Stigmatised Identities and Religious Health Inequalities

Exploring Experiences and Consequences of Shifts in Identity Construction of British Born Muslims in Nottingham UK

Yesmean Khalil

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The messenger of Allaah (pbuh) said: whoever among you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand (by taking action); if he cannot, then with his tongue (by speaking out); and if he cannot, then with his heart (by at least hating it and believing it is wrong), and that is the weakest of faith.

(Saheeh Muslim – vol. 1, Hadeeth 177)

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Abstract

Some Muslim groups are shown to experience disproportionate inequalities in health and whilst it is well established that health is socially determined, with racism found to be a fundamental cause of ethnoracial inequalities in health. The reasons for the observed inequalities are less well understood for the Muslim population, especially the consequences of external constructs of a Muslim identity.

In recent decades the Muslim identity has come under much scrutiny. The “War on Terror” and the ensuing counter-terrorism measures, targeting Muslims have institutionalised discriminatory policies and practices, which have the potential to constrict lives and perpetuate inequalities in health for the ethno-racially diverse Muslim population.

The role of a racially stigmatised identity in the generation of health inequalities is increasingly being recognised, with stigma being identified as a fundamental cause of health inequalities (Hatzenbuehler et al 2013).

This small scale, qualitative study, exploring the lived experiences of external identity constructions amongst an intergenerationally diverse cohort of British born Muslims, living in Nottingham, offers a nuanced reading of everyday life and how ideas about racism and race, ethnicity and religion have shifted over time.

The study reveals the material reality of an inscribed negative social identity, with perceived Muslimness found to be implicated in the reporting of contemporary negative experiences. Specific discrimination on the grounds of a Muslim identity was found, irrespective of ethnicity and/or levels of religiosity. However male participants, with no visible cues to their faith, were found to experience a greater level of discrimination in the workplace due to being brown, pointing to the conflation of brownness and Muslimness. Suggesting the racialisation of religion, further demonstrated by the discrimination experienced by white converts to Islam, due to the eclipsing of their whiteness.

The findings also offer an alternative narrative to hegemonic discourses alleging, Muslim communities refuse to integrate and choose to lead parallels. It is argued that enforced, involuntary segregation, as a protective strategy against racism and Islamophobia, has been weaponised to deflect attention away from structural Islamophobic discrimination.

Islamophobia as a driver of ethnoreligious inequalities in health requires specific attention and further investigation in order to achieve health equity for Muslim communities.

Terminology

It is recognised that the construction and application of terminology in the field of “race”, and “ethnicity” is complex and contested. Describing people of different backgrounds, especially groups who are smaller in numbers and do not belong to the dominant, majority group raises many issues. In the field of health inequalities it is particularly important to use constructive and appropriate language to frame the experiences of groups, so as not to further problematise and reinforce the dominant discourses. There is currently a growing recognition of the limitations of terms and acronyms currently used to describe racially minoritised groups. Both race and ethnicity, are social constructs and lack specificity and utility and acronyms such as BAME and BME have come under considerable criticism and therefore are currently under review. Terms such a racially minoritised or racialised minorities are gaining currency as they recognise the processes that cause disadvantage and marginalisation, but these terms are not necessarily agreed upon either (DaCosta et al 2021).

Therefore the terminology and terms within this thesis are applied heuristically and not from a position of endorsement, particularly as the study aimed to centre and privilege the voices and experiences of the participants, who experience disadvantage and marginalisation.

TERMS

Abayah - A full length outer garment worn by some Muslim women
Dupatta – A scarf worm by women from the Indian-subcontinent
Eid – One of two religious festival within the Islamic calendar
Haj – Pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia
Halaal – Permissible or lawful according to Islamic law and applies to both food and practices or behaviours
Hijab – Head covering that some Muslim women wear
Ramadhan – The ninth month of the Islamic calendar in which Muslims worldwide observe fasting, from dawn to dusk for 29 or 30 days. NB: The Islamic calendar is lunar, therefore the start and end of the month is marked by the sighting of the new moon.
Sunnah – Teachings and practices of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)
Qur’an – The compilation of the Divine revelations and sacred scripture of Islam

Abbreviations

BAME – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

BME – Black and Minority Ethnic

CSDH – Commission for the Social Determinants of Health

HNA – Health Needs Assessment

IMD – Index of Multiple Deprivation

JSNA – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

MCB – Muslim Council of Britain

MEND – Muslim Education and Development – a not-for-profit company

SDoH – Social Determinant of Health

UN – United Nations

WHO – World Health Organisation

Contents

Chapter One. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Over the last two decades religiously motivated discrimination against Muslims in the UK and more globally has intensified, particularly since the events of September 11th, 2001 (9/11) in the USA and subsequent terrorist events in the UK and other European countries. The crimes were committed by individuals and groups claiming to be Muslims and followers of the Islamic faith and the ensuing global "War on Terror" discourses have represented Muslims and Islam as a collective threat to western democracies, freedoms and way of life. Policies, introduced to improve security and reduce and eliminate any future terror related threats and attacks, are shown to disproportionately target Muslim communities, creating conditions that have a range of negative socio-economic and health consequences. Muslim communities in the UK and around the globe have come under increased suspicion, facing hostility, stigma and discrimination (MCB 2015, Nazroo and Bécares 2017, Green 2018, Awan and Zempi 2018, Bagguley and Hussain 2019, Abbas 2020 and Allen 2020)

In the UK a series of policies and practices emerging from counter-terrorism measures, such as Prevent, have become firmly embedded within public institutions that disproportionately target Muslims, suggesting the racialisation of terrorism and the problematisation of a Muslim identity. A diverse community is homogenised through the ascription of an essentialist set of attributes to mark out Muslim bodies, as the other, demarcating boundaries of belonging, resulting in marginalisation and exclusion and a restriction to health enhancing resources, which has the potential to perpetuate health inequalities found for the Muslim community.

Studies of the socioeconomic and health conditions of racialised minority groups in the UK have persistently found Muslim communities, in particular Pakistani and Bangladeshi people to be living in the most deprived neighbourhoods, occupying the lowest socioeconomic positions, having the lowest level of income and the worst health outcomes (Kapadia et al 2022, Stopforth et al 2022, Chouhan and Nazroo 2021, Karlsen and Pantazis 2017, Nazroo and Bécares 2017, MCB 2015). In much of the studies, ethnicity serves as a proxy for religion but with the introduction of religion as a category in the 2001 Census, concrete data on the demography of Muslim communities has become available for specific analysis of the Muslim experience in Britain (MCB 2015). Thus evidence of the disproportionate level of inequalities faced by Muslim communities in the UK, previously masked by the limitations of ethnic categorisation, is beginning to emerge, however data limitations continue to stifle a comprehensive analysis of an inscribed negative Muslim

social identity and its association with the patterning of racial health inequalities. That said evidence in some areas, such as education and the labour market, suggest the existence of a specific Muslim penalty in the patterning of inequalities arising from religiously discriminatory policies and practices (Bi 2019, Samari 2016 and Khattab and Modood 2015).

Whilst racial discrimination has been found to be a fundamental underlying cause of racial health inequalities, public health researchers have paid little attention to the health effects of a stigmatised Muslim identity (Samari 2016). Particularly given the correlation between stigmatised identities, discrimination and the determinants of health. Racial health inequalities have been found to be perpetuated by processes of stigmatisation, leading to exclusion, which is associated with the suppression of power and resources that negatively impact a range of economic and social outcomes and health (Ibid, Hatzenbuehler et al 2013).

In the case of Muslims, stigmatisation manifests as a racially discriminatory phenomena termed Islamophobia, which seeks to capture the unique experiences of Muslims that can be masked and even rejected due to the contemporary understandings of racism that is strongly rooted in the biologised conception of race (Sayyid 2015).

There is extensive public and political opposition to recognising Islamophobia as a real discriminatory phenomena affecting Muslims. A key contention surrounds the conceptualisation of Islamophobia, as a racially discriminatory phenomena akin to racism and anti-Semitism. Given the ethnoracial diversity of the Muslim populations, Islamophobia is denied on the grounds that Muslims cannot stake a claim to being a racial group and though they may experience religious prejudices at an interpersonal level, structural and institutional level Islamophobia is rejected. Such arguments fail to take account of the longer history of racism and the original formation of race, as a construct, within Europe, in which the Muslim religious identity was the first marker of difference, denoted by beliefs, practices and visible appearance, as well as purity of blood. Thus, revealing the interconnection between cultural traits, visible appearance and biology in the construction of the racialised other within the White, Christian-centric European imagination. This construct of race served as a prototype, which was later refined and mobilised as part of the imperial colonial project and spread outside of Europe to different parts of the globe. A veneer of legitimacy from the scientific community that purported biological inferiority of non-western groups, cultures and religions, further cemented the ideas of difference to augment the formulation of races, encoding human superiority and inferiority. A racially hierarchised global system was thus established to deliver advantages to the White,

Christian-centric Europeans. This system continues to deliver advantages to those categorised as superior, whilst constricting the lives of those rendered inferior. The historicising of Islamophobia reveals the centrality of the mechanisms and processes of racialisation that exist within societal structures and system and are performative in othering and inferiorising groups based on multiple identity markers (Cainkar and Selod 2018, Sayyid 2014, Grosfoguel 2012, Meer and Modood 2012, Rana 2007).

Once Islamophobia is understood as a distinct form of racism, beyond the black/white binary, the true nature and extent of the Muslim penalty can be investigated to advance understanding of the disproportionate health inequalities experienced by Muslim communities in the UK. Though it is recognised that disentangling ethnic penalties from a specific Muslim penalty present conceptual and methodological challenges. Even where studies have demonstrated a stronger Muslim penalty, over ethnic penalties, for example in the labour market, a distinction between religiosity and religious affiliation is difficult to establish.

Currently the social determinants of health (SDoH) framework is the most widely accepted framework guiding public health research and practice to understand and address health inequalities. It has brought to the fore the impact of social, economic and political conditions upon health. And though the evidence demonstrating a strong correlation between racism and racial health inequalities has become well established (Stopforth et al 2022, Williams et al 2019), the SDoH framework is found lacking due to its failure to take account of racism as a fundamental cause of racial health inequalities. The social exclusion effect of racial discrimination is not accounted for in the traditional measures of socioeconomic status for example, qualification as a marker of socioeconomic status fails to recognise the lower educational returns found for Muslim communities in the labour market. Population based interventions, seeking to address socioeconomic disadvantage have limited impact for reducing racial health inequalities. (Yearby 2020, Khattab and Modood 2018, Karlsen and Pantazis 2018, Shaw et al 2016, Phelan and Link 2015, Salway et al 2010).

In the case of Muslim health inequalities, however, there is a dearth of evidence about religion and specifically the implications of a reified Muslim religious identity, for racial health inequalities. The reasons for the observed racial inequalities are less well understood for the Muslim community and although research studies about Muslims and Islam have burgeoned over the last two decades, across a range of academic disciplines, there are still considerable gaps in knowledge about the underlying causes of the disproportionate burden of health inequalities experienced by Muslim communities (Samari et al 2018). One possible reason for this could be the continued centrality of race and

ethnicity within health inequalities research that overlooks the significance of a religious identity, which can intersect with other identity markers such as gender in the patterning of socioeconomic and health inequalities. Issues relating to a Muslim identity and the racialisation of religion are often overlooked within health research and subsumed within the ethnic category, making it difficult to delineate a Muslim penalty from an ethnic penalty, or establishing the multiplicative effects of a problematised faith based identity, within the ethnic category.

Discrimination and stigma and global threats resulting from political conflict and terrorism have been noted to be central to the lives of the Muslim community, especially over the last two decades and recognised amongst some of the challenges for public health in the 21st century (Weeramanthri & Bailie 2015). Muslim has become a metonym for terrorism, signifying the shifts in identity constructions over time from race to ethnicity to now a faith based identity that serves as a primary marker of otherness and inferiority, to reinforce exclusion and material inequalities that determine health. Muslims across the globe are victims of terrorism in multiple ways, directly at the hands of the perpetrators of terrorism. And indirectly by the counter-terrorism measures that fuel discrimination and exclusion, by identifying Islam and Muslims as a threat, placing them under intense scrutiny and suspicion. The cumulative impacts include intense fear, vulnerability, stress and isolation, with adverse psychological and physical consequences (Alcalá et al 2017).

It is against this backdrop that the study sought to examine the everyday lived experiences, of the shifts in external identity construction and its impact upon an intergenerational diverse cohort of Muslims, born in the UK.

Empirical data was gathered from semi-structured interviews with 22 intergenerationally diverse group of participants, born and raised in the UK. The data was thematically analysed to delineate the participants' perceptions and tangible experiences of the external shifts in identity ascriptions overtime and how this impacted their everyday lives. The encounters were captured, using a biographical interview approach to reveal the generational shifts in identity designation and its significance and impact upon the conditions which shape the everyday lives of the participants.

The inclusion criteria was Muslim, eighteen years and above, born in the UK, irrespective of gender, ethnoracial background and levels of religiosity. This criteria sought to eliminate a number of variables and issues related to English language proficiency, overseas education and qualifications and country of origin and migrant status effect, associated with identity construction and discrimination. The majority of the participants were of Pakistani

heritage, with smaller numbers of Bangladeshi, dual heritage (White British and African) and White British. Recruitment challenges meant that the Black African and Black Caribbean Muslim voice is absent from the study.

The intergenerational, diverse participant profile, allowed for comparative analysis to be undertaken to examine the strength of ethnoracial versus religious characteristics that are performative in the discrimination experience and to what extent gender and levels of religiosity are implicated.

Also, whilst the study was geographically bound to the county of Nottinghamshire, no one particular neighbourhood was selected. Participants self-opting into the study, came from a mix of neighbourhoods. That is neighbourhood characteristics, such as, affluence, poverty and ethnoracial density were not specified as inclusion or exclusion criteria. A decision taken to minimise the risk of reinforcing hegemonic discourses that recast the inequalities experienced by the Muslim community as the fault of the group.

In examining the intergenerational accounts of the participant's experiences of the societal conditions in which they have grown up, live and work, unique insights are offered into the shifts in external identity inscriptions. The study offers an insider perspective on the multiple and complex ways in which race is constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed, but all the while negatively inscribed in either overt or subtle ways. The different ways in which the intergenerational diverse cohorts of participants experienced the real and tangible manifestations and consequences of external inscriptions have allowed for specific analysis of the existence of a Muslim penalty.The association between external socio-political contextual factors in identity construction and the impact on everyday lives of the participants, elucidate the links between interpersonal and structural ethnoreligious discrimination, contributing knowledge to the field of ethnoreligious health inequalities .

The thesis engages with the sociological concept of health to understand the underlying causes for ethnoreligious health inequalities, specifically contributing knowledge to improve understanding of the association between the Muslim identity and health and the implications for public health research and practice.

1.2. Study Aim and Objectives

The research aims to advance understanding of the drivers of ethnoreligious health inequalities by considering the lived experiences and consequences of external identity

inscriptions amongst an intergenerationally diverse group of British born Muslims living in Nottingham, UK.

- To examine, participants experiences of external identity inscriptions and compare and contrast the generational shifts that have occurred overtime
- To compare and contrast the impact of external identity constructs upon participants daily lives
- To identify, based on participants self-assessment of their identity, which, if any aspect of the multiple identities (age, gender, ethnicity and religion) was perceived to be constructed most negatively

Research Question(s): What steps can public health research, policy and practice take to disentangle the independent influences of a Muslim religious identity, on ethnoreligious health inequalities to achieve health equity for Muslim communities?

1.3. Thesis Outline

Chapter two elucidates the conceptual framework underpinning the study, through a critical engagement with the literature relating to the field of study. An overview of the Muslim population in the UK and more specifically in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, the study site, is presented. The chapter then goes on to review the literature on ethnoracial and health inequalities and the challenges in identifying a specific religious dimension. It highlights policies and practices, related to classification, categorisation that bound ideas of difference and reinforce exclusion because certain groups remain uncounted for, particularly in the analysis of ethnoreligious health inequalities. The concepts of race and ethnicity are examined, to identify the shifts in racial categorisation and the emergence of the Muslim identity, which has come to be framed as the “Muslim question” (Parekh 2008). The historical roots of Islamophobia and the significance of the concept of Islamophobia, as a distinct form of structural discrimination that is rooted in the process of racialisation is illuminated. This explicates the need to understand the centrality of Islamophobia in public health research to advance knowledge of ethnoreligious inequalities in health for the Muslim community. Finally, the strengths and weaknesses of the explanatory models which have come to shape public health policy and practice are critically appraised and new, alternative models to address ethnoreligious health inequalities are presented.

Chapter three provides a critical analysis of the methodological approach and choice of methods utilised for conducting the study. The chapter begins with addressing issues of

positionality and providing the personal and professional context and motivation for the study. The lived experiences and how they have come to shape the researcher's world view and the values and assumptions that are brought to the research process are explicated from the outset. In so doing, a critical engagement with the theoretical orientations defining the methodological approach is made visible. The centering of participant voices was a key consideration in the selection of methodological approaches and methods used. The "suspect" positioning of the community, within mainstream discourses invariably had consequences for the study, highlighting the complexities and sensitivities of working in this field. As a researcher from within the community I was researching, I was aware of issues of trust that had undermined inter and intra community relationships. I reflect on these issues throughout the chapter, as they were at the forefront of my mind and central to every decision I took in the study design.

Chapter four, present an analysis of the findings, specifically addressing the first objective of the study and presents an analysis of how the participants experienced their social identities shift overtime. A detailed analysis of the participants lived experiences of how their identities have been constructed and understood by others, particularly those from the white majority, non-Muslim group, explicates the multiple and complex ways in which race is inscribed to create an inferior other. The mechanisms, processes and conditions which propagate othering, the bedrock of oppressive and discriminatory treatment, the consequences of which are marginality, exclusion and ultimately inequalities are revealed.

Chapters five and six, address objectives two and three of the study, through the interrogation of the data to specifically analyse the real and tangible manifestations of the impact of ethnoracial (chapter five) and Muslim identities (chapter six). Comparing and contrasting the experiences between the diverse cohort, as well as attending to levels of religiosity, the complexities and nuances of the impact of inscribed identities are revealed. Three, identity defining moments emerged in chapter four, two of which, "Old School Racism" and "Multiculturalism and the Semblance of a Post-racial Society." are addressed in chapter five. The third, identity defining moment within the data unanimously found to be described as being rooted in Islamophobia, warranted specific detailed analysis and discussion, as presented in chapter six. Chapter six builds on and extends the critical insights gleaned from the data in chapter five, contributing to contemporary debates surrounding ethnoracial and religious inequalities, particularly the concept of Islamophobia as a form of racism. Thereby the study makes a specific contribution to advance understanding of the fundamental drivers of inequalities in health experienced by the Muslim communities in the UK. In addition, the two chapters offer an alternative, counter-

narrative to hegemonic discourses, challenging the explanatory factors, apportioning blame upon the Muslim communities for their disadvantaged position, which elides the role racialisation plays in the unique discriminatory phenomena, Islamophobia, experienced by the participants. Complexities and unique challenges for the analyses of discrimination experienced by the Muslim community are accentuated, and how public and political discourses frame ethnoreligious differences to legitimise Islamophobic policies, practices and behaviours, which have the potential to perpetuate ethnoreligious health inequalities.

Chapter seven, presents an overall summary and conclusion for the study and the original contribution to knowledge is discussed. The strengths and limitations of the study are addressed and areas for further exploration and future research proposed. The chapter concludes with recommendations for public health research, policy and practice.

Chapter Two. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter elucidates the conceptual framework underpinning the study, through a critical engagement with the literature relating to the field of study.

The chapter begins with an overview of the Muslim population in the UK and more specifically in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, the study site. It then goes on to review the literature on ethnoracial health inequalities and the challenges in identifying a specific religious dimension. It highlights policies and practices, related to classification, categorisation that bound ideas of difference and reinforce exclusion because certain groups remain uncounted for, particularly in the analysis of ethnoreligious health inequalities.

The concepts of race and ethnicity are examined, to identify the shifts in racial categorisation and emergence of the Muslim identity, which has come to be framed as the "Muslim question" (Parekh 2008). Government policy, in locating the threat to national security from terrorism, within the British Muslim population, has created a suspect community who is presumed guilty and whose innocence remains in a state of flux. The impact of such a framing of the British Muslim community has the potential to exacerbate health inequalities but also shape the debates and explanations offered for the causes of ethnoreligious health inequalities.

The chapter examines the impact of such a framing upon the Muslim community which manifests in multifarious forms of discriminatory treatment, described as Islamophobia, impacting all areas of life, including education, employment criminal justice system and health.

In charting and analysing the historical roots of Islamophobia, the significance of the concept of Islamophobia, as a distinct form of structural discrimination that is rooted in the process of racialisation is illuminated. Complexities and unique challenges for the analyses of discrimination experienced by the Muslim community are accentuated. Central to the issue of Islamophobia, is identity, especially external identity construction and how public and political discourses frame ethnoreligious differences that legitimise Islamophobic policies, practices and behaviours and which have the potential to perpetuate ethnoreligious health inequalities. Identity, specifically a stigmatised social identity and its relationship with the patterning of ethnoreligious health inequalities is interrogated to

explicate the need to examine Islamophobia as a fundamental underlying cause of racial health inequalities, for the achievement of racial equality and social justice.

Finally the strengths and weaknesses of the explanatory models that have emerged and have come to shape public health policy and practice are critically appraised and new, alternative models to address ethnoreligious health inequalities are presented.

2.2 The Muslim Population – National and Local Profile

There has been a longstanding, relationship between the UK and Muslims and Islam that can be traced back for over 1000 years. Though it is the colonial relationship that perhaps, bears the greatest influence in shaping the demographics of the UK Muslim population (Knott 2018, MEND 2018, Weller and Cheruvallil-Contractor 2015,). Muslims in the UK are a diverse group of people with roots in all parts of the different continents of the world, including Europe but also Britain itself, as witnessed by the growth in White British converts to Islam, which can be traced back to the 16th century. Interestingly, those converting to Islam in the 16th century were referred to as becoming Turks (Zebiri 2008, cited in Knott 2018), demonstrating the entanglement of Islam with ethnoracial and cultural characteristics, which denote foreignness such that White British converts to Islam undergo a process of racialisation wherein they are rendered as the other to the majority White, Christian-centric population (Sealy and Modood 2021).

The diversity found amongst the Muslim population with the UK, reflects the different migratory pull and push factors that are also strongly grounded in the colonial project and the relationship Britain had with its colonies. Whilst some groups arrived as citizens, answering the call to plug post second World War labour shortages, others arrived as economic migrants and some have, and continue, to arrive, seeking refuge and asylum, from various countries around the world (Weller and Cheruvallil-Contractor 2015).

The Census, with the introduction of the religion category in 2001, is a critical resource, providing one of the most comprehensive dataset, on the characteristics of the Muslim population in the UK. According to the 2011 Census, Muslims make up 4.4% of the total UK population, with the majority (95%) living in England, 3% in Scotland, 1.6% in Wales and 0.1% in Northern Ireland. Muslims have a younger age structure compared to the overall population and almost half of the Muslim population is British-born (MCB 2015).

The UK Muslim population, the largest minority religious group, is ethno-racially, linguistically and culturally diverse, with intra-ethnic diversity found. Muslims are recorded

across all the ethnic categories in the 2011 Census, with shifts in size of Muslim ethnic diversity observable. Whilst the largest Muslim ethnic group continue to be Pakistani (38%) and Bangladeshi (14.9%), a notable fall of 4.5% and 1.9% respectively is seen in the intervening years between the 2001 and 2011 Census. Shifts in the size of Muslim population are seen across all ethnic categories, with a notable increase in the Black African and Black other group. The Arab category, only added in 2011, is greater than the Bangladeshi group, though the Arab category masks internal diversity (MCB 2015).

According to the 2021 Census, 6.5% of the total population of England and Wales identified as Muslim, compared to 4.8% in 2011, an increase which accounts for 33% of overall population rise (MCB 2022). This could, in part be explained by the younger age profile of Muslim women in 2011, who in the intervening years entered into an age band in which they were more likely to have children. The increase can also be attributed to migration. Although a full analysis of the 2021 Census is outstanding, some initial analysis, using the Index for Multiple Deprivation (IMD) by the Muslim Council of Britain (2022), shows increasing numbers of Muslims in England, live in the most deprived local authority areas. However it cannot be concluded that Muslims lead segregated lives, rather the 2011 Census shows a greater level of geographic spread, with only the White British population shown to be living in majority white areas, as can be accentuated from the local profiles discussed below.

Locally, Nottingham, is served by two major local authorities, Nottingham City Council, which is a unitary authority and in Nottinghamshire County a two tier system of local government exists. Nottinghamshire County Council is the first tier local authority and the second tier constitutes seven borough districts councils and in some instances a third can be found at a town or parish council level.

The Nottinghamshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA 2017), reports a relatively low Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population, 4.5%, but this rises to 7% in each of the three districts of Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe. The proportion of the BME population born outside of the UK is found to be lower, as is the age structure, though this picture varies across the County. It is interesting to note, the document uses broad categories to describe its racialised minority groups, such as Asian and Asian British, which is the largest group, mainly residing in the districts of Broxtowe and Rushcliffe. Mixed and Multiple Ethnic groups was the next largest group followed by Black African and Caribbean and Black British ethnicities, with the smallest group referred to Other Ethnic Group, the remaining 95.5.% population is categorised as White. These categories clearly reflect the adoption of a black/white position to understanding racially minoritised groups and by virtue of this lens

exclude other groups, such a white Muslim. With respect to religion and belief, Muslims were recorded across all seven districts of the County, with the majority in the three districts of Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe, strongly corresponding to the broad Asian and Asian British category. It is interesting to note that these three districts are all ranked within 40% least deprived areas, with Rushcliffe ranked within the top 3% least deprived local authority district in the country. This suggests that the Muslim population of Nottinghamshire are residing within some of the most affluent districts in the county as well as the country. However it cannot be concluded that they do not experience unfavourable treatment on the grounds of their identity characteristics, specifically Islamophobic discrimination. Interestingly racism and religious forms of discrimination and their consequences for the population of Nottinghamshire are completely overlooked within the JSNA. Also the application of broad ethnic categories is clearly problematic in providing meaningful analysis to assess the patterning of ethnoreligious health inequalities and identifying the scale and challenge of the problem. A section of the report is dedicated to health inequalities and the analysis is undertaken at the intersection of neighbourhood deprivation, gender and age, with ethnoreligious identity and related issues of racial discrimination completely absent. The failure of the wider established health inequalities agenda to give explicit and due recognition to ethnoreligious discrimination as a fundamental driver of health inequalities is mirrored at the local level. The spread of the Muslim community across all seven district areas, reveals differential exposure to poverty and deprivation issues, and a cursory analysis of ethnicity and religion, had the potential to, at a minimum, expose socio-economic status, but this level of analysis was also absent within the health profile, suggesting that ethnoreligious equality concerns remain on the margins.

The total of population Nottingham City is 337,100, in contrast to the County's population which is 785,802, however the Black and Minority Ethnic group (BME) population, based on the 2011 Census and reported in the JSNA (2022) is 34.6%, significantly higher than for the County. BME is a term used within the report and defined as, everyone who is not White British. The same broad ethnic categories, as identified above, were used within the report, with the exception of a distinction made between White British and White (not British). The BME population is spread across all twenty wards of the City, however, seven wards have a high density, 60% to 89% of White British population. In terms of health, a wide range of social environmental factors are stated to impact the differences in health as a result of geography or ethnicity, but no further insights are provided. Ethnicity was notably absent from the analysis of social and environmental factors such as poverty, employment, income and education. Asian/Asian British groups were reported to have the highest proportion of people with long term health problems, 68.6% compared with the White

groups 62.2%, pointing to within ethnic group comparisons only being made. The document did provide a breakdown of the religion category.

The approach to the analysis and the limitations noted for the County profile, present a graver concern for the City, given the ethnoracial diversity of the City. But also because the City ranks 11th most deprived district in England, with high levels of child poverty, 25.1% compared to 18.1% in the UK. That said Nottingham has conducted a BME Health Needs Assessment (Burton et al 2017), demonstrating a commitment to understand and address the health needs of racially minoritised groups. Its strengths rest upon the stakeholder and community engagement approach adopted using survey and focus groups to ascertain the key health challenges and priorities. However the HNA is found wanting in a number of areas, firstly a similar trend in the use of broad terms such BME denoting non-white and categories such as Asian/Asian British is found. Such broad categories mask specific needs and inter-ethnic diversity and disadvantage. Secondly a comprehensive profile of the local Muslim population is absent and, as a minimum, cannot be guesstimated from the Asian/Asian British category, especially given Muslims, as noted earlier, are found to be spread across all ethnic Census categories. The uncritical and inappropriate application of social categories can contribute to reinforcing stereotypes (Selvarajah et al 2020). Thirdly, the cursory reference to racism and discrimination and the omission of related evidence, unequivocally affirming the links between racism, health and health inequalities (Kapadia et al 2022, Hackett et al 2020, Phelan and Link 2015), means that much needed transformation of current structures and system to achieve racial health equity will not be realised. Finally JSNA's in England present an opportunity for identifying and addressing racial health inequalities. They have the potential to drive key commissioning decisions and priorities and influence cross-sectorial actions address underlying determinants including racism. However this appears to be a missed opportunity in Nottingham, given the incompleteness of the demographic profiles, which does not allow for the application of an intersectional analysis to examine the multiple social axis of racial inequalities (Salway e al 2020 and Kapilashrami et al 2015). Thus the omission of the Muslim category only serves to further marginalise Muslim communities and can be understood as a form of structural discrimination that limits access to health enhancing resources.

In summary, it is apparent from the national dataset that Muslims are ethno-racially diverse, spread across all ethnic categories identified in the 2011 Census, reflecting a wide range of ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Given that almost half of the Muslim population was born in the UK, along with changing profile of new and emerging Muslim communities, education level from country of migration, various barriers such as English language proficiency become less pertinent, as the Nottingham City HNA suggests, yet is

identified as an explanatory factor for the socioeconomic disadvantage (as discussed in the next section) experienced by this group. In addition the local profile, albeit limited, suggests that the local Muslim community is geographically dispersed across Nottingham in varying numbers. This geographical spread does not chime with public and political discourses espousing, Muslims choose to lead self-segregated and parallel lives, which it is purported threatens the cohesion of communities and a cause of the socioeconomic disadvantage faced by Muslim communities (Sealy and Modood 2021).

In the next section national data and research into the patterning of health inequalities for the Muslim community is examined and key challenges and gaps in knowledge are identified.

