find this also applies to Hindus, whom I have spent considerably more time amongst. I feel passionate about social justice, and feel that Muslims are currently *the* target for discrimination and prejudice. I therefore, began the study invested in making a difference through contributing to the evidence base in a way that will permit supportive action.

Finally, although I try to avoid labels, I am politically left-wing and socialist; I believe that being in a position where I can potentially contribute to a more just society- and to others' sense of well-being- is a privilege and also to some degree a responsibility, as well as being rewarding in terms of personal fulfilment.

### 2.15 Challenges

In summary, three main challenges arose:

1. Recruitment was both problematic and interesting. It appeared that for many people the topic felt so sensitive that they preferred not to be involved. Feedback suggested that some individuals found it difficult to decide how to talk about discrimination in this context in an appropriate way. There was a sense that they could end up positioning themselves in a way in which they are misunderstood as (e.g.) somehow racist, or as apologists for the Islamic State. As such, this silence suggested that the research was operating in a very sensitive discursive field. In order to understand and report what was happening around participation, I considered running a focus group with people who have seen the ad but who felt reluctant to take part. Of course, this was met with similar obstacles. Essentially, recruitment issues were overcome when I adopted a much more personalized approach (i.e. asking Muslim colleagues to recruit on my behalf) and opening up the interviews to Skype.
2. The discursive perspective required me to learn more than a methodological technique. It has also necessitated me to take on a radical shift in perspective, in terms of looking at the concepts of 'the construction of meaning', and 'the social-construction of reality'.

3. Similarly, in order to conduct this piece of social-justice oriented work, I have had to grapple with the relationship/tension between relativism and realism, which is central to the theoretical stance of this research. The research is a discourse analysis, but it is also about the social and political worlds that give it a realist dimension, which means that I have had to seriously unpack the philosophical underpinnings of these theories in order to fully understand how I can address the research question.

#### 2.16 Validity

The important observations, adjustments and changes described above uphold research validity (Willig, 2013). Additionally, I used retrievable data both in terms of the appendices and extended data extracts along with the analysis. Further supporting the validity of this research, it adhered to the four Quality Criteria in Qualitative research, set out by Yardley (2000), in which the main characteristics are a *sensitivity to context*, which is demonstrated through our socio-cultural awareness and ethical considerations (Appendix 1); *Commitment and rigour*, demonstrated through my in-depth engagement with every stage of the research process; *Transparency and Coherence*, demonstrated through clarity and presentation of methods and data, and the fit between theory and method, as well as detailed reflexivity; *Impact and importance*, where it is hoped that the research will have a societal impact in terms of changing attitudes towards the Muslim community, and a practical impact for Islamic people and service providers who work with them.

##### 2.16.1 Transferability:

In the context of 'impact and importance' of the research, an important criterion for evaluation qualitative research is the concept of 'transferability'. Transferability is established by providing readers with evidence that the research findings could be applicable to other contexts, situations, times, and populations. As such, the generalisability of the findings from this research will be considered in the evaluation of the research and the implications section (see p. 154 and 155) where the value and relevance of the knowledge claims emerging

from the study will also be considered through the lens of their transferability/generalisability.

### 3. Analysis

#### 3.1 Introduction and overview:

The study had set out with its main focus being the construction of discrimination. However, what was striking was that something quite different emerged. The participants did something very interesting while talking about discrimination, which was to *discursively construct their identity* in relation to a pervasive climate of anti-Muslim discourse. i.e. discrimination was the context within which they were doing this identity-related discursive work; foregrounding their identity in the interviews as their main concern in relation to discrimination. Throughout each of the interviews, the participants used language to actively negotiate their identities and demonstrate the struggle they have in order to construct identities that function in practice, given the hostile social climate which they inhabit. Consequently, the data have pointed towards a focus on what the participants are *doing* with their talk, which is to construct their identity in various ways within an adverse environment in which they are suspected, stigmatised, marginalised and excluded.

These identities are being imposed on them by powerful discourses, which allowed the study to focus on identity as the most fertile focus for the constructions. This Second order positioning is particularly important with these participants compared to other types of analysis because the analysis uncovered constructions of who they are assumed to be that are so concrete- and potentially life changing in their consequences- that the participants then have to reject or engage with them in some way; the discourse is acutely 'felt' and demands interaction. This is in contrast to, for example, the White heterosexual male who in the majority of contexts does not need to justify himself nor consider that anyone might question who he is in terms of there being a construction that precedes him in which people make strong assumptions about what that means; about his identity. For Muslim men, however, this happens right across the board.

Through my own use of language in the interviews, I constructed my position as non- suspicious, and therefore constructed myself as a non-threatening other

despite being a white, non-Muslim researcher. Nevertheless, the participants felt the need to make considerable effort to demonstrate their identity. This created an overarching suggestion that the discourses which challenge Muslim identity, 'out there' in society, are pervasive and very powerful. As such, an analytic focus on their identity construction has allowed me to cover the discursive economy in the data whilst also looking at what the participants are actually *doing* with those discourses, and, importantly, to map out the discourses that are available to them in order to do it.

The emergence of a pervasive struggle with identity in a hostile social and political climate fits well with the social justice agenda of this piece of research. Therefore, the purpose of this analysis chapter is to show how the Muslim men in our study achieve identity construction by drawing on a number of constructions or discourses to orient towards or disclaim particular identities.

#### 3.1.1 Discursive Themes:

In the context of this identity-related work, six discursive 'themes' emerged, which are intimately linked with each other. The themes together illustrate the pervasive and intense discriminatory environment in which British Muslims in the UK live their lives, and they also demonstrate the central role of discourse.

The first of these themes ("**The existence of discrimination**") focuses on the notion of discrimination against Muslims as something that is up for debate; as if it needs to be proved first. I will demonstrate how the participants construct discrimination against their community as something that they cannot quite be sure of as even existing; as if it is not allowed. Emerging from this are positions of self-doubt around their own interpretations of perceived microaggressions, and a resulting atmosphere of hypervigilance and paranoia in which the public fear of Muslims has been adopted and internalised by Muslims themselves. This expectation of, and hypervigilance for being perceived so negatively, results in uncertainty around interpretations of their own experience. This has been constructed by our participants as a persistent state of re-examining how non-Muslim others might be perceiving and positioning them and responding to this

by modifying and repositioning themselves accordingly. This is constructed by the researcher as 'internalised paranoia'.

On the other hand, the participants also constructed discrimination as something that clearly does exist. In this context, the participants construct themselves and their experiences in terms of being positioned within discourses of Muslims as the dangerous and hostile enemy; discourses of the male Muslim as terrorist, and discourses of Islam itself as threatening. We will see discrimination constructed as innate and ingrained in the social discourse, systemic within a culture of commonplace minority discrimination, and the norm in which Muslims are constructed as the latest 'target group' who are having to negotiate their identity within a powerfully embedded discriminatory context. The idea that the existence of discrimination itself first needed to be proved seemed to set up a whole process for the participants of needing to work hard to justify and position themselves, making constructing their identity so important. As such this discursive theme has been addressed as the first section of the analysis.

The next discursive theme (**911 and the War on Terror**) focuses on the way in which Muslim identity has been called into question since the events of '911', which is constructed as (e.g.) a 'turning point' for the Muslim community. 911 led to the social and political construction of the 'War On Terror' which has perpetuated powerful discourses that that legitimise political and social scrutiny of Muslim communities globally, nationally and locally.

What follows this will be the third discursive theme (**The role of the Media**) which offers an extensive examination of the way in which public perception of Muslim identity was constructed by the participants as being underpinned by relentless and negative Media representations. This will include an examination of constructions of the role of the media in driving, perpetuating and building on discourses stemming from 911 and the War on Terror. Furthermore, constructions of dehumanisation that frame Muslim lives as worth less than those of non-Muslim others, will illustrate the double standards in media reporting. From this, the chapter will explore discourses that exclude, shame and stigmatize

Muslims, labelling them as terrorists, extremists, dangerous, threatening and, therefore, legitimate targets for oppression and hatred.

Feeding into this, '**Politics**' will thus form the next discursive theme of the chapter. Political discourse and Anti-Terror Policy are constructed as further intensifying the assault on Muslim identity. Government-led programmes that are fundamentally concerned with intense scrutiny and surveillance, position the Muslim community as vulnerable and targeted. A particularly sensitive consequence of this is the danger that a disenfranchised, ostracised Muslim youth, can become vulnerable to extremist interpretations of anti-Muslim discourse, combined with radical interpretations of Islam.

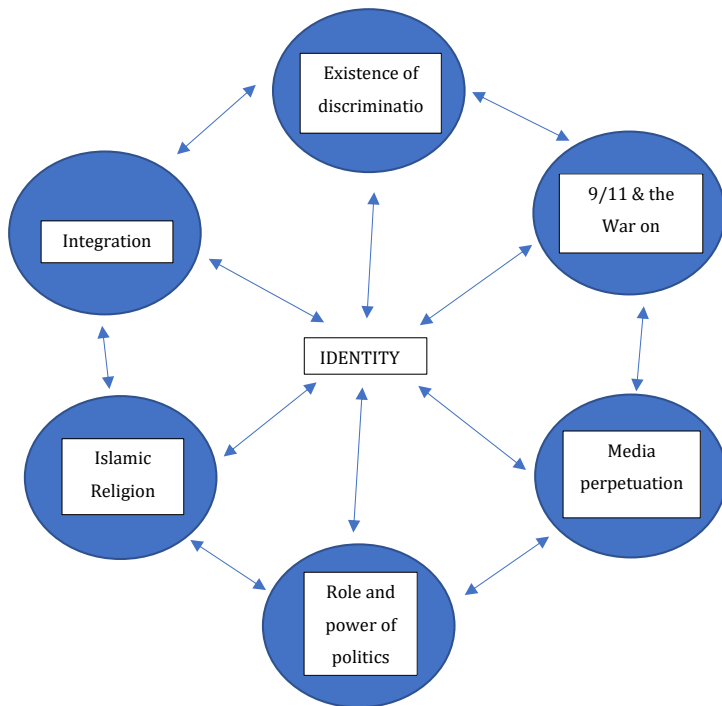
Following this, the next section of the analysis chapter will focus on the theme of '**religion**'. This focus will highlight discourses that generalise terrorist acts to the entire Islamic community and will unpack constructions that misrepresent and discredit their Islam thereby impacting on their religious identity.

Consequences of this hostile climate will include a close look at how the discrimination described in the previous themes legitimises exclusion and forms powerful obstacles to integration and belonging, seriously impacting what Muslims can say and do within the discourses available to them. This sixth and final theme (**'Integration'**) will examine constructions of the complexities of integration and assimilation that pose challenges to identity negotiation in terms of a 'vicious cycle' in which the divide between communities widens.

Taken together, this hostile climate of suspicion feeds into constructions of the complexities and dilemma of negotiating multiple, conflicting identities, which has raised serious ethical and safety concerns for our participants lives, and those of their families. Intimately linked with this, the thesis will focus on discourses and constructions of resistance in which the intense and hostile climate has created an almost 'forced' access to constructions of more activist positions that require the participants to reposition themselves and their communities, and to reclaim a sense of power through solidarity and lessons learned through other marginalised

minority groups formerly considered the 'target'. This position goes hand in hand with resistance; they are having to resist what is inescapable and therefore 'forced' upon them. A response to a potentially overwhelming (through its inescapability) situation/environment.





The above diagram illustrates the six main discursive categories used in the thesis. These highlight the discursive worlds inhabited by the Muslim participants in the study. The diagram indicates the way in which each of these categories are linked with each other, and the story they tell around identity. This story begins with the idea that the very *existence of discrimination* against Muslim's is under question, which set up the whole process of the identity-related discursive work that the data highlighted. The next category discussed the way that *911 and the War on Terror* were constructed as a turning point for Western attitudes towards the Muslim community. The third discursive category explores *the role of the media* in perpetuating and exacerbating these negative and discriminatory attitudes. The fourth category investigates *the role and power of politics* in the discursive story being told about Muslim experiences. This leads into the fifth category which focuses on the *Islamic* aspect of Muslim identity and the way that this is experienced by the participants as particularly under discursive attack. The sixth and final category looks at the construct of *integration* in light of the preceding five themes. Each of the six discursive categories have several sub-tonics within

### 3.2 The existence of discrimination:

Interesting discursive constructions that question the very existence of discrimination emerged across the interviews, covering a spectrum from it not existing and needing to be proved at one end, to being something obvious and tangible at the other. Throughout the spectrum, the participants worked hard to justify their identity as Muslim men in the UK.

#### 3.2.1 Discrimination as up for debate:

In the following comment, P4 constructs discrimination as something whose existence is not a taken-for-granted 'given', nor assumed to be real. Rather, he constructs discrimination as something that has to be proved or demonstrated; as if it is up for debate. P4 is possibly aware of, or drawing from, discourses of denial or a reluctance to speak out about discrimination both within and external to his community. In doing so, he is mobilising a discourse that constructs discrimination as a thing that first needs to be proved: it is problematized, not identifiable, under question. By constructing it in this way, he himself is positioned as having something to prove first, before it can be challenged or responded to.

He challenges this through identifying with another discourse which clearly acknowledges discrimination against the Muslim community as being something tangible; that it does exist. He takes it further by constructing it as existing both explicitly and in a subtler form. As such he is constructing himself in an almost activist way, by challenging discourses which might question the existence of discrimination against Muslims. The non-acknowledgement of discrimination at a societal level, potentially adds layers to the discrimination: insult to injury with implications for subjectivity. P4 constructs this with a tone of defiance against denial/non-acknowledgement of discrimination, which suggests both a position of power in terms of feeling able to speak out, and also a position of the oppressed in terms of actually having to do the speaking out.

In response to the first interview question "What are your initial thoughts about discrimination against Muslim men in the UK? P4 responded:

**P4:** “.hh Erm .... (1.0) ... tut .. well, **it exists**. That’s a simple place to start.

A straight-forward place to start. I think some people may (.) er, be perhaps in denial, but I (.) confidently say that I’ve experienced **it**. Erm, (1.0) overtly like you said, and also perhaps more subtly where **the person isn’t aware**, erm, necessarily, that they’re perhaps **treating me differently**, where **if I look differently**, er, I might, erm I wouldn’t **be treated in that way**”.

In his opening point (“*well, it exists*”) P4 constructs discrimination from the outset as needing to be established as being there. He seems to be separating himself from those that deny discrimination (*I think some people may (.) er, be perhaps in denial, but I (.) confidently say that I’ve experienced it*); as if his construction is about emphasizing the need for discrimination against Muslims to be understood as a lived reality that does exist but is nevertheless under question. This construction suggests that discrimination is hidden/denied in society and potentially within the Muslim community, who may be positioned within discourses that limit what they feel they can say and do and are perhaps afraid to voice their objections to the discriminatory context for fear of exacerbating it; a sense of having no voice.

For example, powerful discourses exist in the UK and the West generally, that we are open, accepting and inclusive multi-cultural societies. Therefore, claims of widespread discrimination against an entire community, stand in the face of such powerful discourses. Conversely, wider discourses around the insidious, taken-for-granted, superiority of the ‘majority’ also exist, which again can feel threatening if challenged. These two seemingly opposing discourses work in tandem to maintain the status quo. Which of these discourses is more readily available to which group is an interesting question?

### 3.2.2 Discrimination as not quite tangible:

The idea that the existence of discrimination is under question- or ambiguous- was also constructed as something that is not quite tangible; cannot be quite fully owned or experienced. Nevertheless, P5 constructs a climate of subtle microaggressions, which creates an environment in which he constructs himself

as constantly vigilant for how he is being perceived by others; very subtly but persistently positioned as 'other', leading to subjective experiences of doubt around his own experiences and interpretations.

By constructing potential discriminatory experiences in this way, P5 was able to illustrate the caution and apprehension- even expectation- of being perceived negatively while going about his (their) day-to-day. This raises the question: what are the underlying conditions which create the sense of apprehension in Muslim people and that generate the expectation of being discriminated against?

The following comment came at the start of the interview and in response to the opening question asking P5 to talk about his experiences of discrimination as a Muslim man in the UK. I had clarified that this could be both obvious/explicit and/or subtle forms of discrimination.

**P5:** "The subtle reaction that you get, you don't know, for sure, you know, that you can categorise them as, you know, if it is Islamophobia or, you know. You can't really, can you? You're just guessing, aren't you? I think, anyway, if someone looks at you differently or, er ...(0.4).... it does play up on your mind. It does, because if you don't experience it, and then when you do experience something like that, you think 'oh, is it because of this?' Or someone looks at you funny, you know, erm, or if someone's looking at you, constantly..."

He constructs the situation as impacting on his capacity to make meaning out of his experiences, as if what is actually happening- and the intention behind it- feels slightly out of reach. His construction suggests a position of subjective confusion including about how to respond in those moments. As such he is positioned rather ambiguously, and it is as if he wonders if discrimination is even allowed. There is a sense that he is positioned as a target, though he cannot quite put his finger on it, which leads him to position himself as potentially mistaken and even paranoid. Nevertheless, the anxiety he is pointing towards seems real enough to him. These discourses and the behaviours that P5 describes (i.e. his action of reasoning and estimating others perception of him), suggests that he is sorely limited in what he

can say or do in terms of interacting in 'usual' ways with people in everyday interactions, when his first impulse is to check whether or not he is offensive or threatening in their eyes.

### 3.2.3 Discrimination as evident:

Perhaps less ambiguous is a construction from P4 who suggests a pervasive presence of discrimination simply for being identifiably Muslim. In general, the term 'Muslim' itself was constructed across interviews as being something that is filled with negative connotation in public discourse. In the context of talking about the many benefits of being a British Muslim in the UK compared to other countries, P4 makes this comment:

**P4:** "Erm (1.5) bu:t it's er (1.5) you're **aware** of the fact that you're a Muslim, you're very **aware** of the fact that you're a Muslim, you're made **aware**".

The construction became more emphatic as P4 stepped into the discourse as he moved from being *aware* (*You're aware*), to being *very aware* (*You're very aware*) to being *made aware* (*You're made aware*). His repetition of 'aware' suggests that the negative connotation attributed to the construct 'Muslim' impacts on Muslim individual's own sense of identity in terms of how they believe they are being perceived, and the expectation of this that is inherent in the comment. Although P4 did not feel the need to explain to me what was meant by 'Muslim' in this context, he assumed a shared implied understanding of 'the *fact* that you're a Muslim', which he repeated twice. The construction suggests a pervasive presence of discrimination simply for being Muslim; an assumed negative identity that precedes Muslim people.

Discrimination was therefore constructed as non-Muslims having a suspicious spotlight on Muslim-ness; of a hyper-vigilance on Muslim identity, which appears to make P4- and the wider Muslim community- hyper-vigilant too. This position of a constant questioning of identity by non-Muslims, potentially raises questions for P4 around his own sense of identity. It is as if 'Muslim' in this construction is a highly negative label, which appears to be assumed and taken on by the

participant i.e. being 'made aware that he is a Muslim' is meant to position him as 'less than/bad/wrong', a position that- within this discourse at least- he appeared not to have an alternative to.

#### 3.2.4 Discrimination exists. Discourses exist.

In the next comment, P6 also addresses the issue of how he is being perceived in the social world. He explicitly constructs discrimination as existing but is discursively able to distance himself from the discourses that arise following a terrorist attack by constructing himself- including through his matter-of-fact tone- as reasonable and rational, as if the situation somehow makes 'sense' despite its inherent ignorance; seen in the way he twice constructs the generalisation of terrorism as "just that generalisation".

In the comment P6 offers evidence for "*how you know that there's discrimination around*". He identifies terrorist discourses as constructing the Muslim as bad and dangerous, generalised to the entire Muslim community. P6 goes on to offer evidence for the discriminatory climate in the form of "*Punish a Muslim Day*", an online event that had occurred a few months prior to our interview. He constructs a process of the instantaneous negative impact on public opinion following a terrorist attack in a matter-of-fact manner; as if it is perfectly understandable:

**P6:** "... there was just a series of terror attacks, wasn't there? Um, you're just, you know, you're just **mindful how people perceive that and then therefore perceive you**. Um, yes, because I think there's **just that generalisation** of, you know, it's not just this one person, it's, you know, it's anyone associated with that community as well. You know, like, all Muslims are terrorists, **just that generalisation** I think, um, (1.0) **they're bad**.

**R:** "Did you say bad?"

I had not quite caught the word and was keen to hear more. By asking the question I was constructing it as important and so he gave me more.

**P6:** “Bad, yes, like, you know, in the most general sense, so, dangerous, yes, um, (2.0) all of that really... there was this thing called ‘Punish a Muslim Day’. Are you aware of that? Yes, no, yes, it was quite shocking to read actually. But this, this is how you know there's discrimination around.”

P6, like many participants, was noticing the existence of discourses themselves. This demonstrates that those who are in a marginalised group naturally notice and analyse discourses although they do not necessarily call it that. This point will be expanded upon in the conclusions chapter.

### 3.2.5 Muslim identity as homogenous:

In the next comment, P4 (a lawyer) constructs the non-Muslim other as having access to only one discourse about Muslim men in the particular context the talk is situated within (a courtroom). He had just been constructing a situation in which he had been assumed by the opposing team of lawyers to be a defendant who was eavesdropping on their conversation, when he in fact was leading the defence of the client. In this context, he constructs discrimination as demonstrably existing.

P4 appeared quite emotional while constructing this- a mixture of disbelief and indignance- which he seemed to assume I shared. His comment is in response to my question: *“How do you think that they perceived you?”*

**P4:** “.hh, Like I said, **it could only be** that I if I was in that environment, in a court (.) **I have to be** a defendant, **I have to be** someone whose done something allegedly and **I'm on trial. It can't be** that I'm the person professionally representing them= =And that's **rubbish** because there's **hundreds, thousands** of Asian, Muslim lawyers”.

On one hand P4 is saying that there is no other position available to the people who assumed him- as a Muslim man- to be a criminal (*“it could only be; I have to be; It can't be”*). On the other hand, he constructs the idea that there is something intentional about this bias, because “that's rubbish, there's hundreds, thousands

of Asian, Muslim lawyers”, as if it is wilful ignorance. P4 is strongly rejecting the discourse that Muslim men are all criminal and constructs himself in a powerful position in which he explicitly and unquestioningly negates the possibility that it may be an unconscious position to construct Muslim men as criminals by saying “and that’s rubbish”, and then offers evidence to the contrary.

### 3.2.6 Deeply embedded discrimination

Similarly, P2 talks about colleagues who evidently openly discriminate against Muslims in the recruitment company where he works (i.e. Muslim candidates are subject to a much more stringent recruitment process, and their forms are left ‘at the bottom of the pile’). He suggests the discrimination to be clearly evident to him, but unconscious to his colleagues, such that they make no effort to disguise their attitudes, despite him being openly Muslim and their senior. He constructs discrimination as so unconscious that it is ‘entrenched in their makeup’. As such, he is speaking with certainty about the existence of discrimination, albeit constructed as something unconscious and engrained.

**P2:** “Um, but still, some people are **really struggling** with that, so that's something I'm **working on** here and, you know, getting people **to move past** that but it seems to be very much, you know, **entrenched in their, in their makeup**, which is something I'm **still struggling** to understand”.

**R:** “you used the term entrenched in their makeup (when referring to discrimination in the workplace). Could you expand on that a little bit”

**P2:** “Sure. I mean, to be honest with you, I, I don't know how openly I'm allowed to speak without coming across as a, you know, a stereotype or, you know, stereotyping against anyone or, you know, trying to characterise or, or, or put anyone into boxes. That's definitely not my intention”.

Discrimination was constructed as entrenched within a professional culture of perhaps unconscious- prejudice; as something deeply embedded. Constructed as so innate in contemporary professional environments, that perpetrators are



unaware of their prejudicial thinking and actions. P2 constructed himself as needing caution when speaking about it or challenging discrimination. Despite positioning himself as actively challenging this discriminatory culture at work, P2 felt the need to add in a clause so as not to directly offend (his colleagues? Me? Others who he may feel might read any outputs from this research?). It is as if he is asking me 'am I allowed to say this?' The way that this is discursively constructed illustrates the limitations that he feels when wanting to voice his opinions/observations. It also demonstrates the care that he (and other participants) felt the need to take when constructing themselves in the interviews.

### 3.2.7 Internalised Discrimination

The previous comments have illustrated the struggle to avoid discourses that are so powerful that they demand engagement. Nevertheless, various ways of minimising their impact were deployed. However, the following example of discrimination highlights the way in which the discourses of the unacceptability of Muslims in certain contexts are so inescapable that the participant himself was caught up in the drama of the situation he is describing. So much so in fact, that he felt a tense internal conflict when his phone ring-tone sounded with the traditional Muslim call to prayer (Allahu Akbar). Rather than trying to discursively distance himself from the discourses, or to prove the existence of discrimination, he appears to be letting the facts speak for themselves:

**P3:** "I've got an alarm on my phone, um, for prayer times and it's, it's Adan: (Allahu Akbar) and that is the call to prayer ... I'm thinking of one time where that's gone off and, um, it was around sort of new staff and one of my senior staff members. And then there was like a, **sort of a panic** from the senior staff member like looking at me and kind of, um, even myself **I felt panicked** like' .... 'I just felt quite, um, **quite upset with myself** that I had then, um, sort of joined in with their sort of response to, you know, my, my call to prayer and, I felt pressure and it was almost like, and, and I don't feel like this but almost like, **like a shame**, like I **shouldn't, I shouldn't be, shouldn't be, that shouldn't be, I shouldn't be having that then**".

Through this construction, we see discrimination constructed as so pervasive that Muslims themselves can buy into and become impacted by the stereotypes; wanting to avoid bringing mention of Islam into non-Muslim contexts and struggling with the conflicting identities that arise. This discursive context mobilises the very discourses that attack Muslim identities and that Muslim people wish to resist. His response to the panic on his boss's face was to join in: (*'even myself I felt panicked', 'feel pressure', 'Like a shame'*). This also demonstrates the power of the discourses that exclude Muslims from certain contexts; as if it is now an unspoken, but understood, societal norm, suggesting that the discourses are so pervasive as to be 'accepted' as legitimate; sometimes even by Muslim's themselves.

P3 continues to construct himself as being in a situation where powerful discourses were pulling him in opposing directions; between his religious conviction and his awareness of how his Islam was being received (or rejected) in that circumstance. One so powerful that it could temporarily pull him into a kind of self-discrimination/stereotyping, and a difficult identity conflict. His repeated use of the word 'shouldn't' (*"like a shame, like I shouldn't, I shouldn't be, shouldn't be, that shouldn't be, I shouldn't be having that then"*) appears to construct him as still subjectively struggling with this subjective conflict, still, in the context of the interview where he was again inside these discourses; as if his own sense of agency remained significantly challenged by the discursive context.

### *3.2.8 Passing for white*

In such a context in which Muslims themselves can buy into powerful discourses that construct them negatively, considerable subjective conflict around their identity emerged. As such, 'passing for white' was constructed as an option that could make things easier in the here-and-now, but also had serious implications for their cultural and religious identity in the long term. This discursively-constructed conflict has important implications for subjectivity, including around personal integrity:

**P3:** "I see quite a lot of young white, white guys, very trendily dressed with the long beard but, and I think do they think maybe, maybe, **maybe I could get away with that** and I think sometimes no, do I, I don't want to get away with it like that. The reason for the beard is, is a, is I'm Muslim and I shouldn't try to think, "Yeah, **maybe they'll think I'm just a hipster or something.**" So, you know, there's so many things that come into your head when wearing it, man, when donning it so to speak, yeah."

Other constructions highlighted discursive contexts within which our participants were positioned as having no choice- or at least an incredibly difficult one- in terms of *having* to 'pass as white' or face becoming professionally disadvantaged. This constructed discrimination as existing as an explicit and accepted norm in this professional context, with important implications for identity and subjectivity.

**P2:** "But I mean **interestingly** enough, I was working at a law firm, um, whereby I was asked if I could change my name on my email signature, right, because clients would respond better to a more, I think the word I'd use is more corporate name ... Um, **interestingly** actually, the person who asked me to do that was a Pakistani man. So, that was, that was **quite peculiar**. So I had to actually change my name on the signatures for the purpose of this internship ... E-Exclusively based on the thought that he felt the clients would respond better to a different name and they felt that they wouldn't think, um, they were, you know, they would, **it would be more welcoming if I had a less Muslim name**".

Discrimination was constructed as demonstrably obvious; the facts again speaking for themselves. The construct of 'passing for white', (or perhaps to simply not appear Muslim) is constructed as so pervasive and normalised that it is experienced as coming even from other Muslims in the professional context; the anti-Muslim discourse so normalised it is therefore inescapable, and with profound implications for subjective experiences around agency and positioning arising from the explicit pressure to disguise Muslim identity in professional contexts. Discrimination is thereby constructed as a systemic fact and accepted given within this profession, which promotes discourses around the greater

legitimacy of non-Muslim (White) individuals, which Muslim employees are routinely expected to fall into line with.

P2 doesn't express whether he agrees or disagrees but lets the facts speak for themselves. In doing so- and in opposition to the stereotypical image of the angry Muslim- he is constructing himself as a reasonable man who is using his brain rather than his emotions to approach and discuss this topic- this was demonstrated by P2's use of the word "interestingly" twice and by his observation "that was quite peculiar"- and by letting the facts speak for themselves as a way of doing that..

In this section, I have identified the main ways in which the existence of discrimination is problematised and oriented to. The next section will explore constructions of the driving forces behind the generation and perpetuation of the discursive climate, and how it has become so embedded and created a powerful challenge to agency, and the need for the participants to fight to defend and justify their Muslim identity.

### 3.3 September 11<sup>th</sup>, and the War On Terror:

This chapter will begin by focusing on the way in which Muslim identity has been called into question since the events of 911, which is constructed as (e.g.) a 'turning point' for the Muslim community. The ensuing construction of the 'War On Terror', which emerged as a consequence of 911, has perpetuated powerful discourses that are loaded with permissiveness that legitimises political and social scrutiny of Muslim communities globally, nationally and locally.

Discourses that link the events of '911' and the 'War on Terror' with terrorism- and which then generalise culpability of terrorist activity to entire Muslim communities- were mobilised throughout the interviews. 911 and the War on Terror were constructed as being a 'turning point' for Western perception towards Muslim people and the Islamic faith, and as underpinning an ongoing environment of hostility, in which Muslims- and in particular Muslim males- are positioned as potential terrorists. Consequently, Muslim identity, in terms of their

religion and their 'Britishness', was constructed as being called into question by oppressive, persistent and ongoing discourses.

So pervasive is the discriminatory climate, that it was repeatedly constructed by the participants as an expectation; as inevitable. They discursively responded to this, by constructing their identity in ways that distanced themselves from the persistent anti-Muslim discursive climate in which they are systematically and intensely scrutinised. This scrutiny was also constructed as being written into UK law in the form of anti-terror policy as a direct result of 9/11 and the War on Terror. However, the legitimacy of the Western construction of the War on Terror as a necessary, righteous and noble cause was challenged. Instead, questions were raised that construct the War on Terror as perhaps masking potentially sinister political agendas that have devastating consequences for the global Muslim community in terms of how they are being constructed and the impact this has on their sense of identity, and the discursive work they are therefore forced to engage in.

### 3.3.1 Inescapable constructions:

The following comment from P6 illustrates this. He also constructs himself as adapting to an unjust situation despite its prevalence; as despondent yet resilient; resigned yet determined.

**P6:** "It's sort of, sadly, it doesn't surprise me anymore. You just come to expect it. Which, that's sad, but it's been going on since 2000 when the Twin Towers went down, so it's been a long time and lots of things have happened since then, you know. But, yes, no one, like, me and nobody else who's unrelated to any **incident** should have to **feel the consequences** of that **incident**. So, yes, I guess I'm not, I'm not shocked that that happens anymore because it's been a long time. You just sort of, **you move on with your day. You don't let it obstruct you**, sort of thing".

Although in this comment, P6 has not used the terms 'Muslim', 'terrorist', or 'discrimination', he discursively constructs Muslim people as being positioned as responsible for and/or complicit in terrorist attacks against Western targets.

Muslim people are therefore positioned as a threat; unwelcome outsiders who are marginalised with hostility. When he says *“no one, like, me and nobody else who’s unrelated to any incident”*, he makes a clear distinction between himself- and other ordinary Muslim people- and those (Muslims) who commit terrorist crimes.

He orients towards discourses that construct victims and perpetrators, and that identify some groups as guilty and others as innocent. Within this, he positions himself as ‘other’; an ‘innocent’ Muslim outside of the remit of blame. By implication he constructs that there are some that are guilty. His orienting himself outside of being to blame, highlights the prevalence of discourses of suspicion and blame, and an underlying ‘them versus us’ mentality. He is also Othering by aligning himself with his Britishness and wider society. These discourses are so dominant that they are unavoidable. Their sheer pervasiveness means that people either have to use them (as in this example) or resist them (as seen in upcoming comments). Importantly, the discriminatory climate is constructed as having consequences that need to be navigated by another construction: that of the ‘innocent Muslim’, which necessarily mobilises the construction of the non-innocent Muslim.

### 3.3.2 Changes in Western Perception of Muslims

P4 constructs the discriminatory climate emerging from the 911 attacks, as persisting over time. He constructs the ‘bad perception’ of Muslims as existing on a scale and uses the 911 context as a marker (i.e. ‘at its peak’), constructing the current situation (summer 2017) as comparable to the high intensity of the level of discrimination in 911.

**P4:** “So, I think that it’s no secret that **since 911 the world changed** and the world, Er and **Muslim lives changed, Muslim perception in the er West changed**, but it has not been as bad as it has been this year ... It is at its most, since 9, if 911 was when it was at its **peak**, and then there was a decline, it’s back up at that **peak**, er, from my point of view, 911 sort of level”.

