The Importance of Making the Unconscious Conscious

Vahishta B Pardiwalla

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City, University of London
Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0HB
United Kingdom

T +44 (0)20 7040 5060

THE FOLLOWING PARTS OF THIS THESIS HAS BEEN REDACTED FOR DATA PROTECTION REASONS:

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Preface

The central theme of this DPsych portfolio is highlighting the importance of elusive phenomena to the consciousness of individuals. Consciousness refers to awareness and perception of one's mind and/or surroundings (Sruthi & Mukherjee, 2020). Freud's topographical model of the mind conceptualised consciousness into three levels: the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious (Lemma, 2015). Freud described the unconscious mind to be systematic configurations of information which is not available to individuals but is present. This information was believed to be a source of motivation for humans and through defence mechanisms, such as, repression, this information is kept in the unconscious by the mind as a natural protective mechanism. This includes memories, defences, sexual desires, and aggression drives (Lemma, 2015). The study of consciousness has moved beyond Freud and has been demonstrated in cognitive neuroscience where research has found that memory encryption, decision-making, problem-solving (Milner, Squire & Candle, 1998), and emotional processing (Solms & Turnbull, 2002) can all occur without conscious awareness. This portfolio will focus on how elusive and ambiguous phenomena can go unacknowledged and unprocessed by recipients.

In my first year as a trainee, I came across the concept of racial microaggressions, I was fascinated and sceptical of this concept. When I first started going through the literature, I was surprised to see that the description of microaggressions reflected my experiences. It included things I had experienced daily but never really thought about, for example, people complimenting my English or telling me I am pretty for an Asian girl. These comments seemed so normal and harmless to me and so I was confused and intrigued as to why they were problematic. It was difficult to comprehend how exchanges where there were no malicious intents and did not cause any obvious injury be bad? I then started to reflect on my experiences on a deeper level, I started to notice how I related to my culture and how my identity had been constructed. That is when I realised that the impact was deeper than I thought. I had unconsciously altered so many things about myself due to my experiences.

For instance, I had shortened my name and made it easier to pronounce, I had to explain to people that I was not fully Indian to ensure I would not be stereotyped in any way, I would feel proud when people would view me as ethnically ambiguous and I would steer clear of anything which made me seem “too ethnic”. I was shocked that all this had happened without me even realising, that is when I embarked on this journey to examine the unconscious processes which occur in people’s daily lives.

Section A: Empirical Research

“Racial Microaggressions in the Contemporary U.K. Context: Exploring the Experiences of British Asians”.

The first part of this portfolio focuses on the racial microaggression experiences of British Asians. I focused on the experiences of eight participants as I wanted to examine this ambiguous phenomenon in others. I realised through my research that racial microaggressions had been heavily researched in American literature and there was a strong evidence base for it. However, the U.K. literature was limited especially regarding the experiences of British Asians. Seeing the impact, it had on me unconsciously and that described in existing literature I thought it was important to examine the phenomenon and provide these individuals the opportunity to voice their experiences. By using semi-structured interviews, I was able to gain deep insights into their experiences and how they made sense of them. This highlighted that racial microaggressions were a racial reality for British Asians, however, acknowledging and processing them posed various challenges.

Section B: Publishable Journal Article

Understanding the Impacts of Racial Microaggressions on British Asians

The second part of this portfolio expands on the main research study by specifically focusing on the impacts of racial microaggressions. It highlights the detrimental impacts racial microaggressions have on the emotions, identity, relationships, and professional lives of British Asians if they go unacknowledged and unprocessed. Therefore, demonstrating the

importance of being aware of this phenomenon and helping recipients make the unconscious conscious.

Section C: Client Case Study

The finale part of this portfolio contains a client case study joint with a process report. The client presents with complex-post traumatic stress disorder due to childhood sexual abuse. She had gone most of her life being unaware of the detrimental impacts her childhood trauma had on her. She often minimised the incidents and would blame her symptoms on herself and believed they were personal shortcomings. Through the application of Ehlers and Clark's (2000) model of trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy, I helped her realise the impact of her childhood experiences. I demonstrate in this report that by conducting reliving work and making her trauma memories conscious she was able to overcome them.

Evaluation of Portfolio

Essentially, in all three aspects of this portfolio, I highlight the importance of awareness of ambiguous phenomena which may not overtly impact recipients. However, covertly they can be harmful as their power lies in their invisibility. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge and validate the experiences of recipients. The importance of making the unconscious conscious also has major implications for counselling psychologist, because if we can acknowledge and understand elusive phenomena like racial microaggressions and complex-trauma we can empower and validate the experiences of those around us, including our clients and colleagues.

I started my counselling psychology journey as being naïve, unaware, and confused which is why I think I was drawn to ambiguous phenomena. I felt empathically attuned to individuals with such experiences. Witnessing individuals doubt themselves and second-guess their perceptions felt familiar to me which is why I was curious to learn how to elevate that distress for others. I believe that my portfolio helped me with that too because it gave me the opportunity to self-reflect and understand one of the contributing factors to the

construction of my personality. When I first began reading about microaggressions I realised how much these experiences had impacted my self-confidence and the way I conducted myself. I would give the opinions of others more value and doubt my knowledge and perception. However, when I was able to understand why this was and able to name the experiences that transferred these subliminal messages to me of inferiority and self-doubt, I was able to condemn these thought patterns. Therefore, I wanted to be able to do the same for others which is why I decided to conduct my research on racial microaggressions.

I realised in my final year that complex-trauma had a similar disposition to ambiguity like microaggressions. For many of my complex-trauma clients, the challenge was self-doubt and an inability to fully label their traumatic experiences. I noticed that when clients were able to recognise their traumatic experiences as real, they were able to take away their power. That is when my portfolio went beyond reflecting my personal life, it made me realise that the power of experiences lies in their ambiguity. If that power is taken away by acknowledgement and validation the individual can be empowered. This gave me confidence as a psychologist to face issues with clients straightforwardly. I used to be terrified of confrontation or saying the wrong things, however, my portfolio gave me the confidence to overcome this. I was able to believe in myself more and challenge my negative self-beliefs and because of this, I was able to do the same for my clients. Therefore, I think this is an important piece of work as it can help empower others to confront ambiguous phenomena and to reflect to see what unconscious experiences have held them back in life.

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Section A: Doctoral Research

Racial Microaggressions in the Contemporary U.K. Context:

Exploring the Experiences of British Asians

Abstract

A critical literature review on racial microaggression literature revealed an evident knowledge gap. Racial microaggression literature originating in the U.K. was limited, especially that which examined experiences of British Asians. While the academic literature fails to provide an in-depth account of individuals' experiential realities it demonstrates the importance of studying racial microaggressions. Therefore, the current study aimed to expand the current literature base by exploring British Asian experiences of racial microaggressions using a phenomenological approach. Eight participants were recruited through volunteer sampling and were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. The study aimed to gain better insight into their experiences. Hence, interview questions inquired about the experiences of racial microaggressions they have encountered, how the encounters impacted them mentally, physically, and/or psychologically, how they dealt with the encounter and its effects. The interview transcripts were analysed using an interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA). The analysis rendered three superordinate themes. Superordinate theme one 'Racial microaggression experiences' looked at the nature of racial microaggression experiences described by participants and consisted of the following subthemes: Direct racial microaggression experiences, indirect racial microaggression experiences and environmental racial microaggressions. The next superordinate theme 'Reactions to racial microaggressions' encompassed the following subthemes: Attempting to make sense of experiences, acceptance, and confrontation and action. The third superordinate theme 'Impact of racial microaggressions' includes these subthemes: Emotional experience, impacts on identity, personality, and self-image, impact on professional and personal life, and learning opportunity and self-development.

Literature Review

Overview

This chapter contains an in-depth literature review on the concept of racial microaggressions. At first, critical race theory will be introduced and discussed as a mean of framing an understanding of racial microaggression. Next, a description of the British Asian demographic will be provided followed by an introduction to contemporary racism and a discussion of the development of the racial microaggression concept. A definition of racial microaggressions will be introduced and the phenomenon will be explained. Thereafter, evidence highlighting the existence of racial microaggressions in real-life settings will be presented. This research will be critically evaluated to highlight how the application of the racial microaggression theory to real-life initiatives can be beneficial. Next, criticisms surrounding the racial microaggressions concept will be discussed and debated. Subsequently, existing research on the British Asian experiences of racial microaggressions will be presented to highlight significant gaps in literature. Then the impact of racial microaggressions on recipients will be examined by evaluating quantitative and qualitative studies. Lastly, the implications for counselling psychology will be examined to emphasise the importance the current research may hold for the field.

Introduction

In 2017 one in four Brit's identified as being racially prejudice, with 26% describing themselves as "little" or "very" prejudice (National Centre for Social Research, 2017). An illusion of a 'post-racial' society within liberal democracies such as the U.K. exists. The idea that such nations have moved beyond racism is perpetuated by the portrayal of ethnic minority individuals in positions of power (Patel & Connelly, 2019). For instance, the marriage of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle was used to evidence that racism is a concern of the past in Britain (Murray, 2018). However, contemporary racism seems to have replaced biologically based overt racism for racism which is covert and based on culture (Patel &

Connelly, 2019). ‘Racial Microaggressions’ which fall under the contemporary racism umbrella have garnered significant attention within American literature. While in the U.K. literature is slowly developing, research on racial microaggressions specifically seems limited.

According to the 2011 census data, the total population of England and Wales was 56.1 million of which 4.2 million people (7.5%) were from Asian ethnic groups. Asians were identified as the largest ethnic minority group within the regions (U.K. Government, 2018)**.** As they make up a significant portion of the population it is important to understand their experiences within the U.K. context. However, academic literature on the British Asian experiences of racial microaggressions is scarce. Grey literature indicates that racial microaggressions are an experiential reality for British Asians which can negatively impact them in various ways. Therefore, this study aims to expand the current literature base by exploring the British Asian experiences of racial microaggressions in the contemporary U.K. context.

Critical race theory

This study will apply the critical race theory framework to understand racial microaggressions. Critical race theory developed in America during the 1980s to help legal scholars understand the role of race and racism within American society (Delgado, 1995), critical race theory is claimed to have no single definition. Rather it is considered a dynamic framework which proposes that racism is inbuilt within the fabric of society and has the goal to emancipating minorities who are oppressed by the system (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011). Despite the context-specificity of its origins, being developed to analyse civil rights legislation and societal racism towards African Americans (Yosso, Smith, Ceja & Solorzano, 2009), it has developed since then and the framework is claimed to have global relevance (Gillborn, 2011). This is potentially attributed to the critical race theory not proposing a universal theory of race (Pitcher, 2011). Nevertheless, it has five central tenants (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011):

1. The centrality of racism- It proposes that racism is normal and is deeply embedded in social order (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Critical race theorists posit that racism is not necessarily always overt but rather it can operate in a nuanced manner as it becomes entrenched within the sociopolitical contexts of Western societies (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011). Concepts like meritocracy, colour-blindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity are said to discreetly continue the oppression of minorities while serving the disguised self-interests of majority groups (Solorzano, 1997). Critical race theory aims to challenge such dominant ideologies (Yosso et al., 2009).
2. Interest convergence- This notion asserts that common beliefs are created by the majority to maintain the status-quo and oppress minorities (Bell,1980). Suggesting that White individuals support racial justice as long as they benefit, and it converges with their interests. Critical race theory aims to expose such narratives and is committed to social justice which includes empowering marginalised groups (Yosso et al., 2009).
3. Intersectionality- While the focus of the critical race theory is mainly on racial inequality it does not overlook others forms of discrimination. Racism is thought to intersect with discrimination based on gender, class, sexuality, and more (Crenshaw, 1991).
4. Storytelling and counter-storytelling- The framework particularly values the voices of racial minorities and views their experiential knowledge as legitimate and essential to understanding racial discrimination (Carrasco, 1996). Through storytelling, biographies, family histories, parables, scenarios, and chronicles the lived experiences of people of colour are heard (Yosso et al., 2009).
5. Interdisciplinary perspective- To examine race and racism within a historical and contemporary context critical race theory employs interdisciplinary methods (Delgado, 1984).

Critical race theory is claimed to be a driving force in highlighting the implicit racist norms/practices which are engrained in Western democracies (Flemmen & Savage, 2017). Its movement beyond overt racism acknowledges the damage contemporary racism can inflict and recognises the importance of challenging benign manifestations of racism. Therefore, it was thought appropriate to use critical race theory as a framework to understand the racial microaggression experiences of British Asians.

British Asians

The U.K. experienced a surge in immigration after World War Two including migrants from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and old Commonwealth nations. Their reasons for migration included a search for a better life, job prospects, advancing financial/social positioning, escaping violence, famine, and persecution (Ghuman, 1994). Initially, Asian men migrated alone with the idea of earning money and returning home (Brah, 2006), however, overtime chain migration occurred leading to the expansion of communities. Immigration from the Indian sub-continent especially increased in 1961 as concerns grew that government restrictions would be placed on individuals of those regions entering the U.K. (Ghuman, 1994).

Initially, cultural identity was not perceived to be a political issue for Asians and their sense of self was secure. Asians found a way to maintain their links to home by actively seeking individuals from their communities, this led to the formation of close-knit groups where their values, customs, and languages were preserved (Brah, 2006). The daily lives of Asians in Britain changed around the early 1960s as anti-immigration campaigns, discrimination in housing and employment, and racial abuse became increasingly significant (Brah, 2006).

Nevertheless, Asians were considered ‘model-minorities’ by opinion-makers. They were perceived to be hardworking, non-threatening and apolitical compared to African Caribbeans, who were stereotyped as lazy, criminals, and anarchists (Ratna, 2014). Racial

biology was linked to cultural markers of identity, implying these aspects were inherent. Such racial triangulation was said to be used to exert control over both minority groups and serve the White population's cultural and racial hegemony. This warned Asians to remain subdued and apolitical or else, they would compromise their social and economic status and mobility opportunities like African Carribeans and it indicated to African Carribeans that their inferiority was due to their own deficiencies. This allowed those in power to have plausible deniability about the existence of racism and promoted the idea of a colour-blind nation (Ratna, 2014). Even now, the 'model-minorities' tag is attached to British Asians. However, not all minority groups are valued the same (Ramji, 2006).

The 70s encompassed the second-generation British Asians who had mainly received formal British education. These young individuals were considered to be suffering from a 'culture clash' and identity conflicts due to the exposure to different cultures at home and school (Brah, 2006). However, recent studies have suggested the British Asian identity is adaptable and dynamic. Rather than being seen as confused, young British Asians are labelled 'cultural hybrids' who have managed to create a fusion of Eastern and Western identity markers (Amin, 2003). To demonstrate this Dey, Balmer, Pandit, Saren and Binsardi (2017) used the example of British Celebrity Baker Nadiya Hussain who said, "I am British, Muslim and Bangladeshi and I am proud of all three". They asserted the following "Hence British South Asians, like many other diaspora communities, face dual/multiple cultural identities and their daily lives, consumption and sociocultural interactions are influenced by the dichotomies and complexities emanating from their bicultural orientation." (Dey et al., 2018, p. 791). This creates a narrative where British and Asian identities are not polarised and categorised as progressive and regressive (Ratna, 2014). However, despite achieving harmony in diverse values, British Asians' identities are still perceived as static, homogenous, and are considered backward and strange due to their Asian culture (Burdsey, 2007a).

It is important to note that everything mentioned thus far is related to South Asians, this includes Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis. Through analysis of literature on the Asian demographic in the U.K. the researcher noticed that there has been a lack of acknowledgement of East Asians. Aspinall (2003) even speaks about how in the 2001 census East Asians were not even classified under the 'Asian/ Asian British' category rather they were classified as 'Chinese or other ethnic group'. This may indicate that East Asians are not considered British Asian. A few studies mention East Asians, but even they tended to specifically focus on the British Chinese population (e.g. Yeh, 2014). This is concerning as this indicates that perhaps a significant sector of the Asian community who might identify as 'British Asian' are being overlooked. Yeh (2014) suggested that perhaps the perception of British Chinese as being a 'model-minority' may give the illusion that they are protected from racism, explaining their exclusion from such conversations. This explanation could apply to other East Asians too. Nevertheless, in later sections, it will become evident that racial discrimination is a concern for these communities too. Hence, it is important to gain insight into a cross-section of the British Asian demographic.

Contemporary racism

Racism has proven to be resistant and adaptive. Our understanding of racism has transformed over time and new definitions of what is considered racism have evolved (Lee and Lutz 2005). Due to the wide scope and application of the term, a universal definition would not be sufficient (Fleras, 2014). Therefore, what is considered racist can depend on how the individual defines racism or views a particular context. The fluidity of the concept might be helpful sometimes, however, it can also aggravate and confuse individuals (Fleras, 2016).

In Western societies like the U.K. egalitarian values are increasingly endorsed as social norms, this coincides with increasing contemporary racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998). The term contemporary racism is an umbrella term which can encompass the following forms of racism: modern racism (McConahay, 1986), symbolic racism (Sears, 1988), and aversive

racism (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002). These forms of contemporary racism all commonly share the belief that racism is covert, ambiguous and has derived from overt and conscious racism. They can also be thought to be on a spectrum with aversive racists being the least intentionally negative, then modern and symbolic racists are thought to be more biased, while blatantly overt racists sit on the other end of the spectrum (Nelson, 2006). Contemporary racism is thought to be concerning as it may reflect a deeply embedded prejudice that has been preserved over-time and manifests within individuals unconsciously to maintain racial hierarchies and protect racially privileged positions rather than to cause intentional offence (Estacio & Saidy-Khan, 2014).

The aversive racism framework proposes that subtle racism by well-intentioned individuals stems from their unconscious rudimentary cognitive processes, for example, socialisation, ingroup/outgroup categorisation, motivational and cognitive biases (Dovidio et al., 2002). Although consciously these individuals may truly consider themselves to be unbiased perhaps even holding beliefs supporting racial equality, unconsciously they hold racial biases and negative beliefs regarding minorities which manifest covertly (Dovidio, Pearson & Penner, 2018). Whilst upholding a self-perception portraying them as unbiased and egalitarian, they would still unconsciously engage in regular discriminatory behaviours where their behaviour can be justified and attributed to factors other than race (Dovidio et al., 2002). Interestingly, the framework labels perpetrators of such transgressions as ‘well-intentioned’, however, this label could be argued to be subjective depending on whose perspective you look at the transgression from. A recipient of these acts may not perceive the perpetrator as ‘well-intentioned’. Therefore, perhaps a criticism of this framework could be that only the perpetrator and their thought-process is accounted for while the recipient and impact on them is overlooked.

Alternatively, implicit biases are automatic unconscious responses which evolve from repeated exposure to information regarding a group. These biases are relatively change-resistant and inherited through direct experiences or socialisation, they can echo cultural

associations and hence vary from explicit biases (Dovidio et al., 2018). Implicit and explicit biases are both independent predictors of prejudicial behaviour as they are weakly correlated (Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009).

A manifestation of contemporary racism in modern Britain is thought to be 'Brexit' as the vote is claimed to have racial underpinnings (Bhambra, 2017). Many scholars discussed immigration concerns and preserving national identity as driving forces of the leave campaign. The strongest predictor of opposition to EU membership was negative beliefs regarding immigration (Portes, 2016). Leave voters were said to favour policies restricting freedom of movement and prioritised British order and stability over diversity (Goodwin & Milazzo, 2017). However, when Patel and Connelly (2019) interviewed 13 leave voters they found that many participants tried to distance themselves from racism and were angered and disappointed by the claims of racism made about leave voters. Participants stated they had many small reasons for their votes, however, restricting immigration was a key reason. They posed their concerns regarding immigration in a legitimate manner which made them seem like defensive responses to the victimisation of Whiteness.

Therefore, Patel and Connelly (2019) concluded the following "we argue that far from living in a 'post-racial' epoch, racisms continue to thrive through new modes of articulation. These new racisms emerge from the shadows at key times, such as the EU Referendum, and refashion themselves in ways that are considered more palatable than the older (explicit) racisms of past" (p.968). While this study is limited to a specific population of the U.K. it provides insight into how contemporary racism may be deeply embedded into the U.K.'s political and social structures.

Racial Microaggressions

Sue et al. (2007) recognised that many researchers struggled to illustrate discrimination that transpires in everyday life through 'aversive racism' or 'implicit bias'. Through analysis of contemporary racism literature, they deemed that the term 'racial

microaggression' was most suited to describe the manifestation of these phenomena in everyday life.

'Racial microaggressions' were originally defined as "subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are 'put downs'" (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez & Willis, 1978, p.66). The term was later re-established by Sue et al. (2007) to mean "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults" (p. 271). Such exchanges encase demeaning racial messages which are transferred verbally, behaviourally, and environmentally by generally well-intentioned individuals.

Sue et al. (2007) proposed a taxonomy of microaggressions which was firstly established by analysing literature on aversive racism. Aversive racism studies provide support for the racial microaggression concept as they demonstrated that implicit and explicit stereotyping independently existed (e.g. DeVos & Banaji, 2005), that daily racially charged discrimination is ambiguous (e.g. Crocker & Major, 1989), that everyday racism can manifest in various situations (e.g. Plant & Peruche, 2005), and various similarities were found between accounts of microaggressive encounters and items on measures examining perceived racial discrimination and race-related stress (e.g. Liang, Li, & Kim, 2004). Secondly, Sue et al. (2007) acquired experiential evidence from analysing the life stories written by White psychologists and psychologists of colour which were related to race (e.g. American Counseling Association, 1999).

Sue et al's (2007) proposed microaggression taxonomy includes three distinct types of microaggressions. The first being 'microassaults' which are blatant expressions of deliberate racial derogations that can be verbal or non-verbal and are intended to hurt minorities, for example, racial slurs. The degree of perpetrator consciousness is thought to be more varied within the other two forms of microaggressions. Microinsults are subtle snubs which belittle someone's racial heritage or identity. These exchanges are often unintentional,

however, their undertone is humiliating, insensitive and rude. For example, an innocent statement like “your English is so good” to an Asian could be perceived to have the underlying message that Asians typically have poor language skills. Microinvalidations are exchanges nullifying the experiences, thoughts and/or feelings of people of colour (Sue et al., 2007), for instance, expressing a colour-blind mentality through statements such as “I don’t see colour”.

Sue et al. (2007) further identified nine lower-order types of microaggressions with distinct themes, for which they provided a detailed table in their original paper (Appendix A). The table differentiated each theme and included sample comments or situations that could be considered racial microaggressions and the latent messages that accompanied them. A review of 73 racial microaggression studies on various racial samples (Wong, Derthick, David, Saw & Okazaki, 2014) observed the reoccurrence of several original themes. However, in most studies, at least one new theme emerged, implying that perhaps an overarching taxonomy of racial microaggressions is not sufficient to understand the experience of racial microaggressions for all ethnic minorities. For instance, Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal & Torino (2009) identified eight microaggression themes directed at Asian Americans, some overlapped with Sue et al’s (2007) original themes, however, the following were unique to Asian Americans: exoticization of Asian women, invalidation of ethnic differences and invisibility. While, for South Asian Americans the “assumption of terrorist activity” theme emerged (Kumar, 2016). This indicates that racial microaggression experiences are not homogenous across different ethnic groups. Therefore, examining the unique racial microaggressions experiences of British Asians is important.

In the real-world context

The concept of microaggressions has begun to garner significant attention in various social contexts. In 2015 the term ‘microaggression’ was awarded the word of the year title by the Global Language Monitor (2015) to reflect the terms growing use across the English-speaking world. Moreover, within various higher education establishments, the concept has

been acknowledged and a narrative has begun to be established. For example, The University of California adopted Sue et al's (2007) racial microaggressions table to produce a microaggressions guideline which can act as a tool to train faculty members and raise awareness across the student body (Barbash, 2015). Similarly, Oxford University's Equality and Diversity Unit in its Trinity term newsletter released cautionary advice to its students regarding microaggressions. They provided examples of actions and phrases which could be deemed racial microaggressions and that could have adverse effects on recipients, these examples included not directly speaking to someone, evading eye-contact and asking someone where they are "originally" from (Turner, 2017). Recently, Cambridge University held unconscious bias and race awareness staff training since the number of Black students enrolled increased by 50% (Sales, 2020).

While the concept of microaggressions has begun to be acknowledged in British Higher Education, Sian's (2017) research on the difficulties experienced by academics of colour/difference at British universities indicates that these establishments are not 'post-racial' and that subtle discrimination is prevalent. She conducted a series of in-depth interviews with academics within universities that come from various cultural and religious backgrounds. Her findings revealed that within these institutions microaggressions manifest in subtle complex ways and are intertwined with institutional racism practices. Various consequences of these exchanges were endured by recipients, for instance, they felt psychologically strained, excluded, and paranoid. Reportedly challenging racism was not seen as an institutional priority and when it is addressed it is done superficially. Sian (2017) concluded that for progression to occur these establishments must develop policies that encourage academics of colour/difference to be actively involved within higher education.

Moreover, Pearce (2019) identified a similar need for training within Initial Teacher Education programmes in England, as she found that at present such programmes do not equip teachers to address racism. Pearce (2019) conducted a longitudinal study lasting six years to identify the factors that hinder beginning teachers from addressing issues

surrounding diversity and racial equality within the classroom. She interviewed eight final year student teachers, five of which were White British. The data found that all participants displayed an awareness of overt racism with some even identifying and challenging the incidences of stereotyping or name-calling they witnessed. However, of the eight participants, only three reported more subtle incidences. Of the three two of the participants were from ethnic minorities and had experienced microaggressions themselves. The third participant was White, and she only reported two instances.

According to Pearce the disparity in accounts from White and minority teachers could be attributed to White teachers not noticing these nebulised incidences or not viewing them as racist. Nevertheless, it highlights the need for teacher education programmes to discuss and address microaggressions as it will help new White teachers to enhance their understanding of racism and of their role in challenging racism. Moreover, including the discussion of microaggressions and labelling it within such training programmes can also validate the experiences of minority student teachers (Pearce, 2019). While Pearce's results are important, they need to be interpreted with caution as it could be argued that the study sample is limited and unrepresentative, for example, no participants of Asian descent were included in the sample. Therefore, examining and including the experiences of these individuals could have significantly altered the results.

In the real-world context, environmental racial microaggressions are rife too. Environmental racial microaggressions are systematic and said to have no perpetrators. However, they seem to affect all minorities interacting in a social setting (Sue et al., 2007). Studies focusing on these macro racial microaggressions seem to be scarce, although a few have focused on them within educational contexts. A recent study by Mills (2020) focused on the environmental racial microaggression experiences of Black undergraduate students within a predominantly White institution. 17 participants were divided based on gender into four focus groups and interviewed.

Through thematic analysis, six types of environmental racial microaggression experiences were identified which included: segregation, lack of representation, campus response to criminality, cultural bias in courses, tokenism, and pressure to conform. The results also highlighted the gender differences in experiences of racial microaggressions as only female participants spoke about cultural bias in courses. They described their courses as highly Eurocentric and reported that discussions or assignments highlighting race were not received positively by faculty or their peers. Conversely, only male participants discussed the lack of ethnic diversity within leadership roles within the institution (Mills, 2020). While these results are insightful, the study is exploratory and limited to one American university sample, hence it is not generalisable. It could be that experiences of British Asians at universities in the U.K. could greatly vary, hence, this is important to examine in the current research.

Beyond educational settings, research studies have found that racial microaggressions are also experienced within the workforce. Studies have shown that racial microaggressions experienced in the workplace can drain one's cognitive resources, negatively impact recipients' job performance and lead individuals to feel invisible (Louis, Rawls, Jackson-Smith, Chambers, Phillips & Louis, 2016; Kim, Block & Nguyen, 2019). For instance, Herbert et al. (2008) explored the experiences of everyday racism amongst Ghanaian migrant workers in the U.K. Participants reported experiencing racism to be naturally occurring in the labour market as they felt that regardless of their qualifications and skills they were denied opportunities due to their race. Participants were provided different reasons for unsuccessful job applications, for instance, lack of experience and communication skills. However, they did not feel like these reasons were legitimate rather they attributed their experiences to an implicit labour market hierarchy which favoured British-born White individuals and was designed to keep participants at the bottom of the employment ladder.

Herbert et al's (2008) participants also spoke about the discrimination they experienced in working life from clients, colleagues, and mangers. Differential practices were hidden in different ways, for example, bureaucratic language of standard procedures. As a result, participants reported feeling powerless, excluded, frustrated, and humiliated. Feelings of frustration seemed to be especially prominent where racism was covert. The study also highlighted the intersectionality of racism with immigration status which contributes to participants' perceptions of racism. This study provides an interesting snippet into the macro biases present within the British labour market and highlights the experiences of racism and exclusion which minorities may face in everyday working life. The study did not just focus on one employment group hence, the data can be generalised to various industries.

However, this study was conducted over 10 years ago and focused on Ghanaians who are considered to be a less-established smaller migrant community (Herbert et al., 2008). Therefore, the experiences of participants in the study may vary from the experiences of British Asians in current times. Nevertheless, a more recent study on British Pakistani and Algerian women demonstrated similar results (Naseem, 2017). Participants reported at some point in their professional career experiencing capped equality due to their racialised identification. Being employed in graduate-level roles did not mean that they received total equality in terms of career progression opportunities and acceptance from co-workers. A sense of isolation was also reported due to a lack of workplace diversity and friendly work environments. The author attributed everyday racism to participants being perceived as "… 'illegitimate' members in their work environment who cannot claim their right to graduate-level professional jobs." (Naseem, 2017, p.103).

Acceptance in the workplace was also reported to be dependent on the visibility of participants religious and/or ethnic identities rather than their experience or qualifications. It seemed the intersectional identities of participants (race, gender, and visibility of religion) were contributing factors to workplace discrimination. Hostile work environments led participants either to return to unstable professional situations and/or tolerate the mental

oppression. Unlike the participants in the Herbert et al's (2008) study, these women were resistant to acknowledge workplace discrimination due to their elusiveness. The author also attributed this resistance to the prominence of multicultural discourse in Britain. While these women expressed their belief in Britain's multicultural discourse the experiences they shared, highlight that racism is prevalent. However, these findings cannot be generalised to all British Asians as the study only included women from two ethnic backgrounds. The study also specifically focused on Muslim women and so discriminatory experiences may vary for British Asians coming from other ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Estacio and Saidy-Khan (2014) also suggested that within the National Health Services (NHS) diversity training and handling of racial microaggression cases needs to improve as ignoring such instances leads to passive endurance of injustice. Their suggestions stem from their analyses of reflective diaries of migrant nurses. They found that racial microaggressions were exhibited by patients' service preferences for non-migrant or British nurses as they were perceived to be more competent and have better English fluency than migrant nurses. Moreover, racial microaggressions from colleagues manifested through subtle bullying using humour or blatant insults targeting their competencies. Participants reported feeling angry, frustrated, and paranoid due to racial microaggressions. However, the ambiguity of racial microaggressions led to them being downplayed as insignificant.

This study demonstrates that racial microaggressions are an experiential reality for people of colour working in the NHS and the U.K. However, its methodological flaws pose limitations. For example, while participants were given freedom to write whenever and whatever they felt in their diaries some prompts were provided. Additionally, participants were contacted to monitor progress every two weeks within the study's six-week period and participants were compensated a £100 Amazon voucher. These aspects of the study could have led to the demand characteristics effect. These findings also cannot be applied to all professionals as the sample was unrepresentative. Only the experiences of nurses who had lived in the UK for a considerable amount of time were investigated, such participants may

have considerably different experiences to someone who may have lived in the UK for a shorter time or left their post, these participants could have had more time to form coping strategies. Moreover, the sample was only recruited from two institutions from one region.

The occurrence of microaggressions within health care settings is not limited to staff members and patients can be subjected to similar experiences. For example, Slaughter-Acey et al. (2019) conducted a retrospective cohort study on 1,410 Black, African American women who gave birth in Detroit between June 2009 and December 2011. They examined the link between perceived racial microaggressions and delayed prenatal care using data collected through a Life-Course Influences on Fetal Environments (LIFE) study. The researchers operationalised perceived microaggressions through the Daily Life Experiences of Racial Discrimination and Bother (DLE-B) scales. This included looking at incidence where the participant felt they were being ignored, their opinions were minimised or devalued, they were being mistaken for someone of the same race and/or they were being followed and observed. The DLE-B particularly focused on the frequency of these occurrences, i.e. how often participants felt these encounters happened, and the extent to which participants were troubled by these encounters.

The findings demonstrated that 24.8% of participants received either no prenatal care or it was delayed. Furthermore, it was found that participants with DLE-B score above the median (a greater score was associated with more racial microaggression experiences) were 24% more likely to have their prenatal care delayed compared to participants with scores equal to or below the median. This indicates that perceived racial microaggressions may influence participants' use of prenatal care. The researchers suggested that participants who may have experienced a greater amount of racial microaggressions in general or within the health care setting specifically may become increasingly hypervigilant of such instances, hence, they may avoid or delay prenatal care as a means to avoid possible discrimination. Moreover, they found that self-reported skin tone was a moderating factor of this relationship, where higher DLE-B scores were associated with participants who identified themselves as

being on either end of the colour spectrum (i.e. being light brown and dark brown) but not for participants who identified themselves as being medium brown.

Slaughter-Acey et al. (2019) employed reliable and validated measures to demonstrate that discrimination based on skin colour along with racial microaggressions can impact women's decisions to access prenatal care. These findings have implications for and could potentially be used to improve health care systems and maternal and child health care programmes. Although, their findings can be said to be limited as causality cannot be inferred from their data and their sample was unrepresentative.

The various studies discussed within this section need to be carefully considered as they do examine niche research topics and tend to have small unrepresentative samples which make their generalisability limited. Nevertheless, these studies demonstrate that racial microaggressions are an experiential reality for people of colour cross-culturally and within various societal contexts, making it a worthwhile phenomenon to investigate.

Criticism

While the conceptual application is wide the concept of racial microaggressions is not free from criticism. Campbell and Manning (2018) claim that microaggression theory and initiatives diverge society from a culture of honour and dignity by glorifying victimhood. They propose that in the rising victimhood culture complaints on minor instances like microaggressions are catastrophised and are widely publicised to garner sympathy and demand third-party interventions by taking on a victim role. These complaints are also seen as a tool for societal control to dominate offenders by making them feel guilty and defensive. Within honour culture sharing your grievance, asking for support, and being a victim of microaggression would be dishonourable. While in dignity culture it would be shameful to do this over a 'minor' transgression as it would show you are not 'thick-skinned'. They believe that victimhood culture and airing out microaggression grievances is damaging to society as it leads to excessive dependency, disharmony, conflict and diminishes our sense of unity.

Sue (2018) argued that Campbell and Manning (2018) seem to overlook the experiential realities of minorities. Firstly, in their formulations of cultures, they overlook the impact power and privilege have on an individual's reaction. Within medieval times seeking personal retribution or voicing discontent was not possible for women, people of colour or those from low socioeconomic groups (Rini, 2015). Many oppressed groups adopted an accommodating attitude towards adversities like enslavement. To create fewer waves, they would hide or indirectly express their fear and hostility towards White slavers (Boyd- Franklin, 2003). Moreover, seeking help from third party sources was not an option for people of colour within the dignity culture phase as their grievances would be discounted, and laws would favour the majority (Sue, 2018).

Furthermore, Freire (1968) argued the first step towards empowerment and liberation is to label the opposing event or process, so it loses its power. Therefore, it can be argued that rather than creating a victimhood culture microaggression theory is deconstructing and disempowering the phenomenon. By developing an understanding of the microaggressions people of colour are being provided with the language to better express their experiences which can be empowering, liberating, and validating. It also makes individuals from majority groups introspect and reflect on how they may contribute to the preservation of oppression within society (Sue, 2018).

Moreover, West (2019) also challenged the idea that ethnic minorities are simply 'hypersensitive' and perpetuating a victimhood culture using self-report questionnaires. His first study consisted of a U.K. based sample which involved Whites and ethnic minority participants. He found that ethnic minorities experienced microaggressions more frequently than White participants, and microaggressions were linked to lower life satisfaction. However, this link was not found to be moderated by minority identity. These findings were replicated in West's (2019) second study where he used groups whose majority/minority statuses were based on geographical differences rather than ethnic and cultural differences.

The sample included Koreans who lived in the U.K. (minority group) and Koreans who lived in Korea (majority group).

These findings undermine the claims of 'hypersensitivity' against minorities and demonstrate that majorities are impacted by microaggressions in similar ways. Hence, if they experienced them at the same frequency as minorities, they too would experience damaging consequences as there is no evidence that they are more resilient or proficient at dealing with microaggressions. Moreover, these results demonstrate that the impact of microaggressions cannot be attributed to the victim mentality of minorities. Nevertheless, these findings should be considered with caution due to the limitations of the retrospective self-reporting methodology which is vulnerable to memory and desirability biases (West, 2019).

Another criticism of the racial microaggression concept comes from Lilienfeld (2017) who posits that racial microaggression research is based on faulty principles, therefore, underdeveloped for real-life application. Henceforth, microaggression training programmes and measures should be suspended until research limitations are addressed. Lilienfeld states that microaggression has an unclear definition and that the categorisation of microaggressions is subjective according to one's interpretation of an action. This can lead to misuse of the term and a well-intended comment can be considered a microaggression as retrospectively most ambiguous comments could be perceived to fit the definition (Lilienfeld, 2017).

Sue (2017) argues that Lilienfeld fails to acknowledge that there are multiple pathways to examine human conditions. Empiricism is limiting as it requires deconstructing microaggression which is a complex phenomenon. In striving to achieve internal validity studies would compromise external validity as reducing a concept based on powerful emotions and subjective experiences to objectification and rationality would take away its experiential reality. Lilienfeld's scientific scepticism inadvertently denies and dilutes the experiences of oppressed individuals. Hence, the holistic approach microaggression

research tends to employ is appropriate. Considering the consequences of microaggressions a moratorium on initiatives is an unaffordable luxury for the oppressed (Sue, 2017) hence, continuing research and enhancing ongoing initiatives is vital.

Furthermore, Fleras (2016) theorises microaggressions as ‘racism 3.0’ which essentially shifts the concept from a positivist perspective which posits that certain acts are racist and/or racism is a series of conditions which can be identified and eradicated. Rather it focuses on inter-subjectivity and lived experience of minorities. The definition of microaggressions according to this framework is dependent on the perception of the individual experiencing the act. This theorisation is also supported by the critical race theory which acknowledges racism can be covert and is hidden within social structures. Hence, rather than placing value on the objective truth this framework prioritises the voices of minorities and views them as legitimate (Carrasco, 1996). This counteracts Lilienfeld’s (2017) criticism as it shifts the concept from an objective phenomenon which can be operationalised to a claims-making process which privileges the voices of minorities in defining what counts as racism (Fleras, 2016).

British Asians and Racial Microaggressions

Per the author’s knowledge, only one study has specifically focused on the British Asian experience of racial microaggressions. Burdsey (2011) interviewed 12 British Asian cricketers and found that racial microaggressions are an experiential reality for British Asians. However, participants tended to minimise racial microaggressions by dismissing them as jokes as they were masked within the locker-room context. Their dismissal was attributed to denial and/or uncertainty that racial microaggressions had occurred, fear regarding the consequences of reporting racial microaggressions and/ or powerlessness. This mitigation strategy is a key component of the ‘colour-blind’ ideology (Doane, 2006) which suggests that discrimination is no longer a substantial factor in the lives of people of colour and that racist acts are only overt, therefore, “it eliminates the bulk of racially motivated actions by individual whites and institutions by fiat” (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p.30). This

finding determines that the colour-blind rhetoric is not limited to White groups, it is so entrenched that it can lead people of colour to promote dominant views and deny their experiential realities.

The study employed the critical race theory framework and through its counter-narrative tenant Burdsey (2011) was able to give British Asians a voice and highlight that discrimination goes beyond the racist/non-racist dichotomous model. However, his findings are limited as it was grounded in the context of first-class cricket and his sample mainly contained Muslims of Pakistani descent. The current study attempted to include a more diverse sample as to be culturally competent as it is important to analyse the narratives of various groups within this population and acknowledge that intersectional identities will impact people's experiences and in-turn their well-being (Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit & Rasmus, 2014). Moreover, the current study attempted to widen the scope by providing insight into the British Asian experiences of racial microaggressions in various contexts.

While the current literature related to British Asians does not explicitly mention racial microaggressions, it does seem to demonstrate the manifestation of everyday racism. These studies tended to only look at British Asians' experiences within sporting and/or entertainment contexts. Nevertheless, they have highlighted important issues which could be the building blocks for the current research. For instance, representation was a commonly discussed issue. Various researchers have highlighted the underrepresentation of British Asians in professional football (Burdsey, 2004). Football has been identified as a popular and socially significant sport for many young British Asian men, however, this passion is not translated into professional participation (Burdsey, 2007b). This becomes evident in the statistics quoted by Kilvington (2019): "Only ten British Asian professional footballers are competing in England out of approximately 4000 despite there being a population of 3.6 million in England and Wales. Just six British Asian footballers between the ages of 16 to 18 years old were attached to the 72 Football League academies in 2009 out of over 1300

players. There is only one British Asian coach out of the 522 senior football coaches in England." (p.584).

Kilvington (2019) identified three main barriers preventing British Asians from participating in professional football. Overt racism is a barrier as the animosity is thought to prevent some British Asians from participating (Kilvington, 2019). The second barrier is covert racism involved within recruitment processes where British Asian talent is tended to be ignored. Various researchers have highlighted an inequality of opportunities as British Asians are overlooked by scouts (Kilvington, 2013). This is attributed to scouts stereotypically perceiving British Asians to be physically inferior to White and Black players (Kilvington, 2020). Asian culture is also thought to be incompatible with English football which also contributes to the exclusion of British Asians (Kilvington, 2013). The final barrier is thought to be the lack of youth level opportunities available within predominately British Asian localities (Bains & Patel, 1996). The discrimination examined in this context seems to coincide with the concept of microaggression on an individual and environmental level. The current research attempted to expand its scope by investigating if there are other industries or areas in which British Asians experience such exclusion.

The media representation of British Asians was another commonly mentioned issue. Tincknell (2020) asserts that while the presence of South Asians within British television and cinema has expanded since the 1980s, how they are represented seems to affirm typical stereotypes. She particularly focused on the representations of older South Asian women in comedies where she argues that such women are presented as grotesque, monstrous, and clownish. While we have seemed to move away from the stereotypical images of subservient women, these women are still portrayed as simple and non-layered characters. Similarly, Mak (2019) surveyed East Asian actors in British television and film and analysed four British productions and found that the following stereotypical portrayals were prevalent: orientalism, the yellow peril, 'model minority', colonial sexuality and fetishism. It seems that East Asians are still portrayed in ways which makes them seem exotic and/or backward. They can also

be caricatured to be criminals as the historical fear of the orient has been reworked. Women too are portrayed as devious criminals if they are not shown as passive “little dolls”.

Previous research has illuminated how typically ethnic minorities within British media are represented as problematic outsiders as coverage tends to focus on signs of racial conflict (Hartmann & Husband, 1974). Saeed (2007) focused on the media representation of British Muslims as he asserts that they have been particularly targeted. They are not represented in the stereotypically passive way other groups of Asians are, rather they are portrayed as radical aggressors whose identity does not match the ‘British secular society’. For instance, he states that Pakistani and Bangladeshi’s are shown to be narrow-minded, self-isolating, and unwilling to assimilate. Saeed (2007) further argues that while the coverage about Islam and Muslims has increased since 9/11 this increase overall consisted of negative portrayals of British Muslims. Tincknell (2020) attributed such portrayals to the political climate: “Moreover, as the cultural climate in Britain has become more polarised in the wake of the Brexit referendum in 2016, the opportunities afforded to actors of Asian heritage appear to have been pulled back towards highly reductive roles as “radicalised” Muslims and their victimised families in crime dramas and thrillers supposedly torn from the headlines.” (p.147).

These studies seem to demonstrate the manifestation of environmental microaggressions in the British media. Such findings are important as they can impact the treatment of such individuals as British citizens (Saeed, 2007). This is thought to be because the media successfully reproduces racism as the media tends to dictate public discussions and strongly tries to influence consumers’ views (Van Dijk, 1991). However, the existing literature seems to be limited and focused on certain subsections of the British Asian population. Furthermore, it does not seem to investigate the experiences and impact such media portrayals have on British Asians themselves. The current study hopes to fill this knowledge gap by exploring the perceptions participants have of the media portrayals of British Asians.

Another important issue discussed in academic literature is the identities of British Asians. Ratna (2014) focused on national identity and belonging within the context of football and found that generally British Asians were constructed to be 'disloyal citizens'. Within football, they are not seen as true supporters of the national team as their loyalties are perceived to be split between their country of origin and England. Furthermore, within football and other contexts, older British Asian's reported attempting to integrate but felt they were not allowed to do so due to racism. The impact of this can be summed up by the following quote: "Hence, their everyday experiences of racism taint their sense of belonging to the nation." (Ratna, 2014, p.299). Some participants who played football also reported that to be perceived as a loyal member of the nation they had to act like an English person and suppress things relating to their Asian heritage which would highlight their difference. However, despite these attempts to fit in acceptance is not guaranteed (Ratna, 2014).

Ratna's (2014) study does not directly mention racial microaggressions but it seems to concur with Sue et al's (2007) 'alien in own land' microaggression theme. It also provides insight into how British Asian experiences of everyday racism can impact their identity and sense of belonging. However, it is limited as it again is focused on the football context. While participants do address other contexts, her sample is limited to football fans and players, hence, these results lack generalisability. The current research aims to investigate such issues of identity and belonging within a more general context with a wider sample.

While academic literature directly addressing the British Asians experience of racial microaggressions is limited a wealth of grey literature online is available. For instance, many British Chinese individuals reported incidents of microassaults like being called a "chink" and feeling that racism against them went unacknowledged (Thomas, 2015). Another British Asian of Indian descent spoke about her identity struggles due to racial microaggressions: "Microaggressions still hurt like racism and they still make you feel as though you don't truly belong." (Sohal, 2015). Tranfield (2020) shared experiences of racial microaggressions where inter-ethnic differences amongst South Asian groups were dismissed and

pathologizing and mocking of her culture were masked as ‘banter’ and subtle comments. She explained that these racial microaggressions led her and her Asian friends to be ashamed and insecure about their culture. They had to make a conscious effort to fit in which in turn led them to disconnect from their cultural identities. Moreover, she explained that this cycle of prejudice carried on as when they confronted racial microaggressions their feelings were invalidated and they would be labelled as ‘overly-sensitive’, which prevented future confrontations.

These individual accounts of racial microaggressions seem to reflect some of the themes mentioned in the academic literature surrounding British Asians. The critical race theory framework places value on the experiential realities of minorities regardless of the form it is presented in (Yosso et al., 2009). Therefore, these accounts should not be dismissed as they are means through which British Asians have conveyed their voices. The current study hopes to contribute to the current knowledge base by filling the gap in academic literature.

Impact

The power of racial microaggressions rests within their invisibility. These exchanges can be more detrimental to recipients than overt racism as their elusive nature can illicitly distress recipients and harvest psychological dilemmas leading them to question their occurrence (Sue et al., 2007). A single racial microaggression encounter can lead to short-term distress but the accumulated impact of racial microaggressions can be detrimental (Nadal et al., 2014). Racial microaggressions are important to examine considering that they are a daily reality for minority individuals hence, the psychological toll could be substantial.

Racial microaggression studies conducted on different minority groups have found that these experiences can have various negative implications for recipients. For example, Sue et al. (2009) found that Asian Americans described feeling belittled, angry, alienated, and frustrated from experiencing constant microaggressions. Psychological distress arose for

these participants as they acknowledged that while the majority of microaggressions were unintentional, they reflected a biased worldview that carried demeaning messages. Participants also experienced ‘catch-22’ situations where if they acknowledged their experience and reacted to microaggressions they would be labelled “paranoid”. Similarly, due to microaggression African Americans reported feeling powerlessness, invisibility, the pressure to represent one’s group, forced compliance and loss of integratory (Sue, Capodilupo & Holder, 2008).

Both these studies employed the qualitative focus-group methodology aiming to provide rich insight into each groups experience. However, using groups can be limiting as they can lead to unrelated discussions or debates. Groups can also be intimidating for some participants limiting their engagement. Moreover, both samples were small and unrepresentative hence, their results cannot be generalised. For example, Sue et al’s (2009) sample did not include all Asian ethnicities and the gender ratio was unequal.