2.2.1 Health Status of the Muslim Community

The patterning of health by religious identity is an under-investigated area, due to data limitations, inconsistent application of categories and the patchy recording of religious category by key public and health institutions (Nazroo and Karlsen 2009). For example, according to the 2011 Census almost 50% of the Muslim population are born in the UK, but the death register records death by country of birth, which means reliable analysis and assessment of patterning of racial health inequalities cannot be made (Race Disparity Unit 2021, Bradby and Nazroo 2021). Country of birth was a category, widely used to differentiate between the racially minoritised, in the main non-white and the dominant White group, until the 1991 Census, when it was replaced by ethnicity but this change was not uniformly reflected in some key health datasets used to develop indicators of health inequalities. However progress is underway to make ethnicity recording, a mandatory requirement on Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, which will inform Office of National Statistics mortality statics (Ibid). This will not however improve understanding of the extent and impact of religious health inequalities upon the Muslim communities. This is because religion is voluntary field in the Census, indicating a lower weighting and importance, thus influencing data collection and monitoring practices more widely. That is, at best patchy and at worst no recording of religion in key health datasets. There has been a renewed emphasis and recognition for improving the quality, standard and consistency of ethnicity data recording to inform understanding of ethnoracial inequalities and how these might be addressed (Scobie et al 2021, Salway et al 2020). However there is no mention of the religion category, the implication being that ethnoreligious health inequalities are not a priority concern for policy makers, from which an inference to institutional Islamophobia can be made.

Reporting of Muslim health inequalities, in the main, rely upon ethnic categories as proxy for Muslim, namely, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups, as the majority identify as Muslim (MCB 2015). This approach only offers a partial picture of ethnoreligious health inequalities, because it invisibilises almost half of the Muslim population who are spread across all the other ethnic categories, within the Census. Importantly it highlights the need to collect and analyse data based on identity measures that reflect the differential and unequal experiences and effects of discrimination amongst the different ethnic groups (Shankley et al 2020).

Persistent inequalities in limiting long-term illness are seen in the health of Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups. 69% of Bangladeshi men and 64% Pakistani men aged 65 or over reported limiting long term illness compared to 50% of White British men. Whilst 77% of Pakistani, 76% Bangladeshi and 56% White British Women over age 65 reported limiting long term illness. Higher rates of poor self-rated health are also found for the Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups (Bécares 2015). Interestingly the level of reporting of fair or bad health amongst White English people aged 61-70 is equivalent to that of Pakistani people aged 36-40 and Bangladeshi people aged 26-30. So poor health is being experienced at a younger age, increasing dramatically with age (Nazroo 2004, cited in Bradby and Nazroo 2021). Also in comparison to the White British group, higher rates of diabetes and heart disease are found for Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups and interestingly higher rates of congenital abnormalities are reported to be found amongst the Muslim group (Bradby and Nazroo 2021).

It is evident from the literature that racially minoritised groups experience worst health than the White British population, however it is difficult to establish the exact scale and challenge of health inequalities for the Muslim populations, as noted earlier, due to data limitations.

The next section examines the literature which seeks to offer explanations for the observed ethnoracial inequalities.

2.2.2 Explanations for Ethnoracial Health Inequalities

The patterning of ethnoracial health inequalities in the above section, suggests a strong relationship between ethnicity and health, which implies that ethnic factors can offer explanations for the differences in health. Such as genetics, biological and cultural lifestyle factors. Such explanatory approaches are rooted in a biomedical model of health, in which health is reduced to illness and death and explanations are sought at the level of the

individual, which include lifestyle behavioural risk factors (Chouhan and Nazroo 2020 and Lynch 20017).

For racially minoritised groups, such explanations framed through a victim blaming lens, function to deny the complex socio-political and environmental factors that produces health and are the underlying causes of ethnoracial health inequalities. The approach serves to reify and stigmatise groups and perpetuate ethnoracial health inequalities. Yet ethnicity is found to be an acceptable term due in part to the inclusive dimension, espousing that everyone belongs to an ethnic group and as a minimum it offers partial or situational meaningfulness. Also the fluidity and diversity encapsulated within the term ethnicity, affords recognition and accommodation to difference, such as cultural, language and religion. Its adoption was seen as a positive development, evolving from a process of internal self-identity formation as well as external processes of social stratification (Aspinall 2020 and Chattoo et al 2019).

However the concept is complex and dynamic and is found to be deeply entwined to race, as explanations for illness and diseases often invoke ethnicity, suggesting that ethnicity like race implies biological determinism and therefore sustains a racially hierarchised social system (Bradby and Nazroo 2021, Aspinall 2020). So whilst race has been accepted as a social construct rather than a scientific reality and banished to history, heralding a post-racial era and an end of racism. Racism continues to be performative through seemingly non-racial frames. The adoption of a colour-blind approach elides racism by emphasising internal cultural factors as the cause of ethnoracial health inequalities. Culture thus becomes central in discourses of human inferiorisation and othering such that racism becomes socially acceptable. Matters of cultural practices are framed as preferences and choices and racial health inequalities become the consequences of those choices, in this way attention is deflected from structures that produce racial health inequalities because racism is performed in subtle non-racial ways, but continues to be felt by racially minoritised groups on a daily basis (Bonilla-Silva 2015).

A growing body of compelling evidence demonstrates a strong correlation between ethnic health inequalities and the socioeconomic determinants of health, such as housing, education, economic activity, income, poverty. Social factors have long been recognised to determine people's health and wellbeing. The report of the World Health Organisation's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health declared on the front page: *"social injustice is killing people at a grand scale"* (WHO 2008), which evoked mixed responses with some critics suggesting that the report had not gone far enough, claiming that it is not

inequalities but those responsible for producing and reproducing inequalities that kill people, thus making explicit, inequalities are a political choice (Navarro 2011).

Based on ethnicity as a proxy, Muslims have been found to experience inequalities, across all the domains identified in the social determinants of health framework (Bécares 2015, MCB 2015). Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are more likely to be living in poverty, with Bangladeshi's found to be experiencing severe and long lasting poverty. However, the Eurocentric design of traditional standard measures of socioeconomic status can limit applicability and transferability of particular markers, thus masking important variations that allow for inequalities to persist and worsen for certain groups. For example traditional markers for socioeconomic positions do not account for compensatory strategies that groups deploy to mitigate against barriers such as discrimination and exclusion (Karlsen and Pantazis 2017). As can be accentuating from the concept of ethnicity, proposed by Modood and Khattab (2016) as:

"a form of intersubjectivity consisting of norms and behaviours which have an effect on and are shaped by socio-economic structures such as those of, say, education and employment, as well as are affected by the treatment of other, especially dominant (ethnic) groups" (p235).

Karlsen and Pantazis (2017) in their analysis of ethnic variations in poverty and social exclusion, employed nuance measures wherein a range of subjective measures complemented objective measures to expose the extent of ethnic variations. The findings, consistent with previous research, confirmed Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups to be amongst the most disadvantaged, however extreme disadvantage was found to be experienced by Black African communities. And though they did not undertake analysis by religion, they conclude that given large numbers, from all three groups, identify as Muslim, further investigations to disentangle the ethnicity and religion effect could reveal what has become known as the Muslim penalty.

Evidence suggests, Muslims experience specific discrimination, on the grounds of a religious identity, Khattab and Johnston (2013) found that out of 14 ethnoreligious groups in the UK, Muslims are the most disadvantaged group in the labour market, which has been termed the religious/Muslim penalty. Muslims are also found to experience the lowest employment rates amongst any other group. Heath and Li (2015) found that over 50% of British Muslims experience household poverty compared with the national average of 18%.

To conclude, what can be accentuated from the literature is that universal policy initiatives adopting a population based approach to address social inequalities in accordance with the social determinants of health framework (SDoH) have failed to achieve equitable outcomes for racially minoritised groups. Ethnicity is often relegated to the background and consequently ethnoracial inequalities suffer social and scientific marginalisation (Salway et al 2010 Chouhan and Nazroo 2020). Interestingly while ethnicity is found to be on the bottom rung of the health and social policy priority ladder, the Muslim category appears not to have acquired recognition. The issue of Islamophobia in the UK health literature remains patchy, at best some fleeting reference and at worst no mention. For instance, a recent analysis of the comprehensiveness and quality of health related datasets solely focussed on ethnicity, with the religion category found to be completely omitted from the analysis (Scobie et al 2021). This suggests, religion and its association to health is not perceived to be of significance in advancing understanding of racial health inequalities. Thus contemporary experiences of racialisation of Muslims that have institutionalised Islamophobia (as discussed later in this chapter), are not understood and/or Islamophobia is rejected as a discriminatory phenomenon and therefore relegated to the margins. Mirroring the practices that have been deployed to suppress the integration of ethnoracial inequalities within mainstream health inequalities agenda.

The main approach to documenting and understanding the patterning of Muslim health inequalities, continues to draw on the more developed literature for ethnic inequalities to understand implications for the health of Muslims in the UK (Nazroo and Bécares 2017). This literature shows a relationship between racism and ethnic inequalities, adults who perceive racial discrimination, were found to experience poorer mental and physical health compared to those who do not (Hackett et al 2020) which is discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.3 Racial Discrimination and Ethnoreligious Health Inequalities

Ethnoracial inequalities are not limited to socioeconomic circumstances alone. The particular disadvantaged experienced by racially minoritised groups, has been found to be strongly associated with racialised social identities and racism that structures and conditions the everyday life, over the life course of groups who are categorised as racially inferior. Discrimination based on racial classifications emanates from racial ideology in which some people are classified above the line of human and others below the line of human, from which discourses of human superiority and inferiority have evolved. Those above the line of human, are recognised as human beings and enjoy access to rights and material resources. Whilst those classified below the line of human are conceived as sub-

human or non-human and so restrictions to fundamental rights and access to materials resources are grounded in the logic of deserving and undeserving (Grosfoguel 2016).

Racial ideology with its roots in intra-imperial competition among European Empires was expanded and exported, as part of the European colonial project, across the globe, establishing a capitalist/patriarchal, western/Christian centric modern world system that continues to yield the power of coloniality, independent of colonial administrations (Grosfoguel 2011).

Thus, racism when conceptualised as a global hierarchy of superiority and inferiority along the line of human that has been politically, economically and culturally produced and reproduced for centuries, to structure a global world system, allows for racism to be understood as dynamic, with multiple manifestations, corresponding to the socio-political context of the time and/or region. That is, multiple racisms exist, deploying diverse markers, often entangled, such as colour, language, culture, ethnicity or religion, to service and sustain the global, racially hierarchised system. Therefore racism cannot be reduced to one, exclusive form or definition that reflects a particular history such as colour racism, emerging from biological visible markers that later gained credence from the scientific community, purporting physical difference represented inherent inferiority (Saini 2019, Grosfoguel 2016). This point can be further illustrated by the analysis of the racism experienced by the Irish community that has its roots in the English colonisation of Ireland in the 16th Century. The coloniser and colonised were both white, but as Gaelic Catholics, the Irish were considered to have the wrong religion and classified as below the line of human. Therefore they were designated as inferior and backward and in need of humanising. Thus illustrating the central tenet of racial ideology, through a civilising mission narrative of developing the colonised subject, imperial colonial power and the creation of a system of unequal power relationships acquired legitimacy (Garner 2009).

Thus it becomes evident that racism is the product of a racial ideology, a material force, intrinsically connected to domination, to create a racially hierarchised social system, in which the mechanisms, practices and social relations that produce and reproduce racial inequality are of central concern as opposed to the racial attitudes of people. That is, the established racialised social order is structured to institutionalise racial inequality and systemically produce unequal outcomes (Bonilla-Silva 2015). Interpersonal racism is a consequence of a racialised social system, waxing and waning in line with public and political discourses but not a precise measure of racism. Racism is the process by which meaning of inferiority is attached to an identity from which race emerge as a category of group association to deliver privileges to the dominant group, as shown below.

The disproportionate levels of health and social inequalities suffered by racially minoritised groups and which have persisted over time, have been shown to be strongly associated with racism, which has been identified to be a fundamental cause of ethnoracial health inequalities (Phelan and Link 2015)

Paradies et al (2015) conceptualise racism as:

"…organised systems within societies that cause avoidable and unfair inequalities in power, resources, capacities and opportunities across racial or ethnic groups…" (p: 2)

The findings of the meta-analysis of racism and health conducted by Paradies et al (2015) indicates that racism is significantly related to poorer health. The relationship between mental health and racism was found to be stronger, compared with physical health. However the authors contend that the cognitive impact from chronic exposure to racism can in turn damage bodily systems and impact physical outcomes such as cardiovascular disease. The particular stage of life and length of exposure to discrimination, the greater the harmful effects due to biological embedding and weathering effects of chronic exposure to stress over the life course. Racism shapes people's lives over the life course, with both direct that is actual experiences of racism and the indirect harm of racism that is living with the fear of racism and in a state of hypervigilance, have been found to have a cumulative effect on health both mental and physical. Racism effects health in multifarious ways and through multiple pathways, including individual level interpersonal encounters to structural level, through which access to health enhancing resources are restricting such as quality and standard of education, employment and housing, as well as shaping health risk factors and behaviours (Hackett et al 2020, Williams et al 2019 and Paradies et al 2015).

But even when groups deploy internal resources to mitigate the negative consequences of racism and achieve a level of social mobility, racism is found to exert a powerful influence on health outcomes, as exposed by the Covid 19 Pandemic. A disproportionate number of BAME doctors and other healthcare workers died from COVID 19 (Bhatia 2020).

The burgeoning research, documenting the inequalities experienced by racialised minority groups in the UK has a long history, traced back to the establishment of the Runnymede Trust in 1969. The UK's leading, independent, race equality think aims to provide reliable and objective data and information to inform the development of evidence base policy and interventions to address racial inequalities, arising from racism. Over fifty years on, the

work of the Trust continues to make critical contributions in highlighting the challenges faced by racialised minority groups to promote race equality. A particularly noteworthy contribution is the findings of the Trust's seminal research produced in 1969. The study situated the experiences of racial inequality in a historical and political context and concluded that the prevailing racial inequalities of the time were not a result of social class or cultural dissonance but rather an independent and enduring consequence of racism that was enshrined within the structures and systems within which policy and action were formulated (Alexander and Byrne 2020). This finding, as illustrated in the previous section holds, true fifty years later, racial inequalities are a consequence of power that structures society, producing social hierarchies which deliver a range of material and social advantages to some members of society whilst disadvantaging others.

In examining the contemporary discriminatory experience of Muslims across the globe, Islamophobia, conceived as a form racism invoking religion as the most prominent marker of inferiority, can be mobilised as an analytical tool to capture the unique racial injustice experiences of the Muslim community obscured by the ethnic category. Especially as the ethnic category in the European context infers non-white and by extension racism is understood along the colour line and in biologised terms. This means, the discrimination experienced by Muslims on the grounds of their religious identity, which is not bound by colour, fails to be captured by the contemporary category of racism (Sayyid 2014). This offers an explanation for the contestations surrounding Islamophobia and the rejection of any definition that denotes Islamophobia as a form racism. Arguments are grounded in the biological construction of race and given the ethnoracial diversity of the Muslim populations Muslims are not conceived as a race and therefore any disadvantage experienced on the grounds of a religious identity is rejected as a form of racism, either at the interpersonal or structural level. The next section specifically examines this argument, which could help explain the reticence, noted earlier, to make the Muslim identity an explicit priority area within health policy and research developments that seek to achieve racial equity. .

2.3.1 Conceptualising Islamophobic Racism

The emergence of the term Islamophobia in contemporary discourse came with the publication of a report in 1997 by the Runnymede Trust's Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia: *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All.* The authors of the report acknowledged that the word "Islamophobia" was already in use and as such did not stake any claims to either coining the phrase or giving birth to the concept (Bleich 2011, Klug 2012). The term Islamophobia describes the prejudice and discrimination experienced by Muslims in their everyday lives (Runnymede Trust 1997)

There is a growing body of research that seeks to advance understanding of the much contested concept of Islamophobia, with many scholars drawing parallels between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, tracing the theological historical roots of the hatred, fear and prejudice experienced by both groups from western societies (Rana 2007, Firestone 2010, Grosfoguel 2012, Meer and Modood 2012, Hafez 2014, Meer and Modood 2019, and Mohiuddin 2019). Following the conquest of the Roman Empire, Christianity staked a claim to a theological truth which was to be challenged with the spread of the Islamic Empire. This threat and the resulting hostility towards and disparaging claims about Islam and Muslims, in order to retain religious supremacy and dominance by Christianity, is shown to be the bedrock of current Western racial ideology and contemporary Islamophobia (Firestone 2010).

In the main, the historical roots of Islamophobia are traced back to the year 1492 (Rana 2007, Grosfoguel 2012, Meer and Modood 2012, Hafez 2014, Meer and Modood 2019 and Mohiuddin 2019). This is noted to be a critical point in time, as it was year when the Christian Spanish reconquered Islamic Spain, expelling Jews and Muslims or forcing conversions to Christianity of those who remained. It was also the year that the indigenous people of Americas were colonised and the African people were enslaved.

Thus was born the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the world system which privileged people of European Christian descent on the grounds of ethnoreligious superiority. Jews and Muslim were characterised as people with the wrong religion, whilst the indigenous people of the Americas were characterised as people with no religion, but ultimately both groups were classified as inferior. However it was the superiority of Christians over Jewish and Muslim converts to Christianity, foregrounded in the doctrine of “purity of blood”, which converts were unable to claim, that was to become the prototype for the construction of races.

A racial ideology propagated by a theological doctrine laid the foundations for a conceptual framework for race, deployed in the first instance, internally within Europe and subsequently exported to support European colonial imperialism. Devaluing people with a different or no religious belief and designating them as savages, primitive, uncivilised and inferior and therefore sub-humans to justify exploitative and discriminatory practices, gained greater credence when the theologically driven racial ideology was refined by secular scientific theory of evolution. As Mignolo (2008) argues, race is an epistemic category, to justify racism and legitimise the subjugation and domination of people to further imperial and colonial interests of the West and is operationalised differently, in response to the socio-political imperative of the time. Therefore new categories and classifications of

race are created and instrumentalised in the racialisation process wherein groups are devalued on the basis of deviation from western norms so that inequality is inscribed upon the bodies and cultures of non-western groups (Garner 2009).

Although the biological construct of race has lost its currency, groups continue to experience racism through the process of racialisation, conceptualised as “racism without races”. Therefore the tools for analysis need to be recalibrated beyond a biologised understanding of racism, especially as racial ideology is (re)articulated in cultural terms, to become less overt but no less ubiquitous, yet imperceptible, with deleterious outcomes. Culture becomes a proxy for bodies which are raced. (Modood 2018, Sayyid 2014, Grosfoguel 2014 and Garner 2009).

Islamophobic racism manifests in multiple ways, firstly, epistemic racism, wherein non-Western epistemologies, ways of knowing and being are deemed inferior to Western epistemologies. Secondly, Orientalist, in which Islam and Muslims are represented in essentialised ways and depicted as backward, barbaric, violent and uncivilised. And finally cultural racism that frames the beliefs, values, practices and behaviours of Muslims as signifiers of inferiority, revealing the mechanism and processes of racialisation from which race is constructed (Grosfoguel 2014).

Though Islamophobia continues to be a contested concept, with no widely acceptable definition, Klug (2012) contends that the concept has *“come of age”* gaining a strong foothold in academia, warranting further research and analysis and the need for it to be studied alongside associated fields such as racism, ant-Semitism and xenophobia. However coming of age does not imply the term and concept do not require further development and scrutiny, but rather its utility, has come to frame scholarship and research in the field. As confirmed by Bleich (2011: 1584): *‘Even seemingly well-established terms like democracy or ideology are fluid and subject to scholarly disagreement*.’ Klug (2012), contends that no one single feature defines a name but rather many similar features which are common to the name, arguing that the complex and interrelated similarities and their relationship is what has been woven together by many commentators to help conceive the concept of Islamophobia. Applying this approach in examining the analyses of Islamophobia in academic literature after the events of September 11th 2001, Sayyid and Vakil (2011) weave together the shared, common features of that analyses and conclude *that ‘Religion is ‘‘raced’’ and Muslims are racialised’* (Sayyid and Vakil 2011 p. 276).

The absence of an agreed upon definition of the term and concept within political and academic circles means the implications of this discriminatory phenomena and its real and

tangible manifestations require engagement with those on the sharp end, whose everyday lives are affected. In centering the voices of Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim, a lived perspective on its utility can make a significant contributions to the debate.

2.3.2 The Muslim Identity, Stigma and Health

Muslims and Islam have been negatively portrayed as the other within the media and wider public and political discourses. Muslim identities, rooted in Islamic values, beliefs and practices are represented as not just inferior but innately dangerous and in complete oppositional terms to Western values. Muslim identity becomes a source of concern and anxiety on two, inter-related levels, cultural as well as security threat, consequently every aspect of a Muslim's life is perceived to be motivated by the Islamic belief, which is constructed as a dangerous ideology. From the mundane and innocuous acts of everyday life to violence and crime, all are decontextualised from wider social forces. Muslims are positioned as the out-group, not belonging within the western context due to non-conformity to a western way of life. Hegemonic discourses of the Muslim threat, (re)activate strong in-group identity that must be protected at all cost. As a consequence a stigmatised Muslim identity emerges, which is subjected to a range of exclusionary and discriminatory policies and practices that have deleterious health consequences (Williamson 2019, Link et al 2017)

Stigma is shown to play a critical role in (re)producing health inequalities, as it undermines and exacerbates several processes that lead to adverse health outcomes, such as the restriction of health enhancing resources, stress, and anxiety of actual and perceived fear of discrimination and hostilities that negatively impact social relations. Thus stigma operates at the level of the individual as well as structural and is characterised by the intersection of negative stereotypes, discrimination, a devaluation of status that designates individuals and groups as less worthy (Link et al 2017). This concurs with the mechanisms and processes of racialisation discussed in the previous section, particularly the centrality of power, domination and privileges that are conferred upon the in-group and corollary, disadvantage and inequalities for the stigmatised out-group.

As the previous section has demonstrated, society's structures have been organised around a well-established racialised social hierarchy, which systematically defines social relations, such that disadvantage is delivered without overt interpersonal level expression. That is, societal level conditions have been shaped by a racial ideology that normalises White, western, Christian-centric, values, beliefs, practices and behaviour from which the Muslim identity is assessed and rendered deviant. It is at the macro-level that negative

social identity formation is described as structural stigma (Hatzenbuehler 2017), wherein strategic discourses inscribe negative attributes to the Muslim identity, the implication of which is a stigmatised identity.

Structural stigma in the case of a Muslim identity can be found, firstly, in the framing of 9/11 and the subsequent response which declared a “War on Terror” which implicated all Muslims as a threat by association on the grounds of a shared identity with those committing the atrocities. In the UK, ensuing counter-terrorism measures and in particular the Public Sector Prevent Duty reinforced the guilt by association, placing Muslims under increased suspicion and surveillance (Choudhury 2021, Younis and Jadhav 2020 and Ragazzi 2016). Secondly the “Muslim grooming gang” narrative, in which the Muslim men are singled out as uniquely problematic (Cockbain and Tufail 2018). And finally an example of structural stigma can be accentuated from integration discourses that emerged following the riots in Northern English Towns in which the lack of Muslim integration and the failure of multiculturalism, were identified as the underlying causes (O’Toole 2022).

The above examples all target Muslims, constructing them as a threat to western values and way of life, a deviant other, who must be governed, through a series of security measures and surveillance tools in order to protect the wider public. Such a framing stigmatises the Muslim identity, creating conditions in which Muslims experience marginalisation and exclusion from the institutionalising of Islamophobia, in the interest of national security and safeguarding. Thus exemplifying how Muslims occupy a second class position irrespective of immigration status, with the curtailing of rights and freedoms. The discursive power of the narratives to manufacture wider public support and consent, including, from key public sector institutions and practitioners, through a veneer of “common sense” legitimises unfavourable treatment and hostilities on the ground. This in turn compromises the safety and security of the Muslim community, causing fear, anxiety and stress, which negatively impact mental and physical health, as well as wider socioeconomic inequalities (Kaleem 2022 and Hatzenbuehler 2017)

It is important to note, the external negative identity constructs of the contemporary Muslim identity, whilst historically situated, did not begin with 9/11, rather, the religious identity of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi community who are the largest Muslim community in the UK, came under significant scrutiny triggered by particular events, beginning with the “Rushdie Affair” in 1989, which is considered to be a defining moment for the eclipsing of the ethnic identity. The novel “Satanic Verses” by Salman Rushdie had caused deep offence due to the blurring of reality and fiction regarding the divinity of Islamic scriptures, revered historical Muslim characters and the history of Islam. Consequently the futility of

peaceful petitions for legislative redress resulted in active and public expressions of grievances, constructed in mainstream discourse as attempts to suppress freedom of speech. Subsequent events such as the first Gulf war, the race riots in the northern English towns, followed soon after by the events of 9/11 have all contributed to the escalation of intense suspicion and scrutiny of the Muslim community, which some commentators contend has created a “Muslim underclass” as a new folk devil, noting that Muslims are the most frequently discriminated against social group ((Aspinall 2020 Allen 2020, Karlsen & Nazroo 2010).

That said, the response to the Satanic Verses and the riots noted above, demonstrate the agency of the Muslim community, not to be passive recipients of external marginalising and exclusionary discourses and practices. Formation of identity along religious lines by the Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim community and lodging objections to transgressions and discrimination, was a signal to those dimensions of identity which were most valued and from which psychological strength was drawn to mitigate against oppression and develop an authentic self-image. The shifts in identity ascription from race to ethnicity to religion, wherein groups once designated as Black were re-imagined along ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds to the emergence of contemporary Muslim religious identity in the UK, as a salient marker of difference reflects both internal developments of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities in the UK and external socio-political forces (Meer 2010).

The power of external socio-political forces, or what Grosfoguel (2012) identifies as the multiple faces of Islamophobia, epistemic, orientalist and cultural, work in tandem to limit and restrict the emergence of alternative narratives and the suppression of subaltern voices, that is, those conceived below the human line are silenced.

2.4 Where Next for Ethnoreligious Health Inequalities

In the UK, efforts to improve the health of the public have a long history, with the Victorian era being renowned for introducing key public health reforms addressing a wide range of conditions such as poor quality housing, sanitation, waste disposal and poverty, deemed to be detrimental to health. Efforts to improve the health of the public and secure measures to protect the most vulnerable in society were instituted through the enactment of the 1848 Public Health Act (Baggott 2011). A dedicated branch within the field of medicine was established to identify and respond to the challenges facing societies to secure the health of the population. Over the years threats to the health of the population have changed and evolved, in part due to changes in disease patterns, medical advances as well as overall

improvements in social conditions, but health inequalities endure and persist. The fact that improvements in health and life expectancy witnessed over the years have not been enjoyed equally, amongst different population groups has been a growing concern in recent years. Especially as inequalities in health are the avoidable and unjust differences in health status between different population groups and are a consequence of unequal socioeconomic and political factors known as social inequities in health (WHO 2008).

As, noted earlier, stark health inequalities are found to be experienced by racially minoritised groups, persisting despite improvements in socioeconomic status. There is a growing body of evidence identifying racism and stigma as fundamental causes of racial health inequalities (Williams et al 2019, Hatzenbuehler, 2017, Phelan and Link 2015 and Hatzenbuehler 2013).

The amassing evidence of the persisting social and health inequalities experienced by racialised minorities has gained increasing attention over the years. Phelan and Link (2015) in their analysis of the extant data of racial inequalities, assert that having established SES as a fundamental cause of health inequalities, racial inequalities in health endure because racism is a fundamental cause of racial differences in SES but more crucially find a fundamental relationship between racism and health outcomes independent of SES. They conclude that persisting racial inequalities in health cannot be addressed by solely reducing SES differences between racialised minority and White groups. Therefore, they argue that racism must be recognised as a fundamental cause in order to address racial differences in health, though acknowledge the need for further empirical evidence to firmly establish systemic racism as a fundamental cause of racial health inequalities after controlling for SES.

However the current policy direction continues to be focussed on the social determinants health, without devoting explicit attention on structural factors that have been identified to exacerbate racial inequalities namely racism. It has been noted that the global health equity movement concerned with the social determinants of health has failed to attend to the role of ethnicity in the production of health inequities which threatens to perpetuate the social and health inequalities experienced by certain racially minoritised groups, particularly in western societies. Though many of the commissioned reports on the social determinants of health make reference to ethnicity, it is often relegated to the background (Ingleby 2019).

Although mainstream public health research is recognising and documenting the relationship between racism and ethnoracial health inequalities, these studies do not necessarily advance racial justice and health equity goals and have had limited impact on

influencing policy and practice. A critique of the current SDoH framework that explicates the limitations of the framework to address racial health inequalities, implicates the public health profession, which has been central to its development, for omitting to pay attention to the fundamental underlying causes of racial health inequalities. A failure to take account of the conditions that structure the lives of racially minoritised groups only serves to perpetuate racial health inequalities. Especially given that biological and cultural determinism arguments are used to explain risks, which reinforces racial discrimination and stigma (Yearby 2020). Yearby concludes that public health is a key system that impacts health and must be considered within the SDoH framework, as a fundamental driver of racial health inequalities. In a reimagined framework, a systems approach to facilitate public health practitioners, policy makers and researchers to attend to structural racism, is proposed, noting that:

> "…systems structured in a racially discriminatory way reinforce discriminatory beliefs, values, and distribution of resources, leading to racial health disparities…" (Yearby 2020 p: 524)

A Public Health Critical Race Praxis (PHCRP), as a framework for empirical endeavours, to radically alter existing racialised power structures has been proposed by Ford (2016). According to Ford, PHCRP, emphasises the need to adopt a critical lens, in order to center the voices of the marginalised, the populations that are the primary concern of Public Health efforts. But, given the persistence of racialised inequalities in health, Ford (2016) highlights the imperative to critically evaluate how the profession is reinforcing the marginalisation of racialised minority groups. What can be accentuating, is the complicated and difficult relationship between Public Health and race and racism and its role in racialising populations and disease by invoking biological and cultural determinism as explanations for the patterning of health inequalities. Ford's assertions resonate with Yearby's (2020) analysis, that public health systems determine the health of racialised minority groups and therefore must be considered as a determinant of health within the SDoH framework. Ford (2016) describes PHCRP, as a methodology, that promotes, self-reflexivity and race-consciousness to identify the roots causes of health inequities, specifically it is comprised of:

> (1) a semi-structured research process, (2) a lexicon that helps standardise the theory and method used to assess racism's contributions to health inequities, and (3) a set of principles and concepts that together guide anti-racism approaches to Public Health research and practice. (Ford 2016 p: 484)

The limitations of current approaches to tackling, racialised minority health inequities are evident. Therefore a race conscious orientation in which race is conceived within a wider socio-political context to understand the process and function of racialisation and its detriment will have the potential to also consider ethnoreligious health inequalities in which the role of Islamophobia as a distinct form of racism is explicitly acknowledged and efforts made to address it.