P4 repeatedly uses the word 'change' to construct the depth of the impact on Muslim subjectivity following 911 ("*since 911 the world changed and the world; Er and Muslim lives changed; Muslim perception in the er West changed*"). He also describes the current situation as "as bad" and "back up at that 911 peak". In doing so P4 constructs an environment in which Muslim community as a whole are positioned at the mercy of and vulnerable to the impact and interpretation of current events and must therefore remain vigilant for the current discriminatory trends. He continues:

**P4:** "—just going back to that theme we were talking about earlier, because **we are the suspect community**—because **we are** the community being .hh (2.5) erm **most under the microscope, most investigated**, (.) having laws set up exclusively for Muslims, (1.0) erm, (2.0) it's exacerbating now, it's, it's most emphasis (2.5) is on Muslims than any other community (3.0)".

Invoking a widespread discourse of suspicion and surveillance, P4 constructs the Muslim community as the target of hostile scrutiny. He constructs himself as a victim in a situation, which can be more or less 'exacerbated' dependent on various external factors- including the law- and how these factors can impact the wider British public and the society that Muslims live their day to day within. He implicates government and political policy as having responsibility for targeting Muslims and the trickle-down effect that this has on public discourse. His constructions suggest that Muslims have an expectation of discrimination, which can vary in intensity dependent on various factors, (e.g. political agendas and recent terrorist attacks). Consequently, the situation whereby external events control the 'discrimination barometer' raises important questions around the way in which information is constructed and disseminated i.e. What is fuelling the fire of public anti-Muslim discourse?

### 3.3.3 Parallel positioning in the interview context

Globally, Muslims are positioned as being under attack, and locally (UK) they are positioned as being vulnerable to invasions of privacy and police harassment. In this next comment, P2 uses terms such as "innocent people" and "unfairly

detained”, to construct himself in opposition to the inherent prejudice and bias in new laws brought about following 911, and the permissive discrimination that arose from them and still persists.

**P2:** “...48-day detention without trial, 48-day detention without, so they're being charged as suspected terrorist, of course it affects **day to day people**. I mean particularly at the time when it was passed, that piece of legislation, um, you know, you had a lot of **innocent people** being detained for, for reasons, you know, that were unknown to them, um, whether it was, you know, a text message that was **perceived in an incorrect way**, whether it was, you know, they had a group of friends who behaved, who were in different social circles. You could be **affiliated** in almost any way and, as a result of that, be **suspected of terrorism**. So I think yes, for people living in the UK, um, particularly, you know, young men, they, they, they were facing a challenging time because there were several cases of people being, you know, **unfairly detained** but that was the law at the time.”

P2 constructed a situation in which he talks about being suspected of terrorism without drawing on the construction 'Muslim'. Instead, he has constructed Muslims as “day to day people”; “innocent people being detained”; “People living in the UK, particularly young men”; “people being unfairly detained”. As such, he avoids mobilising discriminatory discourses and instead constructs the Muslim community as he would any other member or group of UK society.

Nevertheless, this comment constructs Muslims as legitimate targets in the eyes of the law, which feed into and mobilise discourses of fear and suspicion. Through his focus on the explicit changes to national and international law regarding Muslims and the reduction in restrictions and increase in power of government agencies, P2 is able to rationally construct his objections to it, by letting the facts speak for themselves, whilst simultaneously constructing himself as rational, and therefore not the irrational terrorist.

P2 constructs these laws as having legitimised the harassment of Muslims. He constructs a situation in which ordinary Muslim people might have to second



guess the types of conversations that they are having and with whom, and how this might be mistakenly perceived as being terrorist affiliated (“*a text message that was perceived in an incorrect way, whether it was, you know, they had a group of friends who behaved, who were in different social circles. You could be affiliated in almost any way and, as a result of that, be suspected of terrorism*”).

The resulting need to exercise caution when using social media, could lead to subjective experiences of hypervigilance, exclusion, and even paranoia. There also seems to be a parallel process going on in the way in which he is carefully constructing things in the interview, He is able to avoid explicitly criticising the government, or social attitudes, which allows him to speak to the issue but also to protect himself from potential recriminations. Some of this might explain the difficulties we had with recruitment for this study.

His use of language was gentle (“*innocent people, perceived in an incorrect way, unfairly detained*”), and the end of the comment where he says “*but that was the law at the time.*” Although he is describing something that is outrageous and highlights a great injustice, he is simultaneously able to construct himself as not angry/emotional by presenting it in a very rational way that lets the facts speak for themselves. This contrast between the outrageous facts and his rational presentation is what achieves this positioning; this tension between the facts of the comment, while presenting himself as non-emotional and rational, and the impact this might have on the listener. His construction leads the listener to feel that there is an injustice going on, which highlights the action orientation. He knows that by describing it in this way, I will have a response. He then tells me “well that’s how the law was’ – thus provoking a sense of outrage in me, but himself able to step back ‘it wasn’t me, it was the law’.

#### 3.3.4 Legitimacy of the War on Terror

Other constructions of 911 as a key factor in intensifying anti-Muslim perception and sentiment, also raised questions around the legitimacy of existing discourses around the War on Terror, fundamentally challenging widely held discourses of

the West's military mission in the Muslim world as something necessary and worthwhile.

**P1:** "Yeah, I mean, the erm discrimination, in terms of Muslims, **obviously**, er, have increased, er, since 9/11. And, erm, of course, what happened on 9/11, er, was a big, erm, I mean, tragedy but then, **obviously**, the 'war on terror', since then, has **obviously**, led to millions of people being killed".

P1's construction of the war on terror having killed millions of people, expands on and perhaps challenges more readily available discourses that construct the War on Terror as something essential that is being fought to reduce the risk of terrorism here in the UK and other Western countries such as the USA and France. His repeated use of "obviously" constructs both an agreement between us in the interview, and also constructs a challenge to discourses that ignore or deny these realities.

P1 goes on to link the media and the 'War On Terror' together, constructing them as intimately related. In doing this, he calls into question the legitimacy of the commonly mobilised discourses around the "so-called War On Terror", and at the same time, constructs resulting consequences for public perceptions of Muslim identity, and for the subjectivity of Muslims at the receiving end of these perceptions.

**P1:** "But at the same time, because of the **so-called** "war on terror", it also has led to people, **normal people**, er, who **maybe** identify themselves as being, er, **very peaceful**, er, **maybe even** consider themselves to be, er, **British** or **maybe**, I don't know, **maybe part of society**, feeling **alienated** because of, er, what's going on in the media."

P1's use of 'maybe' throughout this comment, ("*... people, normal people, er, who **maybe** identify themselves as being, er, very peaceful, er, **maybe even** consider themselves to be, er, British or **maybe**, I don't know, **maybe part of society** ...*") suggests that he is using language to point towards something that is not being

thought about in wider discourses i.e. that 'maybe' Muslim people are normal, peaceful, British people, who are in fact part of the society, despite the negative constructions of Muslim identity being propounded by the dominant discourses (i.e. non-Peaceful, warring, outsiders). It is as if he is subtly using irony to drive this point across.

Additionally, his construction of "maybe even consider themselves to be British" stands in opposition to dominant discourse of Muslims being anti-British, anti-Western values etc. Similarly, he problematises the 'War on Terror' by referring to it as "so called". As such, he is able to discursively challenge the dominant discourse that the 'War on Terror' is somehow a necessary and noble cause, and instead is able to throw doubt over this assumption- indeed over this powerful discourse-, thereby questioning its taken-for-granted legitimacy. He positions the media as responsible for discourses that feed into this taken-for-granted assumption ("*... feeling **alienated** because of, er, what's going on in the media*").

By raising these important questions through his use of language, P1 is at once constructing the situation that he faces as a Muslim man in the UK, and subtly but persistently challenging taken-for-granted beliefs about Muslims more generally, as well as challenging the British foreign and domestic policy around Muslims. In doing so, he is taking up a position of active resistance, as well as demonstrating that he has resisted internalising discourses that demonise and dehumanise Muslims. Within all of this, it is clear that P1 continues to construct himself as situated within a powerful discursive climate in which he needs to work hard to demonstrate his identity as being 'not that'; a constant effort to position himself differently. P1's construction of the role of the media may begin to address the question posed earlier: what is fuelling the fire of public anti-Muslim discourse?

### 3.3.5 Consequences for young Muslims

Also commenting on the disregard for and imbalance in the number of Muslim deaths resulting from the War on Terror, P3 confronts a sensitive issue by constructing potentially worrying consequences of this:

**P3:** “ And then **this is what feeds these young, you know, the young, the fanatics** that just, they're not even fanatics, they're just like, most of them are just young men, yeah, they come from the roads, **they come from the streets**, most of them”.

P3 constructs those who go on to become integrated into fundamentalist Islamic groups first as 'fanatics' but reconstructs them as 'young men' as a means of both expressing his real concern about the implications of becoming fanatical, but also humanising and allowing us to construct them and to consider their plight in the discursive context in which they are living their lives; to understand perhaps why someone might embrace a discourse of freedom-fighting/terrorism. In doing this, P3 is constructing himself as concerned for them- and for the potential consequences- but also as understanding and sympathetic through his insight into the bigger picture. As such he is perhaps constructing others as having only a small amount of information; insufficient to be usefully and intelligently informed.

This shift in focus of the way that the object (discrimination) is being constructed is important. Instead of continuing to see discrimination constructed as something that is happening *to* Muslims, P3 is taking things further and constructing a situation whereby the consequences of the discriminatory discourses are themselves having serious consequences, which are both feeding into one another. Thus, we begin to see the construction of a vicious cycle that is perpetuating itself. P3 constructs himself as concerned about, distanced from, and at the same time, sympathetically understanding of the situation in which oppressed young Muslim teenagers whose identity is relentlessly constructed as 'bad', might be susceptible to the lure of 'belonging' and having a clear identity, which are inherent to being a part of an established group; no matter how extreme its views. As such, P3 has constructed himself as a concerned British man, a threatened Muslim man, and one who worries about the self-perpetuating cycle that the media attack on Muslim identity might be having; particularly on vulnerable young people, for whom he clearly cares.

### 3.4 The role of the Media:

In the next discursive theme, the media were constructed by all participants as playing a significant role in perpetuating negative stereotypes of Muslim identity. Mainly, this was constructed as intense and biased media reporting following a terrorist incident, underpinned by a repetitive emphasis on the Muslim/Islamic aspect of the perpetrator, which is then generalised to the entire Muslim community.

Alongside this, there were important discursive differences in the way that the media constructs the identity of non-Muslim terrorists, compared to those identifying as Muslims. Importantly, the participants spoke in depth about the 'double standard' in media reporting when it comes to terrorist attacks in terms of differences in reporting around the identity of the perpetrator (i.e. the selective use of the word terrorist, and the inclusion of a person's religious and ethnic identity only when that person is Muslim), and the consequences that this has in terms of public perception of Muslim identity, which positions Muslims as Other, threatening and dangerous. This in turn impacts on Muslims own subjectivity as they work to position themselves in various ways in an attempt to redress public perceptions of them. Furthermore, it creates a discursive context that positions Muslims such that they are forced to engage with the media discourses, even if they reject the constructions of their identity contained within that particular discourse. The following section will unpack this, by exploring in detail the various ways in which our participants have interacted with the discourses that relate to the role of the media and its impact on Muslim identity, and the consequences for subjectivity and practice arising from this.

#### 3.4.1 Media as propaganda:

Discourses in which public perception of Muslim identity is constructed as being underpinned by relentless and negative Media representations permeated the interviews. Consequently, this constructed the mainstream media as having an agenda aimed at undermining Muslim identity in the perception of the British public, so powerfully that it forces the Muslim community to engage with the discourses.

In the following comment, P4 constructs anti-Muslim media propaganda as a given, and himself as gathering evidence to demonstrate this.

**P4:** “... the evening Standard. I don’t touch it, not at all now, because I know immediately that every single page is gonna have an **anti-Muslim** story. And I remember taking a video once, erm, I held my phone over the newspaper, started at the headline, (.) page by page I kept the camera recording and with the pen I marked each article and there was an article on each page, er which was **anti-Muslim. Ridiculous** things. In an **inflammatory way**”.

By constructing the media reporting as so extensive and “inflammatory”, P4 is mobilising a discourse of the media as having an intentional anti-Muslim agenda, which has important effects on his subjectivity. He constructs his sense of agency as mobilised by this, choosing “*I don’t touch it, not at all now”*. Similarly, his action of collecting evidence is also a demonstration of mobilised agency. P4 continues:

**P4:** “... =the only news I have on my phone is the Guardian, because I don’t, I don’t want to read anyone else’s.”

**R:** “And is that, is that specifically because of the anti-Muslim sentiment in the other papers?”

**P4:** “I think that was the driving force at the start, and then when we had the general election and then everyone and the whole Brexit thing and everyone’s got their own agenda, .hh that sort of (1.0), I mean it became **more clear than ever** that (.) all the press, including the Guardian, .hh they have their agenda, they propagate **their** agenda to **their** masses, knowing that **their** audiences will lap it up. Erm, (2.0) so that, (.) that’s, but the driving force at the start I think was definitely the Muslim related topics.”

He constructs the great power of the media as being the influence they wield over their readers. His construction suggests that the press-reading masses are

ignorantly uninformed. His repeated reference to “*their agenda, their masses, and their audiences*” really drives this point home. He also constructs himself as having the choice of whether to subject himself to the anti-Muslim discourses that they propagate i.e. his agency around whether or not to read papers he recognises as being anti-Muslim.

### 3.4.2 Discursive variability and the impact of context on positioning and subjectivity

P4 goes on to talk about his experiences of the radio in relation to Muslim identity and their place within British society. In this next comment, he raises questions around the intentionality of negative media representations of Muslims, whilst also demonstrating discursive variability in the construction of discrimination:

P4: “And then radio. So, I have quite a long commute, (.) erm morning a:nd evening from work, hour and a half (1.0) ... the first one (terrorist attack) happened in London, .hh erm, I started listening to LBC, (.) a:nd then, I don’t know why I started listening, before I’d never listened to it, (.) and (.) **each and every presenter** they have on (1.8) especially at er peak times (.) so, early morning they have Nick Ferrari, 5.30(pm) they have (Ian Dale) (laughs), and then they have Nigel Farage, .hh and it just made me think that, at times, when I’m listening to the radio, and most people are listening to the radio (.) .hh, it’s **people who are famous for espousing anti-Muslim views**. Erm, really **inflammatory stuff** and (1.0) erm it (.) **it doesn’t go unnoticed** that they are on at those times when most people would be listening. While perhaps the most **left wing and Muslim friendly**, er (.) presenter they have= =James O’Brian, he’s on weekdays 12 O’clock, (.) everyone’s at work, (.) you might get the odd person listening to the radio, .hh but er::, **It’s very deliberate, very very deliberate**. (2.0).”

He begins by constructing the context as relating to a recent terror attack. Then constructs a media-driven discursive climate with considerable power and influence which feels discriminatory: “*each and every presenter they have on, especially at er peak times...*”; “*...it’s people who are famous for espousing anti-Muslim views. Erm, really inflammatory stuff...*”. He drives this point home when

he says “... *it doesn't go unnoticed that they are on at those times when most people would be listening ...*”, and discursively builds on questioning media motivation in terms of the way in which they seem to be negatively constructing Muslims in a systematic manner. The comment continues:

**R:** “Can you say a bit more about the deliberate?”

P4: “So **people like me** who are listening have to listen to call after call about how erm there's too many polish, there's too many Spanish, er waitresses working in Costa, or (.) you know **whatever Brexit argument they have** (1.0), erm and again **it impacts, it impacts**. So all the arguments- as a Muslim Brit born in the UK- all the arguments I've heard about (.) Eastern Europeans and (.) their immigration here or:: erm, Spanish Italian (.) immigration here (.), even though it's got nothing to do with Muslims, I feel it, and with the Black population, the whole Black Lives Matter thing, again that's another erm movement that I feel fully behind, and actually feel fully supports me because it's a minority who are being **picked on** because (.) either **the way they look or where they're from**, (.) and er automatically I find myself just getting in line behind (.) whatever that is, and **when they're targeted I feel targeted** as well (4.0).”

In contrast to the agency he constructed himself as having in terms of reading newspapers in his previous comment (i.e. 3.4.1), in relation to the radio P4 constructs himself as lacking that same agency “...So, people like me who are listening, have to listen to call after call...”. It is as if his action orientation feels more restricted by the context when positioning himself alongside other oppressed minority groups. Additionally, when positioning himself in solidarity with other minority groups who have to live within an ‘established’ discriminatory climate, P4 feels able to use much more explicit language to construct his experiences “... it impacts, it impacts ...”; “...a minority who are being picked on because (.) either the way they look or where they're from ...”; “...when they're targeted I feel targeted as well ...”.



### 3.4.3 Just an ordinary family man

In the following comment, P1 is talking about what happens for him following a terrorist attack. In it, he exemplifies the discursive identity-related work that the participants felt the need to engage with throughout the interviews:

**P1:** “In terms of the reporting in the media erm, of, ‘Yes, this was Muslims again,’ and all the **hate** that comes with it. So, as a Muslim, of course, this has, er, a double effect. Erm. Maybe, er, in people who are not Muslims who, obviously, er, **listen to the media** and see everything and they then **develop this hatred towards people like me** who maybe of course are **sitting** in my own home and worrying about **my own family**. Also, I see myself as being the victim here because, first of all, there are a few criminals that are committing some unjustifiable, er, **acts** and then I’m **sitting** here, trying to make a living for myself **and my family** and every time I put on the news, it’s almost like I’m being told, er, “This is your fault.” And this is a big problem.”

P1 illustrates the societal expectation that terrorist attacks will be linked to Islam (‘Yes, this was Muslims, again’), and the way that the perpetrators’ religious identity is generalised to the entire Muslim community via the media. He discursively constructs the idea that non-Muslim people in the UK gather their education about Islam from the media and thus derive their opinions about Muslims and Islam from the media, which fails to construct the Muslim as ‘normal’ people with families, homes, worries etc (‘... *in people who are not Muslims who, obviously, er, **listen to the media and see everything** and they then develop this hatred towards people like me who maybe of course are sitting in my own room and worrying about my own family*’).

P1’s use of ‘*all the hate*’, suggests ongoing and sustained discourses that pervade society, impacting on non-Muslim perceptions of Muslims and on Muslim perceptions of how the wider population are perceiving their identity; they are Othered, and constructed as deserving of hate. This discursive climate positions Muslims as the enemy, as a threat, and marginalises them as hostile outsiders,

forcing them to engage with these discourses in order to distance themselves from such an image.

To achieve this, P1 positions himself as a regular British family man who values his family and works hard to support them, has the same worries as any other British husband and father. He also constructs himself as (of course) 'sitting' which allows him to come across as harmless. The non-verbal gestures that accompanied his talk also contributed to this construction of a gentle person who is not 'that'.

P1 simultaneously constructed terrorists as 'criminals' whose *acts* are 'unjustifiable'. He points out that these individuals are a minority and therefore do not represent him or the wider Muslim community and is therefore able to distance himself and the wider Muslim community from that identity. It is interesting that P1 seems to intentionally avoid the use of the word terrorist while constructing those who commit terrorism. Instead, he puts an emphasis on the word 'acts' and took a moment to consider which word to use (seen in the 'er') (*...there are a few **criminals** that are committing some **unjustifiable, er, acts***). It is as if he is resisting the strong societal pull to be caught up in the very discourses that he is trying to distance himself from. In doing this he distances himself from the generalised image of the Muslim terrorist and aligns himself with the general population. To do this he constructs 'terrorists' as common 'criminals', thus playing down the ideological motivation for the 'acts' they commit. His use of 'of course' when referring to himself as worrying about his own family etc, also constructs him as being the same as other British people, which he discursively assumes is clearly evident to me through his use of 'of course'.

#### 3.4.4 Muslim expulsion

**P3:** "and so yeah, it gets me sad sometimes, you know, when I see, when there's attacks yeah, like when there's, when that London Bridge attack happened I was sad. I just seen it and I thought, like I just, I started crying actually. I think I was crying for a bit. I just thought, "This is like. This is, this is so... **everything's going against us like**. This is just perfect for, for, um, for, for things to go, like **for things**

**to be put in place."** I was actually thinking that **we're gonna get shipped out soon.** There's gonna be a thing where **Muslims are gonna have to get shipped out of this count-**, that's, that's how I was thinking for a minute there 'cause it was like nonstop attacks and Muslim after Muslim and this one said he's a Muslim."

Here, P3 has discursively constructed a situation in which he immediately experiences an intensification of the anti-Muslim climate following a terrorist attack, and which is driven by the style, tone and content of Media reporting. As a result, he has constructed himself as having moments in which the media discourses that emphasise the Muslim identity of terrorists, (which is generalised to the wider Muslim community in the UK), feel so overwhelming, that he positions himself within discourses of the potential expulsion of the entire Muslim community from the UK ("*... I was actually thinking that we're gonna get shipped out soon. There's gonna be a thing where Muslims are gonna have to get shipped out of this count-,...*"). This subjective experience of anxiety and paranoia arises from the relentless and intense media portrayal of individuals who identify as Muslims as being somehow representative of the wider community ("*... 'cause it was like nonstop attacks and Muslim after Muslim and this one said he's a Muslim....*"). Embedded in this, he constructs the hostility that follows a terrorist attack as being intensified and legitimising hatred and prejudice towards Muslims.

These constructions are perhaps reminiscent of 1920's Germany when hostile public opinion towards the Jewish population was gradually and systematically developed by the Nazi propaganda machine. Given that the WW2 example is still very much present in contemporary discourse and therefore available to our participants, combined with current narratives explicitly emerging from Trump and his administration (e.g. Muslim travel ban), it is unsurprising that these assumptions/fears (i.e. expulsion) arise in Muslim discourse.

#### 3.4.5 Representation in the media

As well as negative media portrayals of Muslims as terrorists, dangerous extremists and 'the enemy', the data produced evidence that Muslim identity is also impacted by the media through an absence of positive constructions of

Muslims, such as an absence of Muslim representation in TV shows. In response to my question around 'other contexts' where he might experience discrimination, P4 situates himself within discourses of negation and invalidation while discussing the importance of role models in terms of identity development.

P4 "... and I think that **does** play a role in **forming people** moving forward, .hh **Where if you hadn't asked me that question**, I'd be aware of the fact there's few Muslim men on TV, .hh erm and I'd think to myself that it doesn't **really** matter, (1.0) erm, (.) so what if another guy with a beard turns up on TV, .hh (.) erm, but I think in terms of **development and helping people**, and **making people feel more empowered**, I think it does probably, (.) at a certain **subconscious level**, actually matter quite a bit (.)"

Here, P4 assigns responsibility to this type of pervasive, endemic discrimination as having effects on subjectivity around identity development. His emphasis on the 'does' ("*does* play a role in forming people") suggests discourses that might doubt, overlook or even deny such impact. By constructing a lack of opportunity for people to "form", he illustrates something that hinders development and disempowers people with detrimental effects on their (identity) development. This construction of "subconscious" discrimination allows us to understand it as an insidious discrimination. In the final sentence, P4 is drawing from psychological discourse ("development; feel more empowered; subconscious") which allows him to drive home the implications for Muslim subjectivity.

It was also interesting the way that he constructed himself as stepping into and becoming more aware of the discourse and its implications as a result of thinking about it in the interview. In particular as a response to something I had said "*...Where if you hadn't asked me that question...*". He was telling me that I'd contributed to him becoming aware of it by asking him to think about other contexts. That hands back responsibility for coming across as perhaps disgruntled to me (i.e. saying that 'yes, I actually do feel discriminated against'). It is as if I (a White majority-member professional psychologist) am legitimising him pointing to something that "does matter". This suggests that if I hadn't asked, he would have

thought it doesn't matter. Although a classic Counselling Psychology context would interpret this as P4 'getting in touch with something', discourse asks: what is the function of this? What is he doing? He is positioning himself as someone who doesn't complain/grumble, but, 'as you ask I'll tell you, though I wouldn't have just said that'.

#### 3.4.6 Constructing self-identity in opposition

In the following comment P4 discursively raises questions around whether it is a deliberate action on the part of the media (i.e. to exclude positive Muslim representation).

P4: "..... where perhaps as Muslim men we don't have that representation (3.0). Whether that's **deliberate**, I don't know much about, or enough about show business, or enough about how people get into media, that's not my, .hh (.) it's not my environment at all. Er:m, but in terms of the effect that it then has on the wider population (.), er then yeah possibly. It does **enforce** and **impact** and (.) and er, **further emphasize** the feeling that it is perhaps **us, we've been othered into this corner, and here's the rest of society**. Perhaps".

P4's use of the words "possible" and "perhaps" contribute to him constructing himself as a rational and reasonable man who wouldn't make uninformed claims about the situation as being an intentional, deliberate, and organised assault on Muslim identity. Nevertheless, P4 does construct the situation- whether intentional or otherwise- as being one that *"...does **enforce and impact** and (.) and er, **further emphasize** the feeling that it is perhaps **us, we've been othered into this corner, and here's the rest of society...**".* As such, he constructs the power of the media and the consequences of the way that they use that power in terms of the second order positioning that arises from it, and the identity-related discursive work that Muslim men then have to perform.

#### 3.5 Politics:

The British government and politics were constructed as being contributing factors to the discriminatory environment in a number of ways. Government

policy was constructed as being aimed at 'bad' Muslims, but missing its target, and instead perpetuating discourses that generalise terrorist activity to the entire Muslim community, thereby positioning all Muslims as potential suspects. As with the variability in construction seen regarding the media, politically-driven discrimination was constructed on the one hand as being an unwished-for but unavoidable consequence by the government, but on the other hand, it was also repeatedly constructed as an intentional government agenda. In this context the media were constructed as the arm of the government, i.e. fulfilling government agendas, and also as providing 'entertainment for the masses' in the form of perpetuating a long-standing cultural discursive practice, which is to attack minority groups. Discrimination in this context was constructed as deliberate; a political need for a "phantom Menace" that serves political agendas.

Counter-terrorism policies/initiatives were constructed as being counterproductive, including having a 'domino effect' that may stimulate the very behaviours they claim to eradicate/target (i.e. radicalism). These policies include 'Stop-and-Search' powers which were extended following 911, state surveillance in the form of recording devices throughout Mosques, and 'Prevent' officers in schools. The Prevent programme was constructed as being particularly controversial. In one interview the construction focused on the impact on young children and their parents in terms of Muslim children being targeted, labelled and then stigmatised at school by the Prevent process. Parents were positioned as utterly powerless to defend and protect their children.

Based on wider discourses around bullying and its harmful effects on children, serious concerns for young Muslims were constructed. Additionally, the Prevent programme was constructed from the position of a Muslim school teacher who was positioned by the programme to 'spy' on the young children who he is there to teach and care for. This raised serious challenges to various aspects of his identity, as a Teacher, a Muslim, as British, Islamic, and a Father. Furthermore, serious concerns were constructed around how the bullying and targeting etc can in fact drive youngsters into the very radical groups that they are being suspected of in the first place.

Finally, the constructions around politics also indicated a reluctance to speak out in general. As if the power of policy etc and the discourses that they produce and maintain, silence Muslims from taking action and challenging. What follows will unpack the above summary:

### 3.5.1 Political 'need' for a Phantom Menace

P5 begins this next comment by constructing discrimination against minority groups as being a commonly and historically used tool by the government which deflects the public's attention and allows governments to function with less accountability. He constructs Muslims as the latest group to be targeted in this way.

P5: "I think there's always, the government, I've not studied sociology or anything, but just looking at recent history, there's always a need, like, for a '**Phantom Menace**', so to speak, in society and with the government, especially. One that they can use, you know, as and **when they please**, just to take off, you know, some pressure off themselves. Um, so, I think the reason, like, the more recent, in the past ten years, fifteen years, you know, it has been, has been **Muslims** and it **started off** with **Muslim terrorists** and then it's, it's come down to, er, the **level** where we're at, now, where, **at street level.**"

P5's construction of the "phantom menace" suggests a discriminatory social environment which can be exacerbated or calmed at the governments' pleasure ("when they please"), and this as a fundamental part of British democracy. He constructs this as having intensified from a more macro discrimination, to something that impacts on all Muslims ("at street level").

As he continues, P5 constructs 'levels' of targeted discrimination (eight times). He constructs 'mass murdering terrorists' as 'high level' whilst people like himself-ordinary, everyday people- are the "lowest level they can get". Nevertheless, all are constructed as targeted. The discourse used by P5 serves to maximise the

distance between himself (and people like him) and the real (and what he constructs as legitimate) targets.

P5: “It’s not, it’s not the higher **level** of mass murdering terrorists, it’s, it’s the **level**, it’s come to a **level** where, you know, they can, they’re **targeting me**, you know, people like me. You know, I go out every day, 9 until 5, you know, I’m out going to gym, going to the supermarket, you know, **they’re targeting people** that are, starting to **target** people like me. They **can’t go any further than that**, this is **the lowest level that they can get**, on the **street level**. I like to call it the street level where it’s just, you know... **everyday people** like me, erm, are **targeted**. So, yes”.

P5 has constructed the UK government as *targeting* Muslims, beyond terrorism, to “everyday people”. In this context, he constructs himself as someone with a 9-5 life, who goes to the supermarket and the gym. In doing so, he is not only distancing himself from the construction of the Muslim terrorist but is highlighting the pervasiveness of government-induced discrimination.

### 3.5.2 Collateral Damage

In the following comment P4 is talking about his views on the role of the government and its wider impact on discrimination against Muslims.

**P4:** “.hh, I mean they’ve always been very erm articulate and always drummed home the point that it’s **just the bad Muslims** that we’re trying to catch, a:nd, we don’t want to, you know **ruin the rest of your lives**. .hh But because they’ve got no idea how to catch **the bad Muslims**, the laws that they implement, the policies that they implement (.) it does **affect us in our day to day basis**. Erm (2.0) so that’s a **massive mistake**, the whole counter terrorism policy that the government has shown for the past 15 years, that made not only (1.0) that made, I think, **Muslims feel targeted** (4.0) Erm (6.0)”.

At the beginning of the comment, P4 constructs the government as “very articulate” and points out that their intention is to target “just the bad Muslims”. However, as he steps into the discourses which “ruin the rest of your lives” and



“affect us on our day-to-day” he constructs the government more critically and appears to hesitate and hold himself back from explicitly constructing them more negatively in this context.

He says that they (the government) have “no idea” suggesting that the “laws and policies that they implement” and which “affect us in our day to day” are not well-thought-out at best and pursued without regard to the consequences at worst. He refers to the situation as a “massive mistake” that the government has “shown”. His choice of “shown” constructs the idea that the government has exposed itself. He appeared to slow down his talk towards the end of the comment, seen by the increasing frequency and duration of the pauses in his talk.

He constructs the government as incompetent (massive mistake etc) rather than evil, thereby constructing them in a way that is quite forgiving; as causing horrible suffering because of a mistake, but not “ruining lives” deliberately. Holding back from constructing them as evil, allows him to not feel angry at them for intentionally harming the community, but instead experiencing frustration at the consequences of their mistake.

Here, the construction of the ‘bad Muslim’ is taken as a given; an acceptable and legitimate construct. Among the many implications of this, it discursively links terrorism with religion. This point seems to be so embedded that P4 does not challenge it, but seems to mobilise the discourse himself. Discrimination is therefore constructed as a consequence of ‘a few bad Muslims’. Furthermore, and crucially, the seeming acceptability of this construction almost excuses and permits the discrimination as something necessarily unavoidable: Discrimination as non-discriminatory, which allows government and law enforcement to make sweeping assumptions and laws, which leads to subjective experiences of frustration and injustice.

P4 constructs the political situation as ‘targeting’ Muslims. The impact of this can be seen throughout the comment. Interestingly, he appears to have softened his use of language from ‘ruin the rest of your lives’ to ‘affect us in our day to day

basis'. His construction of this as 'a massive mistake' drives home the point that these initiatives have consequences for Muslim subjectivity. P4 has become more explicit in the way that he constructs the impact and consequence of government policy. Assigning responsibility to it and subtly suggesting that the consequences of these policies themselves have consequences (i.e. that it promotes further division). Additionally, the construction contains the potential that these counter-terrorism policies have mobilised the community, pushing them further away from mainstream and pulling them closer together. Although positioned by these discourses as a threat, as less than, as suspicious and a target, P4 positions himself as diplomatic, and there is a sense in his construction that he consciously avoids speaking out too explicitly against government and law structures. Nevertheless, discrimination is constructed as institutionalised; as a political agenda that isolates the Muslim community.

### 3.5.3 Harmless and ordinary

P4 continues to construct the idea of being targeted through giving a personal example in which he constructs and positions himself in opposition to the way that the government policy is constructing and positioning him:

P4: ".hh So when I was going through my old things (.), I found erm a stop and search slip in one of my pockets. So, it turns out that when I was 16, I was stopped under this power=

=Not knowing I'd been stopped under the terrorism act, it hadn't occurred to me at the time .hh

Only now, when I know about this sort of stuff do I realise that huh? I was stopped under the terrorism act, because an officer somewhere, suspected me er, skinny old [\*\*\*\*\*Names himself] from [\*\*\*\*\*Names the town he is from] of maybe committing an act of terrorism, When really I was probably going out to play football somewhere".

By referring to himself as "*skinny old ..... from ..... who was probably out to play football*" P4 discursively normalizes himself by constructing himself as harmless, and highlighting that he, like most other British boys, was probably playing

football. He constructs himself as an 'innocent', contrasted with the view of him implied by the search i.e. that of a terror suspect. This highlights the way that all participants felt compelled to construct their identities in relation to negative anti-Muslim discourses throughout all of the interviews.

P4: "So just for me to think now that I've have **lived through that period** where (.) I was stopped because someone needed to make sure that I wasn't going to go (.) and **do something stupid** somewhere (1.0). You know, it's, starts dominos effects= =because they've got the whole counter terrorism policy wrong, the government, (.) that's had a domino effect into other (.) into all other aspects I think, political life, I mean, what else is there (2.0)."