Nevertheless, studies employing other methodologies have similar findings. For example, Ong, Burrow, Fuller-Rowell, Ja and Sue (2013) asked 152 Asian Americans to complete daily measures assessing their affect, physical health, and daily life-events for two-weeks. Using multilevel analyses, they found that days of increased microaggressions tended to elevate negative affect and somatic symptoms (e.g. aches) scores. Their lagged-day analyses found that the unpleasant experiences of microaggressions accumulates and intensifies after each occurrence. From a multiracial sample (N= 506) Nadal et al. (2014) found a significant inverse relationship between ‘The Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale’ (Nadal, 2011) scores and the ‘Mental Health Inventory’ (Veit & Ware, 1983) scores, implying that racial microaggressions were a negative predictor for participants’ mental health. Racial microaggressions were also negatively correlated with negative affect and depressive symptoms.

The above-mentioned studies tend to involve American samples, however, studies using British samples too have rendered important findings. For instance, West (2019)

looked at the impact of recalling experiences of microaggressions on 65 ethnic minority participants and 50 White participants. Firstly, participants completed the 'Positive and Negative Affect Schedule' (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) in which they indicated how accurately 20 emotional descriptions accurately described their feelings in that exact moment. Next participants were randomly assigned to either the negative treatment recall condition or they were assigned the neutral treatment condition. Participants were asked to describe real events in their own words and then complete the PANAS again. Findings revealed that regardless of the participants' ethnicity those who recalled negative experiences in the form of microaggressions reported increased negative affect compared to those who recalled neutral events (West, 2019). Similarly, Wong (2015) found that the 'model minority' stereotype caused British Chinese and Indian students' discomfort, insecurity, and anxiety attributed to high expectations. Not meeting expectations also impacted participants' social identities and the support received by teachers.

Lilienfeld (2017) asserts that cross-sectional studies like those previously mentioned make unqualified casual assertations from correlational data and advocate that racial microaggressions are definitively detrimental to individuals' well-being. Although, limited there have been longitudinal studies that revealed the lasting impacts of microaggressions. For example, Torres, Driscoll and Burrow (2010) found at a one-year follow-up that the microaggression "underestimation of personal ability" was positively correlated with perceived stress and subsequently increased depressive symptoms for African Americans. Lilienfeld (2017) also argued that considering the ambiguity of microaggression items most studies overlook the possibility that their results could be shaped by individual differences like negative emotionality. For instance, Ong, Cerrada, Lee and Williams (2017) found that racial microaggressions and sleep-disturbance were moderated by 'stigma consciousness' for Asian Americans. As stigma consciousness, amplified participants' sleep quality and length diminished on nights after a reported microaggression. These results were robust to adjustments for other individual differences too.

Considerable literature also discusses the relationship between racial microaggressions and racial trauma. For example, within Nadal, Erazo and King's (2019) multiracial sample (N=254) they found that a higher number of racial microaggressions were linked to a higher number of trauma symptoms. Race-based traumatic stress can be defined as "race related transactions between individuals or groups and their environment that emerge from the dynamics of racism and that are perceived to tax or exceed existing individual and collective resources or threaten well-being" (Harrell, 2000, p.44). Race-based traumatic stress is said to differ from post-traumatic stress as the latter usually only involves one unexpected large event. Alternatively, in race-based traumatic stress, the stressors are said to be persistent, subtle, and ambiguous, such as microaggressions. Although, the two share similarities they should be considered separately as they can produce different symptoms (Miller, 2009).

Carter (2007) furthered the concept by introducing the 'Race-Based Traumatic Stress Model' which is a clinical nonpathological model in which symptoms are said to depend on the nature of racist experiences. Racial discrimination which is considered avoidant-based, for example, being denied housing, is associated with reactions like arousal and hypervigilance. While racial harassment which is typed more hostile is associated with more complex emotional symptoms, for instance, depression (Pieterse & Powell, 2016). However, the severity of symptoms within this model is dependent on the subjective experiences of recipients and the cultural attributions they make to the events (Comas-Diaz, 2016). Comas-Diaz (2016) argues that ignoring racial microaggressions may lead to the underdiagnosing of racial trauma and race-related stress.

Furthermore, racial trauma and microaggressions are considered acculturative iterations designed to reinforce racial positionality and the expectations from recipients which cater to the needs, status, and emotions of White people. It seems that acculturation also acts as a coping mechanism wherein which people of colour learn to live with White people in harmony. For instance, they have learnt that avoiding racial discourses and confronting microaggressions is ideal to avoid White distress. This leads to peaceful coexistence as the

person of colour is racially innocuous and perceived as unthreatening. The understanding of the interplay of these concepts is important for psychologists as it could help improve the quality of care when helping clients healing from race-related trauma (Liu et al., 2019). These theoretical insights are valuable to counselling psychology as they highlight the psychological impact of racial microaggressions. However, such research does not provide deep insight into the experiential realities of individuals. The current study aimed to examine the manifestation of these concepts, especially within a British context.

Although the studies discussed in this section tend to have various methodological flaws, each study highlights the various negative impacts racial microaggressions can have on individuals. Racial microaggressions seem to be a complex phenomenon which impacts individuals on a psychological, emotional, and physical level. Moreover, racial microaggressions seem significantly linked to traumatic symptoms. Therefore, it seems to improve the quality of care within counselling psychology it is important to gain a more in-depth understanding of racial microaggressions and its effects.

Implications to Counselling Psychology

Counselling psychologists have a duty to be culturally competent hence, awareness and acknowledgement of racial microaggression experiences are essential to developing strong therapeutic alliances with people of colour. Cultural competence can be “defined as the ability to understand, appreciate and interact with people from culture or belief systems different from one’s own” (DeAngelis, 2015, p. 64). An awareness of the link between racial microaggressions and mental health can be useful for psychoeducation as informed practitioners can guide clients to identify racial microaggressions, validate their experiences and help them form coping strategies. Microaggressions may have become a normalised aspect of a client’s life therefore, they may be oblivious to the negative impact it has on their well-being. Reflection can allow clients to work through unresolved emotions preventing their internalisation and better equip them for future encounters (Nadal et al., 2014). Validating a client’s racial microaggression experiences is important as recipients often doubt that they

dealt with racial microaggression situations effectively leading to guilt, shame, and fear (Sue et al., 2008). This will also strengthen alliances as practitioners would earn credibility (Sue & Zane, 1987).

Moreover, practitioners need to be mindful of the racial dynamics within therapy as the therapeutic process is not immune to racial microaggressions. Therapists may engage in microinvalidations and microinsults by dismissing clients' experiential realities or by stereotyping clients of the same racial groups and/or dismissing their cultural heritage (Nadal et al. 2014). Owen, Tao, Imel, Wampold and Rodolfa (2014) found that 53% of clients (n = 152) reported experiencing therapists microaggression, of that 76% reported that microaggression was left undiscussed. Lee, Tsang, Bogo, Johnstone and Herschman (2018) through their critical discourse analysis of transcripts of genuine therapy sessions also found the presence of all the themes presented in Sue et al's (2007) taxonomy of racial microaggressions (except environmental racial microaggressions).

Therapists need to efficiently acknowledge the ongoing process within therapy and skilfully navigate conversations regarding racial microaggressions as Owen et al. (2014) found that perceived racial microaggressions were inversely related to therapeutic alliance ratings. Ratings were even lower for therapist-client dyads that experienced racial microaggressions and did not discuss them than those who experienced racial microaggressions and did discuss them. To lower dropout rates and improve therapeutic outcomes microaggressions must be prevented and/or acknowledged when they occur (Nadal et al., 2014). Therefore, racial microaggression research is needed to inform therapists' training and practice to help them develop their multicultural orientation and to reflect on their own beliefs, experiences, and biases (Owen et al., 2014). To improve the therapeutic outcomes of British Asians it is important to be well informed about their experiential realities of racial microaggressions. Hence, the current study aimed to gain a better understating of the British Asian experience.

Moreover, racial microaggression research is imperative to counselling psychology as research has found this phenomenon to be present beyond client work. Constantine, Smith, Redington and Owens (2008) investigated the experiences of racial microaggressions encountered by Black faculty members in counselling and counselling psychology courses. Through a series of semi-structured interviews, seven primary themes were found that highlighted that racial microaggressions from colleagues and/or students are an experiential reality for participants. Participants reported having trouble distinguishing the nature of the subtle discrimination if it was more race or gender-based. Depending on the context of the racial microaggression encounter participants alternated between feeling invisible and overexposed within their institution and/or department. Racial microaggressions were also portrayed as a mentally and emotionally draining phenomenon which could lead to social or physical isolation.

Furthermore, perceived racial microaggressions have also been found within cross-racial supervisory relationships. Constantine and Sue (2007) interviewed clinical and counselling psychology trainees who identified themselves as Black and found that White supervisors microaggressed in the following ways: holding stereotypical views about trainees or their Black clients, dismissing or avoiding cultural or racial issues in supervision, not acknowledging White privilege, and attributing blame for the aetiology of mental health issues experienced by clients of colour on the client rather than societal oppression. White supervisors were also reported to provide culturally insensitive treatment options which were often grounded in Eurocentric conceptualisations of mental health. The provision of feedback to trainees regarding their clinical skills was also seen as being problematic. Participants reported a sense that their supervisors feared being seen as ‘racist’ and hence restrained from providing feedback. Conversely, some participants felt due to their supervisors’ prejudice attitudes that the feedback they did receive was primarily focused on the trainees’ weaknesses (Constantine & Sue, 2007). The authors used the aversive racism framework to explain both approaches to feedback (Dovidio et al., 2002). In that, the aversive

racist supervisor may not be aware of their unconscious biases towards Black individuals and their implicit prejudice leads them to unknowingly communicate to Black trainees that the feedback they receive is related to or influenced by their race (Constantine & Sue, 2007).

Participants reported feeling frustrated, invalidated, angry and disappointed due to such microaggressions. An environment of mistrust was created due to this which negatively impacted the process and outcomes of supervision and client work. This led to the creation of unconscious barriers towards discussions and inadvertently created rifts in the supervisory relationship (Constantine, 2003). These negative views held by White supervisors could also seemingly diminish the trainees' mental health, especially if trainees' feel like they must protect their Black clients from their supervisors (Constantine & Sue, 2007). Supervisors' avoidance of discussions on race and culture can also be harmful to clients seen by their trainees. If these issues are viewed as being unimportant within supervision, it becomes indicative of a lack of cultural consideration which then may lead trainees to provide non-holistic treatment to their clients of colour (Inman, 2006). This could raise ethical issues as clients would be receiving inadequate therapy which is not culturally sensitive (Ramos-Sanchez et al., 2002).

These studies demonstrate that the experiences of racial microaggressions can have detrimental consequences for the mental and physical well-being of those within the field of counselling psychology and for the field itself (Constantine et al., 2008). It can not only damage relationships with colleagues and supervisor, but it can also deny clients adequate care which is holistic and culturally sensitive (Constantine and Sue, 2007). Multiculturalism is declared to be the fourth force in counselling and psychotherapy (Pedersen, 1991) and a lot of developments have been made within the field. Nevertheless, a need to deepen our understanding of contemporary racism and racial microaggressions is evident to improve our training programmes, the wellbeing of faculty and trainees and the provision of treatment to a culturally diverse population (Constantine et al., 2008). Therefore, racial microaggressions

research such as the current study is valuable to help aid the development of the field and progress its commitment to the social justice agenda.

While Constantine et al. (2008) and Constantine and Sue's (2007) studies provide vital information, they are not without limitations. Firstly, both studies included small unrepresentative samples. Secondly, findings of both studies also relied on transcripts which could be limiting as the verbal inflections or articulation that may have occurred during discussions were not accounted for during data analysis. These inflections or articulations could have revealed more information about the impact racial microaggressions had on participants. Lastly, as both studies employed Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) their findings are limited as they were based on the researcher's interpretations of the data. While the researchers in both studies did consider the impact their biases would have on the data, their perceptions likely influenced various aspects of the study.

Despite these limitations, these studies demonstrate that racial microaggressions are an experiential reality for individuals within counselling and counselling psychology. Even though these studies do not provide generalisable themes they are a step towards generalisable findings. More research such as the current study is needed to establish generalisable findings on racial microaggressions (Harre, 1979).

Rationale

There is an evident gap in academic knowledge regarding the racial microaggression experiences of British Asians. The existing literature highlights the importance of studying racial microaggressions, however, it fails to provide an in-depth account of individuals' experiential realities. The current study has major implications for the counselling psychology field as the findings could potentially develop practitioners' cultural competencies and help better equip them to work with this demographic effectively. Moreover, the findings could help create general awareness regarding racial microaggressions. Through the application of the phenomenological perspective, this study will attempt to answer the following research

question: “how do British Asians make sense of their experiences of racial microaggressions?”. By examining participants’ interpretations of their racial microaggression experiences this study aims to provide better insight into the daily experiences of British Asians.

Methodology Chapter

Overview

The first part of the chapter will introduce the study's methodology. Firstly, I will rationalise the decision for adopting a qualitative framework in relation to the research aim. The study's epistemological and ontological views will then be discussed. Thereafter, an overview of the IPA approach will be presented alongside the justifications for employing it. The current study will then be evaluated. The second part of the chapter will cover the study's method including the study's sampling strategy, participants, procedure, analytic strategy, and ethical considerations. The final part of the chapter will focus on my reflexive account. This chapter is written in the first person to preserve its authenticity and allow the reader to engage with the researcher's internal processes.

Research aims and questions

The study aims to gain better insight into the racial microaggression experiences of British Asians and posed the research question: "how do British Asians make sense of their experiences of racial microaggressions?"

Methodology

Rationale for adopting a qualitative approach

Qualitative research is interested in subjective experiences, mainly how individuals interpret and discuss these experiences (Willig, 2012). Hence, a qualitative approach which provides deep novel insight into the experiences of participants is in line with the study's aim. As illustrated previously there is limited information on the British Asian experiences of racial microaggressions, therefore, it seemed appropriate to undertake a qualitative approach which is exploratory, inductive, and fluid. Moreover, qualitative research allows phenomena to be studied naturalistically where specific experiences and their interpretations can be examined within certain contexts (Willig, 2012). This is in line with the current study's aim as

this research is trying to illuminate how British Asians make sense of racial microaggressions. Collecting data on the quality and texture of these experiences could help fulfil the study's aspirations of raising awareness and assisting practitioners to be culturally competent when working with this demographic. The aim of the study was not to test hypotheses derived from theories, establish links between variables or find casual relationships hence, the deductive approach employed by quantitative studies would have been unsuitable (Riazi, 2016). I seek to understand racial microaggressions in the U.K. context rather than predict the outcomes racial microaggressions might have on British Asians.

Ontology and epistemology

Ontology addresses the nature of reality, while epistemology is the theory of knowledge and is concerned with what knowledge we can acquire and how we acquire it (Willig, 2013). The methodology of a study needs to be consistent with the epistemological stance of the research question to ensure the desired knowledge can be produced (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Through introspection on the ontological questions regarding reality and human existence, I have come to realise that my beliefs are held between realism and relativism. I ascribe to a critical realist view which claims that there are stable aspects of reality which exist autonomous from human conceptualisation. People may experience different parts of reality; therefore, varied interpretations of experiences are plausible (Bhaskar, 1978).

The critical realist approach was applied to this study. The study does not assume that racial microaggressions will be experienced universally by all participants. Participants' experiential realities of racial microaggressions will differ depending on their interpretations of situations. The belief that people act on their perceptions of reality than actual reality is applied here (Snygg & Combs, 1949). The data could provide some reflection of reality in an un-mediated manner and through an interpretative approach, some underlying structures could be manifested (Willig, 2012). The epistemological stance of this study is

phenomenological, as I am trying to produce knowledge about the subjective experiences of racial microaggressions of my participants. I wanted to step into their experiential world, understand their world view and highlight what is real to them, rather than produce realist knowledge that encapsulates the exact representation of the real world (Willig, 2013). I approached my analysis with the view that I may not be able to capture an accurate description of individuals' experiences of racial microaggressions, but I will attempt to provide insight into the participants' experiential realities and meaning-making processes.

Method

Theoretical underpinnings of IPA

I believe that the IPA approach is in line with my research aim. IPA is designed to investigate how people perceive and interpret their experiences (Smith et al., 2009) will be applied to analyse this study's data. IPA is underpinned by phenomenological, hermeneutic, and idiographic principles. According to Larkin and Thompson (2012), the two main components of IPA are: encapsulating the main claims of participants and providing interpretations for encounters grounded in the participant materials. Balancing these two elements leads to a successful IPA study.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology was established as an eidetic method by Husserl (1927) which is interested in studying phenomena as they are experienced by individuals, rather than examining predetermined abstract or scientific concepts. This approach aims to provide transcendental knowledge that is more descriptive. Husserl claimed that "we should go back to the things themselves" by abandoning our natural attitude for a phenomenological one which is reflexive and examines the consequences of our 'taken-for-granted' lifestyles (Smith et al., 2009, p.12). Hence, studies aim to identify unique aspects of phenomena by 'bracketing' any preconceptions held, illuminating the true essence of a phenomenon (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Husserl's work provides the foundation for IPA as it highlights

the importance of understanding individual experiences and guides researchers' focus to the reflective process (Smith et al., 2009). Husserl's approach has been criticised as being overly theoretical, unachievable, and idealistic (Spinelli, 2005).

Heidegger (1962) expanded Husserl's concept towards hermeneutic phenomenology and proposed the notion of 'intersubjectivity' proclaiming that individuals are unextractable from the world surrounding them. He believed Dasein or 'being-in-the-world' as being an unavoidable feature of the human experience. Stemming from Heidegger came Merleau-Ponty's (1962) focus on embodiment, he emphasised that the physiological experience is key to understanding phenomena. It was proposed that the body is a way in which we experience our environment, hence, unique physical experiences should not be overlooked (Smith et al., 2009). Hermeneutic phenomenology is descriptive in disposition but interpretive in application (Larkin & Thomason, 2012). IPA resonates more with hermeneutic phenomenology as it aims to capture an understanding of the quality of an individual's experience and how they interpret phenomena rather than aiming to capture the essence of the phenomena itself (Eatough & Smith, 2008).

The current study was not trying to prove that racial microaggressions exist nor was it trying to reflect the exact reality or messages that underline these exchanges. Rather, the study accepted that these subjective experiences have occurred and are real for these participants and the aim is to see how participants make sense of these experiences. IPA's phenomenological aspect allows participants' concerns to be voiced (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006) this is congruent with the ambitions of this study.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is seen as the theory of interpretation and the hermeneutics underpinnings in IPA differentiates it from other phenomenological methods which are more descriptive (Smith et al., 2009). IPA is influenced by Schleiermacher, Heidegger and Gadamer's work on hermeneutics.

Schleiermacher (1998) offers a holistic view of the interpretive process which involves grammatical and psychological interpretation. He claimed that the interpretive process aims to understand the individual and the contents of experience (Smith et al., 2009). He argued that to truly understand an individual's experience it is important to comprehend their mentality and the language used to facilitate their experiences (Freeman, 2008). Language is seen as an expressive means of experiences, which goes beyond description. Hermeneutics thinkers suggest that experiences are truly reflected in poetic, figurative and rhythmic languages. Hence, through textual and interactive interpretations using one's own subjective experiences the meanings of someone else's experience can be reconstructed (Friesen, Henriksson & Saevi, 2012).

Heidegger (1962) believed that the world is divided into 'phenomenon' and 'logos'. Phenomenon refers to the appearance of our existence. Appearance is thought to be dually divided between the things which hold manifested and latent meanings. Logos involves analytical thinking to understand or enable appearances. Heidegger believed that hidden phenomena could be manifested by phenomenologists. However, he noted that within this interpretative process the interpreter's preconceived notions and individual experiences would be present as obstacles that need to be worked through rather than bracketed out. He believed that although our forestructures exist before new objects, it may be unknown to us when interpreting something which preconceptions are relevant, making bracketing challenging. Our understanding of our foreconceptions may come from engagement with new information, this understanding can help us work through our preconceptions and readjust our thinking. Therefore, new objects should be prioritised during interpretation over our preconceptions. Heidegger's stance illuminates the importance of reflexive bracketing in IPA and acknowledges it as something that can be only partly achieved (Smith et al., 2009).

Gadamer (1989) prioritises understanding the content of experiences rather than the individual and highlighted the impact historic contexts may have on interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). Gadamer like Heidegger believed that we cannot free ourselves of prejudices but

by adopting an openly reflexive attitude during interpretation the influence of our biases can be minimised.

IPA researchers adopt an active role during the analytical process, this dual interpretation process has been dubbed as ‘double hermeneutics’. Within this process, the individual is trying to understand their world and the researcher is trying to understand the individual’s meaning-making of their world (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Hence, the researcher immerses themselves within the data and intuitively seeks to find latent meanings through deeper interpretation and probing of manifested information (Finlay, 2011). This resonates with the hermeneutic circle, which encourages researchers to work with their data iteratively and flexibly. It promotes a holistic outlook in which you must look at the whole to understand the parts and the parts to understand the whole. Hence, an IPA researcher moves between different ways of thinking about the data, the various levels of interpretation help to gain different perspectives that allow the phenomena to shine (Eatough & Smith, 2008).

Idiography

Lastly, IPA is theoretically underpinned by idiography. Idiography is concerned with examining individual cases allowing for an in-depth analysis of individuals’ perspectives (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Rather than producing probabilistic data on group averages like nomothetic approaches do, idiographic studies provide rich data concerning the individuals’ lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Idiographic studies do not forge generalisability, however, each study is a step towards establishing generalisability as the phenomenon’s evidence base grows (Harre, 1979).

While IPA’s idiographic approach may make findings ungeneralisable, it is suitable for this study as it signifies that it can encapsulate the complexities of the human experience (Smith et al., 2009).

Consideration and rejection of other methodologies

A descriptive phenomenological approach was considered, however, I felt that it did not coincide with my views. I did not believe that it was possible for me as an Asian to completely ignore my preconceptions. I believed that adopting IPA and indulging in 'double-hermeneutics' (Smith & Osborn, 2008) would facilitate my reflexivity throughout the research process. Moreover, by acknowledging and mediating my engagement with the data I believed that a more holistic view of the participants' experiences could be captured. Furthermore, I though an interpretative approach would be ideal for this study due to the elusive nature of racial microaggressions which often leaves recipients with psychological dilemmas (Sue et al., 2007), as it would allow me to comprehend participants' meaning-making processes and extract meanings which may not be obvious to them (Willig, 2012). I acknowledge Heidegger's (1962) view that interpretations are not immune to our foreconceptions, however, they may be essential to the interpretive process.

Grounded theory (GT) which stems from symbolic interactionism and assumes that meanings need to be constructed through interactions (Starks & Trinidad, 2007) was also considered. However, GT aims to generate explanatory theories on social processes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) which contradicts my study's aim which desires to gain insight into the meanings already constructed by participants. Moreover, GT has been critiqued for overlooking the participants' internal worlds (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2009) and lacking emphasis on reflexivity (Willig, 2008). This averted me from employing it as I believe that gaining an understanding of the internal worlds of my participants was essential. Hence, I thought that adopting a method such as IPA which allows me to capture the nuance and quality of experiences would be better.

Discourse Analysis (DA) arises from linguistics and is focused on "language-in-use" rather than psychological phenomena (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1374). The underlying assumption in DA is that language constructs and mediates our sense of reality rather than reflecting it (Georgaca & Avdi, 2012). Hence, DA tries to analyse individuals' accounts to

examine how experiences are constructed by examining regularities in accounts and exploring the rhetorical and functional aspects of talk within ongoing interactions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The application of DA to this study was deemed inappropriate as this study aims to get a detailed understanding of experiences, focusing exclusively on language would neglect other key aspects of experiences. Within IPA language is acknowledged as a tool within the meaning-making process but it also acknowledges individuals' emotions and thoughts (Smith et al., 2009), hence it was believed that IPA would provide a holistic understanding of experiences thus be more suitable. Moreover, DA is a social constructivist approach (Pedersen, 2009) with many theorists adopting a relativist view (Georgaca & Avdi, 2012), this contradicted my ontological views and the epistemology of this study.

Evaluating research

While it is important to consider issues of validity and reliability within qualitative research it is done differently than when conducting quantitative research (Finlay, 2006). Smith et al. (2009) suggest that broad guidelines should be used when evaluating qualitative methodologies, so their creativity is not stifled. Following their recommendation, Yardley's (2000) criteria for assessing the validity of qualitative research was employed to evaluate the current study. Yardley's (2000) four key principles have been described and discussed in relation to this study below.

1) Sensitivity to context

According to Yardley (2000) quality research will demonstrate sensitivity to context throughout the research. This research idea emerged from a knowledge gap in the current literature which I identified while conducting a thorough literature search. As there was limited research on British Asian experiences of racial microaggressions I had to widen my reading and look at the conceptualisation of contemporary racism in Britain, racial microaggression experiences cross-culturally and amongst other minority groups in Britain.

My extensive reading went beyond psychology and I examined literature in other fields including sociology, sports, and education.

Moreover, to demonstrate sensitivity towards participants and to ensure equality within power dynamics I tried to minimise taking the expert position. This involved allowing participants to select convenient times and locations for interviews, being mindful when inviting participants for interviews and explaining procedures, making them aware of their rights and obtaining full informed consent. I also demonstrated sensitivity towards participants' views by employing open-ended questions within interviews which would allow them to fully express themselves and guide the process. To ensure that their voices were being represented accurately and to add credibility to interpretations (Smith et al., 2009) direct quotes were used throughout the analysis.

Lastly, through my reflexive journal, I tried to maintain sensitivity towards my influence as a British Asian researcher on the data. This involved acknowledging the power dynamics which could have occurred due to my intersectional identities and my interview style. I also reflected on my socio-cultural context and how that may have influenced my interpretation of the data.

2) Commitment and rigour

To meet Yardley's (2000) criteria one's commitment should go beyond the role of a researcher. Being an Asian who has faced racial microaggressions throughout her life I had a personal connection to this research. I believe this added to my commitment as I have a personal interest to ensure this study raises awareness and is useful to the British Asian community.

Moreover, I tried to enhance my IPA competency by attending lectures and extensively reading literature regarding IPA and phenomenology. I also requested guidance from my peers and research supervisor throughout the research process. Such feedback helped uphold the validity of my interpretations and allowed me to take a step back and

analyse data less subjectively. Multiple drafts were sent to these individuals further demonstrating my commitment to this study.

Further, Smith et al. (2009) state that rigour is demonstrated by carefully selecting a homogenous study sample. I had concerns when including South and East Asians to my sample as there are distinctions in these groups' histories and cultures. However, I did not feel like it was my place to dictate who is considered 'British Asian', especially when I had individuals contact me from both groups. It was clear that racial microaggressions were a reality for individuals in both groups and it felt wrong to deny one the opportunity to voice their experiences especially when they identified with the British Asian label. I also was concerned that including participants who had been born here and those who had migrated here would reduce the homogeneity of the sample too. However, I again felt that it was not up to me to judge who fits into the label of 'British Asian' and pre-judge their experiences.

I also demonstrate rigour later in this chapter where I go into depth about my analytic process. I followed Yardley's (2000) recommendations for being diligent and systematic yet empathetic and intuitive during the analysis.

3) Transparency and coherence

Yardley (2000) states that research should be presented with clarity and cogency. The research question must be congruent with the epistemology, methodology and analytical strategy. In the previous section, I have justified how the phenomenological epistemology fits with the research question and provided a detailed rationale for employing IPA.

Furthermore, transparency refers to all relevant aspects of the research process being disclosed (Yardley, 2000). In the following section, I have gone into depth about my recruitment process, development of my interview schedule, interviews, and analytic strategy. This was intended to ensure transparency to the reader regarding the research process. Additionally, using direct quotes from participants in the analysis write-up further demonstrates transparency regarding the data and my interpretations. By discussing my

reflexive position and keeping a journal I have tried to be transparent about my influence on the research. To further demonstrate transparency, I saved all my notes throughout the research process and drafts of all chapters.

4) Impact and importance

Lastly, Yardley (2000) argued that research should be evaluated based on its utility and impact. The literature on racial microaggressions within the British context is limited especially that which focuses on British Asians. Therefore, I intended this study to be exploratory in that there is no specific context which I focused on. Hence, the findings are of potential importance to British Asians and individuals who interact with this demographic in a variety of contexts. These implications will be further explored in the discussion.

Procedures

Participant recruitment

Recruitment for the study was conducted through volunteer and snowball sampling. A recruitment flyer (Appendix B) for the study was created and posted in public locations, such as the City, University of London campus and distributed to my professional and personal contacts. The flyer was also circulated online using various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin and Helpfulpeeps.

The sample's inclusion criteria required participants who held the belief that racial discrimination exists in the U.K. as this ensured that the phenomenon of interest was present during interviews. Participants were not excluded from the study based on their gender as their intersectional identities may influence their individual experiences of racial microaggressions. Participants from a clinical population were excluded as the study did not intend to focus on the resulting dysfunction of any disorder. Only participants who were consenting adults were recruited, hence, those under 18 were excluded.

Moreover, the label of ‘British Asians’ was not assigned to a specific community within this study and both South and East Asians who identified with the label were included in the study sample. Therefore, participants were not excluded from the study based on their ethnicity. Additionally, the sample included participants who were born in the U.K. and those who had lived here for at least five years or longer. It was thought that perhaps those who had lived here for five years or more would have fully engaged within the U.K. context and would have a better understanding of it compared to someone who had lived here for a shorter period.

Screening procedure

Once individuals had expressed interest to participate in the study, they were sent an information sheet (Appendix C) and a pre-screening phone call was organised. The phone call was typically between ten to fifteen minutes. Participants were asked a series of questions (Appendix D) and given the opportunity to ask questions too. If participants met the inclusion criteria and were happy to proceed, a time and location were mutually agreed for the interview to take place. Interviews were conducted at the university campus or public locations such as coffee shops.

Participants

The study contains a homogenous sample of eight participants who identified themselves as British Asians. The study sample included three females and five males, ranging in ages from 23 to 52. Ethnicities of participants included were Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Chinese, and Filipino. Demographic information of participants has been summarised in Table 1 using pseudonyms.

Table 1

Pseudonym	Gender	Age range	Ethnicity	Length of Stay in the U.K.
Divya	Female	25-29	Indian	Born and raised in U.K.
Neil	Male	18-24	Chinese	9 years
Lucky	Male	30-34	Indian	Born and raised in U.K.
Salman	Male	50-54	Bangladeshi	Born and raised in U.K.
Kat	Female	35-39	Indian	Born and raised in U.K.
Ahmad	Male	50-54	Pakistani	Over 40 years
Josephine	Female	45-49	Filipino	9 years
Jamal	Male	40-44	Indian	Born and raised in U.K.

Pilot interview

A pilot interview was conducted with a female British Asian colleague to test and refine the initial interview schedule to ensure that participants were given the opportunity to openly share their experiences, the questions generated the intended data and that prompts were supportive rather than leading. I also used the pilot as an opportunity to assess my interviewing skills. It was important to make sure she felt like we sufficiently explored her experiences without being intrusive or exposing. I received generally positive feedback and very slight modifications were made to maximise the effectiveness of the questions.

Interview schedule

The initial interview schedule was created by examining previous racial microaggression research and with the current research question in mind. The modified interview schedule (Appendix E) focused on the participants' experiences of racial microaggressions, how they interpreted and reacted to them and the impacts of these experiences. The questions started broad and the line of questioning was refined based on the information provided during the interviews.

Semi-structured interviews

Following Smith and Osborn's (2003) advice semi-structured interviews were employed. This method allows rich data to be collected on participants' subjective experiences. A structured interview seemed incompatible with the research aims as I wanted to examine the experiences significant to participants and how they made sense of it. Therefore, having structured questions exploring what I think is important may have been inauthentic.

Diaries and written personal accounts were also considered as they are valuable means of getting participant voices heard. However, I did not just want to examine recent experiences rather I wanted an overview of the experiences participants have had throughout their life. Moreover, writing experiences may be unappealing or challenging especially because of the elusiveness of racial microaggressions. Therefore, I thought a face-to-face approach would be better as I would be able to respond to participants in a validating and empathetic way using my counselling psychology training.

Furthermore, I believed interviews would provide me with a more holistic understanding of participants' experiences as I would be able to observe their non-verbal cues and features of their speech (tone and pitch). Hence my analysis would not just be one dimensional, I would be able to use these factors to interpret participants' experiences and

go beyond their words. This again is important with an elusive phenomenon where recipients can be dismissive of their experiences.

Interview procedure

Once participants arrived for the interview they were greeted and given the information sheet again and provided the opportunity to ask any questions. They were then required to sign two copies of a consent form (Appendix F). Once written informed consent was obtained the interview began. All interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder and lasted between 45-90 minutes. A semi-structured interview was conducted using the refined interview schedule. After the interviews had been concluded participants were verbally debriefed and given a debrief sheet (Appendix G).

Analysis

The analysis was conducted by loosely following the steps suggested by Smith and Osborn (2003). Each interview was transcribed after multiple listenings of the recordings. I transcribed all the words spoken, laughs, significant pauses, and false starts. Smith and Osborn (2003) stated that prosodic features in transcripts are not necessary, I included them occasionally where I perceived them to have an impact on the meaning of what the participant was trying to convey. For instance, I included short pauses as they could reflect the mental and/or emotional states of participants in some manner. Pauses in the transcripts are indicated using a set of dots, the longer the set the longer the silence. To avoid confusion in the analysis section instead of using ellipses to demonstrate the omission of words from quotes empty square brackets were used [ ].

Each transcript was reviewed multiple times to allow me to fully immerse into the data and gather new insights each time. For the first three transcripts, exploratory comments were annotated by hand in the margins of the transcript (Appendix H) and then typed up. However, I decided to only type up the comments for the remaining transcripts as the process of writing and typing felt too time-consuming and redundant. I also felt that due to the ease of typing

my comments were more elaborated. These comments focused on my observations of language, content, and personal reflexivity. The comments were broken down into the following categories which included descriptive comments, linguistic comments, conceptual comments, and decontextualizing comments. These comments looked at content, linguistic features which contributed to meanings behind participants' words and making tentative interpretations regarding emerging concepts (Smith et al., 2009).

Emergent themes were then created by converting these comments into words and concise phrases which reflected a more psychological conceptualisation. While emergent themes were mainly formed using my comments they were still rooted in the participants' details of experiences. All of this was done digitally on a word document where a table was created, the transcript was placed in the left column, the exploratory comments were placed in the middle column and the emergent themes were placed in the right column. The comments were colour coded where each colour indicated the comment type, a colour key was placed on top of the transcripts (Appendix I).

The emergent themes were then written on a new separate page and inspected to identify connections between themes. Themes were clustered together based on conceptual similarities and assigned a descriptive label. During clustering, I would refer to the transcript to ensure that the connections make sense. Themes which did not comply with the emerging structure or had weak evidence bases were dismissed at this stage. This led to the creation of a table of superordinate and subordinate themes for the transcript (Appendix J). This process was conducted for each transcript separately by attempting to set aside knowledge of previously analysed transcripts.

Once all transcripts had been analysed the individual theme tables were compared to identify the master themes (Appendix K). Themes which were prevalent, rich in data, and answered the research questions were selected. To preserve the integrity of each participants' words my process was iterative. Once the themes had been compared, they were consolidated into a master table which included three superordinate themes: racial

microaggression experiences, reaction to racial microaggressions, and impact of racial microaggressions. Each superordinate theme comprised of three to four subthemes. The master table was created on a word document which encompassed the theme labels and some quotes for reference (Appendix L). To make identification of quotes easier I went back to the original transcripts added line numbers and then line numbers were also included in the table to make finding some examples which fitted the theme labels easier. This was to aid my selection process of quotes for the writeup. Finally, the main themes were written as an unfolding narrative.

Ethical considerations

The study has acquired full ethical approval from the City, University of London's psychology department's ethics committee. The study is also compliant with the British Psychological Society's (2014) and the Healthcare Professions Council's (2016) ethical guidelines concerning research with human participants. Participants were fully informed about the study's aims verbally and through an information sheet. No deception was involved, and the participants could ask questions or express concerns before the interviews. The interview commenced once written informed consent was obtained using a consent form. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. All interview recordings and transcripts have been encrypted and safely stored on a password protected device. All identifiable data was altered, and all participant data will be destroyed after ten-years. Participants were informed about their right to withdraw without providing a reason or suffering any consequences. They were also assured that they do not have to answer any questions they felt uncomfortable with. Participants were thoroughly debriefed after the interview verbally and were given a debrief sheet. Participants again could ask questions, provide feedback, or withdraw their data.

It was acknowledged that distressing topics may arise, and measures were employed to ensure that the participants' needs came first. My psychological knowledge was used to assess distressing situations and act accordingly. My therapeutic skills were applied

throughout the interview to ensure that interviews were carried out empathetically and in a non-intrusive manner. Participants were provided breaks and refreshments to avoid fatigue. Additionally, the debrief sheet participants were given entailed contact information for local supporting services and my contact details in case any distress or concerns were to arise after the interview.

To ensure the safety of both parties' interviews were conducted in public places. To further ensure my safety my research supervisor and a close friend were informed about the location and time of the interviews. To safeguard me from psychological distress supervision, personal therapy, and a reflective diary (Appendix M) were used.

Reflexivity

Methodological reflexivity

Qualitative research is personal and reflexive considerations are thought to be an essential component of such studies (Howitt, 2010). To guide the reader's interpretations researchers are urged to reflect on and demonstrate the impact of their involvement within the research process (Willig, 2008).

I believed that IPA was the most appropriate approach for this study considering the research aims, questions, and my own ontological and epistemological stances. However, as a novice to this approach, I was riddled with anxiety consistently through the research process, to the point where I wanted to forgo the approach and employ thematic analysis as I had done a previous study using it. My lack of understanding between the two approaches made IPA seem even more daunting. My thought was that if the two were so similar why could I not just employ the one I know. I overcame my fear through extensive reading surrounding IPA and looking at its theoretical underpinnings helped me understand its uniqueness. Additionally, becoming accustomed to the qualitative methodology and understanding the roles of epistemology and ontology also helped my decision. Through

reflective conversations with my supervisor regarding the research aims and introspection regarding my worldviews, I decided that IPA was the ideal approach.

I heavily relied on IPA literature to guide me step-by-step, majority of my previous research was quantitative and so I think I was trying to find a systemic way of working. Perhaps I followed some sources too prescriptively in an attempt to do IPA 'right'. I think it took me a while to understand the essence of IPA and realise that healthy flexibility is encouraged. I wonder if I had allowed myself more space to be flexible and creative would that have been more beneficial. Perhaps understanding the accessibility of IPA early on would have allowed me to approach the study with more confidence which could have impacted various parts of it, for instance, recruitment, interviews, and analysis.

The recruitment process allowed me to engage with a wide array of individuals who considered themselves British Asians. My screening calls made me realise how complex the label and identity can be. For instance, when I had individuals who approached me who were mixed-race and who considered themselves British Asian it made me realise how broad the term was. I excluded mixed-race individuals as I realised that this may not make the sample homogenous as they may not share the same experiences of discrimination as those who were fully Asian, especially those individuals whose appearance is more Caucasian or ethnically ambiguous. However, I wonder if the recruitment process was inadvertently impacted by my perception of what British Asians are supposed to be?

It was challenging adopting the role of a directive interviewer as I was accustomed to working in a non-directive humanistic way with my clients. During my first interview, I found myself overanalysing everything I did or said during the interview process. It was challenging for me to step out of my role as a therapist and adopt one of being an interviewer. I found myself constantly paraphrasing and reflecting to the participant what they had said as I would do in a therapy session. This then led me to fear that I was leading. During this time confiding in my research supervisor and reflecting on the interview helped me process my thoughts and feelings. This was essential as it helped clarify what was considered being leading and it

made me understand that I needed to learn to be empathetic and present but in the capacity of an interviewer. My newfound self-awareness helped me feel more confident in the following interviews, I was able to be more curious and exploratory without the fear of being leading or intrusive.

Furthermore, during my analyses of transcripts, I recognised how my line of questioning was influenced by my literature search on racial microaggressions. Unconsciously, I was trying to make sure that the experiences my participants were describing fit into the definition and taxonomy of racial microaggressions described by Sue et al. (2007). I noticed during my analysis that I tended to probe deeper into experiences which fit and moved on quicker when they were more obscure. However, this could have been due to my insecurity about my understanding of the concept. Microaggressions are so elusive and initially, I did find myself questioning the existence of the phenomenon. I think having a concrete definition was comforting and so to make sure I was studying what I intended to, I hung on to the taxonomy more prescriptively. Nevertheless, I noticed that this was more prevalent in my initial interviews and the more experience I had has an interviewer the more I was willing to explore. I think the more I heard my participants' experiences the more confident I felt in my study's validity.

The actual analysis was the most daunting for me as I had gathered such rich data and I was worried I would not be able to do it justice. This fear was especially prevalent during the stages of clustering emergent themes and dropping them. The challenge was to try and capture the essence of each participants experience in a concise manner. I wanted the personalities and experiences of each individual to shine during the write-up and so I had to step into their shoes and look at what were the important aspects of their experiences for them and construct their narrative doing so. This was not easy as I knew that I could not fully bracket my perceptions. However, I also could not just be descriptive, I had to find the balance where my interpretations were grounded in participant data (Smith et al., 2009). Hence, I tried to stay as close to the data as possible, my point of reference was always the

transcripts to verify my interpretations. I did not want to impose my understanding on the participants' interpretation of their experiences (Langridge, 2008).

Personal reflexivity

Willig (2008) highlights the importance of researchers reflecting on the influence personal values, beliefs, and experiences have on one's research. It is also necessary to consider how the research has impacted the researcher personally and professionally. Therefore, in the following section, I will highlight the experiences that have led me to undertake this research project and how my personal characteristics could have impacted the data.

My interest in this topic was prompted by my Asian heritage and my own experiences of racial microaggressions. I grew up as a third-culture child in a multicultural community and went to an international school. Growing up in such a diverse environment was both enlightening and overwhelming as it caused various struggles regarding my identity. My roots are Persian, however, I was born in India and brought up in Malaysia. There has always been an underlying feeling of not belonging anywhere within me as I felt that I did not identify with any culture fully which left me in limbo. Upon reflection I feel that the racial microaggressions I experienced growing up averted me from embracing any one culture fully, I felt that I could not be "too Malaysian" or "too Indian" because of the various covert implications that would be attached to those labels.

Although I grew up in an Asian country I went to a British school and was surrounded by mostly White teachers and it was ingrained in me that White values are dominant. I have realised that my accumulative experiences of racial microaggressions to some extent have led me to dissociate from my Asian heritage. Though, my experiences have caused some distress being aware of the roots of my problems and allowing myself to reflect has helped me resolve some internal conflicts and aided the development of my identity. My desire to help those who could be struggling due to the impact of racial microaggressions like I did,

alongside my ontological and epistemological views helped form the research question and encouraged me to employ IPA.

By adopting a critical realist view I acknowledged that everyone's realities will vary, and my presumptions may not apply to everyone. However, it would have been naïve to assume that my preconceptions can be completely bracketed out and will not influence the research at all. Therefore, I tried to be transparent about my values and experiences and to mediate my personal beliefs throughout the research process. To remain mindful, I reflected on my experiences and beliefs in personal therapy, in supervision and within my reflective diary. For instance, I held the belief that the Asian community tended to be proud which led them to deny racism, accept discrimination and rather than confront it. I often found that when I was analysing my data when participants denied certain experience my initial thought was that they are in denial and this is a defence mechanism. I had to be careful that I was not analysing in a way which fulfilled my perceptions and if I had identified such defence mechanisms there was evidence of it grounded in the transcripts.

I also realised that due to my ethnicity I could have been considered an 'insider' to participants. I thought this was beneficial as it amplified my empathy and understanding and may have allowed participants to talk more openly with me. However, it may also have been problematic as the "seduction of sameness" could have led to presumptions of shared meanings which could have led to less probing questions being asked that allow richer data to be gathered (Hurd & McIntyre, 1996, p.78). To surpass this, I attempted to maintain my critical reflexivity throughout the research project.

While I shared similarities with participants there were also significant differences between us which are important to consider. Firstly, I was not born or raised in the U.K. like majority of my participants. This may have impacted my perception as racial microaggressions may not manifest in the same way in Asia as they do in the U.K. Perhaps something I perceive as discriminatory may not be seen in that way for those who have

grown up here (and vice versa). This could be because of cultural differences and/or the normalisation of those racial microaggressions.

Secondly, I was younger than many of the participants in this study and as we will discuss later age seemed to be a moderating factor in interpreting microaggressions. Therefore, my tolerance for microaggressions may differ from some older participants. I had to consciously bracket my judgements regarding acceptance and normalisation of racial microaggressions.

Lastly, as a researcher, I come from a perspective of knowing and understanding the racial microaggression phenomenon having extensively examined the literature. However, participants are not expected to have the same depth of knowledge. Hence, it is possible that due to my understanding I am more able to recognise racial microaggressions or perhaps my perception is biased by the literature where I perceive more experiences in that light than participants. I had to be careful while interpreting my data so as not to force my judgements on participants' experiences.

Analysis

Overview

The purpose of this research was to understand the lived experiences of racial microaggressions of British Asians. Specifically, this study hoped to explore the nature of their experiences, how these experiences were understood and reacted to by participants and what impacts they had. To answer these questions, the transcripts from interviews were analysed and excerpts from them are used to illuminate these aspects of their experience. Analyses of these transcripts revealed three major themes: Racial microaggression experiences, reactions to racial microaggressions and impact of racial microaggressions. Within each of these superordinate themes, three to four subthemes were identified (Table 2).

Table 2

	Superordinate Themes		
	Racial Microaggression Experiences	Reactions to Racial Microaggressions	Impact of Racial Microaggressions
Subthemes	1. Direct Racial Microaggressions 2. Indirect Racial Microaggressions 3. Environmental Racial Microaggressions	1. Attempting to Make Sense of Experiences 2. Acceptance 3. Confrontation and Action	1. Emotional Experience 2. Impacts on Identity, Personality, and Self-Image 3. Impact on Professional and Personal life 4. Learning Opportunity and Self-Development

Superordinate theme 1 – Racial microaggression experiences

All 8 participants shared experiences within this first superordinate theme which includes the following subthemes: Direct racial microaggressions, indirect racial microaggression and environmental racial microaggressions. All participants reported a combination of racial microaggression experiences which tended to come from various sources and in a range of contexts.

Subtheme 1- Direct racial microaggressions

As previously explained direct racial microaggressions were labelled as 'microassaults' by Sue et al. (2007). In the current sample, seven of eight participants reported experiencing such exchanges. For instance, participants like Salman commonly reported experiences of mockery and receiving racial slurs:

> ***"Oh, I've been called 'Paki' and all the rest of it yeah. But not very often err in the past 10 years maybe twice…" (Salman, 681-682).***

Salman's description seemed quite nonchalant which indicated that perhaps although now these experiences are rare, he has become accustomed to them. Similarly, Ahmad reported the common occurrence of direct verbal racial microaggressions he experienced growing up in the U.K. in the late 70s-80s:

> ***"I mean before I go onto the micro sort of aggressions the very clear I mean it was very very very racist I'm talking about [ ] I guess early… late 70s 80s I guess 80s… yeah about 80s [ ] you know very old… women you know…very frail old women *chuckle* swearing at me on the street." (Ahmad, 25-29).***

Ahmad's description seems to imply that direct microaggressions used to be extremely prevalent and/or of great magnitude. For example, he emphasises on 'very' multiple times. He appears to try to contextualise these experiences by focusing on the time period which could indicate he feels a shift in the racial climate. Both participants seem to

imply that the occurrences of such instances have reduced, however, they have become accustomed to them. This perhaps shows that there was a time direct microaggressions were prevalent and that the nature of racism is changing. Nevertheless, Ahmad still described experiencing direct hostility in recent times:

> ***"Erm….so…er…but I mean it d-does now coming… sort of think of it erm eve-even walking on the street sometimes I've had people…and err… you know walking towards you and it's sss ob oblivious to it and then…erm…errr…. you you'll have somebody coming forward and again maybe this is a stereotype you know you have somebody who like looks like a skinhead and you know very sort of that kind of person and he's… clearly… racist because you know…er he'll say "get out of my way you" whatever thing you know…erm…. You know Muslim or something like that because they don't know but that's what the assumption is" (Ahmad, 604-610).***

Ahmad's description indicates that perhaps he is invisible to such perpetrators and when they do cross paths, they have a sense of entitlement where they expect him to be accommodating. The derogatory and aggressive language which occurs within these encounters conveys its racial undertones. Ahmad acknowledges his own biases as he associates perpetrators of these acts to 'skinheads'. 'Skinhead' is a term used to describe someone perceived to be a member of a violent group usually associated with racist movements. Ahmad's use of the term could further indicate that he perceives a strong racial element here.