2.5 Conclusion

The chapter as shown that Muslims experience disproportionate levels of socioeconomic disadvantages which have persisted overtime but the true nature and extent of health inequalities for Muslim communities is hampered by the lack of robust data on religion which invisibilises almost 50% of the Muslim population. The analysis of Muslim experiences of health inequalities is undertaken by using ethnicity as a proxy and racism which continues to be understood in biologised terms and in the main denotes colour. Thus the unique and distinct needs and experiences of ethnically diverse Muslim communities, including White Muslims is neglected. That said the Muslim identity, which has been increasingly problematised over the last two decades in public and political discourses has been the focus of research across a range of academic disciplines, from which socioeconomic position of the Muslim community can be extrapolated. Evidence of a particular and distinct form of discrimination, termed Islamophobia, is beginning to be revealed. That is, what has been previously termed an ethnic penalty is in fact shown to be a Muslim penalty, however further research is required in this area and especially within the field of ethnoreligious health inequalities.

The social determinants of health have been shown to be the fundamental cause of the observed health inequalities in morbidity and mortality between the rich and poor, as well as between different population groups. These differences are considered unfair and unjust because they are not a result of immutable differences, such as age related conditions but rather, amenable to healthy public policy interventions, which address the societal conditions in which health is produced. Socio-economic conditions are embodied within the political structures of a society, which have been shown to be structured by a racialised social hierarchy system. Thus racial inequalities are built into society's structures and system, such that racism becomes ubiquitous and so eliding charges that racism is a fundamental cause of ethnoracial health inequalities. Against this background the specific racially discriminatory phenomena, Islamophobia that has gained traction in describing the contemporary Muslim experience has been found to be discounted on the grounds that Muslims are not a race. However, in historicising Islamophobia, it is evident that racism is

conflated with, race, and given race has been recognised as a social construct and has been repudiated, the weaknesses in arguments rejecting the concept of Islamophobia are revealed. And importantly the mechanisms and processes of racialisation explicate the multiples markers ranging from physical, biological, cultural and religious, used to mark out bodies above or below the line of human. Those above the line are classed as superior and those below the line are deemed inferior and for whom access to material resources is restricted to produce racial health inequalities. Thus the observed ethnoreligious health inequalities are found to be a product of a racialised social system, which through the processes of racialisation locks out Muslims from accessing the requisite resources for health.

In demonstrating the historical genesis of racism, it is evident that the reification of identities of people is contextually situated, physical, cultural and religious characteristics and traits are imbued with social meaning, differently from one period to another. Thus the historical continuities of racial ideology, enshrined within the current structures and systems, are mobilised in contemporary Islamophobia leading to the discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation of the Muslim community. The concept of racialisation has utility in overcoming the contentions to counter arguments that Muslims are not a race and therefore cannot experience racism. The construction of nefarious social identities is grounded in racism and therefore it is important to understand how these shifts are experienced on the ground and their impact on the everyday lives of the communities in question. This will help contribute knowledge and understanding of racial health inequalities and how they might be tackled.

Finally the chapter addressed the limitations of current public health approaches as they do not apply a critical race perspective, demonstrating that specific attention needs to be paid to the impact of racialisation and as a consequence of racism in order to effectively address ethnoreligious health inequalities. Alignment between the biological/cultural determinism explanation for ethnoreligious inequalities and the race science upon which racism was and continues to be predicated is found to be an explanation of the persisting inequalities for racialised minority groups, thus implicating public health systems in perpetuating racial health inequalities. Alternative approaches have been proposed including the Public Health Critical Race Praxis, the application of which did not appear to be evident in the literature that was reviewed for this study but a line of enquiry for future research to understand its utility and evaluate its impact.

Chapter Three. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I set out the methodological approach and choice of methods utilised for conducting the study. It provides an outline of the key considerations and rationale for the study design as well as examining my role and positionality as a researcher from the community whose voices I was seeking to centre.

This chapter is written in the first person, unlike the other chapters as Silverman (2017) argues that in empirically based research, the methodology chapter requires an open and clear account of the research journey, suggesting that *"a bland account in a passive voice is an entirely inappropriate format*" (Silverman 2017 p: 472).

The study, in examining the lived experiences of shifts in external identity construction and the impact upon a diverse, intergenerational cohort of British born Muslim participants, aimed to explore the relationship between a Muslim identity and the patterning of ethnoracial/religious inequalities in health.

This was important because increasingly, evidence suggests the existence of a Muslim penalty, particularly in education and the labour market. That is Muslims, irrespective of ethnicity, country of origin, and educational background, experience the greatest faith based discrimination relative to any other religious group. Perceived closeness to Islam, determined by a range of characteristics and markers of Muslimness including, phenotype, name, country of origin and observance of religious edicts' such as fasting, praying, hijab and the beard, have been found to be strongly implicated in discrimination of Muslim groups (See chapter two).

Whilst it is recognised that disentangling an ethnic penalty from a Muslim penalty is both conceptually and methodological challenging, nevertheless studies, examining the Muslim effect have reported a strong Muslim penalty after controlling for characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, language, education and country of origin effect. This has led many scholars to conclude that ethnic inequalities can largely be explained by religious affiliation, with ethnicity operating as a proxy for the disproportionate and persistent inequalities and disadvantage found for the ethnically diverse Muslim group. In addition, certain characteristics such as skin colour, particularly when associated with certain countries with

a strong Muslim affiliation, serve to exacerbate the Muslim penalty (Sweida-Metwally 2022, de Stasio et al 2021, Karlsen et al 2020, Bi 2019, Samari 2016, Khattab and Modood 2015, Khattab and Johnston 2013). This has implications for perpetuating inequalities in health found for the Muslim community, given health is socially determined.

Societal structures and systems constrict lives by restricting health enhancing resources of racially minoritised groups due to the historical establishment of a racially hierarchised social system that continues to deliver disadvantages to certain racially minoritised groups. (See chapter two). As noted above and demonstrated in chapter two, the Muslim community are found to experience significant social and health inequalities but the fundamental drivers of these inequalities are less well understood, especially the relationship between racialised identity, racial discrimination and inequalities in health. The study aimed to address this gap and make a contribution to knowledge and advance understanding of ethnoreligious health inequalities.

It is important to note that the study was conducted in the context of Muslims experiencing a highly securitised and surveilled environment, creating a sense of vulnerability, fear and anxiety and giving rise to issues of intra and inter community trust. The contemporary representation of Islam and Muslims in dominant western discourses (See chapter's one and two), illustrates how Islam and Muslims, are synonymised with terrorism and reified as the enemy of all things western. Considered a menacing threat in need of restraining and moderating, especially since 9/11 and 7/7, is reflected within the UK counter-terrorism strategy. Specifically the government funded, anti-radicalisation programme, PREVENT, mobilises a range of actors in society including the general public, public institutions and members of the Muslim community, to report any signs of radicalisation. Consequently every space and every interaction is perceived as being policed. Being the subject of perpetual suspicion and assigned presumptions of guilt, on the basis of everyday innocuous religious and non-religious actions, has had reciprocal consequences. Individuals from the Muslim community are hypervigilant assessing threats and risks from particular interactions, within and outside of the Muslim community (Alexander 2017).

The "suspect" positioning of the community, within mainstream discourses invariably had consequences for the study, highlighting the complexities and sensitivities of working in this field. As a visibly Muslim female, I was attuned to the climate of fear. I bring an embodied, lived experience of not only fearing the consequences of the fear and suspicions others have about Islam and Muslims and the rising anti-Muslim rhetoric but also experiences of suffering direct detriment.

Therefore, as a researcher from within the community I was researching, I was aware of issues of trust that had undermined inter and intra community relationships. Some individuals from the Muslim community retreat from formal engagement about issues that concern them, for fear of, at best, being misrepresented, misunderstood or manipulated to further a particular agenda, or at worst, reprisals from expressing legitimate concerns. But also the lack of meaningful change over the years confirms the perceived futility of engagement, and the need to protect oneself from emotional drain. I reflect on these issues throughout the chapter, as they were at the forefront of my mind and central to every decision I took in the study design.

I begin the chapter with addressing issues of positionality and providing the personal and professional context and motivation for the study. In positioning myself in the research from the outset I explicate my lived experiences and how they have come to shape my world view and the values and assumptions that I bring to the research process. In so doing, I critically engage with the theoretical orientations which defined my methodological approach.

I then move onto to discuss the specific methods for conducting the research, the decisions and the rationale for the particular strategies employed. I provide details of the research instruments utilised for recruitment, data collection and analysis whilst critically reflecting on my position and how I remained cognisant of the complexities and sensitivities surrounding the topic and the themes under investigation. I address specific ethical considerations, as well as the strengths and limitations of my insider positionality and my reflections are captured throughout the chapter.

3.2 Positionality

The researcher is a critical instrument in the research process and can transform the research through the framing of questions, interpreting and ranking priorities and problems, as well gaining access to participants. The personal and professional profile of the researcher can impact the quality of the interaction between the researcher and the participant, reinforcing or challenging dominant research methods. Therefore it is a methodological imperative that I begin with a brief personal biography and then present my professional background, which together explicate my motivation for conducting this research. This lays the foundation for the exploration of self-other relationships within the fieldwork, data analysis and interpretation of findings, to offer a reflexive account of the process, to firmly ground the knowledge produced (Foley 2002, Rubin and Rubin 2012, Gray 2018, Miles et al 2020).

3.2.1 The Accidental Ethnographer

Nottingham is the place I call home, a place where I was born and where I have lived and worked. My parents, siblings, nieces and nephews live within a four mile radius and I have an established social network of extended family and friends from diverse backgrounds.
My parents migrated from Pakistan in the early 1960's and we lived within the inner city of Nottingham. At the age of ten, the "myth" of returning home (see discussion Chapter), held by many first generation migrants was set in train and the family moved to Pakistan, only to return three years later. The journey to Pakistan was a truly, experiential learning opportunity and an invaluable period within my life, as it afforded me first hand insights and a deeper understanding of a culture, language and religion into which I was born. But it also afforded me the opportunity to develop cultural, linguistic and religious skills and competence. I can read and write Urdu (enough to get by) but most importantly I had the privilege of spending quality time with my maternal and paternal grandparents and the wider family members. Insights into an alternative way of life and of being, also included differential treatment because we (me and my siblings) were not considered indigenous. We possessed certain western cultural traits that set us apart and though it was not necessarily disadvantaging, it functioned to evoke feelings of otherness and not belonging.

Upon returning to the UK, I had naturally fallen behind in my education, but education was very important to me, "*a priceless treasure that cannot be stolen*", father would tell us, not only as a means for social mobility but "*should they ever throw us out of this country, education will be an invaluable resource and companion*", he said. This latter quote carried a heavy semantic load, it added another dimension and meaning to the subtle exclusionary blights by teachers at school and in wider society. In connecting the two messages, my reality was one of not belonging, not being good enough and occupying a precarious position due to the threat of being displaced at any time, particularly given the plight of the Asian community who had been expelled from Uganda in the 1970's.

Though my passion for education was to be cut short and at the expense of confirming stereotypes, I joined the family business, the "corner shop" in the heart of a diverse community, challenged by many social issues of poverty. This was no different to an ethnographic encounter, as I was directly immersed in, and experienced, over a nine year period, the consequences of social inequalities both directly and indirectly.

During this period I had been blessed with the honour of motherhood, a critical turning point in my transition from being defined by my heritage to discovering a faith based identity. The

birth of my son was catalyst to me discovering Islam. Though Islam was an important part of my life growing up, the emphasis had been upon culture, with many of the expectations having no Islamic basis. This transformation from an ethnic identity to a faith based identity also helped reconcile the contentions of belonging. As a Muslim I was a global citizen but simultaneously British and Pakistani. Islamic values of justice, rights, equality, tolerance, respect and compassion were personally emancipatory and I felt a strong sense of liberation. However externally my visible Muslim appearance through the hijab and later the abayah, brought many challenges that I had not previously encountered as a female from a visible minority group.

So reflecting on my (over-indulged) personal biography, which has many omissions, it is evident that I encountered first-hand the issues I was now seeking to investigate. A second generation, visibly Muslim woman, of Pakistani heritage, a mother and a community member, I share many characteristics and a lifetime of experiences relevant to, but also distinct from respondents.

3.2.2. Under the Tutelage of Public Health

I consider my time running the “corner shop” as a foundational course in community development and acquisition of research skills. It was more than a “corner shop”, it was a community hub, playing a central role in listening, understanding needs and responding accordingly. Although at the time I did not have the academic knowledge and vocabulary to define or describe the neighbourhood features, the presence of social capital was evident, considered the panacea for health inequalities. Yet as Salway et al (2015) note the failure to understand the lived experiences of the disadvantaged position of people has resulted in disappointing and unpredictable outcomes to policy and practice interventions.

My formal professional identity emerged when I was employed on a one year fixed contract, as researcher to investigate the Health Information Needs of South Asian Women, this was my entry into health promotion and public health. I was able to consolidate my community based experiences, skills and knowledge and apply them within a “professional” capacity to address health inequalities. Following a period of fixed a term contracts, I secured a substantive position as the health promotion specialist for South Asian communities. With limited formal qualifications and no formal, health promotion and public health training, I “learnt on the job” and developed a range of, successful, health promotion programmes and initiatives, working collaboratively with the local community to influence service redesign to address barriers to accessing health improvement services.

I was fortunate enough to secure funding to undertake the Masters in Public Health (MPH) but faced barriers to securing a place on the programme, as I did not meet the essential criteria of holding a first degree. But after successfully completing a module to demonstrate my suitability, I was reluctantly accepted on to the course. I say reluctantly, because I was required to make a case to the programme. And after, a successful first semester, the programme Director said *"you have far exceeded our expectations.*" I graciously accepted this statement as a compliment, though there was an unease, which I still continue to feel today. There was an assumption that I would not do well or perhaps even succeed, was the message conveyed in the value laden statement, of unchecked assumptions and believes, which invoked stereotypes and conveyed unwitting racism, which perpetuate inequalities. This was just another interaction of many that I had and continue to encounter as a member of a racially minoritised group. I have been and continue to be exposed to the indignities of everyday racial microaggressions and the detriment that they cause. This has impacted my sense of injustice and has been the motivation to strive for social justice, working to improve the lives of people on the margins of society.

The MPH had a strong biomedical orientation of health and congruence with positivist values, though there was recognition of the social determinants of health. My Masters dissertation was on Social Capital, a topical policy and practice intervention of the time. I undertook a small scale qualitative project, interviewing a group of South Asian men who had participated in an intergenerational social capital programme that I co-developed with a local community organisation. The headline finding was communities were not "bowling alone" (Putnam 2000) but were locked out of accessing the requisite balls and spaces for bowling.

My academic qualification improved my knowledge and understanding about the structural drivers of health inequalities, supporting my professional practice to focus on upstream issues for health equity.

A year after the MPH, I secured my first management role and within two years I was Head of Service and in a "mainstream" role for the first time. I was able to bring constructive challenge to normative practices, such as reviewing essential criteria for job roles and widening opportunities for participation for groups who had traditionally been excluded, as a colleague observed: *"the colour of the team has changed".* Creating an inclusive culture was not without challenge though. There were numerous unfounded allegations of nepotism levied at me for what is otherwise known as professional networking, recognised and promoted as an essential skill, for personal and professional development. This was not only stressful for me but also caused detriment to others, as suitably qualified

candidates from racialised minority groups withdrew applications for promotional opportunities for fear of being constantly undermined and for ever having to defend their appointment. Though recruitment processes involved a panel, the presence of a single racialised minority person disrupted power dynamics to unveil what Robin DiAngelo describes “white fragility” (DiAngelo 2018), exposing the illusion of meritocracy, which seeks to elide racism (Augoustinos et al 2005), with the consequences of racism deflected upon the racialised minority groups through the framing of workplace discriminatory outcomes as “self-imposed” glass ceiling.

My work has been a vocation, given the alignment between my personal and professional values of equality and social justice. The discipline of health promotion is enshrined in values of social just and equity as captured in the preamble statement of the WHO Constitution:

> *“The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.” (WHO 2005)*

As a branch of public health, health promotion aims to tackle the major determinants of health and reduce health inequalities by bringing about structural transformations (ibid). However the biomedical model continues to exert a powerful influence on public health policy and practice as discussed in chapter two.

So whilst I achieved much success in my career, I experienced considerable tensions and my personal identity as a racialised minority female, had significant bearing on my achievements and challenges, highlighting both what is possible but also what remains to be improved. The opportunity to grow, learn and deepen my understanding of a racialised order and its impact on people and their lives presented itself. My life took an unconventional turn and I find myself “back at school” after having established a career, moving from practice to conceptually understanding knowledge production, domination and hegemony. A back to the future opportunity to unlearn, relearn and make a positive contribution to understanding racial inequalities by centering the realities of racialised minority groups in their own words and dislocate hegemonic certitudes that sustain a racialised order.

As a member of a racialised minority group who had experienced racism and Islamophobia, I was conscious of the need to recognise issues of internalised racism and/or reinforcing normative perspectives. A “critical friend” approach was adopted and I utilised supervision

meetings and a select, trusted, group of individuals from my professional and social network, for continuous, critical reflections and constructive challenge of my actions to help minimise the impact of personal biases.

3.3 The Study Design

The research aimed to advance understanding of the drivers of ethnoreligious health inequalities by considering the lived experiences and consequences of external identity inscriptions amongst an intergenerationally diverse group of British born Muslims living in Nottingham, UK. The specific objectives were:

- To examine, participants experiences of external identity inscriptions and compare and contrast the generational shifts that have occurred overtime
- To compare and contrast the impact of external identity constructs upon participants daily lives
- To identify, based on participants self-assessment of their identity, which, if any aspect of the multiple identities (age, gender, ethnicity and religion) were perceived to be have negative consequences in their daily lives

Research Question(s): What steps can public health research, policy and practice take to disentangle the independent influences of a Muslim religious identity, on ethnoreligious health inequalities to achieve health equity for Muslim communities?

A sociological approach to health, which postulates the social patterning of health and illness provides the conceptual framework for the study as explicated in chapter two. The literature review (chapter two), established the unequivocal relationship between health and the wider social, economic and political conditions in which people are born, live and work. A crucial consideration arising from the literature was the interplay between ethnicity, religion and socioeconomic factors as the underlying causes of health inequalities, with issues of racism and discrimination being identified as key contributing factors to the marginalisation and social exclusion of the Muslim community. Though the epistemological position of race, as being visual or having a biological basis from which to infer explanations for health or social inequalities has been invalidated, the ideology of racism and racial formation nevertheless was found to be embedded within social structures which continue to influence social interactions and poorer outcomes for racially minoritised groups.

This helped sharpen the focus of the study, particularly as few studies were found to have investigated, how, over time, social interactions and wider societal conditions were

impacted by shifts in the designation of racial categories and the external inscriptions of stigmatised identities. The majority of the Muslim community in the UK, was once categorised, broadly by race, then ethnicity and now by religion. As noted earlier and in chapter two, a growing body of literature shows, the Muslim community to be at increased risk of poverty, with poorer health, education and employment outcomes than any other religious group.

However a gap in the literature was identified, specifically an examination of the shifts in identity designation and corollary racism, how this was experienced on the ground, it's real and tangible manifestations and the consequences for ethnoreligious inequalities in health. The emphasis of the study was on lived reality, and a small scale, exploratory, qualitative research, guided by principles of ethnography was designed to meet the original aim and objectives of the study. The study was framed by a constructivist and interpretivist theoretical approach and engaged a critical lens in order to understand how participants construct their reality and interpret the various dimensions and relationships between structure, context and experience. These orientations underpinning the study design are explicated below to demonstrate their fit with the study aim and objectives to address the research question.

3.3.1 Qualitative Approach

According to Robson and McCartan (2016) there are many approaches to conducting social research which are considered scientific under the overarching traditions of quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

The contrasting philosophical underpinnings of the two, whilst setting them apart, are not necessarily considered as competing, hierarchical or incompatible, particularly with the emergence of pragmatism. Pragmatism as an exponent of methodological pluralism, advocates for the selection of the most appropriate method(s) to address the research question (Robson and McCartan 2016, Gray 2018, Kaushik and Walsh 2019).

Quantitative research has been traditionally associated with a positivist paradigm, which is the dominant philosophical stance of the natural sciences. A central tenet of positivism is the existence of a social reality that can be objectively measured through observation. The knowledge produced is conceived as credible, reliable, factual and presented as an established truth and therefore resistant to change or challenge. A key criticism of positivism has been the failure of the approach to account for the influence of the researcher on the researched, which has been addressed by the emergence of post-

positivism, which recognises the possible bias arising from the observer. However, the objectivity of the existence of an external reality irrespective of how it is described continues to be a central feature of quantitative research (Gray 2018, Robson and McCartan 2016, Henn et al 2009).

On the other hand, qualitative research methodologies are associated with a constructivist/interpretivist paradigm wherein social reality is conceived as subjective, socially constructed and interpreted based on the lived experiences and perceptions of people. No one person's social interactions and experiences will be the same and therefore "*there are as many realities as there are participants*" (Robson McCartan 2016 p: 25). In addition the researcher's subjectivities are also recognised as an integral part of the research process, in seeking to interpret meaning.

Bryman (2004) highlights an interpretive approach is concerned with the empathetic understanding of human behaviour from which concepts and theories are inductively arrived at. It is through the research process that understanding of a phenomena is advanced and explanations built with a view to drawing conclusions that enable a move towards a theory, termed as "*research then theory"* strategy (Henn et al 2009 p.53).

Investigation of social contexts for the purpose of understanding the unequal distribution of ill health, is a key public health imperative. Public health has its origins in a constructivist philosophical paradigm, the social reforms of the Victorian were instituted as a result of qualitative investigations in to the conditions of the poor. However public health has been significantly influenced by the medical model of health, which has shifted public health research towards a positivist, post-positivist paradigm (Williams and Elliot).

The constructivist/interpretivist approach offers public health the opportunity to move beyond investigating the association of social factors and health to understanding how inequalities are being experienced and the meanings people assign to their situations. The subjective accounts and stories of people reveal important insights to deepen understanding of society, social structures and the impact of the macro-context (ibid).

Though qualitative research methodologies have become central to empirical inquiry within the social sciences they have not been without criticism. Qualitative research is argued to lack a definition and consensus about the set of shared features to be found amongst all qualitative research projects. Thus qualitative research is purportedly, defined by the absence of quantification, as other features found in qualitative research are considered to be fundamental goals of any social inquiry (Hammersley 2013). Aspers and Corte (2019),

contend that qualitative research should be defined by its strengths and not what it lacks. In reviewing a number of qualitative research projects, Hammersley (2018) notes differences in focus, methods and theoretical perspectives, to be the most striking features, across the projects rather than commonalities, concluding that qualitative research is a heterogeneous field. However in contrasting with quantitative social science, qualitative research is defined by Hammersley as:

> *"…a form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasize the essential role of subjectivity in the research process, to study a small number of naturally occurring cases in detail, and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of analysis".* (Hammersley 2013 p: 12)

This definition captures the key features of qualitative research which inform the methods, however, methods employed in qualitative research are not inherently qualitative and can be used within quantitative approaches also, therefore it is important to select the methods which are most suitable to address the research question (Henn et al 2009, Silverman 2017, Hammersley 2018, Aspers and Corte 2019)

A primary criticism of qualitative research, is the unscientific basis upon which claims of knowledge production are predicated, when compared to quantitative methodologies. These contestations point to the contrasting theoretical and philosophical underpinnings and assumptions of the two paradigms about the existence of reality and knowledge production. But also, social scientific inquiry, fundamentally centres social structures as the site of reform and therefore is subject to political orientations of those, funding and assessing the worth and value of the knowledge produced (Denzin and Lincoln 2013).

Having examined the constructivist/interpretivist theoretical underpinnings of qualitative research, I now expound on the other two foundational theoretical perspectives and principles, which are drawn upon within the methodological framework of this study: critical inquiry and ethnography.

3.3.2 Critical Inquiry

A critical inquiry in which a critical stance is adopted, recognises the influence of power relationships and hegemonic interests in constructing reality. The need to scrutinise knowledge claims and disentangle facts from ideology that promote the interest of dominant groups is an essential requirement of ethical research.

The uncritical application of research can be implicated in the reproduction of oppressive and discriminatory practices as noted in the case of the medical model of health and its positivist orientations which have in turn influenced public health research, policy and practice (Salway et al 2015, Packer 2010).

The reorientation and shifts towards critical epistemologies within research methodologies, challenge traditional assumptions about reality and knowledge production. Reality is interpreted and reinterpret and reconstructed according to alternative and marginalised perspectives to reflect societal diversity and consider issues of social exclusion and inequality. The accounts of marginalised groups are not only privileged but investigated to understand the social, political and economic forces that reinforce inequalities (Giacomini 2010).

The aim of a critical orientation is to understand how socially constructed realities are an outcome of power relationships, paying attention to specific and multiple axis of identity to deconstruct knowledge and expose values embedded within it. However to address the criticism of biases arising from researchers own position, within oppression or dominance relationship to the research, disclosure of one's standpoint brings to the fore the issues of researcher subjectivities and biases, in order to develop a critical consciousness approach.

A critical study of power relations also broadens the lens of generalised hegemony to multiple hegemonies, reflecting the differential experiences of specific groups. The developments in a range of disciplines of a critical theoretical approach has seen the emergence of new political perspectives for the transformation of everyday life and individual experience such as feminist theory, postcolonial theory, queer theory and critical race theory, amongst others (Bohman 2021, Bronner 2011).

The general and specific critical lens has been demonstrated more broadly within the literature review, with the emphasis on critical public health and a public health critical race praxis, as well as racialisation and critical race theory being central to the study to understand the experiences of the Muslim communities.

3.3.3 Ethnography

The strength and value of ethnographic research is grounded in the centring of participant voices, going beyond description and interpretations to examining the ideological context and hegemonic practices, revealing the influence of macro-forces in how participant's

construct reality. This reality from a critical ethnographic perspective is seen as a social and cultural construction, situated in a wider context of power relations which privilege some and disadvantage others (May 1997).

The relationship between the researcher and the researched is a central feature of a qualitative study. In order to fully understand the lived experience of people from their perspective, requires a level of immersion within the natural setting of the researched, a view held within traditional ethnography. Thus to understand lived reality taking account of the context of people's lives is essential, in order to develop credible and authentic narratives, which go beyond description and involve interpretation to establish significance (Gray 2018).

Ethnography as a qualitative approach to research has gained wide spread prominence in a range of academic disciplines outside of anthropology in which it originated. However much vagueness and contestations surround ethnography which is often reduced to the level of a method for data collection, involving, observation, in-depth interviews and documentation (ibid, Lillis 2008).

The roots of ethnography are traced to social anthropological research of the 19th century and it is strong association with the period of western colonisation, with the primary focus on understanding different cultures of people living in different lands. It involved researchers travelling to distant places and spending a considerable length of time immersed in the everyday lives and activities of groups in order to uncover and understand unfamiliar cultures. Researchers engaged with the people, observing, listening, asking questions and making extensive notes which were later written up to describe and interpret the norms, beliefs and behaviours of others (Bryman 2016, Rashid et al 2015).

However as Hammersley (2019) notes a key criticism of conventional ethnography is the phenomena under study, is theoretically formulated from the perspective of the researcher, thus creating a gap between the accounts of the ethnographer and the study participants. The ethnographers account claimed authority, yet often misrepresented the reality of the participants as it was based on an outsider's interpretations clouded by multiple, external perspectives as opposed to the participants emic positionality and their experience of the world.

That said ethnography has evolved from its traditional roots and taken many forms and is described in many different ways to capture its reorientation such as native ethnographer or insider ethnography, conceptualised as research being conducted by a researcher who

is a member of the community and setting they are researching (Brannick and Colghan 2007, Angotti and Sennott 2015). Thus ethnography has been repositioned and the cultural gap between the researcher and researched bridged. Its purpose as a methodology of social inquiry is closely aligned with critical inquiry. Thereby an ethnographic perspective is theoretically underpinned by power relationships and hegemonic interests in constructing reality to challenge inequality (Foley 2002, O' Byrne 2012).

O'Byrne (2012) in his socio-political examination of the incorporation of ethnography in mainstream public and population health contends that ethnography is a research method:

"…*that enables in-depth data collection about the specific cultures that do not, in whatever way, correspond with the ideals, standards, and/or values of the hegemonic group"* (P: 866).

Thus the ethnographic imagination has been expanded and is considered a research strategy for the critical examination of inherent power systems, consequently promoting greater acceptance of marginalised research strategies. A note of caution is offered by O'Byrne (2012) who asserts that there is a need to recognise, that the underlying ontological and epistemological values and principles of ethnography are rooted in oppressive practice. Therefore as a process and outcome it has the potential to be weaponised against marginalised groups by perpetuating deviation discourses to reinforce and maintain social hierarchies. This concern is echoed by Gray (2018) regarding the privileging of the researcher over the researched as the object of the ethnographers gaze, with accounts of the reality constructed and produced by the researcher to reflect presuppositions and socio-political context. Therefore ethnographic research requires a critical consciousness, careful planning, interpretation and dissemination to deconstruct normative discourses.

In summary a pragmatic approach was adopted to the research design, under the rubric of qualitative research, methodological perspectives of constructivist/interpretivist and critical inquiry and critical ethnography were found to accord with the study aim and objectives and used to frame the approach to conduct the investigation.

3.4 Methods

This sections provides a detailed account of each of the stages of the research process. I begin this section with addressing the ethical considerations and requirements of any social inquiry but also issues that were particularly pertinent for this study. I then provide the

rationale for choosing in-depth interviews as my primary source of data collection, discussing the design of the approach and instrument and how this worked in practice. I then move onto provide the details of the research instruments and the recruitment strategy, followed by how I conducted the fieldwork and undertook data analysis.

3.4.1 Ethical Considerations

The appropriate College Ethical Review Committee at Nottingham Trent University granted ethical approval for the study and the required data management procedures were adhered to. Specifically in relation to confidentiality and anonymity, all personal identifiable data was handled according to the General Data Protection Regulations. Data was anonymised using pseudonyms and respondent's professional roles and organisations were generalised. It was felt that disclosing particular roles and sectors by age, gender and ethnicity, would compromise anonymity due to the small numbers of Muslims, across the local workforce. This did not compromise the findings as the focus of the study was not profession or sector specific.