P4 constructs discrimination as a 'period' that was 'lived through', which mobilises discourses of pervasive oppression. He does not refer directly to terrorism, but instead constructs it as 'do something stupid', allowing him to distance himself- and the wider Muslim community- from such activity. This action of distancing permeated all of the interviews.

P4's construction of 'wrong' government policy having "domino effects" both continues his criticism and resistance to those policy-driven discourses, and also points towards the way in which those policies in fact promote the momentum of division, marginalisation, and hints at there being potentially ongoing implications; perhaps towards and from both sides.

#### 3.5.4 Government and Media relationship

The relationship between the government and media in terms of anti-Muslim discourse was constructed by P1:

P1: "But then, of course, the Government, what they can't do is tell what the media is going to write because the media is the Government, almost. So, they just have to obviously say certain things, which is right but then how much is er published, is another question. I think the Government is trying to do certain things right. Because obviously, any government, **they don't want to see their people being split**

**up and fear mongering** and, and, as a result, you have **insecurity**. I don't think any government wants that, but the media is the opposite, I think. This is what they want because this is what will, obviously, **lead to more papers being sold. More news, more coverage, more of everything.**

P1 begins by constructing the government and the media as intimately connected (*...because the media is the Government, almost*). His use of 'almost' at the end of the sentence, seems to construct him as not wanting to fully commit to the idea. This is interesting, as later in the comment he constructs a clear opposition in positions between the government and media (*"I don't think any government wants that, but the media is the opposite, I think."*). The construction of separate positions for the government and media feels strategic in the context of what he has just alluded to when he raises questions about government motivation. This allows P1 to construct himself as 'neutral' or even pro-government, anti-media (which is 'allowed') whilst also constructing himself in an activist position that questions government agendas/legitimacy/motivation, while protecting himself from implicating himself. This need to construct himself in this way (i.e. as not anti-government) constructs a situation in which Muslims are experiencing something from the UK government, but feel silenced by the powerful discourses that promote the need for security whilst also constructing Muslims as complicit in the terrorist activity, and as potentially anti-Western. Together, these discourses silence the community.

Nevertheless, within the pro-government construction there is a sense that P1 is implicitly mobilising discourse that questions the fundamental motives and agendas of government: *"Because obviously, any government, they don't want to see their people being **split up and fear mongering** and, and, as a result, you have **insecurity**".*

### 3.5.5 Surveillance

In the following comment P3 had been speaking quite passionately about the impact of the discriminatory political environment on Muslim youth and was clearly quite emotional at this point in the interview. As such, I asked a question

that introduced the construction of 'anger' to frame what it was I thought he might be referring to in terms of what his previous constructions might be generating in the Muslim youth.

R: "You seem quite emotional now. And, and that that has a lot to do with anger in general in the, in the community?"

P3: "Yeah, definitely, definitely, definitely, yeah. Yeah, it does, man, it um, and again, it's, it's coming from the government. When I say police, my stance on police is, is, is individual pockets that I see doing good, so like the bobbies on the street, they're not... obviously MET commissioner's is high. I would sort of class them in the same bracket as government, obviously lower level but, um, but yeah, I mean things like, like **monitoring, monitoring** all mosques, er, hidden mics inside the mosques. **Now I understand but**, you know, it just makes us feel, um, **watched and observed and marginalising us further.**"

His use of the disclaimer "*Now I understand, but ...*" allows him to disclaim any attribution that he is not reasonable and rational and capable of appreciating the 'good intention' behind the policy, which again demonstrates the constant work that needs to be done in relation to constructing themselves as 'acceptable' and not these angry crazy terrorists.

R: "Is that, is that what's happens?"

I asked this question as I was quite shocked to think that there would be "hidden mics" in a religious setting and wanted clarification.

P3: "Yeah. And you go into most mosques, even Regents Park, then it says, um, you are being, you are on, you are being, there's like signs inside the mosque, inside the wash area, the Wudu area, "You are being, um, recorded in this area".

At the beginning of the comment, P3's construction appears to frame street level Police officers as relatively 'good', in contrast to 'high-ranking commissioners'

who are equated to 'government' in terms of generating and perpetuating anti-Muslim discrimination. His construction in this context appears to assign responsibility to the commissioners/government for "*like monitoring, monitoring all mosques, er, hidden mics inside the mosques*". P3 is explicit in his construction of the oppression that arises from this intense and invasive surveillance "*it just makes us feel, um, watched and observed and marginalising us further*." Although he does not explicitly refer to the disrespect this shows towards the Islamic religion, it is as though in his comment he chooses to let the facts speak for themselves.

### 3.5.6 Prevent: Stigmatizing Children

P3 continues to construct the impact of government anti-terror policy on the lives of ordinary Muslims, including school children:

P3: "But, you know, you've got Prevent officers. **They take kids out of the class**, um, like they might take them out for a twenty-minute chat ... 'cause I've got mates who have got little kids in, in primary school innit, and they, they went to the head 'cause they weren't happy with it. They were getting, they got took out of the class once because they wanted to have a twenty-minute chat. It's like having a key worker, where they wanted to see how they're getting on, how they're, um, **asking about their anger**, um, things that are just... and then, and **then it's known that that's the Prevent officer so all the other kids know that's the Prevent officer. A stigma**, so he's going out because he, "**he's a terrorist, you're a terrorist, terrorist, terrorist, you're a...**" you know what I'm saying? It's like how's that kid gonna then feel ... like he just, well I'm a terrorist. You want me to be a terrorist? Alright, cool".

The Prevent programme was constructed as a controversial policy by most participants. In his comment, P3 outlines the process of children being taken out of their classroom for a twenty-minute chat and constructs the powerlessness of their parents to act in this process. The children are constructed as being stigmatised and labelled as suspected terrorists by the very process that is apparently aimed at protecting them from being radicalised ("*so all the other kids know that's the Prevent officer. A stigma, so he's going out because he, "he's a*

*terrorist, you're a terrorist, terrorist, terrorist, you're a...*). In his construction (*"It's like how's that kid gonna then feel ... like he just, well I'm a terrorist. You want me to be a terrorist? **Alright, cool**"*), P3 appears to raise concerns that this process may in fact further marginalise and exclude Muslim children.

His use of "alright, cool" discursively suggests that there is the potential that such shaming and insult could lead to subjective feelings of defiance that might lead young children to think that moving towards radicalised ways of thinking could be a way of fighting back against the overwhelming attack that they experience, both from their classmates and the powers that govern their school and their country. Discourses in which the bullied eventually fighting back against the bullies permeate our cultures. It is likely that P3 was drawing from discourses that are (e.g.) represented in movies, literature, and songs where the 'weaker one' fights back and does not give up. Drawing on the moral value attached to being the one who fights back against the oppressor.

### 3.5.7 Prevent: Tension between identities

Similarly, P1 also constructs important concerns about the implications of the Prevent programme. However, he does this from the point of view of his identity as a Muslim man and a school teacher who is expected to "spy" on the children he is teaching; to maintain a suspicious vigilance. He constructs Prevent as being implicitly constructed to target Muslims, but that it is framed in such a way that challenging it on that basis is disallowed. P1's identity is constructed as challenged as he faces the dilemma of being a Muslim, and a teacher, who is being positioned by the policy as necessarily (having a civic duty to be) suspicious of Muslim children in his care.

P1: "But the thing is, **as a Muslim**, I feel a huge, **huge amount of pressure**, er, because, first of all, I'm a Muslim and then, second thing, I need to obviously listen out for other Muslims who want to, maybe, hurt **all** of us. Sometimes- and it's your job, you have to do it- but sometimes, I think it's very difficult to spy on your own students because that's not my job, **my job is teaching, I'm not a spy**. But, this is

obviously, though, the **things that the Government want us to do so we just have to do it**".

Where he says "*I think it's very difficult to spy on your own students because that's not my job, my job is teaching, I'm not a spy*", P1 highlights the dilemma that he faces as he is forced to wrestle between identities: a moral and ethical dilemma to his responsibility towards the children as a teacher, and towards government policy as a British citizen.

As such, P1 is forced to mobilise powerfully discriminatory discourses against the children from his own community by positioning them as being at risk of radicalisation. As the comment proceeds, P1 explains his position further "**as a Muslim**, I feel a huge, huge amount of pressure, er, because, **first of all, I'm a Muslim** and then, second thing, I need to obviously listen out for other Muslims who want to, maybe, hurt **all** of us". This construction suggests that the situation forces him to choose between identities, thereby having to negotiate a strong tension, and at the same time, he distances himself and other Muslims from those who commit terrorism in the name of Islam ("listen out for other Muslims who want to, maybe, hurt **all** of us").

P1 continues and draws on discourse of the differences in accessibility between Muslim and non-Muslim groups in terms of access to other discourses i.e. for non-Muslims the Prevent programme may make perfect logical sense in theory. However, P1 constructs the 'reality on the ground' as it were, in which Muslim children are targeted and maliciously stigmatised, their parents are powerless, and their school teachers are threatened.

P1: "Er, so, yes, as a non-Muslim, you might just see it as, er, something which is, someone who wants to, obviously, do anything unlawful and you just have to report it. But **this Prevent thing is meant for Muslims**, it's just not mentioned. It doesn't say "this is for Muslims" but as a Muslim, I know that's what it is. Again, this is **again another form of discrimination**, I think, towards the youngsters which I teach every day and some of them having different types of religion. All of them,



and, obviously, any other child in this country, imagine being told that you're being **spied on, at that early age?**".

P1 concludes the comment with a question: "*imagine being told that you're being spied on, at that early age?*", which suggests that for the non-Muslim public, there is perhaps a lack of empathy towards the reality that is faced by the community as a result of the discriminatory climate and government policies such as Prevent, and the way that it powerfully reinforces a discursive climate in which Muslims have to fight to make their identities function.

### 3.6 Religion:

Political and media discourse has a strong focus on the Islamic aspect of the Muslim identity. Throughout the interviews, there were extensive constructions of a demonised Islamic religion that is suspected and discursively under attack from the non-Muslim majority who attribute responsibility for terrorist attacks to Islamic discourse, which was constructed as being perceived as inherently violent. Closely linked to this were discourses in which Islam was constructed as a homogenous doctrine to which all Muslims are adherents, and thereby implicated in terrorist activity. However, Islam was constructed by our participants as a religion with many strands and approaches, much like Christianity. The consistent need by participants to offer clarifying constructions of Islam throughout the interviews suggest pervasive discourses in which there are critical misperceptions of the religion, with important implications for their religious identity.

The focus on the religious aspect of Muslim identity- Islam- is a distinguishing feature of the type of discrimination that is constructed throughout the interviews. For example, media constructions of terrorism and terrorists highlight Islam when the perpetrator(s) are Muslim, yet do not include religion when constructing the identity of non-Muslim terrorists and terrorism. Therefore, the religious discrimination in this context is constructed as uniquely a problem facing Muslims. This constructs discrimination as a double standard (i.e. one set of rules when reporting terrorism committed by a Muslim, and another set when the

perpetrator(s) are White Christian terrorists), with important implications for Muslim subjectivity including their sense of safety due to the powerful and persistent generalisations that are constructed. This will be deconstructed in what follows:

### 3.6.1 Defending Islam against ignorance:

In the next comment, discrimination was constructed as misperceptions about Islam and Muslim culture generally; as an absence of public knowledge about the more widely held meaning and objectives of Islam beyond the discourses around War and terrorism. P2's construction positions him as regularly having to defend Islam, in an environment that is ignorant and potentially hostile. In doing so he constructs himself as knowledgeable and as someone who feels a strong sense of loyalty towards his Islam, and in an activist position against the ignorance and injustice.

**P2:** "A big one is, is often religion. And I find myself constantly having to, you know, defend Islam, for whatever reason, because people have a misrepresentation of what it is. I have to constantly find myself in situations where I have to, you know, almost educate people on what Islam is actually about".

It is interesting what P2 is doing in his construction here in terms of how it seems to parallel the essence of the paper: his struggle to 'constantly' justify his identity against an overwhelming jury that has largely made up its mind and hears only evidence that confirms its views. He constructs Islam as taken out of context, and that mistaken views about Islam are rigidly held. He mobilises discourses of Muslims as 'othered', and as outsiders who do not belong and cannot integrate into mainstream British society; as if that is the 'given' which he campaigns against. As his comment continued, P2 also constructed non-Muslim people as ignorant and intrusive:

**P2:** "And I'm constantly finding people who are inquisitive as to, you know, the, the background, right. And that's what I mean in terms of concern, because, you know, if for example my sisters, you know, were, erm, sort of easily identifiable as

Muslim, I feel that it would come with a certain confrontation and they're not that well, sort of, read on Islam and they might, you know, say the wrong thing and, you know, become defensive and, you know, an argument would escalate on it. That's, that's what I mean from that".

Being identifiable as Muslim was constructed as automatically positioning people as needing to defend and justify themselves, their religion, and their culture. P2 constructed a situation in which there is an expectation of needing to explain and defend Islam in an environment rife with the potential for defensiveness and aggression; for things to escalate quickly. This constructed a pervasive climate of negative and hostile assumptions about Islam, which are generalised to the entire Muslim community. Furthermore, P2's construction highlighted the need to be careful not to say something that might be misinterpreted. This positioned Muslims as needing hypervigilance to monitor what they say and to anticipate how it might be landing, which comes with a great deal of responsibility, not only for one's own safety in a given moment, but also for the reputation of the Muslim community. Again, this has serious implications for subjectivity, agency and sense of identity.

Interestingly, P2 positions non-Muslim people who engage with enquiry about Islam in two opposing ways: Firstly, as 'inquisitive' when his construction focuses on himself who he constructs as relatively confident to be able to enlighten inquisitive people about the true nature of Islam. However, secondly, he then positions people as potentially confrontational ("*come with a certain confrontation*") when the construction includes his sisters; a context which he constructs as more risky ("*say the wrong thing and, you know, become defensive and, you know, an argument would escalate on it*"). This constructs the way in which subjectivity is influenced by the context, and vice versa. In both constructions P2 constructs himself (and other Muslims) as regularly needing to defend Islam, that there is an (internal and external) expectation that they should justify themselves and their religion (i.e. their identity), and in both contexts the level of preparedness in terms of knowledge dictates the subjective experience (i.e. confident versus anxious).

### 3.6.2 Religion as protective; Imam as activist

So pervasive are the discourses of Islam as a warring, violent religion, that religious leaders are constructed as finding it necessary to focus specifically on the impact on public perception of Muslim identity following terrorist attacks, in terms of supporting their congregations to cope with the emotional and psychological impact of the discourses. These constructions illustrate the scope of the impact on subjective experience of the Muslim community at large, and the way that Muslims are collectively positioned. In the following comment, P6 constructs a situation in which the Muslim community has an expectation that they will be blamed and discriminated against as a whole, and that together as a religious community they prepare themselves to face this:

P6: “Um, any, any time there is, like, you know, a big, maybe like a terror event or something, um, on Friday prayer days at the mosque you'd have, like, the Imam talk to... are you aware what an Imam is? It's like the equivalent of a priest, (researcher nods) yes, just to double check, sorry. Um, and, um, so. Like, he would give, like, a talk to our, to the Islamic community there at the mosque, you know, to sort of, you know, be aware, be cautious, you know, but also don't, don't sort of **shy away**, don't sort of **shy away from who you are** in spite of these things. And these talks are quite helpful I think, especially to people who would, you know, sort of **shy away** from the faith or, you know, almost **be ashamed to be called a Muslim**. And that's **the type of effect that discrimination can have** is that, on somebody's own **identity**. It can make them, like, **not sure they want to sort of say that they're Muslim** if they're asked or **hide it or conceal it** out of, you know, out of fear of discrimination, even, so before discrimination has even taken place. It's sort of a protective type of response I guess, it could be.”

The situation is constructed as intimidating such that Muslim people might take up positions in which they hide or deny (“*shy away from*”) their religious identity as a means of reducing risk and experiences of shame, and to increase a sense of belonging to the wider British community. P6 is constructing an environment in which Muslim people are having to choose between honouring their religious and

cultural identity and feeling safe. P6 also constructs himself as drawing support from the religious community to which he belongs and suggests that the Mosque-based discourses counteract the subjectivity arising from the positions imposed by the discriminatory ones. His construction positions Muslims as oppressed by discriminatory discourses and empowered and protected by religious ones; the two being in opposition to one another.

R: "Could you say a bit more about that, about this anticipating, this anticipating, and, and the sorts of conversations that, that, that are being had about it?"

P6: "Um, just like, it's sort of, these talks are just sort of to **bring it to awareness**, to, to **help people reflect** on the natural responses that people have in, in the Islamic community to **potential discrimination or actual discrimination**. So, it's like, it's just **bringing it into awareness**, talking about it to try and help people not to fall into those **patterns of being**, you know, be who you are sort of thing, be **proud**, etc., um, but at the, and, and also **to set a good example**. So, all, all these **perceptions are based on negative behaviours**, and, you know, terror attacks, etc., so the Imam is encouraging us to, you know, **to make other people see** that, 'This doesn't reflect what I'm reading in the newspaper'. Sort of thing. Instead of, because if you **hide away and you sort of separate yourself**, you're almost, er, **reinforcing that perception that people already have**. You're not really **giving them a chance to see something else** basically."

This comment is permeated by constructions of the need for Muslims to justify themselves and distance from constructions of them as dangerous and threatening. P6 has constructed an organised, caring, rational and psychologically minded community, which is in contrast to the violent perceptions contained within the discourses being opposed. Muslims were constructed as having to prove themselves to the wider population in order to redress the more dominant discourses about them, (*"to set a good example; the Imam is encouraging us to, you know, to make other people see that: 'This doesn't reflect what I'm reading in the newspaper'; giving them a chance to see something else basically"*). This

means that in order to distance themselves from negative constructions, the Muslim community are having to engage with the very discourses that they wish to distance themselves from; having to engage with the negative identity in order to disprove it.

This point is interesting in the overall picture of the discriminatory climate in which Muslim people find themselves, because White British Christian people do not feel the need to 'compensate/justify/take responsibility' for the terrorist activity of individuals who share their racial, cultural and religious features. Despite this, P6 appears to construct himself as reasonable and rational, as someone who sees the point of view and responsibility of both sides and is solution focused. As such he takes up positions of being both powerless and powerful.

Similarly, there is a tension between discourses of oppression that give rise to discourses of activism; of David and Goliath, of challenging the status quo, despite- or perhaps because of- its inherent injustice. This construction also mobilises the complexity of integration, (i.e. the need to engage with the discourses to change them, versus the simultaneous potential for Muslims to further withdraw from wider society as a result of the pervasiveness and inescapability of the discourses). We will explore the construction of integration in more detail in section 3.7.

### 3.6.3 Heterogenous Islam

Similarly, P5 constructs the influence of religion in countering the impact of discrimination. He constructs Islam as a religion of great variety and has no hesitation to position certain groups within Islam as 'extremists'. His construction of them as "these groups" distances him and the Salafi strand of Islam (which he constructs himself as belonging to) from 'them'. While achieving this distance, P5 also discursively splits Islam into 'good' and 'bad' and mobilises the very discourse that he seeks to distance himself from.

P5: “It’ll be... because I, the, the strand of Islam that I follow is the Salafi strand, um, so we don’t, we don’t speculate, you know, “Is it the Government, or you know, tactic, or it is this, this.” There’s no conjecture or anything that’s involved and whatever the Media says, you know, it’s a Muslim guy that’s attacked people and they’ve shown a picture of him and we will believe that. We will stick by that, you know, we’re not going to speculate on anything, you know. Yes, it is a Muslim guy, so we will, we will, you know, speak about, um, you know, about these, these groups people, these groups of Muslims that are, that are out there, that do exist and they’ve, they’ve existed since the beginning of Islam where they are extremists.”

In this comment, P5 constructs his religious understanding as teaching him not to assume or speculate. In that context, P5 is very much inside a religious discourse, within which he refers three times to having ‘no speculation or conjecture’ as central to that religious discourse. However, in other comments which were made within a non-religious context he is doing just that; taking up a different position: assuming and speculating (e.g. 3.7.3 and 3.5.1). The context within which he is mobilising the current construction may explain the seeming contradiction by suggesting the religious position as protective.

As such, in the context of speaking about his religious identity, he orientates himself towards aligning with the teaching of his particular strand of Islam. Whereas in previous comments made in the context of discourses of negative perceptions about Muslims, P5 had access to considerable speculation and conjecture around government and media led ‘agenda’s’ which manipulate the wider public in an anti-Muslim and Islamophobic way. Similarly, when P5 is positioned inside discourses of fear and threat (e.g. of acid attacks (see next comment)) he refers to protective strategies that he employs (keeping water in the car and the doors and windows locked) and he talks about an online discussion group where consideration of potential consequences, and safety planning strategies are discussed, which again suggest speculation and conjecture.

This contrasting positioning and its impact on contrasting subjectivity, also has implications for the behavioural outcomes of positioning as a vulnerable Muslim, i.e. the action that then comes out of that. For example, in the context of a discourse of threat and risk of physical harm (acid attacks), P5 said:

P5: “You know, it’s, you, so having to, having to, you know, lock the doors in the car and keep the windows shut, you know, Keeping water handy, (in case of acid attack) doing things like that, it doesn’t really, it doesn’t bother me”

#### 3.6.4 Internalising negative religious discourse

The assault on Islamic identity, and its impact on individuals who may internalise the negative discourses, was constructed as positioning Muslim people as wanting to disguise their religious and cultural aspects. Moreover, P6 constructed a situation in which Muslim people are positioned so negatively, that it can actually “put you off being a Muslim”. The construction goes on to frame the process whereby Muslim people can be ‘put off’ their faith as something happening “unconsciously”, and that the Imam uses psychological discourse to address this with his congregation. As such, discrimination was constructed as having subtle, insidious impact/consequences on people’s sense of identity. P6’s construction of ‘levels of religious belief’ as a protective factor is made in the context of efforts made by the Imam in the Mosque.

Throughout the comments, P6 draws on psychological discourse (“awareness”; “consciousness”; “patterns of behaviour”) and also he constructs the relationship between the Imam and his congregation by using the analogy of a therapist with a client:

**P6:** “er, in Islam. So, it’s like, your being, yes, so it’s to do with, like, your **level of beliefs**. So, somebody with a, I guess a higher ‘Deen’, we don’t really use that type of term but, yes, it’s just, like, your **level of belief**, so don’t let a **level** of, don’t let a negative situation sort of affect that, don’t let it **put you off being a Muslim** basically. So, I guess that’s what he’ll talk about. And again, like I said before, sort of, bring your, he will help you sort of, he sort of aims to bring people’s awareness



to **this typical response** because you know, you may respond in this way but not be aware of it sort of thing, um..."

**R:** "So, people might sort of withdraw a bit, without...?"

**P6:** "Yes. And **as they're withdrawing, they're not really conscious** of... so it's about bringing that into consciousness, almost the way a therapist would do for a, for a client bringing their patterns of behaviour into consciousness. He's a... he's... this Imam is really, I quite, I quite like him because he's got quite a psychological approach. He's had training in psychology in the past. Um, he thinks about things. I like the way he thinks about things. Um, but yes, I guess, it's just, your question was about what does he say. And it's like, he will examine the event, assess how it may affect people in a, in a sort of typical way and then give advice on, you know, how to overcome that and bring that into conscious awareness."

Discrimination was constructed as challenging the religious belief and identity of Muslim people. It draws on discourses of shame (a very psychological construct) in Islamic identity ("shy away from; withdraw; ashamed"). He constructs this potential to reject the Muslim identity in this way as a "typical response". These constructions are made within the widespread and relentless discursive climate, which has serious implications for subjectivity. For example, given the way that he has constructed the impact of discrimination as something so insidious and pervasive (describing being "put off being Muslim" as a "typical response"), the implications for this on what people might feel they can say and do, are quite vast. On the other hand, the Imam is constructed as holding a position of power within the community that can potentially counteract this impact. So, discrimination is also constructed as prompting action to challenge these discourses at the level of religious leadership.

Additionally, P6 constructs himself as someone who is careful to be clearly understood and not misunderstood. He clarifies his meaning regularly, which may indicate that he assumes that I also need educating around these topics, but also, it could be that he is speaking to discourses that misunderstand/misinterpret

Muslim practices, and also allows him to distance himself from discourses that frame Muslims as aggressive or irrational or uneducated.

### 3.6.5 Scientific defence of Islam

In the following comment, P3 constructs ignorance towards 'real' Islamic knowledge, as also coming from within the Muslim world, and thus attributes responsibility to certain elements within religious Islam for perpetuating wrong or false beliefs about Muslims. In doing so, his construction includes the implicit assumption that there are widespread misperceptions around Islam in non-Muslim discourse, including its perceived homogeneity. Overall, P3 constructs himself as responsible for providing a detailed account of the complexity of Islam, and the way that this is misrepresented in public discourse.

P3: "So these are like very, er, so these are Muslims that want to reform Islam, um, and, and, and they're, they're just, they're apologists and they, um, they kind of, um, **they're not speaking from, from knowledge**. They claim to be people of **knowledge** but they're not. Whereas the **scholars, the real scholars**, they're against the, the oppression against Muslims but they're also against terrorist groups like ISIS because they come with scriptures and, and, um, like just **evidence, Islamic evidence that refutes**, um, like how ISIS is moving, what they're doing, Al-Qaeda, how they're moving and what they're doing, things they're doing to innocent people, people that are not in the battlefield, things like that. They're refuting all of that but they're, but they're then called extreme because like they, they, you know, they believe in the women wear Hijab, **not forcing it on them** but that women should be covered, things like that, things that doesn't, doesn't sort of, um, comply with, um, kind of western values and ideals".

In the sentence where he says "(they are) against the oppression against Muslims but they're also against terrorist groups like ISIS", P3 constructs the same Islamic leaders who are "against the oppression of Muslims" as also being "against terrorist groups like ISIS", and in doing so, he constructs a distinction between being against Western oppression of Muslims and being anti-Western, thereby challenging widely held assumptions to the contrary. His use of "but they're also"

in that sentence constructs a discourse in which non-Muslims lack access to discourses that make these important distinctions, and instead, feed into the suspicion around the Muslim community. His emphasis on the word 'against' accentuates the importance that he is giving to this point. Importantly, it also shows that Muslim identities are constructed around their stance in relation to extremism.

P3 also constructs the conflation (in public discourse) of Muslim cultural practices- such as traditional female attire- with extremist beliefs and practices that condone and even encourage terrorism. Within this construction, P3 draws on wider discourses of the subjugation of Muslim females, and he stands in opposition to the veracity of these discourses when he says "they (Islamic religious leaders) believe in the women wear Hijab, *not forcing it on them* but that women should be covered,". Towards the end of the comment, P3 also draws on discourses which construct Muslims as "not complying with Western values and ideals". This construction is not without a sense of injustice and frustration at these discourses and the consequences that arise from them. In particular, his use of the term "comply with" which suggests an almost legal requirement to align with Western values and ideals, rather than something that is available to be embraced.

P3 uses the language of science, and therefore draws from scientific discourse in what appears to be an effort to add credibility to his arguments/position ("the real scholar; "evidence"; "evidence that refutes"; "refuting all"). It seems that scientific discourse is used here to construct a version of reality (about the true meaning of Islam) which has truth status, since it is derived by scientific means. The use of the language of science in a context in which people are accusing you of being an irrational, dangerous Muslims, allows the accusations to be countered, by claiming the language of science even though P3 is talking about religion.

P3 is constructing two groups. Instead of it being a homogenous group of Muslims, he is splitting it into two, those who really are problematic, and the 'real scholars' who are using a scientific mindset and are therefore the 'good' ones. This shows

that belonging to an oppressed group can necessitate splitting the group into good and bad, and the slippery slope of those who deserve the discrimination. The need for members of an oppressed group to construct themselves as 'not that', is therefore imposed by the discourses, whereas for the white Christian majority, it is not necessary to discursively distance themselves (for example the Christchurch, New Zealand attacker (e.g. Moore, 2019)) in the same way that Muslims have to do this work.

It is likely that this positioning of needing to justify, explain and position themselves is a constant subjective struggle for members of oppressed groups; having to do this work even when alone. I.e. that the discourses and their consequences and potential consequences (challenge from others, microaggressions, media representations, policy etc) are active within the cognitive and emotional processes of Muslim people even when (e.g.) driving their car from A to B.

### 3.7 Integration

Each of the five discursive themes outlined above demonstrate the struggle posed by the discursive climate for Muslim men in terms of having to work hard to construct an identity which distances them from dominant discourses that construct them negatively. These all have considerable implications for integration.

The constructions of Islam as hostile and dangerous have had a serious impact on the public perceptions of Muslim identity, and are at the core of the cultural divide, positioning Muslims as 'justifiably' ostracised, which lies at the heart of their effort to reconstruct and reposition themselves within British society. In this context, integration- or rather the lack thereof- was constructed both as a product of discrimination, and also that efforts at integration are emerging as a result of the discrimination.

In all interviews, integration was constructed as fundamental to the discrimination issue. The participants constructed potential causes for the lack of

integration. These included cultural 'ignorance' resulting from a lack of contact between non-Muslims and Muslims. In this context, the participants were constructing themselves and other Muslims in a 'just-give-us-a-chance; we're nice, really' kind of way. Similarly, discourses of unfair and biased government and media representations of Muslims that emphasize the differences and exclude a focus on sameness and shared commonalities, were mobilised as factors that exacerbate and maintain the obstacles to integration.

Some constructions around integration also assigned responsibility to the Muslim community to be more accessible in terms of making themselves more visible in the everyday (e.g. "customer facing jobs"). On the other hand, there were constructions that portrayed a situation in which Muslim communities are retreating further away due to the discrimination, creating a kind of self-perpetuating cycle of marginalisation and Othering, from both 'sides'.

Another underlying integration-related construction was around the current education system around Muslim history- and in particular, the lack of availability of discourse and information about positive Islamic contribution to the world. This biased view, feeds into the distance between communities, and acts as a powerful barrier to integration. The participants felt the need to present these alternative perspectives of Muslim identity to challenge current perceptions of Muslims as barbaric, and instead as a group who have, and wish to continue contributing to British and global progress. The above summary will be deconstructed and elaborated in the following:

### 3.7.1 Ignorance as a barrier

Speaking in this next comment about narratives he notices on social media, P5 constructs the lack of integration as being underpinned by an ignorance about Muslim people. The ignorance he refers to suggests that the opportunity to integrate is sorely limited. He uses the term (ignorance) six times in this comment, and in the first sentence goes from "*quite ignorant*" to "*hugely ignorant*" to "*ignorant racists*". This suggests that he becomes more impacted by the discourse as he steps inside it. This ignorance constructs discrimination as a barrier to

interaction and therefore integration; a lack of exposure- and a reluctance to being exposed- to 'everyday' Muslims, which is further perpetuated by the discriminatory discourses that impact on Muslim willingness to interact outside of the community; the mechanism for a vicious cycle that highlights discourses of difference and alienation between the majority and minority populations, and which perpetuates the divide between communities.

P5: "I think more, I think people, people do, with these, people are **quite ignorant**: I-I've seen people who are **hugely ignorant**, honestly, and you think, "If you'd just speak to a Muslim, and just learn just a **little bit, meet a Muslim**, just **speak to a Muslim**, you know, even a **little bit**, just speak to a Muslim for **a couple of hours**, you'll sort of realise, you know, how, how, um, **ignorant** you are." And I think, I think it is, it is **ignorance**, you know, with, I think, I think, with racism and Islamophobia, it's, it is, there's **ignorance**, it is. I think, with a lot of people, who are **ignorant racists**, you know, with **a little bit of interaction**, speaking, speaking to them **a little bit**, it could change, they'll change them, I think they will **quite easily change their views**. And so, there is a case of, putting for us, as Muslims, to put information out there, to be **more accessible** and to, to reach people. You know".

Although positioned as outsiders and unapproachable, P5 positions himself and other Muslims as misunderstood. Gravely misunderstood. He constructs Muslims as approachable, reasonable, and normal, just like everyone else. His construction of himself was of a man who is looking for solutions to the issue, despite (or perhaps because of) the sense of injustice that permeates his comment. Again, constructing Muslim identity in opposition to dominant discourses.

Interestingly, the overall tone of the comment suggests that this is not so much a criticism of the ignorance, but rather a subjective experience of frustration of the apparent ease with which it could be dispelled. P5 constructs this by repeatedly referring to the idea that it would just take a "little bit" of time, "a couple of hours" to "speak to and meet a Muslim", which could fundamentally change the perception and therefore improve integration and relations more generally. He constructs the remedy as a two-way effort "And so, there is a case of, putting for

us, as Muslims, to put information out there, to be more accessible and to, to reach people. You know”.

### 3.7.2 Hope for Integration

In the next comment, P3 also constructs the integration issue as having responsibility on both ‘sides’. By constructing it in this way, (i.e. ‘both sides’) he highlights the current division and constructs the potential for Muslims and non-Muslims to be able to address the issues. He suggests solutions, which are mainly constructed as a current lack of “common understanding”, which might be addressed if access to information and the availability of wider discourse was more balanced.

P3: “But, um, but it's good that, you know, people like you, Paul, that can see, you know, that can see through this, **this blurred glass that has been put out there**, you know. We need more people like that **from both sides** and, you know, 'cause **there needs to be a common understanding** and **a un-, a unity**, even though, you know, I'm not talking about singing and clapping and running down the streets as... but yeah, just **a unity and a harmony** amongst, you know, **different people, different religions, different lifestyles, different everything** and just, yeah, we're all living here together. **We just need to understand each other** and, and name things for what they are. Extremism is extremism, whether it's IRA, whether it's Christian extremists in Nigeria, whether it's ISIS, let's not, you know, conflate it and, and start making bigger issues out of it. That's what I think anyway”.