Kat reported encountering extreme stereotypes generalising British Asians and targeting their hygiene and physicality:

> ***"Yeah…... Stingy, dirty, smelly….. erm…well…….. eh it's weird you say that because…. Well so those… are erm I guess… the most aggressive.… the most***

racist kind of thoughts I've had… from people that are like "oh, you know all brown people smell of curry"" (Kat, 221-223).

While Neil described encountering direct mockery of his Chinese background during his time at school:

"there were couple of like erm people they just say "hi" in the hallway [ ] and before I finish the hi sentence like even the one vow syllable they just go "ching chong ching chong ching" *chuckles* it just is… is so frustrating to talk to you knn." (Neil, 175-178).

It seems like Neil was made to engage under false pretences of friendliness and then was mocked for the way Chinese people are presumed to speak. He mentions that there were a "couple of people" who engaged in such behaviour indicating that this was not an isolated incident for him. These instances created an unwelcoming environment from which he desired to escape:

"It also… like… back back to the… the thing I was saying first it felt very unwelcoming. I don't want to be here anymore… and I just want to find somewhere else to be." (Neil, 182-183).

Transgressions with unwelcoming undertones occurred more directly for some other participants. For example, Lucky was physically assaulted by a stranger:

"…he was like the way he was walking it must have been why he had a bottle of water and just kind of threw it towards me at my bike and said, "go back home"". (Lucky, 449-450).

Josephine received the unwelcoming treatment regardless of her efforts to make friends:

"I was in the chat room and I don't have friends remember so I was in the chat room [ ] I think they they said something like "you smelly blah blah blah…only

know how to clean the toilet" and then… erm a woman was saying that erm "you're stealing our jobs… you're stealing our men"…" (Josephine, 742-745).

The abuse started for Josephine the minute she disclosed her ethnicity online. Her description of these responses makes it seem like she was ganged up on. All the comments she reported seem to be direct racial microaggressions which either demean her, perpetuate stereotypes and/or portray her as an outsider. It seems like she was dehumanised and reduced to these stereotypical images.

This subtheme revealed that direct racial microaggressions occur as verbal and physical exchanges. Most commonly these experiences held an undertone of an unwelcoming environment in which participants were excluded and made to feel like outsiders. It was observed that direct racial microaggressions seemed to be mostly levied by strangers compared to indirect racial microaggressions as we will see in the preceding subtheme.

Subtheme 2- Indirect racial microaggressions

Sue et al. (2007) identified indirect forms of racial microaggressions and labelled them as 'microinsults' and 'microinvalidations'. As mentioned previously in these exchanges the manifestation of microaggressions tends to be unconscious and unintentional. All participants reported multiple incidences which varied in nature and perceived underlying messages.

Participants described frequently encountering stereotypes especially those regarding their intelligence and abilities. For instance, while at school baseless assumptions about Neil's mathematical abilities were commonly made which made people rely on him:

"yeah such as, "you must get A's in maths" *laughs* and "you must be good at maths" and something like that, but I hate maths. I don't really like it. It's just what people think and then… people always come up to me at school er… "eh can I do this? Can I do this?"". (Neil, 220-222).

When asked Neil seemed confident that judgements regarding his abilities are purely based on his race:

> ***"Yeah, definitely yeah. People asked me cause how I look and … they they just expect… that I'll -w-w-what I can do it and what I don't know." (Neil, 232-233).***

Similarly, Josephine reported that without even asking her statements assuming her occupation are made:

> ***"…we're being identified when you say "oh I'm from the Philippines" they conclude "oh so you're a nurse"… without asking what I do… or they con-conclude that erm cause either you're a domestic… erm carer or cleaner or you're a nurse, they always conclude that…" (Josephine-221-223).***

It sounds like stereotypes relating to occupations of Filipinos are so entrenched that she is not even questioned about her profession rather these assumptions are forced upon her and thought to be true. For Josephine, these stereotypes undermine the capabilities of Filipinos:

> ***"Ermm not good cause it's like.….for me anyway it's like saying "oh their their… brain is just for the health… care field…their brain is just for science" erm we're also good in other fields so…I feel that its undermining what we are capable of." (Josephine, 259-261).***

Josephine seems to connect the stereotype to power through her use of the word "undermining" which conventionally is used to indicate that someone is bringing others down to build themselves up. Therefore, I wondered if she sensed some unconscious power-play underlying this stereotype where she felt that Filipinos are being put down and limited to certain skillsets so the perpetrators of these exchanges can feel more capable or superior.

Another commonly mentioned stereotype was regarding the passivity of British Asians. For Jamal, this stereotype is enforced at work in subtle ways:

> ***"They have to be erm a person who gets on with it, person who erm…who is always quite pleasant and nice, doesn't challenge anyone [ ] …and then when I am it's kind of like "woah where has that come from?" [ ] Right so let's say for example a White person might say might be in a meeting might [ ] and the White person might turn and say "oh I don't agree with that. [ ] I think you should do this dadada" will be received a lot better than say if it came from from me and that's happened at meetings so…erm its often like I said previously incident it gets snubbed. So, if I bring something up and I think it's a very valid point and they need to take it on board… I would often get snubbed and I have to maybe repeat it 2 or 3 times or really really provide a lot of information for what I am trying to say…" (Jamal, 286-295).***

He seems to interpret these acts as containing the underlying message that his opinions are not valued and accepted the same way as his White colleagues:

> ***"Yeah I think it's potentially it's like a cultural thing like… "you're just meant to kind of…go along with what we say. We are the people with brains and…you know we will sort of dictate where…what what what's what's this conversation is going to be about, what the conclusion are going to be"" (Jamal, 298-300).***

He seems to think that potentially roles are assigned to people of certain backgrounds, where White people are the leaders and Asians are the supposed non-confrontational followers. His description implies perhaps an unspoken hierarchy of intelligence exists where White people have placed themselves on the top. Other participants have also alluded to this unspoken hierarchy.

For Kat, the passivity stereotype seemed to intersect with her gender identity:

> ***"I was in my very early 20s but someone was having a go clearly I was having a go back, *chuckling* I'm not very quiet when someone is having a go, I tend to fight back… erm and I just remember someone saying something like… "aren't***

> ***you Indian girls meant to be subservient". I think I was just impressed that they knew I was Indian *laughing* not Pakistani I was like "well done you"." (Kat, 437-440).***

In her description, Kat indicates that she was expecting interethnic differences between Asian groups to be disregarded which could imply that this is another common racial microaggression she experiences. Moreover, Kat seemed hesitant to contribute the passivity stereotype to only her race:

> ***"see I don't know if its…. they don't expect me to say anything…... I never know if it's because of race or because I'm smaller than them …. Or because I'm a girl… So, I couldn't tell you if it's specifically because of race…" (Kat, 398-400).***

This could demonstrate that racial microaggressions intersect with other parts of recipients' identities. Perhaps Kat's intersectional identities combined created this unique mode of discrimination.

Male participants reported gendered stereotypes too. For Jamal aspects of his identity (religion, race, and gender) seem to intersect and contribute to this stereotype of him being regressive and holding primitive values:

> ***"Erm so coming from a Muslim background…err I think errm… I think gay people often sometimes feel…err that I may be homophobic erm…I think erm….er sort of partners in the past have often thought that I would be erm…quite erm [ ] chauvinist err that kind of… feeling. I think become defensive about it so even when I do say something just slightly chauvinistic it's like "see I knew it" that kind of thing." (Jamal, 304-308).***

Jamal suggests that people sought opportunities to prove their beliefs about him are true and they seize it to label him.

Moving forward, humour was found to be another way in which indirect racial microaggressions manifested. In Jamal's experience humour and sarcasm were used as means to make minority individuals feel excluded and inferior:

> ***"…err humour I find sarcasm…is really erm a tool that's kind of used erm…again when it's majority sort of White people they have this…humour which if you're from an ethnic minority especially if you're from a different country or…you've just been brought up in a different environment and you're not used to that humour, they will use that humour to kind of…belittle somebody and make somebody feel a bit…erm what's the right wording, not as intelligent as they might be." (Jamal, 96-101).***

Jamal seems to believe that jokes are used to belittle individuals who have been brought up in different backgrounds and to make Western humour seem superior. Alternatively, for Lucky humour was commonly used as a tool to reinforce the ascription of intelligence stereotype. He is assumed to have greater knowledge of computers because of his race:

> ***"… it-it was jus-just the common jokes you find like when someone someone needs the computer fixed they just call me like "oh yeah L-lucky will fix it he's he's the IT guy". But then, I would never be entirely sure whether it is because I can actually fix computers, or it was because of er…" (Lucky, 192-195).***

However, while he seems used to these jokes there appears to be an ambiguity within them causing him to hesitate to attribute these exchanges to his race.

Jamal also reported jokes as a means to belittle his culture:

> ***"Er or even Indian music. I got some of my favourite Indian music in the car, I play it a little bit loud. Er…I had a a friend call me on the phone, usually attached to the car but yes I didn't so I put him on loud speaker and I had the Indian music on in the background and he started laughing. So, was like "ah***

what's this Indian music you're watching, ah are you twisting light bulbs are you in the car and stuff like that" and blah blah blah. So that while it was all in fun, sort of banter and a bit of a joke, it is a bit snubby." (Jamal, 414-419).

While Jamal labels these incidences as 'banter' and 'fun' amongst friends there is an underlying insulting tone present which makes him feel like his culture is being snubbed. It seems like he gets questioned about his culture in a way which pathologizes it.

Participants also spoke about other manifestations of racial microaggressions which disrespected their culture, values, and language. For instance, Ahmad received subtle comments regularly snubbing him for his values surrounding alcohol:

"… you know erm…that kind of thing where where they would say you know "I know your kind" or [ ] er… be quite disrespectful and say… "what you should drink" and you know… "what's wrong with your people?"… that kind of thing erm…" (Ahmad, 566-569).

In Ahmad's experience being abstinent from alcohol is seen as taboo and non-conformity is met with hostility. It appears Ahmad's beliefs are disregarded and like Jamal, his values are pathologized. There seems to be an attempt to push drinking upon him and it makes it seem like Western values are superior. When he does not conform, he perhaps is perceived to be different and being an out-group member. It seemed like they were trying to create a dived between him and them which highlights his difference and portrays his values as problematic. Similarly, Kat described how a subtle snub belittling her was due to her native language:

"…I was sat here I was outside there was no one here so at some point this lady came this older lady came and sat next to me erm….and I was talking to mum in Gujrati and I think that's what the problem was the fact that it was Gujrati and when I put the phone down… she was like "thank god erm you've

been on that thing… this whole like you've been on that thing for ages and she's been sounding like a drone"..." (Kat, 550-554).

Although, there was no direct mention of race Kat interpreted that this woman only had a problem with her was because she was speaking an Eastern language. Her description made it seem like this woman felt like she had authority over Kat and was entitled to tell her off which makes me wonder if an unconscious or conscious race-based hierarchy was present here too for this woman.

Racial microaggressions where participants were treated unequally also commonly manifested in various forms. For instance, Lucky was denied an opportunity to apply for a job he was competent and recommended for:

"Erm, I think… there there was 1 time when I was working at the airport. My my er manager she, she wouldn't let me even apply for… an internal position. Simply because of my race." (Lucky, 47-48).

Lucky's request was ignored, and it sounded like he felt they did not respect him enough to even acknowledge him. Although, race was not directly mentioned Lucky felt that this was race-based as he had persistently felt hostility from his manager which was also sensed by others:

"Everyone else had told me that was cause with her. That's the reason why and for some reason she always had it in for me. I never I had never done anything wrong, I had never made any mistakes. You know, so I couldn't figure out what the problem could have been." (Lucky, 50-52).

The ambiguity of racial microaggressions can be sensed here, at first, he was confident about the reason for the incident, however, his confidence diminished as our conversation progressed. I wonder if this is because there was no direct mention of race. However, his confidence was reinstated when he revealed that a White individual got the job:

"He wasn't qualified…So, there was no other reason unless there is some sort of favouritism…" (Lucky, 82).

Salman spoke about inequality related to housing where preferential treatment was given to those with Western sounding names. The discrimination seemed prevalent as he described people having to adopt second names:

"Yes, Mohammed? No chance. But if its Mike. So, many of my friends have 2 names." (Salman, 97).

Salman himself reported facing this discrimination. There was no direct mention of race but there was a felt sense that it was race-based. This seemed to be derived from his perception of underlying messages hidden in the wording of housing request rejections:

"Just the wording just just the way they [ ]… the way they basically said, "oh this this place is no longer available"." (Salman, 120-121).

However, due to the situation's ambiguity, he seemed hesitant to attribute this to race. Rather than completely dismissing his experience, he seems to try and validate it using scientific research:

"Obviously, there was no proof because there was no… I didn't do any study… but there have been studies where they've they've approached [ ] 40 landlords and ones been Mo and ones been Mohammed [ ] But I haven't done that so those people who had rejected me I could've they could've rejected me if I made my name was John." (Salman, 110-116).

For Kat, inequality transpired in daily non-verbal exchanges:

"Yeah, there are times where like…erm…we're both waiting to get served and the White person always gets served first or…erm…you know when there is a narrow passage… erm…to go through I'll always stop first just out of habit…" (Kat, 501-503).

Kat's description perhaps resonates with being treated as a 'second-class citizen' where priority is given to White individuals. Kat's experience seems common and putting others first has seemed to be instilled in her. However, it seems these experiences are not only due to her "habit" rather there also appears to be a sense of entitlement in White individuals. For example, below she highlights how common courtesy is not displayed towards her:

> ***"… I think its common courtesy. Someone like holds the I'll hold the door for people… and they won't say thank you and that really bothers me." (Kat, 512-514).***

Furthermore, participants reported racial microaggressions where they were made to feel excluded, unwelcomed or like outsiders. For example, Divya felt this way by a question from her husband's grandmother:

> ***"We went to this event and I remember her asking "ooo do erm do you guys have events like this?" *laughs* like it was just I think it was just like a birthday party where all the family got together…" (Divya, 98-100).***

While Divya perceives this question to be harmless she reported feeling that his grandmother had underlying assumptions about Asians being foreigners. She felt the question unintentionally created a dived between them:

> ***"…I guess you feel a bit excluded like you are not really part part of them when in fact you are because you are just human [ ] …you are still part…you know we not we don't live in another country, where it might be different and we still live in the same society…" (Divya, 110-114).***

Neil reported a similar sense of exclusion when he was socialising at college:

> ***"…and there was like some cultural reference I wouldn't that I didn't understand [ ] …and then they and then they said "it's fine he's Chinese" something like that "he wouldn't understand"" (Neil, 75-76).***

It could be assumed from Neil's correction of his language from "I wouldn't" to "I didn't" he did not feel incapable of understanding. He was assumed to be incapable of comprehension and integration because "he's Chinese" and hence he was dismissed.

Participants also described racial microaggressions where inter-ethnic differences were dismissed. In these experiences, there were subtle implications and assumptions of homogeneity regarding British Asian groups. For instance, Divya's schoolteacher was unable to differentiate between her and her other South Asian friends:

> ***"So, we all used to be in psychology together and every week we used to go around and reading you know we used to read a paragraph from this book. [ ] then when it came to us our teacher *chuckles* couldn't she couldn't remember which one of us read last. Cause she was like "which one of you" *laughs "which one of you girls?" cause we all looked the same [ ] *Laughs* so she was like "ooo which one, whoever read last" we were like "yeah yeah it's Neha's turn" because we didn't want to read but she couldn't tell the difference." (Divya, 434-442).***

Divya's description indicates that perhaps there was no sense of individuality for the girls and they were just generalised. Moreover, her use of "whoever" makes it seem like it did not matter to this teacher who read and not much consideration perhaps was given to them or their education. Intriguingly, Divya explains "cause we all looked the same" this perhaps displays the internalisation of this assumption that 'all Asians look the same' or it perhaps is the way she makes sense of the experience and justifies it. Moreover, rather than perceiving the situation negatively she finds it humours and used it to her advantage.

Lastly, participants reported racial microaggressions where their experiences of discrimination were dismissed. For instance, Ahmad received comments from his White friends dismissing his racial reality:

> ***"they dismissed it, they said "well…. I don't never get treated like that. Not in a train, no one looks m anything like that, no one stares at me"" (Ahmad, 95-96).***

It appears his friends seem to employ a colour-blind mentality where they cannot comprehend that they have different experiences than him. They compare their experiences and because they do not match, they dismiss him.

This subtheme revealed that indirect racial microaggressions can manifest in various contexts and forms. They tend to be transferred in subtle ways, for example, through innocent comments, jokes, or non-verbal cues. These underlying messages had themes of stereotyping, cultural disrespect, humiliation, unequal treatment, exclusion, generalisation, and invalidation.

Subtheme 3- Environmental racial microaggressions

Environmental racial microaggressions are indignities that occur on a systemic level (Sue et al., 2007) and over half of the participants reported them. A common thread within this subtheme was the involvement of the media. Josephine talked about the way British Asian stereotypes are enforced in different entertainment mediums:

> ***"Like even in the advert when we watch a movie oh when you watch something on tv…and the advert if its erm…accountant or whatever position they would show erm Chinese looking girl…just so to cover everyone so that's stereotyping she can be a scientist as well isn't it… er if it's a nurse you would see a Filipino… even in the movies a maid…" (Josephine, 697-700).***

Interestingly, even when condemning these stereotypes and trying to move away from them she does not stray too far. For example, in trying to find an alternative job for a

Chinese girl she said scientists which still fits the stereotype associated with Asians being academically proficient. This could indicate that perhaps the ascription of intelligence stereotype is deeply entrenched and has been internalised. Moreover, Josephine seems to perceive the representation of Asians to be tokenistic and only present to depict a false sense of diversity.

Ahmad similarly discussed the role of television in normalising racism previously as the content had no boundaries:

> ***"I remember as a child watching TV and erm looking at some of these comedians and they were… blatantly racist …. I think Berding Berding Manning or someone like I can't remember his name anyway comes to mind you know it was very very racist outwardly racist about…he used to use the P word he used to use…you know every kind of thing you could think of he used to use erm…and…it was normalised [ ] … but it's putting people down again and again, it's putting Asians down all the time.". (Ahmad, 164-171).***

His description indicates that the content was highly prejudiced and was used to belittle Asians consistently. According to Ahmad racism has become more covert, however, a minority of the media still engages in explicit racism:

> ***"Sometimes people have…erm…have er views strong views but now they are very reluctant to say them because of society because of media and everything else…there are obviously people out there who do there are plenty of celebrities and whatever, they have no qualms about saying things… [ ] Outwardly that's fine but it's in a minority compared to in the past." (Ahamad, 158-162).***

Ahmad perhaps believes that prejudicial views are held by people still, however, they do not disclose them as they have become taboo. For Jamal, the media has been used to create an unwelcoming narrative which has led him to feel like he does not belong:

> ***"…probably errm on a regular basis and that would be…erm again quite subtle [ ] rather than really direct erm…I think because a lot a lot of it is just because of it is just in the narrative of the news and the media and people who are growing up with it and err I mean I look at I look at the behaviour of my nephew. My nephew is 14 and the fact the kind of stuff he sends me over WhatsApp on on Instagram it is always almost linked to his race and him by miss feeling of belonging and I kind of question it "why you feel at 14? Why why does he feel this way?"" (Jamal, 469-474).***

It seems that there is an observer impact too where the unsettling feelings of others due to social media baffles him.

Another environmental racial microaggressions theme identified was politics. Many participants tended to believe that politics had major implications for the country's racial climate. Salman believed that political shifts towards the right-wing conservative government have made individuals who previously covertly held prejudicial views think that openly voicing such views is acceptable:

> ***"many of the press are quoting… other people who have who believe that the present climate when I say present, I mean relating to Brexit and Trump in particular [ ] Erm those phenomena have….. kind of given those people who had maybe some views that they held always kind of… undercover it basically gave them a ri not a right but er a platform to say "well actually it's ok to think like this and to voice my opinions". Erm I have always felt that it was there an underlying current." (Salman, 15-22).***

Interestingly, he seems to associate right-wing politics with racist values. Salman seems to be saying that there always was an underlying racial current, however, it has now come to surface due to these political events. This could imply that environmental racial microaggressions impact perpetrators and by default racial microaggressions on

interpersonal levels. Jamal explained how viewing such political content creates insecurity for him:

> ***"I think I just watched a video this morning funnily enough about ermm Sikh woman…er she's the some someone from the labour party she's talking about interestingly [ ] integration and Brexit and particularly the Brexit party were really snubbing her [ ] the the headline on the …errm er the video was about… "Sikh woman… being snubbed by…er Brexiteers"… so it's stuff like that that does make you feel [ ] I don't know some…inferior or insecure." (Jamal, 449-455).***

It seems that the current political climate and seeing those representing the Asian community being insulted publicly perhaps sends certain messages to him which creates negative emotions. It seems that he is confused about these feelings and cannot distinguish between feeling unsafe or inferior.

Another common manifestation of environmental racial microaggressions were issues with representation. For Neil, the lack of Asian representation in the retail market made him feel like he did not belong:

> ***"…it it just when I walk past… like a-any high street and then the….. [ ] I wish they…. they are more like like like let's say clothing shops I wish their more… more less boring like more… more of my taste. Shops that I wish I I I've more choices there like.….like I I like that is of my interest." (Neil, 328-333).***

Neil expresses that he does not feel like clothing shops cater well to his preferences as there is a lack of diversity. He desires retailers to be open to new ideas which perhaps indicates that he finds the market to be closed-minded and only representing Western culture.

Kat conversely spoke about the disrespect she felt when she did find her culture was represented as it was done with a lack of sensitivity to religious and cultural sentiments:

> ***"….and then especially being in London you go into like hippy shops…and like there was a pic there was like a Kama Sutra colouring book…next to like three statues…one was Krishna er two were Krishna and one was Ganesh [ ] And I was like "if my grandma came in here, she'd be so offended". [ ] Cause that's religious… to her like that's a religious artefact and she'd be really…like that's something that's deeply spiritual and important to her [ ] and right now it's just in and amongst porn… literally erm….and it was like in the Indian section er *chuckle* and…. they can get away with it because they are White…." (Kat, 1084-1095).***

They appear to display stereotypical items associated with Indian culture together without consideration for their meanings and they are generalised under the 'Indian section'. Her language indicates an 'us vs them' dynamic and the only reason for this disrespect is the existence of White privilege. Kat explains that this is a prevalent problem across shops in England:

> ***"No, I didn't say anything I just walked out erm….because that's just one shop… there are shops like that in every city in England…" (Kat, 1102-1103).***

Kat sounded quite defeated to do anything, her hopelessness could be attributed to the scale of the problem. Perhaps she felt unable to change the systemic problem and all she can do is remove herself from such shops when she encounters them.

The issue of representation also reprised for Neil when discussing festive events as he felt Asian events were not acknowledged within the U.K. and environmentally there is not much representing Asian cultures:

> ***"And… yeah….and I wish I would see that than…than just a small…just small area celebrated… [ ] Mhmm its it its *clears throat* it's like it's like Christmas or some other bigger Western celebration and and I I don't see any of that in of the***

Asian culture happening in here [ ] It it just felt…. Less connected in the area and… bringing back the idea that I I don't belong here." (Neil, 420-426).

This lack of acknowledgement seems to make him feel disconnected from his surroundings which perpetuates the idea that he does not belong here.

The representation issue also manifested within a workplace context. For example, Jamal talks about the lack of diversity in senior management within his industry:

"I think in housing there is erm… there is social housing, there's a certainly glass-ceiling, of the senior management upwards chief executive level are generally all White erm…" (Jamal, 41-42).

The term 'glass-ceiling' is used to describe invisible barriers which prevent certain marginalised groups from advancing professionally. Jamal uses this term to describe his experience as a minority within this industry where it seems that there are illusive barriers which make it difficult for him to rise beyond a certain point in the workforce hierarchy. He seems to evidence this by explaining that senior management all tend to be White.

Salman talks about the lack of Asian representation within the whole security industry not just at the senior levels:

"I was in film I was and I came into security. So, when I came in I found myself a… minuscule minority [ ] I didn't meet a single Asian guy. I went to IFSEC which is the world's biggest exhibition well security exhibition. 25 thousand people, maybe about 4 people that were not White, apart from the delegations from foreign countries." (Salman, 596-601).

Further, within this subtheme participants often described unconscious environmental segregation between communities. For example, Divya noticed a division amongst races as areas become more segregated:

> ***"…and erm we like the street that we moved into it was full of erm English White English, no Asian people and now over the years it's full of Asians like all the White British have just move moved out into I don't know the country side or whatever, they've moved, that's me that's me being racist *laughs* "they've moved to the countryside"…but you know just moved outside of Hounslow. So that's one thing that I have noticed. Erm you know an area becoming more dominantly one culture I guess erm….." (Divya, 41-46).***

Her language perhaps implies a correlation between Asians moving into this area and White individuals moving out of it. However, she does not seem to directly mention this being due to prejudice, nevertheless, her mentioning it in this interview could imply that there were racial undertones to this environmental shift. Jamal too spoke of this segregation in his community:

> ***"In school where I went to school there was er there was a school… erm about a mile away which was predominately White, my school was predominately Asian… err yeah they would come over and have a fight every now and again or pick on somebody and we'd hit each other some kind of incidences growing up." (Jamal, 28-31).***

It sounds like children of different backgrounds had been separated from the start. However, the way Jamal describes this it does not seem like it was something conscious but rather this naturally occurred as his area was "predominately Asian". He goes on to describe hostility and conflict amongst the groups, could this be attributed to the segregation?

In this subtheme, we can see that various types of environmental racial microaggression occur and tend to be transmitted in different contexts. For example, the media, politics, retail, community, and work. These racial microaggressions tend to perpetuate stereotypes, create hostile political/social environments, and produce personal and/or professional challenges.

Superordinate theme 2 – Reactions to racial microaggressions

This superordinate theme intended to capture the ways in which participants reportedly reacted to racial microaggressions. Within this superordinate theme the following subthemes are included: Attempting to make sense of experiences, acceptance, and confrontation and action. The reactions of participants tended to vary depending on the situation and participants reported a combination of reactions. Moreover, some of these reactions constituted ways in which participants coped.

Subtheme 1- Attempting to make sense of experiences

All participants seemed to react to illusive racial microaggressions by trying to understand them. Jamal describes the multiple processes he underwent to understand his experience when a White colleague less qualified than him got a role they were competing for:

> ***""This is what I'm s-sort of surrounded by", questioning myself "I could be wrong. Might just be a thought in my mind, I might be paranoid". Erm so all them kind of thoughts, have that little internal conversation. Something maybe run it by a I had run it by a couple of people who had a conversation erm relate it back to my past experiences…then kind of sort of rationalise it." (Jamal, 137-140).***

It seems like Jamal was trying to justify the situation by attributing it to his surroundings and society's structure. So, it seems like there was an attempt to externalise the reason rather than blame himself. However, he doubted his perception of the situation too this perhaps demonstrates the ambiguity of the situation. He also uses social support and past experiences to rationalise it. It seems that multiple methods and cognitive processes are used to help him make sense of the experience.

Like Jamal other participants too questioned their perceptions of such ambiguous situations. For example, Neil shares his thoughts regarding an incident at his old workplace

where when a set of customers wanted to split their bill the following comment was made by his manager:

> ***"so, after I took the receipt, I asked the manager erm w-where do I get the calculator *chuckles* and the manager said said "you're good at maths right?" *laugh*" (Neil, 242-244).***

Neil describes an incident where potentially an ascription of intelligence was made, however, the intent behind the comment seems unclear as race was not directly mentioned. Although as the source was an authority figure the comment seemed to have more of a racist undertone for Neil. However, Neil appeared to question his felt sense and hesitated to label the incident as a racial microaggression transgression. The elusive nature of the encounter appears to have left Neil open to giving his manager the benefit of the doubt:

> ***"Yeah. But at the same time I gave him the benefit of the doubt that he saw my CV he saw my CV, *laughs*" (Neil, 250-251).***

Likewise, Kat seemed forced to give perpetrators the benefit of doubt as her intersectional identities make her think that these events could have transpired regardless of her race:

> ***"I feel a lot more conflicted now erm… I also question things more … [ ] Now as to…are things happening because…because I'm Indian? [ ] Or would that have happened anyway? [ ] Or is it happening cause I'm a girl or cause I'm short or… [ ] erm… so I urgh I keep having to give things the benefit of the doubt cause before I'm probably did but I just wasn't doing it actively." (Kat, 1157-1163).***

In her description, Kat seems to convey frustration which could indicate that giving things the benefit of the doubt is not her personal choice but something she feels she must do because the situation is not straightforward. It seems that her giving things the benefit of the doubt is naturally occurring as she used to do this previously without thinking about it. Kat

through the interview even noticed her second-guessing her perception while discussing her experiences and she called it out with seeming frustration:

> ***" Sometimes when I sit *scoffs* I I can I can see I can hear myself doing it I'm second guessing whether it is …. Because of race or it's just…" (Kat, 489-490).***

Participants also attempted to understand their experience by rationalising them. For instance, Lucky attributed his experiences of microassaults to ignorance:

> ***"… I just considered them as ignorant. To be honest it's not really their fault that the-they've their blindsided with information on…on one side and without looking at the bigger picture you can't really take… [ ] take it in yeah." (Lucky, 18-22).***

It seems that Lucky does not hold perpetrators responsible for their actions but rather attributes them to their sources of information. He appears to believe that people are fed an overwhelming amount of information which is biased making them vulnerable to biased views. Lucky also attributed racial microaggressions to the lack of education on other cultures at school. For instance, he rationalised an incident where a boy made fun of his turban at school:

> ***"But I I can't blame him for that. I mean we got into a little bit of a t-tuffle of a fight but er its only been that way because our school didn't teach it till much later about you know culture." (Lucky, 309-311).***

Salman rationalised racial microaggressions by attributing them to genuine experiences perpetrators may have had with British Asians. Salman normalised generalising by trying to convey that our lived experiences form our judgements. Below he uses his own lived experience to justify why a White landlord may not want to rent to South Asians:

> ***"… there was err there was inst there was an instance I read about where a la a very big landlord. He owned about 250 properties, he was in the papers a few***

> ***months ago where he said "I will I will not rent out to erm… Asian people" that means Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Indians and he was asked why. He said "it's because… once they leave, we can't get the curry smell out of the curtains and the carpets and the furniture" … Right, now that's racist. But you know what? He's got a point. He has got a point!" (Salman, 269-274).***
>
> ***"I am going to my mother's house later on; I will have to change my clothes after I leave…. It's cause I will stink of curry …" (Salman, 276-277).***

While Salman labels the landlord's comments as racist, he can justify them as the premise behind them coincides with Salman's experiences. Therefore, it seems Salman perceives the landlord's comments to originate from his experiences which he has generalised to all South Asians.

Another rationalisation offered was that the lack of exposure to British Asians perpetuates racial microaggressions. For instance, Divya like Lucky rationalises her husband's grandmother's microaggressive comment (as highlighted in the subtheme indirect racial microaggressions) by linking it to ignorance. However, in her understanding, the ignorance stems from a lack of exposure to British Asians rather than misinformation. According to Divya, the intention behind the comment was curiosity and to learn more about British Asians:

> ***It wasn't she wasn't being it, she wasn't saying it to offend me she was saying it to get the understanding and I was just there to educate her but then it did there was that diff…I guess there was that clear boundary of you and me… (Divya, 139-141).***

It appears unintentionally Divya was made to feel different. Interestingly, it seems like Divya pushes her negative emotions to the side and assumes the role of the educator and gives it priority.

Employing a macro perspective was another means of rationalising racial microaggressions. Kat understood racial microaggressions by linking them to historical oppression:

> ***"But they do that with Indian stuff because they can….erm… and I think it comes down to that Indians are second-class citizens but I think you get its masked as "oh Indians are easy going". [ ] But I think Indians are easy going because they didn't have a choice because they got…put in line with the dogs when they were in India. [ ] And when they came over to this country, they were beaten the shit out off…. [ ] So, I think they've been beaten down to know their place… and now they're kids have been brought up to…know not to rock the boat." (Kat, 1108-1118).***

Kat seems to believe that Indians are perceived to be subdued second-class citizens, however, they are falsely labelled 'easy-going' to hide this perception, maintain their tolerance and to take advantage of them. She attributes their tolerance to the colonisation of India and the discrimination Indians faced when they migrated to the U.K. She appears to be implying that Indians through history have been beaten into submission and are taught to be inferior. This belief gets passed down through generations and they are conditioned to be tolerant. Her use of the phrase "not to rock the boat" indicates that perhaps it gets transmitted to younger generations that there is a delicate balance in the U.K. society and speaking up would cause issues. Interestingly, these beliefs were observable in older participants within this study too.

Kat throughout the interview also spoke of the concept of 'White privilege' to understand her experiences. For instance, Kat reported the following uncomfortable encounter with a White friend's mother she had:

> ***"… she just looked at me and she was like "oh no we don't we don't want anything" and I hadn't said anything yet and she just went "we don't want***

anything" and I was like… "oh… er h-hi is Nick in?" and she was like erm "sorry" she was like "oh no he's not at home". I had just spoken to him and he said to me like "come over" so I was like "oh he he told me to…come over" and she went "sorry you are?" she was being like weird with me and I was like "oh Mrs Jones it's Kat" and she was like… "you're Kat?" and I was like "yeah" and she goes… "ohhhh you'ree Kattt" she's like "oh yeah come in" everything was fine then you know. She's like "come in love come in" I was like "oh thank you" *wary tone* [ ] and then she goes… "I didn't know you were Indian love. You don't sound very Indian on the phone you just sound like a White person" and I was like…." (Kat, 674-683).

Kat attributed this exchange to White privilege where this woman thought that she was superior due to her race. She seemed to act like a gatekeeper to her inner circle and only once Kat had proven that she spoke English like a White person she was worthy to enter:

"…. almost like… I guess like she was better than me…. And…. I was good enough to fit into that little circle good enough to hang out with her son I guess." (Kat, 696-698).

Because you sounded… White? (Interviewer, 699)

White I guess… because until the that point, she wasn't even willing to let me into the she wasn't even willing to let me know he was at home!" (Kat, 700-701).

However, Kat appears to believe that this privilege is unconscious and deeply rooted within White minds and could be attributed to the way there have been socialised:

"It's just the people they just think they are better than us and they don't realise it… but that's how they've all been brought up." (Kat, 723-724).

Ahmad attributes racial microaggressions to the societal changes which have occurred surrounding racism:

> ***"I think…it was gradual erm and it started to go and because also…there was more awareness there was more talk about racism [ ] So, it started to go more underground if you like, people were more reluctant to say it out loud." (Ahmad, 65-68).***

Ahmad seems to propose a causal link between racial microaggressions and the increased awareness of racism. He appears to suggest that although prejudice views still exist overt racism has diminished as current norms deem them unacceptable. Therefore, these views now manifest as racial microaggressions.

While the concepts described by Ahmad and Kat seem like environmental racial microaggressions they do not describe them as such. Rather they use these concepts as factors which contribute to the occurrence of racial microaggressions.

From this subtheme, we can see that one way in which participants react to racial microaggressions is by trying to understand them. It was found that participants tried to understand racial microaggressions using their personal experiences, human psychology, and societal structures. Interestingly, a commonality between participants was that they did not feel like racial microaggressions could be blamed on perpetrators of exchanges as they did not see them as intentional. Furthermore, attempting to understand these experiences was not simple for everyone and second-guessing one's perception was frequent.

Subtheme 2- Acceptance

During the interviews, all participants at one point spoke about accepting the way things are as a mode for different experiences. Salman explains that he is accepting of microaggressive beliefs as he finds them to be deeply embedded in cultures:

> ***"and I've found it to be a bit more kind of "oh well". But I've always accepted it. It's one of these things I believe its tribal." (Salman, 39-40).***

His description makes him sounds defeated and like he perceives microaggressive beliefs to be unchangeable. Throughout the interview, he used the phrase "birds of a feather" to explain that he believes it is natural for individuals with cultural/racial similarities to flock together and discriminate against others. In his view, any kind of difference or non-conformity to British social norms will lead to discrimination. Salman suggests that the responsibility of discrimination is on minorities as discrimination can be minimised by conformity:

> ***"See the problem with the Sikhs is again, if you wear a turban… you are displaying your you know your…your your tribe and you're… you're asking for it. I am not saying from everyone…as I said *clears throat* many people will treat you… as if you were anybody else but there will be a big minority not a small minority a big minority of people who will say "you know what you are this therefore I am going to treat you like this"." (Salman, 674-678).***

Salman's description perhaps implies that any display of culture creates an opportunity for discrimination as by doing this the individual is highlighting that they are different. "You're asking for it" can be perceived to mean that if something horrible happens to someone they deserved it because they brought it on themselves. His use of the phrase in this context could imply that by wearing a turban the discrimination against Sikhs is deserved. While he acknowledges not everyone thinks in such a way, he uses the oxymoron "big minority" which could indicate that a substantial number of people will act in this way. Therefore, his acceptance seems to rest on his perception that people will treat you based on how they perceive you.

Similarly, Ahmad expressed that he is acceptant of microaggression as he does not think he can be truly accepted or treated equally in the U.K. He seems to perceive change to

be challenging and something that will occur with time. It also sounds like he does not see himself as being capable to bring upon change. Therefore, acceptance and patience are key:

> ***"…and what I am saying is that it's really difficult … for the predominant…err nation that's…been living here to treat you as equal or a Black man or or an Asian man to be treated as equal… as a White person…now that's not something everyone's going to agree with or understand but I fundamentally believe that's the situation and I can't change it overnight and nobody can change it overnight. This is why… [ ] There is no shame, there's no real you know…take away of pride and say …. If we live and we're still like guests here." (Ahmad, 822-829).***

From his language, it seems like he perceives equality to be a difficult concept for the dominant group to accept and he appears to empathise with them.

Likewise, Josephine expresses her acceptance while discussing her race being misidentified:

> ***"…they cannot identify…me and my race…maybe that's not their faults, I just have to understand that." (Josephine, 206-207).***

It sounds like Josephine believes she must be the one to compromise and be understanding. She seems to divert the responsibility towards herself and portraying it as if it is her role to just accept.

Participants also seemed to express an acceptance of racial microaggressions as they were able to normalise them. For example, Divya seems to find it difficult to reflect on instances where she was treated differently as she has become accustomed to them:

> ***"It's it's a really hard question because you you…you end up just becoming…. You just do your things day to day without thinking if it's racial or not… [ ] You come to an acceptance I guess…." (Divya, 179-182).***

It sounds like seems due to the frequency of such occurrences Divya may have just accepted them as normal and moved on from them rather than dissecting them.

Participants also spoke about laughing off situations and moving on from them. For instance, throughout his interview, Neil would laugh while describing serious experiences. This is even demonstrated below when he discusses his reaction to the experience of being socially dismissed:

> ***"Well you know this it is one of the things where you just laugh…y-you just laugh of each other but you don't really understand *chuckles*. You know it's just one of those *coughs* one of those conversations that you just laugh but then yeah ok and then they're more second nature more than their meaning it *laughs*" (Neil, 83-86).***

It seems that Neil laughs off such instances as he is not able to fully comprehend them and he perceives them to be unintentional. He also uses the phrase "it's just one of those things" which could imply he felt there was nothing he could do in this situation, therefore, he just laughs it off.

Lucky attributed laughing off microaggressions to being personally beneficial:

> ***"…. Offended yes but then I always just try to laugh it off because if you… er… its its mostly just about erm…. Diffusing … whatever er negative energy they are trying to project … cause the last thing I want is… is for that negative energy to waste… er my entire day thinking about… erm hatred or you know "oh that guy…. I should have hit him" or "oh that guy could have said something" or just coulda woulda shoulda…. Its more about I know I am better than that." (Lucky, 424-428).***

It sounds like Lucky perceives microaggressions to be a projection of the perpetrator's negative energy and internal states. Therefore, while he does feel insulted by

these exchanges, he does not want this negativity to stick with him. Hence, he moves on from experiences rather than ruminate on them.

For Jamal acceptance is reached through a process of analysis. For example, when he is snubbed at work initially processing the experience is challenging and he sits with his negative emotions. Thereafter, he carefully analyses the experience which eventually leads to acceptance. This perhaps implies that he perceives such instances as complex experiences which take time to process:

> ***"Very difficult. You really got to sit back and go through it and digest it and and you're actually in the in the situation so I think at the time I just really withdrew and I just kind of let the workshop carry on, sitting in a bit of frustration. Later on broke it down little bit more, analysed it cause I wanted to know exactly what was going on, put some context to it and then I kind of… got to a position where I was like "well it's the world you live in and I got to kind of accept it". So, its erm annoying ermm but you know but it all it did get me to challenge things, push things, I was doing a lot of work around diversity in organisations" (Jamal, 78-84).***

There seems to be some duality in Jamal's perspective where there is a part of him which believes that he just needs to accept microaggressions as they are natural. Then there is a part of him which attempts to challenge racial microaggressions and change the status quo. This could perhaps mean that Jamal experiences an internal conflict where he really desires to challenge microaggressions, however, acceptance is a way of coping.

This subtheme has demonstrated that all participants to some degree react to racial microaggressions with acceptance. It seems that acceptance can take various forms and can be reasoned in different ways. For instance, it can be attributed to nature, societal structure, and a way of coping. However, it seems like participants face conflicts even when they attempt to accept racial microaggressions. In the subsequent theme, we will see that even

those participants who spoke about acceptance to some degree challenge racial microaggressions. Hence, there seem to be conflicts within individuals regarding acceptance and due to this duality, their reactions to situations are not standardised.

Subtheme 3- Confrontation and action

All participants including those who previously advocated for acceptance spoke about challenging racial microaggressions. In this subtheme, we will see that participants' reactions to experiences vary depending on the nature of their experiences. For instance, Ahmad previously preached for tolerance and acceptance of microaggressions. However, below he explains how in certain situations it has become necessary for him to confront them:

> ***"So, it's something that…that forces you erm…in life when you have those kind of experiences…erm you you have to sort of do it you have to sort of…either face them or or or you get trodden on." (Ahmad, 392-394).***

It seems that his experiences have taught him to either defend himself or get exploited. However, Ahmad reported that confrontation is not always possible as some instances are too subtle. For example, he spoke about incidences at work where people would look at him and make ambiguous comments to other people:

> ***"I think in those circumstances erm… *sigh* what you can't do is…what I felt is its no point confronting that kind of situation because it's so subtle." (Ahmad, 481-482).***

Ahmad described such instances as "hurtful" hence, his sigh above could be an expression of frustration with not being able to convey his emotions. However, he did not see a point to retaliating. Ahmad also felt that in some situation's confrontation was too risky:

> ***"cause its its quite a group of them sometimes, erm it only takes 2 people together you know and then they become….you know they feel they become er….er… very powerful…and with a group of people like that then it's just not***

worth…your while to sort of…take that kind of risk because it can get…you know violent." (Ahmad, 599-602).

Ahmad appears to believe that when in a collective, perpetrators of microaggressions have a sense of power which enables them to act risky potentially. He seems to see confrontation as pointless as he does not see a peaceful outcome and predicts things escalating. These accounts seem to demonstrate that reacting to microaggressions is complex. An individual may accept some racial microaggression experiences and even have a tolerant attitude towards prejudices. However, this does not mean they will not challenge all racial microaggressions.

Lucky also previously endorsed an accepting attitude and expresses concerns about situations becoming too confrontational. However, in situations like the one below he appears to tackle the microaggressions indirectly through social media:

"Well, I stopped I looked at him erm obviously cause I had a camera on on my helmet as well. I said "you're on camera now, I am going to be posting this online" and then he just kind of just turned away…. And then I…. I just kind of smiled, laughed and just went to work and when I… got to work I think I posted something along the lines of er … "to the ignorant racist guy who threw a bottle of water at me, I forgive you"" (Lucky, 456-460).

It seems like Lucky was trying to spread awareness but also perhaps he used social media as an emotional outlet.

Similarly, Josephine employs covert behavioural tactics to prove to people that their assumptions about her are wrong. For example, at posh restaurants, she feels that she is looked at like she does not belong and is only there because of her partner. Therefore, to challenge this she will purposely pay the bill:

> ***"When I do that. Well, I feel like powerful *laughs* I feel like I'm good people should know I'm good as well I mean you know with my own… capacity that I'm ok I can live here and I can do this stuff." (Josephine, 373-375).***

It sounds like these situations make her feel inferior or powerless. Hence, to cope with these feelings she fights back in this subtle manner. It also seems like she feels she needs to prove her worthiness to live in the U.K. Her language implies that she perceives there to be certain criteria to be accepted here and it seems she knows internally she meets these criteria, however, others may not be able to see this and she has to show them her capabilities. Therefore, while participants may not directly confront every microaggression they may employ certain behavioural strategies to take subtle actions.

Kat had been brought up being told that she should be non-confrontational. However, this opposed her natural tendencies which were geared towards fighting injustices:

> ***"I feel like…*chuckles* Indians have this kind of thing of we should be seen and not heard erm and…I felt I feel like [ ] it was so against everything that was nat coming to me naturally because when things happen I just feel like I need to fight it [ ] in fact the times I did let things go those were the worst times where I would keep going over stuff…" (Kat, 987-991).***

Not confronting microaggressions reportedly took psychological tolls on her and she believed it made her susceptible to victimisation**:**

> ***"Because if you don't say anything first time…it's easier to become victimised." (Kat, 996).***

The word 'victim' essentially puts one in a powerless position, hence by employing it she might be implying that by not confronting microaggressions a passive role is assumed, and power is offered to perpetrators. However, it is unclear if she means that not reacting would make you inherit a victim mentality or would lead you to be perceived as weak. An example she gave of confronting microaggressions involved a random man at a restaurant

pulling out a serviette from under her arm without asking. Kat reported feeling shocked and angry, she even voiced her disapproval to him. However, Kat expressed regret as she felt that she was not able to flag the underlying racial tone of the exchange:

> ***"…my husband was like "I'm glad you called him out on it" I was but I didn't really I should have just turned around said to him "your White p-privilege is ridiculous" but…" (Kat, 1011-1012).***

Kat's decision-making process highlighted that she became aware that she was a minority in that restaurant. If she were to call out his behaviour as being racially privileged, she would be making others like him uncomfortable:

> ***"But I became…all of a sudden aware that…the whole restaurant was filled with White people…. [ ] And we were the only two Indian people in there. [ ] And I was like "if I say that to him that is going to put everyone on edge [ ]" (Kat, 1015-1019).***

It also sounds like she was concerned that if she were to make it a race issue it would cause people there to perceive her as oversensitive and problematic. Her language indicates that perhaps there was a delicate balance, and any mention of race would have disturbed it.

Jamal described speaking out in various experiences especially in the work context. For instance, below he reports talking to a chief executive about his observations regarding the way he communicates:

> ***"err having this conversation I was telling him about how…his communication on the floor is very different from race to race… and I said "what would be good is telling yourself try and do what you do with your White colleagues do that very similarly to Asian and Black colleagues" alright. I also also had to sort of explain to him about… "I understand from er your perspective that you might sometimes feel "I don't know how to do this, but I'd be seen as racist if I do this***

> ***if I say that", so there is always a barrier for a White person to speak a certain way" (Jamal, 152-158).***

It sounds like Jamal was empathetic rather than confrontational, he seemed to want to show the individual that he understands his view. However, it could also be that Jamal was trying to justify the difference in treatment and give the individual the benefit of the doubt. Furthermore, when discussing subtle exchanges with friends Jamal explains how he feels he has a duty to speak up even when he does not want to. However, it seems he is sometimes able to fight off this feeling of obligation and can just move on from microaggressions without confrontation:

> ***"It's it's it's… it's it's kind of like something it's like I don't wanna be fighting all my life *chuckle*, do you know what I mean *chuckle*. I don't want to be constantly calling people or blah blah blah so you kind of just accept it, laugh it off, accept it, move on." (Jamal, 398-401).***

Nevertheless, Jamal expressed the importance of using communication to help deal with racial microaggressions:

> ***"lots of talking about this thing definitely does help, makes people understand ermm I did a a [inaudible] workshop in my last organisation around multiple personalities. This was about whether you are how how you r recognise yourself your sexuality, what gender you are, what ethnicity you are and all of those sort of multiple personalities and what that… translates into the workplace and that conversation itself there is a lot of senior management team and that team it was really eye-opening for them…" (Jamal, 576-581).***

It appears that communication is perceived to be key for Jamal, not only does it seem to help him manage such instances, but it also has wider benefits in that it helps develop the understanding of others. Jamal seems to have taken the initiative to educate others and create these conversations and awareness in his workplace.