The participant information sheet (Appendix 2) clearly specified the purpose of the research and how personal and interview data would be handled and used. There were a number of conversations with the participants about the study prior to consent being given and the interview taking place. However, given that no amount of information can predict or anticipate how the conversation will unfold during the interview, participants were reassured that they could stop the interview at any stage if they felt they could not continue for whatever reason. In addition the semi-structured nature of the interview and the biographical approach minimised direct questions being asked and the respondents were free to share as much or as little information about their experiences. In stances where painful encounters, relating to discriminatory practices or hate crimes, were shared, (which I provide a reflexive account of in section 3.4.7 below), the option to take a break or terminate the interview was offered. Information about agencies who could offer specialist support was also made available, such as Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks), Citizens Advice but also how mainstream provision such as the GP could support and make appropriate referrals to specialist psychological therapies.

The need to protect research participants from harm resulting from any scientific social inquiry is of paramount importance. This concern is found to have arisen from historical miscarriages of justice in the name of science, wherein numerous, infamous examples of unethical practices have been recorded. In some cases scientific inquiries were conducted without the explicit knowledge and consent of participants. And in other cases, where

apparent consent was sought, details about the purpose of the study and the consequences of taking part were either withheld or inaccurate information given to participants. Hence ethical codes of practice, guidelines and regulations have been developed across the scientific community (Henn et al 2009). Henn et al (2009) in their review also note the arguments against ethical codes of practice, which assert that ethical codes can be used to preserve power structures and hegemonic practices, thereby restricting and stifling critical social research, which seeks to illuminate the relationships between structure and agency. They conclude, that whilst ethical codes of practice are useful, demonstrating ethical behaviour is the responsibility of the researcher and is governed by the researcher's personal moral code.

Following ethical approval, two pilot interviews were conducted to test the research instruments and the data analysis method. These were transcribed, analysed and written up as a formal report and submitted for the transfer requirements from MPhil to PhD. These interviews have also been included in the main study.

A key learning point from the pilots was that the instruments, in terms of the interview guide, participation information sheet, consent sheet and the demographic questionnaire were all acceptable and did not require any revisions. The area for improvement, however, related to my interviewing skills in terms of managing the conversation such that there is a balance between detail and salience, as one of the interviews was over 90 minute duration. That said this same interview provided very rich data. A number of distressful, encounters pertaining to racism and Islamophobic incidences were recounted by the individual and interjecting was not deemed appropriate. The respondent relayed the encounters in a stoic demeanour, but there were occasions when frustration and pain was expressed at the unjust, inhumane and unfair treatment that had been experienced. Though the experiences were unique and distinct, I was able to relate to the issues, given my own similar experiences, as someone from the same community. I was able to offer empathy and understanding and this appeared to be important because the participant was able to talk about the incident without having to provide a detailed explanation of the impact and consequences or justify the emotional distress. This pilot interview, due to the distress recounted by the participant, was conducted in two stages, with the consent of the respondent. The second stage of the interview was arranged a few days later for a mutually convenient date and time. Allowing a break before arranging the second part of the interview served to recognise and acknowledge the deeply distressful exercise of engaging with ethnoreligious research and therefore the need to be sensitive and offer participants time and space to reflect and process the emotions and feelings that be can be evoked. This provided the opportunity for the participant to reconsider whether they wanted to

continue their participation in the research or withdraw completely from the process. This is an ethical imperative particularly when researching sensitive issues of lived discriminatory experiences related to race, ethnicity and/or religion.

The final ethical consideration, which could in some respects, but not exclusively, be judged unique, was related to gender segregation etiquettes within the Muslim community. As a practising Muslim female this was a key consideration for me personally but also for my respondents and therefore interview arrangements, took account of the Islamic code of practice of not being alone in the company of the opposite sex. This process demonstrated not only recognition and respect for my respondents beliefs but also increased their confidence and trust in me as a fellow Muslim, who adhered to an Islamic code of practice.

As a researcher I did not compromise my Islamic beliefs and principles but rather I adopted methods which were foregrounded in the centrality of these codes of practices. In so doing integrity and authenticity of our shared faith, irrespective of level of personal practice and adherence was conveyed to create not only a physical safe space but also a safe space for open and honest conversations to take place.

That said, giving due to consideration to Islamic principles and practices and negotiating acceptable options regarding the physical space for conducting the interviews, was consistent with universal ethical requirements and institutional policy to mitigate against the risk of harm and safeguard both the researcher and the researched as stipulated by the Lone Worker Policy of the University.

3.4.2 In-depth Interviews

As a small scale exploratory study, which adopted critical ethnographical principles, in-depth interviews were decided to be the most relevant method for data collection. The interview guide can be found in appendix 4

In depth interviews are a qualitative research technique, predominantly used in small scale studies. The interview takes a discovery orientated approach in the format of an extended conversation, guided by a broad set of areas and questions so as to remain focussed. This allows for detailed and rich information to be generated about the participant's experiences, perspectives and feelings (Rubin and Rubin 2012). According to Silverman (2013) interviews provide access to experiences and insights into the socially constructed realities of participants, a primary objective of the study.

The interview method was harmonised with biographical techniques, traditionally associated with ethnography that has gained widespread appeal across a range of disciplines and fields of study and various methodological approaches such as critical race theory, decolonising research, feminism and health related research (Bornat 2008). A biographical method was found to work in harmony with in depth interviewing, providing a framework to capture and contrast the past and present accounts of life, as lived, experienced and, constructed by the participants over time. In taking a life story approach, social and political contextual issues were illuminated as the focus was on the interrelationship between the individual and society. It allows for an interplay of narrating objective encounters and events and their subjective evaluation by participants (Gomensoro and Paredes 2017).

The biographical approach was found to facilitate access to socio-political contextual issues without me leading the line of inquiry, thus providing assurance of the integrity of the interview data generated and the subsequent discussion and write up of the findings. It is important to note that no specific questions were asked about race, racism or Islamophobia, rather the biographical conversation during the interviews centred on personal lived experiences of life in the UK and the shifts that had taken place overtime.
However, I found, in asking people to share their life stories, entails an unpredictability as to how much the participants are prepared to share personal encounters, memories and experiences and the level of engagement in the interview. This was a strength of the biographical approach as it gave agency to the participants, they were in control to steer the conversation, only sharing their memories and experiences which they felt comfortable to. The level of engagement was found to be variable, with some participants sharing some deeply distressing encounters, very openly and honestly, whilst others remained guarded and articulated their fears and anxiety of speaking about their experiences given the current climate of hostility towards Muslims, this was also found by Moosavi (2015) in his work with Muslim converts.

I prepared an interview guide (Appendix 4) with broad categories and a limited number of questions in advance to facilitate the conversation whilst maintaining a focus of the research question/topic, this is described by Rubin and Rubin (2012) as a topical interview. Though prompts were formulated in advance, specific follow up questions and relevant prompts were generated during the interview depending on interviewee responses. Thus I was required to take an active role in the interview, listening for nuances, particular expressions, paying attention to body language and attending to memories and incidents for further clarification to understand the impact and meaning participants attached to the encounters. The unpleasant encounters with neighbours, teachers and at work, were

described in various was such as, bullying, harassment, terrorising, intimidation, such expressions conveyed a deeper distress and pain. I listened attentively, taking my cues from the participants, only interjecting to check if they wanted to stop, take a break or terminate the interview. Only one interview was stopped and rescheduled for another date and time by consent, as the experience recalled was particularly traumatic and the participant appeared emotionally drained. The interview had come to a natural point, to move the conversation along but the respondent appeared exhausted, so we agreed to reschedule.

As Rubin and Rubin (2012) note the first obligation is to the interviewee and ensuring they are not harmed in anyway. I explained at the opening of each interview that if the participants felt uncomfortable, they had the choice to stop at any time and completely withdraw from the process.

All interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants. I took the time to go through the participant information sheet with respondents at the beginning of the interview, even though the information had been sent to participants in advance. No objections were raised about audio-recording the interviews. There was one occasion, once the interview had ended and audio-recorder turned off, that a participant shared, the guardedness evoked by audio-recording of the interview, inhibiting the participant from being open and forthcoming as they would have liked to be. So I offered the participant the opportunity share any other reflections, which I noted in the diary and with the consent of the participant, used in the data analysis and findings.

The interview opened with a general question asking participants to tell me a little about themselves. Information about identity was readily shared, specifically participants stated they were Muslim and what that meant to them and the conversation developed, and area's identified within the interview guided unfolded in a comfortable and natural way. The guide was used as an aide memoire and therefore I was able to adopt a responsive and flexible style during the interview that allowed for conversational interaction, otherwise restricted by a sequential style using a set of questions. At times the interviewees would cover topics and area's that did not follow the biographical timeline within the interview guide and in these situations I noted any area's that may need further elaboration or if they had been sufficiently covered. A balance was to be struck between salience and unnecessarily labouring points and following a line of inquiry that clearly the respondent either did not have insights to share or had chosen not to share. For incidence in a couple of interviews, participants talked about an all, white female senior management team, reflecting the organisational culture. I tried to probe this further, to ascertain meaning and interpretation,

especially as both participants were male, who had left their respective organisations to pursue promotional opportunities elsewhere, whilst stating they had not experienced racism. Upon probing, they expressed that the representation of the senior management team, was an informal articulation of the person specification criteria, but vehemently held the view, it was not a race issue. Interestingly both participants were more animated and expressive about wider issues of anti-Muslim rhetoric. Illustrative of the flexible interview style, wherein participants could give prominence to issues of priority to them and how they wanted to present them in either a personal or depersonalised manner.

Interviews were arranged by either email or telephone, arrangements for the interviews were negotiated and a mutually acceptable, date, time and venue were agreed. The need for a quiet, private space to maintain confidentiality had to be balanced with religious requirements, as discussed in 1.4.1. Given it was a priority for both parties, the issue was not perceived as a problem and did not present any barriers to recruitment but acknowledged as a practical reality, managed through an open, honest dialogue. Two noteworthy learning points were observed, firstly my positionality, as a practising Muslim female meant I had insight to and understood the requirements, so no judgements were formulated. Secondly, within the Islamic cultural context, as a female of a particular age, afforded me a privileged status. I was addressed either as older sister or aunty and this cultural/religious framing of my identity facilitated access to male members of the community. The interviews with male participants either took place in the participant's home where other family members would be present but not necessarily in the same room. Some interviews took place at the participant's place of work, or in a quiet, public space on the University campus, all these options worked very well and no problems were encountered. The interviews with the female participants were also arranged on a mutually convenient date and time and a venue of the participants choice which ranged from home, place of work and the University campus. Interviews which took place in the person's home were found to have worked the best, as there was a level of informality, participants appeared relaxed and the conversation developed more naturally, although on a couple of occasions there were interruptions by family members, the telephone or a knock at the door. The interaction during the interview at the University campus or place of work began more formally, with a sense of seriousness and an element of professionalisation on the part of the participants. However, very quickly, individuals relaxed due to the conversational and biographical nature of the interview, helping people switch from work mode and talk about themselves.

3.4.3 Sampling

The study was conducted within Nottingham and no geographical boundaries were placed, so the participants were drawn from a geographical mix of urban and suburban spaces. These geographical areas, had variable levels of deprivation with some areas more affluent than others, according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. The decision to retain a broad geographical lens as opposed to focussing on inner city based areas with a high deprivation score, was primarily informed by the literature review. Though the social gradient for health has been established, according to the fundamental causes of health theory, Link and Phelan (2015) have shown a fundamental relationship between racism and health outcomes independent of socioeconomic status (SES). They concluded that persisting racial inequalities in health cannot be addressed by solely reducing SES differences between racialised minority and White groups. Therefore the study was not confined to a particular geographical area within the county of Nottinghamshire or a particular SES group.

In addition, the study population, was demographically diverse in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. The focus was any person who self-identified as a Muslim and was from either the majority community or second and third generation migrant born in the UK. Level of religious adherence or having a Muslim family were not an inclusion criteria. Therefor the study participants were second and third generation, drawn from the established migrant communities, as well as white British converts to Islam, the rationale for this decision was to minimise variables that could explain social exclusion such as language, or lack of familiarity with the mainstream education, employment and other public services and systems.

This sampling strategy was invaluable, in generating data that could be compared and contrasted across the different demographic groups, over different time periods to contribute knowledge and understanding of the changes in the social conditions overtime.

The total sample size was 22 participants, with an equal gender split, a full demographic breakdown of participant is provided in Appendix 1. A decision about sample size and to stop at 22 interviews, was taken midway through interviewing, when it became apparent that the interviews were in-depth, quite long and generating rich data. So the need to manage the volume of data, was assessed in conjunction with having different perspectives from across the diverse intergenerational cohort, including gender, visible versus non-visible markers of Muslim identity, to ensure there were no gaps in the data and no new refined or unique perspectives were emerging (Rubin and Rubin 2012)

3.4.4 Recruitment Strategy

As a researcher, from the community I was researching, I had direct links into the community, but also I was able to draw upon my extensive and well established professional and personal networks to overcome any barriers to accessing individuals. Therefore I did not utilise the support of community leaders, who are often considered as gatekeepers. But also, I wanted to maintain choice and participation to be voluntary, which I felt could be comprised by the sense of obligation or expectation to participate, if the project was being endorsed by a community leader. In addition a key aim of the research was to give voice to the seldom heard and capture lived experiences of individuals who do not deem themselves to be community activists or politically engaged. This group does not actively participate in organised community groups and therefore can be neglected and inadvertently excluded from research, consultations and surveys.

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling techniques via personal, professional and social networks, utilising a range of strategies including word of mouth, attending events where potential participants gathered, such as study groups, charity events and religious festivals. As most events observed gender segregation, male participants were recruited through personal and professional male contacts, who promoted the study amongst their contacts. Also female contacts were asked to share the information amongst their male family members and asking them to share information more widely, amongst their networks.

Once interviews commenced the interviewees also facilitated the process of recruiting further respondents by sharing their experience of the interview and encouraging others to take part, this worked well in recruiting male members. It helped to demystify the expectations and requirements and increase trust and confidence, providing reassurance that it was a safe and relatively unobtrusive exercise. There appeared to be an appeal in the biographical interview approach, it was less threatening as no contentious questions were being asked about the current securitised climate.

It was the word of mouth strategy that snowballed via trusted, respected networks and the respondents, that offered reassurance and confidence, and individuals began to come forward.

Once individuals expressed an interest to take part in the study then a more formal follow-up contact was made and participants were sent the study information. Once participants had the opportunity to read the information, I contacted them again to address any

questions and concerns they had and if they were happy to proceed and a date, time and venue for the interview was subsequently confirmed.

Two individuals who had expressed an interest to take part in the study, withdrew before the interviews took, both were Muslims of African-Caribbean background. This is certainly a gap within the sample and the study findings.

In terms of power imbalance, the study focus was purely community based without any relationship between researcher and participants, where participants would feel obliged or coerced in anyway, including being reliant upon the researcher for a service or support, such as student/lecturer relationship, accessing health or social care services or community services. The researcher was not occupying any paid position, serving the community at the time of conducting the research (Isaacs 2014).

3.4.5 Data analysis

There are many different approaches to analysing qualitative date, with further challenges arising from a lack of distinct rules, which Henn et al (2008: P: 253) suggest *"can be liberating as there are no right or wrong approaches."* Unlike quantitative date, qualitative does not have a universally accepted set of conventions, however general approaches to qualitative data analysis do exist. These include, content analysis, narrative analysis and grounded theory and thematic analysis (Gray 2018, Henn et al 2009 and Robson and McCartan 2016).

As discussed in section 1.3 above, the study is located within the interpretivist paradigm, with a critical ethnography orientation and therefore a thematic data analysis strategy was employed in which the knowledge was constructed inductively. This was deemed the most appropriate method for analysing the data (Clarke and Braun 2015).

As a method, the flexibility of thematic analysis is argued to be compatible with a number of theoretical orientations within qualitative research, including grounded theory and ethnography as these too rely on coding and searching for themes as part of their analysis process (Kiger and Varpio 2020).

Thematic analysis, rooted in qualitative research values offers a non-positivist framework to interpret the data wherein researcher subjectivity is considered a resource for research rather than a threat or a bias. The recognition that meaning and knowledge is contextually situated and therefore partial and provisional requires researchers to self-consciously critique and appraise their subjectivity, known as reflexivity. The application of reflexivity in which researcher subjectivity is embraced emphasises the inherently interpretive practice of data analysis in qualitative research, wherein meaning is not fixed but partial and provisional. This sets it apart from a positivist paradigm in which notions of objective, correct and accurate interpretation is implied, but in reality questionable and considered impossible, as researcher influence and positionality can neither be neutralised or considered unbiased. Therefore in recognising the impact of the researcher in the research process, the potential value of subjectivity in the co-construction of data and findings can be an asset. A reflexive thematic data analysis approach offered me the opportunity to centre the voices of my participants by capitalising on my multiple identities and subjectivities (Braun and Clarke 2022). Valuing the unique knowledge, expertise and perspectives I bring to the process, I endeavoured not to reinforce the power dynamics and reproduce research findings that serve to sustain a racially hierarchised social system

Thematic analysis is a method for organising and making sense of a vast amount of qualitative data, usually in the form of text. The process of coding and developing themes to identify patterns across the data set offers a robust and systematic framework for data analysis and interpretation, which can then be linked to broader theoretical and conceptual issues (Braun and Clarke 2012). Codes and themes are generated organically from the data, through extensive engagement, developing codes and themes to show patterns (Miles et al 2020) and the observed unifying meaning being conveyed (Braun and Clarke 2022).

The primary source of data for this study was collected by in-depth interviews which were audio recorded. I transcribed two of the interviews but then a pragmatic decision was taken to procure the services of a professional transcriber, who signed a contract and confidentiality agreement to comply with data protection requirements. This allowed for transcription and interviews to be undertaken simultaneously, with phase one of the thematic analysis process commencing at the same time. I began data familiarisation by reading transcripts in conjunction with the audio interview, addressing any blank sections highlighted by the transcriber, who was unfamiliar with particular ethno-religious words, terminology, phrases or events.

Once transcripts were finalised, I re-read them and highlighted key words and sections of the interviews, making notes in the margins. I undertook manual data analysis, because I wanted to be immersed in the data, given that I had not transcribed the interviews.

I found three area's across which points of convergence and divergence, between male and female participants, between second and third generation participants and finally between visible and non-visible cues to the Muslim identity.

After a couple of readings of the transcripts, the data was made visible on flipchart, using post-it notes. The interviews were clustered into sets of five/six by male and female, so I had four bundles in total, two for men and two for women. This strategy of bundling helped to create a structure and make the data interrogation stage manageable. Initial codes for each interview within the bundle of five was then transferred on to a post-it note and placed on to flipchart sheet. That is for each bundle there were five sheets of flipchart, each corresponding to an interview and this facilitated the identification of patterns. At this stage I had a total of 30 sheets of flipchart, from which I started to sift and revise the initial codes, as well as identify points of convergence and divergence between men and women, thus reducing codes. Codes were further interrogated by generational variables and visible and invisible markers of identity, after which point themes were developed and reviewed. At the end of the process three flipchart sheets remained that signalled uniting meaning across the dataset but interrogation of the different facets of the data facilitated the formulation of sub-themes. I also made notes during the process and developed unique identifiers so that I could retrieve the original transcripts and select specific excerpts for the next stage of the process. I applied a critical lens to interrogate the themes and patterns, contextualising the personal and social meaning in the construction of the themes and sub-themes.

The processes and conditions which are performative in the process of external racialised identity constructions, was a thread that ran through the dataset. The meaning participants attached to this was one of "otherness" and thus became the overarching theme of chapter, four. A further two sub-themes were developed around how participants described their lived experiences of being othered. The sub-themes were developed from examination of the data by generational cohorts as well as gender and ethnicity, allowed for points of convergence and divergence in shifts in external identity construction to be contextualised within the wider socio-political climate, bringing to the fore structural issues. Themes two and three, form chapters five and six, respectively, were developed from participant's narrative, describing the impact of external identity inscriptions. Sub-themes, within these two chapters were developed to demonstrate the real and tangible manifestations of external identity constructions, and how participant's and their families circumnavigated the

impact. Theme two, frames chapter five and specifically addresses the impact of external ethnoracial identity inscription, unanimously described as racism. Whilst theme three, frames chapter six and attends to the consequences and impact of a Muslim identity, which participants unanimously described as Islamophobia. The examination of the real and tangible manifestations of racism and Islamophobia, the impact as well as a range of compensatory strategies deployed by participants, shaped the development of the sub-themes.

Comparing and contrasting the data by generational cohort, gender, ethnicity, religiosity and cues to perceived Muslimness, facilitated examination of the strength of ethnoracial versus religious characteristics that were performative in participant's discrimination experience. Explicating structural and institutionalised processes of racialisation and the shifts in the construct of race and ethnicity and corollary, racism overtime, as discussed within the findings chapters.

Throughout the analysis process I drew upon my supervision team and critical friends to reflect on the process of constructing themes and sub-themes, all the while checking my assumptions, an ethical imperative in representing the voices of racially minoritised groups. I could not take for granted my "insider" positionality and the extent to which this had been adulterated by internalised racism, potentially threatening the critical inquiry lens and impeding social justice endeavours.

In the next chapter my findings are presented not as a descriptive and explanatory account of the data analysis but rather an interpretive discussion is provided. (Miles et al 2020)

3.4.6 Validity and Reliability

As was noted earlier qualitative research is often criticised for lacking scientific rigour and whether the findings of the study accurately reflect the phenomena under investigation. According to Miles et al (2020 p: 3):

> *"Findings from well analysed qualitative studies have a quality of undeniability"*

There is an ethical imperative to render the accounts to scrutiny to ensure acceptance of findings, as qualitative research has real consequences for people's lives. However it is well accepted that certain criteria such as generalisation to theory are not appropriate as theories in qualitative research are inductively developed. In small scale studies, theory does not always emerge but rather the findings offer an alternative perspective to

hegemonic discourses. An alternative to generalisability is transferability of the findings and interpretations. This approach, to assessing trustworthiness and authenticity, pertains to the transfer of knowledge from the study to a specific new situation and as such the findings are not determined by the discovery of the general conditions under which they are valid, but instead how they can be used and generalised by the reader. However in order for this to happen the researcher is required to make explicit the key features and details for how the study was conducted, for the reader to asses applicability to other cases (Maxwell and Chmiel 2013, Silverman 2014, Miles et al 2020).

It is important to note that validity is a contested term amongst some qualitative researchers, as it is a quantitative construct, and alternative terms such as *"verisimilitude and a persuasively written account"* (Miles et al 2020 p: 306) are preferred. Nevertheless the term validity is widely acceptable as it denotes a rigorous stance. But whichever term is used, it fundamentally relates to the issue of whether findings make sense and the two main approaches for the researcher to demonstrate validity is through internal and external validity.

Internal validity was achieved by centring the voices of the participants, I attached significance to the narratives, interpretations and meanings shared by the respondents and these were then discussed and contextualised within the wider literature to present a persuasive account. A key aspect of internal validity was whether consciously or unconsciously respondents altered or modified what they said and this can be a particular issue when sensitive topics are under investigation. However this was addressed by building rapport and my insider positionality as a fellow Muslim with a shared understanding of the issues and challenges, helped to reduce this effect. Also trust was a key element, whilst the majority of the respondents recounted personal encounters, a few did depersonalise aspects of the interview, recounting indirect examples to talk about the challenges facing the Muslim community more generally. Nevertheless it was the interpretations and meanings of the respondents that were foregrounded in the analysis and findings. So the construction of reality was inductively generated and my positionality as an insider, which has been explicated earlier, facilitated, rapport and trust, with respondents feeling safe and secure to reveal their world to me. I remained critical and reflexive throughout the process, checking for not only for my biases but also subjectivities which as discussed are considered a resource and which could steer the perspectives and voices of the participants (Henn et al 2009, Miles et al 2020). Internal validity was also achieved by classifying each interview as a case and the looking for patterns from which a level of consistency emerged across the data set, to formulate themes and develop a coherent and persuasive account.

External validity on the other hand, was achieved by making observations to illuminate reality, drawing on the literature to provide more transferable applicability of the findings. Also a key aspect of external validity is the detailed account of the processes, sample, settings and instruments used, as well as the theoretical underpinnings of the methodology and methods, including data analysis, so comparisons with other samples can be adequately made. These have been documented in this chapter, thus helping to fulfill the reliability criteria. I inductively reconstructed each respondent's reality, meaning and interpretation of the accounts and compared these with each participant. I started with small data sets, isolating by gender, then comparing contrasting the data within and across men and women, as well as within generational cohorts and then across general cohorts and finally by visible and invisible identity markers. This comparative approach illuminated points of convergence and divergence within the findings between and across the different cohorts of participants to address validity and reliability requirements (Silverman 2014, Miles et al 2020).

3.4.7 Reflexivity

In providing a comprehensive account of my positionality and embodied subjectivities at the outset, within this chapter, I acknowledged my partiality. Throughout the chapter, particularly within the methods section I attempted to intersperse a reflexive examination of my positionality and its impact on my research practice and ultimately the situating of the findings. Here I would like to offer some observations on the overall process and my positionality, as at times I was both an insider and outsider, for instance, an outsider to the unique context and reality of the male respondents. However some scholars in the field, as noted by Ross (2017) caution against such binary distinctions and suggest partiality should be conceived so as to recognise the simultaneous and shifting aspects of commonalities and differences between the researcher and the researched.

A noteworthy observation is that that the majority of participants within the broad category of Muslim, shared some deeply traumatic encounters, to reveal the unique forms in which they were experiencing the external inscriptions of a Muslim identity. When considered reflexively, it points to the strengths as an insider, in, designing methods which created a safe space for respondents to share deeply distressing encounters of discrimination and oppression. I was empathetic and compassionate and given my insider positionality, sharing similar, though not the same experiences, meant that there was a validation rather than undermining, devaluing or judging of the respondent's experience. So the shared-ness of our marginal positionalities, minimised age and gender differences. This was found

to be the case with other interviewees too, where difference existed, for example between myself and the females who did not display any visible cues to their Muslimness. Therefore the self-ascribed Muslim identity was the common ground from which rapport, trust and confidence was build, as opposed to levels of religiosity. This was evident, during the interviews, with respondents, quite frequently using the phrase “you know what it’s like”, the sense of being understood, reduced the emotional drain of explaining and justifying encounters and associated feelings of not being understood or believed. However, I was careful not curtail the conversation by such statements and therefore, sensitively used probes and prompts to clarify meanings and impact, so as not to make assumptions and weaken the data and subsequent findings.

I observed a therapeutic value of the interview, as contended by Rossetto (2014). In sharing encounters of racism and Islamophobia, though distressing, there was an element of emotional release as for many interviewee’s, it was the first time they were talking about the incident. Though there were variable levels of distressing encounters shared across the interviews, the therapeutic value was consistently found across all. At the end of each interview, the interviewee’s thanked me for the opportunity to take part and commented on how they valued the time and space to think about issues which they had not given much thought to previously. Often the conversation, about some of the issues raised during the interview continued after the interview had been terminated, suggesting that the participants were at ease and felt comfortable to talk. Such exchanges illustrated how the insider positionality was critical in shaping the research process and facilitating access to participants and acceptability of the researcher by the participants.

The insider positionality was also found to be critical in reducing anxieties and tensions that can arise from the participants perceived stance of the researcher in relation to the wider social, political and cultural context of the research (Lusambili et al 2020). As discussed at the outset of this chapter and also in chapter one, Muslims, globally have been represented in dominant discourses as the “other”. The declaration of “War on Terror” post 9/11 and the ensuing counter-terrorism measures, targeting Muslims specifically as a terror threat has created a “them and us” narrative that denies Muslims recourse to racialised discriminatory discourses that constrict lives in multifarious ways. Including, negatively impacting inter and intra community relationships due to the governments Prevent strategy. Both are problematic as they undermine relationships, particularly trust, with implications for research, given that Muslim participation in public life is governed and the Muslim voice at best marginalised and worst silenced. I do not claim that only an insider, someone who has direct experience or consciousness of the challenges being encountered, can gain access to and trust of the Muslim community. Or that only an insider can truly understand, interpret

and construct meaning from the data to dislocate hegemonic certitudes. My personal positioning as a Muslim researcher who has direct experience of a highly securitised and surveilled environment, implicated indirectly with terrorism and categorised as a suspect, for whom innocent until proven guilty is juxtaposed, is the context that offers unique subjectivities and insider perspective. It is a resource that I have drawn upon in all stages of the research process, serving me well not only to recruit participants but more critically to understand and create the necessary safe and secure space for meaningful conversation to take place. And for participants to have the confidence to share their reality, safe in the knowledge that it would not be misconstrued or used to further augment racialised stereotypes and importantly not to be conceived and reported to relevant authorities as extremist for expressing natural frustrations of the socio-political environment. The shared Muslim identity generated a sense of belonging and identification from which relationships of equals were forged and the interviews can be described as humanising encounters in an otherwise dehumanising socio-political context. That said as noted in the previous section, I did not take for granted my insider positionality and as such I remained critical of my decisions throughout the various stages of the research process, specific reflections pertaining to the different stages have been interspersed within this chapter as well specifically addressed in relevant sections.

Finally, my position as full-time student conducting the research as part of a programme of study, was received positively and engagement with the study was found to be motivated by supporting my academic aspirations. The PhD, though funded by the University, its bursary status functioned to position me as a student as opposed to a researcher, working for or on behalf of the University. Also, I was not attached to any public, private or community sector organisation in a paid work capacity. These factors democratised the process, reducing power differentials and provided greater acceptability of both me and my research at a time when the community was under intense scrutiny.

3.5 Chapter Summary

The chapter as presented the methodological framework for the study, detailing the specific methods for conducting the research, the decisions and the rationale for the particular strategies employed. I provided details of the research instruments utilised for recruitment, data collection and analysis whilst critically reflecting on my position and how I remained cognisant of the complexities and sensitivities surrounding the topic and the themes under investigation. I began with my personal and professional biography which provided the context and motivation for the study. In positioning myself in the research from the outset I explicated my lived experiences and how they have come to shape my world view and

the values and assumptions that I bring to the research process. In so doing, I critically engaged with the theoretical orientations which defined my methodological approach.