While constructing a hopeful, solution-focused approach to the situation, P3 constructs himself as realistic by clarifying that his vision is not one of a utopia “even though, you know, I'm not talking about singing and clapping and running down the streets”. Nevertheless, he does twice construct the vision as “just a *unity* and a *harmony* amongst, you know, *different* people, *different* religions, *different* lifestyles, *different* everything and just, yeah, we're all living here together”. Here he is drawing on discourses of difference that are driven by a lack of understanding, which may parallel the ‘ignorance’ constructed in the previous

comment by P5. His use of “harmony” and “together” either side of the list of what is “different” highlight the hopefulness in his construction.

P3 constructs discrimination as something that has “been put out there” suggesting a reference to the various (perhaps media driven) discourses discussed earlier. The construction of the discourses as being “blurred glass” is also interesting in that it constructs a barrier between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. P3 also constructs discrimination as the absence of integrated multi-culturalism and the presence in society of conflict over respect for difference and diversity. He draws on discourses that omit the long line of ‘terrorist’ groups throughout history, and that instead construct Islamic terrorism as unique; discourses that single out fundamentalist Islamic groups and construct them as representative of the whole Muslim world.

P3 constructs himself as an activist/advocate for integration and understanding. This comment constructs the situation as something that can be resolved, and summarises a potential way forward. Both sides have something to contribute to reducing the discriminatory environment towards Muslims, as well as the fear of them from the non-Muslim population. His proposal constructs understanding through acceptance and embrace of diversity, and he concludes by constructing Terrorism as nothing new, and the domain of a few extremists from many walks of life. His construction also allows him to mobilise the discourse of terrorism as being a Christian thing too, thereby levelling the playing field and again challenging the tendency of discourse to generalise terrorism to all Muslims. P3 is able to discursively construct his hope for a more integrated and equal society through several strategies. He positions himself as inclusive. He positions Muslims as ‘same’ both in terms of their wishes and needs, and as having radical factions who identify as Muslim, in exactly the same way as Christian or other terrorists do. In doing so he positions Muslims as non-generalizable when it comes to the actions of terrorist acting in the name of Islam.



### 3.7.3 Politics and Integration

Continuing with constructions of hope and despair, in this next comment, P5 constructs a climate in which Muslims are the current political and social target, and that this very targeting prevents integration. He constructs the targeting of minority groups as endemic to British culture, Muslims being the latest in a long line of such discrimination. He positions Muslims as victims of “an actual agenda against Muslims”, and that there is a deliberate “effective tactic against Muslims”. P5 also mobilises a hopeful discourse around “Muslims might integrate positively” but discursively constructs a situation in which the wider public are influenced by “deliberate tactics and agendas” aimed at demonising and marginalising the Muslim community. His construction frames this as a lie, that “more and more people might start to realise ....” that this agenda/tactic is something aimed at political control.

Without explicitly naming government etc, he frequently refers to “they” and “they’ll choose another group”. This positions Muslims as political pawns, alongside other, formerly oppressed minority groups. By constructing it in this way, P5 is able to perhaps distance his experiences of discrimination by situating it in a historical context. To somehow depersonalise it slightly in an effort to affect its impact on his subjectivity, and to perhaps emphasise its ubiquity and therefore to demonstrate that it has nothing to do with him as an individual.

P5: “And I think, I don’t know, you know, in a few years’ time, it might be a group of people that, um, Muslims might **integrate positively**, into society. And people more and more people might start to realise that, you know, this is, this is a, um, an **actual agenda against Muslims**, you know. And then it won’t be, it won’t be so **effective, that tactic, against Muslims, it might not be as effective**. And then they’ll, they’ll, they’ll choose another group, there’ll be **another group of, um, people that they’ll target**.”

“You know, going back, even going back not, not long, going back so many, a few decades, it was the **Afro-Caribbeans** that were **targeted** in society. Um, going back, I think it was the **Irish**, the Irish that were **targeted**, as well. So, it’s, sooner or later,

you know, people will move on from **targeting Muslims** and there'll be another set of people, you know, that are **targeted**. Who they will be, you know, I don't know, you know, but I hope not, you know. I don't want, I don't wish, I don't wish it upon anyone".

P5 constructs Muslims and former minority groups as 'targets'. Muslims positioned as different, as a people to be feared. This fear and suspicion positions them as outsiders who are both unable and perhaps afraid to try to integrate. He is able to compare his own group with historical others, and sympathise both with their situation, as well as with those that will be oppressed once the Muslim issue becomes assigned to history. Towards the end of this comment, when he says "I don't want to wish it on anyone", P5 constructs the depth of the problem, with implications for subjectivity.

In his next comment, P5 draws on discourses of outsider status and cultural divide. He goes on to construct another side of the integration coin that attributes some responsibility to his local Muslim community; an absence of integration as a lack of everyday interaction and familiarity, which he suggests solutions to. In doing so he constructs himself as having a balanced and unbiased view, as optimistic even in the face of an environment in which he feels 'targeted', and in which he constructs non-Muslims as "the everyday people" which positions the Muslim community as 'other', and outside of that.

P5: "Whereas, whereas cities like where I live, in (names a city in the North of the UK) you don't, you don't get that so much. **You don't see Muslims working in the supermarkets or, or in the customer facing jobs**. So, I think it is, it is up to us, a little bit, as well, you know, to get these jobs, you know, get these customer facing jobs where, you know, people, where we can **interact**, you know, with people, with the everyday people. You know, there is that, as well, that we can make, and there's more that we can do, as Muslims, there is more that we can do, you know. But I'm positive, I'm positive for the future. Um".

#### 3.7.4 Negation of Muslim contribution

Constructions of white privilege and supremacy permeated the interviews, positioning non-white people as irrelevant, negating Muslim contribution historically, thereby complicating the integration process. P2 explores this in the following comment by challenging the education system here in the UK in which world history was constructed as biased in favour of white contribution, particularly around constructions of the 'good' and 'the' bad. P2 situates his construction in the context of his own high school experiences, which positions him as part of the 'bad' group and not part of the 'good' group, with implications for his developing sense of subjectivity and identity.

P2: "And again, I'm just kind of waffling and digressing but, you know, it is interesting to know that, you know, even when we look at, you know, even when I was doing my GCSEs, we looked at, you know, **certain accomplishments** and, you know, certain historical events and we, there was no sort of insight into, you know, what, what, you know, the Arabic or the Middle East or Muslim regions have, you know, **added to society**, you know, even African or, you know, black contributions to society. But we obviously have Black History Month but, you know, I think **the education system is incredibly tailored** to, you know, good and bad events that have surrounded around, you know, **white people**, not just English or the UK, just, you know, **very much white.**"

This construction suggests Muslims as the current political target, in an ongoing and historical political approach to maintaining a system in which the white majority is favoured through promoting them by contrasting with a negatively represented 'Other'. Therefore, integration is constructed as intentionally obstructed as part of a political agenda.

In the next comment, P1 also constructs the omission of Muslim contribution to society and to civilisation throughout history. In the interview, he feels the need to outline examples to me, both in order to evidence his construction, and to distance Muslims from the dominant discourse in which only white contributions count.

P1: "I mean, Muslims, if you look at the history, they obviously have contributed a huge amount of knowledge to the whole world. And, er, in every aspect, including history, maths, science. The first ever university was in Cairo, so Muslims have contributed so much, but it's almost, the way things are today, er no-one's reporting all of those good things that have happened or are no longer reporting. I think some people are almost claiming that this is only achieved by Westerners and no-one else. Almost trying to wipe away the history of the good things, and I think a fair media would probably have done all of those".

His comment goes on to construct this bias as directly linked to the struggles around integration, and he positions the wider population as responsible for their ignorance *"maybe listen to what we have to say, like you are doing today and actually finding out how Muslims are thinking"*. As such he is constructing a situation in which discourses of the irrelevance of Muslims are perhaps so strong that people have no incentive to get to know the community. He constructs the Muslim community as "peace-loving" in opposition to discourses of Islam as hostile and violent. He attributes responsibility for the ignorance to media reporting and goes one step further and constructs the media influence as culpable for the number of 'acts' that are occurring in the UK (summer/autumn 2017). This construction allows P1 to construct the issue of integration as being something systemic, and something beyond the control of ordinary Muslims, despite their wish to.

"So, reporting all the good things and maybe finding millions of people, living in this country, including myself and maybe listen to what we have to say, like you are doing today and actually finding out how Muslims are thinking. This is exactly how, most Muslims, who are peace loving people, are thinking. So, if they reported this, I think that maybe everything would have been different? Even in terms of the number of acts that we're having, I think it's maybe been influenced by how the media's reporting."

### 3.7.5 Stereotypes and Integration

As well as the more generalised constructions seen above, specific situations that illustrate the struggle with integration were constructed. In this comment, discrimination isn't mentioned directly; the term itself is almost avoided. But P4 seems to be constructing it as being the result of the operation of stereotypes (which he presents as residing in people's heads without them even being aware of it). This suggests that there are many steps to go before the work towards real integration can begin. As was seen across and throughout the interviews, in this comment, in order to distance himself from the construction of himself as criminal etc, P4 has to construct himself as 'other' than 'one of those' that he represents.

P4: "Erm, I was with a **very high ranking barrister** (.) outside, outside the cells waiting to see **our client** (.) and I'd managed to cause a, erm (1.3) .hh, er, a sort of **alarm** amongst security, where security rushed out to ask (.) where I was going (1.0) erm, **because it wasn't normal** perhaps to see a twenty (.) I must've been 26 then, **a 26 year old (1.0) Asian (.) Muslim (0.7) lawyer**, perhaps going downstairs to the cells. It could only be that I know someone downstairs in jail and that I'm going to try and go and see them which wouldn't be allowed. **I-i-i-it didn't perhaps (.) add up in their head** that I was representing one of them."

P4 constructed discrimination as automatic negative assumptions based on his appearance, which mobilises discourses of the Muslim, Asian as deviant, criminal and dangerous. It is interesting how he felt identified in a particular way; evidenced by the order in which he constructed his identity through the eyes of the court security personnel: "26 year old (young), Asian, Muslim, lawyer". Where P4 has said "I-i-i-it didn't perhaps (.) add up in their head that I was representing one of them" he was constructing a situation in which discourses of an integrated, British, professional, who also looks like an Asian Muslim were not available to those staff members. It was as if non-Muslims in that context have no other identity for a Muslim in a court available to them, other than criminal. As such, he is positioned as 'lesser' by the actions of the security staff, but he constructed himself as being a member of the in-group of professional lawyers (note that he says 'our' client rather than 'the' client'). By constructing himself as a member of

this high-status group, as deserving of respect and therefore protected against discrimination, he constructs the discrimination as even more outrageous.

In a way, he is also implying that high-status categories (people who study law) should have more respect. Constructing discrimination as worse (i.e. more unacceptable) for people who have high status, as if they should expect to not be discriminated against. Does this then mean that others should expect it? P4 buys into that particular discourse in this section of the interview, as a way of making a point to me, to highlight the 'obvious' injustice by demonstrating how Muslims are associated with criminality and considered rule breakers. Later in the interview he takes up other positions in which he constructs everyone as deserving of equal respect: A more humanistic discourse.

P4: "and immediately the barrister – she was a **white woman**, (.) er, she .hh immediately turned around, as soon as **she stood up for me** and said, excuse me, this is (my name from such and such firm), erm, he's with me, he's a solicitor, he's with me, (1.0) and they **backed off**, she immediately said 'that was **completely racist**, if you were a **white solicitor** no one would've come to ask why are you wearing the tie why are you wearing the suit, why are you going downstairs', but they felt the need to come to me .hh."

Discrimination in this comment is not something that needed to be proved. It was made explicit and validated through the authority of the white woman. P4 constructed her as having power; she is higher up in the hierarchy, and at the same time he twice referenced her saying that he was with her, thus aligning himself with her power. It is as though the construct 'racist' was allowed by P4 in this context because it was spoken by a 'white' person. It seems that he is using footing (a term used to refer to a discursive move that involves citing usually authoritative sources to voice one's own views or concerns) to make the claim that the security guards' behaviour was racist. In fact, he called it "completely racist". This allowed him to own discrimination as something that does exist and does not first need to be proved. He was able to speak explicitly about its existence to me in this context, which is in contrast to his earlier constructions in which discrimination first

needed to be proved (e.g. 3.2.1). The situation he describes illustrates the important role of context in terms of what can be said and done in the discursive environment.

He was able to bring to life the sense of indignance that he experienced in that situation, through the discursive construction of the role of the white female colleague. It constructs a mixture of subjectivity from being empowered by the opportunity to express racism explicitly; to have it named. But also, the frustration and powerlessness/restriction of there needing to be a white person in order to feel that this can be allowed. Thus, he is constructing discrimination as something existing because he is not white, which again, exemplifies the complexities of intersectional identities, and the enormous challenge to integration.

#### 3.7.6 Contrasting impact of the discursive climate at Gatwick Airport

Given that integration implies acceptance and trust from both sides, the following construction further illustrates the distance that currently exists. P4 constructs an intensely anxiety inducing situation at Gatwick airport where his mother began to pray at the appropriate (Islamic) time:

P4: “Erm, where I remember just last year it was prayer time, we were at the arrivals section of an airport, I think Gatwick, (.) and erm in the middle of the airport she just went to the side, and just started praying. You know the rituals of praying, you bow down, you kneel down, (0.5) and I remember sweating and thinking she’s gonna cause, she may cause a security sort of incident where it just takes one person from (0.5) anywhere around the world- because it’s an airport- just to think ‘oh my god what’s this person doing, they’re about to do something’, because perhaps everyone is slightly on edge at an airport since 911, I don’t know.”

The level of fear and scrutiny that are contained in this construction suggest a discursive environment in which Muslim people feel the need to be hypervigilant for an expectation that they are terror suspects, and that this is widely accepted in society and Muslims are therefore vulnerable to hostile action against their

culturally (and religiously) appropriate behaviours. P4 constructed an unpredictable social context, in which a demonstration of religious devotion can very quickly escalate into a catastrophe. He constructed himself both as a protective son- in the context of his mother positioned as being perceived as a potential radical extremist- and as needing to hide/be invisible in a threatening environment, that demands constant awareness of how others might position him. This is quite striking.

On the other hand, this comment constructs contrasting experiences: Whereas his mother felt free to express her religious practice, it is evident that P4 felt the need to be as discreet as possible. In this context P4 went on to say: *“So my mum, no, my mum’s er: an anomaly I think, erm ...”*

### 3.8 Analysis summary

To briefly summarise the analysis chapter, I have shown how the very *existence* of discrimination was constructed as being under question, which set the scene for the identity related work that the participants did in the interviews. The political justification for the War On Terror following *September 11th* has been constructed as having mobilised discourses of whether or not public sentiment towards Muslims is ‘discrimination’ or something that’s justified.

The *role of the media* in the story was constructed as perpetuating and driving the discursive anti-Muslim environment, including intimate links between the media and *political agendas*. Discrimination towards Muslims was constructed as permeated by an attack on their *religion*, which further complicates the assault on their identity, and adding complexity to the identity-related discursive work they are necessarily involved with. Taken together, each of these five elements make the task of *integration* a complex one.

The next and final chapter will expand in more detail on the wider implications of this analysis. As well as a critical appraisal to evaluate the research, this chapter will locate the discourses in the outside world, with a focus on agency, positioning, and action orientation. It will also include a focus on the reflexive position of the



researcher, reflections on the implications of the study for Counselling Psychology, and recommendations in the wider social and political world. Finally, it will offer a brief response to the original research question which drove this piece of research.

## 4.0 Conclusions

Throughout the analysis, a picture emerged of the Muslim men in this study working hard to redefine their identity in the face of constructions that othered them, positioning them as suspicious, dangerous and threatening outsiders. The intersection of their identities (Muslim, Male, Islamic, Asian, British) leaving them vulnerable to discourses that question and attack their identity, both externally as well as internally.

### 4.1 Summary of themes

On one hand, discrimination was constructed as needing to be proved, problematised and under question before it could be challenged. Microaggressions in this context were constructed as unconscious yet pervasive, normalised and therefore complex to engage with. On the other hand, discrimination was constructed as a pervasive and systemic expectation by the Muslim community stemming from the events of 911 and the War on Terror, and the emerging media-driven oppressive discourses of suspicion and blame, which have led to the generalisation of the construction of the Muslim terrorist, challenging British Muslims' national, religious, cultural and social identity, and their place in British society.

Additionally, the Islamic religion was constructed as demonised through misrepresentation in public discourse. Part of what they are doing in order to feel acceptable to themselves and others, requires them to construct Islam in particular ways i.e. as themselves being either moderate or their particular strand of Islam as moderate. Thus, their Islam illustrates another aspect of the dynamic process of identity construction that they are immersed in. In this context, it became evident that there was a clear lack of availability of alternative discourses, including an absence of alternatives to discourses that construct Islam as a homogeneous entity. As such, Muslims were constructed as one standardised group and not as individuals, which led to the participants navigating the tension arising from- and within- such constructions through *resistance*. This exemplifies

their need to constantly distance themselves from negative constructions of Muslim identity and to instead construct themselves in opposition to the dominant discourses. Thus, demonstrating that the participants had to work hard to distance themselves from negative constructions and reconstruct themselves as 'acceptable', and 'not that'.

This action on the part of the participants produced evidence in the data of a shift from discrimination itself to a focus on how the participants are using discourses to negotiate their identity in an intensely discriminatory climate, which was constructed as inescapable, and where they as Muslim men are constructed as terrorists and irrational extremists. In the media they are shamed and blamed via the construct of the War on Terror, which is itself directed against Muslim people, including children (e.g. Prevent). Policies such as Prevent aimed at reducing the risk of radicalisation through identifying symptoms of extremism, are paradoxically constructed as themselves being a potential cause of extremist thinking and discourse. All of the above factors- constructed as 'discursive themes' in this study- fed into the complex challenge facing the Muslim community around belonging and integration.

#### 4.2 Locating the Discourse in the outside world

Interesting developments during the process of writing up this thesis took place. These speak directly to the participants' constructions by locating the discourses drawn on in the interviews back out in the outside world; in the culture, via the media. The interviews themselves took place during the recruitment period of the study which ran from October 2017 to May 2018. Following the tragic and horrific attacks in the Christchurch (New Zealand) Mosques in March 2019, there was an international focus in the media on the way that the New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Arden, handled the crisis. From this, important questions around media reporting and the resulting discourses have been raised internationally. These align with the constructions the participants in this study invoked and have put Islamophobia and White supremacy at the centre of public debate.

For example: writing in the UK Guardian newspaper, Waterson (2019) leads with the headline “Media are reluctant to label **far-right attackers** as terrorists”. The article goes on to say that “Global research finds **violent Islamists** are three times more likely to be called terrorists.” I found it interesting the way that each of these groups were constructed (‘far-right attackers’ versus ‘violent Islamists’) which again demonstrates the availability (or lack thereof) of language that distances Muslim communities from terrorists who identify with a particular religion, yet an individual from a white, non-Muslim background is easily distinguished from the wider community; i.e. “far” away from them.

The research that was cited in that Guardian article is from Moore (2019) who performed a statistical analysis of 200,000 media articles on 11 different terrorist attacks found that Islamist extremists (again the construction seems inescapable or ironically unseen) were labelled terrorists 78.4% of the time, whereas far-right extremists were only identified as terrorists 23.5% of the time. He concluded that the media continues to use language unevenly when reporting on acts by white supremacists compared with Islamic extremists and described the reporting on the Christchurch shooting as “exceptional” due to the way in which the media was so willing to label the attacker as a terrorist. He concluded by saying that ‘key figures and spokespeople taking bold and progressive stances on these issues set a precedent that has a notable and measurable impact in the media.’

In this same context, Kristof (2019) writing in the New York times said: “New Zealand shows us what leadership should look like.” He is referring to Prime Minister Arden’s handling of the tragedy in terms of gun-law reform and her solidarity with the Muslim community, as well as distancing from the terrorist and explicitly denying him a platform. Similarly, in The New Yorker, Gessen (2019) wrote that Jacinda Arden had “quietly upended every expectation about the way Western states and their leaders respond to terrorist attacks”, due to her focus on the loss of fellow citizens, and the absence of Othering in her discourse and approach.

In the same month, Waterson (2019a) writing in the Guardian quotes the British counter-terrorism chief, Neil Basu, as saying that far-right terrorists are being radicalised by mainstream newspaper coverage. Basu criticised the hypocrisy of mainstream news providers in the wake of the Christchurch attack, and cited the 2017 terror attack in Finsbury Park, London as an example of where a person was “driven to an act of terror by far-right messaging he found mostly on mainstream media”. Relatedly, Wren-Lewis (2019) writing in the New Statesman, writes “A partisan media that is fuelling far-right extremism – we need to wake up”. Furthermore, Assistant chief constable Mark Hamilton, the National Hate-Crime lead for the National Police Chiefs Council, said: “Experience tells us that we should sadly expect that a horrific attack such as the one in Christchurch will have an impact on levels of hostility in the UK, and it will also increase the fear of crime in affected communities. Evidence of this was reported in the UK Guardian by Dodd (2019) who reported the number of anti-Muslim hate crimes reported across Britain increased by 593% in the week after the attacks by a White supremacist in Christchurch.

#### 4.3 A constant state of action orientation

The media-driven negative social discourses around Muslim identity are so pervasive, that not only are Muslims acutely aware of this perception of them, but it profoundly impacts and influences who they feel they need to be in their actions. Against this background, Stage 3 (Action Orientation) of Willig’s (2013) six-stage analysis focuses on the ‘discursive contexts within which different constructions of discrimination are being deployed’. It asks, what is gained from constructing the object in this particular way at this particular point in the text; what is its function, and what is it capable of achieving? Given that the data were saturated with evidence of a shift from discrimination itself to a focus on how the participants are using discourses to negotiate their identity, an important conclusion from my study is that Muslim men in the UK are in a constant state of ‘action orientation’.

The argument is a complex one; it tells a story that coheres around identity and what the participants are *doing* with their talk. About how they are relating to

constructions of themselves that they are coming across (i.e. how they perceive that they are being perceived) and how that then impacts the way that they construct themselves in the interview for me- a non-Muslim other- and also how this impacts and influences who they feel they need to be in their actions 'out there' in their day-to-day. Furthermore, I was also aware that- for the participants- the research report might be considered representative of the wider Muslim voice. For this group of people, then, their sense of identity is constantly tied in with what they are doing with their talk; a constant state of being positioned and positioning, repositioned and repositioning.

#### 4.4 Second-Order Positioning

Due to the way in which negative identities are being imposed on Muslim males by powerful discourses, the study was able to focus on identity as the most fertile focus for the constructions. Second-order positioning (Harre et al, 2009) is particularly important here with these participants compared to other types of analysis because it uncovered constructions of who they are assumed to be that are so concrete- and potentially life changing in their consequences- that the participants then have to reject or engage with them in some way; the discourse is acutely 'felt' and demands interaction.

Another interesting aspect of being positioned in this way (i.e. second order) is how it demonstrates that those who are in a marginalised group naturally notice and analyse discourses although they do not necessarily call it that; it is obvious to them. Being part of a marginalised group seems to provide the critical distance, which is a product of such life experience. Members of minorities, without being trained around discourse analysis are aware of the existence of discourse in a society that constructs them negatively, or in ways which cause them discomfort. Hence, the second order positioning in which they are aware of how they are constructed externally which creates a chasm with how they experience themselves. It is in this chasm that all the identity work is being done by our participants.

People from 'majority' groups, who do not experience this positioning are not then aware of discourses in the same way. Travelling and being exposed to other cultures can also promote this awareness. Similarly, chronic illness can 'other' a person which can lead to thinking about 'norms' in a way that was not otherwise necessitated. The participants were reflexively and critically aware of how the mainstream constructs things and takes them for granted. A main aim of this research was to identify and challenge these taken-for-granted assumptions that exist in the form of discourses.

These reflections also fit with the reflexivity in the methodology chapter where I talk about my understanding of the Muslim community as the current target and how in the 80's and 90's I had found gay men with HIV to be the target of a global assault on their identity. So, even though I had not been trained in discourse analysis at that time, I was aware of becoming positioned etc although I didn't call it that, but knew it was happening; I felt it. This may explain (at least in part) why theoretically for this study, the concepts of second order positioning, and the resulting 'action orientation' were quite hard for me to work through in terms of having a framework for understanding them.

#### 4.5 Agency

Another important and interesting discursive strategy permeated the interviews. There were differences in the extent to which participants positioned themselves in relation to the discourses available to them, and to what extent they refused to step into or reject those discourses, which involved their agency.

In general, across interviews, the participants constructed themselves as reasonable and able to rationally outline what was going on. Perhaps this allowed them to distance themselves from the media construction of radical, 'crazy' Muslims who are not rational or reasonable, by constructing themselves as men who in fact are rational and reasonable. This suggests that they are impacted by dominant discourses that promote an image of the fanatical Muslim man, which leads to an interesting question around whether or not it is possible to escape or avoid these discourses that attack Muslim identity. E.g. there are powerful and

pervasive discourses that construct all Muslims as potentially dangerous, therefore Muslim males feel there is no position available in that discourse other than a terrorist. Consequently, they have to position themselves either as a terrorist or reject the whole discourse. Either way, they are forced to engage with it.

However, within the discourses available there is also the position of the 'good Muslim' (as perceived by the non-Muslim public) who is e.g. adapted to dominant western style etc. Some of the participants mobilise this by using their agency to differentiate between themselves and the undesirable other. However, by doing so, they are feeding into the discourse that there is this undesirable other. The question then, is can discriminatory discourse be escaped? How much agency is there to construct meaning? Another interesting question emerges from this finding: Is a person who positions themselves in an oppressive or problematic discourse less agentic than someone who rejects that discourse, or are they simply doing something different?

It may seem from a liberal left-thinking person's perspective (as a general category who are sympathetic and side with the oppressed) that the discrimination can be thought of as coming from the top-down. It may be an automatic assumption that it is only the privileged- or in this case the oppressors- who construct Muslims in this way, and literally that it is all about their power to impose, and that the oppressed know that what is being said about them is not true. But this is revealed as too simplistic when contrasted with the Foucauldian (more complex) idea of the power of pervasive discourses that are inescapable, which leads to Muslims internalising discourses and then having to orient towards them and to actually engage with these constructions in some way.

#### 4.5.1 Agency and radicalisation

Of particular concern, is the issue of the vulnerability of an ostracised and stigmatised Muslim youth to being drawn to radical ways of thinking. Teenage people in their formative years are more likely to seek out discourses that fit with their identity formation. As with all the various subgroups within a population,



there has always been a more disenfranchised, and vulnerable minority. For disenfranchised Muslim young people there is the added danger that they may be vulnerable to being indoctrinated by extremist groups as their identities are confused by a relentless media attack on their culture and place within British society and the West in general. As such, part of the appeal of these groups for vulnerable young people may be about exercising their agency in the service of their attacked identities. This can be greatly complicated in a discursive climate that attacks and negatively constructs their sense of identity (e.g. they might be seeking out these other- potentially extreme- discourses to counteract the oppressive ones).

#### 4.5.2 Agency as part of a 'minority' but not as a Muslim

Variability in the construction of agency was seen in the contrast between when the participants talked about discrimination against Muslim people alone, versus when discrimination was spoken about in terms of *all* minorities, including Muslims. When the participants positioned themselves alongside other oppressed groups (whose oppression is validated) they were more able to speak about- and against- discrimination explicitly in their constructions, whereas discrimination against Muslims alone could not quite be owned.

In that context, it is noted that constructions of media discrimination against Muslims involved much more active agency demonstrated though participants having to 'seek it out' (e.g. examining newspapers, putting evidence together, and then talking about the discrimination objectively and without emotion). Whereas, when discrimination was constructed as inescapable for all minorities (in the context of the radio programme), it was spoken about as clearly evident and the participant therefore did not have to position himself as the paranoid person who has to scrutinise for evidence of discrimination with a magnifying glass. As such, the action orientation of constructing the radio as being unavoidable seems to feed into the construction of this type of context as being all encompassing and affecting lots of groups and therefore the participant does not have to be special or unusual in any way. This sense of permissiveness to talk about discrimination when it involves other (non-Muslim) groups happened throughout the data. It was

as if the participants felt that they had permission to point out that there is discrimination when they position themselves as part of a very large group of people who are being discriminated against. Then it felt more legitimate and could be constructed as such.

#### 4.6 Variability in construction

Variability in construction stood out from the data; existing in several of the discursive themes. Variability in this sense was seen through the way in which the media and politics were constructed as shedding both benevolent and attacking lights on the Muslim community. The discursive climate was constructed on the one hand as being an unwished-for but unavoidable consequence by the government, but on the other hand, it was also repeatedly constructed as an intentional government agenda. Similarly, the existence of discrimination was constructed as both needing to be proved, and as clearly identifiable. Additionally, the participants took time and care to construct aspects of the media as 'not anti-Muslim'. From the point of view of their action orientation, this could be part of the positioning of not wanting to be seen as the angry Muslim. This again demonstrates them as having to work hard to distance from these discourses.

#### 4.7 Identity through the lens of psychological theory:

Discursive theory and social identity theory both speak to the idea of what happens when people are put into social categories, but they are making different arguments, which means there is a tension between discursive and non-discursive approaches to theorizing about identity. As such, using social identity theory to interpret my findings might cause problems in that it might not be considered as incompatible with a discursive approach. Nevertheless, there is a resonance that is worth acknowledging. Social identity and narrative theories are also contextual in that the personality of a person is considered the product of the context within which they find themselves.

As described in detail, the participants are negotiating several combining identities (e.g. British, Muslim, Islamic). These are all impacted individually and as a whole by the dominant societal discourses. For example, if their British

identity is discursively impacted then the meaning of their Muslim identity acquires a slightly different value because it is the Muslim identity that leads to the challenge they face around their British identity. This would be quite different if people in the social world thought that being both Muslim and British was no problem; but because their 'Britishness' is challenged then their Muslim identity is positioned in a different way, and vice versa. As such, a picture emerges of the way that the participant's identity narratives are shaped by the dominant discourses.

To elaborate on this point, two opposing discourses were seen in the data. On the one hand, Muslim identity becomes even more important for the participants as a result of these societal discourses, and on the other hand, their Muslimness can be shied away from. Consequences of the dynamic that comes out of that for the individuals (i.e. playing up/down one or the other aspects of identity) might explain the tendency to construct fellow Muslims as 'my Muslim bothers and sisters', which may have evolved/been reinforced as a response to the dominant discourses. Similarly, these dynamics could lead to more radical ways of thinking as a response. i.e. getting rid of British aspect.

This process of people responding to the discursive context around different identities (Muslim, British) and their action of positioning and repositioning themselves demonstrates the capacity for the self to be 'reauthored'. Given the context in the culture where British identity and Muslim identity are opposed, this then leads to individuals having to reinvent their identity i.e. by defending themselves and justifying their British identity etc. Importantly, by discursively reauthoring themselves in this way, the participants demonstrate the transcending nature of identity, and their remarkable capacity for resilience through their action and creativity. I.e. how they are actively reauthoring their identity as they traverse this terrain of the discourses that they are confronted with.

This finding around creativity and resilience could be taken up by policy makers, academics, researchers, practitioners and campaigners to see that this group are not just passive victims in this situation.

#### 4.8 Gender:

Returning to the question of gender. As discussed in the methodology chapter, the focus of the study was on men for a number of reasons, including loud calls in the literature to engage Muslim men in research due to the current scarcity of research with this group. However, questions might be asked about how the inclusion of women in the study may have impacted on the findings etc.

Now that I have reflected on the data and findings, I notice that I am reluctant to speculate what might have been found if women had been included in the study, as this would have been an opportunity to mobilise discourses about Muslim women that could be considered stereotypical and therefore unhelpful. However, rather than speculating and making claims, there are instead a series of questions that could be raised in terms of gender. In particular around the potential differences in positioning and discourses that are available for different genders, and what this might have meant for each stage of the research process from data collection through to analysis.

A useful example from the data is where P4- in the context of having to defend Islam- talks about the differences between himself and his two sisters. He positioned himself as protector; as having to make sure that they are safe, as well as their apparent differences in religious knowledge about Islam. This raises interesting questions about how Muslim women might have spoken in the interviews in general. More specifically, my status as a male who is also non-Muslim, is likely to have had an important impact on what Muslim women felt that could/should say to me, which may have been quite different to how the Muslim men spoke to me. Thus, the study could have been shaped quite differently if it was not an entirely male sample, with potentially different nuances taking the study in a different direction. Overall, I aimed to avoid speculating too much on the potential outcomes of including Muslim women as a means of avoiding a prejudice reading of what might have been said or done.

#### 4.9 Reflexivity: My own agency (and struggle to construct meaning as I wanted)

Throughout the analysis write up, it was interesting (and also quite challenging) for me to notice how I had to use the construct of 'Muslim' in order to construct 'non-Muslim terrorists'. In this context, it could be said that through this language use, I'm saying that it is normal for Muslims to be terrorists. This demonstrates the general struggle to distance from the association between the Muslim community and terrorist acts. It is just one example of how my relationship with using language has changed through the research process in the sense that– even though I couldn't say it in another way (i.e. there is no other language available)– I became acutely aware of what I am *doing* with my use of language.

Thus, I become a discursive actor by constructing meaning in language that is loaded with important ethical and moral implications (professionally and personally) around my responsibility. This position comes with a sense of being 'stuck', because there are no other ways to talk about it; whatever language I use I do the same thing, and so there is the danger of not wanting to say anything at all. This seems to parallel with what my research participants were doing with their own talk in the interviews.

Another example of my struggle with language through the research process was where I noticed once in supervision that I said "proper Muslim" to refer to those Muslims who wear religious garb. This then assumes that those who don't, aren't. I was simultaneously aware and slightly ashamed that I would not use the same language when referring to religious or non-religious Jews. This demonstrated to me that in the context of religious Jews, I have more language available to me and would not need to draw on 'proper' to make that distinction, which further demonstrates the plight of the Muslim community in this hostile discursive climate. Additionally, and along similar lines, my experience of conducting the research has made me more aware of my own positioning and how I get positioned by others.