Josephine expressed feeling positive when speaking up:

"If I reply or answer back I feel nice cause I… stood up for myself…."

(Josephine, 199).

However, like Jamal she too expresses a sense of tiredness at the repeated nature of having to confront situations:

"Just bad isn't it cause I wasn't able to… fight for who I am…and the thing is you you kind of get tired like why do I have to explain myself to them?"

(Josephine, 204-205).

It sounds like this is a catch-22 situation for Josephine wherein not saying something she feels negatively as if she failed to protect herself. However, when she does say something, she feels like she is justifying herself and having to prove herself. It sounds like there is no winning either way for her.

Participants also spoke about employing actions once incidences had occurred to help them. Lucky spoke about finding outlets which helped him cope the few months after he had resigned from his job due to his manager:

"…meditation, talking to people, keeping my mind…er bit more positive."

(Lucky, 284).

It sounds like he employed various practical techniques which tended to involve relaxing his mind and body to find inner peace. Jamal too discussed using practical means to help build internal resources to cope better:

"…ways of dealing with it ways of coping with it er feel go to the gym feel physically strong that kind of stuff. So, you feel like you're able to protect yourself all these kind of yeah bizarre. Mentally you have to be mentally strong you have to be wiser have to read more. You have to make sure I can…keep my

you know keep my you know build up my intelligence so challenge things" (Jamal, 459-463).

It seems like he feels he needs to be better than others physically and mentally to cope. It sounds like physical gains help him build a sense of security to protect himself if need be and being mentally wise may help him feel confident to challenge these instances.

This subtheme highlights that taking actions during or after situations is a common reaction for participants. However, confronting situations as they occurred did not come easily, as preceding it participants went through extensive decision-making processes where various factors were considered. Moreover, confrontation was not always perceived to be a beneficial option, hence, participants dismissed situations or used alternative means of action.

Superordinate theme 3 – Impact of Racial microaggressions

All participants spoke about the different ways their experiences of racial microaggressions impacted them. This theme captures the immediate and longer-term impacts of racial microaggression experiences. The following subthemes emerged: Emotional experience, impacts on identity, personality, and self-image, impact on professional and personal life, and learning opportunity and self-development. The impact on participants seemed to vary depending on the situation, hence, this superordinate theme tries to consolidate and generalise impacts of experiences described across interviews.

Subtheme 1- Emotional experience

Participants spoke of a variety of emotions during racial microaggression events and their sequels. This included feeling annoyed, frustrated and/or angry. For instance, Divya talks about the emotions she felt when at a restaurant preferential treatment was seemed to be given to a group of White individuals:

> ***"We didn't say anything you know we didn't say anything or we …. We didn't confront it. We were just….I guess annoyed and angry or… Not not even angry but just… it's unfair. [ ] ermmm not having an understanding of what what actually happened…" (Divya, 206-209).***

While Divya and her group did not react in the situation it did stir up negative feelings for them. However, her language seems to convey uncertainty when attempting to identify these negative emotions. 'Angry' has strong negative connotations and Divya seems to move away from it, this could be because the word perhaps felt too strong for this subtle indiscretion or she is not uncomfortable displaying such strong emotions. It seemed like Divya tries to move on from her emotional experience and tries to explain her cognitive process where the lack of clarity within the situation made her think it was unjust.

Conversely, Kat describes expressing her anger when a woman tries invading her space and assuming dominance:

> ***"and this woman came and sat next to me after I was already here I was already on the phone… and she complained about me being on the phone… erm and then I even said to her I think I was just so…angry and I was just feeling so low and I said "you know what, I'm feeling pretty suicidal and I just needed to talk to my mum" erm and she was like "well whatever you're going to do go and do it somewhere else"…. And then I think I lost my rag and I was like "you know what screw you, old lady, look how hateful you are, no wonder you're sat here by yourself" and [ ] I just said some really mean horrible things to her." (Kat, 565-571).***

Kat's anger seemed to gradually increase as the situation progressed. She reportedly tried keeping her cool and reason with the perpetrator. However, her lack of empathy triggered Kat causing her to lash out.

Jamal spoke about a mixture of such negative emotions when he was consistently snubbed at a workshop:

> ***"Erm it just made me withdrawn, I kind of sat back like I said that about four times. Go a bit frustrated and a bit annoyed erm and got er sort of recognise the erm…I want to say it's racism, unconscious bias or whatever you want to call it sort of taking place" (Jamal, 70-72).***

It sounds like in the moment he felt quite defeated after fighting to be heard. While he is not able to exactly label the exchange, he is able to identify his emotions which seemed to have lingered even after it was over:

> ***"…. I would say certainly all all that day pretty stressed out erm… probably still stressed out ermm yeah last couple of weeks. Sort of bit stressed, a bit sss…you know I'm surrounded by people who are…maybe see me as inferior you know whatever I am not so sure." (Jamal, 88-90).***

Jamal seems to use tentative language here which perhaps indicated that the impact may not have been major but enough for him to acknowledge it. It also sounds like his distressing emotions were accompanied by concerns regarding perceptions others hold of him. A struggle for him to understand his internal experience is perhaps evident and maybe he does not want to dwell on it, so he dismisses it by saying “whatever” quickly.

Feelings of shock and discomfort were also commonly mentioned by participants. Neil when reflecting on his secondary school experiences expressed feelings of discomfort:

> ***“Cause I grew up there and I studied in secondary school there and then people there that they are very… narrow view of seeing different colour of than themselves and I found that very erm…. What’s the word… offensive? No not offensive. Uncomfor uncomfortable to be around.” (Neil, 14-16).***

Out of context having a ‘narrow view’ can be a criticism that someone is biased and that their outlook is limited. It seems Neil is describing people who he grew up around to be intolerant and closed off to other races. From Neil’s tone and pauses it seems like he is struggling to make sense and/or convey his emotional experience. Neil seems to hesitate to label his emotions, however, he settles on discomfort. Usually when someone feels ‘offended’ that links to feelings of resentfulness or annoyance. However, it seems his emotional experience was not that negative rather it was more linked to milder emotions such as feeling awkward or at unease.

Some participants also expressed fear in relation to their experiences. For instance, Ahmad spoke of an incident where he was in a minor car accident with a White woman. He was not at fault however a White passer-by was willing to testify against him:

> ***“he was quite…a distance, he came running rushing towards her she didn’t even he didn’t even look at me…went directly to her and said… “If you need a witness, I will be your witness! … I’ll I’ll I’ll I’ll support you to say he crossed the light”.” (Ahmad, 200-203).***

However, at the time other witnesses came to Ahmad's defence. Ahmad seemed to express concern and fear regarding the ramifications of the situation if that man was the sole witness:

> ***"So, I mean imagine in that situation…where erm…there was he was the only witness [ ] And…it's difficult and I I am pretty sure in the past…you know who's word would be taken…in this country particularly erm things might be a little different now but still, that's the kind of impact it can have on your life and I can give you more severe e-examples where it can have impact on a person's life and it has done" (Ahmad, 214-219).***

It sounds like Ahmad is hinting towards systematic racism and his fear is linked to the words of a White individual being given more priority. It seems that while he can acknowledge things may have shifted slightly there is still a concern in him regarding the consequences such instances can have on an individual's life.

Several participants also expressed feeling hurt, sad, and insulted. Josephine expressed sadness over various racial microaggression experiences. For instance, while discussing the stereotypes associated with the abilities of Filipinos, she communicates sadness at the lack of effort made by others to know different aspects of her and to acknowledge her achievements.:

> ***"Like they don't know I'm good in maths and they wouldn't ever conclude that isn't it, they wouldn't know I have a medal because I won in a maths quiz bee so yeah that's sad." (Josephine, 263-264).***

It sounds like she is trying to say that there is so much more to her, but people would never assume she is capable in those aspects as that does not fit their mould of her.

Kat expressed a similar array of emotions while discussing the incident with her friend Nick's mother. In the moment she expressed feeling uncomfortable and confused. Reflecting

on the experience though she expressed a sense of sadness as she is now able to comprehend what was really going on:

> ***"Thinking about it now… erm….. ah it's weird thinking…thinking about it now I feel a bit…I feel a bit bad for the kid me…like… "ah it's such a shame that you had to go through that… because actually they were not being cool" but I don't think they even realised they were not being cool that's what I mean its….. [ ] people are not…. Being dicks being trying being racist but it is there." (Kat, 715-719).***

It appears there is a struggle for Kat as well to verbalise her current feelings. She states feeling sorry for her younger self who had to endure the incident, this makes it sounds as if she is separating her current and younger self and is reflecting on the incident as a third-party. However, it seems like Kat tries to justify the incident by declaring it as being unintentional and attributing it to White privilege. I wonder if this justification is used to soothe her negative emotions.

Reflecting on his emotional experiences of racial microaggressions Jamal described a mixture of emotions where feeling insulted was a key component:

> ***"I would say all them incidences that I spoke about really. I feel you feel insulted every time, that's part of the feeling. There's kind of a a ingredient sorry mixture of feelings…erm so each and every time I feel insulted because… I I like to think I am not in anyway prejudice, probably got some prejudices maybe you know… maybe I have. I certainly try not to have…and I would like to think everybody's kind of on the same page a bit." (Jamal, 248-252).***

From Jamal's language, it seems like he is projecting his feelings externally as when he is describing them he shifts from saying "I" to "you" as if he is talking about someone else. It sounds like he feels disrespected as he potentially expects others to be as non-prejudicial as her tries to be.

Josephine spoke about mixed feelings too. Although, it seems that for Josephine her prominent emotions are dependent on her internal state. For instance, when discussing her emotional experience when she is given certain looks at restaurants, she explains her internal process:

> ***" …again it's a it's a mixed feeling some again it depends as well…with how confident I feel or how good I feel that day. If I see them like that…erm I'd feel like "so what" you know in my mind I feel like saying that obviously I can't… we just erm act as if everything is normal and this…wha's happening is like normal…" (Josephine, 356-359).***

It seems that her self-view and emotional state during the day such instances occur dictate her perception of the situation which then influences her emotional experience. It also sounds like she is unable to express her feelings or thoughts at the time, even if she does feel negatively, she perhaps thinks she must bear with it. Could this be attributed to social etiquette or her discomfort sharing her feelings? This process can also be seen when Josephine discusses her experiences at work when colleagues comment on her appearance:

> ***"I I just laugh with them because you know it's banter in the office isn't it and it's like… I know that they don't mean anything …sometimes I feel special but I think it depends with my mood as well… so if I'm feeling good I was like "oh yeah I really I am beautiful because of my colour and my hair" but sometimes you feel like… *sad tone* "oh yeah because I'm different"." (Josephine, 125-128).***

It seems that she cognitively labels these comments as 'banter' and her reaction is to laugh however her emotional state does not always reflect that. She is perhaps saying that the intent behind the comments does not determine the impact they have on her. There may not be any malicious intent, however, if she is in a bad mood she will feel negatively and in

her mind the comments would highlight that she is different from them. It seems she attributes her emotions to her perception rather than the actual events.

Participants also spoke about the challenges they had coping with the emotional impact of these experiences. For example, Jamal expresses difficulty when trying to identify his coping mechanisms:

> ***"I don't know I mean maybe you build some defence mechanisms" (Jamal, 459).***

'Defence mechanisms' can be healthy or unhealthy psychological mechanisms employed to help reduce anxiety within individuals. These mechanisms are thought to be unconscious which aim to deny or distort the reality of a situation to make it bearable (Lemma, 2015). It seems that Jamal believes unconsciously such processes occur for him, however, he seems uncertain of them. Could it be that there are psychological ways in which he reacts to these experiences, but he has not processed them enough to be aware of them? If so, this could be potentially problematic as it could mean that these defence mechanisms keep his thoughts and feeling unconscious and while this helps him cope in the short run, in the long run, he may still be carrying these feelings. He further explains that it can be challenging for him to manage his feelings:

> ***"…cause I can't I can't sometimes control my emotions bit bit bit emotionally unintelligent on my part and then err I feel like I can't control it and that just comes out into my into my the way I behave." (Jamal, 559-561).***

It sounds like his emotions are so intense that he cannot control them, and they impact his behaviour. Could the intensity of his feelings be attributed to the previously mentioned defence mechanisms?

Kat tends to ruminate on her experiences of racial microaggressions which seem to make coping with them challenging:

> ***"I'll just think about it again and again and there are times where I'm like I try not to think about it, and I can't help it. It just sits there and I…go over what happened, what I could have done, what I could have said erm…if I did anything wrong that could have diffused the situation…erm…I usually come up with a- actually they were in the wrong." (Kat, 978-981).***

It seems like the more Kat tries to avoid thinking about her experiences the more they intrude her mind and stay there. Moreover, it seems like when she does think about her experiences, it is not in a way which helps her emotionally process but rather in a rationalising manner. Hence, rather than processing and being reflective about the situation she dissects the details which leads her to question her responses and blame herself. It seems like she doubts herself regarding her responses and there is an essence of self-blame of perhaps escalating the situation. However, eventually, she can battle the self-blame and conclude she is not at fault. Kat's description perhaps reflects traces of racial trauma.

Ahmad attributed his struggle to cope with racial microaggressions to a lack of language:

> ***"…. *sigh* I think this is the difficulty… it's very difficult to explain to people…. erm…how someone…is…a victim of this they they…its difficult explaining to them…. Because [ ] I don't think we have the language and maybe this is part of the process…. of…of defining it of actually finding out what is it. [ ] Erm…what are the kind of things that actually… [ ] Make up this kind of …. Language. [ ] And at the moment I I I find it very difficult… I I I know it's there but it's difficult to even even describe." (Ahmad, 290-300).***

In Ahmad's view, it seems that identifying a lexicon of words for the phenomenon is important as the lack of it currently makes it challenging for individuals to share their experiences with others. It seems that for him there is a felt sense of when a racial microaggression occurs but the explicit language to describe it is missing making it

challenging. This struggle perhaps can be seen in his description above through his use of fillers, rambling, and silences. Furthermore, his sigh here could be an expression of frustration or exacerbation while trying to look for the right words to use.

This subtheme demonstrates the complex emotional experiences of participants in relation to racial microaggressions. A range of emotions were discussed by participants which varied in intensity and duration. However, it was not always easy for participants to identify or convey their emotions and it seems often multiple emotions were associated with events. It seemed that participants made attempts to cope with these feelings by rationalising, minimising, and avoiding experiences. However, coping with experiences sometimes posed challenging due to various reasons.

Subtheme 2- Impacts on identity, personality, and self-image

All participants spoke of their experiences having an impact on their identity. Such experiences seemed to manifest various conflicts and challenges in relation to participants cultural identities. Salman described not feeling fully British due to his skin colour:

> ***"I feel stateless… I feel stateless. I don't feel a hundred percent British and I don't think I ever will because of my colour nothing else. I feel British in in terms of my values, my values are very British. However, I have taken on some values which are the Asian values." (Salman, 436-439).***

To be 'stateless' refers to not being recognised as a citizen of any nation, therefore, perhaps by describing himself using that term could imply that there is a lack of belonging felt by Salman. He states that he does not feel fully British because of his skin colour and "nothing else", his statement seems to convey that perhaps this is the only barrier preventing his full acceptance of a British identity. He further assumes that he will never be fully accepted. While he cannot fully identify as being British a part of him does feel British. Rather than being conflicted by the dual nature of his identity he has managed to take the best of

both cultures and integrate them to build a harmonious value system. However, for some participants such as Neil embracing their cultural identities was more challenging:

> ***"…well its it it has impacted me that…not to…not to…do my… like not not to embrace my own culture [ ] And….and I I am always seen as the Asian guy that… hangs h-hangs around with White people *chuckle*….erm… [ ] I don't want this to be to be me. I don't want it to be as myself. I just want to be… be known as…me, myself" (Neil, 448-453).***

It seems that his racial microaggressions experiences have made him so reluctant to embrace his Asian culture that it impacts the perception others have of him too. It sounds like being perceived in this way is frustrating for him and perhaps he has a longing for his true identity to be recognised. Likewise, Divya spoke about suppressing her identity throughout her school and university life. For instance, she talks below about avoiding Indian movies:

> ***"I think before I never used to watch them because I was a bit…. Embarrassed [ ] when you are younger you want to feel like you fit in? [ ] and you want to do all the right things like everyone else like [ ] and the you are like "oh but I still want to watch it" like you know I still want to be who I am. [ ] So, you watch a little bit of it, and then you hear those sort of things. But now it's come to a stage where you know you put yourself first. I don't know as you get older erm you do you." (Divya, 298-305).***

It sounds like hearing snide comments regarding Indian movies was discouraging for her and she used to avoid that part of her culture out of shame. She makes sense of her actions by attributing them to attempting to fit in. Her language here seems to imply that embracing her culture would be wrong, for example, she states she wanted to "do the right thing" when referring to avoiding Indian movies which could suggest that she saw watching these movies as being inappropriate. Divya had mentioned growing up surrounded predominately by White individuals hence it could be that any display of Indian culture was

not seen as the norm. Therefore, she perceives her desire to embrace her culture as non-conformity and taboo. Although it sounds like Divya wanted to conform to what is seen as societally right she was also yearning to embrace the Asian part of her identity. It appears she was experiencing an internal struggle between embracing her culture and trying to fit in. It appears that to resolve this conflict she tried to compromise by embracing this part of herself secretly. However, she attributes this to the vulnerability of being young:

> ***"Now I wouldn't care now I am like yeah let's go with it let's cover the house with it. But I think I think it does affect… it does affect you a lot more when you're at that vulnerable age, you know when you are at school or when you still haven't made up your mind about who you are and you're becoming or where you want to be or what you want to do." (Divya, 516-520).***

It sounds like when she was at an impressionable age, she experienced an identity crisis and was more impacted by the perceptions of others, hence, she avoided things which made her different. However, it seems like the opinions of others matter less to her now because she is more confident about her identity. There seems to be a sense of defiance now and the pressure to conform to social standards is not as important to her.

Jamal appeared to still experience this struggle with embracing his cultural identity. Below he explains how his friends making fun of him for listening to Indian music impacts him:

> ***"I think subtly it does kind of make you feel a bit like… "ok ermm…you know here we go again. Is this like…well it seems I can't even comfortably put my music on now". You kind of feel like, so you might might close all your windows when I want to listen to an Indian song about it or put on your headphones as opposed to playing it out loud. Whereas you might just you might listen to something that's on in in the that's on the charts or something, you might just play it out loud in your car. Er….so yeah it changes your mind***

about what's seen as acceptable or not acceptable and I might play the music say for example, in an Asian area, comfortably have the music down or whatever erm er roof sorry the windows down or whatever you call it, whereas in this particular area I might not." (Jamal, 427-435).

It looks as if these comments make him question his culture and feel like he is doing something wrong by embracing it. This then causes him to amend his behaviour in a way which disguises his cultural identity. It seems that his perceptions of cultural norms and normal behaviour are impacted where perhaps he begins to pathologize Asian culture and perceives it to be something he must hide. Whereas Western culture ("music in the charts") is seen as something acceptable and normal. It appears that like Divya he too feels like he must compromise and only embrace his culture in private or in locations where he feels he will be accepted.

Likewise, Kat describes the identity conflict she experienced as a young British Asian:

"I think for our generation it's difficult because at home you're told to…you're Indian but then you're given like….a completely English lifestyle outside. English schooling… all of this kind of stuff but as soon as you walk through the door, you're told to forget all of that you know. [ ] Like "you're Indian" and its you can't no one can have two identities, so they mix and then no one is happy at home. [ ] Or outside you're always going to be a little bit different. So, I think its difficult for… young British Asians erm try and find out… just to try and…. Fit…and be comfortable with who they are…" (Kat, 741-750).

She seems to be suggesting that if individuals are not fully conforming to English cultural norms they are not seen as worthy. Potentially a fear of this perception may lead to extreme conformity which then creates an identity crisis for Indians particularly. Negative feelings are also reported which could be attributed to an internal struggle as by conforming they are not being true to themselves. Her description suggests that British Asians hold a

dual identity, and the struggle is to balance them as they must fit in when socialising outside the Asian community but also must somehow preserve their cultural identity. It sounds like she is saying keeping up a façade of two identities is not possible and eventually, they merge which makes things more challenging for the individual because they do not quite fit in anywhere. Her use of the word “always” makes it seem like no matter how hard one tries to fit in they never truly will because the other part of their identity will always make them a little different from the average White British individual.

For Jamal, the impact on his identity of these experiences was more drastic:

> ***“…Probably massively I… now erm class myself as an agnostic… and erm human… as er opposed to a race. So, I would say that’s probably a massive… impact that all them incidences probably about not not about a large percentage but a good percentage of that change in me has got to be because of that. Cause cause you are second guessing stuff, questioning. So, in a way it does kind of strip you of your identity. Erm…so yeah I am not saying it’s a 100% that some of it might also be my mindset, my thinking and everything else but I say defiantly yeah it has an impact…which is quite significant big changes going from a Muslim to an agnostic or going from [inaudible] “I’m Indian’ to saying that you’re a human because you want to be more… included and inclusive with everyone.” (Jamal, 520-527).***

It seems that his racial microaggression experiences lead him to second-guess himself and his belief systems. This perhaps then leads him to alter his identity to be more general and non-comital. The phrase “strip you of your identity” refers to the essence of an individual being diminished this could be associated with concepts such as ethnic cleansing or assimilation. While the spectrum of associated concepts is wide essentially it seems to imply that the individuality of a person is taken, and they are made to blend in. The way he uses this phrase here seems to suggest that blending in was not a choice but rather something that happened to him. It sounds like he feels that he was made to give up his

identity as an Indian and a Muslim. It seems like he has abandoned parts of his identity which make him different and has formed an identity which does not isolate people from him. For instance, perhaps he uses general descriptors like “human” for himself because calling himself “Indian” will make people think he is too different from them. However, he seems conflicted about how much these changes to his identity can be attributed to his racial microaggression experiences. Although other factors could have impacted these changes his experiences have made a significant contribution.

These experiences were also said to impact participants’ personality. Neil disclosed that his personality became more introverted due to his experiences:

> ***“…. Became very… I’ve become… very… in-introverted *laughs*. Don’t want to talk to anyone just keeping to myself and just *whispers* put my headphones on *laughs*.” (Neil, 189-190).***

It sounds like his experiences made him want to isolate himself and not interact with those around him. He explained that he was not always an introvert rather this is a consequence of his experiences.

Similarly, Ahmad talks about becoming harsher due to his experiences:

> ***“Erm in terms of I I become a little bit more…erm…I guess harder…with people…and you might inadvertently say *chuckle* be hard to people who who are who are not like that at all…erm because you just don’t want any kind of reaction from them as well.” (Ahmad, 323-325).***

It seems like he goes into a protective mode where he will be harsh even to those who have not microaggressed against him because he does not want to be treated like that. In some way, he perhaps anticipates microaggressions and isolates himself by being harsh before people can hurt him in any way.

Jamal explained that racial microaggressions which involve stereotypes and assumptions regarding his personality influence him to enact a self-fulfilling prophecy:

> ***"ermm it makes me feel like I'm sort of judged makes me feel like I'm in a box. It actually makes me feel to behave as that person in that box a little bit." (Jamal, 312-314).***

Below he provides an example where if a label ascribed to an individual is consistently reinforced than it may become internalised and impact their behaviour:

> ***"So, that is more like erm…if you get told so many times you are this then you, kind of…start to behave that way. [ ] you are erm…directly or indirectly you're kind of told that you come from a…background which is erm… primitive or whatever. You kind of start to behave in that way [ ]." (Jamal, 316-319).***

It appears here he is talking about exchanges in which he interpreted the underlying message to be that his background is uncivilised and not progressive. This seems to not only make him act in such a way but also leads him to become more closed off.

Participants also disclosed that racial microaggressions impacted their self-image, especially confidence. Josephine talks about how racial microaggressions during a job interview knocked her confidence:

> ***"… so her face was like "yeah but still" it's it feels like I'm lying… [ ] to her yeah cause she can't believe that you know I can speak English and then erm… I think every time I mentioned something she's like "oh I don't know that" and obviously, I didn't get the job… so yeah but I kind of felt I I think I kind of lost the confidence when she was like that and she was so snobbish towards me I feel like obviously I'm not going to get the job no matter what so." (Josephine, 58-64).***

She explains that through subtle comments and non-verbal cues she was made to feel inferior. Her language implies that she felt that the system was not meritocratic, and she knew she would not get the job. The interviewer's behaviour made Josephine feel dejected and, in that moment, she lost her confidence and accepted that no matter how well she performed she would not get the job. She then explains how this blow to her confidence impacted her performance on other areas of the recruitment process:

> ***"But after her that said it was…it was it was like ok confidence down so everything just spiralled down cause after that interview there would be like simulation and I didn't really perform well cause in my mind… "I'm not going to have this job anyway"." (Josephine, 77-79).***

It seems like it also made her feel insecure about other jobs as she had begun to feel inexperienced:

> ***"Yeah yeah… So er since then… I'm thinking I was thinking I'm not going to get any job in banks I mean the way she did the way she interviewed me and the way she responded to me… I felt like I need more exp…" (Josephine, 84-86).***

Likewise, Lucky explains how certain racial microaggressions which left him feeling offended also made him question himself:

> ***"It's just like…. "What have I done to offend these people?" "What can I do to make myself b-better?" J-just questions like that and then…. Itss things like that I just ended up kind of… trying to help people more…er but that I think that's just me I'm good natured trying to constantly be there for people." (Lucky, 219-222).***

His language seems to imply that he internalised such exchanges, took responsibility for them, and assumed that he did something wrong. It further appears as if he wants to compensate for his perceived shortcomings and better the situation.

This subtheme has demonstrated that due to racial microaggressions participants tended to experience identity conflicts. It seemed that most participants held a dual identity which they tried to balance out, however, this could leave them feeling stateless or could lead them to abandon their Asian cultural identity to fit in. The degree to which this conflict impacted an individual varied participant to participant. Racial microaggressions also seemed to alter the personalities of participants, their behaviours, and their self-image.

Subtheme 3- Impact on professional and personal life

Seven of eight participants spoke about racial microaggressions impacting their professional lives. Salman shares his experience of attending business meetings where even though the company was his, the White consultants he had hired were assumed to be in charge:

> ***"So, going to these meetings…. and the the MD or the CEO on the other side the the the the the managers would generally initially…. view the other the my consultants as the main person. They thought… they thought they were the ones with the idea…" (Salman, 620-622).***

Salman explains that such situations made him feel like he had to work harder as he saw himself disadvantaged due to his race:

> ***"I just had to overcompensate, I just had to say "you know what this is how the world is"… [ ] stop don't don't cry cry about it, don't like "aww worries me" do something about it" I know more than they do, its fine. I I corrected the situation." (Salman, 653-657).***

It sounds like he has internalised a higher standard for himself and he perceives mediocrity to be unacceptable for him. Salman accepted the situation and took it in stride rather than allowing himself to be upset. Could this be a way of coping for him? Perhaps acknowledging and processing negative feelings can be difficult and so it may be easier for him to just be productive. However, not all participants were able to carry on with the same

determination. For instance, Lucky explains how the hostility from his manager and being passed over for promotion impacted his work performance:

> ***"it it it knocked my morale off like I didn't have much motivation to do the job anymore. [ ] Erm….But I I still continued work obviously but in a just, just coming into work it didn't really feel like "if I am not going to progress then there is no real point staying here"." (Lucky, 88-91).***

Similarly, Divya explained how indirect racial microaggressions from her colleagues created a hostile work environment and made her avoidant of work:

> ***"maybe like I didn't want to be surrounded by her I didn't want to come into work cause I am… they're just negative people really." (Divya, 752-753).***

Both Divya and Lucky seemed defeated by their workplace situations. There seems to be a desire to escape their environments rather than fight to improve them. This could be because they felt incapable to improve their working conditions and saw no way of progressing their careers in such environments. Therefore, a hopeless mentality may have been instilled within them which made avoidance seem like the best option.

For Jamal racial microaggressions in the workplace provoked a psychological chain reaction where his negative thoughts and feelings impact his behaviour:

> ***"the negative side of it is probably sometimes made me uncomfortable in areas says like the office maybe where I should be really getting along with my senior management team and now I am not because what I perceived to see is annoying and therefore changing my behaviour and psychologically its effecting me. Therefore, I maybe acting more negatively than usual ss and that could potentially affect my career or it has affected my career in the past. So erm yeah its its really really interesting area. I think it's a massive massive effects you in so many ways, the way you talk to people, the way you communicate with people…" (Jamal, 533- 539).***

It sounds like he expects to feel comfortable at work and racial microaggressions create an uncomfortable environment where he seems to want to distance himself. He appears to become less friendly and open towards his colleagues and superiors. Could this be because he does not feel comfortable or secure to form deep personal relationships with perpetrators of microaggressions? Participants had previously mentioned that they felt racial microaggressions were a manifestation of covertly held racist view. Therefore, if he holds this view, he may find it difficult to trust and be open with individuals who may hold such beliefs. This then can have consequences on his career progression:

> ***"Would then translate into a a not a not a great relationship with someone [ ] who could potentially be somebody you need to have a good relationship to err to advance your career." (Jamal, 565-566).***

Jamal also spoke about how environmental racial microaggressions can impact the perception other workers have of British Asians:

> ***"erm…it's kind of like how everybody at the lower level is viewing who's intelligent and who's not… and therefore who has more of a say and who's gang is more important." (Jamal, 43-45).***

It seems in his view only having White individuals in powerful roles creates perceptions amongst others about what racial groups are considered intelligent, valuable, and powerful. Therefore, it seems that the concept of this unspoken hierarchy of intelligence is perhaps covertly reinforced by not having any Asian representation within senior management.

Participants also revealed the impact racial microaggressions had on their personal lives. Neil explains how he would avoid associating with individuals from his race as he did not want to be perceived as an outsider:

> ***"But I I sort of intentionally avoided to hang…hang out with like erm…British Asian like the same colour as me. [ ] I I I don't want to… be seen like on the outside" (Neil, 202-205).***

It sounds like he saw staying away from other Asians as a precaution to assimilate better and avoid microaggressions. He seemed to believe that any hostility towards him would diminish if he was well integrated. It sounds like he was trying to protect himself by assimilating and getting rid of his Asian associations:

> ***"I want to I want to be immersed with… er in the Western culture more so I can fit in more…. then I can so I can get rid of any aggressions… that they might have towards me." (Neil, 214-216).***

Kat spoke of the confusion racial microaggressions create within friendship dynamics. Racial microaggressions seem to create a situation where her friends believe they need to help her. However, this can create rifts in their dynamic where she is placed in an inferior victim position and her friends are the superior saviours:

> ***"I know I I feel patronised very quickly…so I think I feel… all my friends kept saving me which was nice at the time now that I'm aware of it I think I would feel patronised…cause I would feel like "no I can look after myself"…" (Kat, 1196-1198).***

It sounds like she is predicting her internal experience. When this situation has previously occurred, she found it harmless. However, now due to her newly found awareness of racial dynamics, complications may arise as she may perceive the situation negatively. She uses this example of friends to explain how individuals using their White privilege is productive to a certain extent:

> ***"Erm…and its easier to be ignorant and just push it aside…whereas if they could understand and embrace it…erm they could actually do some good with it but then it gets to the point when does it become…condescending…you***

know. When… do…when do all the brown people stop needing saving from all the White people?" (Kat, 1187-1190).

Kat sounds conflicted as she thinks that White individuals do need to use their voices and privilege to tackle prejudice, however, after a certain point, this can create a power imbalance where White individuals become saviours and Asians become victims. This could demonstrate the complexities racial microaggressions cause for interracial relationships where perhaps there is a delicate balance in place. It also implies that such relationships can be burdened with power dynamics and feeling equal may be challenging for British Asians, even though their White kin do not intend to put them in inferior positions.

For Josephine racial microaggressions previously used to impact her sense of community:

""I don't have friends here" that's what I was thinking that time I was thinking "I can never have friends here… erm I can never trust them as well"…" (Josephine, 164-165).

Interestingly, Josephine's inability to trust which seemed like Jamal's issue building relationships with his colleagues. Perhaps she found it challenging to build meaningful close relationships because those who microaggressed around her made her feel like they had hidden prejudices and were only being nice to her as a façade. Josephine explained that this has improved over time:

"I mean you can have acquaintances people you know in the office people maybe a neighbour one or two but never a close one never a true friend as you call it. That's why I always say "no I don't have a friend" but erm that was before so now I know that I have true friends." (Josephine, 434-437).

Interestingly, Josephine uses the present tense to convey her perceptions of isolation but says she feels like she has friends now. This could imply that there is a conflict within her where she is trying to adjust, and things are getting better but maybe somewhere in her mind

such thoughts still exist. Furthermore, her response to the question if having friends here makes her feel like she belongs more provided some support to this speculation:

> ***"Erm…not totally, not a hundred percent you still you know that you know… [ ] This is not my country isn't it. I mean I love being here…its colourful and I'm earning money…and I live here obviously and I'm a citizen now… but yeah let's face the fact I wasn't born here." (Josephine, 439-442).***

It appears that despite having friends here and being a citizen, she does not think she will ever truly belong because of her background. This perhaps implies that place of birth is an important factor in moderating one's feelings of belonging. However, it is unclear if this is perpetuated by her own struggles to settle or because of microaggressions which make her feel like an unwelcomed outsider.

For Ahmad racial microaggressions strained his friendships as he felt unable to share his experiences:

> ***"A-as I keep saying it's more damaging because…you don't know how to cope with that, you don't really know…what do you do with that? You can't really talk to anyone about it because as I said even my friends didn't understand when people my friends were White, they didn't understand that at all." (Ahmad, 501-504).***

This builds on Ahmad's earlier stated excerpt that the lack of understanding from his friends regarding microaggressions causes him to feel uncomfortable sharing his feelings with them. It sounds like quite a lonely and isolating environment is created for him as he has no outlet. Therefore, this makes coping with racial microaggressions even more challenging as it seems like he has no way of processing them. It almost seems like because these instances are ambiguous and covert there is no proper social protocol for dealing with them. Therefore, he is unable to figure out how he is meant to react or what the appropriate

emotions are and perhaps his friends dismissing his experiences perpetuates these negative emotions even more.

In this subtheme, each participant shared examples and/or potential concerns regarding how racial microaggressions can impact or have impacted their professional and personal lives. These incidents were revealed to either have impacted the participants' internal experiences or impacted the way they interact with the external world around them and the associated consequences of those interactions.

Subtheme 4- Learning opportunity and self-development

Majority of participants reported that overall, their experiences of racial microaggressions have aided their self-development and proved as a learning opportunity. Divya believed that her experiences shaped her as a person and helped her embrace her identity proudly:

> ***"I I think they've built up on who I am. It's it's become a part of me that it's made me feel more like I think over the years you become… I don't know you're you're proud of who you are." (Divya, 760-761).***

It seems that previously she used to be quite uncomfortable with her cultural identity. However, through these experiences, she has embraced it and now she even is willing to learn more about her culture rather than suppress that side of her:

> ***"…..it has actually made me want to learn more about my culture" (Divya, 796).***

Similarly, Salman explained how such experiences have helped enhance his internal resources and have been a learning opportunity:

> ***"Positively…Yeah, they made me stronger they made made me realise that you can't be everyone's best friend they made made me realise that….. you can't make everybody like you. I've tried to overcompensate…. by being Asian and an ex-Muslim… to… do things for people that I think might be racist… to make***

them th to basically say to them "hey listen… I know you probably have these… deep-rooted… prejudices…. But we are not all like that" I've s I've tried to do that…..and in the past year or two I've… I've come to… the conclusion that….you know what I should stop doing this…. If they're going to be racist let them be racist…. you're not a 1 man… global…. You know m-movement to eradicate racism or discrimination." (Salman, 1151-1158).

It sounds like he has come to an acceptance that he is not going to be liked or accepted by everyone. To "overcompensate" usually means to work hard to overcome one's shortcomings and in this context, it sounds like he is saying he used to feel like he needed to work harder as he was Asian. Therefore, could this mean that he saw being Asian as a flaw or that he felt that it was his responsibility to get White individuals to like him. It seems as if he felt he needed to apologies for other Asians and prove that not every Asian is the same. However, it appears there has been a shift where he does not think it is his responsibility to eradicate racism and change people's views anymore.

For Jamal, these experiences have developed his mindset, made him more aware of his biases and allowed him to challenge them:

"the positive of it is that it has challenged me challenged my mindset to kind of ensured me to not be prejudice and not be ermm…yeah… be racist or have unconscious biases and try and challenge some of them." (Jamal, 531-533).

Likewise, Neil described his emotional intelligence developing due to his experiences of racial microaggressions:

" …. It made me think on the other side that… erm….. It it it made me more… empathetic when erm…like…oth-other people that they… in… like a in a conversation like they don't talk then I I personally do to invite them "what do you think about it?" of… the subject that we are talking about. [ ] and *coughs*… it it just help me to….to understand… like the quiet people that

don't… and… and give the chance that I wasn't given. [ ] …and let everyone have their opinion." (Neil, 461-469).

It sounds like his experiences of not being able to express himself or having his opinions heard have made him self-aware. In that, he is conscious of other people's feelings and does not want to make them feel the way he did. It seems he feels he was denied opportunities to express himself which has made him more empathetic to others.

This subtheme highlights the racial microaggression experiences can have overall constructive effects on participants, as they can help individuals build their internal resources, self-awareness, and empathy.

Summary

Through the rigour process of IPA, the data from all participants was consolidated into three superordinate themes each consisting of three to four subthemes: Racial microaggression experiences, reactions to racial microaggressions and impact of racial microaggressions. These findings suggest that racial microaggressions are experienced daily by British Asians in various contexts, such as education, work, media, politics, and social environments. Participants provided detailed descriptions of their experiences, their reactions during and after these experiences and how they were impacted by them. This involved discussions regarding their emotional experiences, cognitive processes, and coping mechanisms. In the following chapter, key findings will be presented and interpreted using the existing literature. Moreover, the implications for counselling psychology and other fields will be discussed, the study will be critically evaluated and suggestions for future researchers will be made.

Discussion

Overview

The main aim of the current research was to examine the experiences of British Asians by investigating their interpretation of racial microaggressions using a phenomenological approach. The research question posed was “how do British Asians make sense of their experiences of racial microaggressions?” Firstly, in this chapter, the key findings from the study will be summarised and discussed in relation to the existing literature. Relevant literature will also be used to make tentative interpretations regarding the data. Next, the findings will be used to discuss the implications they have for counselling psychology and the wider societal context. Then the study will be evaluated and finally, recommendations for future researchers will be made.

Summary of findings

The findings revealed that participants experienced direct and indirect racial microaggressions which manifested verbally, non-verbally, and environmentally. These experiences were found within their workplaces, social lives, education, and wider social structures. Participants’ reactions to these experiences varied depending on the situation and the individual. Commonly participants tried to make sense of experiences, accept them, and/or try to challenge them in some direct or indirect way. The results also demonstrated that racial microaggressions had significant impacts on participants’ emotions, identity, personality, self-image, and their professional and personal lives.

Experiences of racial microaggressions

Using a critical theory framework, the study aimed to get the voices of British Asians to be heard as their experiential knowledge was considered legitimate and important to understanding racism (Carrasco, 1996). The findings of the current study demonstrate that racial microaggressions are an experiential reality for British Asians. The participant experiences described here seem to fit into the racial microaggression taxonomy described

by Sue et al. (2007). All participants reported a mixture of various microaggression experiences which seemed to fit the descriptions of microassaults, microinvalidation, microinsults, and environmental racial microaggressions. However, not all of Sue et al's (2009) lower-order categories of microaggressions were identified within these results.

As suggested previously Sue et al's (2007) taxonomy did not seem sufficient to understand the racial microaggression experiences of all ethnic minorities in differing contexts as in most studies at least one new theme emerged. Like in previous studies new experiential patterns seemed to emerge in this study which perhaps are unique to the British Asian population. For instance, several participants spoke about being stereotyped as being passive where they are expected to be non-confrontational followers. In previous research, Asian American women have expressed being microaggressed in such a way where they are expected to be coy and subservient (Sue et al., 2009) and women in the current study reported the same. Interestingly, in the current study men too described being subjected to the passivity stereotype. This stereotype seemed to resemble the 'model minority' tag as well which in previous literature was attached to British Asians where they were expected to be subdued and apolitical (Ratna, 2014). In previous literature, it was stated that this tag was not applied to all Asian communities. For example, Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslim groups were expected to be more problematic and valued less (Ramji, 2006). However, in the current sample, the passivity stereotype did not seem to depend on the participants' ethnic or religious community, it seemed to be applied to most participants.

Another microaggression emergence found in this study which perhaps is unique to British Asian men is them being stereotyped as being narrow-minded. This seemed to only be brought up by South Asian men, hence, it may not be generalisable to all British Asian men. Moreover, participants mentioned that this stereotype was applied to them by people of various ethnicities alongside White individuals. While not included in the analysis section one participant even expressed how Asian women too stereotyped Asian men to be "sleazy". This indicated that perpetrators of racial microaggressions are not always White and perhaps

that stereotypical narratives are so deeply entrenched within society that it can lead British Asians to inherit stereotypical views regarding those within their communities.

Moreover, Sue et al's (2009) racial microaggressions taxonomy also spoke about environmental microaggressions which occur on a systemic level without any specific perpetrator, for example, cultural influences, education, and the government. There seems to be a limited amount of studies examining environmental microaggressions as most tend to focus on interpersonal microaggressions (Mills, 2020). Interestingly, within this study environmental microaggressions emerged as a significant theme which could be distinguished from interpersonal microaggressions. The findings did find commonalities with themes found in other studies. For example, Mills (2020) while studying Black undergraduate student experiences in predominately White institution found the following types of environmental microaggressions: segregation, lack of representation, campus response to criminality, cultural bias in courses, tokenism, and pressure to conform. Out of these six types of microaggressions, we identified five within this sample. However, not in the same way as Mills (2020) as this study was not focused on the educational setting specifically. Rather we found these themes to be present in a range of contexts, such as the media, politics, community, labour market, and retail. For example, participants spoke about the tokenistic portrayal of Asians within the media, experiencing the retail market as highly Eurocentric, and segregation within areas amongst communities.

Additionally, in Mills's (2020) study only male participants discussed the lack of diversity within leadership roles, this gender difference was also found in the current study. While Mills' participants referred to this more in educational institutions in this study participants spoke about other industries, for example, security and housing. Participants here talked about the lack of representation in senior management, the existence of a glass-ceiling for British Asians, and biased recruitment procedures. One female participant did share her experience of discrimination she faced during an interview. However, she attributed her experience more to the individual interviewing her rather than the problem

being systemic. These findings also seem to support Kilvington's (2013;2019;2020) research which talks about the barriers faced by British Asians in professional football, such as, covert racism in recruitment, ignoring British Asian talent, and a lack of opportunities offered to British Asians. The current findings are important as they build on existing literature and demonstrate that these environmental microaggressions are not context-specific rather British Asians in other industries too face similar kinds of racial microaggressions.

Furthermore, the findings support the issues discussed in existing research concerning the media representations of British Asians to a certain extent. Such as Tincknell's (2020) claim that the representation of British Asians in television and cinema seems to affirm conventional stereotypes. For instance, a Filipino participant in this study expressed her frustration over East Asians being shown to have stereotypical job roles in the media. She spoke about how Filipinos are always typecasted as maids or nurses while Chinese individuals are typecasted in roles like accountants and scientists. However, the findings did not confirm the prevalent stereotypes regarding East Asians which Mak (2019) claimed occur in British media. This could potentially be because the focus of this study was not solely on media portrays. Nevertheless, I interpreted her description to potentially support Mak's (2019) claim that East Asians are portrayed in a fixated and static manner.

Moreover, the study was not able to support literature which claims that typically minorities are portrayed as outsiders and that the media tends to focus on racial conflict (Hatmann & Husband, 1974), especially in the case of British Muslims (Saeed, 2007). Rather participants claimed that the media had been a tool to normalise stereotyping and racism through cartoons and comedy. This could potentially be attributed to the existing literature being out of date and to the evolution of the British media. It was acknowledged by one participant that overt discrimination had reduced in the media and the media has become less tolerant of racism since the 70s/80s. However, he stated that many public figures still do not hesitate to share racist views through the media. Therefore, this could indicate that the

British media is evolving, and racism may not manifest in the media the same way it did when those studies were published.

Previously scholars have discussed how opinion-makers, such as, politicians have impacted the daily lives of British Asians, whether it is through anti-immigration campaigns (Brah, 2006) or racial triangulation which exerts control over them (Ratna, 2014). However, the existing literature seems to be outdated and focused on the political climate during the initial years of British Asian migration. The current findings demonstrate how the current political climate and events have perpetuated racism and created an unwelcoming environment. Interestingly, participants seemed to think that there has been a shift towards the right-wing which they seemed to associate with racist values. They stated that this shift has given those who previously covertly held racist views a platform to express them openly. They seem to think that individuals mirror politicians, hence, current politicians and political events have been interpreted to mean that expressing racist values is acceptable now. Many participants mentioned 'Brexit' as an example of this shift which is interesting as previous scholars have claimed that the 'Brexit' vote had racial underpinnings (Patel & Connelly, 2019). While we cannot confirm that there were racist agendas attached to the vote, the current findings seem to demonstrate that there was a felt sense within participants that the vote had negative racial undertones.

Interestingly, participants in this study seemed to talk about politics and environmental racial microaggressions more compared to other research studies, this could be a unique feature of the British Asian experience or it could be attributed to the unpredictable and shocking political climate we have experienced in the past few years. From a critical theory perspective, this demonstrates the centrality of racism. Racism is so deeply embedded into social order that it manifests in covert ways within various social structures (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011). By providing the current participants the opportunity to express themselves the study is trying to challenge dominant ideologies which discreetly oppress them. For example, participants' experiences seem to oppose the existence of

meritocracy, equal opportunities, and racial neutrality in workplaces, politics, and other contexts.

Furthermore, the current findings seem to support existing literature which has found racial microaggressions in different contexts. For instance, within this study, there was a significant mention of racial microaggressions within the workplace context. As in Herbert et al's (2008) and Naseem's (2017) studies participants here reported experiencing hostile work environments, uncomfortable exchanges with colleagues and managers, differential treatment and struggles with career progression. This would transpire as nebulised comments, jokes, looks, friendlier attitudes towards White workers, and being passed up for promotions. Intriguingly, one participant even used the term "glass ceiling" to describe his experience working in the housing industry, this seems remarkably like Naseem's (2017) 'capped equality' concept. It seems both these terms convey the notion that while British Asians have been employed in professional jobs they have not fully been accepted. These instances were reported on an individual and systemic level. The sample did not just include participants from one employment group hence, it could be said that these practices occur in various companies and industries.

Racial microaggressions were also briefly discussed in educational contexts which seemed to support some of Pearce (2019) and Wong's (2015) findings. Participants reported microassaults, mocking, and stereotyping. For example, several participants spoke about how they were assumed to be proficient in certain academic subjects and/or posed abilities for specific jobs due to the racial stereotypes ascribed to them. Interestingly, participants hardly spoke about racial microaggression experiences with teachers or environmental racial microaggressions within educational settings. Only one or two participants spoke about racial microaggression encounters involving their educators. Rather than sharing experiences in educational settings participants tended to use education to explain racial microaggressions. This is curious as a significant portion of racial microaggression literature based in the U.K. focuses on racial microaggressions in educational settings. Perhaps the retrospective nature

of this study could explain these findings, participants were all adults over 20 and so they may have focused on recent experiences which were more accessible.