Chapter Four. Forever the Other: From Paki to Terrorist. Shifts in External Identity Constructions

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the detailed analysis of the research participants, lived experiences of how their identities have been constructed and understood by others, particularly those from the white majority, non-Muslim group. The chapter offers an insider perspective on the multiple and complex ways in which race is inscribed to create an inferior other and specifically addresses research objective one of the study.

The processes and conditions which are performative in the process of external racialised identity constructions, emerged as a cogent theme within the data, and as such are the focus of this chapter, expounded through two sub-themes which developed during the analysis process. The empirical data revealed how critical signifiers from which participants experienced their identity being constructed by the majority, non-Muslim, White group had shifted overtime and was strongly correlated with socio-political contextual factors.

In organising the chapter around the two sub-themes a comprehensive and coherent narrative is provided to illuminate the overall primary theme of “forever the other” and advance understanding of how meaning, attached to ethno-cultural and religious symbols, is imbued with negativity that promotes social cleavages. The data reveals the mechanisms, processes and conditions which propagate othering, the bedrock of oppressive and discriminatory treatment, the consequences of which are marginality, exclusion and ultimately inequalities; the tangible manifestations and impact of which are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

The specific sub-themes within this chapter are:

- “Everyone was a Paki”: Biological and cultural markers of identity
- The Emergence of a Muslim Identity

The first sub-theme pertaining to biological and cultural markers of identity is particularly substantive, as it begins by comparing and contrasting the intergenerational experiences of growing up as members of a visible minority group during different time periods. This elucidates the external socio-political contextual factors in identity construction and how these impact interactions that lead to othering.

The chapter than moves on to present and discuss the findings relating to the second sub-theme which emerged as being central to the overall primary theme of “forever the other.” It specifically addresses the issue of how visibility extends beyond the epidermal conceptualisation of race, as cultural and religious cues are shown to be integral in fixing and essentialising identity, and racialising bodies beyond the biological concept of race and racism The empirical data demonstrates the utility of threat discourses and their historical continuities in racialising a range of specific religious and non-religious signifiers to mark out and problematise Muslim bodies, to uncover the contemporary racialised and gendered representations of Muslims within Western global hegemonic discourses. The findings also reveal how ordinary everyday mundane motifs and acts come to represent a racialised threat, on an individual perceived to be Muslim, highlighting the challenges this presents for wider visible racialised minority groups, due to misrecognition, but also how this can create multiple levels of social distancing to further exacerbate the exclusion and marginalisation experienced by the Muslim community.

Overall the chapter provides compelling evidence of the processes by which participants have experienced the reconfiguration of their identities, over the life course. The chapter presents the biographical accounts of participants, encounters with negative identity inscriptions, as they progressed through different stages of life. The intergenerational shifts and changes found in the data reveals exposure to sustained stigmatisation of identities, albeit mechanisms and processes were found to have changed. Though a shift from race, ethnicity to religious identity categorisation emerged within the data, the findings revealed how these changes did little to mitigate against the strategies employed by the dominant powerful group to sustain a racial hierarchy through which ethnoreligious inequalities are structured.

Research into the complex interplay between race, ethnicity and religion in the construction of racialised identities and consequently racial discrimination, still remains in its infancy when examining the Muslim experience, particularly within the field of sociology of health and illness (Padela and Zaidi 2018). As Cainkar and Selod (2018) contend, 9/11 did not create racialised Muslims, as such it is important that any analysis and discussion of the lived racialised experiences of the participants in respect of external identity inscriptions is situated and examined within the historical context of racial ideology which has come to structure Western societies. As Elias and Paradies (2021) contend: “*By merely maintaining existing structures, laws, and social norms, society can impose social, economic, and health costs on racial minorities that impinge on their well-being and human dignity”* (P: 45).

4.2 “Everyone was a Paki”: Biological and Cultural Markers of Identity

In comparing and contrasting the generational and gendered experiences of the participant’s, points of convergence and divergence were found in relation to external identity inscriptions. This section begins with an examination of the participants’ accounts of their experiences of growing up as members of a visible minority group and the key signifiers and markers of identity that were critical in marker them out as the other and how this has shifted overtime.

The second generation cohort of participants, overwhelmingly reported the centering of a racial identity based on the biological conceptualisation of race, over a faith based identity, as they were growing up in the 1960’s and 1970’s. Skin colour served as a primary marker of identity and was found to be imbued with racial meanings, namely inferiority of non-white groups and consequently, the basis of othering and racially motivated oppressive and discriminatory treatment.

Though an overarching binary categorisation of race as white versus non-white emerged within the findings, two distinct racial slurs “Paki” and the “N” word were found to be widely in circulation at the time, demonstrating that differentiations between non-white groups were being made. Non-white groups were crudely assigned into two sub-categories but ultimately both sub-categories marked out and symbolised a racial inferior, other, under the umbrella category of non-white.

> “…we were called Pakis a lot by the adults. I remember Martin, I can’t remember his surname…he used to call us Pakis a lot and he was quite rude, he used to shout, get those Pakis out and things like that…” (Irum)

> “…then equally there was a lot of racism…purely it was just for [the] colour of your skin and being a Paki…Indians were called that, Bangladeshi’s, Sri Lankans…if you were Asian you were called a Paki…black people were called the “N” word…I don’t think religion came in to it, religion came into it a lot later…” (Ahmad)

The slur “Paki” is illustrative of how the white gaze fixed the identity of the participants, with non-whiteness, functioning to convey otherness and inferiority, with implicit reference to cultural practices deemed as deviant from the majority white culture and as such specific religious distinctions were not found to be drawn out within racial slurring expressions. In interrogating the narratives of the participants, it is apparent that no specific religious group,

from amongst the racial minority communities was singled out for discriminatory treatment and perhaps this point is best demonstrated by the racism experienced by African Caribbean population in the UK, who, in the main, are followers of Christianity, the official religion of the host country (Council for Christian Unity 2014, Shafiq et al 2020). Thus it is judicial to make an inference from the data, that religious affiliation was not performative in identity construction of the participants as demonstrated by respondent narratives below:

> "…There was a strong sense of Pakistani identity, being an ethnic minority, because we dress differently, but you couldn't tell a Pakistani woman from an Indian woman or a Sikh woman, because they all used to wear the dupatta on their head..." (Alyesha)

> "…I grew up in [area], there were very few ethnic minorities…well I know for a fact that most of my friends and most of the people I engaged with didn't know I was Muslim and they probably didn't know what Islam was and I didn't express it or I didn't talk about it…there were no Muslims in schools in primary or secondary school…I remember fasting and not telling my friends …they wouldn't have understood and they probably would have been judgemental or I don't know…" (Ikram)

> "…I was less aware of being a Muslim child than I was of being a Pakistani child, because at that time I think I didn't really know about it but there was a lot of, racism was rife when I was growing up…I was aware that…my clothes were different from my other English friends…our food was different at home, I was very aware of being Pakistani when I was growing up…" (Mahnoor)

> "….It's difficult isn't to separate because you are born Muslim but you are also from Pakistani heritage, so growing up…the differences were there…because as a child we wouldn't outwardly [be] practising Muslims, so nobody would think we were Muslim, but we were brown so if we are basing it on that, yes I mean…racism was part of growing up…" (Mahmoona)

The Muslim identity did not emerge as being a primary source of contention of racial tensions during the 1960's and 1970's, as the distinction between culture and religion was not visibly distinguishable. Whilst men dressed in western attire in public spaces, the attire of the first generation Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim women reflected the shared cultural heritage of migrants from the Indian sub-continent. But more critically, given the context of the prevailing white/non-white dichotomous racial discourse of the time, support

for white racial superiority and non-white inferiority logic, was not dependent upon specific differences between the non-white groups. And against this backdrop, accommodation of religious and cultural requirements was inconceivable, forcing the first generation migrants and their children to assimilate or be excluded, as discussed in the next chapter.

The narratives reveal how people of brown skin tone were all referred to as Paki's, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious heterogeneity, whilst people of African Caribbean backgrounds, were referred to, by the Latin word for the colour black. Whilst the literal words in both cases can be argued to be descriptive and thus harmless, it is the concepts and connotations associated with them that are considered destructive. The slurs express an emotion, conveying contempt towards the target group, functioning as a powerful weapon to not only disparage but also maintain and reinforce a social hierarchy (O'Dea and Saucier 2020). Painter (2010) argues that such terms have served to function throughout history in the othering, inferiorising and subjugation of people by elevating the dominant group with a lighter skin tone.

As is evident from the narratives above, the second generation participants overwhelmingly reported experiencing racial slurring, which were perceived to convey disdain, derogation and prejudicial views and an overt expression of racism. The findings explicate how the racial slur was not only a descriptively inaccurate word, as it implied homogeneity of all brown people, but the term was value-laden, eliciting negative, stereotypical perceptions of a non-white racial group, reinforcing the superiority of the dominant, white social group and a justification for discriminatory behaviour (O'Dea et al 2021). Racial slurs are argued to be a form of hate speech, embedded in social roles, functioning to alter the discourse role of the target and speaker to convey a power imbalance with various effects beyond offence, as it is correlated with wider injustices. Racial slurring utterances are not only expressions of contempt and disdain, as hate speech would suggest but are also considered oppressive speech, as they draw on historical and contemporary racial ideological frames through which oppression has come to be institutionalised. Racial slurring is performative in assigning social roles to individuals and groups in society to communicate social status and structure social interactions to create and maintain unjust power imbalances (Popa-Wyatt and Wyatt 2018).

The findings suggest that role assignment, arising from racial slur utterances, is inextricably linked with social identity constructions. It can be inferred that invocation to ethnoracial identity reported by the study participants in the slurring utterances, was situated within the wider hegemonic discourses of a racialised system that generated dehumanising narratives of visible minority groups. The individual acts of racist abuse and discrimination,

experienced by the study participants and their families must be contextualised within the prevailing mainstream political economy which cast racialised minority groups as the undeserving, who are a drain on public resources, as exemplified by the infamous “rivers of blood speech” delivered by the Conservative MP Enoch Powell in 1969. The speech deployed the immigrant threat trope to embody fear of the other in the public imagination to garner opposition to the 1968 immigration bill. Interestingly the case for closing borders and restricting UK citizenship to Commonwealth citizens was also foregrounded on arguments about pressures on public services and race related tensions, but perhaps in a less overt racist tone employed by Enoch Powell; who five years earlier, as the Health Minister, launched a campaign to recruit trained doctors from overseas in an attempt to meet the NHS labour shortages (Chouhan and Nazroo 2020, Tomlinson 2018). Therefore the encounters of racism reported by the respondents and discussed further in the next chapter, illustrates the relationship between the micro, everyday constitution of macro level forces of racial capitalism and the political economies of race and racism “*in the construction of hierarchies of lives which are more or less disposable”* (Ali and Whitham 2021 p:197). This is illustrated by the narratives of Shakoor and Ahmad, who in attempting to expound the individual level racial discrimination they encountered as children through examples of the commonly used slurs and making reference to particular groups, critical insights to the wider socio-political climate of the time can be distilled.

> “…being a Pakistani, we would get called Paki…people calling Paki bashing or we going Paki bashing…but that wasn’t against my religion that was against my ethnicity…” (Shakoor)

> “…you just accepted it that's a by-product of living in this country…at that time there were skinheads there were mods and you just knew there were going to be areas of trouble…” (Ahmad)

Individually mediated acts to express aversion through the use of racial slurs were found to be perceived as a normal and acceptable part of the majority vernacular. This points to the political conditions within which racism was widespread, normalised and rendered acceptable, creating fertile ground for organised right-wing, nationalist groups to occupy central mainstream positions. The specific reference to the term “Paki bashing” by Shakoor is found to be associated with far-right factions of the skinhead subculture, as alluded to by Ahmad. It is important to note that there exists a counter-narrative to the corollary skinhead culture and right-wing ideology (Pollard 2016, Borgeson and Valerie 2017)), however a critique of the skinhead subculture, its genesis and how it came to connote right-wing ideology is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, it can be reasonably deduced,

by the specific references made to skinheads and Paki bashing, that overt racism was operationalised within a wider racist ideological frame, which drew on biological characters to create an aggressive and violent culture and a hostile climate. A consensus was found amongst the second generation participants, that it was the Asian, Pakistani identity, which was the cause of the hostility and insults they suffered, ranging from name calling and verbal abuse to physical abuse and in some instances arson attacks.

> "…some of our neighbours were racist…so Mr C…would come out and tell us off, or shout at us and threaten us…I think the hardest thing of growing up as a child in this country was more to do with racism…a guy called GM used to you know give us racist abuse when we were playing in the street…and at one stage he tried to shove fireworks through the letter box…race was at the time quite in your face, it was open…people were quite happy to call you a Paki…smelly Paki's…" (Amjid 53)

The direct and indirect experiences of bullying, intimidation, harassment and physical assaults, recounted by many of the participants, suggests that the participants' childhood and youth was marred with actual and perceived fear and threat of racially motivated verbal abuse and physical violence. Such early childhood exposure to overt racism has been found to be detrimental to physical and mental health, with long lasting consequences to impact multiple domains of health in later life years of racialised minority groups (Bernard et al 2020 and Shepherd et al 2017). The assigning of values based on social interpretations of visible cues in formulating racialised identities has been found to structure the disadvantaged position within society of racialised minority groups over the life course. Increased exposure to adverse childhood experiences, such as poverty and related social and economic disadvantage including poor educational opportunities, have been found to contribute to poorer health outcomes (Trent et al 2019). Racism is recognised as an independent variable for adverse childhood experience (ACE), adversely impacting the building blocks of optimal health and life long wellbeing and exacerbating health inequalities (Shonkoff et al 2021). Felitti and colleagues pioneered the ACE model in 1998, proposing mechanisms and processes to describe links with early life adversity and later life poor health across the lifespan. Research evidence over the years has consistently supported the association between ACE's and increased risk of adverse biopsychosocial outcomes, including health harming behaviours such as smoking (Boullier and Blair 2018, Hays-Grudo 2020,). However there are calls for the ACE model to take a more culturally informed perspective and for the model to be extended to include the multifaceted nature of racism, particularly institutional and systemic racism, as an adverse childhood experience, to deepen understanding about ethnoracial and religious drivers of health

inequalities in order to develop appropriate public health policy and practice responses (Lanier 2020, Bernard et al 2021).

It is important to highlight that the participants were cognisant at an early age, that skin colour and cultural differences in apparel and food, determined the negative interactions and relationships with the white majority community.

> "…I was very aware of being Pakistani when I was growing up… my clothes were different…our food was different…it felt like being picked on actually so you knew kind of actually you are different…different in a bad way, it wasn't different in a good way…" (Mahnoor)

> "…I think most of my childhood I think we felt isolated is the way I would describe it because we didn't fit in anywhere…" (Farzana)

Disparagement and lack of acceptance of ethno-cultural differences can be elicited by the encounters reported by the respondents. The negative encounters, communicated an oppositional social value positionality. In recalling those childhood memories, deep emotional distress was evoked relating to not being accepted, being othered, and feeling a sense of isolation and inferiority. The findings reveal the participants lived experiences of how they were relationally configured in social spaces, reflecting the socio-political context, symbolising a power relationship to structure their subordinate positionality, through negative social identity inscriptions.

According to Benner et al (2018) discrimination based on racial and ethnic differences is recognised at an early age and this can have adverse consequences for growth and development. Their study examined the links between perceived racial discrimination and health and wellbeing, among adolescents. The findings revealed a consistent link between perceived racial/ethnic discrimination and lower self-esteem, depression and overall negative consequences for wellbeing, with adverse consequences for academic performance. The authors argue, that the strength of effect of racial/ethnic discrimination on adolescents to be of particular concern given the long-term linkages between depression and anxiety as well as subsequent morbidity and mortality rates in later life course. This reinforces the calls to expand the ACE model to include racial discrimination as an adverse childhood experience as discussed earlier.

The findings also highlight the complex and multifaceted dimensions involved in racial categorisation. Whilst skin colour served as a primary predicator of race, a physical marker

of difference and an entry point in to the world of the "other", cultural traits, were also judged and assessments formulated regarding deviation from the white majority norm to construct aberrant and stigmatised identities. What is particularly notable within the findings is that visible somatic characters such as skin colour and the negatively associated inherent biological disposition purported by race science were interwoven with visible cultural practices and customs such as the female cultural attire relating to the Indian subcontinent, or the aroma of traditional food. These cues magnified differences and were used in marking out the other to configure a socially unacceptable identity. This was evident from the data, as participants reported being called "Smelly Paki" (see Amjid's quote above), or being reported to environmental health for the cooking aroma of curries (see Farzana's quote below). The findings reveal how cultural characteristics were mobilised to further draw attention to differences, as Mahnoor notes above, these differences were not evaluative neutral but rather imbued with negative meaning such that disapproval and aversion was openly expressed to create an "us" and "them" serving to reinforce and rationalise a social status hierarchy.

> "…So for example once the not very nice neighbour complained about the smell of our cooking to environmental health…" (Farzana)

The emotional stress induced by recalling childhood memories of exposure to overt racism and discrimination was evident during the interviews, particularly notable was the "ever presence" of the historical encounter, raising issues of potential consequences of intensification when having to contend with further similar but not same events. This point arises from the analysis of Nazia's narrative below. Nazia's narrative also speaks to the current rhetoric of parallel lives and segregation levied, particularly against the Pakistani Muslim community, which is explored and built upon further and discussed in the next chapter. A counter-narrative was found within the findings as respondents narratives highlight the attempts made by the first generation to build relationships with the majority community. This again is further elaborated upon in the next chapter which explores coping strategies deployed to mediate the impact of racism which have come to be weaponised against racialised groups.

> "…I had a friend who I got to know at secondary school called Gemma and she was an English girl…I remember going over to her house… my mum and dad didn't have a problem with it…I remember her mum never liking me…I think that was the first time I felt a bit oh...why does she not like me, is it because of the colour of my skin… she was taking out a lot of her frustrations at anybody around her who was

> then brown… it's very interesting 37 years down the line I can feel that emotion of how she would make me feel uncomfortable and different…" (Nazia)

As Nazia ruminates of her childhood experiences, she recalls becoming cognisant at an early age that the colour of her skin was determining who she could befriend. She states that although her parents did not restrict her from forging friendships outside of own ethnoracial/religious group, she encountered hostilities from her friend's parents, which she perceived were due to the colour of her skin. This assertion is qualified by Nazia, as she states that her friend's mother would vent her frustrations upon all the brown people in the area. As a child it would have been difficult for Nazia to understand or identify the underlying causes of the frustrations but the fact that Nazia remembers that brown people were singled out as the target is instructive. A possible explanation could be the increasing number of brown people in the neighbourhood, invoking feelings of threat, anxiety and fear, implanted by the negative representations and stereotypes that were widely circulating in society at the time. So whilst the host community may never have come into contact with racially minoritised groups before, an image, imbued with aberration had been sown by hegemonic discourses of the racially other that rationalised fear and justified overt racial hostilities.

Nazia expresses how, that memory still evoked the deep emotions she felt at the time of not being accepted and being othered, and the sense of inferiority that it generated.

In considering the wider socio-political climate of the 1960's and 1970's, the findings suggest the normalisation of overt expressions of racism. The data highlights how identity inscriptions were imposed and stereotypes were widely circulated through the negative representation of visibly minority ethnic groups within mainstream media.

> "…you accepted that because there were satirical programmes and comedy programmes which reinforced that, and those stereotypes were accepted…you laughed and joined in with them…[programmes such as] Love Thy Neighbour, Curry and Chips, Mind Your Language, the Black and White Minstrel Show…we watched it…not because it wasn't wrong but we never thought it was wrong…it's about what your concept of things are…we used wrong terminology in those days…that's what society was calling everybody..." (Ahmad 60)

Ahmad makes a critical observation about the acceptability and endorsement of racial discrimination within the socio-political spheres of British society through the airing of popular comedy programmes on national television. He suggests the programmes reinforced racist stereotypes, upheld the established racial hierarchies and validated the

concerns and fears of the general public about migrants, providing justification for the expression of discriminatory behaviours. Ahmad's narrative finds resonance in the racial discourse literature on the issues of comedy and satire which highlights the complex structures and power relationships that create a political and social hegemonic context within which popular racial discourse is framed and presented as comedy serving to legitimise a racist system (Mudambi 2019). Whilst there are claims that the programs were racial satire functioning to be critical of the prejudicial and racist views of the host community, in reality it is argued that comedy of the 1960's and 1970's presented Black and Asian people to be problematic thus justifying and making acceptable racist views and behaviours, within society (Petzold 2016, Ilott 2019).

In addition it highlights how hegemonic racial discourses function in the process of internalising racism to impact racial identity beliefs of racial minority groups. As Ahmad notes the concept of self-identity was strongly shaped by the wider ideological conceptualisations of race, which actively promoted messages about the inherent inferiority of non-white racial minority groups. Thus it appears that participants were socialised to accept the negative stereotypes about the self and the racial superiority of the white majority group. Such sentiments were evident across the data for the second generation participants and can be elicited from the selected quotes above from which an inference to the internalisation of racism at a young age can be made. As Mahnoor states *"different in a bad way"* (see full quote above). The unfavourable representation of cultural practices and behaviours of racial minority groups, within mainstream media, served to devalue non-white normativity on the grounds of deviation from hegemonic norms, which is shown to increase dissonance and distress for racialised minority groups, with negative consequences for mental health and wellbeing (Willis et al 2021).

In analysing the data and comparing the intergenerational experiences of the second and third generation participants, a contrasting picture emerges, which is discussed next.

4.2.1 Ethnicity, Multiculturalism and a Post-Racial Experience

Whilst the second generation participants narrated encounters of being subjected to overt forms of racial discrimination on the grounds of their visible identities, the third generation participants reported growing up in a more convivial environment.

> "….I grew up in an area… very multicultural very different areas of ethnicity there… everyone was friendly…you would be out on the streets and play with different

children, English children, white children, black children, everyone would be playing together…" (Haroon)

"…we could play on the streets and we could play cricket and the whole neighbourhood the whole street used to be there…we used to play cricket, football, get on our bikes and go to the next person's house. The doors used to be open, bikes outside just go in come out, it used to be really nice, it's like a proper community feeling…" (Yousef)

"…So growing up was really nice. Looking back now probably wasn't the nicest of areas to have grown up in, quite what would be considered rough and ready, quite deprived. But it was great as a child, you grew up you felt safe, you knew all the kids on the road, they were your friends at school. And the older kids were just their brothers, it was brilliant, it was a really nice time it was good fun, it was a good laugh. There was a park nearby and that's where we used to spend most of our summers and weekends…" (Fawad 31)

It is interesting to note that the third generation participants' recollections of their childhood, evoked nostalgic memories, conveying overwhelmingly positive emotions of a time and place when they were happy and felt safe and secure. This is in stark contrast to the encounters reported by the second generation, suggesting that visible non-white identity characteristics were not being experienced as problematic by the third generation participants. As such the feelings of inferiority, isolation and othering reported by the second generation were not manifest in the third generation narratives.

"…the area I grew up in was it had a good mix…there was no racism…everybody was out on the street and they were out on the street until whatever time…as such I think my son and my daughter I kind of feel bad for them because I don't think they will have that now, because I live in a different area…" (Amir)

"…we've got a multicultural society…my friendship group was quite mixed…my best friends, weren't only Muslims that I had and I had close friends who were from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds….that wasn't a conscious decision…" (Tariq)

The findings suggest that overt expressions of racism and the hostilities suffered by the second generation respondents were not experienced by the third generation participants, from which it can be inferred that ethnoracial identities were not being inferiorised,

stigmatised and positioned as oppositional. The data revealed a greater level of inter-ethnoracial formation of friendships and mixing, facilitated by a socialisation process in which ethnoracial characteristics were not imbued with negative meaning. This provides critical insights to the ways in which racism is defined, conceptualised, characterised and articulated within society, influencing popular and lay ideas about race and a post-racial society. According to the findings, the policy shift from race to ethnicity and associated cultural characteristics appears to have normalised differences, perceived by the respondents to be a positive development, and the decline in overt expressions of racism creating a semblance of a post-racial society.

The positive experiences of growing up as a visible minority ethnic individual during the 1980's and 1990's, reported by the third generation cohort, arguably reflects developments in race relations legislation in Britain in the intervening years between the two periods that were contrasted within the study. The Race Relations Act (RRA) of 1965, though limited in its scope, was the first major legislation which recognised, and sought to prohibit, racial discrimination. The limitations and weaknesses of the Act lead to further revisions and amendments, culminating in the RRA of 1976 (Brown 2018). This legislative framework was operationalised through a multicultural policy approach, which sought to promote racial equality through the recognition and accommodation of cultural and religious requirements (Modood 2019). The narratives of the third generation participants above, demonstrate the success of such legislative and multiculturalist policy developments in facilitating interactions between diverse cultural groups and promoting equality. Groups historically marked out by physical and cultural differences were no longer being deemed alien or strange and treated unfavourably but rather, differences were reportedly celebrated and incorporated within mainstream institutions.

The narratives of the third generation were endorsed by the second generation cohort of respondents, who also reported that the situation had improved, as they compared and contrasted their own experiences to that for their children. They felt overt and direct encounters of racial discrimination had significantly reduced and that there was a greater level of accommodation and acceptance within public institutions, particularly schools, of cultural and religious needs.

> "…yes definitely absolutely they have changed completely…now it's more acceptable to be different…to be of a different faith the way you look it really doesn't matter…They don't have that feeling of being frightened or being cast aside you know if they are different..." (Aisha)

> "…I think there is a lot more in the curriculum and teachers are more aware so in terms of schools there is more of an effort to make it easier for children from different ethnicities to integrate…their [children's] friends are more aware of their cultural or religious needs…" (Mahnoor)

> "…I can't see my daughters ever feeling left out because of their ethnicity or their religious needs, schools have been quite responsive in that sense…" (Irum)

Thus in a commitment to achieve racial equality, legislation, policy and practice approaches were found to have reduced a sense of alienation, inferiority and othering. This appears to have improved the perception amongst respondents of a convivial relationship with the dominant group, suggesting that race did not divide. However it cannot be delineated from the findings that efforts to celebrate diversity through policy and practice lead to improvements in socio-economic conditions for racialised minority groups. As Bhopal (2018) contends neoliberal policy approaches, in their attempt to demonstrate inclusivity, have, in reality, concealed the processes and mechanisms through which racism, marginalisation and exclusion operate, thus perpetuating inequalities that have been found to consistently persist for Black and racialised minority groups. The post-racial narrative propagated in contemporary discourses, identify individual merit and cultural differences as explanations for racial inequalities, an assertion found in the Sewell report (2020). The report has received widespread condemnation from race conscious scholars, as well as UN human rights experts who note the report's narrow and outdated concept of race and racism and its failure to recognise root causes of racial inequalities as arising from structural and institutionalised practices of discrimination (OHCHR 2021). Tangible examples of discriminatory and exclusionary practices and their consequences were found within the data and are presented and discussed in the next chapter. But a particularly relevant example relating to shifts in identity inscriptions due to changes in ethnoracial categorisation, demonstrates the durability of othering discourses, devoid of biological invocations that creates semblance of post-racial society, which in reality does not exist.

Although the data for the third generation cohort, pointed to a decline in overt forms of racial discrimination, at an interpersonal level, subtle forms of racism were detected based on external identity inscriptions. The findings revealed that negative beliefs and stereotypes held about racialised minority groups continued to be in circulation, functioning to marginalise participants and limit their participation in society, but without explicit reference to biological traits. This is evident from Irum's account below, which interestingly appears to be in direct contradiction to her perceptions in the above quote in which she claims her

children have never been treated unfavourably on the grounds of their ethnic and/or religious identities.

> "…at the social fair or something like that, it would be like well the only thing the Asian parents are asked to do is to bring in a samosa…there is nothing else we can do…we can't go out and just help on the book stand or…"

In another example Irum, explains that her daughter had rehearsed a hip hop dance with her friends, for the school talent show but was told by the head teacher that she should do a bhangra dance instead.

> "… the head teacher turned round…and says oh that's really good but why don't you do a bhangra dance… well my daughter doesn't know how to do a bhangra dance at eight (laughs) but it's that automatically think that you are pigeon holed because you are Asian you can't hip hop because you are not black (laughs)…"

The collective reading of Irum's narratives, on the one hand reveal the positive shift towards recognising diversity, which generated perceptions of inclusion, whilst simultaneously highlighting how recognition of differences can mobilise exclusionary practices. The narratives suggest that perceived stereotypes about non-white ethnic groups are being imposed by a member of the dominant white majority community, to set the limits and boundaries of what is deemed to be an acceptable level of engagement and participation or the appropriate form of cultural and artistic expression. That is, Irum and her daughter, due to their Asian heritage, are constraint and limited by the stereotypes held about them, with presumptions about the strength of association or affiliation with particular practices and behaviours that serve as exclusionary mechanisms preventing participation in universal, mainstream activities. Irum's frustration, conveys a sense of injustice of not being accepted as an equal, suggesting that cultural stereotypes functioned in a similar way to racial stereotypes in that biological inferiority was recycled along the lines of innate cultural inability. Thus within a multiculturalist context participation and the spaces that racialised minority groups could occupy was regulated and restricted, consequently limiting integration. This point is elaborated upon in the next chapter, specifically in the context of acculturation and integration being a reciprocal process that not only requires adaptation, as demonstrated in the above scenario, by racialised minority groups but also the host society.

Interestingly, the roots of hip hop, whilst traced to the African American community in the United States, has over recent decades, crossed social, cultural and geographical

boundaries, given its emancipatory and empowering expression to expose the lived realities of groups that are marginalised in society. Therefore the vernacular and artistic expression of this genre of music, by invariably challenging racial inequality, can arguably cause offence to liberal sensibilities of multicultural toleration, but ultimately is perceived as a threat to the hegemonic power relationship between minority and majority relationships (Lohlker 2014, Drissel 2011).

This one specific case example, amongst the many similar experiences reported by the intergenerational cohort of study participants discussed in later sections as well as the next chapter, illuminate the shifts in the processes and mechanisms appropriated to sustain a racialised power system. The shift from race to ethnic categorisation was a negotiated act, to recognise and identify the different experiences and impact of racism upon the visibly diverse minority communities in the UK, in order to address the unique and disproportionate disadvantaged positions of certain groups (Modood 1997). The rationale of the prevailing anti-racist discourse and the protest against racial discrimination demanded both refusal and acceptance of group identities upon which discrimination was based, i.e. invoking and repudiating differences, which were the cause of exclusion, in order to demand inclusion (Meer 2019). The findings, demonstrate how the shifts in categorisation, whilst well intended, nevertheless were instrumental in sustaining a racial hierarchy. The data revealed that racisms tight grip, had not been weakened by shifts from race to ethnicity. Instead culture became the marker of difference, from which evaluative judgements were formulated and became performative in reinforcing stereotypes, locking in and fixing ethnoreligious identities to produce essentialist discourses, consequently sanctioning what is and is not acceptable within specific ethno-cultural groups to diminish the lives of the participants, illustrating the inherent power imbalance within a racialised social order.