#### 4.9.1 Reflexivity: Nature of the interpretation/position of the researcher

A major strength of qualitative research is that it is informed and influenced by us as researchers, therefore we make our assumptions explicit. In that context, I acknowledge that the analysis is not necessarily independent of my own experiences and positions on matters such as discrimination, and that what I produced in the analysis and interpretation is not simply the truth of what the data mean. Discourses around my own identity and power also feed into/limit my interpretation in terms of an awareness of how my participants will receive the report. This also highlights the idea that another researcher would have made a different interpretation to the one I have presented here in this thesis.

Similarly, inherent in all qualitative research is the limitation that wherever the study/analysis focuses in terms of a particular epistemological and ontological position, this will necessarily exclude other potential points of view i.e. whichever position I take means I am not taking other available positions. For example, if I chose a realist position, then the work can be criticised for not acknowledging that there are different versions of reality, but if I chose a more relativist position I could be criticised for not acknowledging that there is a real world out there in which people are suffering, so whichever position I take cannot cover all bases.

Equally, the tool used for the analysis (FDA) is also full of assumptions, which allowed the particular form of interrogation and interpretation that I performed. From that perspective, discourse itself is inherently full of assumptions, particularly about the role of language, and what it does and the way that discourse can oversee what is Okay to say and do and what can't be said (Power). In other words, by choosing the epistemological and ontological position (critical realist end of the social constructionist spectrum), by focusing on discourse, and by using the 6-stage FDA, I have both produced, and limited the scope of the study in terms of what can be seen and found.

#### 4.10 Ethical implications:

There are also further ethical implications. For example, if the findings were to influence new policy, then my attempt to understand why someone embraces a

discourse of freedom-fighting/terrorism, might feed into the idea that people do get drawn into that quite easily, which might become generalisable, and feed into the very thing this research aims to stand against; unjust and widespread discrimination against the Muslim community, and the generalised construction of the Muslim man as terrorist. As such, the final report has aimed to exercise great care when it comes to the issue of being sensitive around reporting about vulnerability to radicalisation, in order to avoid misinterpretation, or that the information could be taken out of context.

#### 4.11 Implications for Counselling Psychology

In that context, I turn to think about the research through a Counselling Psychology perspective. There are well documented links between social disadvantage and poorer mental health (eg see Davies: 1997; Pilgrim: 1997; Kearney: 1996; William: 1999). The most essential ingredient of distress is the way power is exercised over people (Smail: 1999, p23). Therefore, keeping control of meaning is of central importance to the preservation of power (Smail: 1999) and is inextricably linked to language (Thatcher: 2006). Access to social power and resources is what leads to (psychological) change.

If people are being made unwell through inequitable, oppressive and discriminatory social processes and societal power, and then 'being treated by a powerful value laden system aimed at locating an individual's distress intrapsychically, this will at best be ineffective and at worst be abusive' (Thatcher, 2006, p7). Using legitimised scientific knowledge 'promotes the power and status of therapists while ignoring or exacerbating the oppression that is the result of social structures of power' (Proctor, 2002,p15). The current dominance of individualistic psychological theory means that major models are equally vehement in internalising emotions. Furthermore, they overstate the actual ability of people to transcend the realities of their physical, economic, ideological and psychological environments (Rogers, 2004)

When as psychologists we try to be politically neutral, not only do we end up being conservative (in the sense of not challenging the status quo) we fail to take

personal responsibility for our actions or non-actions' (Kearney, 1996). There is no politically neutral fence for us to sit on. We need to 'walk the walk' (Hage et al, 2007) and to 'constantly question our practice, not just in terms of our therapeutic skill, but also in terms of the political and cultural discourses that influence our work' (Hart, 2003 p224). This further underlines the importance of studying Muslim men from a discursive, social constructionist perspective, and highlights the need for a shift from individualistic ethics to social ethics addressing 'ethical questions about the ideal role of therapy in society' (Tjeltveit, 2000), as seen in Community Psychology approaches under the guise of 'the social justice agenda' (Vera and Speight, 2003), which advocates 'a commitment to social interventions as well as therapeutic processes' (Vera and Speight, 2003).

#### 4.12 Recommendations

Discursive construction is a complex way of thinking about a person compared to a phenomenological way that would look at how Muslim men feel inside and how can they express that. Discourse analysis is much more complex in that it allows a focus on how this internality is brought into being; how our participants are having a relationship with how they are constructed by other people and how that then feeds back. In this way, social constructionist discourse analysis allows identification of the context and its consequences rather than positioning the experience of discrimination as something purely arising within the individual.

In that context, this study, with its strong focus on positioning, Othering and intersectionality, is valuable for psychology because of the way that it is community-based, rather than situating the issue inside the individual, which has allowed an examination of the context in which our participants are living their lives, and identification of the factors 'out there' in the social world that are having a pervasive impact on their sense of identity and strongly influencing who they feel they are for others and who they then need to be in return. These community-based insights then can be translated from research into action for developers of interventions and for those clinicians who work with Muslim males.



Additionally, it is recommended that future research might consider exploring the talk of young Muslim males who are thought to be more vulnerable to radical ways of thinking, in order to identify the factors that underpin this vulnerability (i.e. what is the vulnerability, and how do they position themselves), and using this understanding as a means of early intervention through policy and community initiatives, as well as clinically.

Policy makers should take into account the damage that can occur when issues of integration are thought of as expendable and the damage as collateral. An example of this was shown in Theresa May's Foreword in the Prevent Strategy document. Therefore, I recommend that when politicians construct these types of things that care is given to how they are constructed in an effort to reduce the sense of marginalisation and demonization.

#### 4.13 Transferability

Additionally, these factors have several implications for the transferability of the study findings. First, despite the small sample size of this study (n=6), the knowledge identified in my research does indicate that the experiences they have constructed are available within British-Muslim culture and society. Importantly, the sample were a group of educated professionals which suggests that these experiences are available to what could be considered the middle-class of British Muslim men; a group for whom there appears to be no other research of this kind in the evidence base. Their professional status and resulting social class will have impacted on the types of discourses that were available to them, and the subject positions arising from that. This will have undoubtedly shaped the data that was collected, and therefore the findings of the study. By focusing the findings to a 'middle-class' group of British Muslim men, the contribution of the study to the topic of the discursive experience of discrimination is both limited to and transferable to this group of British Muslim men.

Second, in terms of the more theoretical and methodological contribution/usefulness of the study findings, I have shown how identity is negotiated in a context of challenge on a social level. Thus, transferability allows

us to extend the findings beyond the specific demographic studied in this research, and to transfer the insights into other contexts where people are challenged around their identity; this could be applied to understand the process that might take place in other marginalized groups. So, although I have applied it to Muslim men, my research is saying something more general about how that process works; i.e. that other minority groups under 'siege' may engage in similar processes. An example of this is the way in which it allows me to understand better what it was like for gay men in the early 90's around the AIDS epidemic and associated discourses, and the negative constructions they faced.

Third, is the resilience that has emerged as part of the participants process. My research has shown that people are actively doing something to salvage a sense of positive identity and to re-claim and reauthor the different parts of their identity in the face of these social challenges- and they are being very creative in doing that- which demonstrates a striking expression of their resilience. Policy makers may want to make use of this creativity and activity rather than simply seeing people as only either victims or perpetrators.

Fourth, the understanding and knowledge that has been produced in this research could be applied in to inform psychological interventions and further research, which is explored further in the recommendations section below.

#### 4.14 Critical appraisal: Limitations

Now at the end of the research process, when I reflect back and think about what I would do differently in light of my new understanding of conducting a piece of doctoral research using Foucauldian discourse analysis, I think I would probably be different in the interviews; I would listen differently and now notice things discursively that I lacked the same sensitivity for when the research began. The discursive lens that I have developed thorough the analysis of the interview data would allow me to pursue things differently in the interviews. I would be more attuned to positioning and pick it up more, pursue lines of questioning accordingly. Similarly, with action orientation. I would notice what was happening in the conversation and would have interacted with it as such.

Another learning point around language would mean that I would have constructed the recruitment materials slightly differently, which may have addressed some of the early issues I had with recruitment for the study. In particular, the awareness I have gained around the plight of Muslims who are positioned as objects of suspicion, has increased my own awareness of how I then (as a white male) also take up the position of being suspicious, and also as suspect for potential participants. As such and on reflection, I think that the overall tone of my recruitment ad (whilst- perhaps naively- intended to sound 'official' so that the study had credibility) is rife with power structures (University, Doctoral, Policy, Ethics, Professor) and neither my name nor that of my supervisor sounds remotely Muslim.

#### 4.15 Missed Opportunities

Throughout the thesis I have used the symbol 'P' to indicate the participants, with a corresponding number to differentiate between each participant (i.e. P1, P2 etc). My rationale for this was around anonymity in the interests of confidentiality. This of course could also have been achieved by allocating each participant a different name. I hesitated to do this because I was unsure of how they might perceive the names I would have given to them. Should I choose Muslim-sounding names or more 'English' (biblical) names, and what might new names mean to the participant? In hindsight, I realise that a useful way to overcome the potential that my "P" system risked objectifying and reducing the visibility of subjectivity of voice, would have been for me to suggest to the participants that they choose a pseudonym for themselves to be used in the written thesis and any subsequent articles/dissemination. This method would also have provided a potentially valuable additional opportunity for analysis.

#### 4.16 Summary response to research question

Finally, to summarise my answer to the research question that drove this research:

"How do Muslim men in the UK talk about their experiences of discrimination?"

They do this by constructing their identity in opposition to pervasive and inescapable discourses that construct them as suspicious, dangerous and threatening outsiders who are potential radical extremists and terrorists. Consequently, Muslim men in the UK find themselves in a constant state of having to engage with and orient away from these pervasive discourses. This demonstrates the participants to be active and creative in the face of the harsh discursive climate, which therefore speaks to their resilience. These findings could be taken up by policy makers, academics, researchers, practitioners and campaigners as evidence that they are not just passive victims in this situation, but as a group of people who can also be thought of from other perspectives.

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## 6.0 Appendices

## Appendix 1: Ethics approval letter





18 September 2017

Psychology Research Ethics Committee  
School of Arts and Social Sciences  
City University London  
London EC1R 0JD

Dear [REDACTED]

**Reference:** PSYETH (P/L) 16/17 220

**Project title:** How do British Muslim males talk about their experiences of discrimination in the UK?

I am writing to confirm that the research proposal detailed above has been granted approval by the City University London Psychology Department Research Ethics Committee.

Period of approval

Approval is valid for a period of three years from the date of this letter. If data collection runs beyond this period you will need to apply for an extension using the Amendments Form.

Project amendments

You will also need to submit an Amendments Form if you want to make any of the following changes to your research:

- (a) Recruit a new category of participants
- (b) Change, or add to, the research method employed
- (c) Collect additional types of data
- (d) Change the researchers involved in the project

Adverse events

You will need to submit an Adverse Events Form, copied to the Secretary of the Senate Research Ethics Committee [REDACTED], in the event of any of the following:

- (a) Adverse events
- (b) Breaches of confidentiality
- (c) Safeguarding issues relating to children and vulnerable adults
- (d) Incidents that affect the personal safety of a participant or researcher

Issues (a) and (b) should be reported as soon as possible and no later than 5 days after the event. Issues (c) and (d) should be reported immediately. Where appropriate the researcher

should also report adverse events to other relevant institutions such as the police or social services.

Should you have any further queries then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards



## Appendix 1A: Recruitment Advert

**Department of Psychology**

**City University London**

**Opportunity to be involved in Doctoral Research**

**looking at**

**Discrimination against Muslim men**

Hi, my Name is Paul Garden and I'm Doctoral Trainee Psychologist interested in social justice. My research is focused on understanding Muslim men's experiences of discrimination here in the UK, with the aim of making a positive difference for people of Islamic faith.

By taking part, you could contribute to this aim by increasing and enriching knowledge about the Muslim community's experiences of discrimination, which may impact on social policy.

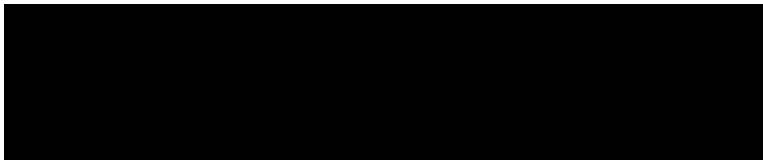
If you are a Muslim man aged between 19 and 36, you are eligible

You would be asked to attend an interview lasting approximately sixty minutes where you can share your experiences and thoughts around discrimination in a confidential environment

We can conduct the interviews on Skype, at City University, or at your local Mosque, whichever you prefer

For more information about this study, or to take part, please contact: [REDACTED]

Psychology Department



This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through the Psychology Research Ethics Committee, City University London Approval code: PSYETH (P/L) 16/17 220

If you would like to complain about any aspect of the study, please contact the Secretary to the University's Senate Research Ethics Committee on [REDACTED]

## Appendix 1B: Participant Information Sheet



**Title of study: “How do Muslim men experience discrimination in the UK: A qualitative study”.**

We would like to invite you to take part in a Doctoral research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done, what your involvement would look like, and the potential benefits of your contribution towards the Muslim community. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

**What is the purpose of the study?**

Experiences of discrimination are of interest to psychologists as they have been found to have implications for people’s sense of well-being. Despite Islam being the second largest religion in the UK, and the well-documented difficulties that result from prejudice, there is little known from a psychological perspective about Muslim men’s experiences with discrimination. This Doctoral Research aims to address this gap by producing a scientific understanding of Muslim experience in the UK. This means that your participation can give voice to the Muslim perspective of the current state of things, and contribute to knowledge that may be used to challenge discrimination at its source. Additionally, such understanding may lead to better service provision for individuals who are negatively impacted by such discrimination.

**Why have I been invited?**

You have been invited to participate because you are a UK Muslim male aged between 19 and 36. If you agree to take part you will be one of approximately ten people participating in the study.

**Do I have to take part?**

Participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any stage, as well as avoid answering questions you are not comfortable with. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent

form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

#### **What will happen if I take part?**

- Participation will involve one semi-structured interview will last for approximately 60 minutes, that will be recorded. The interview can be conducted at a time and place that suits you. We could meet over Skype, in your local Mosque or at City University in Islington.
- The research will take a qualitative approach that aims to report on the direct experience of participants according to their responses in the interviews.
- The study will last for approximately 2 years.

#### **What do I have to do?**

Participants will be asked a series of straight-forward questions aimed at stimulating talk about their experiences of discrimination.

#### **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

There are no foreseen risks with taking part in this study. However, taking part in the interviews might bring up unpleasant or potentially distressing memories or thoughts as the focus of the interviews is on experiences of discrimination.

#### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

You will have the opportunity to express and discuss your experiences in a safe environment with a trained professional. An important advantage is that participation in this study will provide you with opportunity to contribute to the psychological understanding of discrimination against Muslim people. There is potential that findings from research studies such as this one may impact on government policy around equality. Such research will develop the knowledge base, which may inform clinicians and other researchers who wish to improve the services that they offer to people from Muslim communities.

#### **Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

As with all scientific research, confidentiality is paramount and will only be restricted in the event of perceived harm to self or others. Following the interview, the data will



be transcribed and anonymised. Only the researcher and research supervisor will have access to the data. Data will be encrypted and stored securely electronically. Paper files will be kept in a secure cabinet. Similarly, audio recordings are encrypted and stored securely.

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The research aims to contribute to the scientific evidence-base, which includes publication in psychological journals. All reports will be completely anonymised, with all identifying features of participants disguised. Participants are invited to request copies of thesis findings and any publications that may arise from them.

**What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?**

Participants are free to leave, without explanation or penalty, at any time during the study. Participants can withdraw their data from the study up to one month after the interview, with no questions asked.

**What if there is a problem?**

If you have any problems, concerns or questions about this study, you should ask to speak to a member of the research team. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through the University complaints procedure. To complain about the study, you need to phone [REDACTED]. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is: How do Muslim men experience discrimination in the UK? A Qualitative study.

You could also write to the Secretary at:

[REDACTED]  
Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee  
Research Office, E214  
City University London  
Northampton Square  
London  
EC1V 0HB  
[REDACTED]

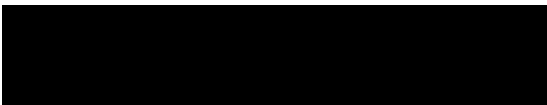
City University London holds insurance policies which apply to this study. If you feel you have been harmed or injured by taking part in this study you may be eligible to claim compensation. This does not affect your legal rights to seek compensation. If

you are harmed due to someone's negligence, then you may have grounds for legal action.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This study has been approved by City University London Research Ethics Committee. Ethical approval code: PSYETH (P/L) 16/17 220

**Further information and contact details**



**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.**

## Appendix 1C: Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: **How do Muslim men experience Discrimination in the UK? A Qualitative Study.**

Ethics approval code: PSYETH (P/L) 16/17 220

Please initial box

1.	I agree to take part in the above City University London research project. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the participant information sheet, which I may keep for my records. I understand this will involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being interviewed by the researcher</li> <li>• Allowing the interview to be audio taped</li> </ul>	
2.	This information will be held and processed for the following purpose: To answer the research question 'How to Muslim males experience discrimination in the UK?' I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other organisation.	
3.	I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalized or disadvantaged in any way.	
4.	I agree to City University London recording and processing this information about me. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose(s) set out in this statement and my consent is conditional on the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.	
5.	I agree to take part in the above study.	

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

When completed, 1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher file.

## Appendix 1D: Interview schedule

Introduction:

Hi, my name is Paul Garden. Thank you very much for coming today to participate in this interview. The purpose of the interview is to understand the experiences of discrimination for British Muslim men. I am going to give you a form, which basically states that your participation is entirely voluntary and that you may decline to participate and leave the interview at any time. Please read this sheet carefully before signing it. It discusses potential risks to you as an interviewee as well as the use of audio taping during this session.

Statement of Confidentiality:

Before we start, I encourage you to share your experiences openly and honestly with me. I will be tape recording this session in an effort to maintain the integrity of our dialogue, and so that I don't need to take notes. However, your identity will remain confidential and only the researchers will have access to this tape. Any written inclusion in the final report will be strictly anonymised.

Opening Question:

1. So today we're going to be talking about discrimination, including subtle experiences. Today, you are here as a Muslim individual so we will be discussing your experiences of discrimination. At this point, I would like you tell me about your initial thoughts about your experiences of discrimination.
2. Discrimination seems to be a significant issue in your life. How does it show in different areas of your life.
3. Can you talk about different social contexts in your life that you experience discrimination.
4. How do you feel other people perceive you?
5. How do different contexts make you feel?
6. What about organizational attitudes towards you as a Muslim man (e.g. Government, Police, Media, University etc)?
7. How does discrimination affect you as part of your family, i.e. as a brother, son, father etc?
8. Can you talk about contexts in which you do not feel discriminated against?

## Appendix 1E: Jefferson light transcription notation system

## Transcription notation:

(.) A full stop inside brackets denotes a micro pause, a notable pause but of no significant length.

(0.2) A number inside brackets denotes a timed pause. This is a pause long enough to time and subsequently show in transcription.

[ Square brackets denote a point where overlapping speech occurs.

> < Arrows surrounding talk like these show that the pace of the speech has quickened

< > Arrows in this direction show that the pace of the speech has slowed down

( ) Where there is space between brackets denotes that the words spoken here were too unclear to transcribe

(( )) Where double brackets appear with a description inserted denotes some contextual information where no symbol of representation was available.

Under When a word or part of a word is underlines it denotes a raise in volume or emphasis

↑ When an upward arrow appears it means there is a rise in intonation

↓ When a downward arrow appears it means there is a drop in intonation

→ An arrow like this denotes a particular sentence of interest to the analyst

**CAPITALS** where capital letters appear it denotes that something was said loudly or even shouted

Hum(h)our When a bracketed 'h' appears it means that there was laughter within the talk

= The equal sign represents latched speech, a continuation of talk

:: Colons appear to represent elongated speech, a stretched sound

In addition to the Jefferson system, when I have presented quotes from the participants, I have highlighted in bold those words or phrases that were particularly relevant to the analysis and that were therefore discussed in the analysis. This was thought to assist the reader as an additional sign-posting tool. Similarly, when discussing the various quotes, I have used italics to highlight the words or comments from the quotes that I am directly discussing. Again, this was intended to assist the reader by orienting them to the material.



## Appendix 1F: Debrief Sheet

***How do Muslim males in the UK experience discrimination: A qualitative study***

**DEBRIEF INFORMATION**

Thank you for taking part in this study. Now that it's finished, we'd like to tell you a bit more about it.

Since the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and the emergence of the War on Terror, there has been an increasingly hostile media, social and political focus on Muslim populations living in Western countries. Despite Islam being the second largest religion in the UK, there is little known from a psychological perspective about their experiences with discrimination. Coming from a position of social justice, this Doctoral Research aims to address this gap and produce scientific understanding of the subjective experience of Muslim men in the UK that will allow psychologists and researchers to better understand discrimination against Muslims in the context of the social discourses within which it occurs. This may lead to better service provision for individuals who are negatively impacted by such discrimination, and will speak to Policy makers and Public Sector organisations with the aim of addressing the issue.

If the research might have raised concerns for you, you may wish to speak to your GP. Alternatively, SANE runs a national, out of hours mental health helpline offering specialist emotional support and information for anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers. They are open every day of the year from 4.30pm to 10.30 pm. Tel: 0300 304 7000.

We hope you found the study interesting. If you have any other questions please do not hesitate to contact us at the following:



Ethics approval code: PSYETH (P/L) 16/17 220

Appendix 2: Transcript with colour coded six-stage analysis (ten-page example).

R=Researcher. P=Participant.

Stage 1

Stage 2

Stage 3

Stage 4

Stage 5

Stage 6

R: So, basically, we're going to talk about discrimination. For about an hour, about your experiences of discrimination. And when I say discrimination I also mean subtle types of discrimination that you perceive, and that you experience.

You know even if you're, even if there's, the people who are doing the discriminating may not even be aware of what they're doing. All of these subtle forms as well as more overt forms. Any sort of experiences that you've had of discrimination, erm, I'd encourage you to talk about as openly and frankly as you'd like to. As you're comfortable with.

Erm, Yeah, so just to begin with, just in a general sense, what are your thoughts about discrimination?

Your experiences of them.

P: .hh Erm .... (1.0) ... tut .. well, **it exists**.

Discrimination constructed as something whose existence is not a given or assumed to be real/taken for granted. Rather, it is constructed as something that has to be proved or demonstrated. As if it's up for debate.

The ppt is possibly aware of/drawing from discourses of denial/reluctance to speak out about discrimination within his community, and chooses to challenge this through identifying with another discourse which clearly acknowledges discrimination against the Muslim community as being a thing. As such he is constructing himself almost in an activist way.

Discourses around who gets to say what discrimination is and when/how it's validated, and who by.

As such, the ppt promotes the idea of discrimination as existing, as opposed to it not. He is taking responsibility for it being there; challenging discourses which might question its existence.

In terms of positioning, the ppt is positioning himself as activist, taking a stand, speaking against what appear to be discourses of denial or non-validation/acknowledgement of discrimination. In doing so he positions himself as an activist, a spokesperson who stands in defiance/opposition of/to those who deny etc .. whether this be within or outside the Muslim community. As this is the beginning of the interview, this may also be for my benefit.

Additionally, the ppt is mobilising a discourse that constructs discrimination as a thing that needs to be proved: it's problematized, not identifiable, under question. By constructing it in this way, he is positioned as having something to prove.

In this way, this comment evidences much of what can and cannot be said and done in terms of there being discourses which doubt the existence of discrimination against the Muslim community.

The ppt's defiance against denial/non-acknowledgement of discrimination suggests both a position of power in terms of feeling able to speak out, and also a

position of the oppressed in terms of having to do the speaking out. Additionally, the non-acknowledgement of discrimination at a societal level, probably adds layers to the discrimination .. insult to injury?

**P:** That's a simple place to start.

**R:** Ok

**P:** A straight-forward place to start. I think some people may (.) er, be perhaps in denial, but I (.) **confidently** say that I've experienced it.

Suggestions that discrimination is hidden/denied in society and potentially within the Muslim community, (this may link to issues around recruitment). This participant is perhaps being (proudly) defiant against this denial.

Discourses around the UK as not being racist, but a tolerant and fair society. Discourses where Muslim people are perhaps afraid to voice their objections to the discriminatory context for fear of exacerbating it. Having no voice.

Separating himself from those that deny discrimination. It's as if his opening point (which of course he has had time leading up to the interview to consider) is about **emphasizing the need for discrimination against Muslim's to be understood as a reality.**

In this context, the participant has positioned himself as perhaps more aware and realistic about the situation compared to some others in his community, as well as denial/lack of awareness of the issue in the wider society. As such, this is a position of relative power, possibly emerging from a sense of activism, bravery or righteousness. Positions himself in opposition to the denial.

Here, there is potentially evidence for discourses within the Muslim community that close down talk of widespread anti-Muslim discrimination, and yet our participant has positioned himself in opposition to that discourse, thereby acting from within a discourse of activism. Furthermore, powerful discourses exist in the UK and the West generally, that we are open, accepting and inclusive multi-cultural societies. Therefore, claims of widespread discrimination against an entire community, stand in the face of this powerful discourse.

As such, the consequences of taking up this position on his subjective experience in terms of what he can think, feel and experience, is a sense of individuality i.e. through asserting that Islamophobia is a reality in his experience, but is often denied within society and the Muslim community, the participant experiences a subjective experience of 'someone has to speak up', which may be empowering. His professional role as a lawyer may partially explain this.

Erm, (1.0) overtly like you said, and also perhaps more subtly where the **person isn't aware,**

Discrimination constructed as something unconsciously imparted: Possible implications for discrimination being so pervasive that some Muslim's may no longer even experience it as such. **Conditioned.**

Wider discourses around the insidious, taken-for-granted, superiority of the 'majority'. i.e. white non-Muslim's.

By framing it in this way, the participant perhaps reduces the sense of threat/attack by considering that the discrimination is not intentional.

As such he is able to position himself in a way that experiences the discrimination in a perhaps less personal way. Awareness of this subtle, more insidious form of discrimination may however, demonstrate to the participant the depth of the issue, and thereby have wider implications for positioning beyond the specific interaction, for him and the Muslim community at large.

So, on one hand this opens up the chance for the participant to reduce the sense of personalisation, and thereby be less impacted by the experience, but on the other hand, it closes down the sense of personalisation in the broader context of what such unconscious, insidious discrimination might mean.

As such, the consequences of taking up this position on his subjective experience in terms of what he can think, feel and experience, oscillates from one of understanding and acceptance- and perhaps forgiveness- of this particular kind of ignorance on a surface and more immediate level, whilst on the other hand thoughts and feelings of being incredibly limited in terms of assimilating and simply 'getting to know' non-Muslim British people.

erm, necessarily that they're perhaps **treating me differently**, where if I look differently, er, I might, erm I wouldn't be treated **in that way**.

**Discrimination based on appearance.** Here, the interviewee is **constructing discrimination in an almost understanding, tentative way**.

Wider discourses around conformity and difference.

It's early in the interview and the participant is quite tentative. This may be due to unfamiliarity with me and the subject matter of the interview. 'Treating me differently' and 'in that way' are not explicit.

Positioning self as 'other' based on appearance being outside of the 'norm'. Other is in a powerful position; dictating the terms, deciding what's acceptable.

This closes down the autonomy and individuality of the participant, in that his acceptability in this situation is determined by the other, and this determination is powerfully supported by the societal norms that the subtle behaviour implies. Additionally, this raises questions for the individual about how they 'should' present themselves, whereby they may have to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of being easily recognised as a Muslim person. This closes down a natural sense of self and identity.

As such, by taking up this position, the consequences on his subjective experience in terms of what he can think, feel and experience, are struggle, and an ongoing sense of the unfairness of things. This may impact on self-esteem and associated concepts. Overall, there's a sense of being perceived and thereby perhaps experiencing the self as 'less than'.

Erm, (2.0) I think (.) perhaps as a Muslim man, and perhaps as someone who looks like a Muslim man, I'm perhaps **mid-hierarchy** as to, as to where, as to people who are discriminated against=

=I think perhaps Muslim women (.) get it worse, er::m, I think perhaps erm black people get it worse, you can be black and Muslim, but er, erm (.) I think discrimination towards (.) would perhaps be more obvious and erm, (1.0)more common. (*Intersectionality*).

**Constructed as existing on a scale ... a hierarchy of the oppressed. Also something around discrimination constructed as being based on appearance.**

Wider 'outsider' discourses around discrimination and/or positioning (other as lesser/greater) dependent on ethnicity, skin colour and gender, as well as Muslimness.

Here, 'my' discrimination is not as bad as that experienced by other minority groups. This may serve the function of protecting his subjective experience, by maintaining an identity that is at least somewhere in the middle. Implications for his sense of belonging (to the UK). Is the participant Bargaining/Reducing? Muslim males versus females; Muslim communities versus Black communities.

Positioned self as 'mid-hierarchy', which suggests the extent to which appearance (i.e. being identifiable as Muslim) contributes to the potential for discrimination. Position therefore dependent on how identifiable or not he is, and where he 'fits' within the ranks of the oppressed.

The opportunity for the participant to function under these circumstances of waiting for approval or gauging his own acceptability, suggest that his capacity for action is considerably dependent on external factors, and therefore a struggle in terms of vigilance and the navigation of perceived (dis)approval and/or acceptance.

As such, the consequences of taking up this position on his subjective experience in terms of what he can think, feel and experience, is very limited by an expectation of disapproval, which may be frustrating and lead to anger (internalised or otherwise). However, by experiencing other minority groups (or Black Muslim's) as being worse off, the participant, may be able to offset some of these limitations. I'm not sure I think that's perhaps, my, very, erm a lazy,

A general way of looking at it, off the top of my head, the way that I'd observe where I sort of stand

**This comment seemed to reduce the impact of what had just been said by the ppt. As if he was adding a clause/disclaimer.**

The effect that this had on me was to make me feel differently about what had been said about discrimination in the previous comment. It's as if the thing he put out there in his initial response he wanted to not fully own/take full responsibility for. In a way, he is constructing discrimination as something complex and which deserves a more well-informed analysis than what he feels he has given. Perhaps disclaiming in case his comment was not 'enough', not doing discrimination justice, that it deserves more. Perhaps academic/scientific explanation/investigation.

Furthermore, it is not unlikely that at this early stage of the interview, he is gauging how I am receiving his thoughts.

Discourses around the complexity/ambiguity of social constructs. Discourses of expertise (academia?) as the holders of such knowledge. Discourses of authority (to say what discrimination is). Ownership of understanding/knowledge. Additionally, discourses of doubt about the existence of discrimination and the need to prove it.

Therefore, his action orientation is that he is disclaiming full ownership of his construction.

Positioned as knowing/not-knowing/cautious.

**R:** Yeah, so it sounds like you're talking about your erm, the way that you perceive discrimination in a social context

**P:** Yeah

**R:** Yeah

**R:** Any other sort of contexts where you think, as a Muslim, you feel discriminated against?

**P:** Erm . (2.0) So employment, I had maybe a period two or three years ago where I was struggling to find work, and (.) I: did think erm that perhaps it was **because of my name or perhaps the way that I looked**, and, a lot of my past erm histories have been, (.) my employment history has been because of, has been with

Muslim organisations, (.) er, (1.5) so:: **perhaps** seeing that on my CV **may** have **put some employers off**=

Discrimination as being about being identifiable (name, appearance, information in CV). Injustice/Unfairness. Constructed as something whose presence cannot be identified with certainty. He speaks about discrimination tentatively rather than definitely; a language of possibility rather than certainty. Additionally, constructed as exclusion. Injustice and unfairness implied as a result.

Muslim community discourses around integration.

He hesitantly constructs his employment history. Maybe suggesting discourses of lack of integration?

Conformity. Difference. Othering. Discourse of other as untrustworthy (from the point of view of the 'other'). From the point of view of the participant, he assumes that the other looks at him with suspicion; thinks he's not trustworthy.

His action orientation is to remain tentative. Perhaps this functions to protect him from the reality of the limitations arising from such discrimination in a professional context, or to allow him to come across in the interview as very rational/understanding/fair.

This also fits with the social justice agenda of the study whereby the construction of discrimination cannot be done with any certainty i.e. it only may be there .... Therefore, time is spent on proving its existence rather than actually trying to get rid of it.

The hesitant construction of his employment history suggests he holds a certain sense of personal responsibility arising from discourses around integration.

Positions him as being not in a position where he can claim discrimination is actually there.

This limits the possibility for action to insist on having it removed/addressed; because it's only possibly there.

Positioning- again based on appearance- as 'less than', as needing to compensate somehow, as Muslim association is somehow 'off-putting'. Therefore positioned as 'other' (Via name and other info on the CV). There is the potential that this discourse around integration positioned the participant here as somehow feeding in to the marginalisation?

Culturally/social/media/politics/committees etc talk is about establishing whether or not discrimination actually exists rather than the assumption that it's already here.- it's about proving its existence rather than tackling it ... ppt is doing similar ... being tentative.

This has considerable implications for how the participant feels that he can talk about it: At this (early) stage of the interview, even with someone like me who is



making it clear that I feel discrimination exists and is a given, I construct it as a reality, he constructs it as something that needs to be proved first.

This gives insight into the availability of discourses of discrimination in our culture. I.e. there may be differences (likely) between the discourses he feels able to deploy with me in this context, to the types of discourse he may feel able to deeply with another (Muslim) friend.

This closes down opportunity for the participant to feel that his work experience within Muslim-based law firms is valid in the wider professional context. This gives rise to doubt about what should be helpful professionally, potentially being harmful.

As such, the consequences of taking up this position on his subjective experience in terms of what he can think, feel and experience, is the need to question his own view/experience and constantly anticipate and compare this to the perceived reaction of important agencies. Additionally, he has to question his choices and motivations in terms of what they might mean for integration.