The only other study which solely focused on the British Asian experiences of racial microaggressions was done within the context of first-class cricket (Burdsey, 2011). The current participants did not mention racial microaggressions within sports. However, participants reported similar racial microaggression experiences to Burdsey's (2011) findings except in other contexts. For instance, in both studies, participants talked about the use of the racial slur "Paki" being prevalent. Participants also similarly reported their culture being mocked and their values and beliefs being belittled. However, Burdsey's (2011) sample mostly consisted of Pakistani Muslims and their racial microaggression experiences were linked to their religion. Within the current sample, such microaggressions were not limited to Muslim participants, while Muslim participants did report their religious values being insulted, participants from other communities too had their cultural values putdown. Hence, the current findings build on Burdsey's (2011) study as they demonstrate that experiences of microassaults and culture-based racial microaggression go beyond the Muslim community and are racial realities for other British Asian communities. The current findings also allow the plights of other British Asian communities to be heard within academic literature which was previously seemingly absent.

Reacting to racial microaggressions

The current findings revealed that reacting to racial microaggressions is not linear and standardised. Participants reactions seemed to vary depending on the situation and the perpetrators involved perhaps reflecting the complexity and covertness of microaggressions themselves. Moreover, the reactions participants have during instances of racial microaggressions and after they have occurred may also vary. For instance, a participant reported a general accepting attitude towards racial microaggressions, however, he also reported that confronting certain microaggressions was important as an accepting attitude would have led him to get exploited. This highlights the complexities involved in reacting to

racial microaggressions and resonates with what Sue et al. (2007) labelled as ‘catch-22’ situations. Recipients of microaggressions are said to face a dilemma while deciding how to react in situations as there is no clean escape from these difficult circumstances and all options have some consequence.

Initially, recipients are said to dissect the situation with a series of questions, such as, “Did what I think happened, really happen? Was this a deliberate act or an unintentional slight? How should I respond? Sit and stew on it or confront the person? If I bring the topic up, how do I prove it? Is it really worth the effort? Should I just drop the matter?” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 279). The recipient firstly tries to determine if a discriminatory act has occurred. The current participants did the same and as suggested by scholars this was not a simple task due to the ambiguity and invisibility of microaggressions which are essentially said to give them their power (Sue et al., 2007). Participants in the current study reported trying to figure out if situations were microaggressions by relying on their experiential realities to connect the dots, for example, by looking at the nature of the incidents (was it common or random?) and/or examining what they knew about the perpetrators (was there malicious intent?). However, racial microaggressions were often masked under nebulised comments and ‘jokes’ making them difficult to identify and react to.

For some participants, it was challenging to identify if microaggressions had occurred because of race or their other intersectional identities. The critical race theory acknowledges intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) hence, it is important to recognise that this confusion for participants is legitimate and not a form of denial or an excuse not to react to microaggressions. Moreover, it could be that participants’ intersectional identities even created unique forms of discrimination for them. For example, one male participant spoke about being stereotyped to be homophobic or chauvinistic due to his racial, gender and religious (Muslim) identities. Another female participant felt that her being a South Asian short female put her at a disadvantage as it gave others the perception that they could mistreat her, and she will remain subservient.

The current findings somewhat resemble Sue's (2010) argument that the "most frequent reaction to microaggressions seems to be doing nothing" (p.55). All participants spoke about accepting racial microaggressions at some point. Participants seemed to justify, minimise, and/or dismiss microaggressions to accept them and move on from them. They would often attribute microaggressions to ignorance, no malicious intent, societal structures, and to the history of colonisation. Moreover, the reasons given for acceptance or non-reaction seemed to resemble those given by Sue (2010) this included not being able to identify microaggressions, the perpetrators being someone the participants have regular contact with or a close relationship with and reacting would have negative consequences. Participants frequently did not blame perpetrators for microaggressions and believed them to be unintentional or perpetrators to be ignorant. Some participants even attributed not reacting to microaggressions to them being too minor and there being a lack of language to help voice their experiences. These unique findings demonstrate the need for awareness of racial microaggressions and the development of a comprehensive lexicon concerning microaggressions.

Alternatively, some participants tried to self-soothe through relaxation, meditation and using support networks. While others displayed a desire to confront racial microaggressions. Even in the times when participants did not directly react to situations, they would take some covert action to challenge them. This tended to vary depending on the individual, for instance, some participants would try to behave in ways which would oppose the stereotypes ascribed to them. One participant spoke about using social media to expose an individual who microaggressed against him, another spoke about running workshops in his workplace to help create awareness regarding discrimination. Racial discrimination can diminish a recipient's sense of control and these strategies seem to indicate that perhaps participants were trying to gain some control over situations without enduring the negative consequences attached to direct confrontations. Nevertheless, the strategies employed by participants here align with Sue et al's (2019) microintervention strategies for disarming racial

microaggressions and making them visible. Sue et al. (2019) stated that to meet these goals addressing microaggressions must go beyond coping, and action-oriented and educational approaches should be employed.

There were a few participants who spoke about confronting perpetrators upfront. However, even in doing that they may challenge the act and not the underlying racial message. For instance, one participant explained how she confronted a man at a restaurant who snatched something from her table without warning. While she condemned him for the act itself, she did not express that she felt that he acted in that way due to his White privilege. She explained that she was aware she was surrounded by White people and by bringing up race she would make everyone uncomfortable. This highlights the catch-22 situation again because while this participant felt better for saying something, she still felt like she had not confronted the problem itself, however, if she would have confronted it she would have been perceived negatively. This could support Sue et al's (2019) claims that targets of microaggressions should be provided a better repertoire of responses which help them confront microaggressions in an effective, dignified, and brave manner so that their self-worth is enhanced.

Moreover, mixed emotions seemed to arise for participants who did confront racial microaggressions. While at times participants reported feeling positive for standing up for themselves, they also reported feeling tired and frustrated. They seemed to resent having to constantly battle discrimination, to prove and justifying themselves. However, this could be considered better than participants not responding at all as Sue et al. (2019) claim that not responding leads to the internalisation of negative self-beliefs and dominant racist attitudes. This again seems to reflect the catch-22 situation (Sue et al., 2007) where either way the microaggression target is at a loss.

Sue et al. (2007) claimed that reacting to racial microaggressions may also depend on the recipient. Intriguingly, participants of older generations seemed more inclined to being acceptant of racial microaggressions, with some claiming this is as good as it gets and that

younger generations should be grateful the level of tolerance the U.K. presently has. Some older participants even felt that the responsibility of microaggressions was on the recipients rather than the perpetrators, they claimed that some British Asians make it harder for themselves by displaying their difference and that an effort to assimilate is the key to minimising discrimination. Conversely, younger participants expressed that change is essential and that British Asians need to stop being complacent. This disparity potentially highlights the generational differences between British Asians. One participant identified this difference and attributed it to the British colonisation of Asia. She claimed that older generations through the British rule had been beaten down and learnt to be subservient and those who migrated year had this mentality reinforced within them through overt racism.

The current findings seem to support Burdsey's (2011) claim that British Asians are subject to the colour-blind ideology as some participants tended to promote dominant views and dismiss their experiential realities by labelling microaggressions as 'jokes', normalising them, and/or questioning their existence. Such mitigation strategies are said to be key components of the colour-blind ideology (Doane, 2006) which seems to portray racism as only being existent in over forms (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). However, the results suggested that maybe this ideology is not as entrenched as we thought as participants do express a desire to challenge racial microaggression (and have done so) and change existing social structures. Moreover, even when participants have not been able to take direct actions, they have employed covert strategies which have helped them cope with these difficult situations, therefore, demonstrating the adaptive nature of these individuals to self-soothe and persevere.

Impact of racial microaggressions

Participants within the study spoke about short-term and long-term impacts of racial microaggressions which seemed to be negative and/or constructive. As found in previous studies (e.g. Sue et al.,2008 and Sue et al., 2009) participants reported feeling emotional distress due to racial microaggressions. This included feeling angry, insulted, frustrated,

uncomfortable, hurt and confused. Even when participants discussed experiences in which microaggressions were unintentional there were still negative emotions provoked within them which were attributed to the racial undertones of the exchanges. The emotional experiences of participants seemed complex as single racial microaggression incidences were reportedly linked to a range of negative emotions. In discussing the emotional impacts of microaggressions participants would frequently act avoidant, hesitant or try to minimise them. Hence, it appeared as if acknowledging and expressing emotions was perhaps challenging and uncomfortable for some.

While participants reported that racial microaggressions provoked negative emotions, impacted their identities and relationships, none of them mentioned any serious mental health problems, trauma or substance misuses linked to their experiences. However, some participant descriptions of impacts of racial microaggression seemed indicative of racial trauma symptoms (Carter et al., 2013). Such as intrusive memories, avoidance, hypervigilance, low mood, anger, and low self-esteem. A significant example of this was seen when some participants spoke about intruding memories and being unable to stop ruminating on their experiences of racial microaggressions even when they tried to avoid thinking about their experiences. The 'Race-Based traumatic Stress Model' (Carter, 2007) claims that the impact of racist experiences will vary depending on their nature (Pieterse & Powell, 2016). However, the study's findings could not support these claims as no distinction in impacts were identified between reported instances which were avoidant-based or more hostile. Nevertheless, it was found that the severity of impact depended on individuals' subjective experiences of microaggressions (Comas-Diaz, 2016). For instance, experiences of a similar nature did not have the same impact on all participants. One participant even spoke about how her mood before experiences would be a moderator of the impact racial microaggressions had on her.

The current study identified racial microaggressions to have significant impacts on the identities and personalities of British Asians. Participants stated that racial microaggressions

caused identity conflicts, reluctance to embrace their cultural identities, diminished their confidence, provoked feelings of not belonging, and they led some to even alter their personalities. However, for some participants, racial microaggressions helped them develop their cultural pride, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness. Interestingly, those who described racial microaggressions aiding their self-development reported this as more of a general impact of their experiences. So, in essence, each racial microaggression experience may have had negative effects on them, but the overall impact was constructive. However, this was not the case for all participants it is unclear if this is due to individual differences. Nevertheless, it seemed that participants who reported self-development were eager to take control and turn negative situations into positives. This demonstrates that the impact of single microaggressions and the collective impact may vary depending on the individual.

Scholars have argued that claims which dubbed British Asians (especially youngsters) as suffering from a ‘culture clash’ due to the exposure of vastly different cultures at home and outside (Brah, 2006) are unfounded. They argue that British Asians are ‘cultural’ hybrids who have managed to fuse their Eastern and Western identity markers (Amin, 2003) and have created a harmonious identity (Ratna, 2014). Curiously, both the identity descriptions mentioned above were found in this study. Some participants even reported experiencing both identity confusion and harmony over their lifetime. Their identity development was often spoken in relevance to age where some described feeling uncomfortable with their cultural identity growing up in a Western country but as they matured, they had learnt to embrace it. However, this was not the case for all participants where some even in their adult lives reported having problems with their cultural identity which they attributed to racial microaggressions.

These unique insights seem to highlight the complexities of identity within a bicultural context and that the impact of racial microaggressions is not the same for even a homogenous group. Perhaps this variation could be due to individual differences regarding the types of areas, homes, and/or schools individuals experienced growing up. For example,

perhaps someone who grew up in a more traditional Asian home and went to a majority White school may find it more difficult to find that bicultural balance as they may have experienced more racial microaggressions at school compared to someone who went to a school where there were other Asian children around. Nevertheless, the findings seem to correspond to past literature on British Asian identity to a certain extent. However, it is important to note that in this study identity was discussed in relation to racial microaggressions. This perhaps builds on previous research which seems to provide descriptions of British Asians' identities, while the current research seems to highlight the underlying mechanism which could contribute to the development of the British Asian identity (i.e. racial microaggressions).

The current study also found racial microaggressions to have impacts on the professional and personal lives of participants. For some participants there seemed to be a knock-on effect where racial microaggressions would lead to negative thoughts, emotions and impact their behaviours. These behaviours for some may be avoiding their friends or colleagues, wanting to escape their environment and/or challenging microaggressions. For some participants, retaliation manifested as a means to negate the assumptions of the racial microaggression. For examples, one participant explained how being mistaken as a lower-level worker during business meetings when he was the CEO made him overcompensate and work harder to show up those who made that assumption. Intriguingly, there was one participant who reported that sometimes racial microaggressions made him want to act according to the assumptions made about. This seems to resonate with the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' (Merton, 1948) where perhaps a fatalistic approach is almost taken where he believes that people will assume things about him anyway so he might as well behave accordingly. Behaviour varied though from situation to situation for all participants. This chain-reaction of thoughts, feelings and behaviours seems to foreshadow the cognitive behavioural theory's claims of the three being interlinked (Wills, 2015). This perhaps could explain why for some participants impacts of racial microaggressions persist.

Furthermore, racial microaggressions also had external impacts including halting participants' career progressions, normalising racism, and interfering with friendships. This demonstrates that the impacts of racial microaggressions are not just limited to the internal experiences of British Asians but rather they widely impact their lives too. For example, one participant explained how being constantly ignored and shut down at work, made those at lower levels think that White members of staff held more power and value than Asian members. Therefore, it seems that racial microaggressions are not only sending messages to British Asians but to others too about who is really in charge. It seems that in some unconscious way the racial hierarchy stays in tac while giving people the illusion that meritocracy and equality exist. This seemed to manifest in friendships too where one participant felt that her White friends constantly defending her during racist acts could create a power dynamic where she is put in a victim position always. From a critical race theory standpoint, this seems to echo interest convergence where White individuals support racial justice and equality if it serves them in some way (Yosso et al., 2009). Participants who described instances such as the ones I mentioned here may have sensed these false narratives of equality but their uncertainty makes it seem that they did not feel empowered to label them in such a way or acknowledge how they maintained the status quo.

Implications for counselling psychology and other contexts

Racial microaggressions seem to be an experiential reality for British Asians in today's British society despite claims of a post-racial era. Through applying a phenomenological perspective this study was able to showcase racial microaggressions through the lenses of British Asians in the contemporary U.K. context. This study attempted to fill the current knowledge gaps within the existing literature by examining racial microaggressions and the British Asian experience within a more general societal context. The study may be a useful contribution to counselling psychology as it attempts to exhibit the racial realities of British Asians and get their voices heard. This is thought to potentially help develop practitioners' cultural competencies and to aid them to work effectively with British

Asians. Comas-Diaz (2016) argued that acknowledging a client's exposure to historical discrimination, and racial microaggressions are important and ignoring these aspects may lead to the underdiagnoses of race-related stress and trauma. Hence, by highlighting the daily experiences and histories of discrimination of British Asians this study hopes to help practitioners create a holistic understanding of the British Asian experience. This may help them enhance interventions used for this demographic and ensure that these clients are being treated appropriately.

As mentioned in previous research the therapeutic alliance is not immune to racial microaggressions (Owen et al., 2014). By highlighting the experiential realities of British Asians an awareness could be created which helps practitioners create positive treatment experiences for them. For instance, by being aware of the types of racial microaggressions British Asians experience practitioners can help clients identify, label, and validate their experiences, rather than dismiss them because they do not share the same experiential reality. Moreover, the findings highlight that the negative impacts of racial microaggressions are not always obvious to recipients and the normalisation of such acts can lead to unresolved emotions. For example, for some participants, we saw that racial microaggressions led to negative thoughts, feelings, and disruptive behaviours. Participants were not always comfortable identifying and discussing these emotions and it sometimes felt like microaggressions had not been fully processed. Practitioners by being aware of these findings could help British Asians process their experiences, deal with their unresolved emotions and identity conflicts, and helping equip them for future encounters (Nadal et al., 2014).

These findings could be adopted by practitioners using various therapeutic frameworks. For example, within a cognitive behavioural therapy approach, practitioners can help clients identify that their negative thoughts are actually stemming from racial microaggressions rather than the client being 'crazy' or 'problematic'. This can help them challenge their negative thoughts and break negative maintenance cycles. For a person-

centred therapist being informed about racial microaggressions through this study could help them be more congruent and empathetic with their British Asian clients. They may be able to form a more authentic bond with their clients as they would be more knowledgeable and understanding of their plights. Moreover, these findings could also be used by counselling psychologist to reflect on their behaviour towards their colleagues too. These findings could be distributed in various mental health services where psychologists and other practitioners can use them to inform their practice and the way they relate to their British Asian colleagues. The researcher during the research process had even made a brief presentation regarding racial microaggressions and her preliminary findings to help inform her colleagues.

The current findings demonstrate that racial microaggressions manifest in various contexts, such as workplaces, social environments, media, politics, and education. Therefore, the current study has wider societal implications where findings could be used to develop sensitive content for various media platforms and raise awareness of the public regarding their behaviours which could seem offensive. For example, these findings could help challenge the stereotypical portrayal of British Asians within the media and change how they are represented in the media. These findings could also be used by educational and/or corporate organisations to aid the development of effective racial sensitivity training programmes and help create dialogues within these organisations about racial microaggressions. If such organisations are aware of the complexities of ambiguous racial microaggressions they could perhaps create better infrastructures for reporting and handling microaggressions where recipients feel safe and validated. The results could also be used to inform recruitment and promotion processes, where if these organisations acknowledge these environmental microaggressions perhaps initiatives can be created to prevent them. Participants in this study often attributed racial microaggressions to a lack of education, perhaps these findings could also be used to encourage educational organisations to integrate information into courses related to British Asians, other cultures, and contemporary racism.

These findings could also be used to help demonstrate to the public that the U.K. is not post-racial and discrimination against British Asians still exists. Perhaps by disseminating these findings on social media or other media platforms a realistic reflection of British Asian experiences of covert discrimination can be seen by social scientists and the public. Launching these findings into the social media realm can also perhaps help create a social media campaign which gives voices to other British Asians who have experienced racial microaggressions. As we have seen with other major social media movements like the 'Me too' movement that when people hear similar stories to their own that can give them the strength and validation to share their experiences. It can also empower them in challenging racial microaggressions and give them the language to name these ambiguous experiences they could not call out before.

Critical evaluation

Although several interesting insights were found in the current study it is important to critically evaluate it as all research studies have their limitations. The generalisability of the current findings should be carefully considered as the study sample was small. The sample also mostly consisted of South Asians with only two participants being of East Asian descent. Therefore, perhaps the findings are more representative of the South British Asian experience and the applicability of findings to all British Asians could be questionable. The British Asian identity is complex and while common themes were found it may be more beneficial for future researchers to study South and East Asians separately.

Additionally, all participants were recruited from London which is considered significantly more multicultural than other parts of the U.K. Hence, experiences of British Asians living in other parts of the U.K. may vary considerably. While some participants shared their microaggression experiences in other parts of the country this was limited. Therefore, the findings may not be representative of British Asians in other geographical contexts. Another potential limitation of the study could be that the sample included participants who were born and raised in the U.K. and those who had migrated here. The

length of stay of participants may be a crucial factor in determining their racial microaggression experiences because those born in the U.K. may have had more time to adapt coping strategies to deal with microaggressions or they may have to deal with less severe microaggressions compared to someone who was not born here. This issue was highlighted by a participant who was not born here as she experienced microaggressions based on her accent which was a visible identifier of her difference, someone born here may not have the same experience as perhaps due to their accent they may be seen to assimilate better.

The study employed semi-structured interviews which could be vulnerable to demand characteristics and desirability biases. Furthermore, the findings relied on the retrospective recollection of participants' subjective experiences, therefore, their description of events may not be accurate representations. However, the study aimed to understand how participants made sense of their experiences rather than trying to gain reflection of the reality of events, hence, the retrospective approach was appropriate. Moreover, the interview schedule was modelled using existing literature and studies (Sue et al., 2007; 2009). Therefore, it is possible that rather than themes and the structure of findings emerging naturally they were guided by interview questions, this should be considered when examining the findings. However, this was done to ensure that the desired phenomenon of racial microaggressions which is elusive, and covert was being studied.

Nevertheless, the current study is a step forward as the sample is more representative than existing research. The study allowed a diverse group of British Asians the opportunity to share their experiences which revealed unique insights regarding their experiential realities. Moreover, by using semi-structured interviews rich in-depth accounts of participants' racial realities were gathered which seemed to be missing from the existing literature base. Another strength of this study is that by employing a phenomenological approach the findings reflected the authentic experiences of participants rather than being influenced by pre-existing theoretical preconceptions. Furthermore, racial microaggressions

are an elusive and complex phenomenon and by employing IPA and using the designated interview schedule the phenomenon was captured in a meticulous way where nuanced analysis was conducted. Furthermore, the current findings were able to capture the U.K. context in a holistic manner where previous U.K. research has been limited to racial microaggressions occurring in educational and sporting contexts. The findings provide a general overview of the racial undertones existing in the different social structures in the U.K.

Recommendations for future research

As seen above this study is not immune to limitations, therefore, the following section will contain recommendations for future researchers which may guide them to avoid pitfalls and get them to build on the current research.

Firstly, it may be beneficial for future researchers to include a more representative sample. The current sample consisted of mostly South Asians and so their voices may shadow those of British East Asians. In this study, I advertised for 'British Asians' with no specifications of what this meant, and this led to the current sample being mostly South Asians. Therefore, perhaps future researchers should try different sampling methods to recruit East Asians and gain a more representative sample. However, it is important to note that generalisability may not even be achieved then as Asian communities seem to vary with each having, their unique histories and cultural values. Future samples may also be more representative if researchers recruited participants from other parts of the U.K. besides London. Moreover, future research may benefit from having more homogenous samples or studies where different groups' experiences are compared. For example, perhaps future researchers may want to compare the experiences of those who have been born in the U.K. and those who have migrated here. The two groups may not be completely homogenous and disparities in experiences may be useful to identify.

Secondly, to expand the U.K. based literature on racial microaggressions future researchers may find it beneficial to apply other research methodologies which allow racial

microaggressions to be explored in a more experimentally controlled and objective manner. For example, quantitative methodologies could be employed by future researchers to establish the generalisability of findings. Within American literature, racial microaggressions have been examined within large samples using standardised measures like 'The Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale' (Nadal, 2011). Perhaps employing similar approaches or mixed methodologies would be beneficial for British researchers.

Thirdly, the racial climate is rapidly changing with new issues arising frequently and so future researchers need to stay up to date with recent events. The issues most prevalent at the time of the interviews were the election of President Trump and Brexit. However, in the current climate issues such as police brutality and Covid-19 are important. Perhaps it may be important for future researcher to examine how recent events related to Covid-19 impact East Asians living in the U.K. As it seems that many linked the virus to East Asians, with President Trump even dubbing it the "Chinese virus". It could also be important to explore if the experience of lockdown has changed how racial microaggressions manifest.

Further, the nature of this study was inherently exploratory as the current literature on British Asian experiences was limited. However, the insights gathered could be a building block for future researchers. The findings produced demonstrated that racial microaggressions aimed at British Asians occur in various contexts, such as the workplace, education, media, politics, and social setting. However, the study did not examine each context in depth rather a more general overview was given. Therefore, to provide a more dynamic and holistic understanding of how racial microaggressions manifest in each of these settings it may be beneficial for future researchers to explore these contexts individually. Moreover, in the current study racial microaggression in therapy were not mentioned. While the current findings could be used to work with British Asian clients in therapy it may be more beneficial for future researchers to examine racial microaggressions experienced by British Asians in therapeutic contexts. For example, they could examine how racial microaggressions manifest in therapeutic relationships with British Asian clients and/or

therapists. Also, the current findings could not verify the link between racial microaggressions and mental health problems, perhaps looking at racial microaggressions in the therapeutic context may yield different results.

Additionally, the study generated introductory results regarding the reactions British Asians have toward racial microaggressions and how they cope with them. Future researchers may want to expand on this further and perhaps even look at if these coping strategies are used by other minority groups in Britain or if they are unique to British Asians. For instance, many participants spoke about accepting racial microaggressions, while still taking action in some indirect way. It may be worth exploring the complexities of reacting to racial microaggressions and understanding the decision-making processes involved. In this study participants often rationalised, normalised and/or minimised their experiences to move forward from them, it may be worth exploring these mechanisms in-depth and examining if these strategies truly help them process experience or if they have consequences.

Lastly, the impacts of racial microaggressions on participants' identities were a significant theme. While there is a vast amount of literature on the British Asian identity future researchers may find it important to further examine the role of racial microaggressions in shaping British Asian identities and the potential issues which may arise. Another interesting phenomenon discussed by a few participants which did not seem to meet the study's analysis structure was the microaggressions participants experienced from other British Asians. Examining this further may reveal interesting findings regarding community dynamics and internalised racism.

Post reflexivity

During the time of my data analysis, I had begun to notice racial microaggressions in my daily life more. There was a time I was resenting my research as I felt previously ignorance was bliss as I did not notice these things around me before. I felt more sensitive to my surroundings and this was not easy. To help me monitor the impact of my research and

to cope with the distress I often used the previously mentioned methods of reflection. I found this extremely useful personally and for the research itself. I think if I would have analysed my data with heightened emotions due to racial microaggressions that could have impacted how I perceived the data.

For instance, there was a time where I felt subtle hostility which carried a racial undertone from a superior where I worked. This severely distressed me as I felt like no one else could see what was happening and I felt like I was going crazy and questioning if it was real or if I had made it up due to my research. I reflected on this in peer supervision and in my reflective diary which allowed me to express and validate my emotions. I feel like if I had not done that and just analysed my data especially the experiences where participants spoke about workplace microaggressions my biases could have seeped into the analysis.

While I resented my newfound awareness before I have come to appreciate it. As I feel like because of my research I can call out such experiences more and help educate others. I think my research has given me a language which I did not previously have to call out these instances, I am now better able to explain my felt senses which previously felt irrational. Furthermore, due to my research, I have been able to create conversations with those who are unaware of the concept and this has allowed others to reflect on their own experiences and behaviours.

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Appendix A

Example of Racial Microaggressions from Sue et al. (2007, p.276)

Theme	Microaggression	Message
Alien in own land	"Where are you from?" "Where were you born?" "You speak good English."	You are not American.
When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born	A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language	You are a foreigner.
Ascription of intelligence	"You are a credit to your race."	People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites.
Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race	"You are so articulate." It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent.	It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent.
	Asking an Asian person to help with a math or science problem.	All Asians are intelligent and good in math/sciences
Color blindness	"When I look at you, I don't see color."	Denying a person of color's racial/ ethnic experiences.
Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race	"America is a melting pot."	Assimilate/acculturate to the dominant culture.
	"There is only one race, the human race." Denying the individual as a racial/ cultural being.	Denying the individual as a racial/ cultural being.
Criminality/assumption of criminal status	A White man or woman clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a Black or Latino approaches or passes.	You are a criminal.
A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race	A store owner following a customer of color around the store.	You are going to steal/ You are poor/ You do not belong.
	A White person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it.	You are dangerous.
Denial of individual racism	"I'm not racist. I have several Black friends."	I am immune to racism because I have friends of color.
A statement made when Whites deny their racial biases	"As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority."	Your racial oppression is no different than my gender

		oppression. I can't be a racist. I'm like you.
Myth of meritocracy	"I believe the most qualified person should get the job."	People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race.
Statements which assert that race does not play a role in life successes	"Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough."	People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.
Pathologizing cultural values/ communication styles	Asking a Black person: "Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down."	Assimilate to dominant culture.
The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal	To an Asian or Latino person: "Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal." "Speak up more."	
	Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in work/school setting.	Leave your cultural baggage outside.
Second-class citizen	Person of color mistaken for a service worker.	People of color are servants to Whites. They couldn't possibly occupy high-status positions.
Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color	Having a taxi cab pass a person of color and pick up a White passenger.	You are likely to cause trouble and/ or travel to a dangerous neighborhood.

Appendix B

Recruitment Flyer

Department of Psychology
City, University of London

Do you identify as British Asian?

Have you ever been asked “where are you really from?” or been told “your English is so good!”

Do you often experience indirect discriminatory comments regarding your culture?

Have you ever been subtly snubbed based on your ethnicity?

If so we would love to hear about your experiences. We are looking for volunteers to take part in a study on Racial Microaggressions in the Contemporary U.K. Context: Exploring the experiences of **British Asians**.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to attend a face-to-face interview, lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Vahishta Pardiwalla

Email: [redacted]

Or

[redacted]

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through the City, University of London Psychology Research Ethics Committee.

If you would like to complain about any aspect of the study, please contact the Secretary to the Senate Research Ethics Committee [redacted]

City, University of London is the data controller for the personal data collected for this research project. If you have any data protection concerns about this research project, please contact City's Information Compliance Team at *dataprotection@city.ac.uk*

Appendix C

Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title of study:

Racial Microaggressions in the Contemporary U.K. Context: Exploring the Experiences of British Asians

Name of principal investigator:

Vahishta Pardiwalla

Research supervisor:

[redacted]

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. 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?

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of British Asians in relation to racial microaggressions. Racial microaggressions are a contemporary form of racism exhibited by generally well-intentioned individuals unconsciously. These acts can be verbal or non-verbal and are subtle and covert but have deeming racial undertones, hence, they may seem harmless but are derogatory. For example, being told, “you are a credit to your race” or being mistaken for a service worker. Past research has found that the accumulative impact of these acts can be detrimental for one’s well-being. Research on racial microaggressions is rare however, it is needed to help professionals and individuals better understand and acknowledge the impact of these acts. Hence, this study would like to better understand the experiences British Asians have in relation to racial microaggressions and explore how these acts are perceived, the impact they have and how they are dealt with.

This study is a doctoral thesis part of my Counselling Psychology DPsych and is part of my accreditation. The final write-up of the study will be held in the City, University of London library and perhaps in the future may be published. The research will be completed over an estimated three-year period.

Special Category Data – Explicit Consent

All research participants must have been informed of the purposes behind the processing of the data (in the PIS) and the participants themselves or the person with will have provided explicit consent to the collection of their personal and special

category data. The data processing is therefore also lawful under Article 9(2)(a) of the GDPR as the provision of personal data will be completely voluntary.

Why have I been invited?

You have been invited to participate in this study as you identify yourself as British Asian and believe that discrimination based on race is still existent on the U.K., hence, meeting the inclusion criteria for this study. Similarly, six to seven other participants with the same characteristics have also been recruited for this study.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in the project is voluntary, and you can choose not to participate. You can withdraw at any stage of the project without providing a reason or being penalised in any way. As a participant, you have the right to not answer any questions during the interview that make you feel uncomfortable or which you find too personal or intrusive. You will not be disadvantaged anyway if you do choose to withdraw your data or not answer any questions.

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. Once, interviews have been conducted and you wish to withdraw your data then your data will be removed from the final write-up.

What will happen if I take part?

Once you have decided to provide full informed consent then the one-to-one interview will begin. The interview is expected to last 45 to 60 minutes and you will be able to take breaks in between, refreshments will be provided as well. Interviews will be semi-structured meaning there will be a few base questions, but the line of questioning will follow the information you bring in as this study is about your individual experiences of racial microaggressions. This interview will be a one-off meeting. The interviews will be recorded on a digital voice recorder and recordings will be encrypted and stored safely on a password protected laptop which only the researchers will have access too.

Interviews will then be transcribed by the researcher. Transcripts will be analysed and coded. Your data will then be interpreted, and overall themes will be produced. The method of analysis is called ‘Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis’

All data will be processed to the standard required within the European Economic Area (EEA).

What do I have to do?

Firstly, if you decide to participate in the study a five to ten-minute prescreening phone call will take place between you and the researcher. This phone call will be to ensure that you meet the inclusion criteria for the study, it is also an opportunity for you to ask questions and to find out more about the study. During this phone call, an interview date and time will also be arranged.

You will then meet with the interviewer at the arranged time and location for your face-to-face interview. Prior to the interview, you will have the opportunity to read this information sheet

again and ask any questions. The researcher will then provide a consent form and your full informed consent will be obtained. Once consent has been obtained the interview will commence. After the interview, you will be fully debriefed and provided with a debrief sheet. You will also have the opportunity to ask any questions, provide feedback and/or reflect on the interview process.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is possible that perhaps talking about past experiences of subtle racism or reflecting on the existing bias in society against people of colour can bring up distressing feelings of anger, shame and/or sadness. However, it is unlikely that severe distress or permanent harm will be caused.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Talking about your experiences of racial microaggressions may help you process and validate your unresolved feelings in relation to these experiences hence, you may feel better after the interview. An indirect benefit of this study is that the results could be used to inform practitioners how to work with British Asian clients in therapy in a culturally sensitive manner. The study can help expand the knowledge and understanding of the experiences of British Asians in relation to microaggressions which in-turn can help produce culturally competent practitioners and improve therapeutic outcomes for these clients.

What will happen when the research study stops?

If the research is stopped or paused, then your data will be encrypted and stored on a password protected computer for ten years and it will then be destroyed this is in line with British Psychological Associations code of research ethics.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

The data you provide will be kept confidential and anonymous. Only the researchers will have access to your data before it has been anonymised. All your data (voice recordings and transcripts) will be encrypted and securely stored on a password protected laptop. Following the transcription, the recording will be deleted from the device and stored on a password protected laptop. None of your data will be shared with any third-parties, unless the researcher has concerns about harm to yourself or someone else for example, in cases of abuse or self-harm. If such an instance arises the research supervisor will be contacted to decide if disclosure needs to be made and the best plan of action will be put into place.

If you want to be contacted about the results of the study and the final write-up then consent to contact you, will be obtained. Your contact details will only be used for this and you will only be contacted by the researcher.

After ten years of the research being published all data files, including, transcripts and recordings will be destroyed.

What will happen to results of the research study?

Once the research has been completed and written-up it will be printed and stored at the City, University of London's library and will be available online on the City Research Online catalogue. Additionally, it may be published in the future in academic journals on race and ethnicity. All identifiable data will be changed or removed before any publication to ensure participant anonymity.

You will be informed once the study has been completed and you can choose if you would like to receive a copy of the publication or a summary of the findings. If you would like a transcript of your interview can be sent too. Copies will be sent either electronically or by post.

What will happen if I do not want to carry on with the study?

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without providing any reason or incurring any penalty. You can withdraw your data up until publication. If you wish to withdraw your data, it will be destroyed.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been approved by City, University of London Psychology Research Ethics Committee.

Data Protection Privacy Notice: What are my rights under the data protection legislation?

City, University of London is the data controller for the personal data collected for this research project. Your personal data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this notice. The legal basis for processing your personal data will be that this research is a task in the public interest, that is City, University of London considers the lawful basis for processing personal data to fall under Article 6(1)(e) of GDPR (public task) as the processing of research participant data is necessary for learning and teaching purposes and all research with human participants by staff and students has to be scrutinised and approved by one of City's Research Ethics Committees.

The rights you have under the data protection legislation are listed below, but not all of the rights will be apply to the personal data collected in each research project.

- right to be informed
- right of access
- right to rectification
- right to erasure
- right to restrict processing
- right to object to data processing
- right to data portability
- right to object
- rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling

For more information, please visit www.city.ac.uk/about/city-information/legal

What if I have concerns about how my personal data will be used after I have participated in the research?

In the first instance you should raise any concerns with the research team, but if you are dissatisfied with the response, you may contact the Information Compliance Team at dataprotection@city.ac.uk or phone 0207 040 4000, who will liaise with City's Data Protection Officer Dr William Jordan to answer your query.

If you are dissatisfied with City's response you may also complain to the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.org.uk

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 City's 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:

You could also write to the Secretary at:

[redacted]
Research Integrity Manager
Research & Enterprise
City, University of London
Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0HB
[redacted]

City 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.

Further information and contact details

Researcher: Vahishta Pardiwalla [redacted]

Research Supervisor: [redacted]

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

Version edited on 26.10.2018

Appendix D

Pre-screening Questions

1. How old are you?
2. How long have you lived in the U.K.?
3. What is your ethnic background?
4. What gender do you identify with?
5. Are you currently receiving any psychological treatment?
6. Have any difficulties arisen due to your experiences?
7. What are your thoughts on the current racial climate within the U.K.?

Appendix E

Interview schedule

1. Can you tell me about your views on the current racial climate in the UK?
2. What is your personal experience of being a minority in the UK?
3. In thinking about your day-to-day experiences, could you describe a situation where you witnessed or experience subtle discrimination based on your race?
4. In what indirect ways do people treat you differently based on your race?
    a. How did these incidents impact you?
5. Could you describe an incident in which you felt uncomfortable or insulted as the exchange had racial undertones?
    a. What was your reaction in that situation and how did you manage it?
    b. Did your distressing feelings linger, if so how did you cope with them?
6. Do you believe there are certain expectations from you because of your racial group?
    a. For instance, are there stereotypes associated with your racial group?
    b. How do you feel thinking about these stereotypes?
    c. Can you describe a time where these stereotypes were applied to you subtly by others?
7. Can you describe any instances in which you felt snubbed because of your cultural values or racial heritage?
    a. Where you felt “put down” because of your cultural values or communication style.
8. Could you describe for me any instances in which you felt that you were inferior because of your race?
    a. Any instances where you felt you were not good enough because of your race?
    b. How did you deal with these experiences?
    c. Do you believe that these experiences impacted your sense of self?

9. Can you tell me about any instances where you felt that you did not belong here because of your race?
    a. In what way have people made you feel like this?
    b. How did you cope with this?
10. Can you recall any examples of a time another people said or done something to you that made you feel like your experiences of discrimination were being dismissed or invalidated?
11. Could you tell me how these experiences have impacted your identity?
12. How have your experiences impacted your life overall?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add in relation to this topic?

Appendix F

Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: Racial Microaggressions in the Contemporary U.K. Context: Exploring the Experiences of British Asians.

Please initial box

1	I confirm that 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:	
	• being interviewed by the researcher	
	• allowing the interview to be audiotaped	
2	This information will be held by City as data controller and processed for the following purpose(s): A doctoral thesis and lawful basis for processing under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for personal data. Public Task: The legal basis for processing your personal data will be that this research is a task in the public interest, that is City, University of London considers the lawful basis for processing personal data to fall under Article 6(1)(e) of GDPR (public task) as the processing of research participant data is necessary for learning and teaching purposes and all research with human participants by staff and students has to be scrutinised and approved by one of City's Research Ethics Committees.	
4	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 penalised or disadvantaged in any way.	
5	I agree to City 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 City complying with its duties and obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).	

6.	I agree to the arrangements for data storage, archiving, sharing.	
7	I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publication.	
8	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 G

Debrief Sheet

Racial Microaggressions in the Contemporary U.K. Context: Exploring the Experiences of British Asians

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.

The aim of this study was to get rich in-depth data regarding the subjective experiences of British Asians regarding racial microaggressions. Hence, you were asked questions regarding your experiences of racial microaggressions, how you made sense of these occurrences, how they impacted you and how you coped with the effects. We were interested in getting a holistic view of one's subjective experiences to better understand the experiential realities of British Asians.

If the research has triggered distressing feelings, we recommend you contact your **GP** and get contact details for your local counselling services. You can also contact the **Samaritans** 24 hours hotline on **116 123** for support. Other available counselling services you can contact include:

- MIND (**020 8519 2122**)
- The Awareness Centre (**020 8673 4545**)
- West London Centre for Counselling (**020 8563 2159**)
- Care to Listen (**020 8616 2160**)
- Asian Family Counselling Service (**020 8571 3933**)

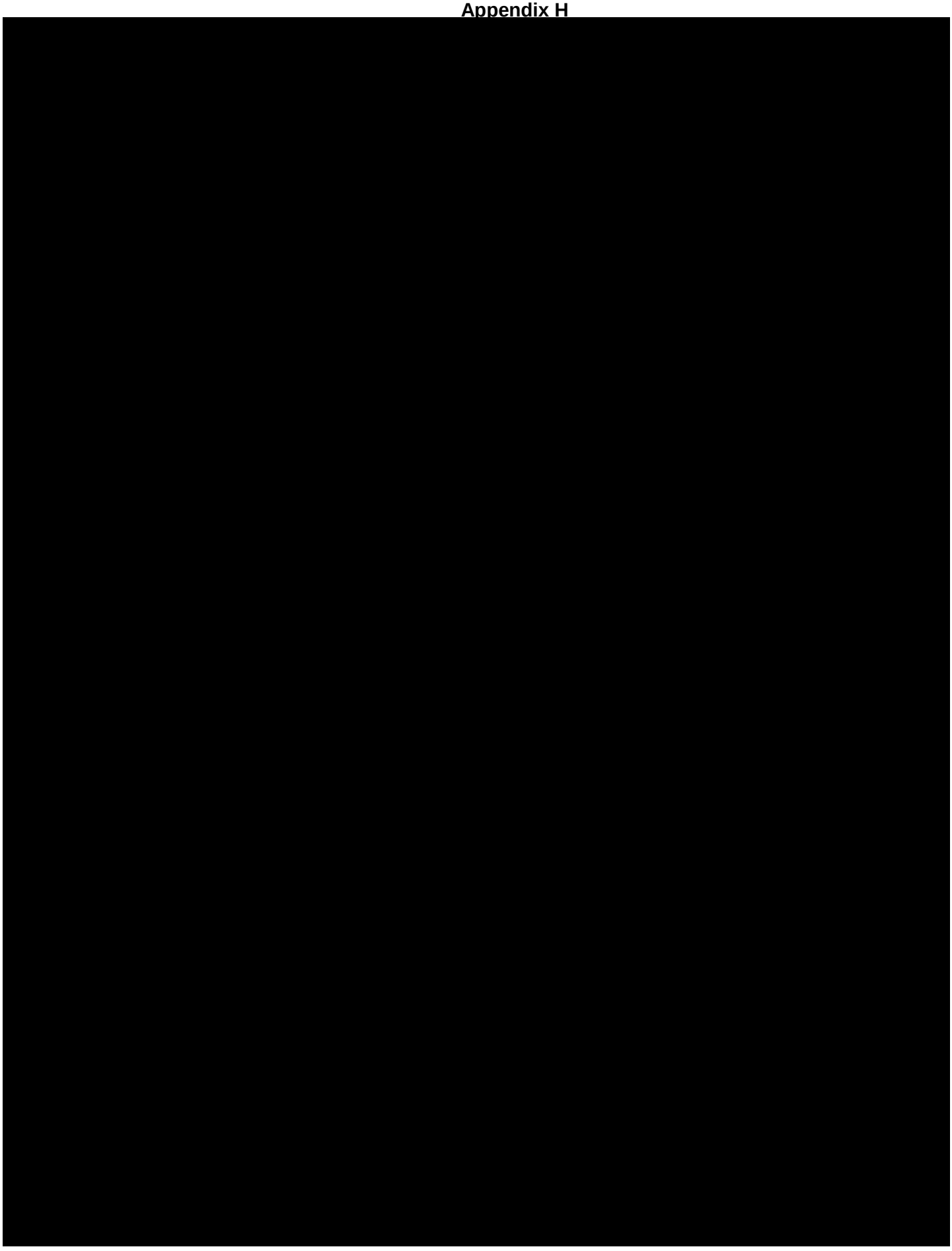
We hope you found the study interesting. If you have any other questions please do not hesitate to contact us at the following:

Vahishta Pardiwalla- [redacted]

[redacted]

Ethics approval code: **ETH1819-0057**

Appendix H



Appendix I

Analysis Table Including: Original transcript, exploratory comments, and emergent themes (Neil)

Red = Descriptive comments

Purple = Linguistic comments

Green = Conceptual comments

Pink = Decontextualization comments

Transcript	Comments	Emergent themes
I: So, can you tell me you know what your current views are on the racial climate in the U.K.?		
P2: I think the…current… racial racial view is that …. Erm… they try to get used to being around with coloured people…	-In-group/ out-group – there is a sense of white people vs people of colour -The white people of the U.K. are attempting to be accommodating of coloured people -His language implies that any one of colour is an outsider who the white people have to be used to. -Try implies there is an active effort and that living together does not come naturally	- In-group/out-group -Accommodation attempt -Unnatural
I: Mhmm		
P2: …that erm that especially that it's more prominent in smaller counties that they don't get erm many foreigners there or like different colours than Caucasians. I erm like in…in big cities like London or Manchester or some some of these other cities that they are very international, and they have more diversity in in the races there. People are more happy to…erm… accept and communicate with erm I found that… being in those cities that I… see more I see less race like obvious race-racism there than in smaller counties, yeah.	-This divide is more evident in smaller counties where it is not as diverse. -He has had different experiences in different parts of the country. -Big cities which have more diversity are more accepting. - "Happy to"- when you are willing to do something. It seems that people in big cities are more willing to communicate with people of colour and are more open-minded. -He has observed less obvious racism in bigger counties than smaller -He is saying that in both areas of the country racism	-Lack of diversity -Varied experiences depending on location

Appendix J

Table of Superordinate Themes and Subthemes (Divya)

Participant 1 Table (Superordinate themes & subthemes)

Views on racial climate	Nature of Experiences	Making sense of experiences	Reaction to experiences	Impact of experience
• Race still matters • Racial Climate is stable • Two-sides of the coin • Differences amongst groups exist • Positive outlook	• Overt prejudice • Made to feel different • Treated like second-class citizen • Culture snubbed • Indirect and ambiguous experiences • Stereotyping • Generalization of Asians • Hostile political environment • Exoticized	• The importance of education • Difficulty identifying and labelling experiences • Lack of reflection • Problem lies with others • Rationalising and justifying • Struggling with emotional experience • Duality • Denial • Positive interpretation • Shift in perspective	• Negative emotions • Avoidance of addressing racism • Externalising cause of hate • Complacency and normalisation • Minimisation • Questioning the experience • Depersonalising • Lightening the mood • Unity • Focusing on the positives	• Suppressing of cultural identity • Threat and fear experienced • Trying to fit in • Self-development • Internal conflict • Internalization • Social impact • Identity struggle • Negative emotional experience

Appendix K

Table Consolidating All Participants' Superordinate Themes and Subthemes

Divya		Neil	
Superordinate Themes	**Subthemes**	**Superordinate themes**	**Subthemes**
Views on racial climate	• Race still matters • Racial climate is stable • Two-sides of the coin • Differences amongst groups • Positive outlook	Factors impacting racial microaggression experiences	• Experiences of racism vary according to geography • Importance of language • Effort levels from others • Cultural differences • Perpetrators can vary in ethnicity • Cultural representation
Nature of experiences	• Overt prejudice • Made to feel different • Treated like second-class citizen • Culture snubbed • Indirect and ambiguous experiences • Stereotyping • Generalization of Asians • Hostile political environment • Exoticized	Views on racial climate	• White people vs people of colour • Living together is unnatural • Diversity is positively linked to comfort • Façade of total acceptance • Two-sides of the coin
Making sense of experiences	• The importance of education • Difficulty identifying and labelling experiences • Lack of reflection • Problem lies with others • Rationalising and justifying • Struggling with emotional experience • Duality	Perceptions of experiences	• Intentionally portrayed as unusual • Stereotyping • People are not genuine • Assumed to be incapable of understanding • These experiences are unintentional • Assumed to be an outsider

	• Denial • Positive interpretation • Shift in perspective		• Perceived to be less educated • Unwelcoming environment
Reaction to experiences	• Negative emotions • Avoidance of addressing racism • Externalising cause of hate • Complacency and normalisation • Minimisation • Questioning the experience • Depersonalising • Lightening the mood • Unity • Focusing on the positives	Reactions to racial microaggressions	• Avoidance • Denial of cultural identity • Silence • Desire to escape • Acceptance • Questioning • Attempting to fit in • Rationalising • Minimising
Impact of experiences	• Supressing of cultural identity • Threat and fear experienced • Trying to fit in • Self-development • Internal conflict • Internalization • Social impact • Identity struggle • Negative emotional experience	Impact of racial microaggressions	• Negative emotions • Pathologizing culture • Desire to isolate • Feeling like an outsider • Impact on university work • Personality transformation • Internal conflict • Internalising • Self-development • Longing
Jamal		**Salman**	
Superordinate themes	**Subthemes**	**Superordinate themes**	**Subthemes**
Views on the racial climate	• Racial Climate is linked to politics • Detrimental impacts predicted • Two-sides of the coin • Geographical location influences • Cultural differences • Assimilation is difficult	Views on racism	• Racism linked to right-wing politics • Hidden under current • Racism is natural • Birds of a feather • Change in racial climate felt over time. • Racism is linked to strangers

Racial microaggression experiences	• Direct racial microaggressions • Glass-ceiling • Lack of representation in senior management • Snubbed and ignored • Perceived to be inferior • Humour and sarcasm • Shutting down • Stereotyped to be primitive • Assumption of difference • Biased perceptions of world events • Culture mocked, snubbed and pathologized • Racial microaggressions in news and media • Racial reality dismissed	Racial microaggression experiences	• Direct microaggressions • Racial slurs • Environmental microaggressions in education • Lack of representation in his industry • Discrimination in housing • Islamophobia • Segregation of communities • Positive discrimination • Denied entry into establishments • Stereotyping • Interethnic differences ignored • Assumed to be a foreigner
Reactions to racial microaggressions	• Normalised • Distancing self from experiences • Responsibility of experiences attributed to societal structure • Justifying • Processing • Acceptance and moving on • Questioning racial reality • Assuming responsibility • Challenging and confronting • Rationalising • Benefit of the doubt • Minimising • Coping mechanisms and defences	Reactions to racial microaggressions	• Acceptance • Normalisation • Defeat • Beliefs are not problematic acts/impact are • Collusion • Justifying • Minimising • Intellectualisation • Laugh it off • Hesitation to label incidences • Distancing experience from current self • Validating • Placing responsibility on recipients
Impact of racial microaggressions	• Mixture of emotions • Trickle down impact • Desire to isolate	Impact of experiences	• Various emotions felt

	• Internalised biases • Internal conflict • Self-doubt • Chain reaction- thought, feelings, and behaviours • Concern about other's perception • Impact on work and career progression • Impact on relationships • Impact on identity • Self-fulfilling prophecy • Hypervigilance • Self-development		• Pathologizing cultures • Personal responsibility felt • Feeling stateless • Shifts in friendships • Identity confusion • Internalization of stereotypes • Need to overcompensate • Denial of impact • Inferiority complex • Self-development
Kat		**Josephine**	
Superordinate themes	**Subthemes**	**Superordinate themes**	**Subthemes**
View on racism	• Racism still exists • Everyone knows about it but does not acknowledge it • Deeply embedded into everyday life • White privilege is prevalent • People are not inherently racist	Views on racial climate	• Façade of acceptance and multiculturalism • Racism felt everywhere
Racial microaggression experiences	• Assumed to be subservient • Direct racial microaggressions • Stereotyping • Jokes mocking her culture • Reduced to race • Treated as a second-class citizen • Experiences dismissed • Subtle snubs • Environmental microaggressions in retail • Interethnic differences ignored	Racial microaggression experiences	• Treated as second-class citizen • Systematically disadvantaged • Microaggressions in media portrayal of Asians • Biased recruitment processes • Stereotyping • Assumptions about abilities • Culture mocked • Differences highlighted • Workplace discrimination

			• Direct microaggressions • Generalizing Asians
Making sense	• It is complex • Difficult to make sense of due to intersectional identities • Attributing biases to socialisation • Attributing it to historical racism • Microaggressions have become normalised • Due to ignorance • Struggle to label experiences • Attempting to justify	Reactions to microaggressions	• Acceptance • Calm responses • Benefit of doubt given • Laughing it off • Justifying • Compromise • Confronting • Not conforming to expectations of her
Reactions to experiences	• Direct confrontation • Aggression • Covertly acting in ways that oppose assumptions • Second-guessing herself • Exit the situation • Repression	Impact	• Range of emotions felt • Her mood moderates her emotions • Feeling like an outsider • Diminishing self-confidence • Tired • Impact on worldview • Identity conflict • Impacts on different aspects of her life (interconnected)
Impact of experiences	• Range of emotions • Anger • Internalising • Impacting friendship dynamics • Becoming more self-aware • More aware of race and racism • Identity crisis • Rumination		
Lucky		**Ahmad**	

Superordinate themes	Subthemes	Superordinate themes	Subthemes
View on racism	• Racism is the norm • Racism is present in all cultures • Not everyone is racist	View on racial climate	• Racism has become more covert • Racism was extremely prevalent in 70s/80s • Racism is engrained • Racial climate differs based on geographical location • Change after 9/11 • U.K. is tolerant compared to other countries
Racial microaggression experiences	• Direct microaggressions • Physical abuse • Ascription of intelligence • Biased recruitment processes • Hostile work environment • Snubbed • Jokes	Racial microaggression experiences	• Direct microaggressions • Non-verbal microaggressions • Subtle comments • Experiences being dismissed • Environmental microaggression in media • Assumed to be lower-level worker • Differential treatment • Cultural values pathologized • Assumed to be an outsider
Reaction to racial microaggression	• Attributing it to ignorance • Normalising • Questioning self • Justifying • Laughing it off • Posting on social media • Self-care	Reaction to microaggressions	• Acceptance • Ignoring • Struggle to label • Normalising • Laugh it off • Confronting • Struggle • Justifying
Impact	• Denial of impact • Impact on job performance	Impact of experiences	• Impact is accumulative

	• Desire to isolate and withdraw • Self-confidence impacted • Overcompensating • Feeling offended • Self-development		• Becoming more aware of identity • Becoming more aware of racism • Range of emotions • Leads to overcompensation • Change in personality • Impact on relationships • Feeling like a guest

Appendix L

Master Table

Superordinate Themes	Subthemes	Quotes (Participant name & line number)
Racial Microaggression Experiences	Direct Racial Microaggressions	"People would like follow us walking back from school err….drivers by might maybe throw like a milkshake….in our direction or something like that…me and my sister." (Lucky, 13). "It's really varied erm… like when I was younger I've been called a Paki…" (Kat, 27). "And saying, "go back home" and using…you know derogatory terms and so on. So, that was very… very common." (Ahmad, 31).
	Indirect Racial Microaggressions	"Again…erm…we're being identified when you say "oh I'm from the Philippines" they conclude "oh so you're a nurse"… without asking what I do… or they con-conclude that erm cause either you're a domestic…" (Josephine, 221). "So…err that that normally would be snubbed off like "what what are you doing wearing that dress?" that kind of thing." (Jamal, 410).
	Environmental Racial Microaggressions	"it's like it's like Christmas or some other bigger western celebration and and I I don't see any of that in of the Asian culture happening in here." (Neil, 422). "it's erm… er say like a glass-ceiling, certain things blocking…" (Jamal, 38)
Reactions to Racial Microaggressions	Attempting to Make Sense of Experiences	"We generalise, many people generalise. I know we shouldn't but we do." (Salman, 233). "Err…… I just considered them as ignorant. To be honest it's not really their fault that the-they've their blindsided with information on…" (Lucky, 18).