The shifts in identity inscription are evident within the findings, elucidating the journey from race as experienced by the second generation cohort to ethnic identity categorisation, which was the only known categorisation experienced by the third generation as they were growing up in the 1990's. Ethnic categorisation was deemed a positive development by both cohorts as the socio-cultural and political environment in which people were devalued, on the grounds of physical, biological and cultural characteristics, was perceived to be receding. However the seemingly convivial relationships reported by the third generation cohort of respondents and also endorsed by the second generation respondents, as a result of developments in race relations and anti-racism discourses, require greater critical engagement with the data, to analyse and assess the context, functionality, impact and outcome of the developments. The findings suggest that these developments potentially served to provide a veneer to the sustained power relations that continued to structure and

disadvantage the lives of both cohorts. This is particularly important given that the literature review, consistently documents the persistence of disproportionate inequalities amongst the Muslim community in the UK, who have experienced a shift in their identity construction from race, to ethnicity to religion. This point is examined further and discussed in the next section but also in the following chapter, where tangible examples from the data are presented to demonstrate the limitations of race relations and antiracism policy and practice interventions with regards to improving the wider societal conditions which come to bear upon the lives of the study participants, as a racialised minority group.

In the next section, data revealing the emergence of a Muslim identity is presented and discussed. The participant's accounts illuminate the journey of how a Muslim identity came to gain greater prominence, to supplant race and ethnic categorisation, not only on an individual and personal level but more importantly within the wider society.

4.3 The Emergence of a Muslim Identity

The section provides evidence from the data of the shift in identity categorisation from race and ethnicity to religion. Three stages of Muslim identity development were found within the data, illuminating the ways in which the Muslim identity gained greater prominence and visibility in the UK. Firstly, as plans to return home after achieving financial security receded, the need to organise around and maintain cultural and religious identity was mobilised by the first generation migrant community. Secondly, as British born Muslims, participant's personal reflections of how they constructed their identity and the significance of Islam in their lives, expounds the complex dynamics between the personal and social, to highlight issues of structure and agency. Finally external inscriptions of a Muslim identity due to wider geo-political forces that have come to bear upon the lives of the respondents are explicated through the data, illustrating how the changing socio-political discourses and shifts in external identity inscriptions reproduce racial discourses that sustain a racial hierarchy which has consequences for maintaining and perpetuating ethnoracial and religious health inequalities.

4.3.1. Furnishing the new home: attending to cultural and religious identities

The developments to improve race relations that sought to accommodate and include cultural and religious differences within mainstream public institutions, were found to coincide with the receding "myth of return" (Anwar1979). A thread amongst the accounts of the second generation participants revealed, that first generation migrants had intended to return home once a level of financial security had been achieved to sustain a desired standard of living back home. However family reunification, generated a sense of

permanency with the host country, triggering a process of geographical recalibration for the achievement of aspirations and the attainment of a better life for the family and children, the primary motivation for migrating. Thus the first generation began establishing a home in a country which was once deemed a temporary abode.

> "…we were guests in this country…so our parents would always say…it's not our country…" (Ahmad)

> "…the people who were here from Pakistan, they were really here just to earn money to go back essentially, that never happened…" (Shakoor)

> "…I believe the dream was always to go back home but…he [grandfather] settled with my grandma had children and then built a life here… (Fawad)

With the dissipation of a temporary relationship with the host nation, came the need to establish services and amenities that met cultural and religious needs such as Mosques, community centres and shops. Demands were also made upon public institutions to make adjustments and adaptions, to service cultural and religious needs in order to fulfill ethnoreligious requirements, such as modest apparel and halaal food. The legislative and policy frameworks were enablers in supporting the settlement and integration of minority ethnic communities (Mason 2017). This negotiation of resources for accommodation is indicative of the shift in the short-term relationship originally envisaged by the first generation, Britain was the new home that required furnishing to attend to and reflect and maintain ethnoreligious needs and identities. The activism of claims making for recognition as equal citizens by the migrant communities represented the acceptance of an enduring relationship with the host nation, moving beyond transactional to transformational modes of engagement and participation within the wider society, including mitigating against the negative consequences of overt racism of the 1960's and 1970's, as elaborated upon further in the next chapter..

As noted in 4.2.1 above, a general consensus was found amongst the participants that legislation and multiculturalist frameworks were foundational to accommodating and promoting the public expression of diverse cultural and religious practices and the preservation cultural heritage links.

> "…we used to get grants to build mosques. And we were allowed to practice our faith… And learn Arabic outside of school…sad thing is it's not been mainstreamed

perhaps and so we had to make the extra effort ourselves to do it and self-finance things and do things…" (Ahmad)

"…when I was younger you used to look forward to going to the Mosque… it was a youth club of some sort but you are learning at the same time…We used to have a (specific ethnic heritage) school on a Sunday…" (Amir)

Mosques and supplementary schools, were supported through government grant funding schemes to address gaps in mainstream provision. Children and young people of minoritised backgrounds were able to avail opportunities that supported and nurtured cultural and linguistic heritage as well as supporting academic development and offering careers advice. However as Ahmad notes, the burden of responsibility fell upon the community to maintain and sustain the activities due to the precarious nature of the funding system.

Although the funding is suggested to have been precarious, it appears that there was a recognition of the value and need for supplementary schools. As Nwulu (2015) notes, supplementary schools are grass-roots, volunteer-led spaces that have historically provided critical educational and cultural support to children and young people and their families who by virtue of their ethnic and/or religious background experience marginalisation and exclusion from the mainstream educational system. As such their focus has been two pronged, improving educational attainment by providing support on national curriculum subjects, as well as nurturing cultural, religious and linguistic needs. It is argued that the multiculturalist agenda of the 1980's recognised the value of cultural diversity including multi and bilingualism, in contrast to the educational policies of the 1960's wherein it was considered an obstacle to assimilation, with diversity opposed on the grounds of cultural hierarchy and the culture, traditions and values of migrant groups was perceived as inferior (Simon 2018).

Supplementary schools are considered safe spaces, created "…*to foster the ambitions and nuanced identities of BME pupils in a diasporic context can build resilience and a sense of belonging"* (ibid p: 8), but are argued to be "u*ndervalued and underfunded"* (ibid p: 3).

However contemporary mainstream discourses and public perceptions, specifically related to Islam and Muslims have singled out schools which attend to the academic and cultural-religious needs of the Muslim community, subjecting them to criticism and scrutiny on alleged claims which attribute problems of social unrest, radicalisation and are perceived as a terrorism threat (Ibid, Abbas 2017, Holmwood and O'Toole 2018 and Simon 2018).

Such arguments have emboldened the claims that multiculturalism has failed and that diversity poses a threat to building cohesive communities, and the widely held belief about the need to promote British values as reflected in education and immigration policy frameworks, which seek to exert and reaffirm a national identity (Simon 2018). Such an analytical lens to frame social challenges as a consequence of multiculturalism deflects attention away from structural inequalities which sustain racial inequities as discussed in the literature review. As Simon (2018) notes, supplementary schools must be contextualised within the wider dominant socio-political discourses, pertaining to acculturation, subordination, racism and identity, as they seek to construct and promote authenticated versions of a community identity and counteract negative conceptions and identity inscriptions; arguing that supplementary schools are sites of community agency, as safe and emancipatory spaces that utilise a range of transnational resources to historically contextualise and positively reposition distinct community identities, thereby contributing to the social and psychological wellbeing of individual members.

The findings offer a counter-narrative to the current discourses and contestations surrounding multiculturalism and the accommodation and toleration of ethnoreligious diversity, as purportedly failing the integration of particularly South Asian Muslim, communities, as expounded upon in the next section as well as chapter 5.

4.3.2 British and Muslim: Belonging, Identity and Faith

> "…I have only been to Pakistan once… it was a big culture shock…" (Yousef)

The findings suggest that participants experienced the dualism of being a foreigner, wherein a sense of "culture shock" when visiting countries from which parents or grandparents had migrated, was bound up with the hostilities and alienation experienced in the land they were born, raised and claimed to be home. The consumption and confluence of multiple and distinct cultural practices, meant that participants were exposed to both heritage ethnoreligious and western norms, values and beliefs simultaneously. This created a double bind which suspended identities, such that they were neither/nor, intensifying feelings of isolation, rejection, whilst being embedded within aspects of both cultures, but not feeling fully part of either.

> "…I started wearing the head scarf and actually that gave me confidence. And it gave me an identity because before that I didn't know if I was Asian if I was British, if I was Muslim or if I was Pakistani, the culture and the religion and your society, everything was just so confusing as a young person..." (Farzana)

The race relations legislation and a multiculturalist policy framework, in seeking to address unfavourable treatment of migrant groups and harmonise relationships between minority and majority communities contributed to the positive repositioning of non-white identities. The recognition and accommodation of difference, allowed participants, to self-negotiate the multiple identity impositions that surfaced from the impact of internal and external forces of othering and inferiorisation.

> "…I think my children identify more strongly with being Muslim now than I did at their age… well they have got no other way to identify themselves apart from being British, they don't feel foreign…whereas I had that slight feeling of being from somewhere foreign because my parents were immediately from somewhere foreign, whereas their dad is English, I am English…" (Mahmoona)

The findings suggest that for the second generation cohort, identity was strongly connected and defined by the immigration status of the parents which conveyed a sense of foreignness within the country they were born and raised. However this immigration connection was found to be weaker amongst the third generation due to the British born status of one or both parents, which generated a stronger sense of belonging and connectivity to Britain.

Mahmoona's narrative reveals the shift in internal identity construction over time, particularly amongst second and subsequent generations in particular, and how they define and redefine their ethnoreligious identities. As a second generation immigrant of Pakistani, Muslim heritage, Mahmoona compares and contrasts her childhood experiences with the experiences of her children who identify both as Muslim and British, rather than Pakistani, as she did when she was growing up. It appears that the British born status and the corollary acquisition of language, knowledge and understanding of local culture, values and systems, by one or both parents, alters the dynamics of subordination and domination, because the sense of foreignness begins to recede. For the third generation, the migration effect of being between two cultures was found to be significantly reduced, which Timol (2020) contends, is due to increased distance from ancestral cultural markers of identity such as language, food and dress, given the influence of secondary socialisation processes within a dominant western cultural context.

Interestingly however, whilst ethnic ties were found to be weakening, a faith based identity emerged as being central to the lives of the study participants, irrespective of levels of religious observance. Timol (2020) contends that cultural and religious nurturing

transmitted during the formative socialisation period by significant others to children, have a high probability of persisting throughout life. That said, secondary socialisation processes can, to varying degrees, assimilate second and third generation individuals to the wider British social milieu, as enunciated by Mahmoona's narrative. A greater allegiance by birth to a British identity, without nullifying a faith based identity was found within the data, as accentuated by Mahmoona's narrative above, illustrating the decoupling of religion from ethnicity, through a process of desocialisation and resocialisation, wherein Islam is comprehended within a western cultural context but without disavowing ethnic cultural heritage and what Timol (2020) describes as the activation of intra-religious conversion.

This activation of intra-religious conversion emerged as a salient thread within the data but to varying degrees. According to Timol (Ibid) significant lifestyle changes activated by a commitment to and an intensification of religiosity that surpasses that of the first generation migrant Muslims, is akin to conversion. It is a transition from the mechanical participation in Islamic religious acts to a deeply emotional experience of spiritual awakening. This is captured by Farzana, a second generation respondent, who as noted earlier feels her hijab is an expression of her commitment to her faith, which is foregrounded in spirituality.

> "…I think the spirituality of it [the hijab] is very important…" (Farzana)

The participants, irrespective of levels of religious observance, consistently reported, drawing upon their Islamic faith, especially during particular life events and times of trials and tribulations, explaining that faith was a source of strength and comfort not only through the act of prayer, but through guidance and teaching which facilitated conciliatory resolutions on various daily matters of life.

> "…So I do pray sometimes…but I don't, it's not a normal routine for me...I do turn to Islam when something is happening in my life and it's effecting me personally and I want it to be better. So if there is a bereavement in the family or somebody is ill or something…" (Irum)

> "…do I pray five times a day, no, I try to go to prayers every Friday…it's almost like a sense of belonging, it gives you a purpose, it gives you…what's right and wrong…" (Amir)

> "…My faith carries me through the trials and tribulations and things I have gone through because I have had a lot of emotionally draining experiences quite recently

> which if I didn't have my faith I think I would have struggled to get through… our faith requires us to pray five times a day… I may not do them (prayers)…" (Nazia)

It appears from the participant's narratives, that the motivation and the foregrounding of a religious identity was primarily rooted in faith and spirituality, which have been found to be protective factors, particularly amongst Muslim women. Being a Muslim has been shown to have a direct positive effect on self-esteem, emotional health, life satisfaction, as well as offering meaning and purpose (Mohr et al 2019).

The participants, who had activated significant lifestyle changes, including an embodied religious identity, without revealing details, stated that personal life events played a crucial role in initiating a re-evaluation of life and a stronger (re)orientation towards faith, spirituality and religious observance.

> "…at about 22 (age) I had a difficult personal experience in my life. I went to see a good friend of mine who was very religious, he gave me some…Islamic books. I read them and that really was the turning point in my life. So I started practising at about the age of 22 and I have never looked back since to be honest. It's been literally the most pleasurable experience of my entire life. I think it influences and defines everything that I do…" (Shakoor)

> "…my life's principles are based on my religion… that's where I find my identity my self-worth and being. It hasn't always been like that… I was going through a rough patch in my life, so that would be around over…23 years ago maybe. Islam gave me that sort of confidence, courage to…address some of the issues I was struggling with. That's the best way I can explain. And then it wasn't just that I needed it for then it just became a way of life, everything from that day onwards became sort of so much easier for me to handle, move forward…I just had this content feeling…" (Mahnoor)

> "…to be honest it gives me contentment I feel there is a purpose in life and it gives me some kind of contentment, something that I can refer to and I have got a goal. And the other thing is it's an identity as well…" (Zakiah)

The significance of Islam within the lives of the participants was found to have ascended from an appraisal of personal circumstances, which inevitably were socially contingent. This meant they were able to approach situations with a level of critical reflection as both insiders and outsiders to examine, interpret, rationalise and fuse multiple ideological

standpoints by recognising the universality and compatibility of core values espoused in the diverse socio-cultural perspectives, including the Islamic faith, within which they had been socialised. Islam offered a way of life that was socio-culturally pluralistic, opening up possibilities for being, that were unbound by race, ethnicity, cultural heritage and territorial and geographical boundaries. Islamic teachings were found to offer a way of life that helped mediate and reconcile personal challenges and become a source of strength and generate feelings of self-worth, inner peace and contentment and ultimately belonging to the place of birth, to which primary identification was found, due to weakening of heritage ties.

This is a particularly noteworthy finding, as identity construction is conceived as the process by which individuals seek to differentiate themselves from others, through distinct practices that are common to a specific group of people to forge a wider social collective (Belamghari 2020). However it appears from the narratives that participants were not actively seeking to differentiate themselves but rather responding to discourses of difference and othering, to find their place as British born Muslims. But more importantly, a greater faith based orientation was found to be rooted in deeply philosophical questions of purpose and meaning of life as opposed to an active resistance of hegemonic western discourses predicated on Huntington's "Clash of Civilisations" thesis which exploits the differences between Islam and the West to portray Muslims as an enemy (Shahi 2017)

Belamghari (2020) contends that identity formation has shifted overtime, and become increasingly fragmented, in an age of globalisation that has disrupted and destructured recognised conventions and stable social norms, leading to invention of identities that are characterised by both global and local tendencies. The shifts in identity construction found within the data indicates the conception of the self to be actively re-imagined in a place of birth with multiple sources of social and cultural influences, leading to the formation of hybridised identities (Meer 2019). This was evident within the data, particularly amongst the third generation cohort who combined several aspects of their identities, articulated through hyphenation such as "British Muslim" or British Pakistani/Bangladeshi Muslim, suggesting the significance of a religious identity but also a strong identification and affiliation with place of birth. However the contemporary approaches to minority and majority relations, particularly in relation to Islam and Muslims are argued to be reduced to a socio-political phenomenon and an issue to be resolved by social engineers and political actors, particularly in Western societies, as the Muslim identity features prominently within discourses of multiculturalism and integration (Iner and Yucel 2015, Modood and Thompson 2021). The spiritual dimension of a faith based identity within a secular context is overlooked and thus the relationship between religion and community identity becomes of sociological relevance because it mobilises stereotypes about foreignness to trigger

processes of othering and alienation (Modood and Thompson 2021). The findings, suggest that Britishness was not found to be incompatible with a Muslim identity. As Ahmad insists, British and Muslim values are not distinct, different or oppositional, rather he alludes to a universalism of the values espoused by both, which allows for the harmonisation of hyphenated identities.

> Well you look at those British values tell me if they are different to Muslim values…is any one of those…British values different from Muslim values, they won't be…" (Ahmad)

Although Muslim groups are consistently found to have a strong sense of belonging to Britain and interestingly this sense of belonging appears to be strengthening (Karlsen and Nazroo 2015, Ipsos MORI 2018), the inclusion of religion as a marker of national identity appears to be contentious as it is perceived to be giving priority to minority religious identities. Modood (2019), however contends that inclusion and recognition of religious identities, within the national imaginary, is an integral aspect of multiculturalism but one which does not denote priority nor demands absolute parity with the historically recognised national religious identity of the dominant society. Rather plurality and equality are essential elements of a multiculturalist approach which call for an extension of and inclusion of ethnoreligious identities, as opposed to a replacement or ceasing of the dominant cultural, religious heritage. Modood's notion of multiculturalism, appears to have been reflected in the experiences narrated by the study participants, as it promoted integration through a non-assimilationist framework that created a subjective identification with Britain.

That said, the participant's sense of identity and belonging was shattered, by the fateful events of 9/11, the day which the participants overwhelmingly reported as changing their lives forever, because their faith had become synonymised with terror, as captured in Fawad's recollections of the day:

> "…I remember it was on the way back from school… [the] bus on the way home stopped in the city centre, and I am not sure if you remember there was a shop called Dixons… in the front of the shop they had many TV screens and on there was pictures of a plane flying into a building… there were crowds of people standing outside… [I thought] was is it a film is it a movie…" (Fawad)

> "…it was only when we came home and our parents explained what had happened did we realise how serious it was…I think the turning point for me was 9/11 which

> is when I realised who I am and who we are and trying to understand what's, the difference between everybody…"
>
> "…The next day when we were dropped off at school, we were told to be careful and come straight home… we couldn't quite understand what that meant, but a number of days later you heard this term terrorists and this stuff being branded about with the religion you are associated with… that was a very puzzling time…"
>
> "….that's the moment when you realised there was this difference between it's a, them and us it almost felt like. And you had to be accountable. I am Muslim and we didn't do that, yeah but it's the Muslims that did that, yeah but we didn't do that, yes but you are Muslim. So that was a defining moment when you realised what's going on…"

The incidence had brought into sharp focus Islam and Muslims, forcing participants to question their identities, particularly as the presumptions of guilt by association were levied at them. It was evident within the data that being a Muslim, carried the burden of accountability and guilt on the grounds of either harbouring terrorist sympathies and/or the purported claims of Islam being an inherently violent religion (Green 2018). The experiences of the participants, as exemplified by Fawad's ruminations, elucidate the processes that created the conditions which forced respondents to confront their identity within a hegemonic narrative which situated Islam as the master signifier (Sayyid 2012), in reference to constructing a terror threat. New, contemporary ideological fault lines had opened up that foregrounded religion as a site for the imperial civilising project, necessitating the "War on Terror" (Ibid). Thus the sense of foreignness and othering emerged within the data, as accentuated through Fawad's narrative, who attempts to articulate the moment when he became conscious of his identity. He expresses confusion, as he is unable to comprehend how and why faith had come to occupy such a central role in the analysis of criminal acts of violence and devastation. He notes, such an analysis functioned to position Muslims in essentialist and oppositional terms, to create a "them and us". The dominant analysis of the events of 9/11, framed the values, beliefs and practices of Muslims as a threat to the Western way of life, that generated fear and mistrust amongst the wider public, the tangible manifestations and consequences of which are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

As discussed in the literature review, racialisation is a useful analytical concept to advance understanding of the Muslim experience given that dimensions of race and racism, cannot be reduced to biology alone (Meer 2013, Meer and Modood 2012, Meer and Noorani 2008).

This is evident in the data as the findings suggest that the experiences of overt racism reported by the participants, as discussed earlier in section 4.2 was simultaneously biological and cultural.

In situating the Muslim experience beyond the black-white binary, and applying a racialisation framework in the analysis of the data, the findings reveal how a range of signifiers came to denote a Muslim identity. These included physical appearance that related to phenotype and religious motifs as well as non-religious motifs, which had acquired meaning and were imbued with aberration and viewed with suspicion to mobilise various policing, governing and exclusionary practices, as discussed below.

4.3.3 Signifiers of a Female Muslim Identity

Of the eleven female participants, four did not wear the hijab and/or abayah, and dressed in western apparel but felt that their ethnicity, i.e. being of Pakistani heritage conveyed otherness purely on the basis of skin colour. So whilst a Muslim identity could not be explicated by these visible cues, participants did feel that the brown skin served as a proxy for a non-Christian faith.

> "…I could be walking down the street, you can't tell whether I'm a Muslim or a Sikh or a Hindu, you wouldn't be able to tell…" (Alyesha)

> "…visibly I could easily be seen as a Sikh or a Hindu but I don't think a lot of people know the difference. So they would know that I am Asian so hence I would be one of those religions…I don't look like a Muslim I don't wear the head scarf so if you see a lady in an head scarf you know immediately they are a Muslim I could be a Sikh or a Hindu I suppose..."
> (Irum)

> "…I don't wear a head scarf, which is one of the obvious ways that people identify you as a female Muslim. So actually some people wouldn't even think I was of an Asian background..." (Aisha)

It was evident from the data that visible cues continue to be performative in differentiating between ethnoracial groups. Phenotype emerged as a primary instrument in codification and identity construction, to draw distinctions between majority white and minority non-white groups from which religious otherness is conveyed but not specified.

Aisha notes that not only is her Muslim identity not conveyed because she does not wear the hijab but also her Asian (Pakistani) heritage cannot be inferred from her appearance. Although Aisha does not expand on why her ethnic background cannot be deduced, in considering Aisha's appearance during the face to face interview, it can be accentuated that Aisha's lighter skin tone and western attire function to deemphasise her ethnoracial and religious identities, to reduce the sense of the other, during her encounters with the White majority community.

On the basis that visible religious markers of the Muslim identity were absent, the four participants did not perceive their religious affiliation with Islam to have attracted any negative attention, although as Irum notes her Asian heritage is manifest from her skin tone and this has been a source of unfavourable treatment.

> "…I think generally in my life I don't think I have had …… any negativity because people think I am a Muslim it's probably because I am an Asian…" (Irum)

So while it could be inferred that ethnoracial markers, particularly brown skin tone is not an independent variable in determining a Muslim identity and thus not performative in anti-Muslim hostility, research suggests a homogenising of Asian, such that brown people are misrecognised as Muslim. This misrecognition is argued to be profoundly damaging and leads to exclusion, marginalisation, stigmatisation and violence (Hopkins et al 2017 and Sian 2017).

Encounters of misrecognition and unfavourable treatment have consequences for fracturing relationships between racialised groups, and fuelling community tensions, creating divisions and weakening the collective voice, struggle and fight against racisms and injustice. In their investigation of encountering misrecognition, Hopkins et al (2017) found, young people deployed a range of strategies to respond to their experiences of misrecognition, including clarification of their identity, i.e. they are not Muslim. This suggests that identity clarification is an act of disassociation and distancing from the Muslim community and by stating *"I'm not a Muslim"* or *"it's not us it's them"* (personal/author emphasis) has the potential to simultaneously deflect and corollary tolerate anti-Muslim racism. Thus consequences of misrecognition extends beyond personal burden, anxiety and harm, to wider issues of community cohesion as it can close down opportunities for inter and intra cultural engagement and interaction, with *"…significant consequences for people's ability to live together and share everyday places comfortably…"* (Ibid P: 937).

In contrast, female participants who wore the hijab, felt that their Muslim identity was explicitly made manifest.

> "…And I also wear the hijab, so that's a physical sort of outward projection of my religion…" (Mahnoor)

> "….I mean if you look at me you'd think, you know….I dress islamically but not sort of, you know, I wear the headscarf, but I'm still quite, I would say, western in my clothing. But you'd be able to tell by looking at me that I'm a Muslim woman…" (Khadijah)

> "…I am quite obviously Muslim because I wear a hijab [and abayah]…" (Mahmoona)

As discussed earlier the significant lifestyle changes, including the wearing of the hijab was activated by a commitment to and an intensification of religiosity, triggered by personal life events leading to a spiritual awakening. Wearing of the hijab was overwhelmingly reported to be a choice and an expression of one's spiritual conviction and relationship with God, but interestingly conceived as an emancipatory and liberating act by both, hijab and non-hijab wearing female participants alike.

> "…a lot of Muslim women that choose to wear the Hijab do it because it's really liberating, it's a form of worship..." (Alyesha)

> "…I clearly remember the first day I wore the hijab…I have liberated myself…that's how it felt to me…" (Mahnoor)

The complex relationship between the theological and social conceptualisation and interpretation of hijab can be explicated from the narratives. The participant's self-reflexive articulations illustrate their consciousness of Western reactions to and constructions of the hijab. Whilst on a personal level the participant's motivation to wear the hijab was religiously grounded, but in expressing the emancipatory and liberating dimensions of the hijab the participants appear to be revealing the social milieu of their experiences, particularly western feminist and secularist readings of the hijab, as a sign of patriarchal oppression and/or an act of resistance against western values (Piela 2019). Such readings reveal the shifts and continuities regarding power and agency and the control mechanisms from the colonial to the postcolonial era, as governance and policing of Muslim women's bodies become battlegrounds, premised on saving Muslim woman from oppressive cultural practices on the one hand. And presenting hijab as a symbol of Islamic extremism rooted

in uncivility, on the other, and as such posing a threat to the national security of Western nations because it was perceived to be an act of resistance to Western liberal values. So the “war on terror” declared post 9/11 by Western nations was rationalised as a civilising mission, not only to save Muslim women but to civilise the religion and protect Western values (Korteweg and Yurdakul 2021, Shahi 2017).

In centring the voices of Muslim women, the findings demonstrate the agentic religious experience and ability of the participants to interpret and enact their own social realities (Piela 2019). The hijab was constructed by the participants (wearers and non-wearers alike) as anti-oppressive and emancipatory, even though it is cast otherwise. This suggests that the participants found the hijab and religiosity as alternative possibilities of being, by countering a range of Western and non-western oppressive ideological pressures, emanating from various socio-cultural and political quarters. An inference can be made that the subjugation and oppression of women reverberates more widely in society and cannot be exceptionally attributed to Islam and Muslims. That said, the popular dominant ideas about Islam and Muslims have been inscribed by the powerful, to socially construct hegemonic narratives that convey a distorted image, which the ascribed do not have power to deconstruct, pointing to the complex relationship between agency and structure (Modood and Thompson 2019). Though the women exercised agency in their choice to wear or not wear the hijab, wider societal discourses, appear to have drowned their voices and diminish their personhood, as is elaborated upon through tangible examples in the next chapter.

Of the seven participants who wore the hijab, six had been wearing the hijab long before the events of 9/11. As such they were able to compare and contrast their encounters about the shifts in the external constructions of the hijab, what it signified and how the wider public reacted towards them, pre and post 9/11.As discussed earlier, though there was a place for religion and a toleration for the hijab pre 9/11, Mahnoor’s experience, reflected a consistent thread found across the dataset, and exemplifies the longstanding western, secularist feminist framings of the hijab,.

> “…I started wearing the hijab…when I went to work…my Indian manager…her reaction was a bit negative and I said yes I have started wearing it, she said why you had lovely hair. A few English colleagues i.e. the reception staff pretended I wasn't wearing the hijab they just ignored it…I remember being challenged by one [Allied health professional]…I can't really remember exactly how or what she was saying but… basically in a nutshell that you know women covering up is a male dominated sort of agenda, and I was saying no its a choice…I was trying to defend my hijab... she was very vocal and very articulate…And she was saying no why

would someone want to cover…it was very much loaded with that sort of anger and frustration…You could tell she was a feminist in the way she was saying things…"

The excerpt from Mahnoor's interview, conveys the range of reactions she received when she first started wearing the hijab over twenty years ago. The first from a non-Muslim member of a racialised minority group, in a position of power, whilst not appearing to overtly express any disparaging remarks about the hijab, the reaction is nevertheless perceived by Mahnoor to convey negativity, as it lacks a positive acknowledgement. It can therefore be inferred that outward expressions of Muslimness can challenge agents of liberal, anti-racist dispositions, who otherwise call for inclusive approaches. It appears that the lens through which an anti-racist activism is framed privileges western notions of freedom and liberty, as expounded further in the discussion below.

The second encounter can be framed within the colour-blind lens which seeks to remedy discrimination and racism by adopting an approach in which ethnoracial, cultural and religious differences are not seen. This colour-blind orientation is evidently deployed by some of Mahnoor's colleagues, who fail to acknowledge the change in physical appearance and what it means for Mahnoor. Such an approach is argued to be helpful in maintaining an egalitarian self-image, as individuals believe they are being non-prejudicial (Plaut et al 2018). However, as Plaut and colleagues contend, colour-blind approaches reduce sensitivity to racism, thereby increasing potential to invalidate and dismiss claims of racial discrimination. It can also undermine interracial interactions and have negative consequences for inclusive practice as individuals are less attuned to the unique realities and needs of racialised minority groups.