=because I got good grades, good university, erm I did a law degree, (.) erm where **perhaps I saw peers who were doing quite well** for themselves

Constructing discrimination as something that happens despite the presence of high achievements/markers of success. Comparing to non-Muslim's. Employment opportunities. A mixture of resentment and understanding?

Discourses of exclusion. Discourses around conformity, and cultural (UK) ideas of success. Discourse 'out there' shared by immigrant communities who feel that they have to work twice as hard, behave even better etc, in order to be accepted/respected. That they even should be better than locals in order to achieve this. These discourses can pass down the generations. Alternative (perhaps emerging) discourses may be in revolt/opposition to this and stand in a defiant 'I was born here and have as much right as anyone else' type of discourse.

Without referring directly to his own marginalisation/exclusion, he has discursively implied it by referring to the possibility that 'peers' were doing well, despite his best efforts and relative success, which serves the function of making his point, but without directly accusing.

This positions him a 'different', 'disadvantaged'. In the first half of the comment, the participant lists justifications for why he deserves to do well, positioning himself as an equal 'peer'. Acknowledgement of own success, and reference to white British as 'peers' (although there is an implication that they are at an advantage).

On one hand, this limits and closes down opportunities. The participant is not explicitly speaking about the unfairness, but this comment does suggest that doors that are open to others are not to him. His reluctance to be explicit also suggests that doing so might be considered somehow unacceptable, imply something negative about him, or otherwise cause problems; he remains tentative.

As such, the consequences of taking up this position on his subjective experience in terms of what he can think, feel and experience, is as someone who is forced to prove himself more than his peers. That even with extra effort and achieving well, he is likely to be marginalised. With this participant, rather than a sense of hopelessness, I perceive something akin to a **defiant determination** resulting from the situation.

Additionally, he demonstrates what appears to be a very cautious approach to expressing discrimination explicitly.

I did struggle initially to really get going. So, I did think perhaps at the start there was erm, (1.0) from the employment point of view **difficulty**=  
=A lot of my friends are unemployed, (.) erm, Muslim friends. (1.0) Erm .hh (2.0) but again that can be down to other factors, socio-economic factors where perhaps they haven't had er, the easiest of starts, er to their education and stuff .hh.

Again, perhaps trying to understand/frame potential discrimination as being about something other than Muslim-ness. And therefore, again constructing discrimination as something whose presence cannot be identified with certainty. Discourses around difference from various perspectives. Discourses of disadvantage/unfairness.

Here, the participant positions himself in the middle of white advantage on one side, and his own advantage relative to other (Muslim) friends. This may allow him to make some sense of and possibly accept more, his own disadvantage in terms of discrimination. So again, in terms of his construction of discrimination, he constructs a **hierarchy of opportunity** (which connects to the **hierarchy of oppression** he invoked earlier) ... he carefully positions himself somewhere in the middle of these hierarchies.

The participant then finds himself perhaps in a more comfortable position within the moral order of such a discourse. Nevertheless, he is still positioned in a kind of balancing act between the two cultures he feels he is part of. That balance being advantage on one side and disadvantage on the other.

This opens up the potential for the ppt to do and say things in each group, though with varying degrees of freedom (of expression). He is able to maintain a sense of belonging, though precariously on one side.

Erm, (1.0) at work, obviously without saying too much, so I now work erm in criminal law (1.0), erm, (.) a::nd, that involves going to courts quite a bit, (.) er different criminal courts in the country, and I remember the first time I went, and I had a much longer beard (.) erm, at that time as well, (.) erm, (.) I walked into the court and the security (.) sort of person who's there,

**I went in as a lawyer (1.0), and I was escorted sort of behind the dock where the defendant stands**

Discrimination constructed as being based on the presence of stereotypes. Ppt constructed as criminal. Discrimination due to appearance and based on preconceived assumptions about the presence of a Muslim man in a courtroom. Indignant? Shocking/preposterous.

Construction of ethnic minority male as criminal/perpetrator of crime. Pathologised.

Demonstrates the injustice.

Positioned self as a victim. Positioned by the other as a perpetrator of crime.

Closes down opportunities to be given due respect/taken seriously.

As such, the consequences of taking up this position on his subjective experience might be a constant need (professionally) to explain and justify himself in terms which otherwise would be taken for granted. Frustration.

R: OK

P: Laughs, and having not been in the courts since my work experience days as a 17/18 year old, .hh, erm, I was, I wasn't too sure where I was being led to and it was only until my barrister had actually noted 'hang on what's he doing there?'

She felt the need to say 'hold on what are you doing, why are you putting him there?' Constructed as a criminal, then Defended/Rescued. And the barrister is constructed as having the power to rescue him.

Discourses of Muslim men as criminals.

Illustrating the injustice, and the assumptions that exist about Muslim men.

Positioned as victimised.

The white female barrister held the power and was able to speak up.

.hh Then similarly, once I was in a court, and all courts have erm jails underneath. So people are brought from prison to go to the court they're brought in via the .hh, via the jail at the bottom, the cells we call them.

The ppt Constructs himself as a member on the legal in-group ("the cells we call them"). This then brings out the contrast with how he is being perceived by the security staff (as outsider). He constructs me as the outsider (of the group) or one who doesn't know about courts etc. He positions me a naïve to the legal world, and thereby himself as 'knowing'.

Discourses of belonging. Of expertise.

He discursively achieves positioning himself as knowing.

Erm, I was with a **very high ranking barrister** (.) outside, outside the cells waiting to see **our client** (.) and I'd managed to cause a, erm (1.3) .hh, er, a sort of **alarm** amongst security, where security rushed out to ask (.) where I was going (1.0) erm, **because it wasn't normal** perhaps to see a twenty (.) I must've been 26 then, **a 26 year old (1.0) Asian (.) Muslim (0.7) lawyer**, perhaps going downstairs to the cells=

Discrimination constructed as a response to fear. Negative assumptions based on Appearance. Interesting the order in which he constructed his identity: 26 year old (young), Asian, Muslim, Lawyer. He felt identified in a particular way. Implications for sense of self in that moment, as well as how the wider Muslim community is perceived.

Discourses of Muslim/Asian as deviant/criminal and dangerous/a threat. Discourses of high professional status as deserving of respect and therefore protective against discrimination.

Injustice is highlighted.

Positioned as lesser by the actions of the security staff, but he constructs himself as being a member of the in-group of professional lawyers ('our' client rather than 'the' client'). By constructing himself as a member of this high-status group, he constructs the discrimination as even more outrageous.

In a way, he is also implying that high status categories (people who study law) should have more respect. Constructing discrimination as worse (i.e. more

unacceptable) for people who have high status, as if they should expect to not be discriminated against.

Does this then mean that others should expect it? The ppt buys into that particular discourse in this section of the interview, as a way of making a point to me. Perhaps there are contradictions later, where he constructs everyone as deserving of equal respect: A humanistic discourse.

=it could only be that I know someone downstairs in jail and that I'm going to try and go and see them which wouldn't be allowed.

Constructed as if it was the only available discourse to the security personnel.

Muslim's constructed as rule breakers. Defiant.

Discourses that all Muslim's are criminal's or associated with Criminal/perpetrator? Criminalizing.

Illustrating the pervasive injustice, demonstrating how Muslim's are associated with criminality, and are rule breakers.

Victimised, restricted, limited.

I-i-i-it didn't perhaps (.) add up in their head that I was representing one of them. So, those were two **instances** in court, erm, that I've had **that stick out as=**

Discrimination isn't mentioned directly; the term itself is almost avoided. But he seems to be constructing it as being the result of the operation of **stereotypes** (which he presents as residing in people's heads without them even being aware of it).

He constructs himself as other than 'one of those' that he represents.

Discourses around stereotypes of Muslim's as criminals. Pathologising ~~fear to speak out. Silenced. Disallowed.~~

He talks about

Positioned as marginalised.

=and immediately the barrister - she was a white woman, (.)

er, she .hh immediately turned around, as soon as she stood up for me and said, excuse me, this is my name from such and such firm, erm, he's with me, he's a solicitor, he's with me, (1.0) and they backed off, **she immediately said that was completely racist**, if you were a white solicitor=

Discrimination in this comment is not something that needs to be proved. It is made explicit and validated through the authority of the white woman. He constructs her as having power. She's higher up in the hierarchy. It's as though the term 'racist' was allowed by the participant because it was spoken by a 'white' person. . It seems that he is using footing (a term used to refer to a discursive move that involves citing usually authoritative sources to voice one's own views or concerns) to make the claim that the security guards' behaviour was racist. In fact he called it "completely racist".

Discourses around the authority of 'whiteness'. Discourses of negative judgement based on outward features.

He is able to bring to life the sense of indignance that he experienced in this situation, though the discursive construction of the role of the white female colleague. Illustrating injustice, justified through the actions of his white colleague. Varying positions, from lesser to equal.

Commented [CW1]:

Commented [CW2R1]: I think here you are perhaps attributing a motive to your participant instead of identifying discourses he is mobilising.

He has positioned her as more powerful, and at the same time he has twice referenced her saying that he was with her, so he is aligning himself with her power.

This allowed him to own discrimination as something that does exist and does not first need to be proved. He was able to speak explicitly about its existence to me in this context.

A mixture of subjectivity from being empowered by the opportunity to express racism explicitly; to have it named. But also the frustration and powerlessness/restriction of needing there to be a white person in order to feel that this can be allowed.

*Interesting to consider this in the context of what comes later in terms of discourses of male gender superiority within the Muslim community.*

=no one would've come to ask why are you wearing the tie why are you wearing the suit, why are you going downstairs, **but they felt the need to come to me** .hh.

Here he is constructing discrimination as something existing because he is not white.

Constructing discrimination as automatic; an impulse.

Discourses of Muslim men as criminals. An absence of discourse around Muslim men as professionals.

He is discursively illustrating the unfairness and his right to indignation.

Positioned as a criminal. Positions self as vulnerable; as needing to be defended.

Limits his capacity to carry out his professional role. To be taken seriously.

Frustration. Powerlessness. Humiliation. Disrespect.

Er::m, (1.4) and that wasn't necessarily just because I am quite young to be doing the work that I'm doing because (.) erm there are there are other people in my age group doing it, but perhaps, erm (.)

.hh **not Muslim men doing it**, where, (.) I don't know the statistics but perhaps (.) this will probably form part of your research (.) .hh

Constructing discrimination as prejudice and disadvantage for qualified Muslim men in professional contexts.

Discourses of Muslim's as outsiders.

He constructs it in such a way as to evidence that he has considered other possibilities for the discrimination. That he is rational and not immediately jumping to conclusions.

erm that there are a high number of Muslim's in prison's and perhaps **they automatically thought** that he's in this environment **he can only be a defendant or a friend of a defendant** and not someone who's working here professionally .hh.

Discrimination as something that's automatic and impulsive.

Discourses around the pathologizing of Muslim men.

He is able to attribute responsibility to the automatic- and ignorant- assumptions that are based in prejudice. And it's as if it's allowed, almost normal with no accountability; an 'easy' mistake.

Positioned as criminal.

These constructions imply that it's extremely difficult to fight against such ingrained -and on some level, acceptable/normalised- discourses.

Er, another **instance** again, **direct reference to the term discrimination is omitted** sticks out where all the lawyers sort of huddle outside erm to discuss deals that could perhaps take place erm you know between the two sides erm the prosecution and the crown, erm, the prosecution and the defence.



## Appendix 3: Summary of Micro analysis

Wider Neoliberal Discourse:

The link between the war on Terror and the financial interests of the Neoliberal construction of 'the market' in terms of big oil and military industrial complex etc, suggests an advantage for their aims by demonising and dehumanising Muslim's at home and abroad. While the wider British (and American) public feel so consistently threatened by Muslim's, the fact that, for example, over a million Iraqi civilians have been killed, and that 'the market' generates trillions of dollars in oil revenue and military spending, become unimportant details, or necessary and acceptable in the pursuit of protection.

1. Discrimination constructed as a Western bias in the difference in value of life between Muslim and non-Muslim cultures. Terrorist attacks that cause death within the UK or Western countries cause public outrage and a media frenzy, and yet terrorist attacks by individuals with the same or similar affiliation, but against Muslim people in Muslim majority countries go largely unreported, and when they are, there is a tangible lack of interest in Western media or discourse. (23, 183, 194, 219, 619, 655,

Double standard.

Discrimination constructed as systemic injustice.

Constructed as a resignation (on the part of Muslim people) in the face of such a powerful and consistent media onslaught (361,

As well as the discrimination towards Muslim people in the UK being identified, this imbalance is suggested to be causing discrimination from Muslim communities towards Western governments and thereby exacerbating the problem, causing further marginalisation and resentment (45, 225, 420, 878, 930, Discourses of Western superiority and the higher value of Western lives. As if Muslim lives are worth less. Discourses of the global dehumanisation of Muslim people, including British Muslim's.

Wider discourses where the 'terror' caused by the Western governments and military armed forces in Muslim majority countries are ignored/unacknowledged, and where they are it is even justified (188,

Muslim people positioned as 'less-than' as inferior, as unworthy of basic human respect and acknowledgement.

Parallel's with 1930's Germany where the Jewish population were gradually and systematically dehumanised by a government and media led propaganda system that formed discourses which allowed the injustices to become acceptable.

*Positions self as also (like the rest of the public) in danger of terror attacks, but also vulnerable to the fallout of media propaganda. Is positioned as a potential*



*threat (terrorist), and feels unable to fight against the position, but instead discursively demonstrates adapting to the situation. He positions himself in opposition to the contradictory yet dominant and widely accepted discourses. He positions himself as rational, and distances himself from those that commit such actions, and in doing so distances the Muslim community at large. He positions himself in direct opposition to the media messages, which he constructs as contradictory/hypocritical. He positions himself as a realist. He is positioned by these discourses as 'less than', inferior to' and 'disposable', but rejects these. He positions himself as someone who knows what's going on and who can stand firm/go against the power of the media messages. He positions those who discriminate, as lacking in fundamental qualities. The Muslim community are positioned as being bullied. Those that discriminate are the bullies who are looking for a scapegoat. He continues to fight back against those who discriminate. He positions himself as one who can see through what's going on. Although the participant is positioned as 'less than' by such discourses, he rejects them and turns the discourses against the perpetrators. i.e. holds the mirror up to them.*

***An active resistance to the internalisation of such discourses.***

Subjective experiences of fear, anxiety, frustration on one side, and thoughtful determination on the other. With this participant, there is almost (something akin to) a sense of empowerment emerging from the sense of powerlessness.

2. Discrimination constructed as largely perpetrated by a powerful media (303, 315, 863, 960), and as being a deliberate media agenda. As being intimately linked to terror attacks, whereby terrorist attacks carried out by individuals identifying with Islam, are framed by the media as something representative of all Muslim's, and in particular as something inherently Islamic.

Conversely, terrorist attacks carried out by white Christian individuals are reported and described as isolated individuals who are framed by the media as having mental health issues, and are not associated with their cultural or religious background or group. This media agenda is described: First, as a means of furthering government policy (anti-Muslim), and second, as a business aimed at generating economic revenue (203, 280, 293, 882, 901, as if on some level, the attack on Muslim culture is entertainment, at once creating a discriminatory atmosphere and feeding into an existing propensity for it (genetic??). (92, 119, 256, 323, 358, 525, 551, 572, 594, 622). Generating hatred towards Muslims' (95, 674).

The terrorist Muslim man constructed as an archetype/stereotype.

Constructed as media bullying (323,

Talking negatively about Islamic beliefs (359, Constructed as a resignation in the face of such a powerful and consistent onslaught (361, 415, 649, 630) (powerlessness)

Discourses of all Muslim's as terrorist, threatening, suspect.

Government (838, 874). PREVENT (1009, 1047,

Role of the media in exacerbating/encouraging terrorist attacks here in the UK (610, 638).

*These discursive constructions position Muslim's as under attack by the media. As outsider's, as a threat.*

*Our participant positions himself as being in opposition to the discourses that frame the 'war on terror' as a valid or righteous cause.*

*By premising with the words 'so-called' he is constructing himself as doubting the legitimacy, or as being in opposition to the notion of the 'war on terror'. Positions self in opposition in an activist-type stance. Positions self as also (like the rest of the public) in danger of terror attacks, but also of the fallout of media anti-Islamic propaganda. Is positioned as a potential threat (terrorist), and feels unable to fight against the position, but instead discursively demonstrates adapting to the situation.*

Subjective experiences of anger, helplessness and fear. Injustice. *Dignified defiance.*

3. Discrimination constructed as a concerted effort to isolate and blame the Muslim community. Constructed as an attack on Islam as a religion, and as a personal identity (456). Constructed as micro-aggressions (452) (488) (1092).

Constructed as a very real and increasing threat towards Muslim safety and well-being in the UK, which needs to be guarded against. (384, 415, 426, 746).

Discourses of being outsiders who are unwelcome and in danger. Of white/Christian (non-Muslim) superiority and supremacy. Constructed as an expectation, intergenerational. Fears for the future (family) (679, 708, 720, 743).

This situation is constructed as unifying the Muslim community, as creating a shared sense of purpose and solidarity in the face of increasing and persistent danger for individuals and their families. Constructed as giving rise to defensiveness as a response to discrimination (428, 1133, 1165) (empowering Muslim's?).

As being based on outward appearance; as being identifiable as Muslim (488, 806, 827, 1080, 1104, (travel: 1166, 1186). He also talks twice about his 'Black-ness' being a protective factor against discrimination (e.g. 1111).

*Muslim's positioned by the discourses as less than. Positions Muslim's as victims of these agenda's. Helpless in the face of overwhelming power. Positions Muslim people as less than, as fair-game.*

*Muslim's positioned by the participant as vulnerable to the psychological impact of oppression. He does not appear to reject these positions, but instead constructs them as a lived and terrifying reality.*

*Positioned self as helpless and vulnerable in the face of threat to their children. As needing to compensate and develop ways in which to help their children live in this oppressive environment. He constructs and positions himself as a realist in the sense that he is aware of what's going on, and a pragmatist in that he navigates the situation as best he can, prioritising his family, in lieu of the harmful, oppressive environment. Positions himself as part of an oppressed group that*

*believes it will continue to get worse. Drawing parallels, and power, from the perceived success of the Jewish community in 'living with' and adapting to the pervasive discrimination. Muslim's are positioned by the Police as a suspect community. He positions himself cautiously when responding to the question of Police and discrimination. Rather, he positions the Police in in an almost ambiguous light, which may demonstrate the way in which Police perception of Muslim's (men?) and the power that they wield, may intimidate and suppress open discussion or even thought. (Given the way in which the participant has spoken so explicitly and clearly throughout the interview so far).*

*This apparent caution, as described above, suggests that Muslim men are adopting a position of deference or passive acceptance towards the discrimination they experience from the police.*

*He constructs himself as intelligently fighting a noble cause; as resistant.*

Subjective experiences of injustice and intimidation. Of anxiety and fear, of feeling threatened (self and children) of paranoia following terrorist attacks.

4. As a lack of integration (489) of not belonging. Otherness.

Discourses of Muslims as terrorists/Criminal. Discrimination against Muslim's as not being a 'bad thing' but something that is justified, necessary and warranted.

*This participant constructs himself as 'equal' and 'same', and extends this construction to include the general Muslim population... he refers several times to the shared values of himself as a British citizen, and non-Muslim others. He frequently makes reference to being a 'regular person' (e.g. 368, 1130) and Muslim's as having contributed to global advancement (584,) in doing so he is constructing Muslim's as valuable, and nodding to the absence of discourses that acknowledge this in wider Western culture.*

Similarly, when discursively constructing those that carry out terrorist attacks, he is able to put a large distance between himself (including the wider Muslim population) and those "Muslim's' that carry out the crimes (203, 233, 270).

## Appendix 4: Analysis of Summaries for prominent topics and discursive themes

Overall, this interview had a focus on professional issues.

Discourses of Muslim's as 'less than', as unwelcome, or not fitting in, unsuitable, inappropriate. Discrimination constructed as needing to 'pass for white'. Or perhaps to simply not appear Muslim (see lines 177 and 290). Constructed as so pervasive in the professional context that it is experienced as also coming from other Muslim's. Discrimination constructed as an inherent bias/prejudice against individuals identifiable as Muslim/African. Favouring Western sounding names. Constructed as greater legitimacy of white professionals over Muslim's. Constructed as a systemic fact or 'given' within corporate law. Constructed as so cultural (from a UK perspective) that even other Muslim's engage with the discourse. Constructed as so innate in contemporary professional environments, that perpetrators are unaware of their prejudicial thinking and actions. Constructed as an embedded and rigid part of the professional culture. Constructed as a 'belief system'. Injustice. Constructed as an inherent, unconscious bias/prejudice. Constructed as tougher hurdles for Muslim's seeking employment. Constructed as being perceived as different in a negative sense. Constructed as pressure to disguise identity in professional contexts. Constructed as demonstrably obvious.

Wider discourses of White advantage and professional (non)acceptability based on ethnic/religious (Muslim) identification. Discourse of othering and suspicion. Discourses of marginalisation. Discourses of Muslim's as inappropriate/undesirable in certain professional environments. Discourses of Muslim's as outsiders, as marginalised, as irrelevant, as less than. Discourses of non-Muslim's as superior. Muslim's as the enemy. Muslim's as anti-British.

Our participant's use of 'clear cut' examples suggests a pervasive culture of discrimination in the professional context (Law), that even other Muslim's buy into and perpetuate to junior employees. The participant constructs the culture of discrimination towards Muslim's as being so engrained in the professional context that even in his presence as the Muslim boss the discourse is still deployed without censorship. It's as if it's a known and accepted prejudice in the professional context.

He discursively constructs a situation in which there is a clear distinction between attitudes towards Muslim and non-Muslim job candidates. This perhaps parallels the bias seen in reporting atrocities.

He is positioned as having to abide by the anti-Muslim discourse, whether he actually accepts it or not.

This position- where he is unable to resist or challenge it- silences any individual thought or objection to the situation.

He is positioned as 'less than' and needing to hide/adapt his identity in order to 'fit in' and progress in his profession. He positions himself as either needing to work harder than others, or as valuing hard work as key to acceptance, yet is nevertheless positioned as an outsider who is marginalised in all but 'needs be' activity at work (i.e. not included socially). He is positioned as 'one of the team' in which Muslim prejudice is a given, but positions himself very much as a Muslim who is uncomfortable with the discourse. Our participant is positioned in the middle of these professional discourses (You're not a REAL Muslim, therefore you're Okay), while also feeling very much a Muslim. As such his subject position within the dominant discourse of Muslim's as less 'acceptable' in this professional context, is accepted by the participant's superior

(a fellow Muslim), and as such is reluctantly accepted by the participant. Thus, they become agents for the reproduction of the discourse.

That other Muslim people are perpetuating these discourse and practices legitimises them further. This impacts on the participants sense of identity and self-expression in important ways.

Frustrating, disappointing, disillusionment.

2. Constructed as an expectation of being discriminated against. Constructed as 'random' prejudice i.e. that is disguised yet systemic (e.g. in airport 'security' contexts, which differs to the professional context in which the participant constructs as an accepted 'given'). Constructed as demonstrably obvious.

Discourses of a societal rejection of- even hatred towards- Muslim people. Of pervasive discrimination. Discrimination as permissive. As an expectation. Discourses of Muslim's as suspect, as dangerous, as potential threat. Terrorism. Radicalised. Discourses of othering. Discourses of white superiority.

(Line 162). Our participant's frequent use of the word 'interesting' in this context suggest his expectation for there to be discriminatory 'issues' experienced in the airport context. Is something else being constructed ('interestingly') ... Our participant constructs himself as not being someone who is upset, angry unreasonable ... but someone who is clinical, rational ... keeping things at arm's length, calmly intellectually appraising the situation. So, as well as constructing the absence of discrimination in that context (i.e. at US airport) as an exception, it also constructs him as someone of a certain, e.g. rational disposition.

Positioned as a potential threat to security. A potential terrorist. Positioned as different to his companions. Positioned as other. Muslim's positioned a vulnerable to attack. As 'easy targets'. Our participant positioned as shocked by the reality of what it means to be a Muslim in the UK in the eyes of the wider population. Knowing who is friendly and who is not, is another challenge.

Although powerless to interrupt the actual process, our participant constructs himself as able to enquire about it in order to understand/confirm his suspicions.

Equal opportunities:

Discrimination constructed as a societal tendency to compartmentalise people- even with good intentions'. Constructed as an absence of a view of all British people simply as British.

Discrimination constructed as much more prevalent than societal discourses suggest. Constructed as paradoxically promoted by policies and discourses around 'equality'. Constructed as division and compartmentalisation (of society).

Discourses of the importance of inclusion and diversity. Discourses of othering.

He is constructing himself as an activist against a well-established and accepted discourse; that of equal opportunities in the workplace. Again, he employs a clearly rational and reasonable approach to his argument. By acknowledging the perceived value of it from a macro point of view, he goes on to argue that on a micro level it is in fact harmful, and exacerbates the main point he has been trying to make in terms of discrimination in the workplace.

He positions himself in staunch (and well reasoned) opposition to the commonly accepted discourse of equal opportunities as a positive thing for minorities.

an interesting part of what our participant is doing and the discourses that he has has. Perhaps this allows him to distance himself from the media construction of radical Muslims who are not rational or reasonable. Speaking to that by saying look I'm reasonable. He suggests that he is impacted by these dominant discourses which propound an image of the Muslim man. Similarly, our participant, when he constructs himself as the boss, he is also to be constructing a cultural normality that he accepts, and also wants to change, but he is a normality ... again constructs himself as reasonable and someone capable of engaging with cultural realities ... different from a terrorist who says 'this situation is unacceptable, it's not acceptable and I'm going to 'Kill' it'. He speaks to other discourses by constructing himself as a reasonable person ... alternative discourses of Muslim men as fanatics ... he doesn't speak about terrorism, but goes to effort to construct himself differently, thereby addressing and distancing himself from the fanatical discourses.

Our participant's well-reasoned rational argument against the value of this discourse, and his confident (although slightly tentative) delivery of it, suggests that he feels his own professional expertise (as a recruitment consultant) qualifies him to make this claim.

Our participant is constructed as needing caution when speaking about it or challenging discrimination. Double standards and hypocritical attitudes (e.g. Muslim individual committing atrocities versus white individuals), (line 750). Our participant is constructing discrimination as something that he is not going to quite say out loud: e.g. 'without the agenda of all the ...' 'some people are really getting with that ...' 'getting people to move past that ...' 'It seems to be entrenched in their culture ...'

Our participant constructs himself as reluctant to commit to what it is he appears to be trying to say: That there is a need to counter terrorist activity from a government perspective, but that their policies (policies) has left the entire community in danger. He constructs this idea as being difficult to live with.

(1000) Discrimination constructed as a need to be well informed on the teachings and philosophy/rational for Islam and its practices. That there is an expectation in the public domain that Muslim's should justify themselves and their religion and customs (presumably to the media bias).

Discrimination constructed as having to censor yourself so as not to be identifiable or offend simply by talking and saying the 'wrong thing', being misunderstood, or not well informed (about Islam).

Discourses of Muslim's playing the victim. Of the absence of actual discrimination. Of the 'benefit' of colonialism. Righteous white England. Discourses of (double standards) and hypocritical attitudes. Discourses of the ends justifying the means i.e. by making the Muslim community vulnerable and legally discriminated against, protects the wider population.

Our participant constructs this section with clear caution, which suggests discourses that disallow knowledge of the way in which atrocities committed by individuals who identify as Muslim are attributed to the entire population, compared to when it is an individual from a white background. His construction here is very interesting: He appears to be constructing himself as unconvinced by the government narratives that accompany their security agenda's, and at the same time, is slightly reluctant to be explicit about his position. By constructing his sisters as not equipped to formerly discuss Islam in its defence, he constructs himself as having authority, and that this allows him to enter into debate and remain objective.

He is constructing himself as a son and brother (family member) who cares and considers the possibilities in terms of the level of threat and protective factors. This highlights the existence of the discourses around Muslim individuals as targets.

He is positioned as speaking inappropriately, and positions himself almost apologetically and makes his claim quite tentatively. The Muslim community is positioned as being expendable, the cost/sacrifice of 'wider' security. He positions himself as struggling to fully accept this discourse. His struggle to commit to it, might suggest that he is reluctant to be explicit in his talk against government policy based on the earlier comments around suspicion etc. On the other hand, it may be a reality that is simply too hard to fully accept due to it's implications. Muslim's positioned as needing to defend and explain their Islam in the face of the dominant narratives/discourses. He positions himself as confident to defend Islam in a calm and objective manner. Professionally even.

The way that this is discursively constructed illustrates the limitations that our participant feels when wanting to voice his opinions/observations. The way that he constructs Muslim people - including himself - in these discourses suggests a considerable pressure to not only explain and defend Islam, but the expectation that there will be counter-argument. It's as if there is so much negative information about Islam that's been generalized to the entire religion as a whole, that everyday Muslim people need to be 'educated' in order to turn back the tide of negative assumptions/beliefs which underpin the aggression and oppression.

5. Discrimination constructed as ambiguous, or as needing to be considered carefully before making claims about it. Discrimination constructed as something that you can't be quite certain of, i.e. perhaps it's all in my mind. Discrimination as something that pervades perception (in Muslims); a lens, that colours all experience. Social stereotypes.

Discourses of a fair and multi-cultural society in the UK. Discourses of a 'victim mentality' amongst Muslim's in terms of feeling discriminated against. Discourses of denial of discrimination against Muslim's.

He again seems to be trying to distance himself from either the idea of discrimination, or from 'saying too much', and coming across in 'the wrong way'. Perhaps this has something to do with how he would like to portray Muslim's more generally?

(1090) He constructs himself as perhaps being unaware of- or 'uncertain'- whether or not there is discrimination in these contexts. As if he can't quite commit to or identify it. This suggests that he has felt a sense of integration in contexts other than the workplace, and that things are more ambiguous in terms of discrimination.

He adopts the subject position whereby he often cannot be sure of- and questions- his own assumptions/perceptions of experiences. Or at least constructs himself as the type of person who is open to discussion.

He constructs himself as needing to be certain about something before making a claim about it. This may be related to his profession, but also potentially speaks to the wider discourses of Muslim's having a 'victim mentality' when it comes to feeling discriminated against.

This caution around speaking to discrimination may be linked to the previous comments around needing to be 'well educated' when discussing Islam with non-Muslim's - in order to 'get it right' and not make any mistakes. This appears to include making statements/claims and assumptions around the topic of discrimination likely also linked to his training as a lawyer.



The stereotypical discourses of Muslim's as people who do not and cannot integrate with usual British customs apparently legitimating friends to 'compliment' him by excluding him from that label (i.e. Muslim) as if Muslim is a bad thing and not Muslim is good.

6. Discrimination constructed as scapegoating. Constructed as a political agenda. Constructed as a historical reality; beyond the current focus on Muslim's. Constructed as 'trends'. Discrimination here is constructed as an unfair bias. As having hypocritical foundations. Double standards. Discrimination constructed as 'legalised'. Discrimination constructed as politically driven/promoted. As undermining the civil/human rights of ordinary Muslims. Also as an anti-Muslim solidarity within Europe.

The laws he expertly refers to have legitimised the harassment of Muslim's. Our participant constructs a situation in which ordinary Muslim people might have to second guess the types of conversations that they are having and with whom. Some of this might explain the difficulties we had with recruitment for this study (line 650).

Political discourses of 'divide and rule'. Discourses of an 'out group'. Discourses of Muslim's as terrorist's. Discourses of Muslim's as a single entity or integrated whole. Conversely, discourses of white people as individualised; the majority being distanced from, and not associated with Caucasian perpetrators of atrocities. Discourses of the superiority of White people. Oppression.

Discourses of needing someone 'less than' in order to maintain 'higher' status.

Our participant is constructing a situation in which the discrimination against Muslim's is situated within a historical trend or tendency for there to be a target group. As such, he is able to perhaps reduce the 'reality' of what is happening to the Muslim community. Our participant constructs this comment by first acknowledging that there are important issues in terms of crimes perpetrated by individuals who identify as Muslim. However, and at times even he seems to buy into this narrative- the actions of these individuals are then generalised to the entire Muslim community (both nationally and globally). Whereas there is a completely different set of discourses surrounding the criminal actions of individuals who identify as White (and Christian, although even I hesitate to mention their religion as it is so far from the wider discourses). Media reporting contradiction/hypocrisy white versus Muslim terrorism ...

Christian is not an easily available construction out there in the discourse. Protected in the discourse. Colonial ideas of white supremacy ... contrasting discourse ... spoken to indirectly even when it's not mobilised by this and the other interviewees. He continues to construct himself as astonished/stunned/flabbergasted by the experience, and it's wider implications on his own sense of identity.

Muslim's are positioned as the current target. Muslim's are positioned as 'other'. As being judged and having to abide by a different set of standards.