	Acceptance	"You come to an acceptance I guess…." (Divya, 182). "…but I think it's a good compromise…that to feel that you are still…a guest because I would never…even now I will never be treated…as equal in this country…" (Ahmad, 805).
	Confrontation and Action	"Oh, I called her a racist old that's it… I said "you white privileged racist old bat"…" (Kat, 583). "…lots of communication, lots of talking about this thing definitely does help, makes people understand…" (Ahmad, 576).
Impact of Racial Microaggressions	Emotional Experience	"…..and I don I yeah I guess I just felt a bit…like… *lowered tone* shit…" (Divya, 116). "… "oh my gosh you can speak good English"… and yeah that just feels sad like erm…" (Josephine, 300)
	Impacts on Identity, Personality, and Self-Image	"I become a little bit more…erm…I guess harder…with people…" (Ahmad, 323). "I feel stateless…" (Salman, 436).
	Impact on Professional and Personal life	"But I I sort of intentionally avoided to hang…hang out with like erm…British Asian like the same colour as me." (Neil, 202). "Erm….it it it knocked my morale off like I didn't have much motivation to do the job anymore." (Lucky, 88)
	Learning Opportunity and Self-Development	"Ermmm… I I think they've built up on who I am. It's it's become a part of me that it's made me feel more like I think over the years you become… I don't know you're you're proud of who you are." (Divya, 760). "….. It it it made me more… empathetic…" (Neil, 461).

Appendix M

Reflective Diary Sample Excerpt

27/01/2019

I just did my third interview today and I found it way more difficult than the other two interviews I have done. I don't know what it was, but I just could not get my participant to dig deeper and the conversation was not flowing. I felt like he was just denying everything I asked and was focused on 1 or 2 racial microaggression experiences. It concerned me because I don't know if it was him being in denial of his experiences or if I was asking the wrong questions or perhaps, he really did not experience any of those things. I did try to probe more but I had to make sure I was not being too intrusive. However, finding that balance with him was tricky because the times I did not probe I did not get much information. I also started to wonder if denial was his way of coping. In my previous experience, I have found that Asians typically do not tend to be vocal about their problems, especially if it is something that puts them down. Typically, in South Asian culture honour and self-respect are extremely valued, in my view sometimes more than justice or your emotions. Therefore, it could be that he is too proud to admit these experiences occurred. Even with the experiences he shared he claimed he was not impacted however, he would indirectly describe impacts. It just felt like he did not want to openly air his grievances. However, I don't know why? I think when it comes to the analysis, I need to be really careful when interpreting his transcript. I can't let my preconceptions influence my interpretations. I am hoping acknowledging them here will help me bracket.

Additionally, I needed to vent this out because the interview did make me doubt my skills and made me feel like I was doing something wrong. However, after further reflection and talking to my supervisor I have been able to gain more perspective on the interview. I can now distance myself and see that there could be various reasons for the outcome.

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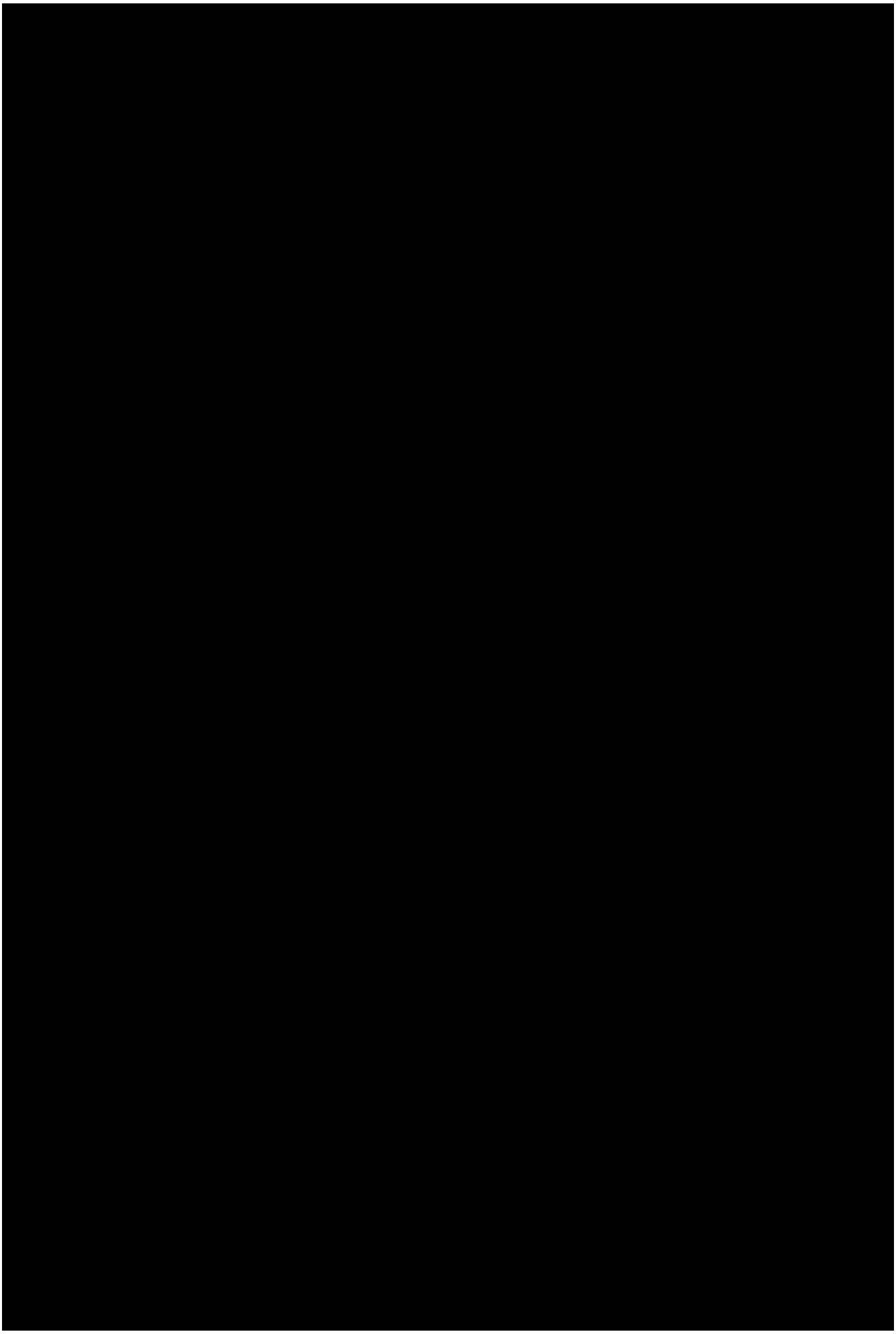
Section B: Publishable Journal Article

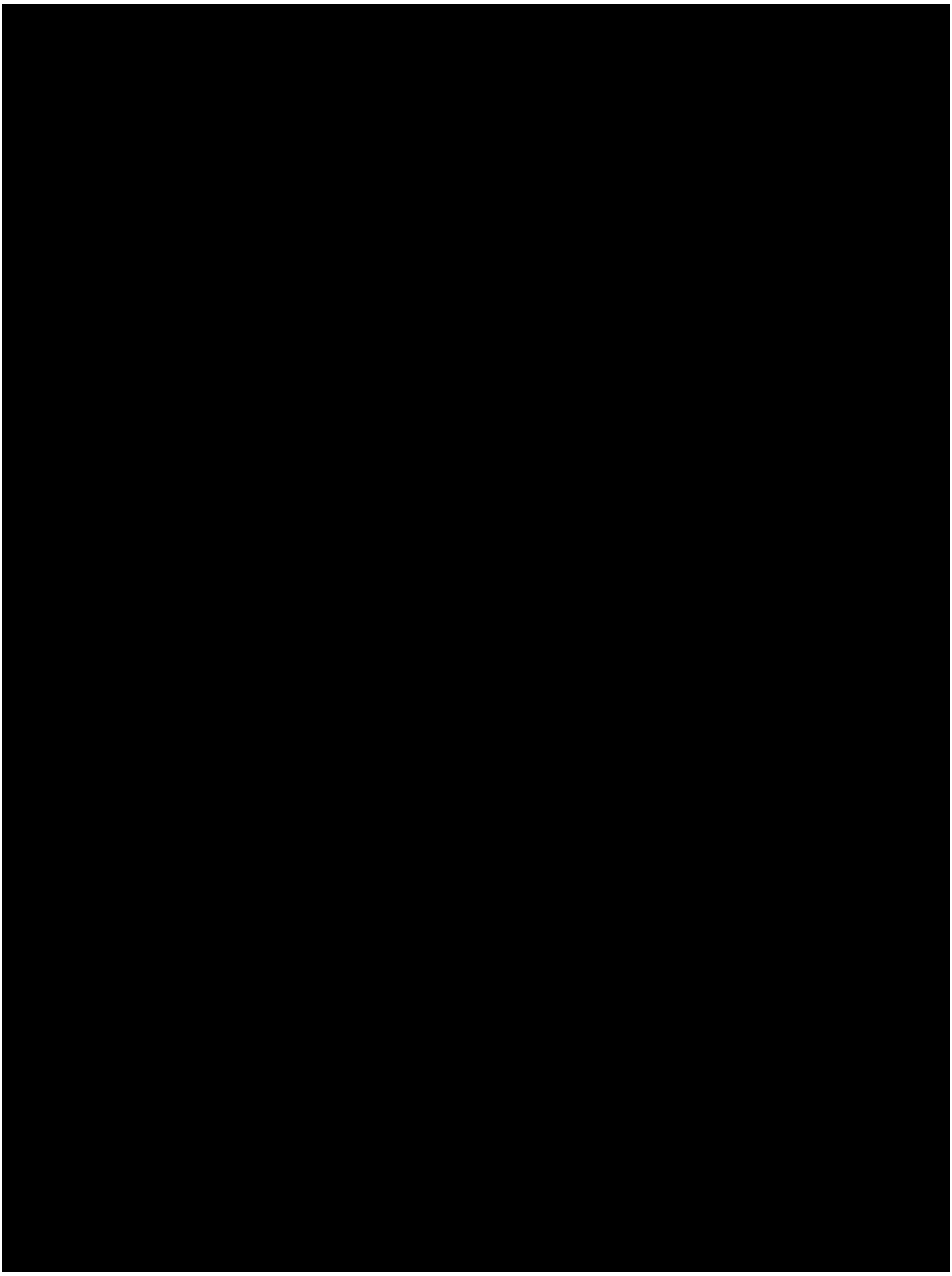
Understanding the Impacts of Racial Microaggressions on British Asians

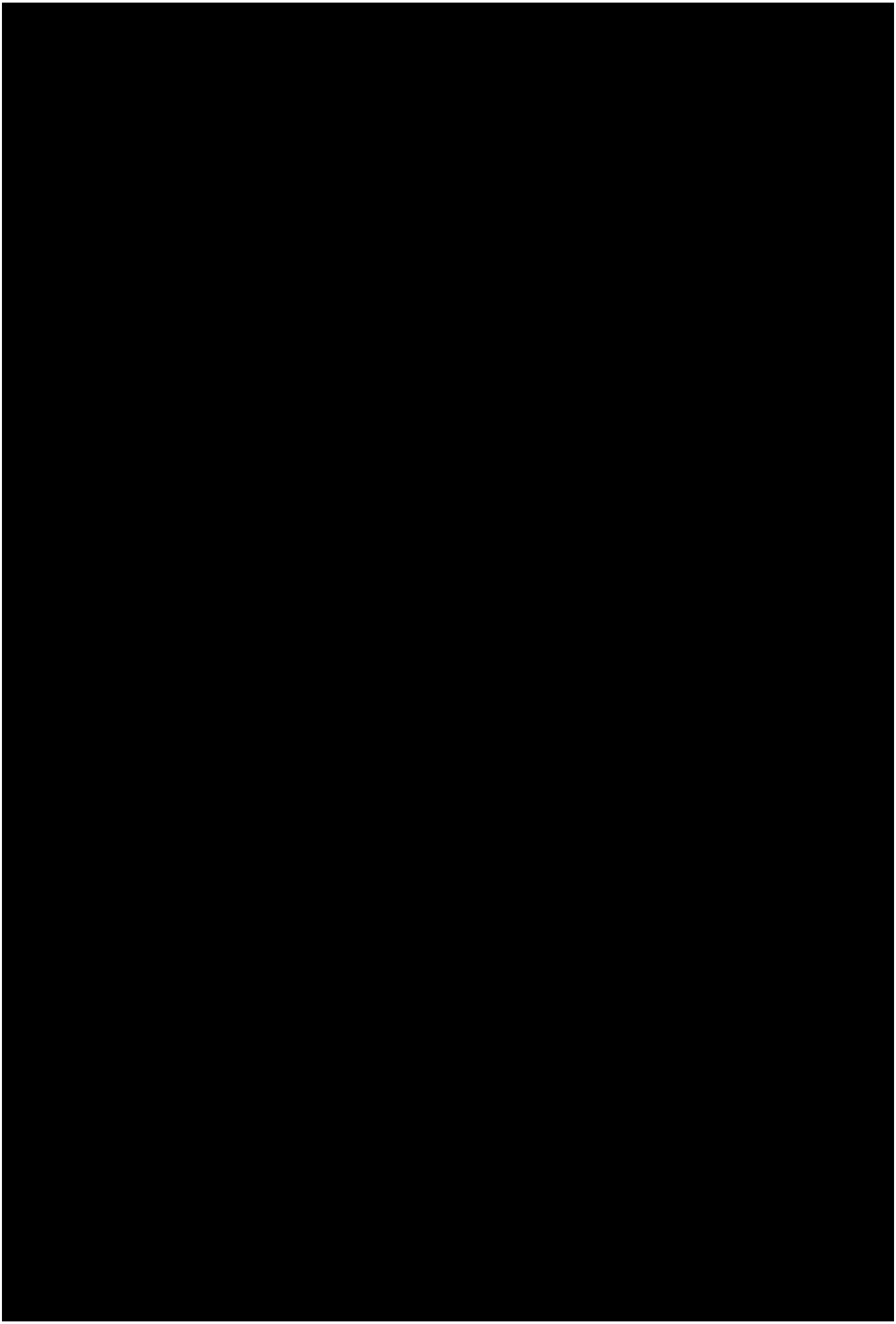
Vahishta Pardiwalla

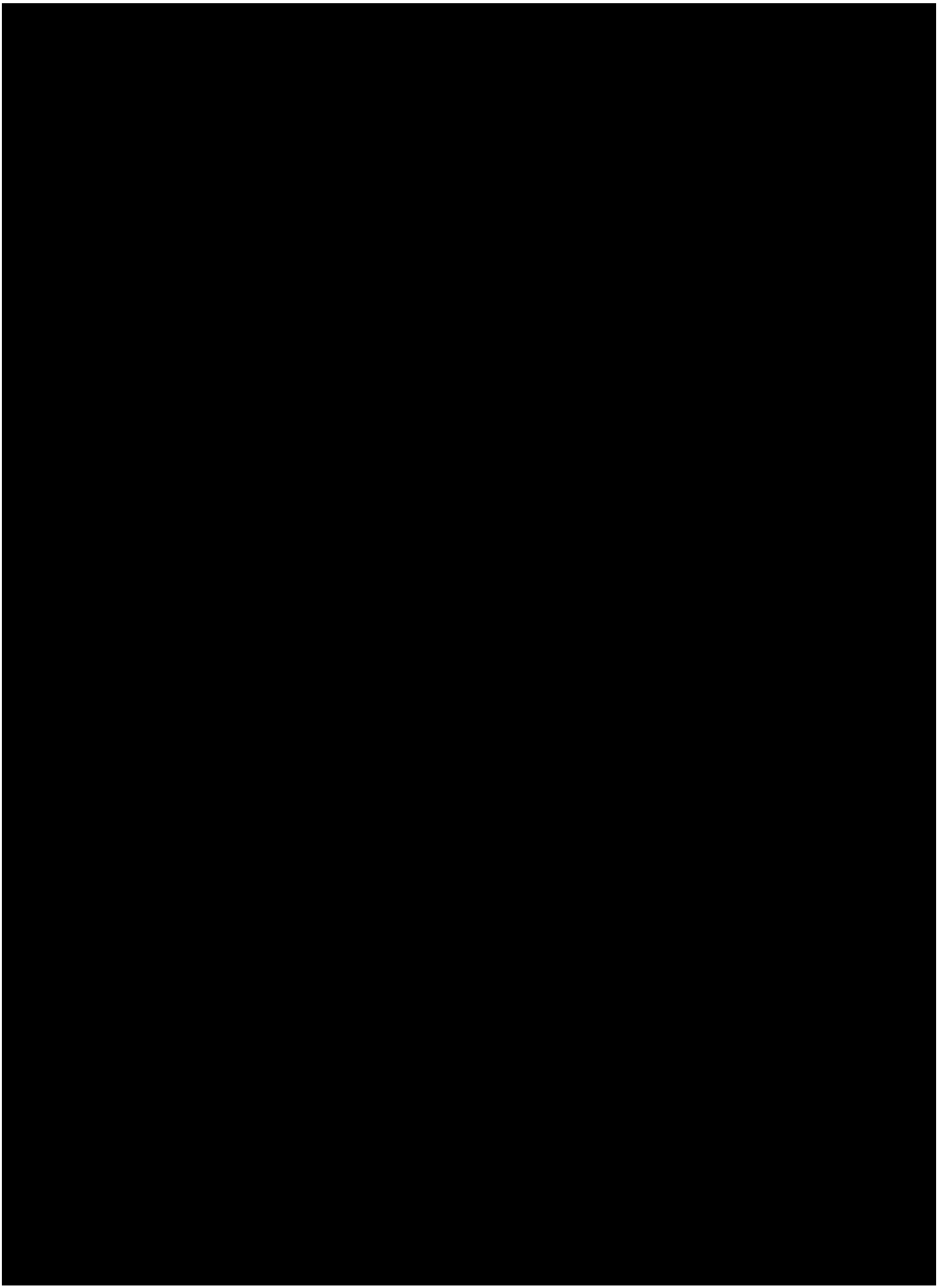
City, University of London

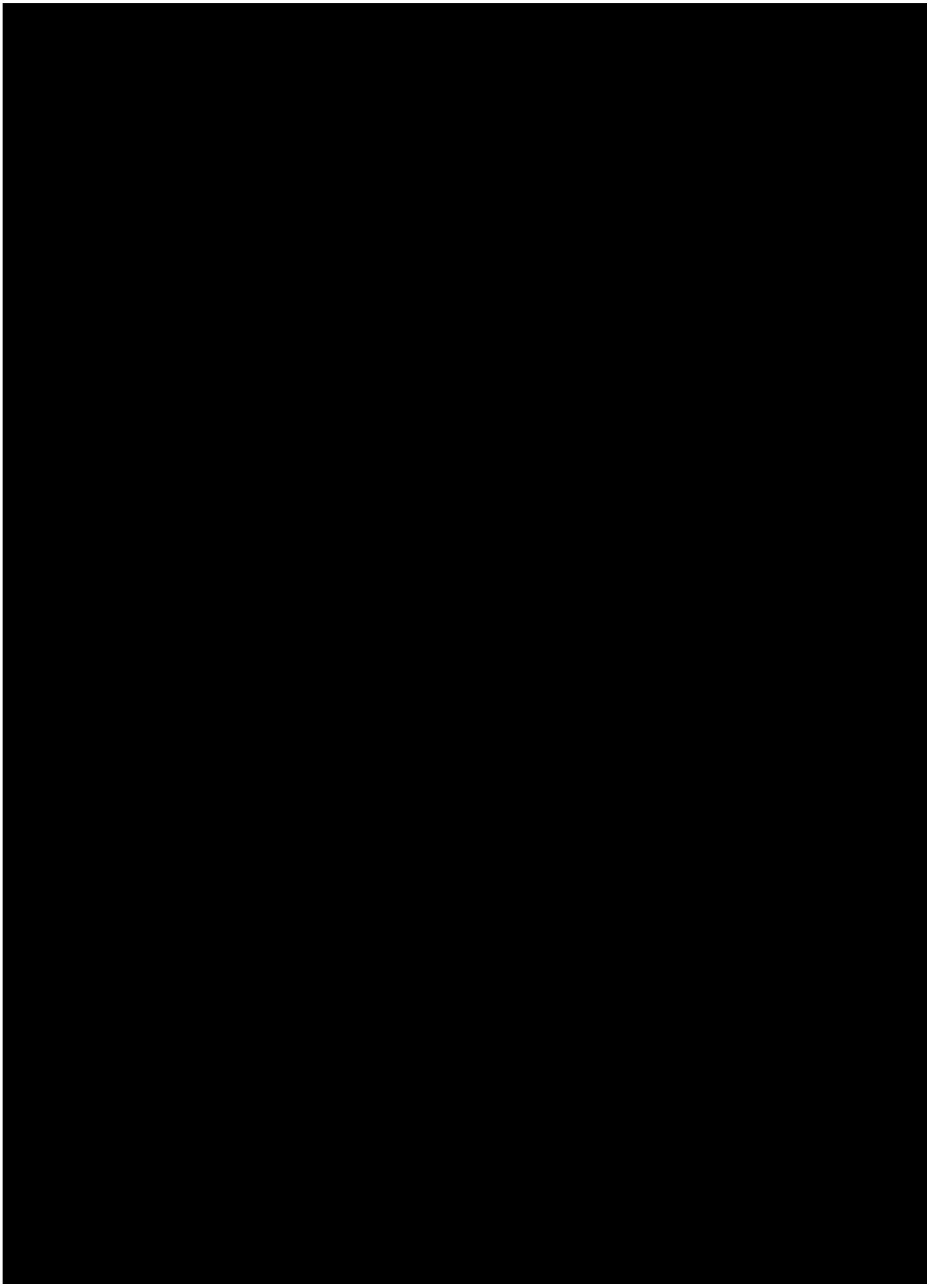
Disclosure: This article is a part of the doctoral thesis portfolio for the Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology Programme at City University London, supervised by Dr O. Nkansa-Dwamena. No financial interests are to be gained from this research.