The final encounter is evidently a more overt rejection of the hijab as it is perceived to signify gender inequality and patriarchal oppression. Thus the reaction is arguably situated in saviour discourses (Mutua 2001, elaborated upon in the next chapter), as an objection to the hijab, is rationalised in a Western moral imperative to save Muslim women (Abu-Lughod 2013). Analysing Muslim women's situations and disadvantaged position purely through patriarchal oppression, purported to be espoused within Islam, is both reductive and deflective. Reductive in that such an approach, blames religious imposition and fails to recognise women's agency, as discussed earlier. And deflective, as it fails to capture the colonial legacy that reveal the continuities of power and control mechanisms and how postcolonial production of gendered, racialised difference does not take into account the wider geo-political and socio-economic conditions which structure Muslim women's lives (Abu-Lughod 2013 and Korteweg and Yurdakul 2021). The conditions in which many Muslim women find themselves globally cannot be dislocated from the consequences of

colonialism and the historical and contemporary strategies of othering that are deployed, consequently creating structural vulnerabilities, causing marginalisation and exclusion. Any analysis of Muslim women's impoverished conditionality cannot solely be attributed to cultural and religious factors but rather wider societal features must be taken into account, particularly ideas about identity and culture and the historical and contemporary connections to the political economy (Sen 2008, Bilge 2010 Saatçioğlu et al 2016). Also evident within Mahnoor's narrative is the conflicting notions of feminism and the ideals of gender liberation, emancipation and empowerment. According to Mahnoor, her colleague is invoking Western, feminist views, in her objections to the hijab and displaying an unwillingness to accept alternative perspectives on emancipation, empowerment and gender liberation that come from Muslim women themselves. Mahnoor's voice is drowned in the essentialised imaginary of a passive victim of Islamic patriarchal oppression, espoused within Western secular feminism that strips away her agency and freedom, which politically, is a foundational cornerstone of feminism but also wider emancipatory politics (Bilge 2010). However, agency is a contested concept (Ibid) and though a full analysis of its (in)congruence within feminism is beyond the scope of this analysis, it can be concluded from the extensive works on feminist readings of veiled Muslim women's agency, that the veil has come to symbolise submission of women to men, particularly within Western liberal feminist scholarship(Piela 2019, Abu-Lughod 2013, Mahmood 2012). Such readings, were evident within the data as exemplified through Mahnoor's narratives, wherein participants own reasons for wearing the hijab, centred around the relationship and connection with God, were discounted, suggesting that the hijab is understood as a form of coercion and any religious reasoning provided by the women to the contrary, is framed as a false consciousness (Bilge 2010). Thus the primary framework for the analysis by Western secular, feminist scholarship pre 9/11, of the hijab appears to be through the lens of submission to men as unconscious agents and therefore supporting Muslim women's choice to wear the hijab would be a denunciation of gender equality. Speaking out against the hijab, as captured in the interaction between Mahnoor and her colleague is therefore understood as a Western moral imperative as opposed to being a discriminatory act which seeks to regulate and govern women's bodies. This points to the continuities of historical, colonial and orientalist rhetoric within contemporary equalities discourses premised on the superiority of western modalities of rights and freedom, which exacerbate marginalisation of Muslim women (Massoumi 2015, Abu-Lughod 2013, Mahmood 2012, and Bilge 2010).

The Western secular feminist framings of hijab as submission and gender oppression, were reinforced by the events of 9/11 in reference to regimes which had forced veiling upon women, notably the Taliban in Afghanistan. But alongside this, women who publically expressed their Muslimness through the various veiling practices, were now also cast as

the enemy. The pendulum oscillated between visibly Muslim women being simultaneously framed as victims and a threat.

In addition when analysing the encounters of hijab wearing participants, critical insights were revealed about how respondents experienced new racial meanings being imparted to their bodies because of their religious identity (Selod 2018). How the hijab has acquired racial meaning, particularly since post 9/11 to racialise Muslim women's bodies, can be delineated by the experiences of Sakinah, a White British convert to Islam, who wears both the hijab and the abayah. Sakinah, is able to contrast her current experiences to when she was a non-Muslim and asserts how she has observed a change in treatment towards her, which is negative and hostile.

> "…before I didn't have any of those problems, none. I have been a Muslim for 24 years but I have noticed a difference to how I was treated before I was a Muslim and now. And I know it would be different, if I was to take my hijab off…no one would bat an eyelid…they may even be quite pleasant..."

Sakinah's White British identity appears to have been eclipsed by her visible religious identity expressed through her Muslim apparel, on the grounds of which she has experienced discriminatory treatment, not encountered previously as a non-Muslim. It appears that the hijab, as a visible signifier of a Muslim identity has acquired racial meaning, previously limited to pigmentation and biological characteristics, suggesting that the hijab has an association with non-Whiteness, thereby disrupting the black-white binary logic which has characterised contemporary understanding of race and racism, within which religion has been a neglected (Husain 2019). Although, as discussed in the literature review, racism and racial positioning has its genesis along religious lines, shaping notions of superiority and inferiority, from which dominant and subordinate racial positions were constructed, but overtime, shifts emerged such that Whiteness was racialised as a superior race, with religion becoming a latent feature within racial structures, reflecting changes in political, social and economic imperatives (Ibid).

Sakinah's encounters of discriminatory treatment, further elaborated upon in the next chapter, illustrate the process of racialisation of the Muslim body. In this specific example, it can be accentuated that Sakinah becomes less White by virtue of the hijab, illuminating how whiteness is understood, within a dominant White, western hegemonic context, specifically pointing to a decoupling of Whiteness and Muslimness, which functions to position Muslim identities in oppositional terms, irrespective of ethnoracial background. This is evident from Sakinah's assertion, that if she were to remove the hijab her white

privilege would be reinstated and she would receive favourable treatment. This is in stark contrast to the accounts discussed earlier of the female participants who did not wear the hijab, from which it can be deduced that non-white ethnic identity denotes an inferior other as well as a non-Christian minority religious affiliation, particularly brown skin, was found to be associated with Islam. As such, critical insights emerge from the data, firstly that the hijab on a brown body, intersects with other structural issues that give rise to inequalities including gender, race and ethnicity to further exacerbate the discrimination faced by Muslim women. Secondly modifications to Muslim women's apparel and the non-adoption or removal of the headscarf, whilst deemphasising a Muslim identity, affords limited privileges and protections from discrimination to black or brown bodies within a racially structured system, premised on a black/white binary logic. Finally, whilst it is recognised that the hijab is the most visible signifier of a Muslim identity for Muslim women from all racial backgrounds, Sakinah's experiences reveal the specific meaning attached to the hijab, which give rise to notions of foreignness and otherness, which do not match her White British identity. This demonstrates that Muslimness carries an implicit racial meaning, supporting Husain's contention that *"religion is a key factor in producing blackness and whiteness in everyday interactions"* (Ibid p: 602). This point is accentuated further in the sections below as well as the next chapter.

4.3.4 Signifiers of a Muslim Male Identity

Of the eleven male participants, two had activated significant lifestyle changes and a greater orientation towards religious observance. Shakoor, as second generation, British born Pakistani, was born into a Muslim household but undertook, what Timol (2020), as discussed earlier, describes an intra-religious conversion, whilst Akbar a white British male, converted to Islam in his teenage years in the 1990's. Both actively live a Muslim way of life, through the observance of the key tenets of the faith in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah (The sacred text and its application in daily life as demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH). In this respect both participants noted that they wore a beard as a mark of the prophetic tradition and a demonstration of their religious conviction, but interestingly only Shakoor felt that his Muslim identity could be deduced from his physical appearance.

> "…as an individual people recognise me as a Muslim because I am brown skinned and have a long beard…"

Akbar, on the other hand, when asked if he could be visibly identified as a Muslim, felt that, as a White British male, his Muslim identity is not conveyed through his physical

appearance as whiteness is not implicated in Muslimness, and a beard on a white male therefore does not become problematised or perceived as a threat. According to Akbar his body is not raced, as Islam is not read on his body through the beard and therefore he is not racialised as the other and treated unfavourably on the grounds of his physical appearance.

> "…no I don't, obviously (appear Muslim) I am white Caucasian I have a beard but they are quite in fashion aren't they anyway. No I don't suppose they would, so outwardly I wouldn't be identifiable as a Muslim from my appearance…I suppose this is white privilege…I don't see any change at all…"

The data revealed an overwhelming consensus amongst the male participants that the beard in isolation does not embody a Muslim identity for Muslim men, rather the beard only acquires racial meaning upon a brown body. Amongst the remaining nine participants, variable levels of religious observance was found and although six of the participants stated that they periodically kept or regularly wear a beard, they explained that this was not an act of religious fervour or an expression of their Muslim identity.

> "…With the beard I have got on today yes, (I would be identified as a Muslim)…it's more for being a bit lazy than it is for Islam…I don't distinguish it as a beard of faith…I do like having a beard on my face…" (Musa)

> "…I think I look very Pakistani, I think I have got a brown face and I have got a beard so I look like a Muslim shall we say... Although the beard seems to be quite in these days but I think if you are a white chap and you have got a beard you are a bit of a cool dude. I think if you are a brown person and you have got a beard it's still you are a Muslim…" (Fawad)

Fawad, concurring with Akbar, notes that the beard can be a fashion trend within the wider society and can be associated with being stylish, but feels that this is not a privilege afforded to a brown skinned male. Fawad appears to be suggesting, visible characteristics such as the beard on a brown skin male have been externally inscribed upon the Muslim male body and implicitly associated with foreignness and terrorism, due to the post 9/11 hegemonic discourses and the framing of its causes and consequences that provide justification for the "war on terror," consequently invisibilising the mechanisms of racialisation within anti-Muslim discourses (Durrani 2020). In comparing and contrasting the perceptions and experiences of Akbar and Fawad, the data reveals critical insights to how the beard on a white male functions to convey a stereotypical gendered normative

practice and behaviour of a liberal western subject, whilst on a brown skinned male, the beard is interpreted in oppositional terms. This point is accentuated in the next chapter, through a discussion of the specific tangible examples provided by the participants of how the beard intersects with the brown skin and the grounds upon which they have experienced discriminatory treatment.

It is evident from the data that the visible ethnic marker of a brown skin and the beard, work in tandem as embodiment of a Muslim identity for men, which Culcasi and Gokmen (2011) contend, conveys a compellingly symbolic threat, invoking anxiety and fear amongst the wider non-Muslim, public imagination and Alimen (2017) argues that:

> *"…facial hair can be regarded as the Muslim man's veil since, much like the hijab for Muslim woman, as it is open to politicisation and stigmatisation in the socio-political context…"* (P: 122).

However the data, whilst supporting Alimen's assertion, also makes a distinction between the beard and the hijab, in that the beard, unlike the hijab requires other cues to make manifest a Muslim identity for the Muslim male in order to trigger moments of perceived Muslimness. The findings suggest there is an implicit racial meaning in Muslimness, irrespective of gender which is brownness (Hussain 2019), as can be accentuated in the collective reading of the narratives of male and female participants and further exemplified below.

> "…No because I don't have a beard and I don't wear anything that might determine or let people know that I am a Muslim. But the fact that I am brown or of Asian origin, most people would look at me and make the assumption that I must be a Muslim…" (Amjid)

Concurring with Irum and other non-hijab wearing female participants, Amjid also confirms the association between brownness and Muslimness.

In addition to the beard, Haroon also notes the racial profiling of the Muslim identity through the application of popular Muslim imagery used within media discourses. He narrates his daily commute to work on public transport, whilst carrying a rucksack and being subjected to unwarranted attention by other commuters.

> "…No, no beard or anything like that, but it's a case of the rucksack and it's something as simple as that, which would make me as an individual feel

> uncomfortable, thinking well there are other people on this train who have rucksacks who aren't Asian who aren't of brown skin why are they not getting those looks, why is it just me…why am I being picked out of a crowd...it's what people hear in the media and what people have seen...they are brown they have got a rucksack are we going to experience the same thing here… ["thing" is reference to 7/7 London terrorist attack]…"

It can be accentuated from the various encounters shared, that the brown skin for the male participants was a primary signifier of a Muslim identity, which was multiplicated by a range of religious and non-religious motifs that only acquire racial meaning when adopted by the brown skin male, such as the rucksack. The rucksack, on a brown body was found to symbolise a threat due to the essentialised discourses about Muslims and their nefarious ideological and cultural traits that have become imprinted upon the public imagination, particularly since the London bombings in July 2005, placing Muslims under greater suspicion and scrutiny in the UK as well as globally, as they go about their daily lives (Driscoll 2007, Vaughan-Williams 2007, Considine 2017, Selod and Embrick 2013). This reinforces the contention noted earlier that not only religious and ethnoracial characteristics are intertwined in the construction of the inferior and dangerous racial other, but also how ordinary everyday mundane accessories acquire racial meaning to regulate and govern Muslim bodies on logics of security as well as the manifest historical continuities of a civilising project, reflected in contemporary justifications for the "war on terror" (Husain 2019, Sayyid 2018, Sian 2017). Thus, the wide ranging racial experiences of the participants point to the way the historical ideological racial project of white supremacy is deployed through essentialised narratives of the Muslim as a terror threat (Cainkar and Selod 2018), the impact of which, whilst discussed in detail in the next chapter, is important to briefly attend to here, as it relates to and accentuates the findings of external identity inscriptions and the signifiers of a Muslim male identity.

The data shows that female participants were concerned for the safety and welfare of their children, particularly their son's, given the essentialist and wide ranging intersecting cues that have come to embody the Muslim male and denote a threat and corollary an enemy.

Mahmoona explains how she worries when her teenage son, is playing rugby in majority white districts of the county, so her husband accompanies their son because they perceive there could be trouble based on their son's physical appearance, tanned skin tone and beard, making hyper-visible his non-white identity and marking him out as the other to trigger hostilities.

> "…my son has gone to rugby and he is going to Mansfield or he is going to Ilkeston… then my husband will make sure he is going with him… there is a perception that there will be some trouble based on the fact that he is, well he is Asian looking as well as the fact that he is a Muslim…he has got a beard."

When asked to clarify how her son's beard is a signifier to his Muslim identity, given that beards are not unique to Muslim men, Mahmoona asserts that:

> "…Yes but then it would be the racist aspect of it which then is interlinked isn't it. It almost becomes intrinsic … they are Muslim, because they are brown, because they perceive Islam and being Muslim as something foreign and different…"

It can be deduced from Mahmoona's narrative that racism is being conceptualised on physical traits of skin colour as the primary catalyst for racial discrimination. And whilst overt expressions of racism, as the data suggests, have receded, racism, at an interpersonal level continues to be a concern for the participants. The concern, however appears to be heightened with the presence of visible signifiers to a Muslim identity. As noted earlier, for third and subsequent generations of British born Muslims, whose subjective sense of belonging and Britishness has been shown to be high, the data suggests the Muslim identity, as externally inscribed and constructed, has compounded marginality and exclusion emanating from anti-non-whiteness. Fear and anxiety about interpersonal level hostilities and hate crimes was found to be a persistent thread across the data.

Khadijah similarly expresses fears and concerns for her children, particularly her son.

> "…I'm scared for my children…my son was in London on Sunday and I was praying…I hope he gets home safe. I live in fear because I just think they will look at his colour of his skin, they won't know who he is, but, you know, just, and I don't know what I should feel like…I don't think it's just me being a mum, I think it's more than that. It is about what's happening in the world and, you know, these divides between, religion and, you know, Islam is the big one, isn't it… there is stats to show that a lot of the crime has increased, hate crime against Muslims. So you can't ignore it…"

It is evident from Khadijah's account, that whilst many parents worry about the safety and welfare of their children, othering discourses which esssentialise and publically frame Muslims, particularly young Muslim men, function to deindividualise and criminalise a whole

community. This in turn multiplies the fear, increasing the level of stress that Khadijah as a Muslim mum has to endure, especially as she is acutely attuned to the daily assaults on Muslims for their very being, by referencing the increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes.

The Islamophobia Monitoring report (2021) by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the second largest inter-governmental organisation after the United Nations, provides an overview of the global scale of Islamophobia and its various manifestations. Many of the local and global incidents documented in this, as well other reports (Bayrakli and Hafiz 2019), are evidence of the consequences of negative identity ascriptions and the existence of Islamophobia at both an interpersonal and institutional level. On occasions and in variable ways, some incidents are reported in local and national media channels, which were found to influence the perception of anti-Muslim sentiments, amongst the participants, but this perception was heightened by personal encounters of Islamophobic interactions to generate fear, anxiety and stress, triggering the activation of a range of protective measures to safe guard themselves and their families. This point is elaborated upon in the next chapter, with specific examples presented, discussed and contextualised within the health inequalities literature to consider the health implications of the unique stressors resulting from actual and perceived fear of discrimination, particularly since there is a growing body of evidence that shows both fear of racism and actual racism adversely impact health.

The othering encountered by the participants, was not limited to visible appearance, as in the case of Akbar, his physical appearance did not convey Muslimness, but a range of other cues to a Muslim identity were found to be instrumental in embodying the Muslim other, as discussed next.

4.3.5 Muslim Racialisation: Beyond Physical Bodily Encounters

The participants reported numerous ways through which they encountered the codification of their Muslim identity beyond the physical body and related physical signifiers both somatic and non-somatic, including names and religious observance, such as fasting during the month of Ramadhan and abstaining from non-halaal foods. These cues to the Muslim identity were found to be performative in disrupting social and professional relationships, leading to a greater level of isolation and exclusion. Thus constraining the ability to benefit from opportunities and resources that inter-racial social networks can offer, to positively impact a broad range of social, economic and health related outcomes that are shown to be the fundamental drivers of health inequalities.

The sections begins with name racialisation and then moves on to illustrate how racialisation of the Muslim identity was experienced by participants whose Muslim identity was not made manifest through visible, physical cues and motifs.

Studies have shown names to be key signifiers used in the formulation of an identity and in determining gender, ethnicity and religious affiliation. It is argued that a name is a key identity characteristic which functions to discern and distinguish human beings. Names powerfully serve as a profiling tool in the social acceptance or social denial of individuals to deliver privileges or disadvantage (Amour 2018, Benjamin 2019). Names embody meaning, value, heritage, social status to offer rights and privileges far greater than is generally accepted or acknowledged (Benjamin 2019, Wykes 2017).

The power of a name is illustrated by Khadijah as she shares a very personal and emotional account of her son taking the decision to change his name by deed pole, following the events of 9/11. The decision to change his name was motivated by the need disassociate himself from a name which had become synonymous with terrorism because it conveyed a powerful image within the public imagination.

> "…I remember him [son] coming home, he must have been fifteen, and said, he didn't want that name anymore, because of all the media stuff… I mean his birth name, we named him, [name] but because of all the negativity, he just didn't want himself [to be known by that name]…that was difficult because it's a name that my father chose..."

Khadijah shares the emotional turmoil as a mother and the need to protect her child from any potential and actual harm resulting from hegemonic discourses that frame terrorism, post 9/11, as uniquely and innately associated with Islam, consequently fixing Muslims into a homogenous category that is labelled an aberration on its presumed incompatibility with the West (Bagguley and Hussain 2019).

> "…but then…I understood where my son was coming from as well because if we can try and help deter some of the negativity…he felt it and it was knocking his confidence and that's enough. Something's happening to knock his confidence. And it's just everything that's displayed in the social media about Islam and Muslims and who we are and what bad people we are…"

But the anguish, surrounding her son's decision to change his name, ran far deeper, as she explains that her son was named by her father who had since passed away. The name

was selected on the basis of its meaning and connection to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), signifying love and compassion. As such her son's name carried deep emotional connections to both her father and her faith. Khadijah's distress was visible as she explained the need to protect her child from hostility on the basis of his name and to instil confidence and self-esteem, whilst at the same honouring her father's memory and retaining the deep spiritual link to the faith. She shares how she had explored various options with her son, such as swapping his first name with his middle but that this was not acceptable to him. His unwavering resolve to remove all connections with his first name and its perceived relationship with terrorism illustrates the deep emotional and psychological impact of the conflation of Islam and Muslim with terrorism that was in wide public circulation in the immediate aftermath and continues to be twenty years later.

> "…he wanted to get rid of that name...we had it changed by deed poll to [name] because he just didn't want anything to do with it... We've removed it...he didn't want to keep it as a middle name either. I said to him, let's swap it round, because I thought, my dad gave him that name, and it's a good name…I had to respect my son and thought, well if he's feeling so bitter about it, it's important that, I don't want it to affect the rest of his life…So I think these are the things that you just think, you know, why do, we have to sort of make these compromises, why…?"

The power of a name and the depth of the associated values, meanings and heritage, is evident, as well as the coding they carry to cause detriment (Benjamin 2019). Khadijah's narrative, conveyed the deep emotional dilemma she faced, a profound sense of loss and sacrifice as she felt she was desecrating her father's memory. On the other hand the need to protect her son from the ubiquitous discrimination and hostilities facing Muslims generally and more specifically Muslim men and their depictions as a terrorist threat within western societies. She is perplexed as to why she and her family have to modify their identities which compromises their sense of being. The need to take actions to disassociate and distance oneself from the Muslim label, generates a sense of injustice, as it is perceived to be a curtailing of fundamental rights and freedoms to a faith based identity. Evidently the name had personal, spiritual, historical and social significance and formed a central aspect of Khadijah's son's identity. Though individuals are free to choose and change their name in the UK, for Khadijah and her son the dilemma illustrates the relationship between agency, power and structure. In conflating Islam with terrorism and a threat to the West, the everyday taken for granted freedoms within the wider society, become eroded for Muslims. The need to prioritise personal safety, protection and survival, as can be accentuated from Khadijah's narrative, lead to an involuntary, enforced diminishing of identity and personhood and ultimately humanness. Choice, rights and freedoms espoused

within western democratic liberal societies, become conditional for Muslims. That is displays of Muslimness emphasise a purported threat, creating suspicion upon which exclusionary and discriminatory practices become rationalised and manifest through a specific Muslim penalty in various domains of the social determinants of health framework, as elaborated upon in the next chapter and also below.

The name as a signifier of identity is further illustrated by Akbar and Sakinah, who are both white British Muslim converts to Islam. Akbar embraced Islam in his teens and Sakinah in her early twenties. Whilst both have taken Muslim names, Akbar has changed his first name by deed pole whereas Sakinah continues to use her birth name both administratively and in non-Muslim circles.

> "…, when I embraced Islam I wanted to take it on whole heartedly so I decided to change my name and I think, it's interesting when people hear your name and they realise OK I am not….David or a Simon or whatever. Yeah I do feel as if that they do regard me in a different way…" (Akbar)

Akbar, in contrasting his experiences before he was a Muslim with a white British name, to now as a Muslim with a distinctively Muslim sounding name, states that people expect him to have a white British sounding name, corresponding to his visible white ethnicity. However the interactions change when they discover his name, implying that individuals are making connections between Akbar's name and his physical appearance to re-evaluate his identity, through the hegemonic discourses which frame Muslims as the other. This resonates with the literature in which it is posited that names are not neutral, rather they are social codes to make assessments about people, structuring gender, class and race, through an encoding, infused with meaning and experience, to render individuals visible or invisible (Benjamin 2019) and racialised by others (Pilcher 2016, Madziva 2017).

> "…I spent…years as a non-Muslim being surrounded by non-Muslims and white British society. I suppose I am in a position where I can tell, you know the way that I am treated is slightly different, there is an element of OK this person is perhaps not like me…there is the challenge of building bridges which I never ever had to do before...I am having to go out my way now to…build the relationships. Because sometimes I think some elements of society they can find it uncomfortable because they can't necessarily….be able to relate to me, with being a Muslim…"

Akbar feels that his Muslim name sets him apart from his majority ethnic group to such an extent that he becomes un-relatable, highlighting that some people become

“uncomfortable” at discovering his Muslim identity and treat him differently. Akbar, by virtue of his name, is perceived as the “other” with his name functioning to make manifest his Muslim identity that creates a distance between him and his once in-group membership to the White majority group, a distance which he feels he needs to be bridged. The name appears to be playing a crucial role in how others perceive Akbar’s racial identity, calling into question his whiteness. This experience accords with the literature, which suggests that Islamic sounding names contribute to the process of racial categorisation and othering through which white British Muslims no longer benefit from their previous white privileges (Wykes, 2013, Moosavi 2015).

The fact that some people become uncomfortable in knowing that Akbar is a Muslim, suggests that mainstream public discourses are contributing to stereotypical generalisations about Muslims and Islam from which the “Muslim threat” becomes real amongst the general population (Moosavi 2015, Taras 2013). This could explain why individuals become uncomfortable with Akbar when they realise, from his name, that he is a Muslim, it triggers an association with terrorism that evokes a sense of threat and fear. It appears that for Akbar his name is the critical signifier to his Muslim identity, although he does support a beard, the beard appears not to be performative in racialising white bodies as discussed earlier.

Akbar, based on his own experiences, expresses concerns for his children and the possibility that their future career prospects could be limited due to their Muslim sounding names.

> “…research has shown that its far more easier to get a job if you have got a white Anglo Saxon name than you have if you are a Mohammed or an Abdullah, it’s just the reality. That worries me because I have children with Muslim names and you know and I think why should, they be deprived of opportunities just because of the name they have been given at birth. And that worries me…”

Akbar’s fears his children were foregrounded in his own lived experiences of discrimination in the labour market. Akbar shares his experiences of applying for senior levels positions commensurate with his qualifications, skills and experience, yet consistently failing to be invited for an interview. The application process in his particular professional occupational field, involves the submission of a CV, containing personal details such as the name. Whilst Akbar cannot categorically claim, suffering a religious penalty, the name, nevertheless, articulates a religio-cultural identity from which the shortlisting panel can make an assessment of a candidate’s religious identity. Research has shown that name racialisation

to be a real phenomenon, which impedes objective decision making, due to the triggering of biases, both conscious and unconscious (Kang et al 2016 and De Stasio and Heath 2019).

> "…in the last two or three years trying to make applications to [senior role in a particular field/discipline]. And we are probably looking at you know over 10 maybe 15 applications without an interview…"

Therefore, Akbar's sense of the existence of religious penalty in the labour market based on his own subjective experiences of the insurmountable barriers at the first stage of the recruitment process appear to be grounded in his reality. This point is perhaps best accentuated from Sakinah's experiences, who having retained a white British name has not experienced any barriers at the shortlisting stage, rather she is consistently called for interviews. However, Sakinah is visibly identified as a Muslim through her apparel and at the interview stage, her physical appearance, according to her, becomes a barrier in securing employment.

> "…I remember going into one particular interview and there were three on the panel and one women would not stop looking at me, up and down at my dress. And she was not happy with me and she... didn't even go out of her way to be pleasant and friendly. And quite frankly it put me off my interview...I was upset in the sense that there was an opportunity missed and lost and I didn't do the best that I could do…"

Sakinah points to an aversion displayed by members of the interview towards her, due to her physical appearance and believes this to negatively impact her performance during interviews. Sakinah's physical appearance at the interview stage was met with what can be described as shock, conveyed through non-verbal cues and body language, to express a level of unease at discovering the mismatch between the name and the physical appearance. Sakinah believes that whilst her name conceals her Muslim identity, affording her protection from discrimination at the shortlisting stage, her Muslim identity upon becoming manifest at the interview stage, adversely impacts interactions causing detriment to Sakinah's confidence and performance, resulting in a negative outcome. This suggests that both the panel member and the candidate enter the interview situation with a level of consciousness influenced by external hegemonic discourses surrounding particular identities and their positionality within society and how this is performative in structuring exclusion and marginalisation of certain groups. Manifestations of such encounters, termed microaggressions, were found across the dataset and are discussed further in the next chapter. Sakinah's experiences provide critical insights to the potential limitations of name

blind recruitment processes, proposed as an inclusive strategy to overcome discrimination in hiring practices, only function to delay the discrimination rather than eliminate it.

The comparison between Akbar and Sakinah's experiences, is instructive, as both individuals are categorised as belonging to a neutral racial identity, however by virtue of their religious identity they both clearly appear to be re-racialised, Akbar through his name and Sakinah through her physical appearance, suggesting that the Muslim identity is central in the discrimination that they and other participants encountered and what has been termed the Muslim penalty (Reynolds and Birdwell 2015, Khattab and Modood 2015)

Interestingly, names to be codes for racial categorisation, was consistently reported amongst the participants, though not all names were perceived to be distinctively Muslim sounding, the fact that names were not British sounding was sufficient to convey foreignness.

> "…I don't think it's a case of differentiating through the name because again it's a case of it's just an Asian name to them isn't it. It's not a case of a Muslim name or a Hindu name or a Sikh name or a Sri Lankan name it's just a name that's not a British English name to them…I know of a person who has changed the way he spells his surname because he has had issues in terms of applying for jobs and things…when he has changed his name he has managed to get through…" (Haroon)

The relationship between a non-white British sounding name and the construction of a racialised identity is illustrated by Haroon. Parallels can be drawn between historic and contemporary essentialising and homogenising discourses wherein non-British/western sounding names are not differentiated, akin to the experiences of second generation participants growing during the 1960's and 1970's when all brown people were categorised as "Paki" .

Haroon recalls the actions of an individual who in anglicising the spelling of his surname, was able to overcome the challenges he was facing in securing employment. As Kang et al (2016) found, the strategy of "whitening" a CV, employed by some job seekers, was effective in securing employment, even though visible markers are present at the interview stage. The strategies, deployed in anticipation and/or due to previous experiences of discrimination, are found to be successful, as they signal racial assimilation and conformity to the employer. Interestingly, Kang and colleagues (Ibid) found that applicants did not feel the need to conceal or deemphasise their racial identity markers when making applications

to organisations with equality and diversity statements. That said, pro-diversity organisations were not found reduce discrimination in the recruitment process, demonstrating a radical divergence between policy and practice, which can potentially further disadvantage racialised minority job applicants, especially individuals who bring their authentic selves to an organisation in the belief that they will be valued, respected and treated fairly.

There is a growing body of evidence demonstrating the success variance in employment recruitment, as well as voting data by ethnicity. Individuals with non-white and non-British sounding names were adversely impacted i.e. less likely to be invited for interviews or achieving a share of the votes, highlighting the relationship between perceived identity symbolised through the name and level of acceptance by the dominant group (Wykes 2017).

The challenge of disentangling a specific religious penalty from an ethnic penalty especially in the case of non-white identities, to establish the degrees of labour market penalties is recognised. That said, the salience of particular intra-racial identity markers, including how a name is imbued with a particular meaning, has been shown to play a significant role in how different racialised minority groups fare in the labour market (Khattab and Modood 2015 and Kang et al 2016). Therefore it is important to consider how the name has become performative in the process of racialising Muslims, particularly in the absence of any visible religious markers. The findings suggest that a specific religious penalty was perceived amongst the respondents, based on personal experiences as well as a general feeling amongst the wider Muslim community based on direct and indirect experiences of rejections and the explanations offered by the recruiting officer (this point is further illustrated in the next chapter). Thus suggesting that non-European/Western sounding names are firstly processed as foreign and then by association perceived as Muslim, paralleling the experiences of the second generation during the 1960's and 1970's when all brown people were collectively referred to as "Paki".