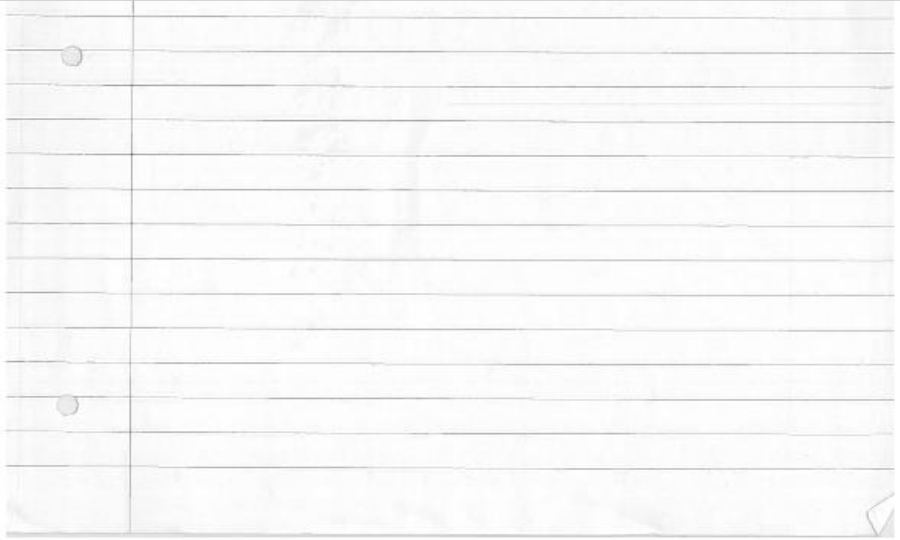
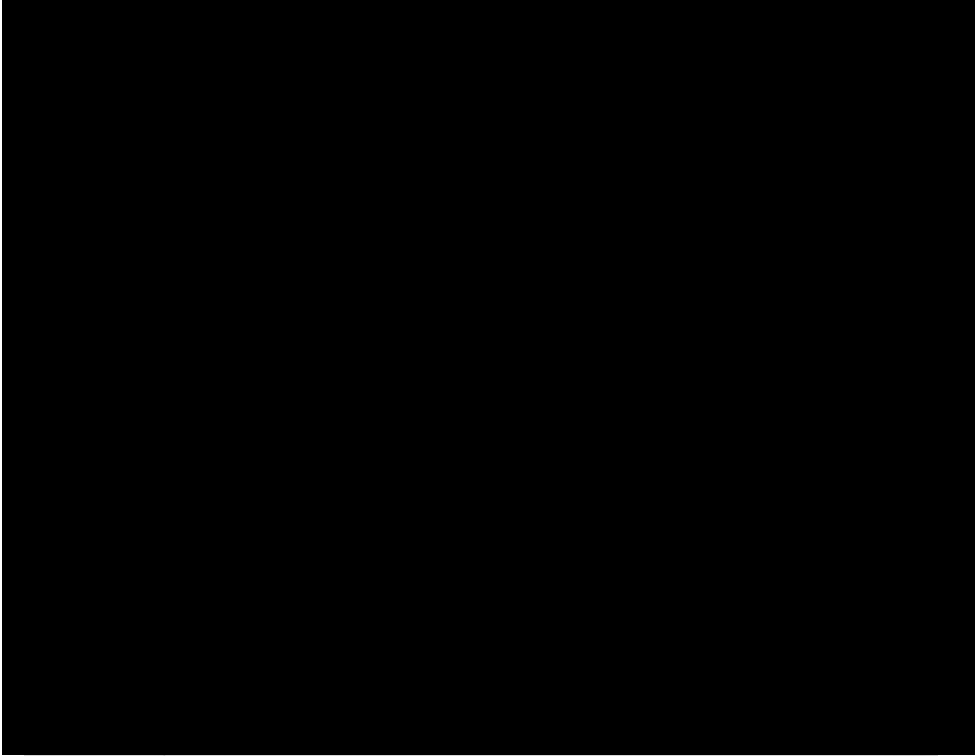
Our participant rejects this position through his comparison of the differing standards for white criminals compared to Muslim ones, but at a certain point, he appears to reject the position that 'the Muslim community' being somehow responsible for the actions of the few. The subject position is therefore lessened when understood in this historical context.

7. Constructed as a spectrum of Muslim-ness (high scores being bad).

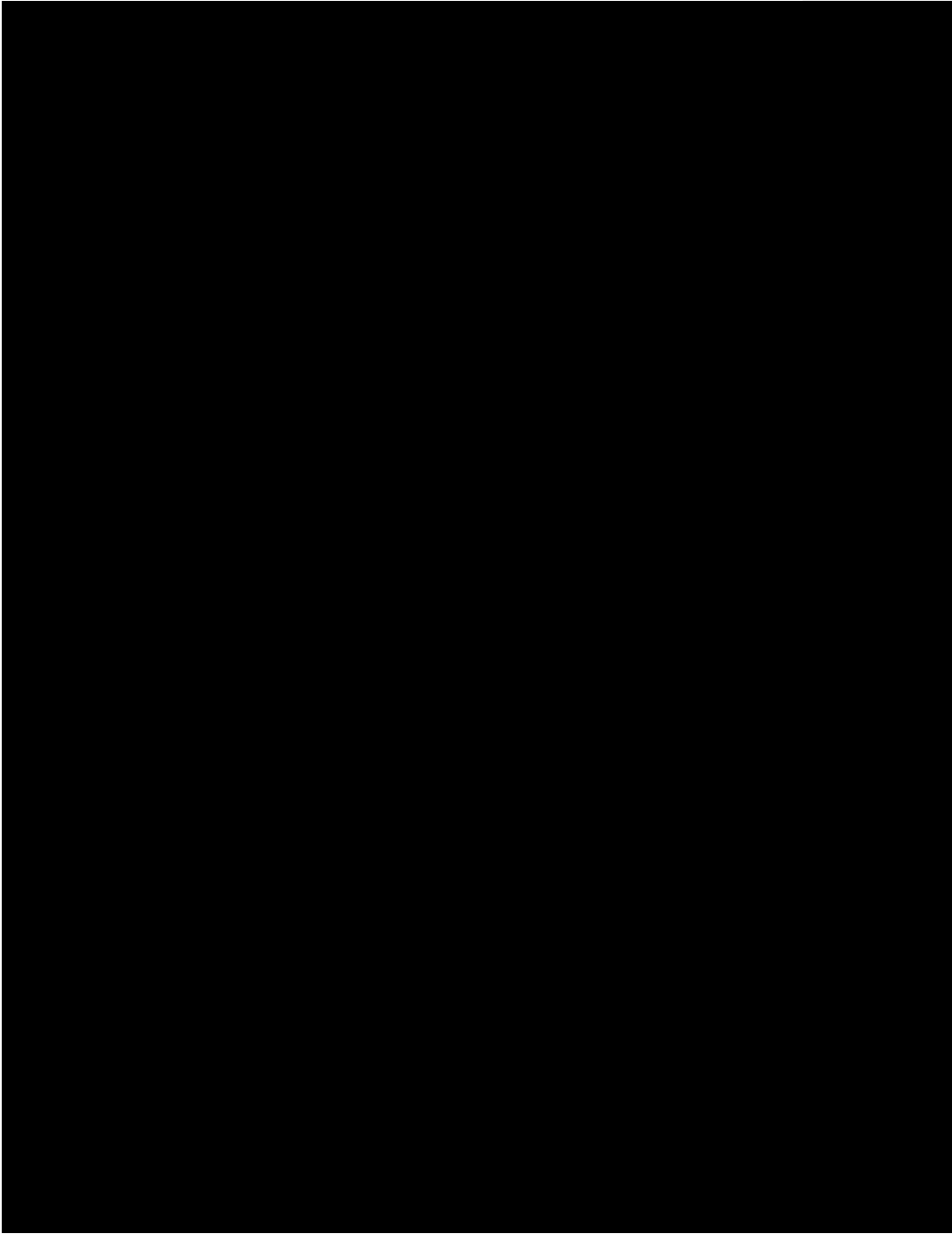
Discourses of Muslim's as bad.

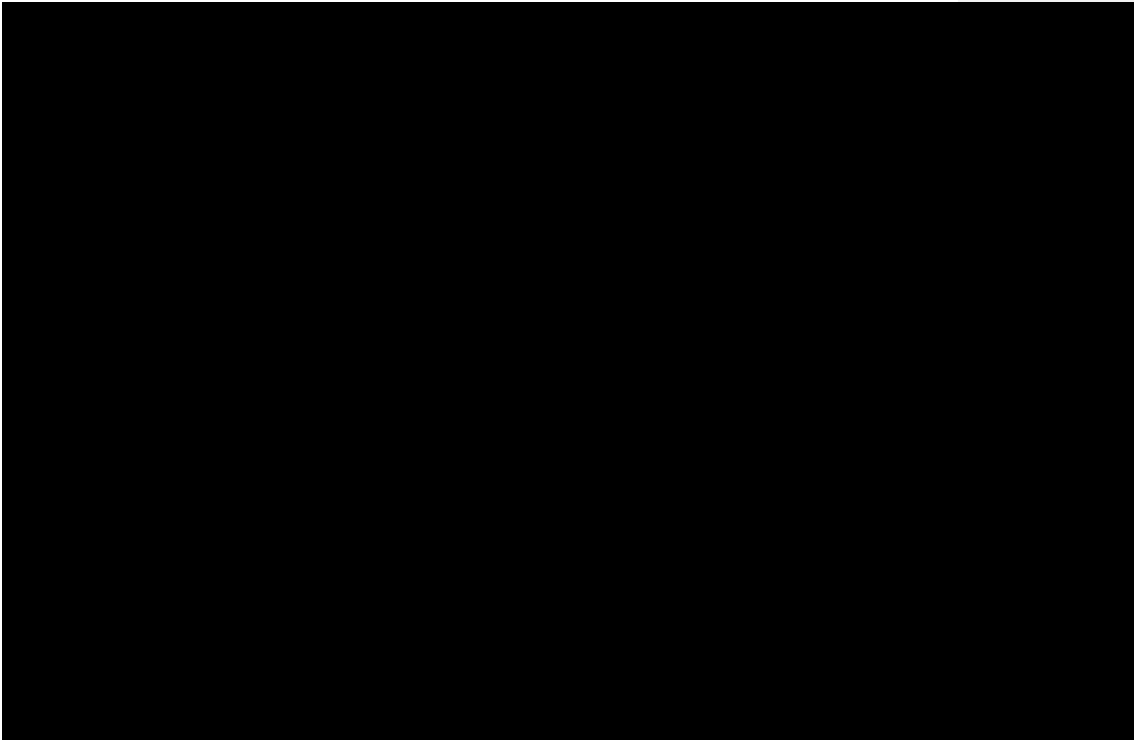
He argues against the idea that there is one way to be a Muslim- or indeed British. He constructs himself as positioned in between his own idea of his Muslim-ness and, awkwardly between his friend's idea of what 'normal' Muslim is (which is implied as negative), and how he is in terms of

## Appendix 5: Discursive themes:

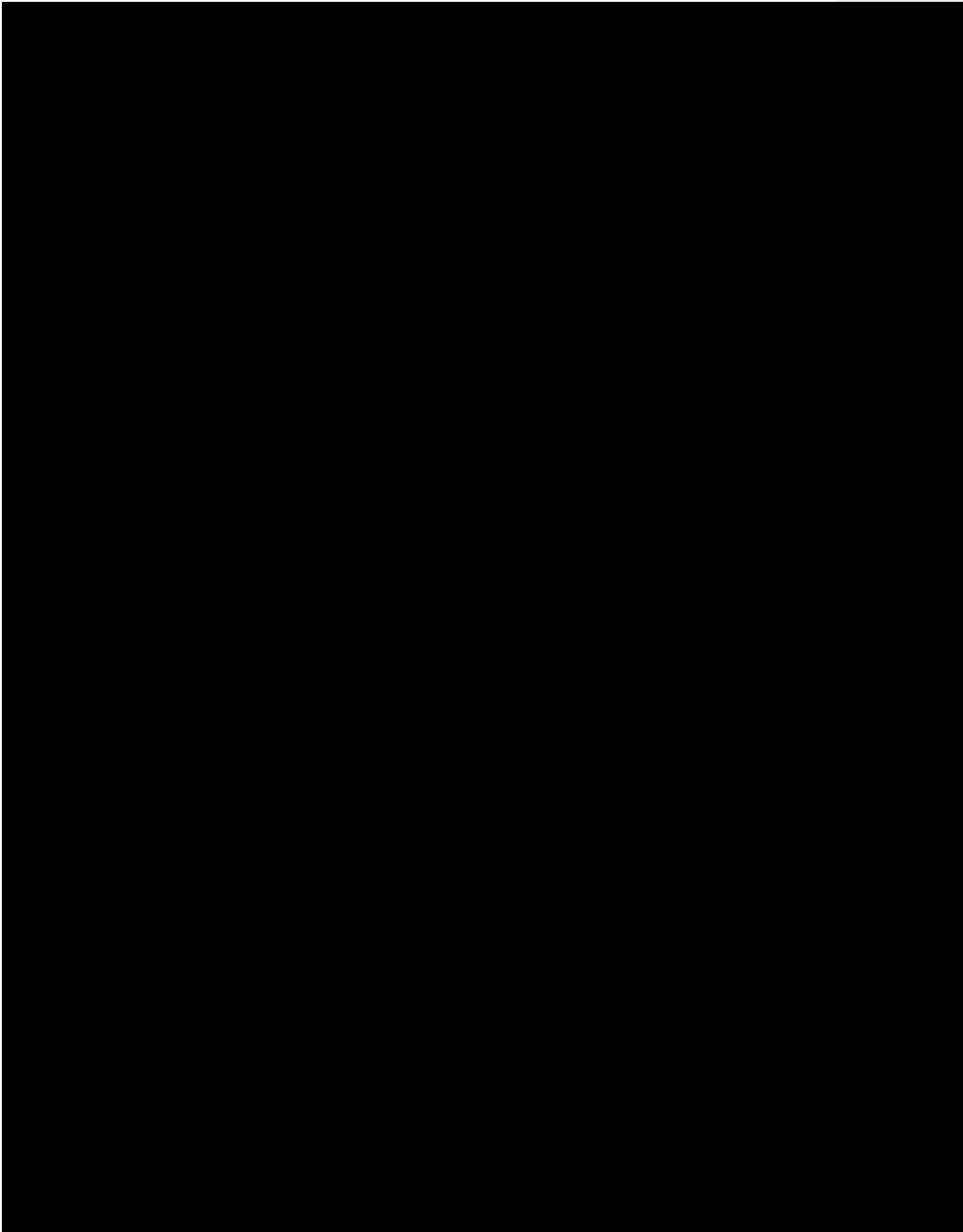


Appendix 5A: Discursive theme brainstorm  
(Integration example)



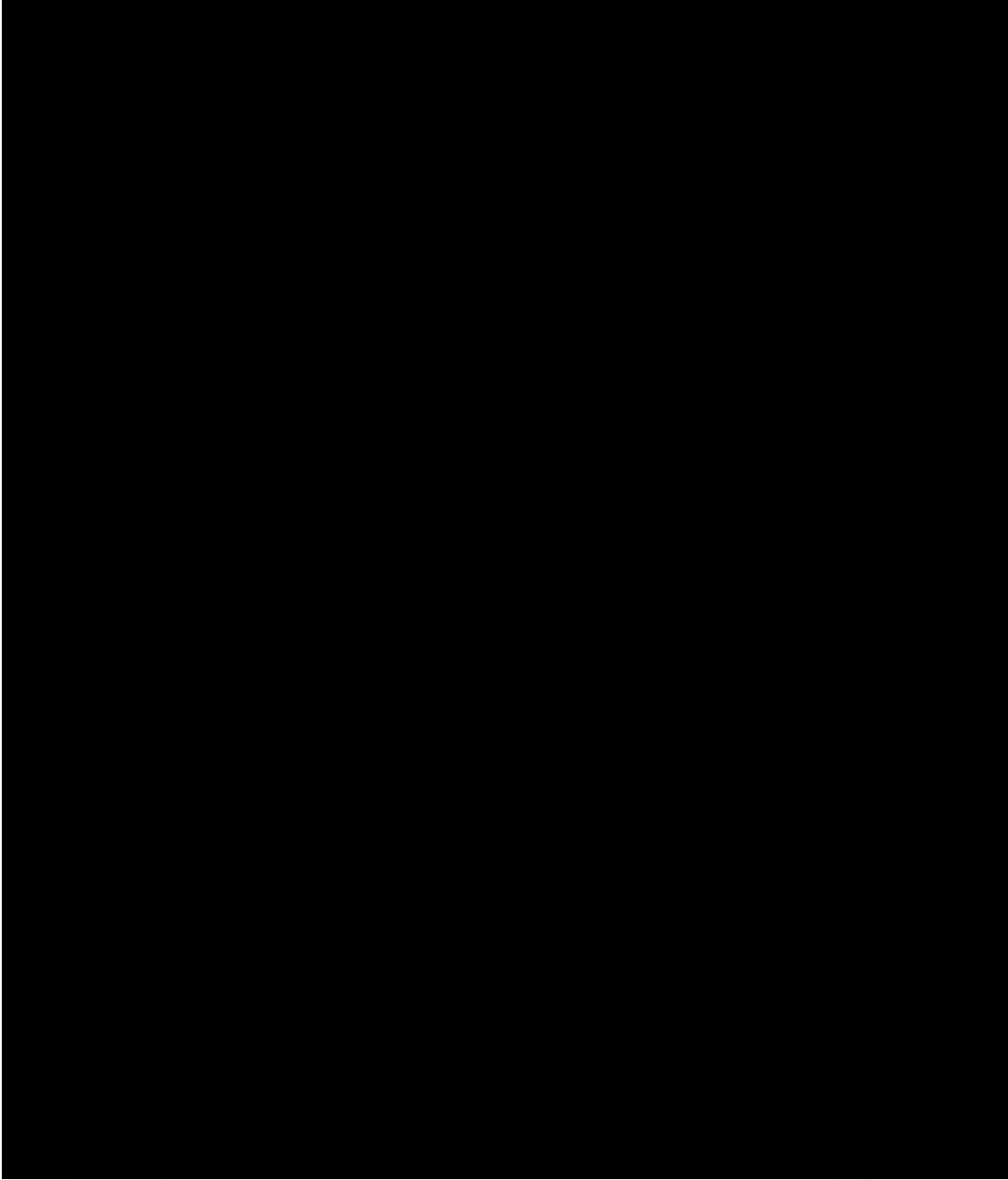


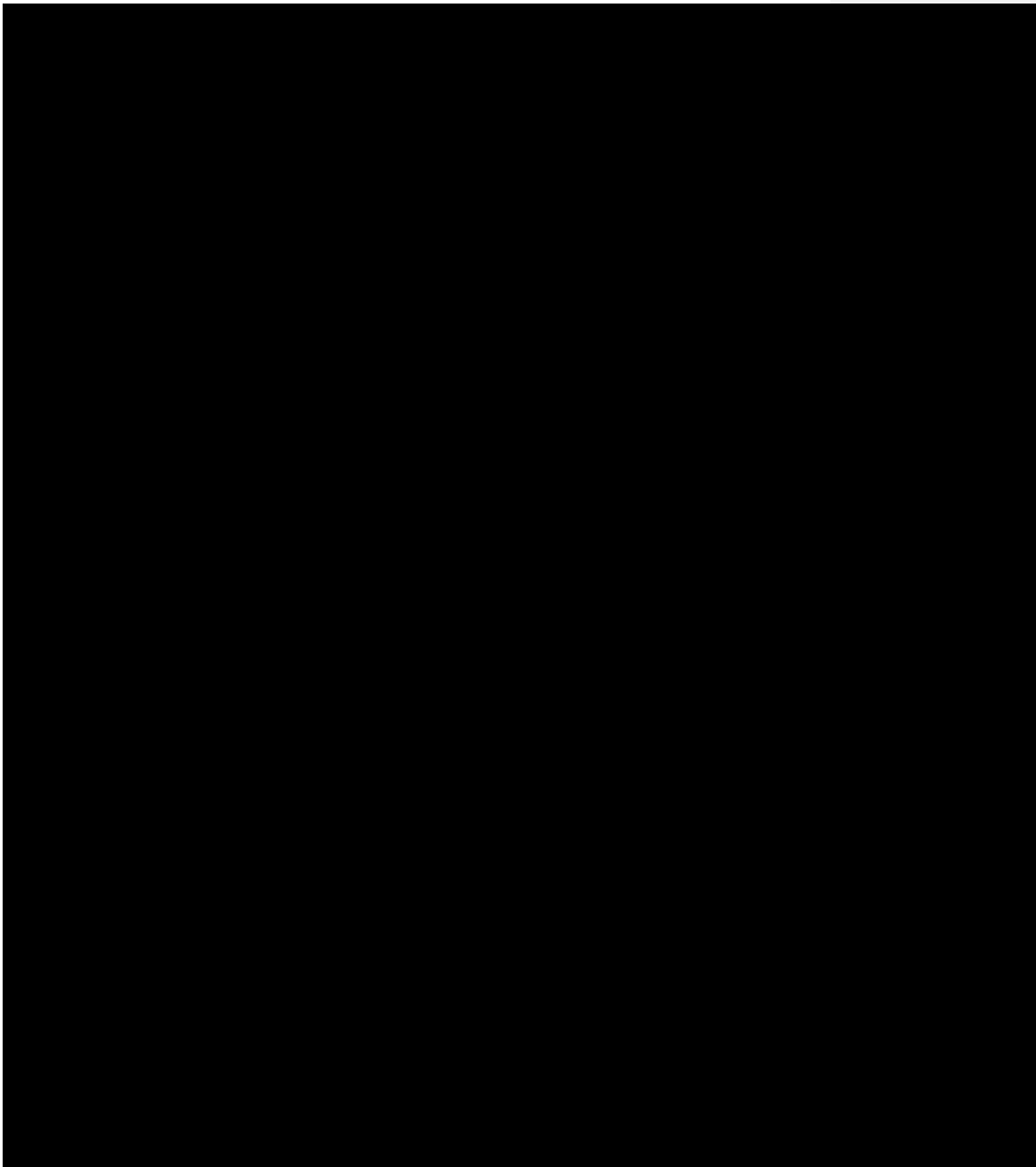
Appendix 5B: Initial ideas spider diagram (Media example)

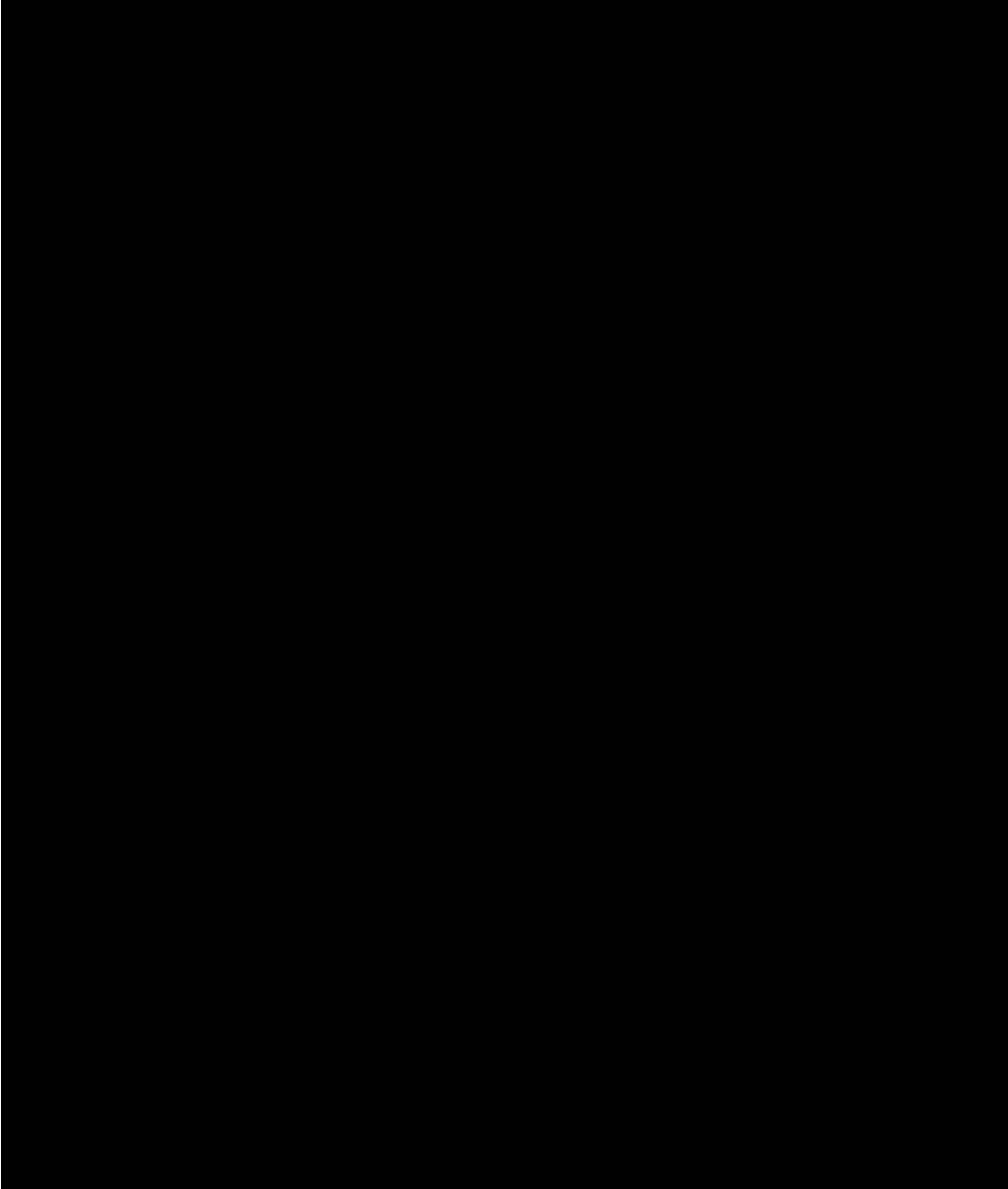


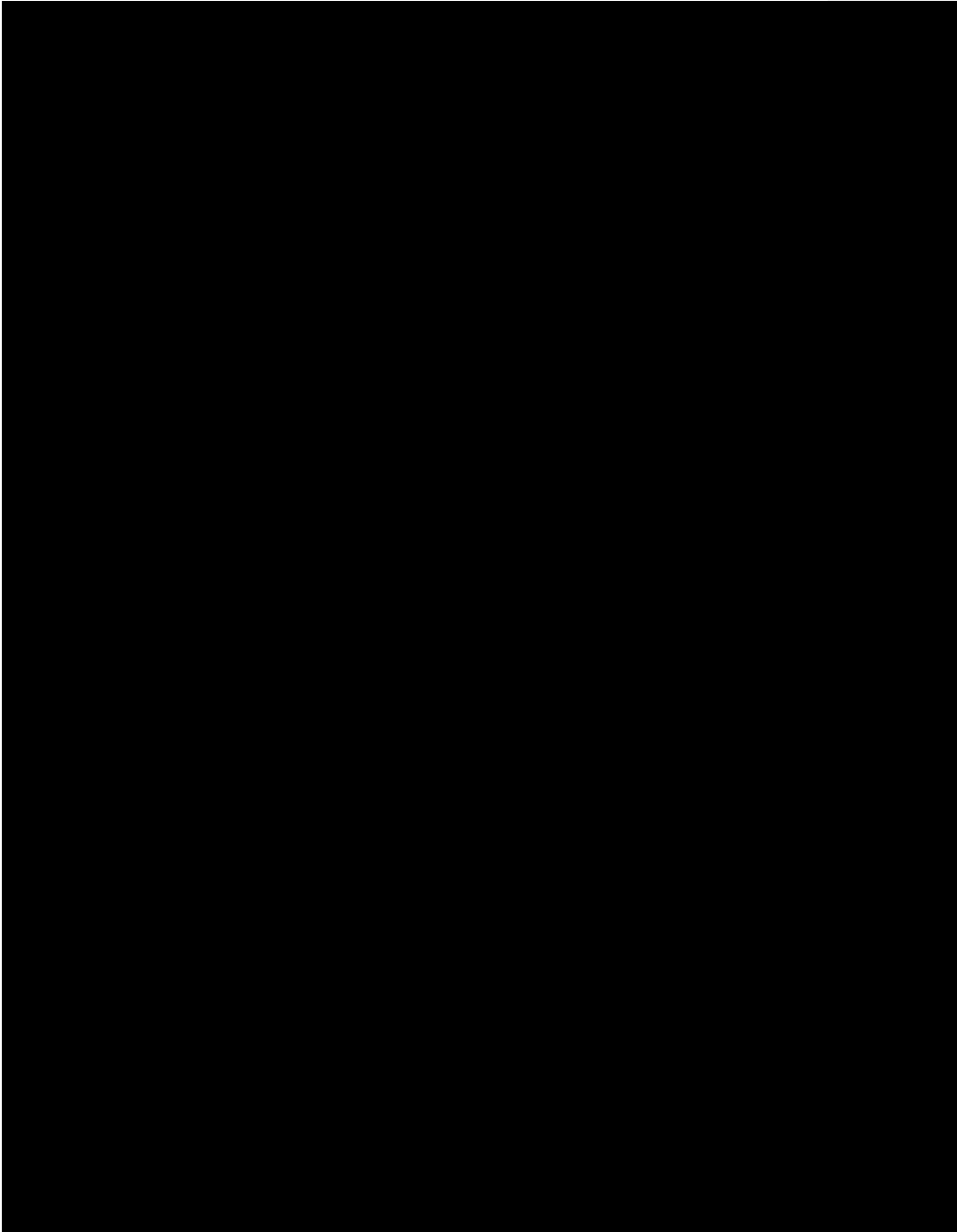


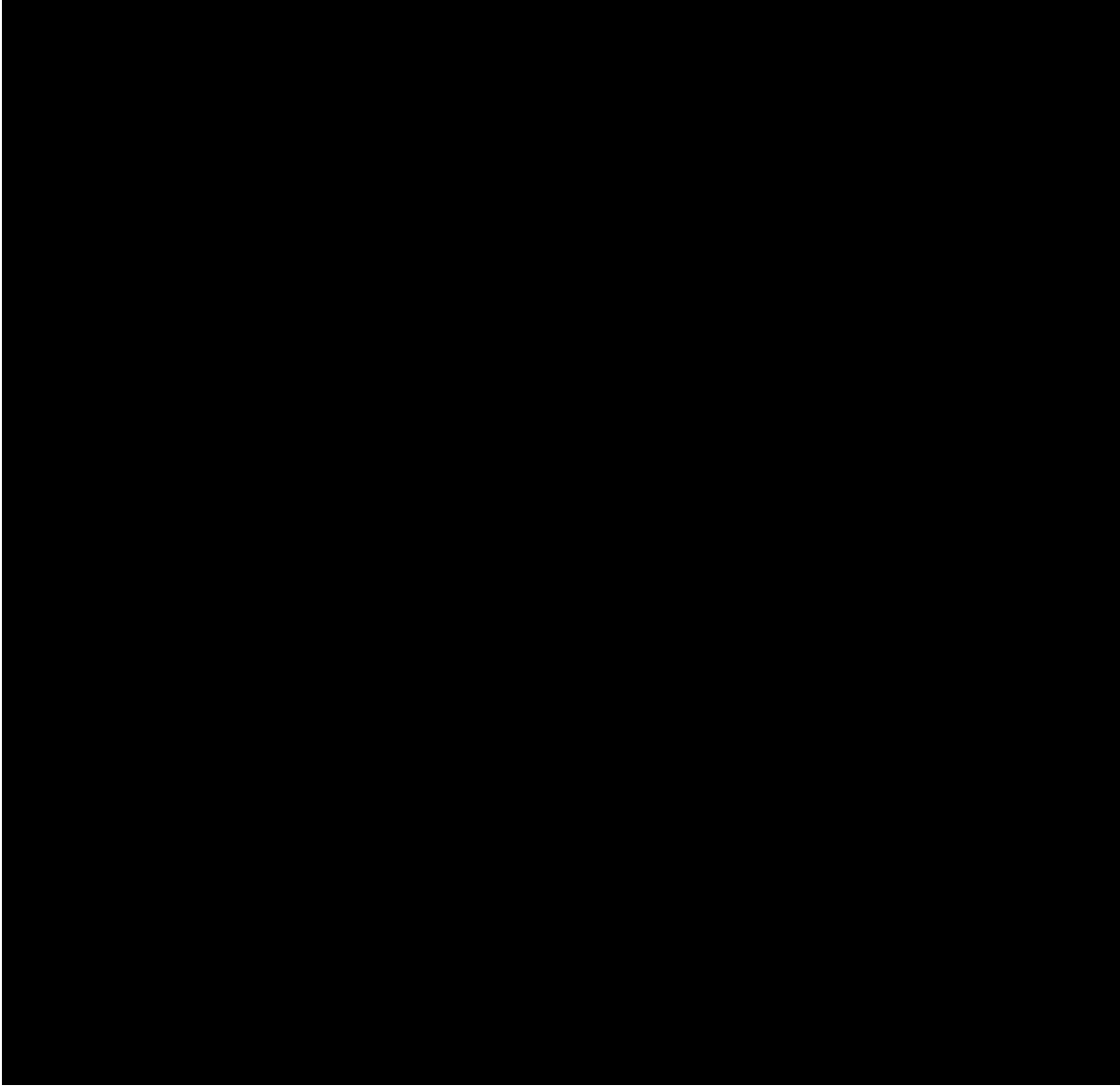
Appendix 5C: Line by line notes where discursive themes spoken about.