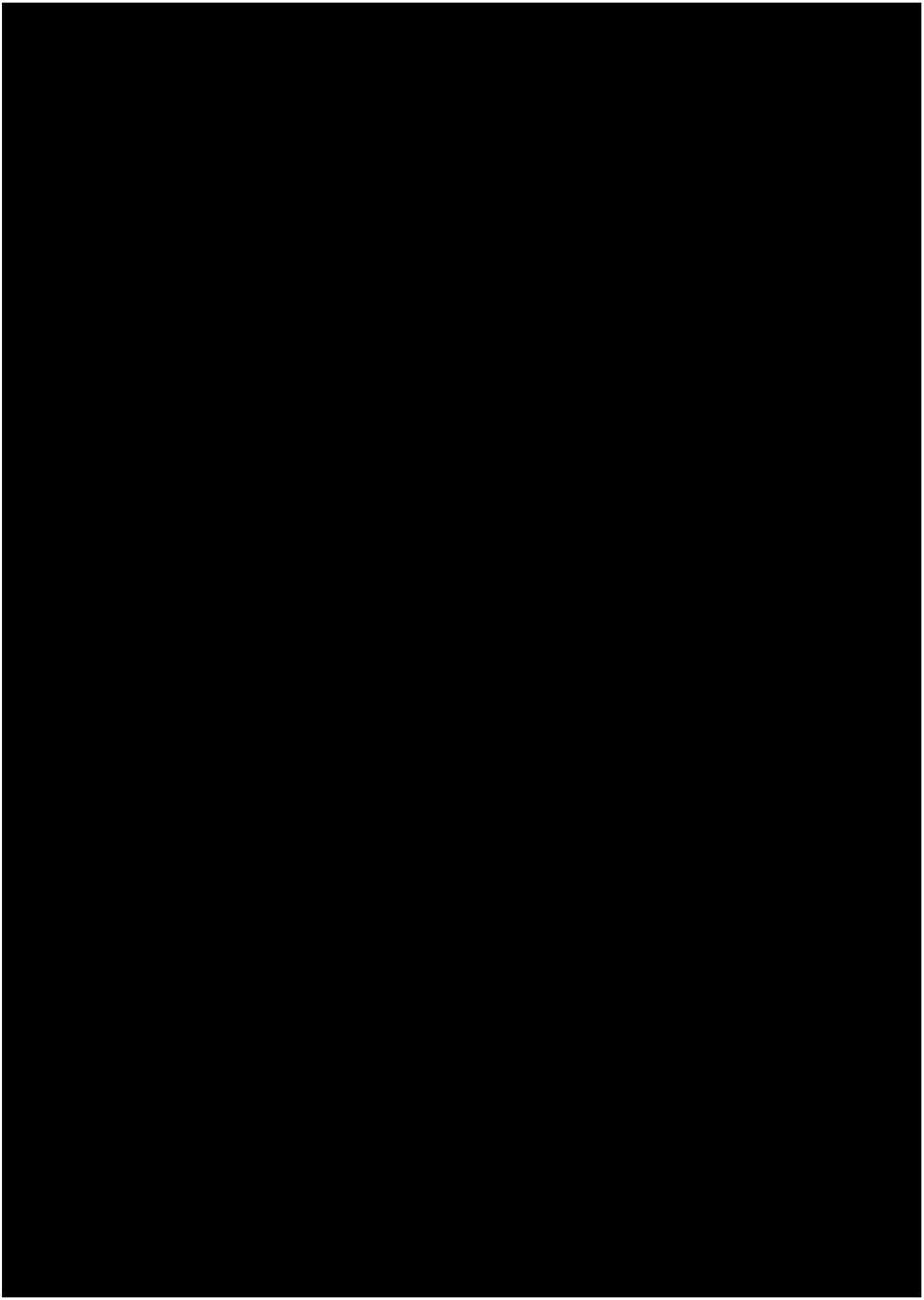


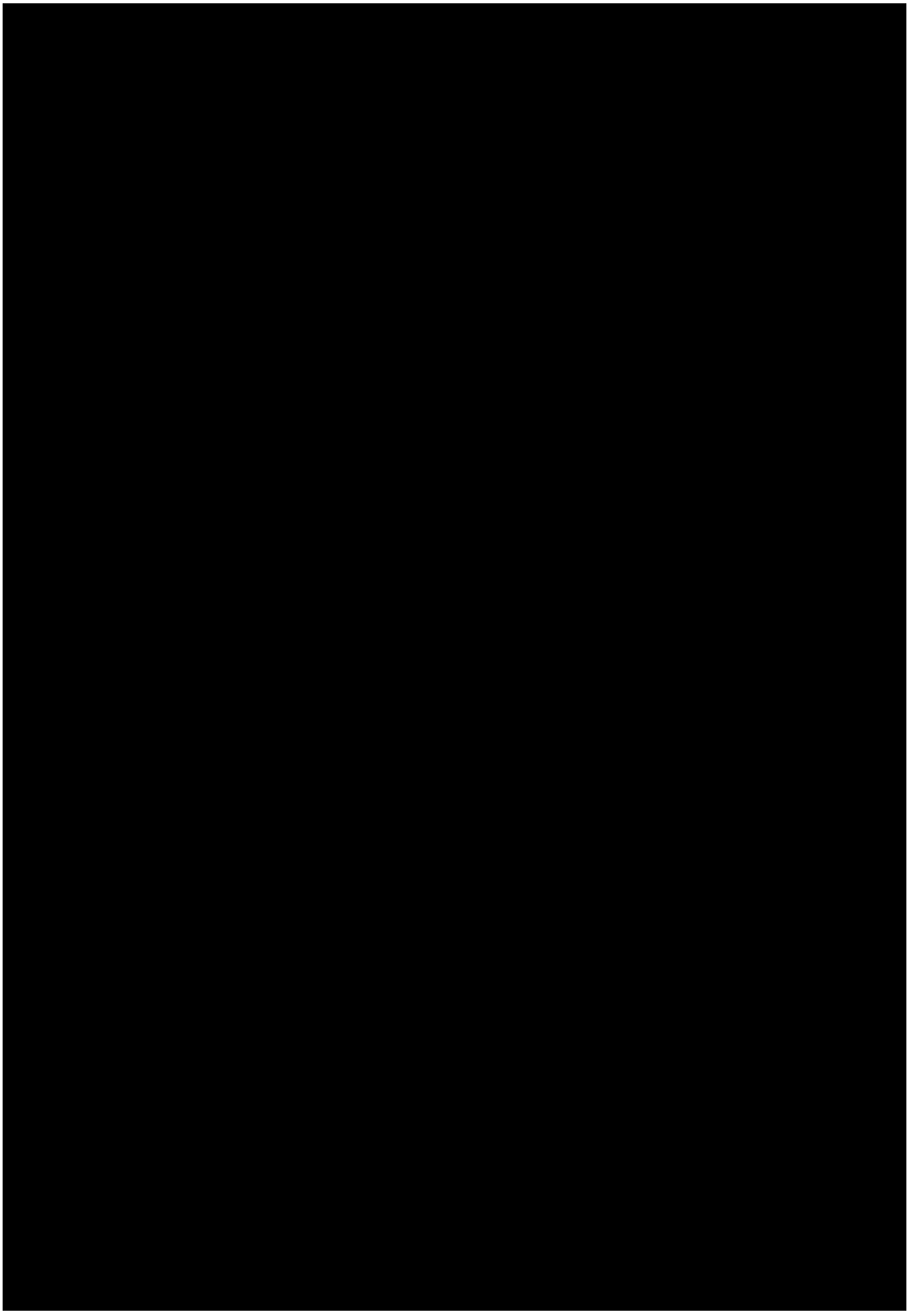


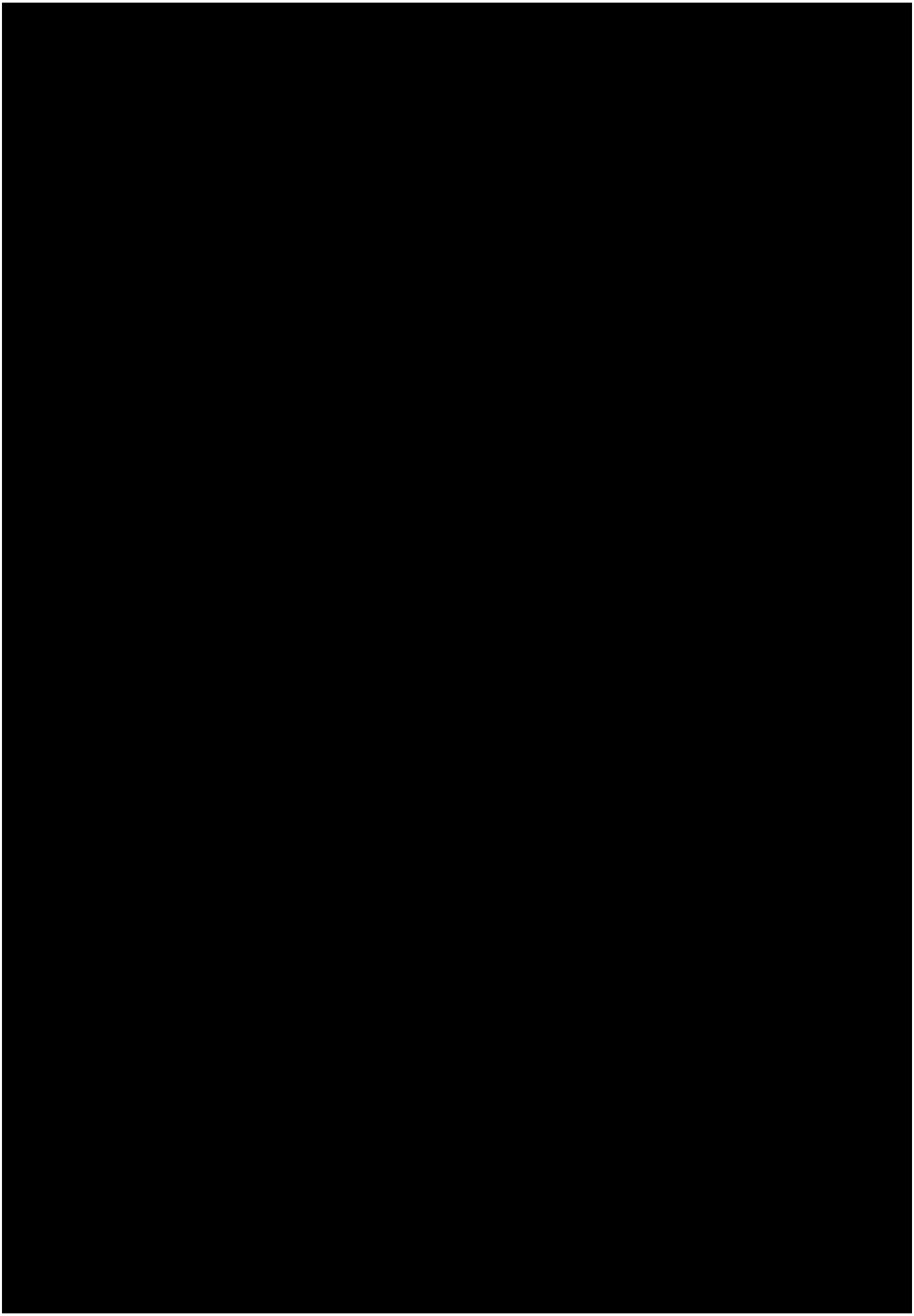


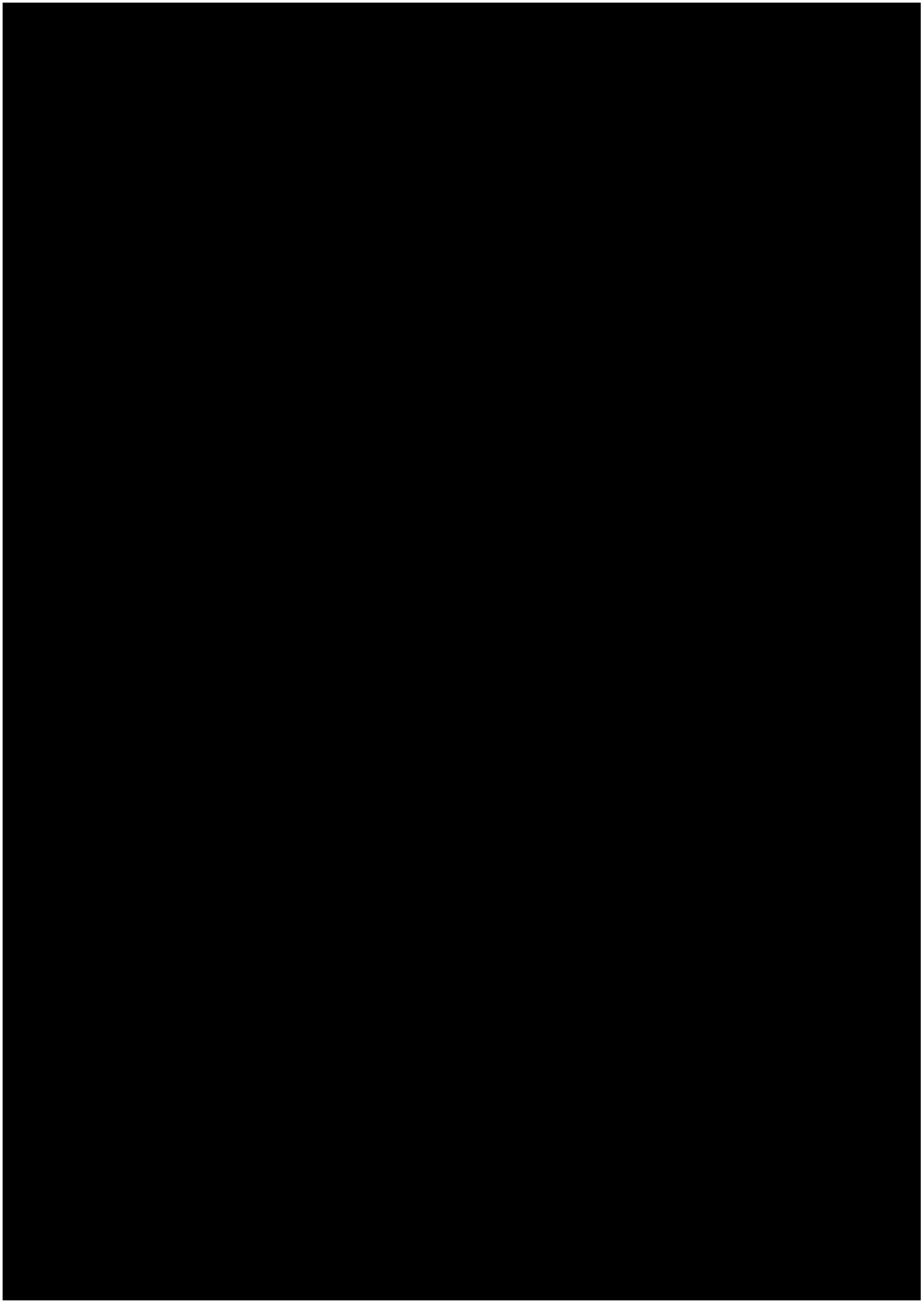


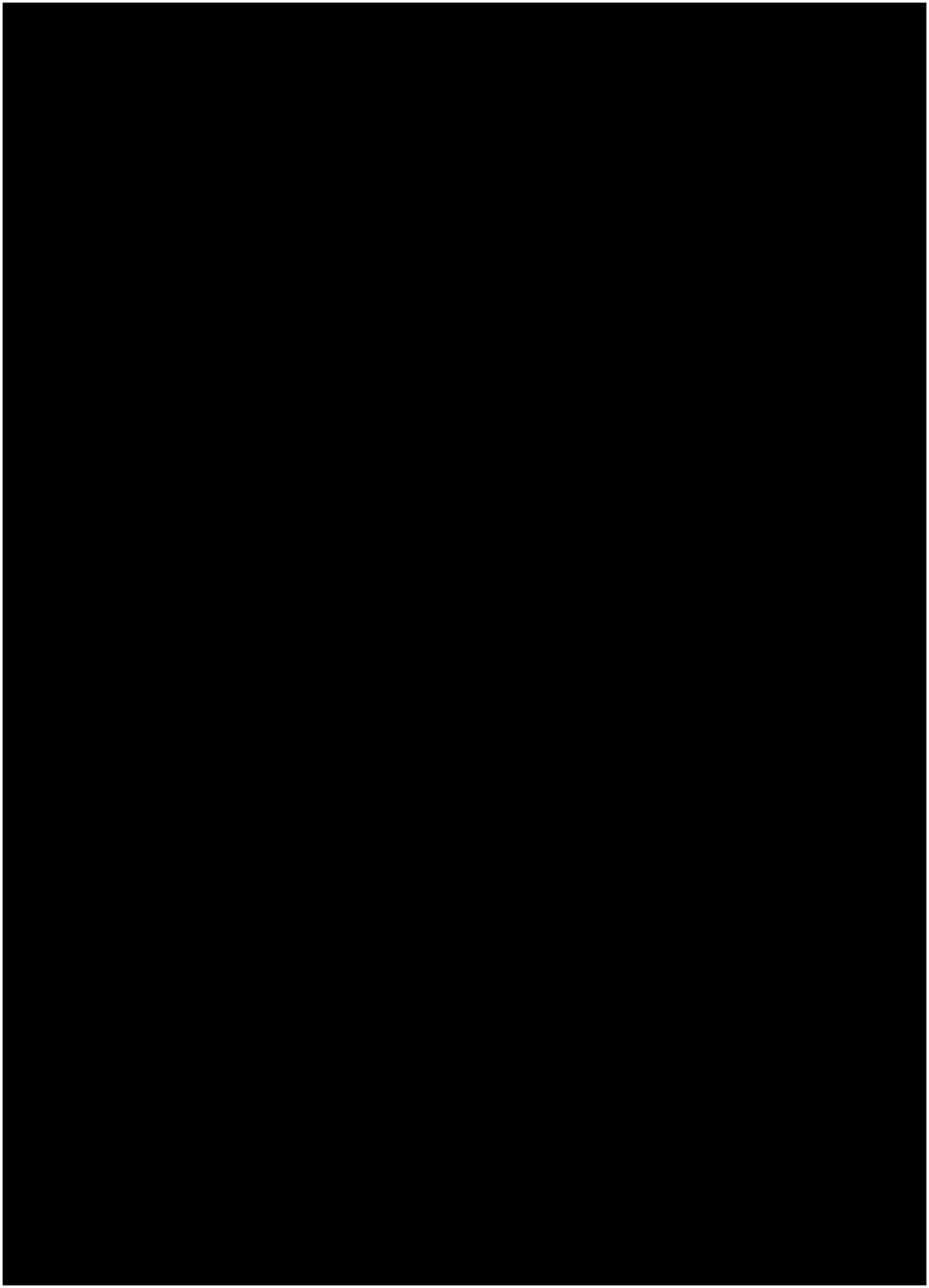


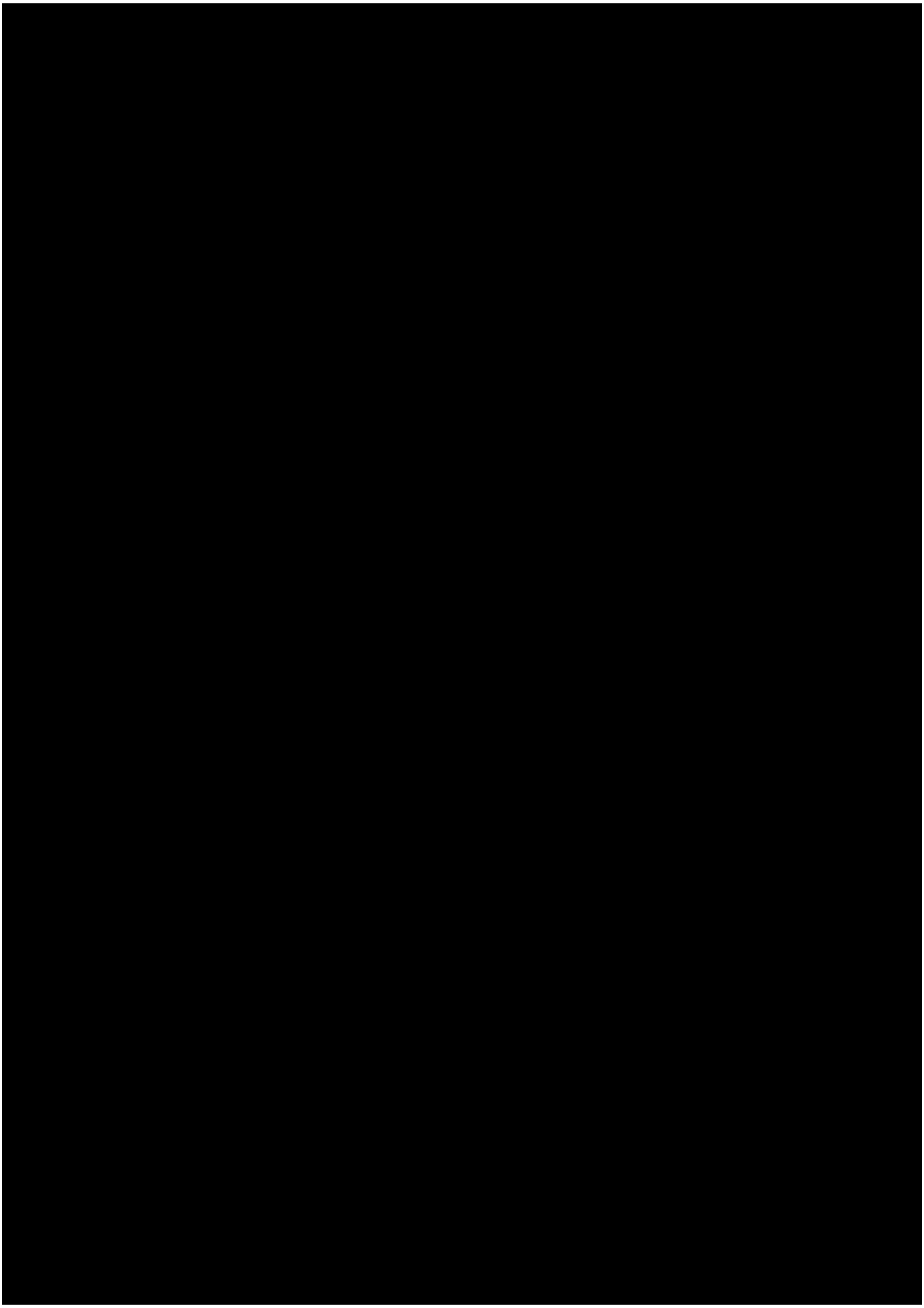


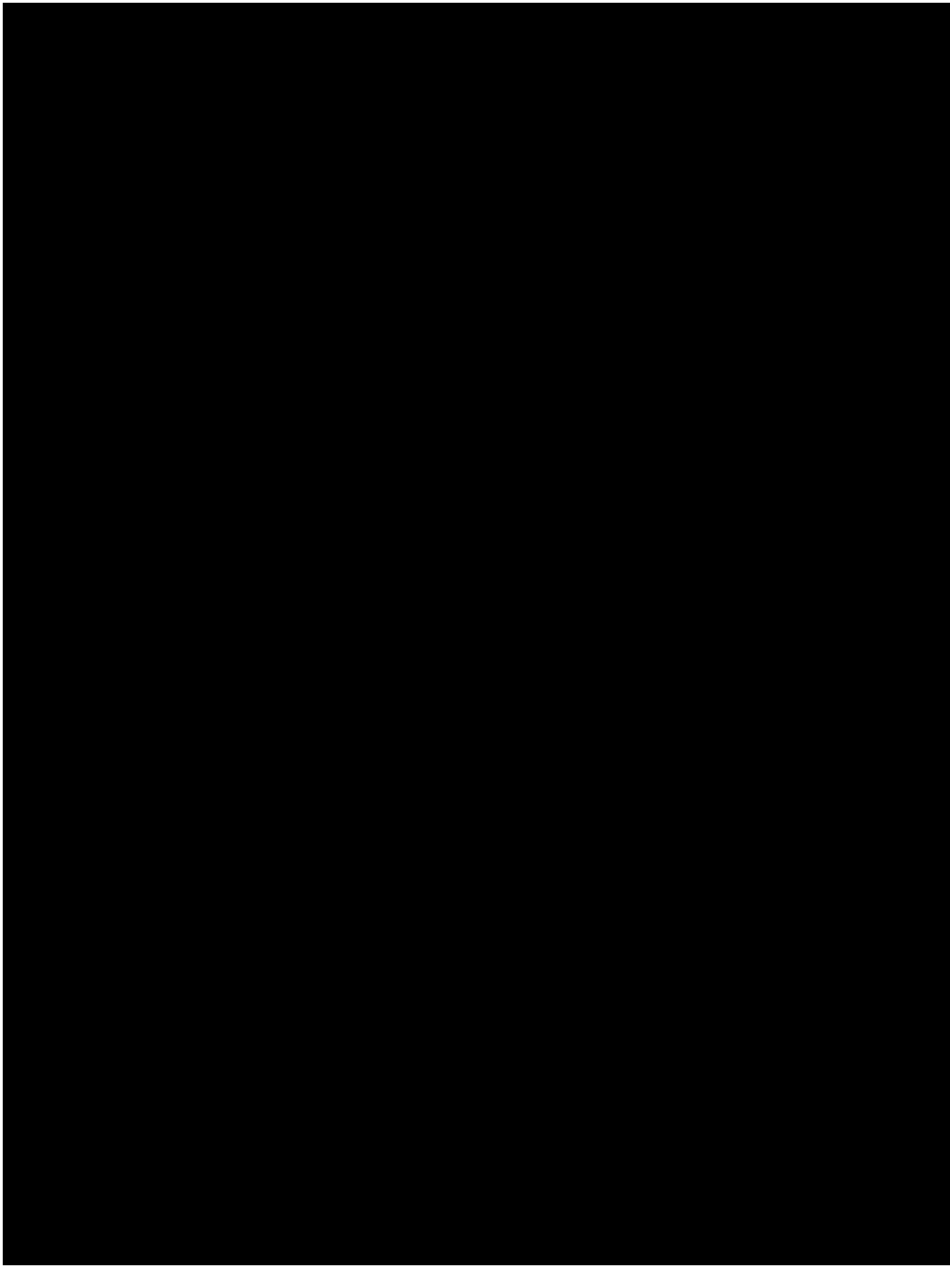


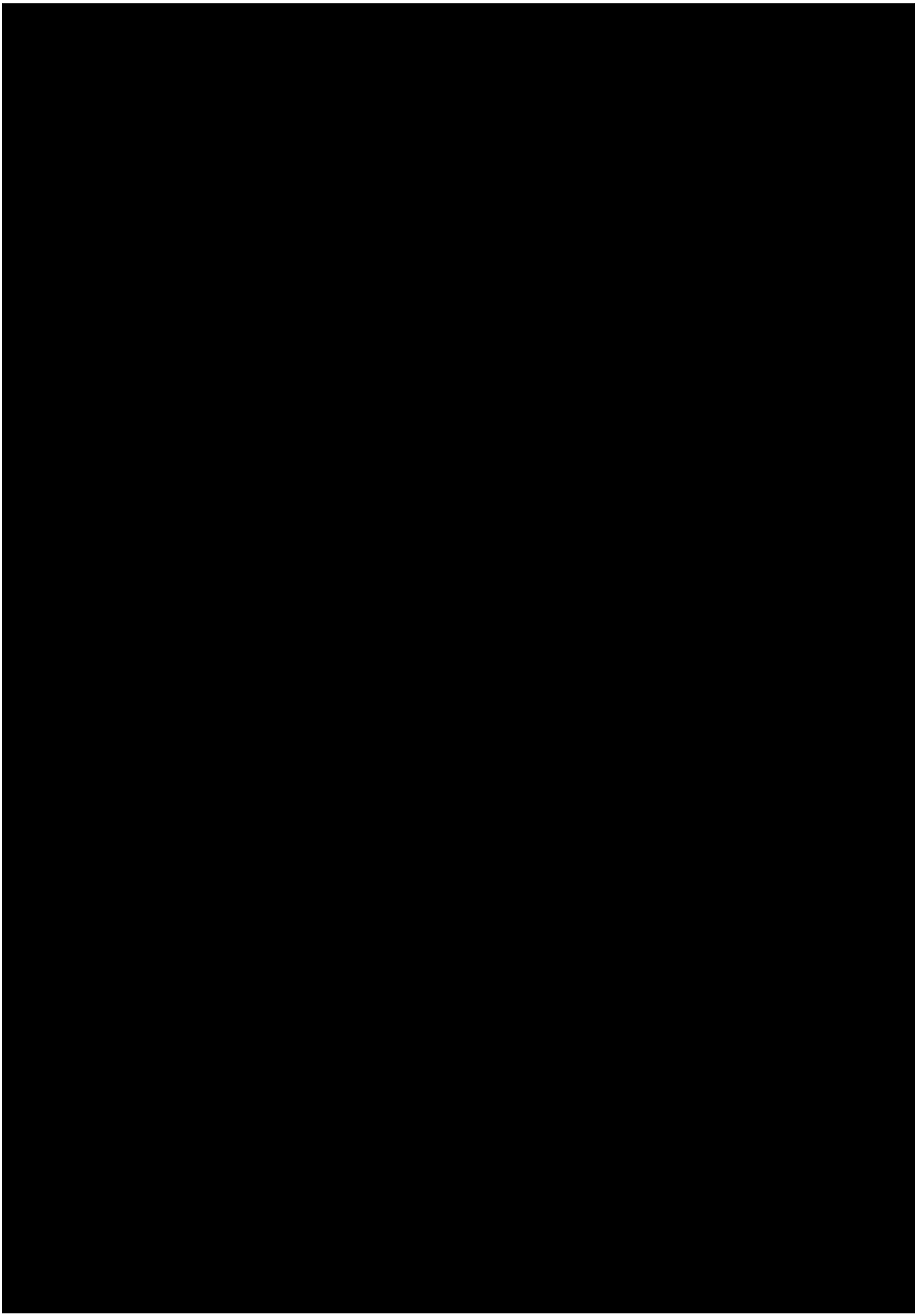


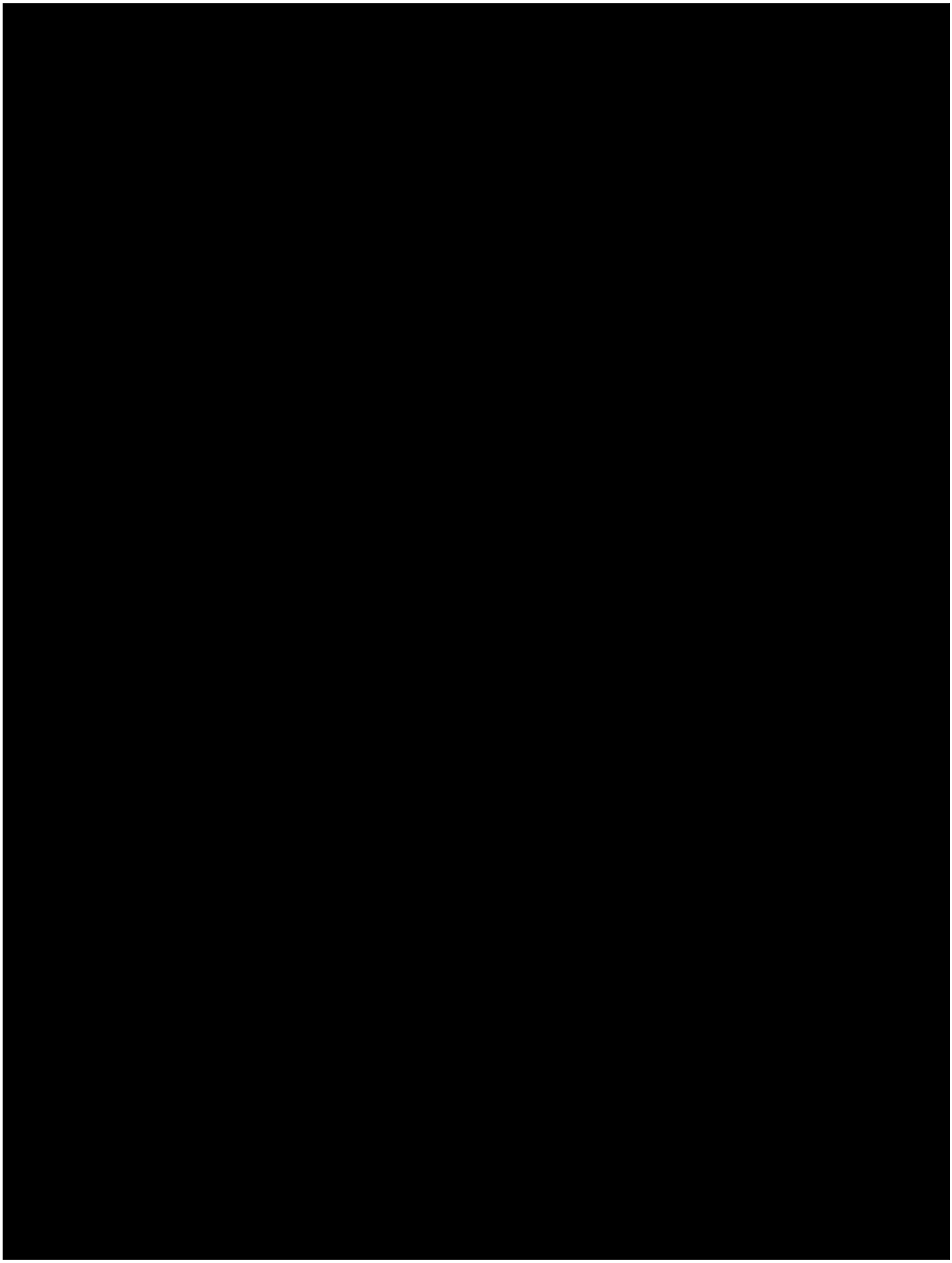


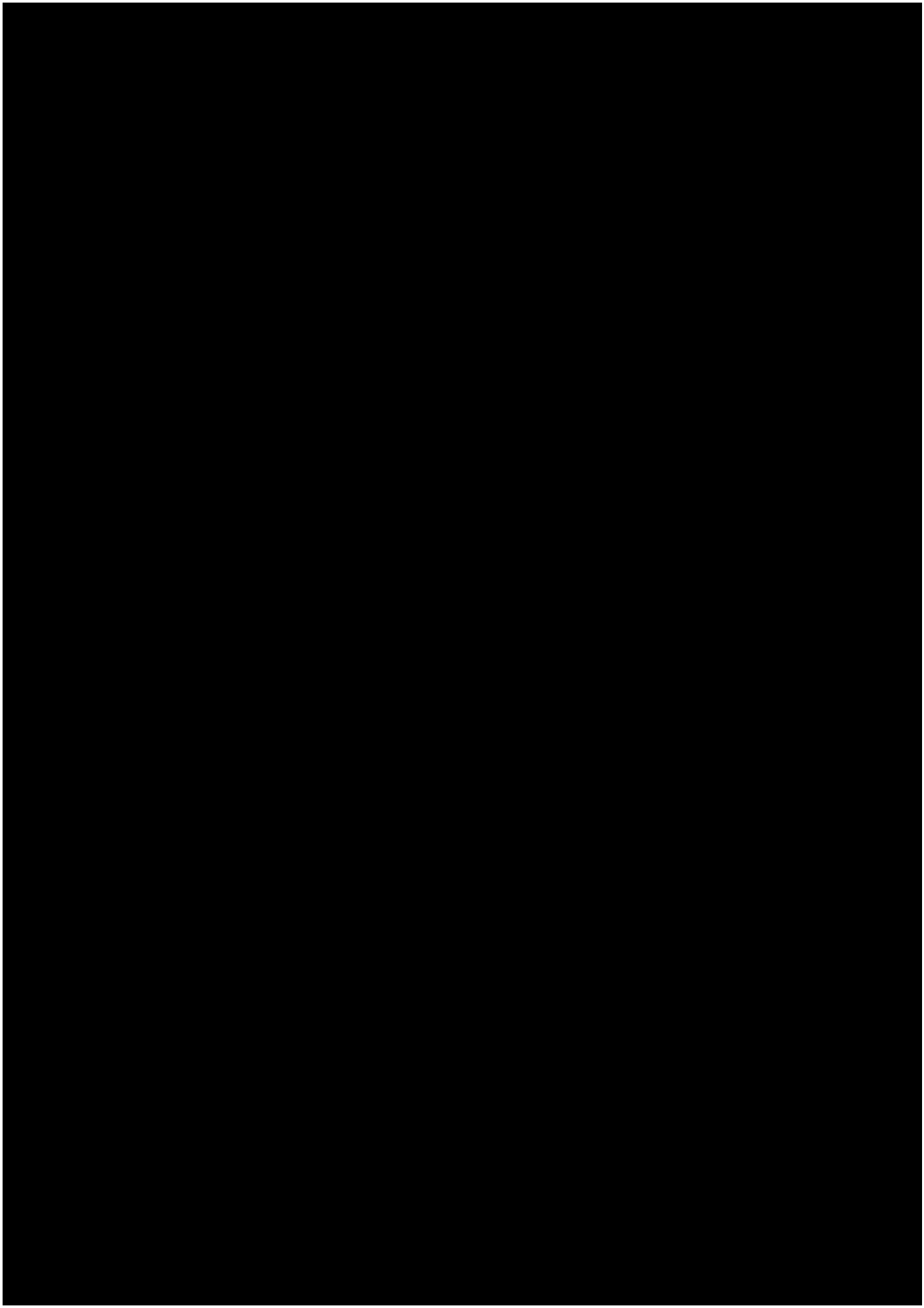


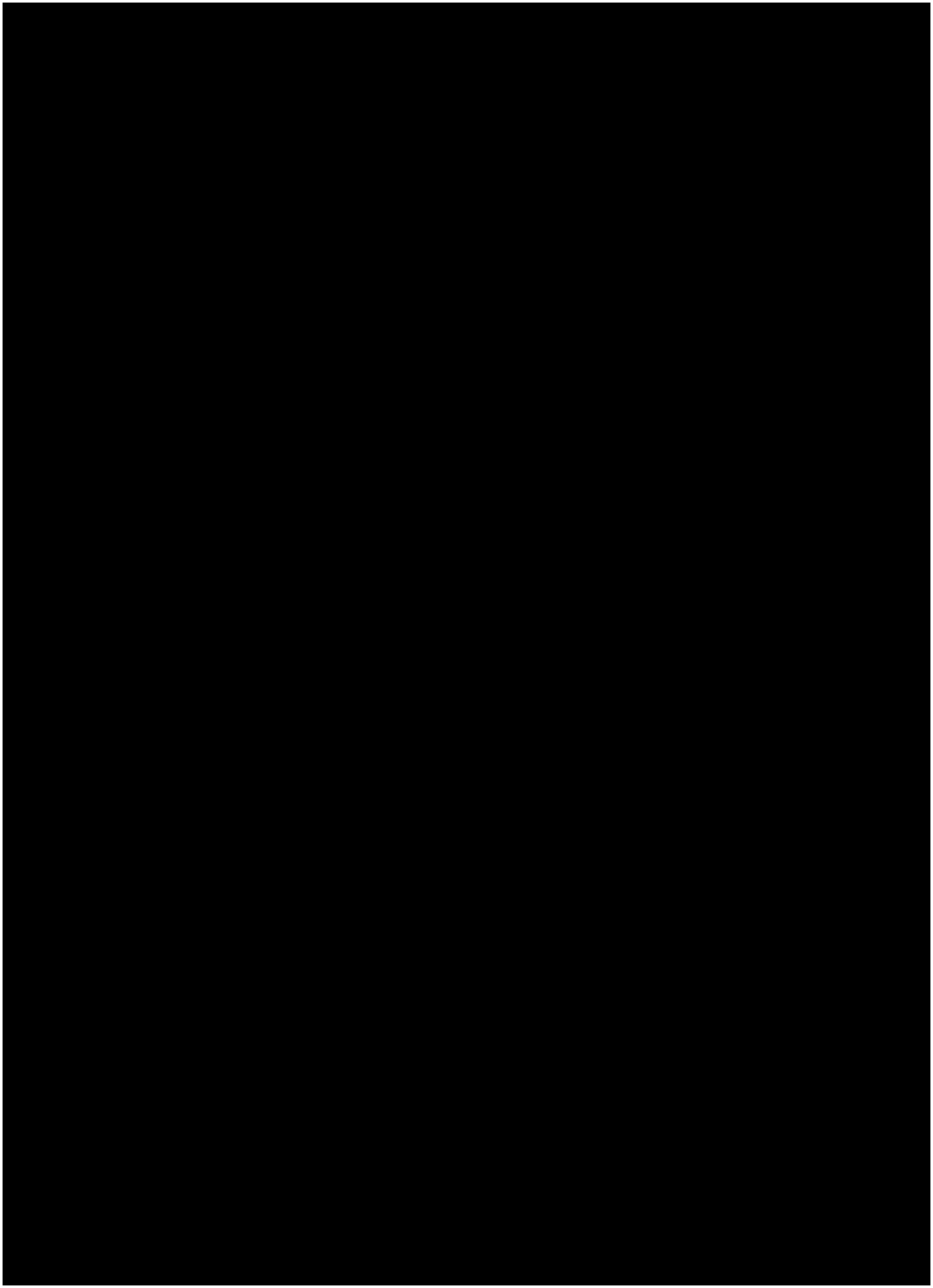


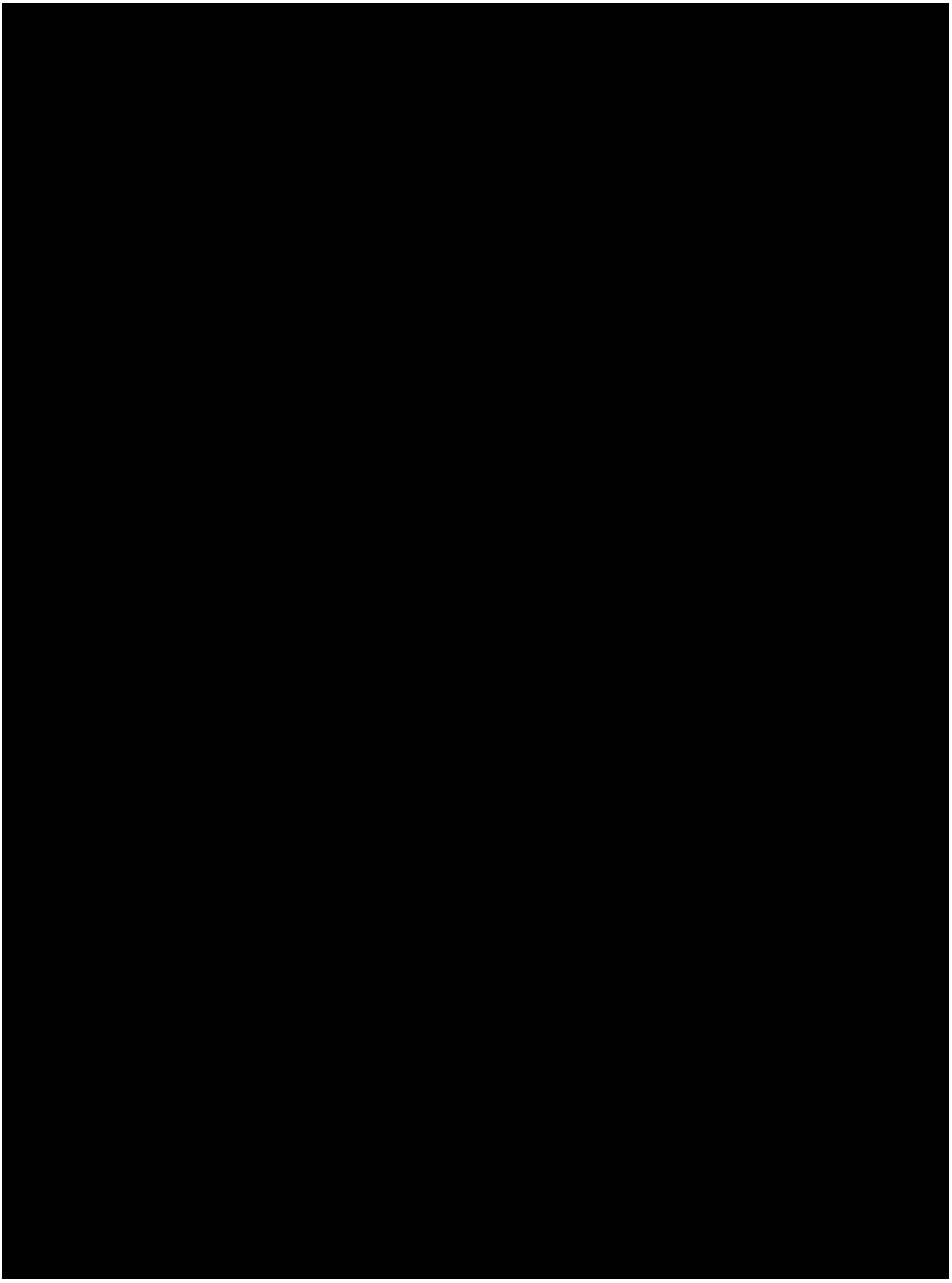


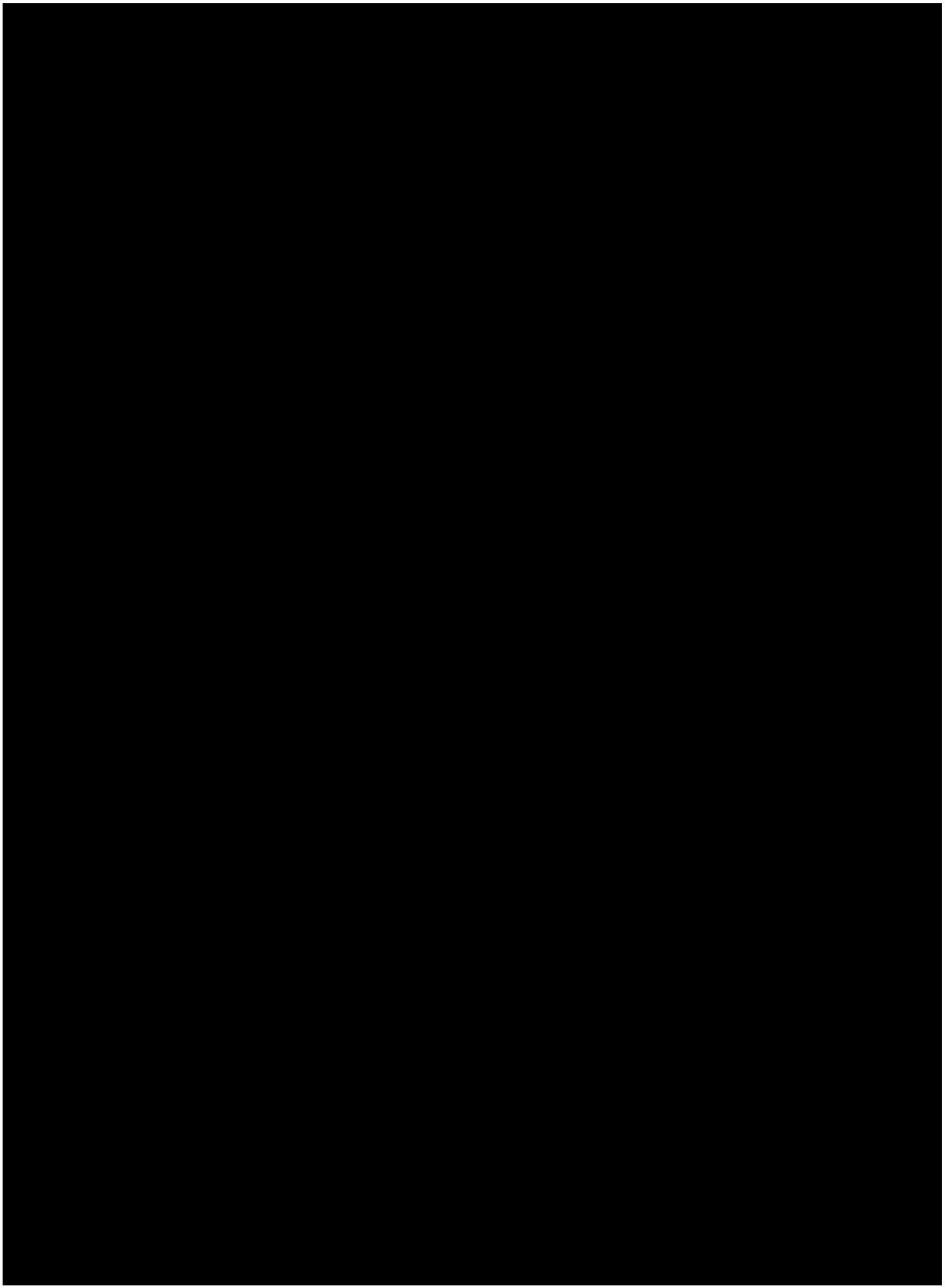


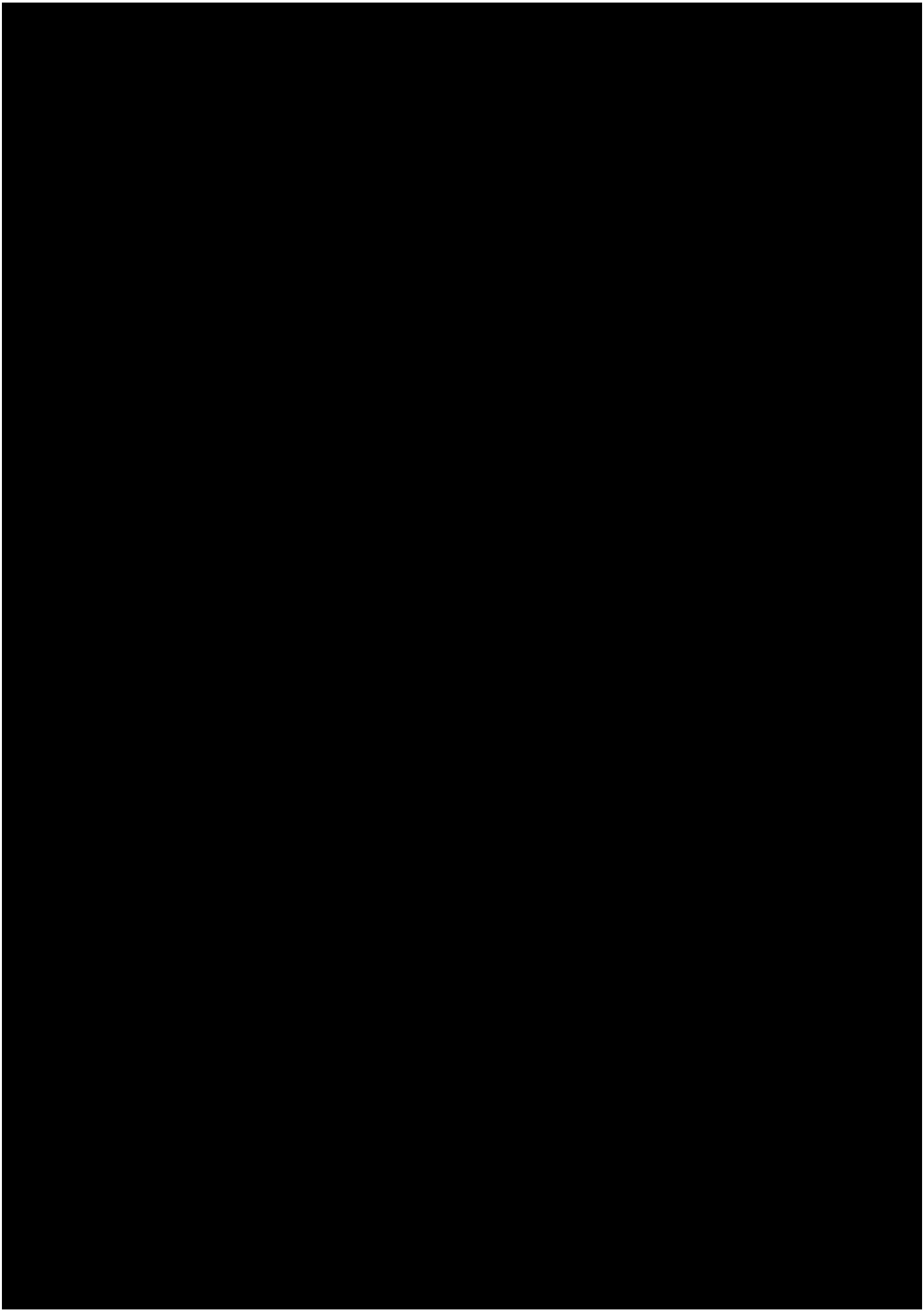


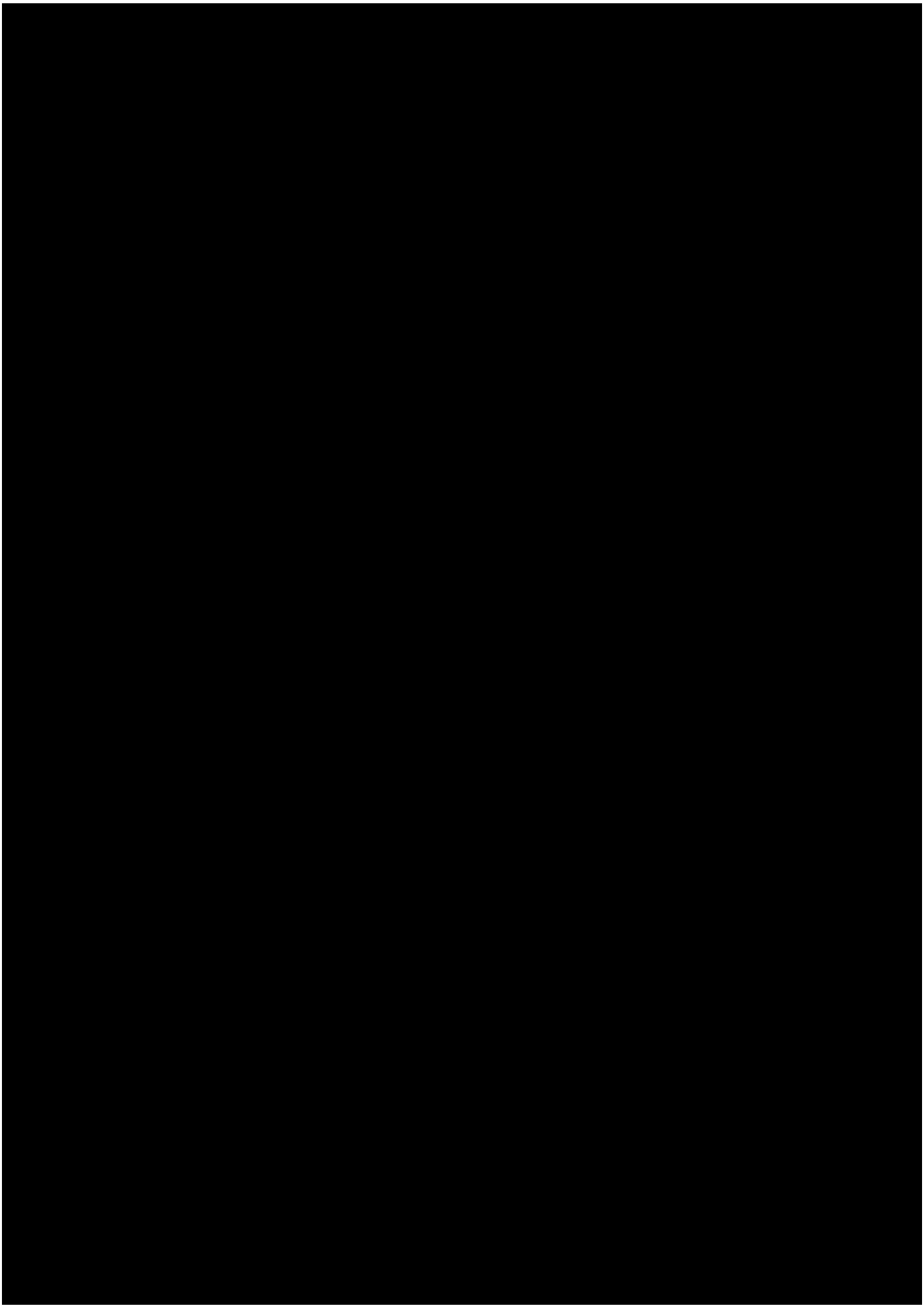


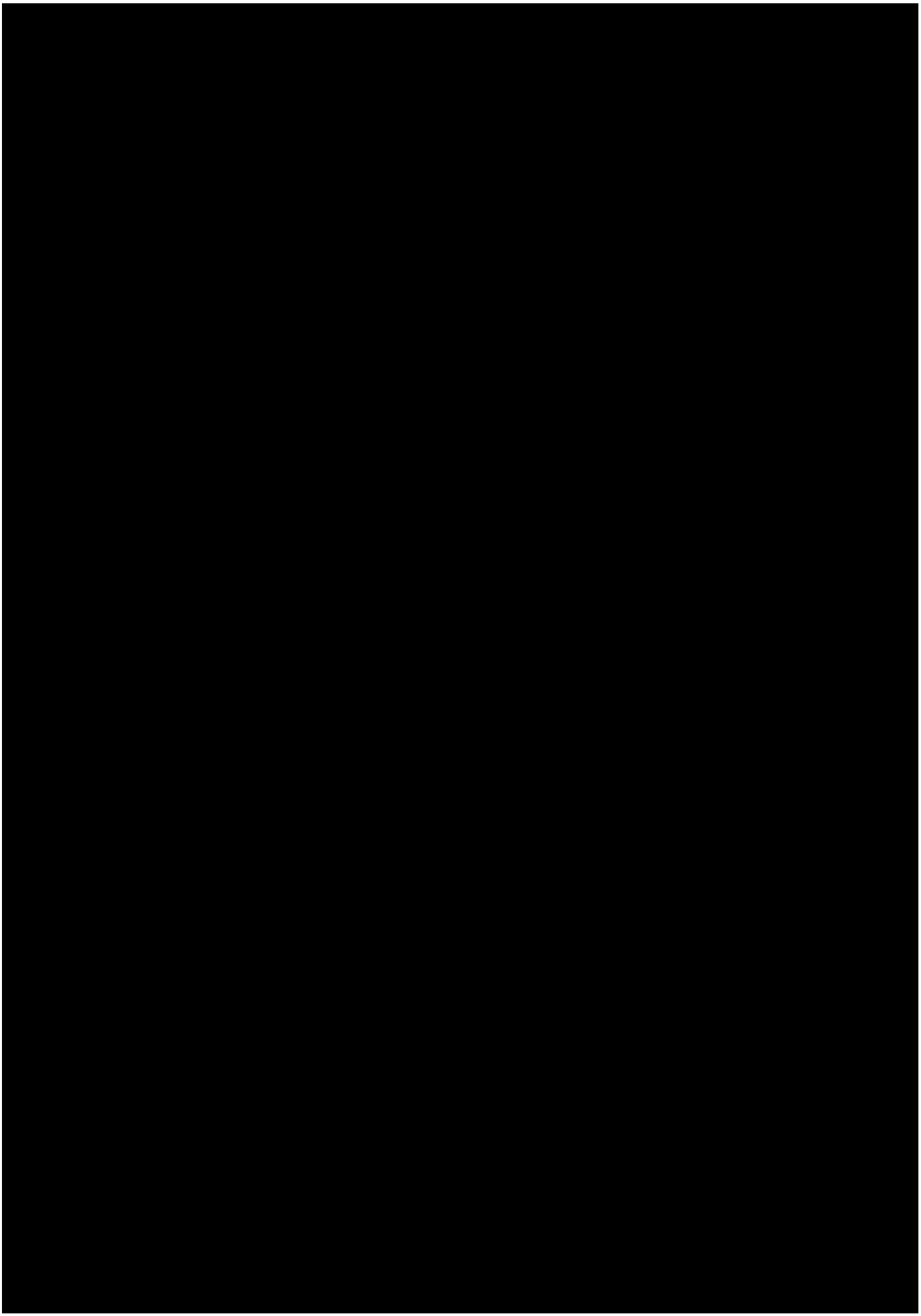


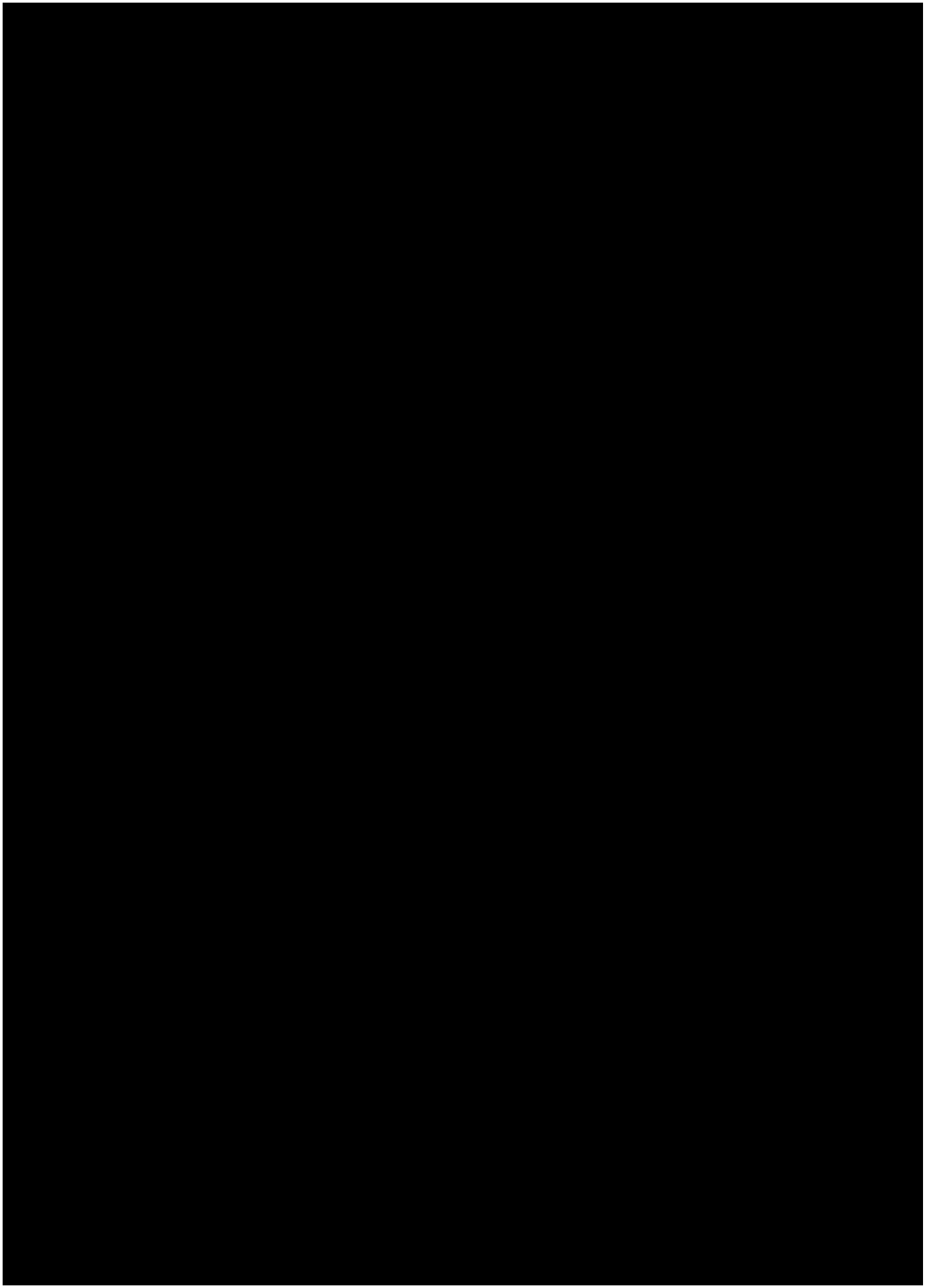


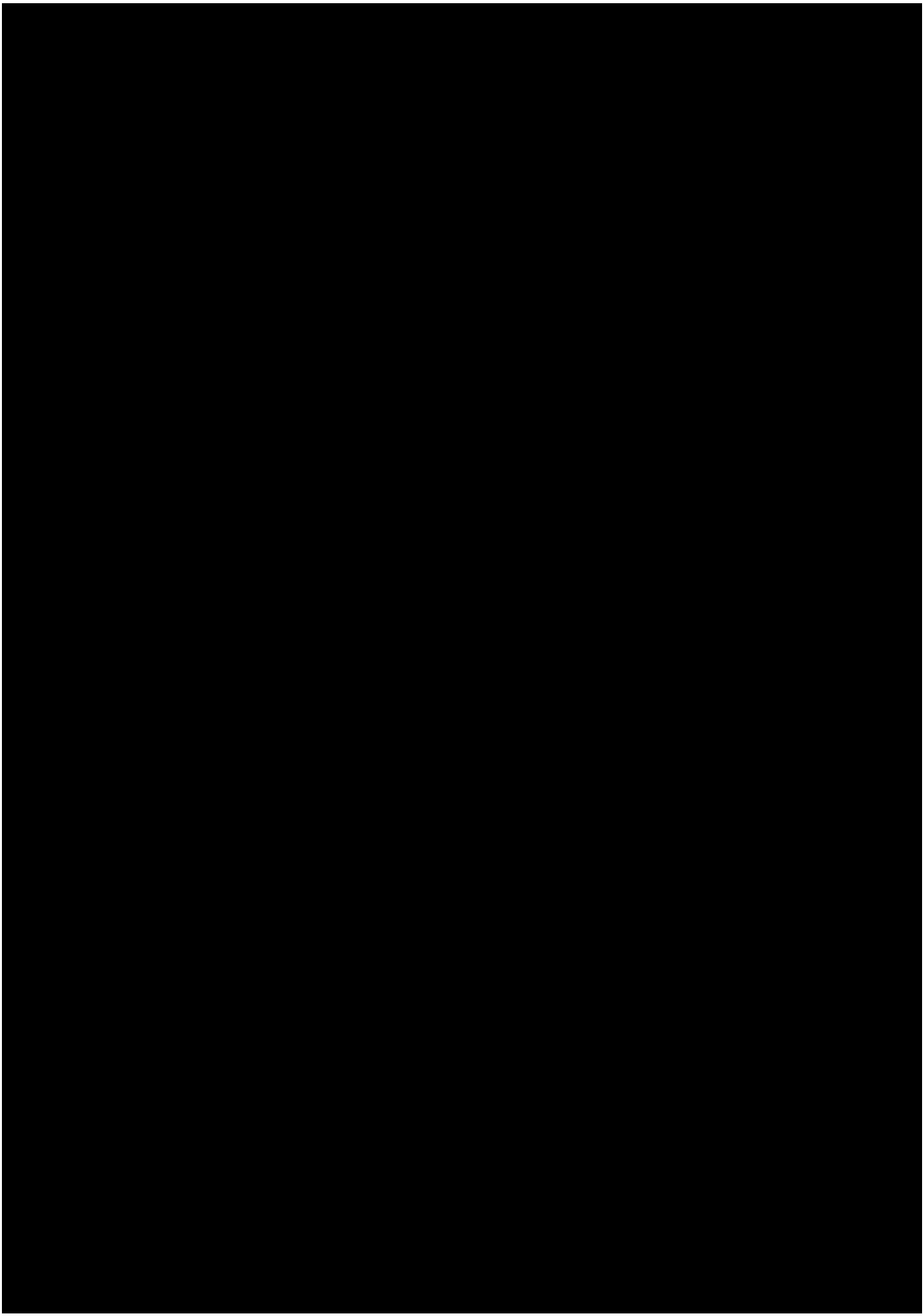


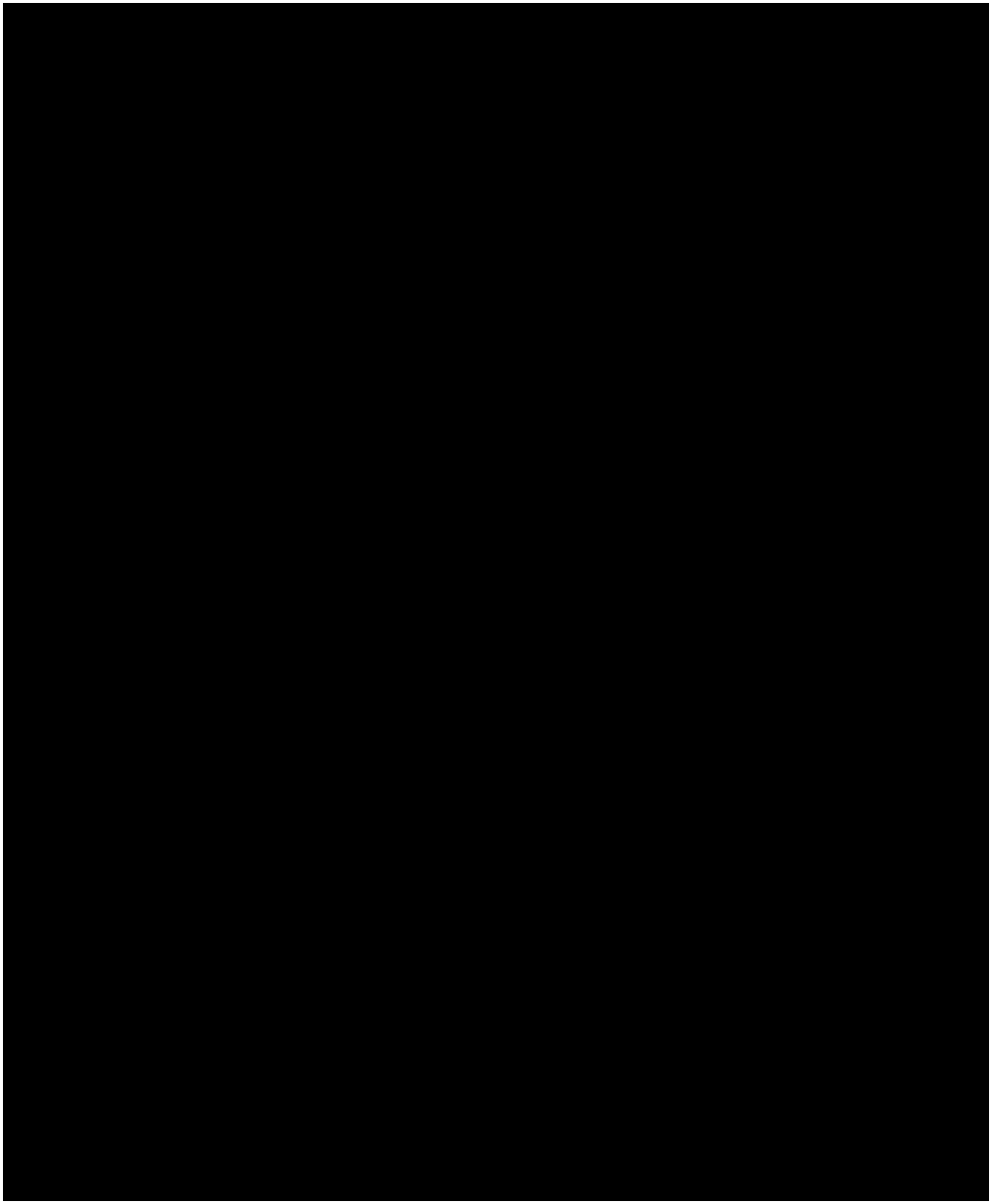