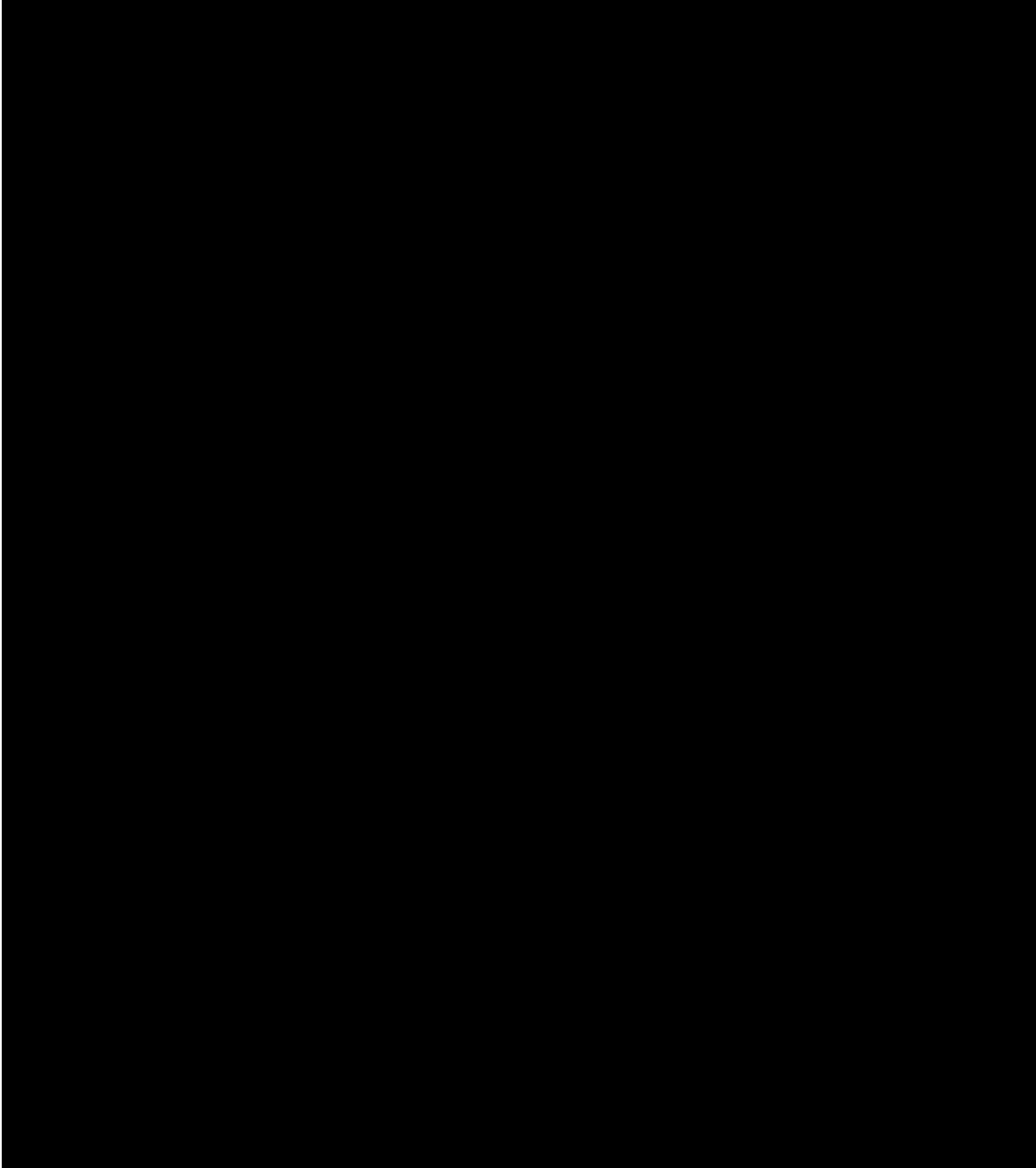




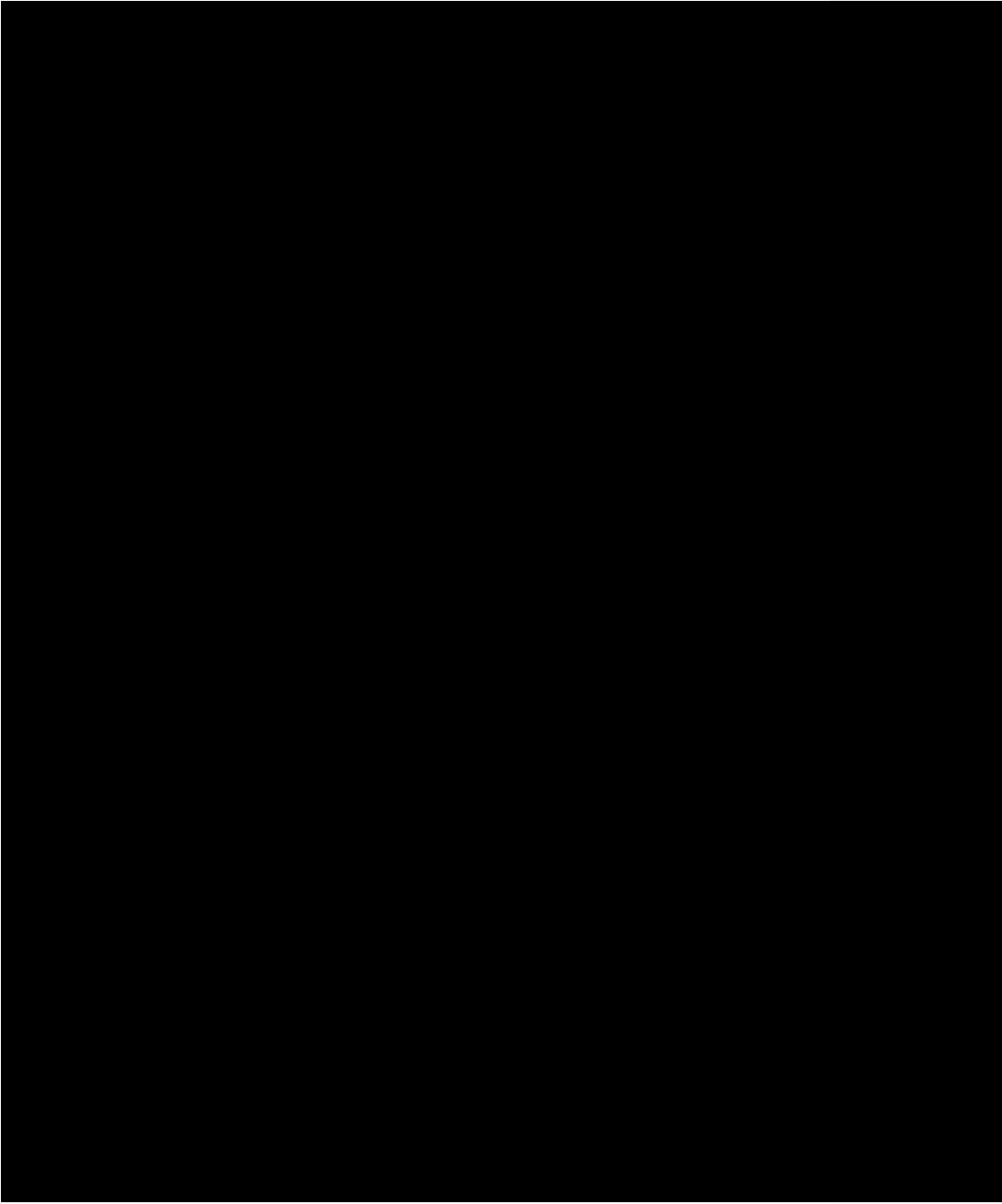


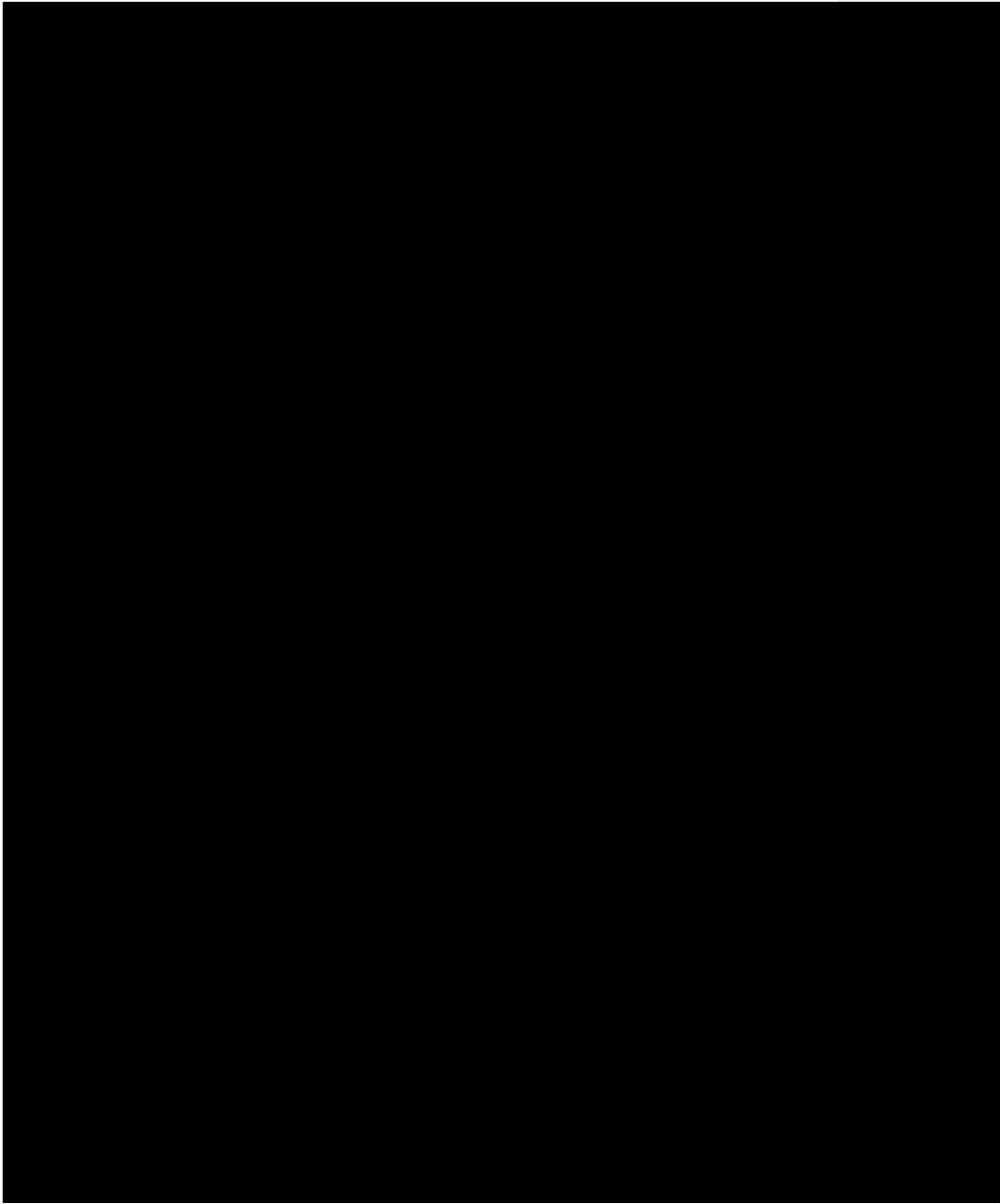


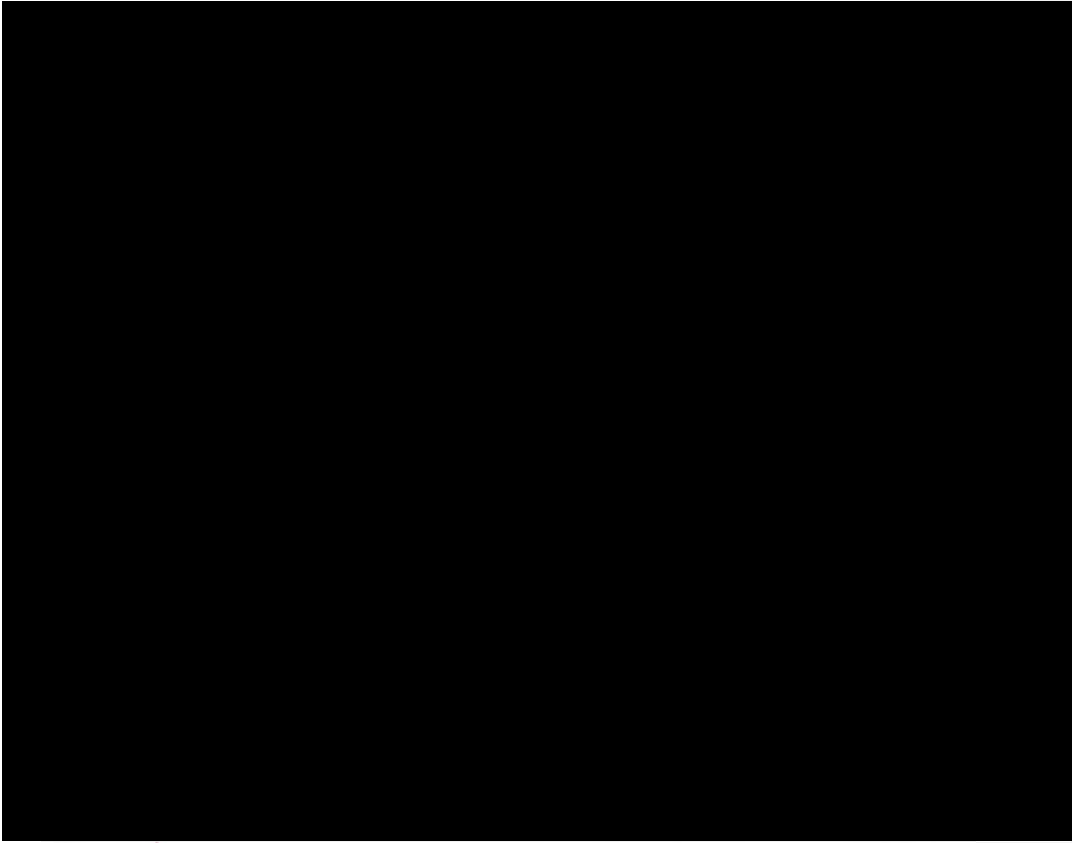
Appendix 6: Notes on themes across interviews



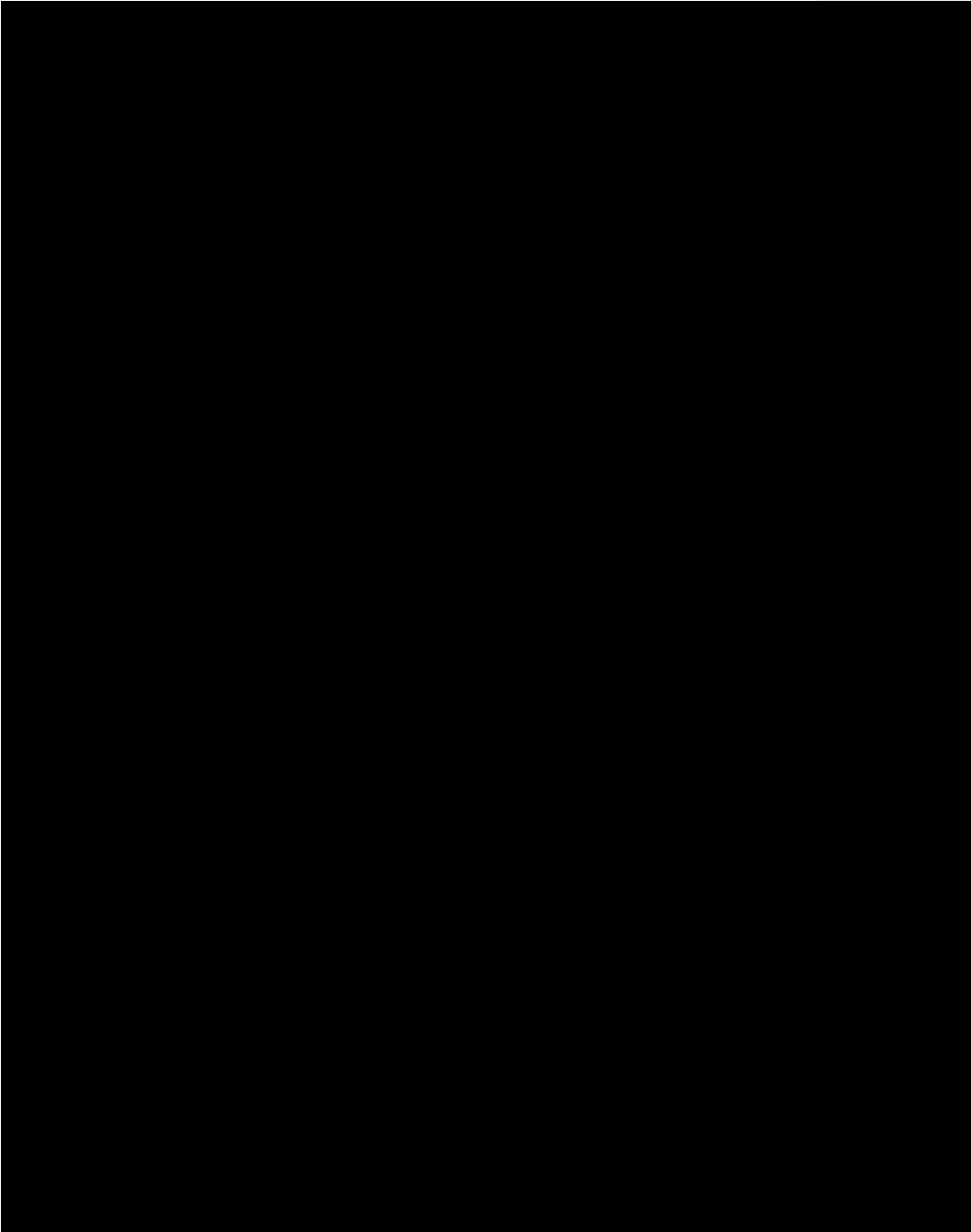


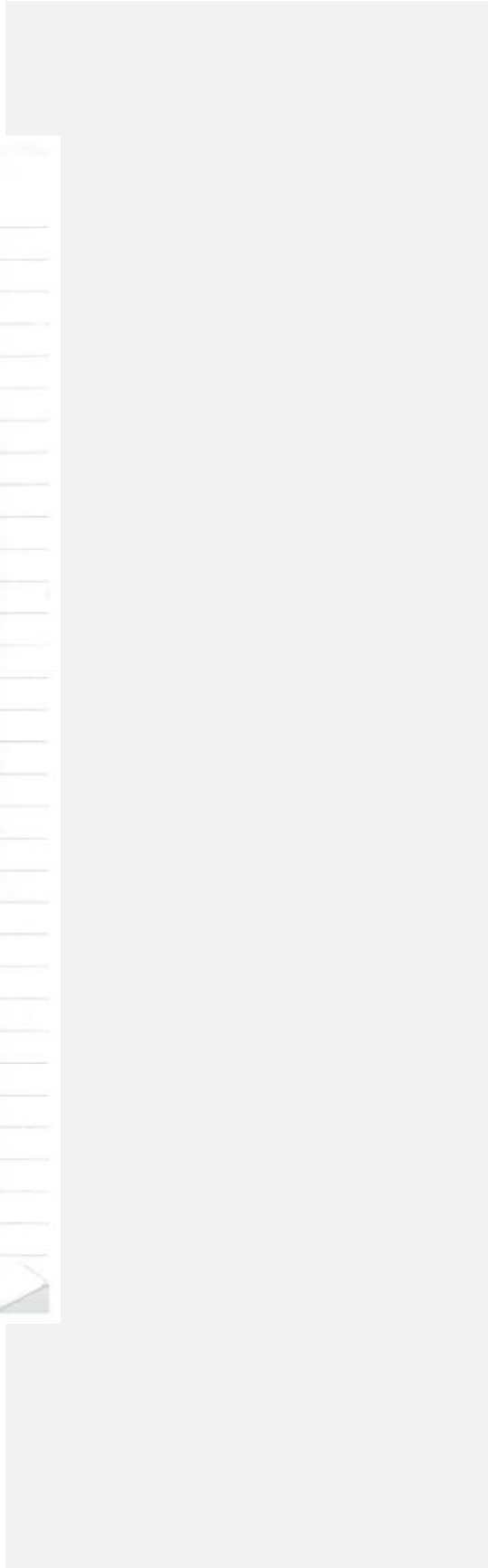
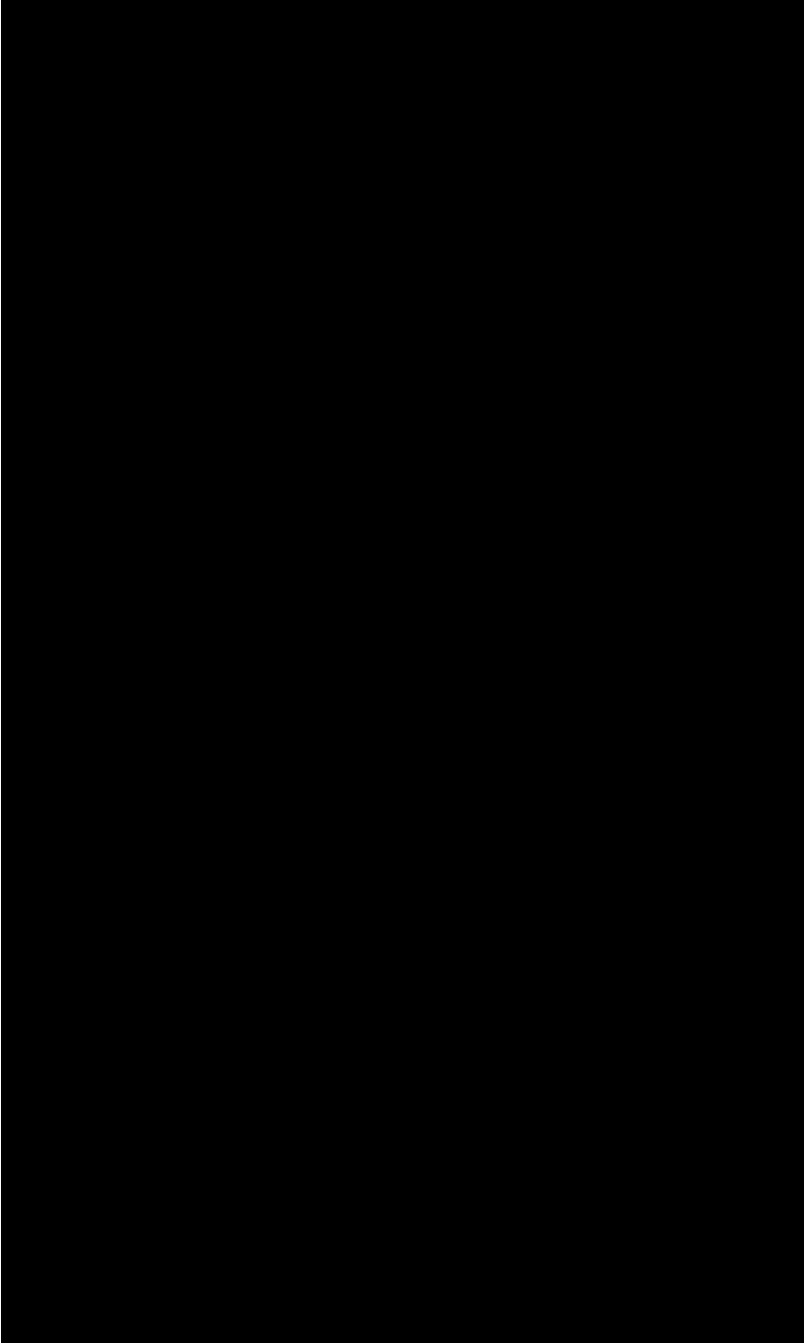




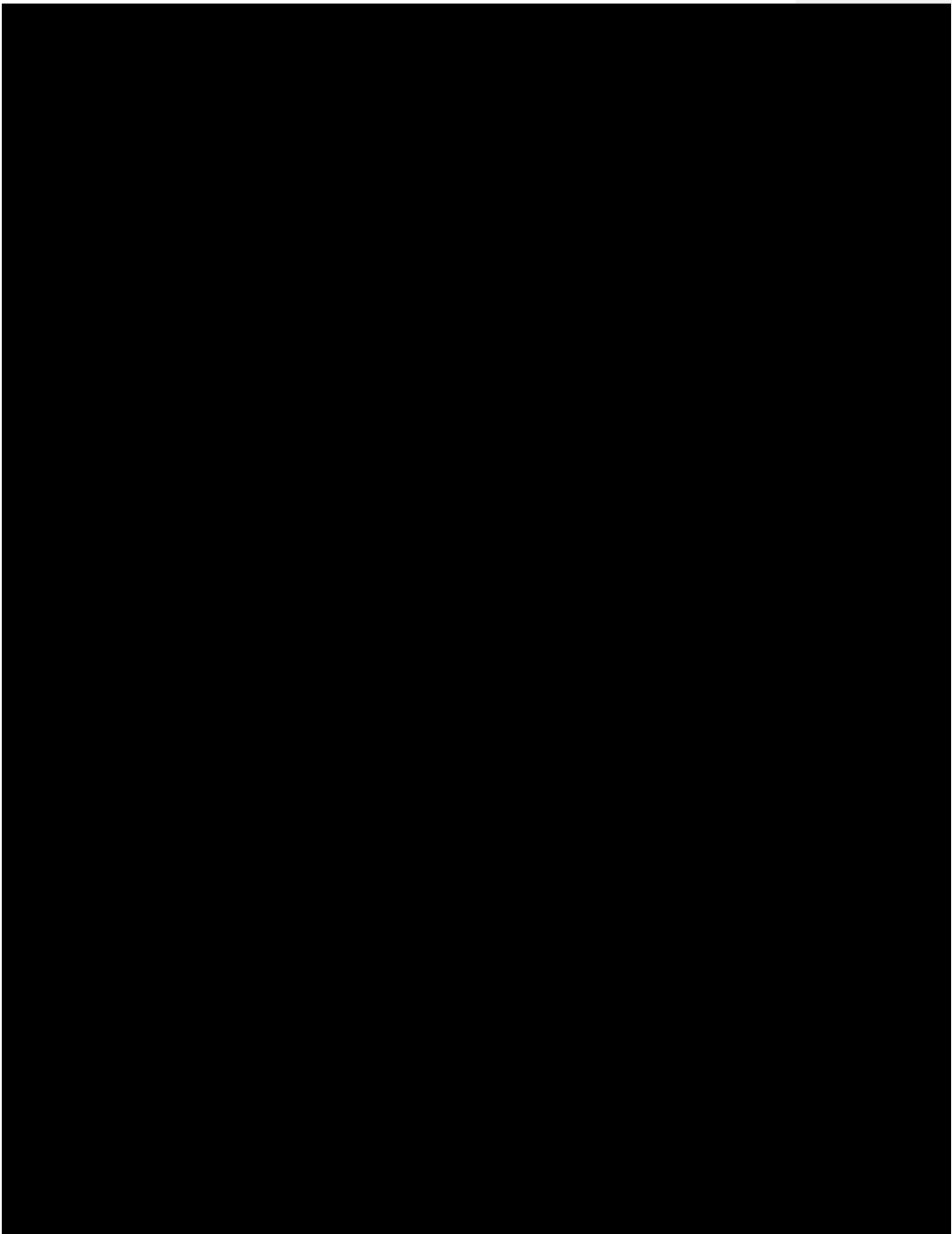


Appendix 6A: Table on how object and subject were  
constructed and positioned

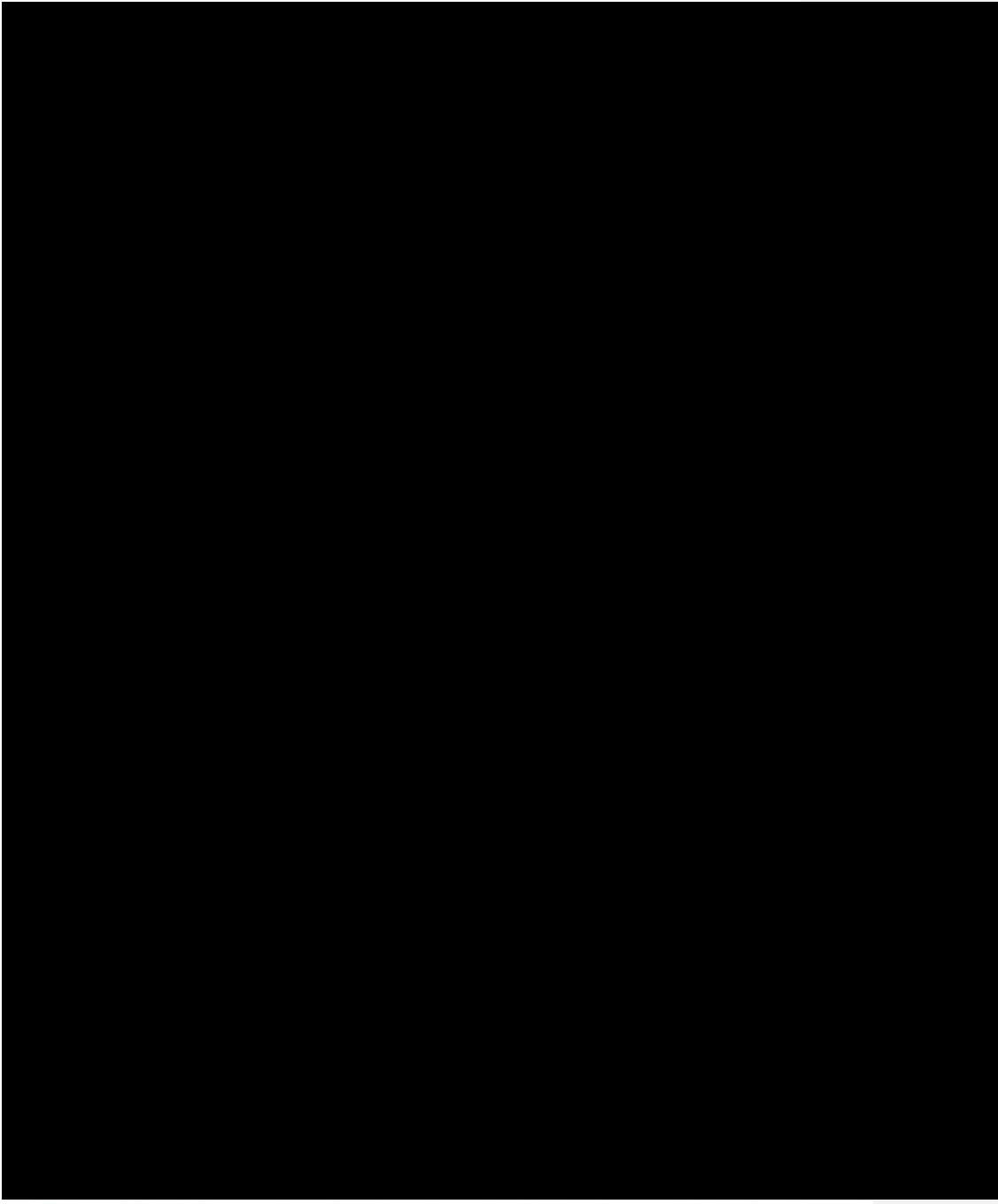


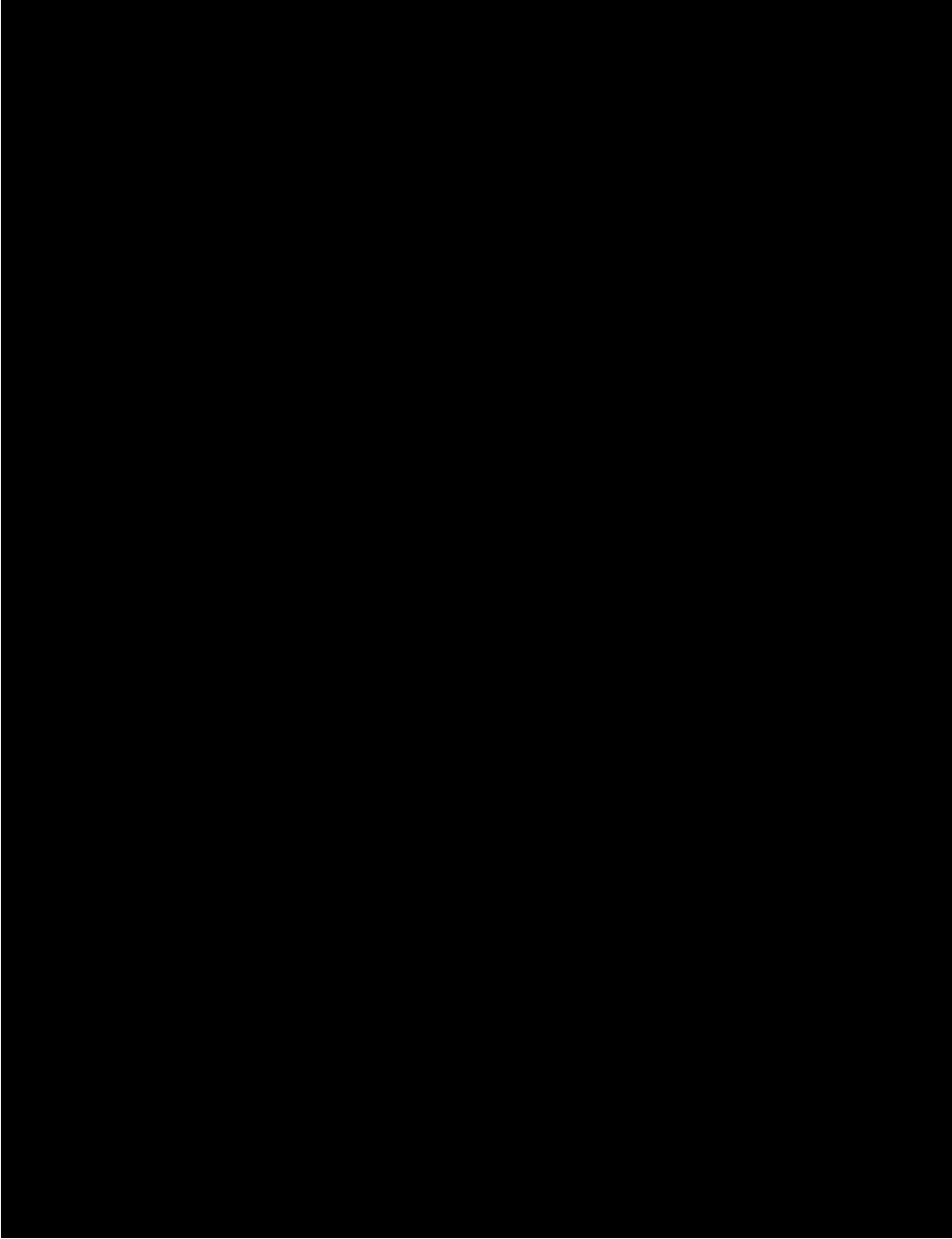


Appendix 6B: Notes on what participants are doing  
with their talk









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**Client study:.....pages 296-329**