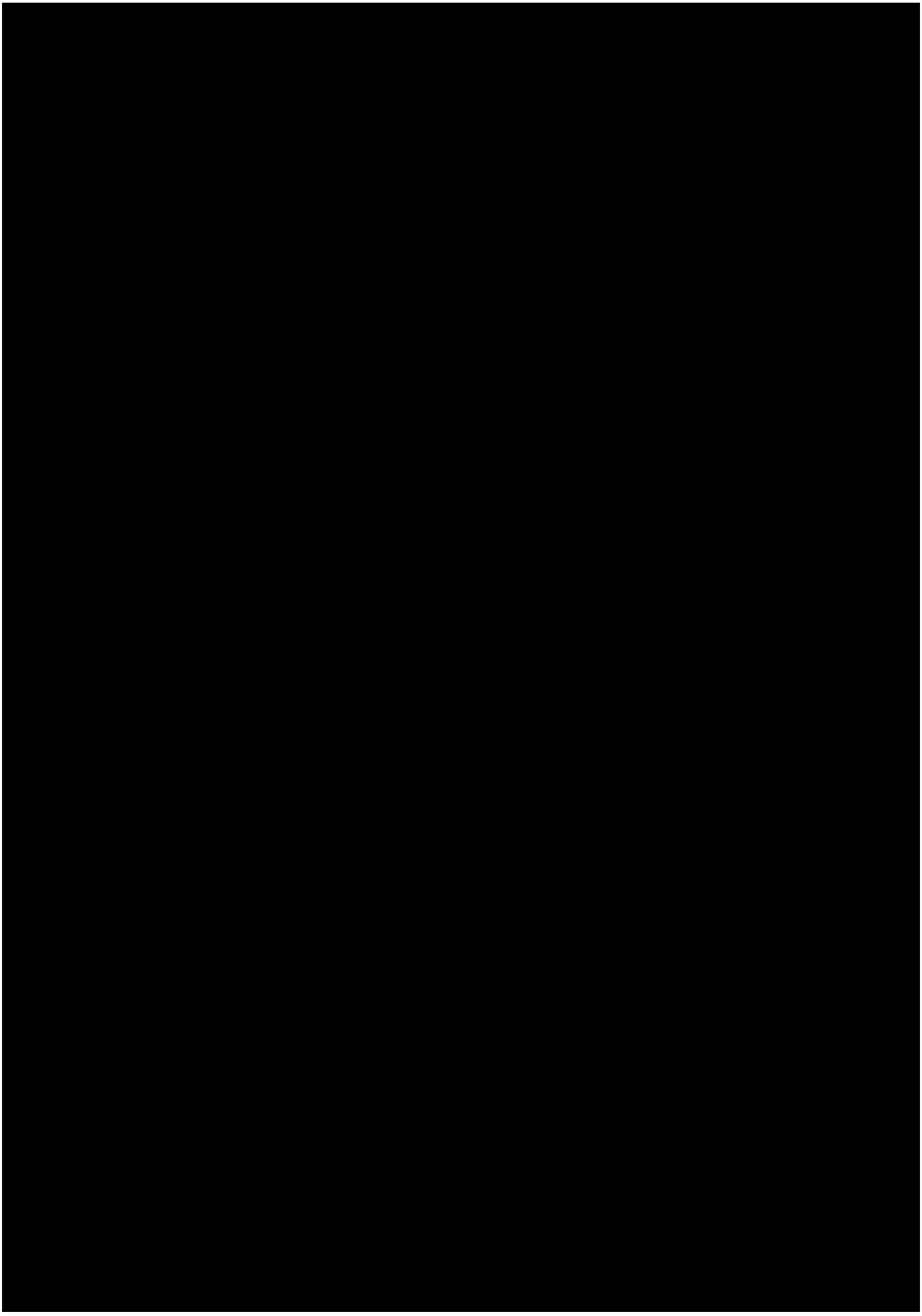


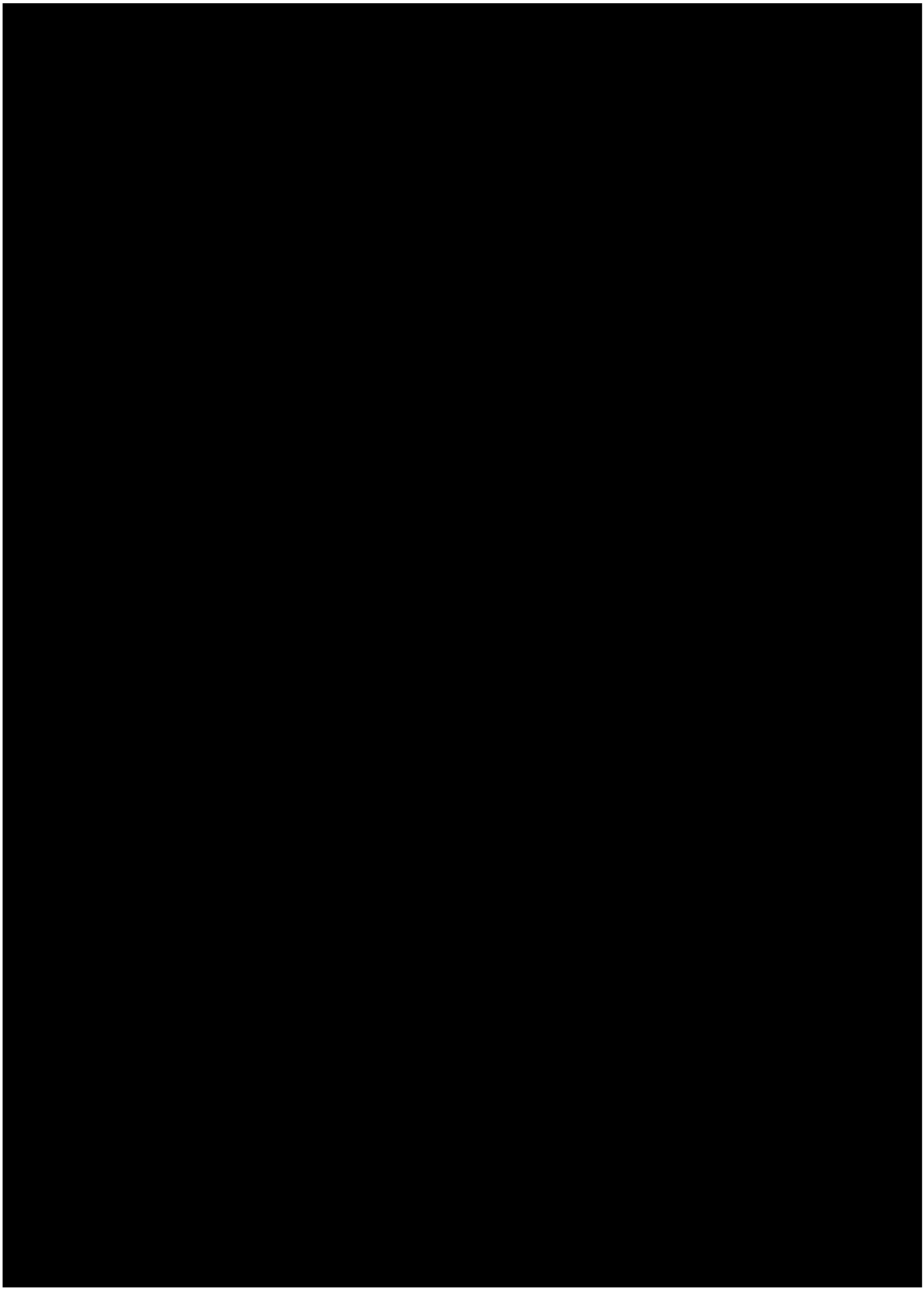


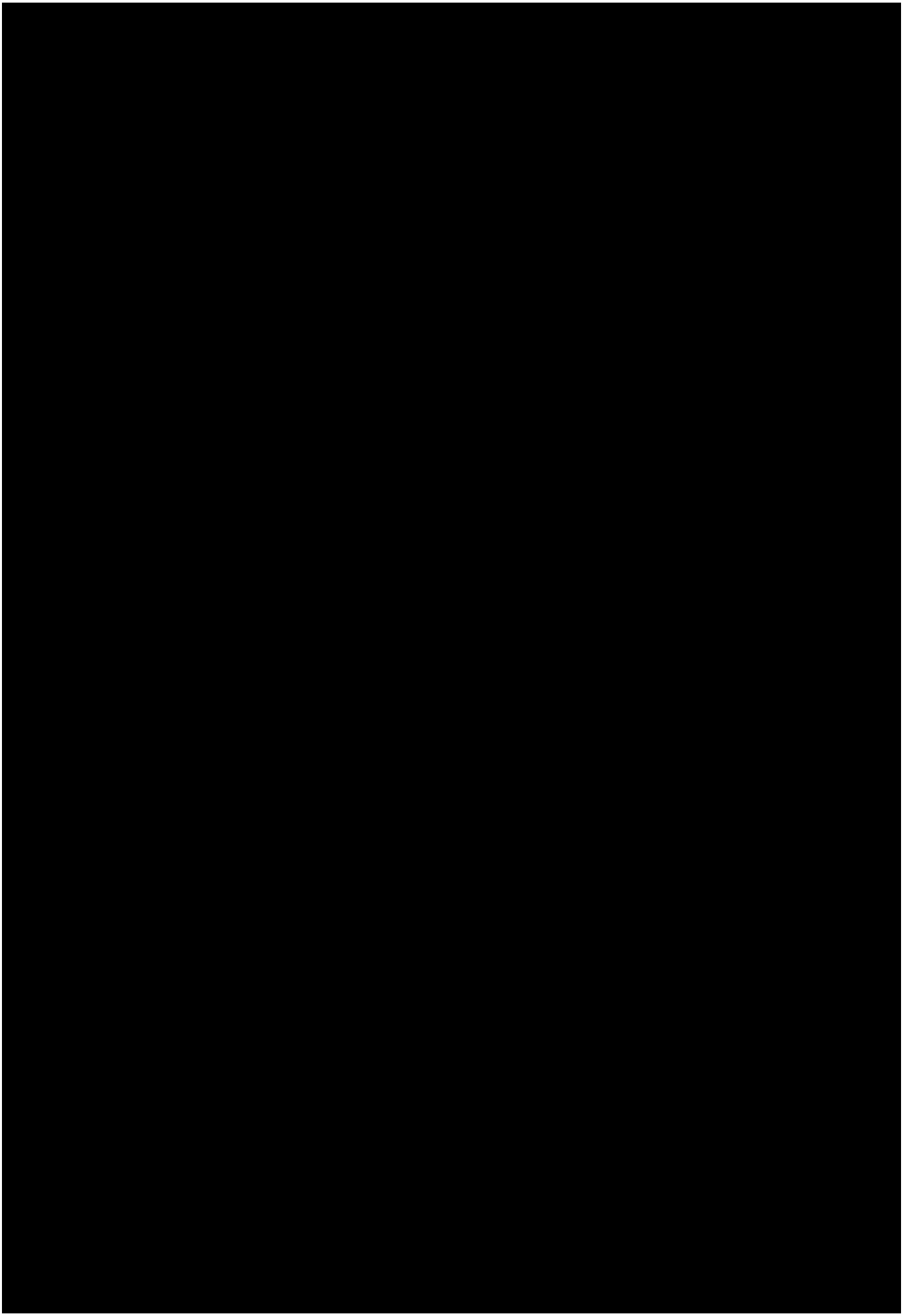


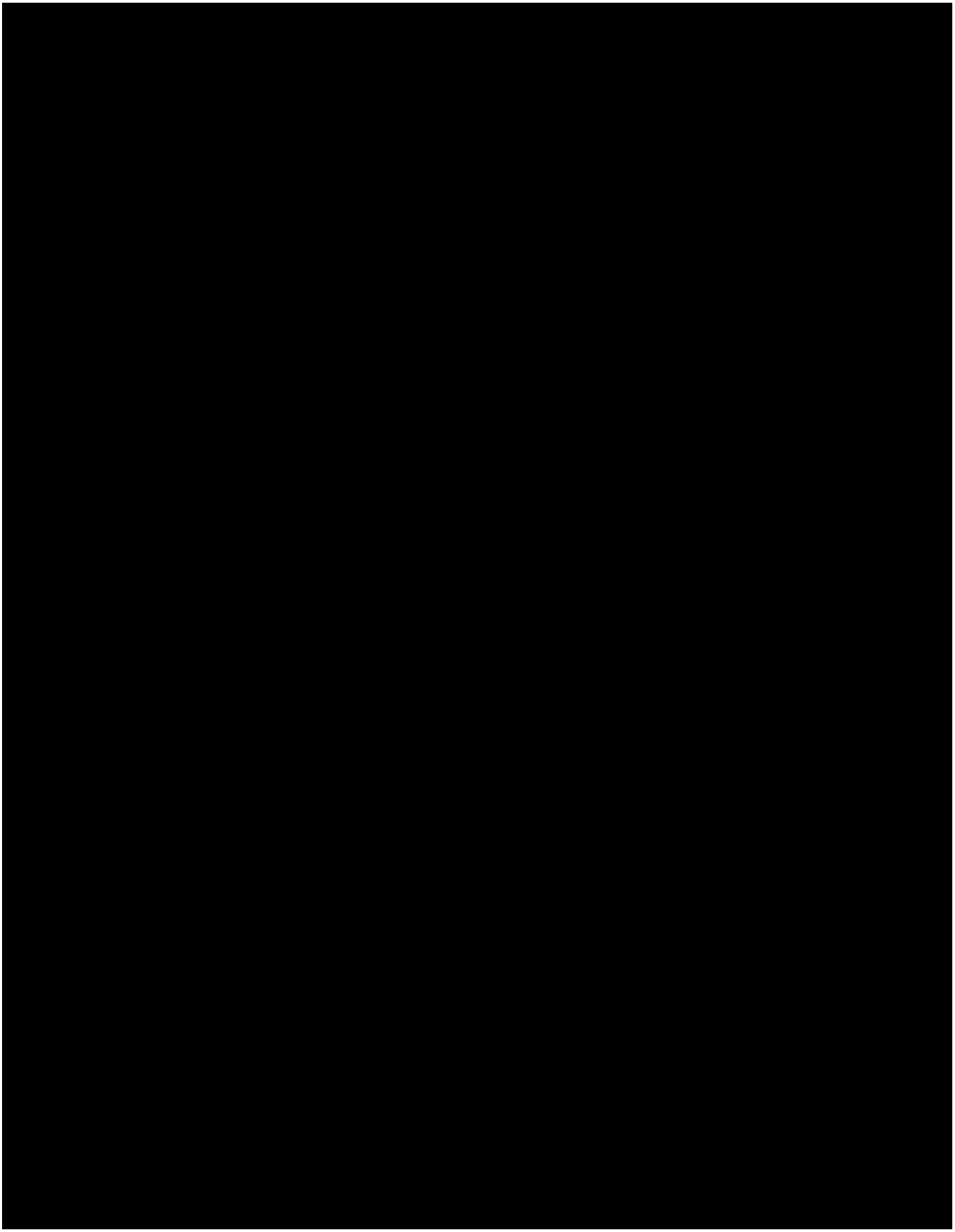


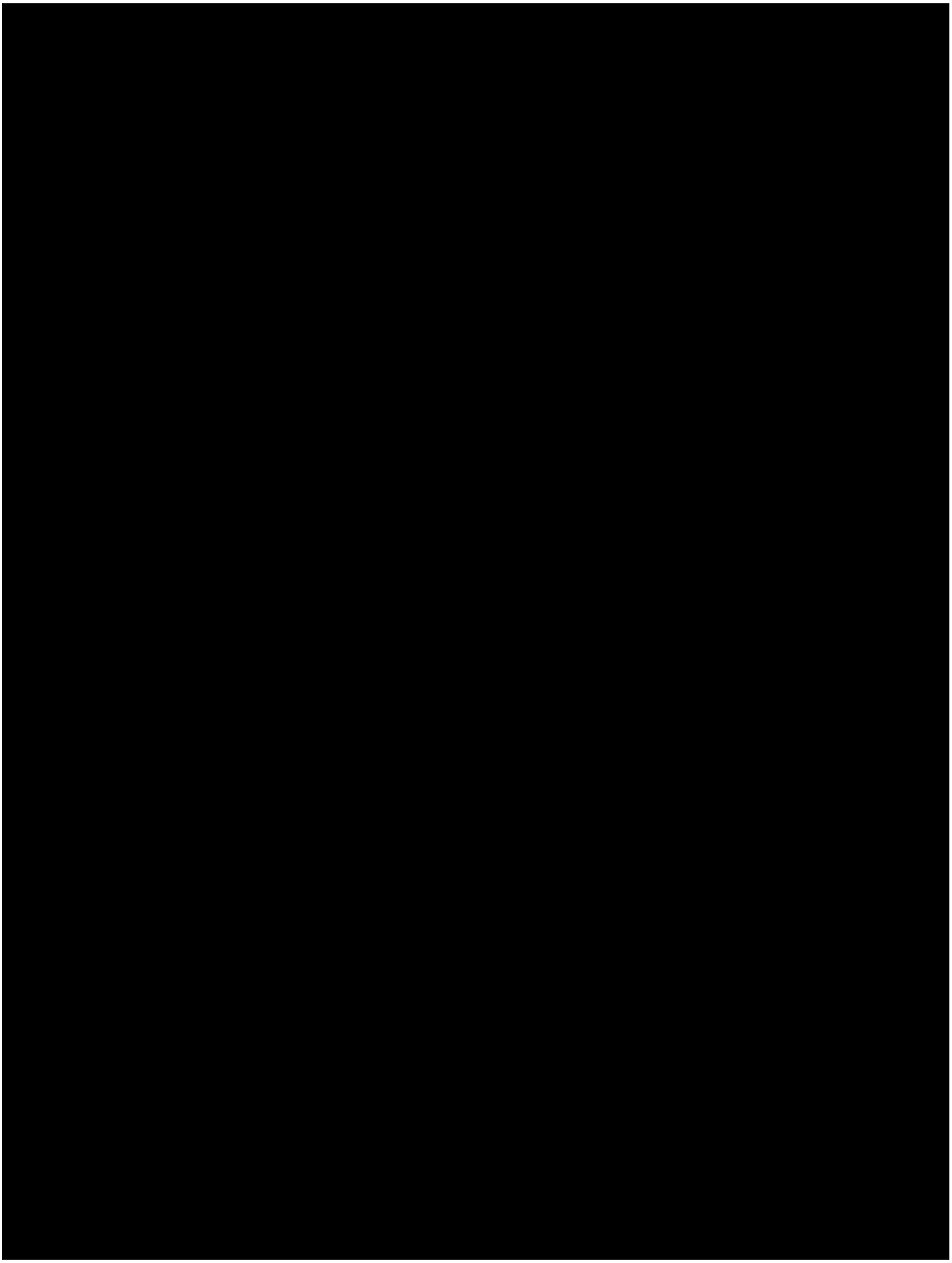


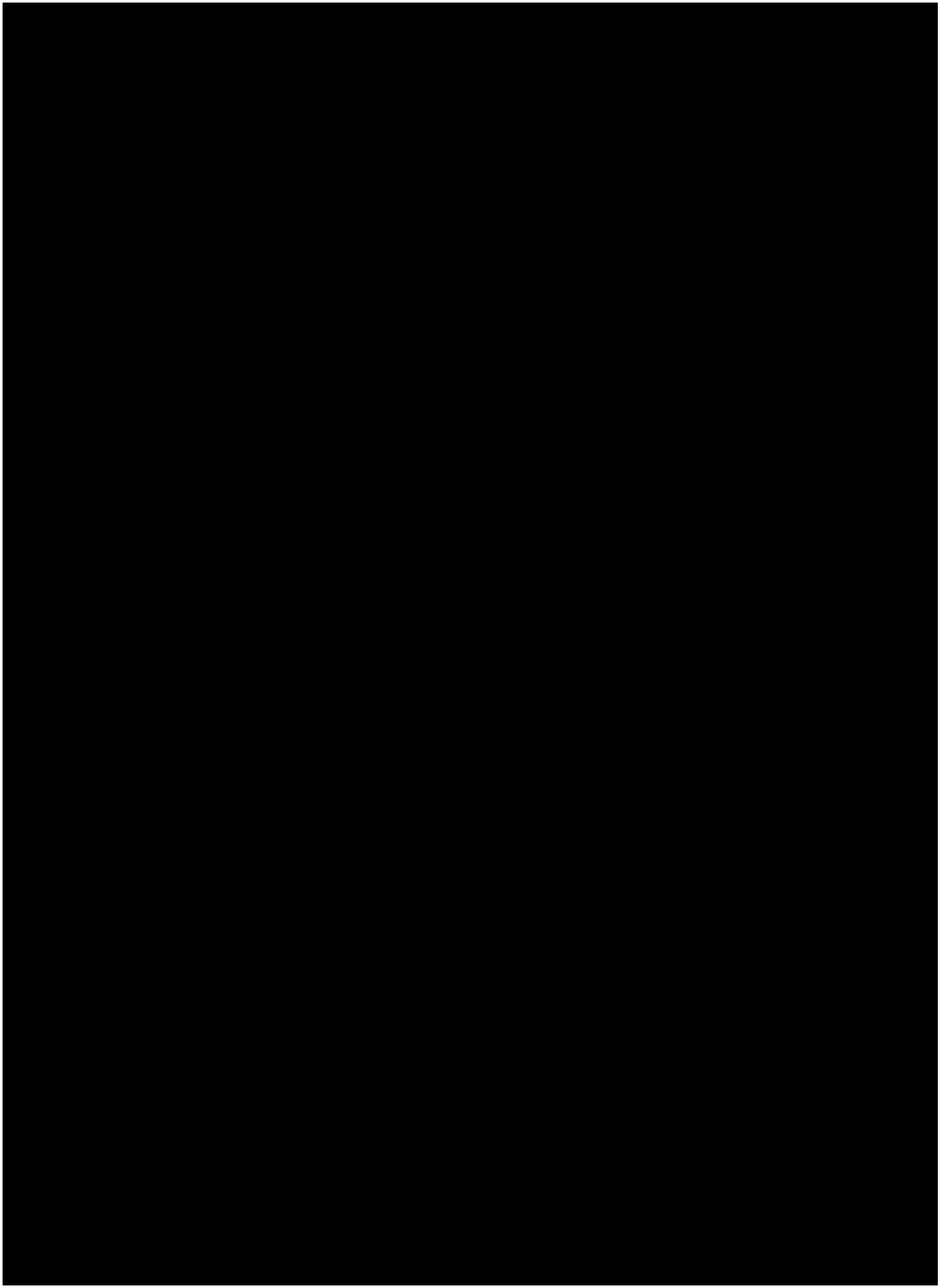


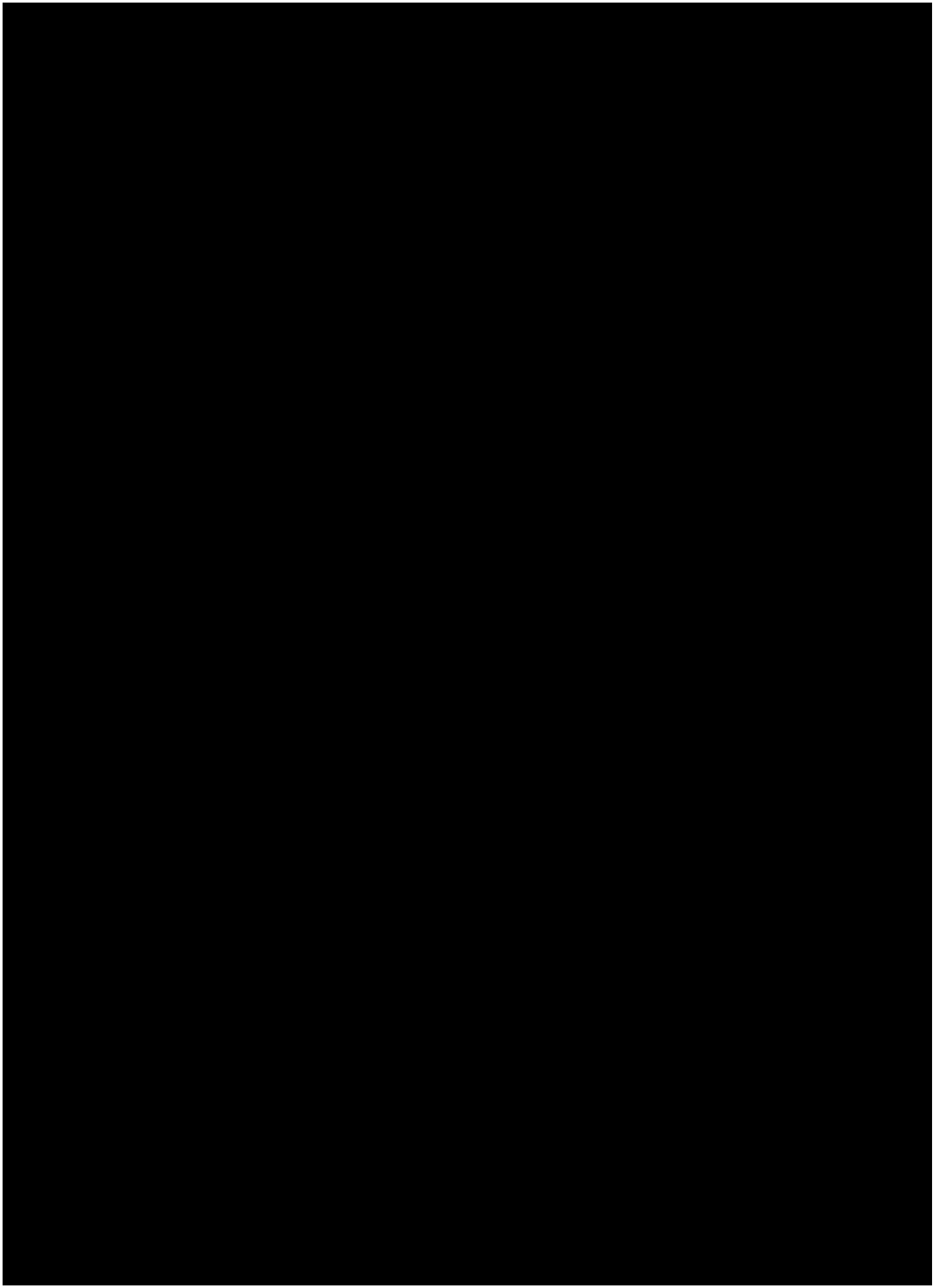


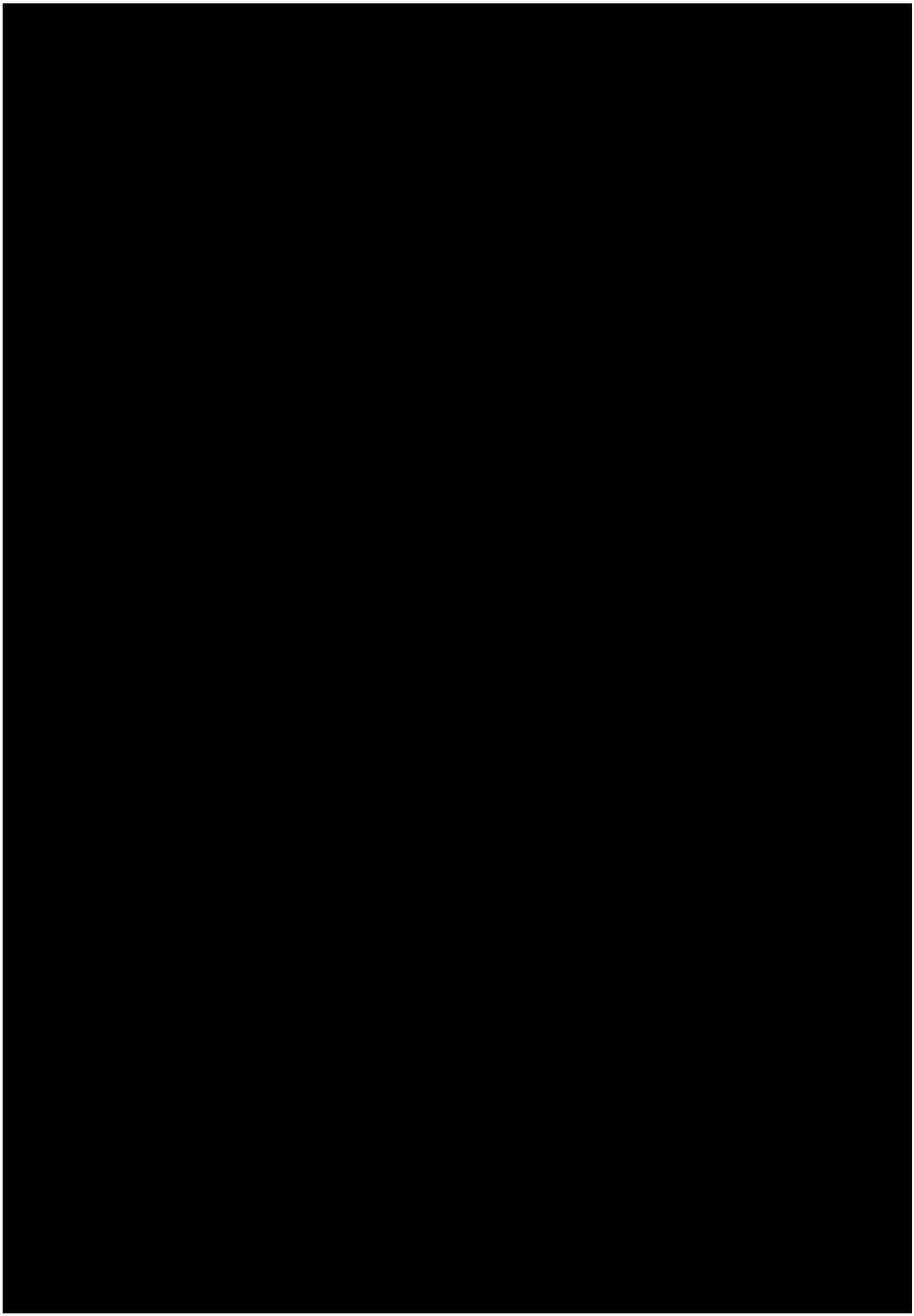


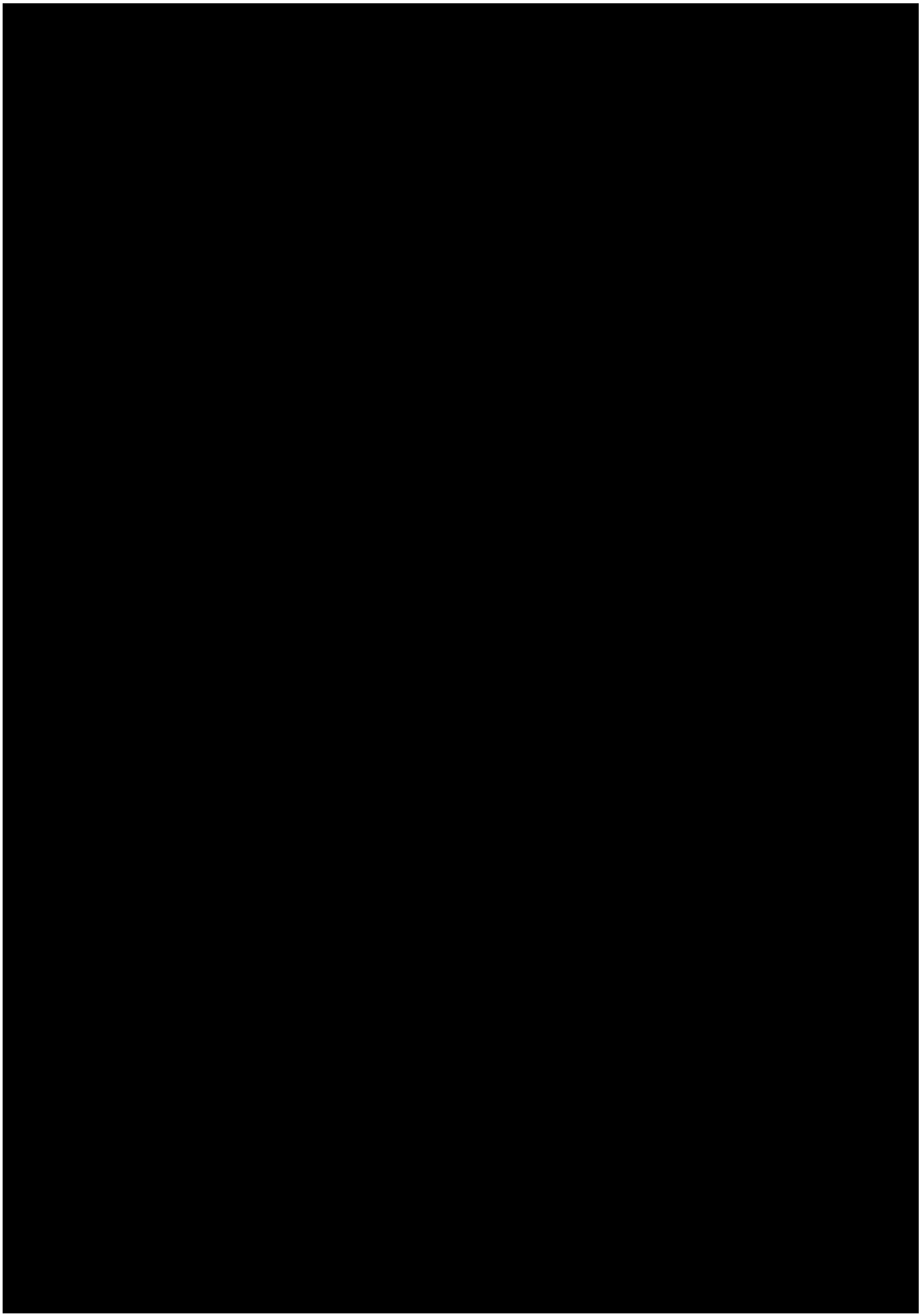


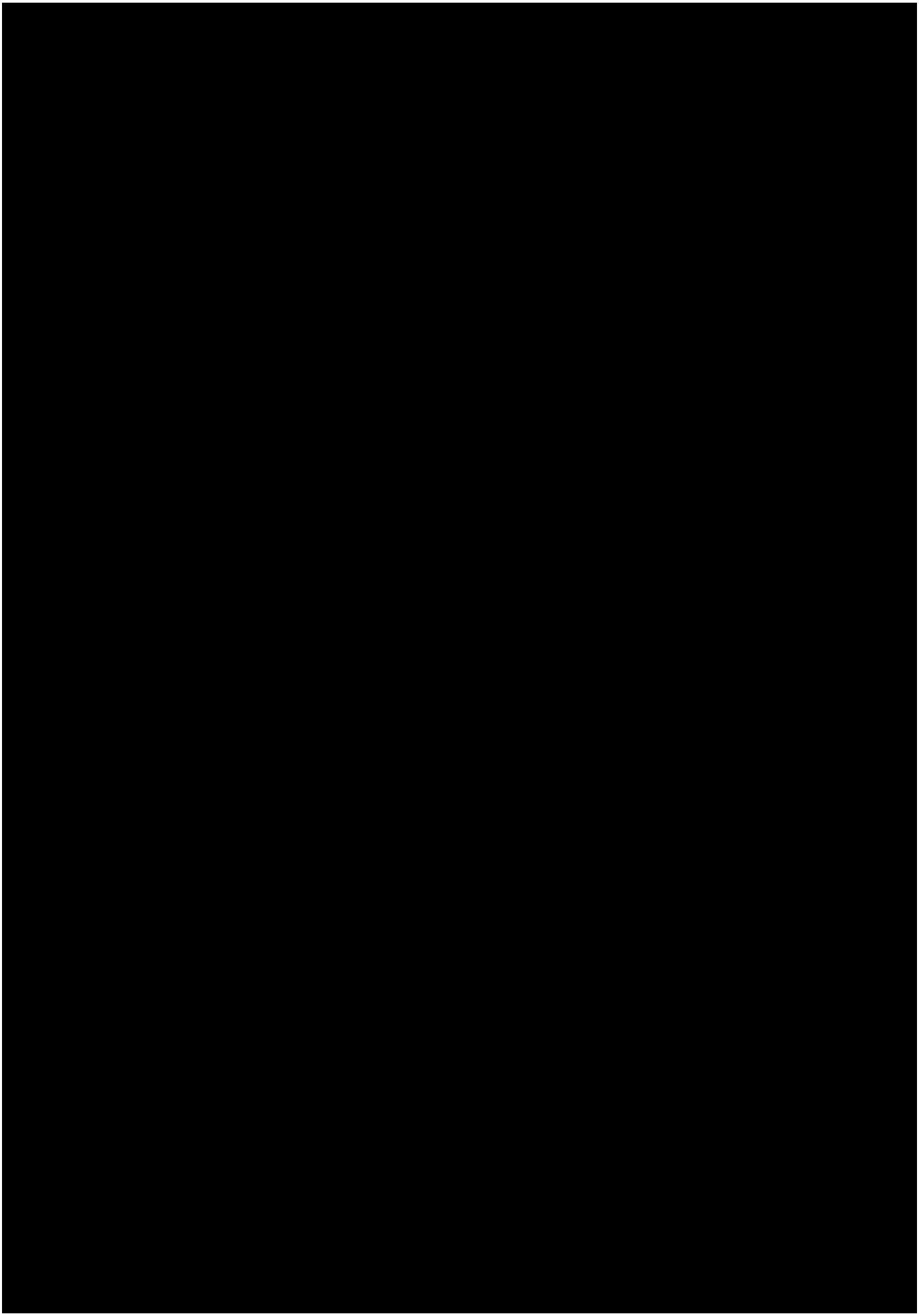


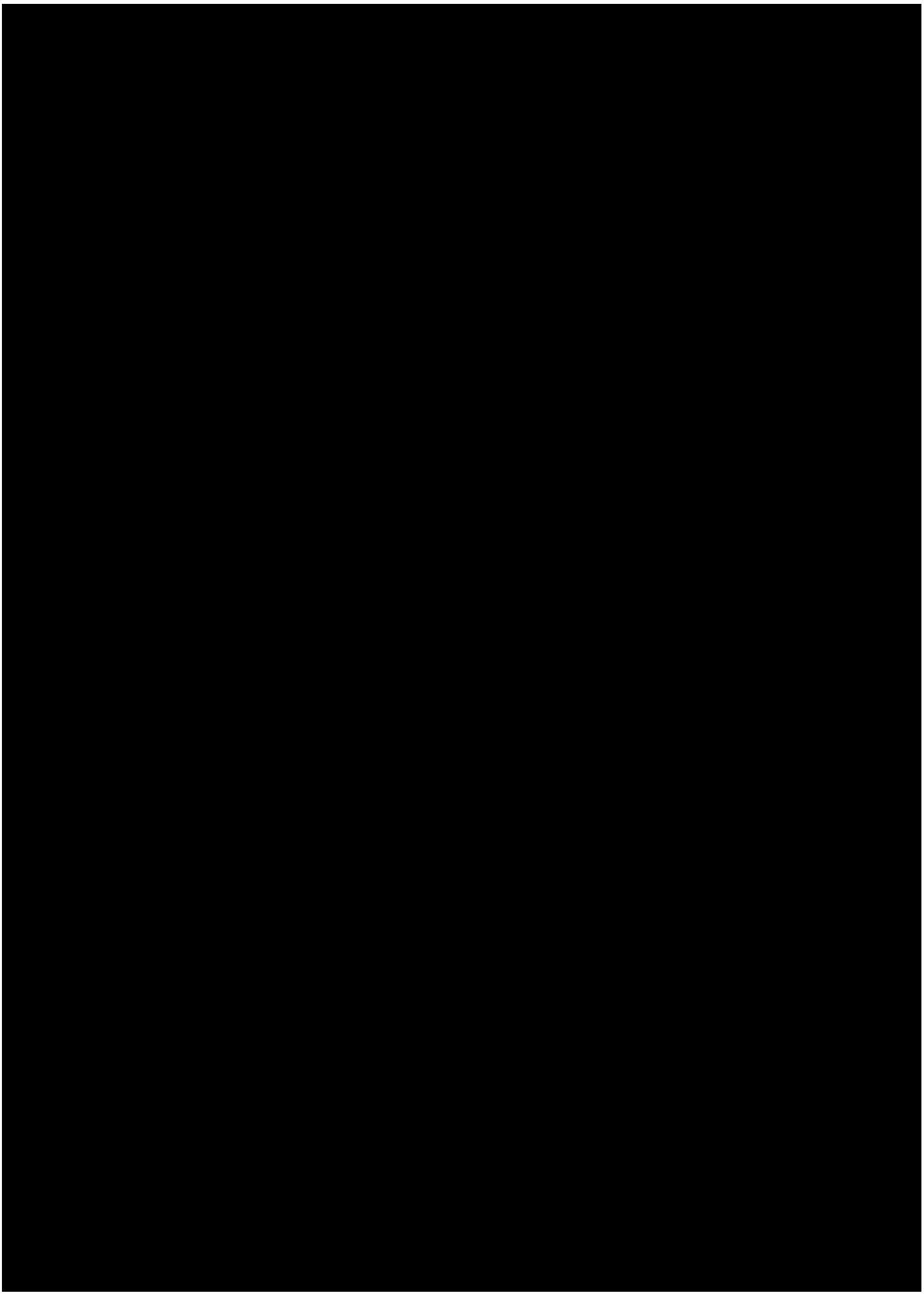


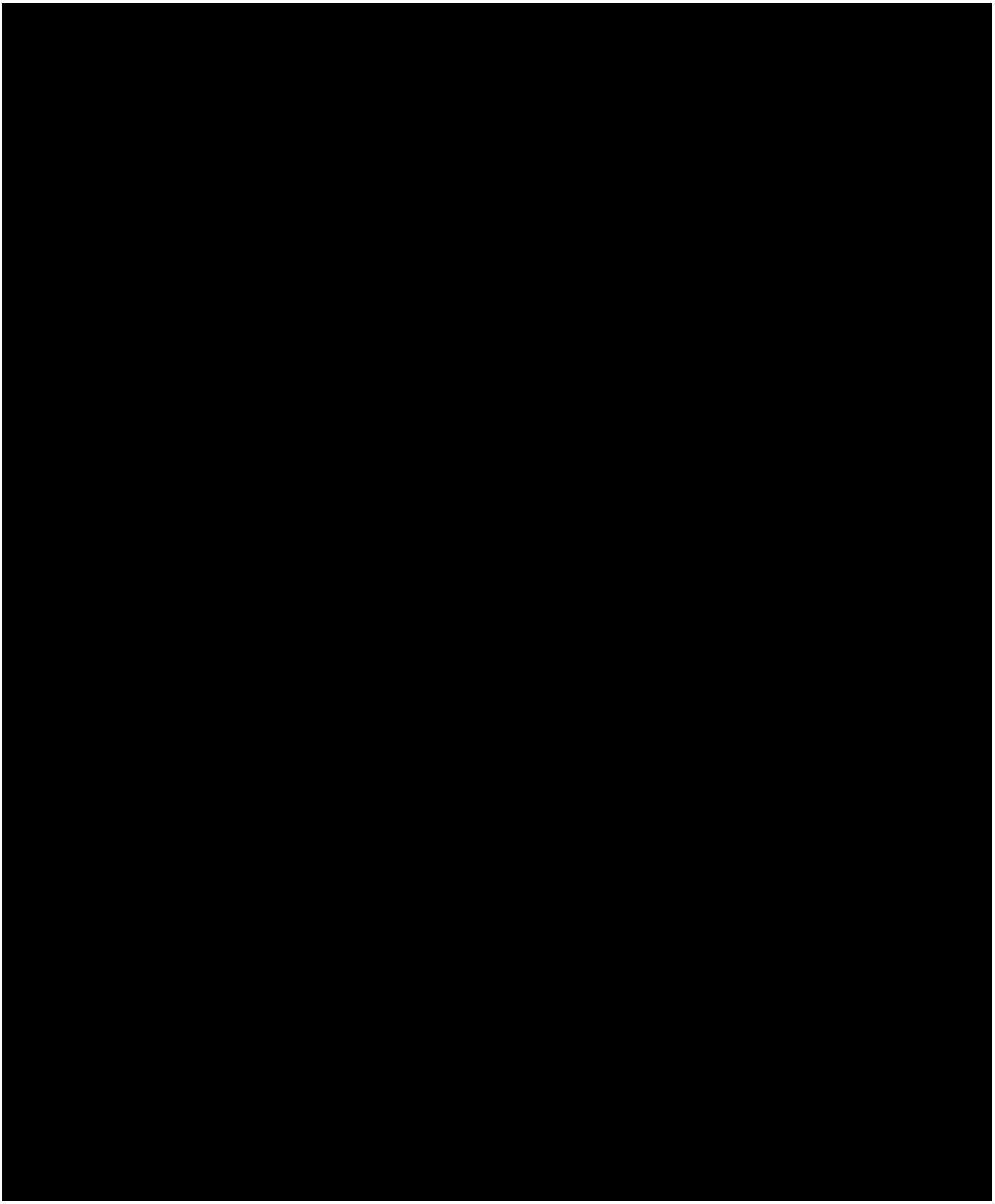












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Section C: Client Case Study

The use of Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with a client presenting with complex post-traumatic stress disorder:

A combined case study/ process report