> "…People say there is no such thing as a glass ceiling, well there is, it's much higher being a Muslim from what I have experienced…they would say is well if I wasn't a Muslim maybe I would be a lot further on [in my career]…" (Haroon)

An inference can be made from Haroon's narrative above that the inscription of a Muslim identity assumed from the name, appears to be a powerful force in positioning Muslims as the oppositional outgroup. A perceived Muslim name, particularly for Muslim men, conjures up stereotypes that are circulating widely within society at present, providing justification

for exclusionary practices. In addition to terrorism and radicalisation discourses, Cockbain and Tufail (2020) have shown the “grooming gang” narrative has been heavily racialised, within a master signifier of Islam (Sayyid 2012) as a threat to the western way of life, cementing the construction of a nefarious Muslim male identity, within which the wider Muslim community is implicated.

The findings suggest that perceptions of foreignness deduced from a non-European/western sounding name has become a racial code for Muslimness. Such identity inscriptions appear to have negative consequences in restricting and constraining Muslim participation and integration within society more generally and incorporation into the labour market, specifically. A growing body of research has documented a specific Muslim penalty within the labour market, spanning the recruitment process, through to working conditions and promotional opportunities. The Muslim penalty is multiplicated with additional social markers such as ethnicity and gender, for example Black Muslims are shown to be the most disadvantaged group within the labour market. But also, for White British Muslims, their Whiteness is found to be eclipsed by their Muslim identity, demonstrating the shifts in social identity markers and how at different points in time, certain markers become amplified and others diffused (Hussein 2022, Khattab and Hussein 2017, Khattab and Modood 2015). Further examples supporting the literature as well as the data presented so far are discussed in the next chapter to illuminate the ways in which external identity inscriptions, performative in the racialisation of a Muslim identity, result in a specific Muslim penalty.

In the case of participants whose Muslim identity was subdued by their name, ethnicity or apparel, thereby deemphasising ethnoreligious and cultural differences between them and the majority community, an interesting trend emerged within the data. The data pointed to the problematisation of behaviours and practices that are neither unique to the Islamic tradition for example fasting, or observed by other religious groups as well individuals within the dominant group, such as refraining from alcohol consumption. As Amir notes, his Muslim identity is only exposed when he does not join his colleagues for after work drinks

> “…if I am at work say for example and people go for their drinks and I say well I am not going to go for a drink and some people who don't know me might say well why is that. I will say I don't drink because I am a Muslim…”

It appears that Amir is happy to openly disclose his reasons for not joining his colleagues for drinks after work and make manifest his Muslim identity, as he does not feel frequenting pubs/bar to be congruent with his religious belief for social purposes. This suggests that

participants were not actively engaging in practices to subdue or conceal their Muslim identity, rather their level of religiosity and personal spiritual journey determined the level of activation and implementation of a religious lifestyle.

It is important to note that a theological critique and ruling regarding the permissibility to frequent establishments that primarily serve alcohol or being in the company of those consuming alcohol is not the focus of this study. Rather, in centring the voices of the participants, this chapter seeks to advance understanding of how a range of cues and signifiers are instrumental in constructing an essentialised Muslim identity that is deemed an aberration.

Some participants who had not activated an intra-religious conversion, were found to be comfortable, in the context of work, to conduct business within a pub if required and did not feel they were breaking any religious prohibition as they were not consuming alcohol. Haroon a second generation Pakistani male, with no visible cues to his Muslim identity, recounts his experiences of differential and less favourable treatment within his place of work and how his religious identity was interpreted and imposed by colleagues and managers.

> "…an example would be there was a piece of work that was being allocated out. I had the experience of dealing with it…so I put forward I am happy to deal with it, happy to meet with the client…the issue was the client wanted to meet in a local pub and I had no issues with going to meet a client in a local pub…but the manager says well you are Muslim you can't drink alcohol so why should you be allowed to go to a pub so let's send somebody else who is comfortable in that environment…"

Meeting a client in a pub did not present any issue for Haroon, however his manager was setting the parameters and imposing religious restrictions, which, while could be interpreted as well-intentioned and a demonstration of respect towards Haroon's faith, this is not how Haroon perceived the actions. Haroon explained that when the manager's persistence against him meeting the client, veiled as religious sensitivity, could not be sustained due to Haroon's contestations that he would not be breaching any religious diktat, the manager retorted *"well, the client would expect you to have a drink with him*". The response left Haroon powerless, he could no longer contest his manager's decision and he felt, his religion had been weaponised against him as an unsurmountable obstacle had been presented that silenced him into submission. The manager did not appear to engage in an authentic, sincere and sympathetic dialogue in which interpretations of religious restrictions and their application were explored, understood and respected from the perspective of

Haroon, as a Muslim. Haroon's subjective lived experience and how, he has chosen to interpret and practice his faith had been completely disregarded. The expectation to subscribe to an externally imposed identity generates sense of discrimination, injustice and unfairness as Haroon perceives he is being governed, regulated and pressurised to behave in a certain way. His faith is instrumentalised to disempower and disenfranchise him, as he no longer has the freedom to make his own choices about he how practices his faith.

Whilst it is difficult to analyse and interpret, the motivations driving the manager's action, a number of subtexts can be drawn from the interaction especially the suggestion that the client would expect Haroon to have an alcoholic drink. A level of religious literacy about Islam is demonstrated by the manager that is used to exert an authoritative and expert position, which has a homogenising and essentialising effect, functioning to (re)produce stereotypes, and enforce exclusionary and racially discriminatory practices. But is also important to highlight that many people for various reasons, aside from cultural or religious, abstain from drinking alcohol. Therefore, for the manager to accept and endorse a client's unreasonable expectations, places not only Haroon but other non-Muslim colleagues in a difficult position. This not only functions as a racially discriminatory and exclusionary practice, undermining rights and freedoms of Muslims but it has a detriment for the wider society. Secondly the interaction points to a "double othering" (Allen 2020) that the participants were found to experience due to the racialised conflation of religion with ethnicity (as discussed earlier). The manager does not offer any other explanation or reason for Haroon to not meet the client. This suggests that Haroon's competence, qualifications and experience were not in question. Therefore it is judicial to infer that the brown skin and the act of refraining from alcoholic beverages, as signifiers of the (problematised) Muslim identity, were perceived as a potential threat to the image and brand of the organisation, which was protected by selecting a white colleague to meet with the client, to retain sociocultural congruence.

Although Haroon secured employment with the organisation, the encounter relayed is problematic in that it infers the embeddedness of certain normative truths about Muslims and Islam in public and political spheres (Allen 2020), which rationalise the selective enforcement of rules to minimise the threat a Muslim employee may present, mirroring the wider governance and regulation measures instituted globally and locally framed around national security and the "war on terror."

Often it is difficult to ascertain primacy of race vs religion, as the target of discriminatory behaviour, however in this case religious identity appears to have been the key determining factor in moderating and governing Haroon's inclusion and integration within the

organisation. Haroon, though expressing deference to host and heritage socio-cultural norms and practices by fusing competing deontic modalities, is nevertheless found to be held back, which could have adverse consequences for promotion and career advancement.

What is noteworthy is that Haroon does not challenge the manager or raise the issue through any formal channels. He feels the matter to be nebulous and difficult to prove, and as such, defendable by the manager and the organisation that the decision was made on the grounds of a business case. Also Haroon believes that raising a grievance or complaint will only create difficulties and fears being victimised further, illustrating how individual mediated acts of discrimination find protection within wider institutionalised racial frames. As such organisational processes and systems are woefully lacking in racial literacy and competence to adequately investigate and address issues of ethnoreligious discrimination.

> "…But the fear is if you put that forward to an employer you don't want to raise other areas where they start saying well it's got nothing to do with you being a Muslim and I felt it would have put me in a difficult position…"

This fear surrounding victimisation is not unfounded as, evidence of failure by many institutions to acknowledge and adequately address complaints of racially motivated discrimination has been found to lead to reprisals, with victims being perceived as the villains (Bhopal 2018). Haroon's encounter, points to the daily microaggressions, the unfair and negative treatment within the workplace due to ethnoreligious identity, found more widely across the dataset, which are presented and discussed further in the next chapter.

Finally, fasting during the month of Ramadhan was found to expose, an otherwise subdued, Muslim identity and the reactions it evoked amongst colleagues were a revelation for the study participants. They had little appreciation of the extent of anti-Muslim sentiment that existed within the workplace because they had no direct experience of religious based discrimination due to the invisibility of their Muslim identity. Whilst individuals can conceal the fact that they are fasting to avoid exposing their Muslim identity, this was not found to be the case. A possible explanation is the sense of Britishness that was found and relatedly the belief and expectation that multiculturalism and the equality legislation afforded accommodation of ethnoreligious diversity and legal protection from discrimination. As such, many of the participants, were found to be comfortable to disclose that they were fasting, but described feelings of frustration of performing the annual ritual of: *"no, not even water".* The expression of shock and horror that emanated from non-Muslim co-workers

and articulations of sorrow, pity and even disparagement emerged within the data and is exemplified in the two excerpts discussed below.

> "…I fast when I am at work…lots of people ask you know…why are you fasting, and they always forget the rules of fasting and I have to tell them every year…" (Aisha)

Aisha expresses frustration at having to explain to her colleague's every year about the rules and purpose fasting. She perceives this to convey a lack of interest and dismissiveness on the part of her colleagues, suggesting that a religious practice of great significance, was relegated as unworthy of serious attention.

Alyesha on other hand also recounted similar encounters, but in addition perceives her colleagues responses to be rooted in prejudicial views about Islam, given the overt objections she experienced during her interactions.

> "…you know when it's Ramadan…I find it irritating when, people have this, oh my god, you're not allowed a drink of water and that's really unhealthy… in my previous post, I'd got a Director of Nursing, trying to convince me that it's, a health and safety issue for staff not eating for such a period of time…they're going to make mistakes in work… I find that irritating…"

Not only can aberration towards the practice of fasting be explicated from Alyesha's narrative but also what Jones and Unsworth (2022) term softer prejudice that has increasingly become the acceptable face of anti-Muslim prejudice and which is difficult to identify and challenge, as it eludes recognition. The Director of Nursing's claim that fasting is a workplace health and safety risk issue, shifts the concerns from emanating from a place of bias and discrimination to being rooted in the welfare of the workforce and its users and as such framed as a business imperative. Such evaluative judgements and associated control measures, suggesting that individuals should not fast, then appear reasonable and provide justification to what would otherwise be deemed discriminatory practice.

However Alyesha's indignation at the manager's suggestion to mandate against fasting was clearly evident, during the interview. She drew comparisons between the behaviour of colleagues, who present to work having engaged in excessive consumption of alcohol the night before, claiming that such behaviour and practice was not evaluated and regulated within the organisational health and safety policy framework, given the deleterious effects she had observed.

> "…I see colleagues here that are out on the lash…you know, during the week. And they come in with a hangover or they talk about the amount of, alcohol that they consumed, without it even being an issue…I don't come down and judge them on that, as like, you know, this is really terrible that you drink and get yourself in a state like that, because I just accept that that's their way of life…"

Alyesha believed that toleration of her religious believes and practices was low and as a Muslim she was being treated unfavourably, given the criticisms regarding fasting were unsubstantiated. It is worth noting that studies conducted to assess the physical, psychological and spiritual impact as well as economic and health costs of fasting, have shown no adverse effects of fasting on healthy adults (Rouhani and Azadbakht 2014, Bertoli et al 2020). Bertoli et al (2020) investigated sector based incidence of working accidents amongst Muslims during Ramadhan in Spain. Their findings estimated a decrease of incidence of work based accidents with no similar effect on accidents involving non-Muslims workers. They argue that religious accommodation on part of the employer combined with a general increased and attention to behaviours and carefulness amongst the fasting Muslims, decrease the risk of occupational injuries. That said Ovayolu et al (2016) found an increase in fatigue amongst nurses who were fasting and argue that it is necessary to evaluate fatigue levels and take necessary precautions to mitigate against adverse personal and patient consequences.

The interaction recounted by Alyesha suggests that no effort, as recommended by Bertoli et al (2020) and Ovayolu et al (2016), that is, the Director of Nursing made no attempt to understand, assess and negotiate appropriate accommodation to mitigate against the perceived health and safety risks claims made. Rather the evaluation of fasting as an expression of Muslimness provides legitimate grounds for (un)reasonable criticism as such the interaction fails on three out five tests proposed by Modood (2018) to distinguish between Islamophobia and reasonable criticism. The interaction lacked dialogue, mutual learning and therefore can be classed as an insincere criticism of Islam and Muslims. Organisational policies and procedures, mobilised, to regulate and govern the behaviour of Muslims within the workplace, in this case the health and safety policy, are illustrative of institutionalised Islamophobia. Differential and unfavourable treatment finds legitimacy through othering discourses, rooted in systemic racialised ascriptions wherein the dominant group has come to view Muslims and Islam negatively and stereotypically as inferior, a threat and an aberration (Modood 2018).

Perhaps it would be remiss to not, albeit briefly, attend to concerns raised by Alyesha regarding the dominant cultural practices involving alcohol. In the spirit of mutual learning

within the reasonable criticism test proposed by Modood (ibid), a rapid appraisal of the literature on alcohol related harm suggests that, on average alcohol consumption tends to be higher amongst managerial and professional roles. Moderate alcohol consumption can impair concentration at work and an estimated 167,000 working years are lost to alcohol every year (NHS Digital 2018 and PHE 2016). Therefore Alyesha's indignation appears not to be misplaced as the risks associated with moderate alcohol use for the workplace does not appear to be problematised, given that alcohol consumption is a sociocultural practice of the dominant group and therefore normalised. However the purported claims of fasting to be a workplace health and safety risk, suggests fasting is being racialised, given Ramadhan is uniquely associated with Islam and Muslims.

As discussed in the literature review, racial ideology has shaped the social system of racial superiority and inferiority in which the white majority cultural frame defines social norms and correct or normative behaviour and attitudes towards, in this, case alcohol, the harms of which may be recognised, but the behaviour is not classed as deviant, beyond the individual. This is because the power to set standards, from which normativity and deviance is assessed rests with the dominant white majority group. The unequal power dynamic, as can be accentuated from this case, illustrates how the manager was in a position to control and shift the issue that questioned the practice of fasting from a race equality matter to a health and safety risk concern. Arguably such a strategy repackages and invisibilises racism that structures white normativity, privilege and advantage, whilst disempowering individuals from racialised minority groups causing detriment and disadvantage and consequently perpetuating health inequalities. The hegemonic portrayal of an essentialist Muslim identity within policy, media and public spheres, as inherently anti-Western is suggested to be rooted in the political economy of racialisation and systems of exclusion, causing marginalisation and vulnerability and ultimately death and illness (Ali and Whitham 2021).

4.4 Conclusion

The chapter has presented the analysis and discussion of the data, to illuminate how the participants experienced shifts in external social identity inscriptions overtime. The analysis has demonstrated how social identities came to be penned with attributions of innate and immutable deficit characteristics. These characteristics go beyond being descriptive, to being imbued with negative meaning, conveying deviation upon which valuations of worth are formulated to justify racial discrimination as a socially acceptable norm.

The intergenerational accounts of the diverse cohort of participants has demonstrated the historical continuities of a racial ideology, and the processes of racialisation through which race, though widely accepted as a social construct, categorises, marks out and designates groups as the inferior other. The lived experiences of the participants, point to the multiple and intersecting ways that a range of signifiers and characteristics, including biological, cultural and religious, as well as ordinary, everyday normative objects, behaviours and practices, acquire racial meaning; and work in tandem to create an inferior racial other, who becomes the source of societal fear and anxiety and therefore must be governed and managed.

The intergenerational, biographical accounts of the diverse cohort of study participants show how racial categorisation has shifted overtime but that racist stereotypes remain stubbornly ingrained, only to be recycled in acceptable ways so as to create the semblance of a post racial society. The chapter demonstrates how racism has evolved, transformed and mutated, such that overt expressions of racism and invocations to biological concepts of race have become muted. Newer forms of categorising and codifying people, beyond biology were found to be instrumental in western hegemonic identity constructions of non-white people that demonstrated the process by which participants were racialised and re-racialised according to socio-political contextual factors to sustain racism in subtle, respectable and legitimate ways. According to the findings, racism is not reducible to anyone identity characteristic, rather biological, cultural and religious features intersect in the (re)configuration and construction of stigmatised racial groups, with particular markers given prominence but not necessarily replacing others. The once shared physical identity characteristics of non-whiteness upon which acts of racial discrimination were experienced by the majority of the participants were found to have been multiplicated along Muslim and non-Muslim lines. However cues to a Muslim identity, irrespective of ethnoracial identity markers were found to convey a distinct form of aberration, which points to a racist imagination which constructs the other, in various ways according to context. The accounts of the White British converts to Islam, were pertinent in illustrating the point and demonstrating the concept of racialisation that accentuate the historical lineage and integral role of religion, alongside biology in the creation of racial social hierarchies.

The findings encapsulate how the world is divided, along lines of “us” and “them”, civilised and uncivilised respectively and identity markers which do not fit the former are racialised as inferior. The interconnectedness between somatic and non-somatic features emerging from the data, accentuate the complex dynamic between race, ethnicity and religion but fundamentally demonstrates the unifying underlying force of racial ideology that has given social meaning to difference. Difference, assessed in relation to distance from the dominant

White identity, was found to be perceived as inferior, illustrating how Whiteness, as a standard, is naturalised, against which deviation is then measured, an approach that is embedded within societal structures and systems, shaping institutions to give rise to structural racism and racial health inequalities.

A growing body of research, shows the links between health inequalities and racism but what is less well understood is the underlying process by which racism continues to be operationalised, given negotiated categories of ethnicity and religion have replaced social markers of race as a construct. The findings, empirically, contribute knowledge to advance understanding of the inextricable links between racial ideology, refined and reformulated over centuries, and the construction of external social identity inscriptions, in creating racially stigmatised groups, whose lives are limited by the racialised social system, which privileges the dominant white racial group. This in turn was found to enforce involuntary segregation, as the coalescing of communities was found to be driven by the need to protect and survive the hostile conditions that structured lives and limited access to health enhancing resources. The consequences of negative external identity inscriptions and their implications for racial health inequalities are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Chapter Five. Traversing a Hostile Environment

5.1 Introduction

The term hostile environment has entered contemporary lexicon and commonly used to denote the implications of the current immigration policy, particularly pertaining to new migrant communities and issues of xenophobia. However a hostile environment is not a new phenomenon that seeks to control who enters the UK, rather, as the findings presented in this chapter illustrate, a hostile environment relates more broadly to the ways in which study participants, as second and third generation migrants, have experienced governance, regulation and management of their daily lives over the life course due to racialised othering discourses.

The lived experiences of second and third and even fourth generation, in different ways, demonstrates the multifarious ways in which a hostile environment manisfested, shifting and changing overtime, deflects attention away from deep-seated issues of structural racism as a fundamental cause of racial health inequalities.

The chapter is organised around two of the three identity defining moments, experienced by the majority of the participants and their articulations of describing their encounters that socially marked out their identities as an aberration. The first set of encounters were unanimously perceived as racism, and related to visibility, primarily marked by phenotype in the main skin colour but did not preclude cultural markers such as, food, language and dress code that problematised participants identities as discussed in the previous chapter and expanded upon below. Therefore the first theme of this chapter is titled “Old School Racism”, partly because racism was experienced in biological terms, especially by the second generation participants and partly because racism continues to be understood in this way, as is accentuated by the second theme of the chapter titled “Multiculturalism and the Semblance of a Post-racial Society.” The second theme presents a discussion of the findings of a set of experiences that were framed as multicultural, wherein diverse ethno-cultural identities were celebrated, perceived to foster conviviality between minority and majority groups that gave semblance to a post-racial society. The final and third set of experiences, unanimously described as Islamophobic by the participants, are presented and discussed in the next chapter. The encounters relayed and categorised by participants as being rooted in Islamophobia warranted a detailed analysis and discussion to offer critical insights to contemporary debates surrounding the concept of Islamophobia as a

form of racism in order to consider implications for understanding health inequalities experienced by the Muslim communities in the UK.

5.2 Old School Racism

This section, building on the previous chapter, presents specific manifestations of racial discrimination and how the prevailing thinking around race influenced the everyday interactions between the participants and the majority community in a variety of settings. This theme, emerging from the data, specifically pertains to the second generation cohort of study participants and was considered cogent for a number of reasons. Firstly it accentuates the interconnection between the different periods, as convergence between experiences of the diverse intergenerational cohort of study participants was found and which explicated the racialisation mechanisms through which racism is normalised. Secondly the data of self-reported racial discrimination was strongly linked to external identity inscriptions and revealed overt manifestations of biologised racism and its impact on the individuals over the life course. This is particularly pertinent as a growing body of research has expanded the evidence linking racial discrimination with different types of biomarkers connected to stress and allostatic load. Racial discrimination is found to be associated with allostatic overload and poorer health outcomes (Guidi et al 2020, Currie et al 2019, Gee et al 2019, and Yang et al 2019). Finally, the theme offers insights to how society is structured, revealing the complex interplay between individual, systemic and everyday racism, that create the unfavourable conditions for racialised minority groups which undermine health enhancing resources over the life course.

As has been discussed in the previous chapter external negative identity inscriptions were strongly associated with biology, with skin colour being a primary cue to mark out the inferior other. The second generation cohort of participants overwhelmingly reported racism in multifarious ways in a variety of settings, some of which have already been presented and discussed in the previous chapter, such as racial slurring, harassment, physical and verbal abuse within neighbourhoods and more widely in society. In this section attention is given to the tangible manifestations of racism experienced in primary and secondary schooling. This expands the data used in the previous chapter that used street level harassment to illustrate how participants experienced the construction of their identities by external actors. The respondents used schools to illustrate how their childhood had been marred by overt racism, as an articulation of how racism operated at multiple levels in society. Schools, as a setting, where the participants spent a significant proportion of their time interacting with the majority community are instructive, as they reveal how schools (and other public and private institutions) are a mirror image of the wider society. As a

microcosm of society, participants considered schools as critical sites that reflected broader societal attitudes and beliefs towards racial differences of the time.

It can be accentuated from Ahmad's account below, that a non-white identity was framed according to the meaning attached to race at the time, as innate and the biological basis for determining superiority and inferiority that set human beings apart.

> "…some teachers…were obviously racist…one teacher saying to a black lad, oh you lot are so ungrateful, we bring you out of the jungle and we teach you manners and civilise you and this is how you show gratitude…And you think bloody hell, that's a bit strong isn't it…"

In critically examining the statement, prevailing societal attitudes and beliefs about and engagement with race emerge. It appears that the teacher's articulation of a sense of superiority and progressiveness emanates from a historical imperial legacy which imported, both commodities from the colonies as well as, the saviour ideology. The trope used by the teacher, is arguably, situated within the dominant narrative of the time, in which non-white groups were depicted as barbarians and savages, in need of being civilised by the White Western saviour (Mutua 2001). Such conceptualisations, with the support of the scientific community, were institutionalised during the colonial period, to justify Western domination and control in order to further material interests (Saini 2019).

Evident from the narrative, is the discursive power of assigning meaning to bodies, the reference to jungle and civility points to attributing traits to non-white individuals that fall out of the fold of being human. A subtext of less than human can be gleaned from the teacher's words, suggesting that the foundations of racism were premised on dehumanising groups, through the denial and lack of recognition of important cultural values, believes, histories and heritage (Ibid). The teacher is implying that non-White people were nothing, nobody, before colonisation, which positions the coloniser, along with its values, cultures and way life as superior, calling into question the innate worth and value of some lives over others. In referencing "civilising" the belief that non-Western cultures were deemed inferior, backward and of little to no worth or value and in need of transformation can be explicated from the teacher's remarks. Thus, the teacher appears to be fulfilling the role of humanising that is foregrounded in a western conceptualisation of what it means to be human, in order to create suitable subjects. Thus non-white identities were desecrated, deconstructed and reconstructed to reflect the beliefs, values and cultural norms of the White dominant group. This, overt manifestation of racism as can be explicated in the above excerpt, illustrates the interrelationship between the individual and the wider social forces and institutional

structures of society. Individuals do not operate in a vacuum and play, whether intentional or not, a central reciprocal role in (re)producing a power dynamic of superior and subordinate positionalities that is deeply entrenched in the hierarchy of race and colour (Ibid).

Interestingly, as Ahmad reflects on this incident, he recalls feeling quite shocked and disturbed by the remarks made by the teacher and feeling that the statement overtly expressed the negative views held about non-white students more widely. The statement conveys insult and seeks to intimidate and belittle the recipient, leaving Ahmad feeling incredulous that an educator would implore such offensive and demeaning language within a classroom. Ahmad used this incident as an example of the overt levels of racism that prevailed during the 1960's and 1970's, across all spheres of society. The incident also points to Ahmad's understanding and definition of racism to be shaped by his childhood experiences of discrimination along the colour line, which denoted biological inferiority. Importantly it shows that racism was not confined to street level harassment but manifested within public institutions, which endorsed negative stereotypes and equally perpetrated racism, thereby reproducing and upholding power and privilege, as part of the wider racialised system to maintain a racial hierarchy and social order (Grosfuegol 2016, Bonilla-Silva 2015).

Ahmad's encounter was not an isolated incident, rather a consistent thread was found within the data, with a number of distressing encounters narrated by the second generation cohort in which teacher attitudes and beliefs were found to be influenced by the prevailing hegemonic racial discourse. Overt racism was evident in numerous interactions with teachers and ranged from respondents reporting incidents of being singled out and receiving harsh punishment and treatment, experiencing disregard and disinterest, low academic expectations and gender based stereotypes. One participant described an encounter with a teacher at primary school as *"terrorising"* (Aisha), whilst others claimed to be *"scared"* (Amjid and Khadijah) of their teachers, suggestive that the school environment was hostile and oppressive.

> "…racism was rife when I was growing up…I don't think my teachers had much expectation of me…it wasn't really that positive experience going to school…" (Mahnoor)

> "…My relationship with the teachers was terrible…they just did not care whether we did well or not …" (Amjid)

The above statements encapsulate the overall schooling experience of the second generation cohort of participants, with many leaving school with little to no qualifications because teachers were reported to be disinterested, irrespective of gender, though the reasons and attitudes and beliefs driving the lack of interest did appear to be driven by gendered stereotypes as discussed next.

5.2.1 Gendered Racism – Conscious Bias

> "…teachers were bullies, teachers were quite indifferent to you…we used to get caned just for forgetting our PE kits. We would get caned if we didn't have our homework done, we got caned if we were seen to be misbehaving in class...somebody stole my watch which my brother bought for me on my birthday, I got punched in the stomach when I refused to give it to the guy. I went to the teacher and he said what, do you want me to do about it? So school wasn't a good experience…" (Amjid)

In considering the male participants experiences first, Amjid, who attended an all-boys school, feels that teachers were particularly punitive in their interactions and disinterested in the welfare of non-White pupils. Though he does not provide specific comparator evidence of how White pupils were treated better, he makes an inference to that effect, through the use of the word "we", suggestive of a collective reference to non-White pupils, who were treated unfavourably. The interactions with male teachers were reported as overtly negative, leading to punitive measures being exercised to discipline the pupils for minor breaches pertaining to school regulations and/or judgements regarding standards of behaviour. Ahmad also notes that corporal punishment, now legally prohibited in the UK, was widely used to discipline pupils at his school.

> "…if you were late you got caned, if you were doing something you got the strap the slipper whatever implement they used to use…they did it to everybody…"

Interestingly, though Ahmad is suggesting that corporal punishment was meted out indiscriminately, when asked to clarify whether he felt that non-white pupils were singled out, he stated:

> "…we were closing our minds to that because we were guests in this country. So our parents would always say we are here it's not our country so we always had a tolerance level about not opening our minds to that….if it wasn't overt you wouldn't have necessarily picked it up. And at that age you didn't even know the language…"

Two important points can be derived from Ahmad's narrative , firstly that racism was tolerated and accepted by the participants upon the instructions of their parents, suggestive of a sense of gratitude and indebtedness for being invited to the country to avail socio-economic opportunities afforded in the effort to rebuild Britain post second world war. Also, the plan, as discussed in the previous chapter, was to return home, hence the use of the word "guest", meant, racism was endured because it was deemed a short-term inconvenience, to which they closed their minds. This practical strategy of dealing with the realities of racism, coupled with limited language proficiency, meant that racist behaviour was not always recognised and even if it were, challenging or reporting it, as noted by Amjid, appears to have been futile, a theme consistently found across the data for the male participants, pointing to the racial ideology of problematised non-white masculinities (Cockbain and Tufail 2020). Boys from visible racial minoritised groups in Western societies are more likely to be targeted for corporal punishment, where such forms of discipline continue to be used in schools. The deleterious consequences and impact of corporal punishment, beyond the physical harm inflicted, which is short term in nature and often without lasting disfigurement, relate to the humiliating and degrading aspects, which are found to have long-term adverse psychological effects, negative behaviour and low educational attainment, especially if students perceive that they are being unfairly targeted due to racial discrimination (Gershoff 2017).

Shakoor makes a critical point about the legislation and regulations and the absence of policies and procedures to address racial discrimination within schools.

> "…Not as they would manage it now, there is a lot more safeguarding a lot more procedures a lot more processes. I don't think…back in the day back then…I don't think they managed it that well…"

Shakoor appears to be suggesting that the current safeguarding framework is a mechanism within schools to protect children from the harmful effects of racism and discrimination, which was not in place when he was growing up. The perception and expectation that mechanisms are in place to deal with racism within the educational establishment and the lived reality of the effectiveness of these is discussed in subsequent sections as well as the next chapter. However what can be explicated from Shakoor's narrative is that discrimination on the grounds of colour appears not to be have been recognised as an issue, probably because the Government adopted an assimilationist policy approach, which problematised the culture and customs of the migrant communities, which in

contemporary terms denotes cultural and institutional racism (Blum 2020 Vaughan 2019, Modood 2005).

In attending to female participants experiences and the gendered stereotypes driving racial discrimination, a number of insights gleaned from Khadijah's two excerpts below, effectively illuminate a thread found more widely across the data set for the second generation female participants.

> "…I do even remember teachers saying…oh you're just going to get married and in a few years' time …we'll see you pushing prams…our teachers had no interest in us… they thought, we're not going to have…professional jobs or degrees…"

> "…I think from a right young age we were labelled, which has affected my life…it's something that you can't erase…that was a part of my life I can't forget…I left school with nothing, so no GCSE's…looking back now, it was completely not fair…you know not given the education that we should have deserved I think…. it was just thought of that…we don't need an education…"

Firstly, a deeply profound and long lasting emotional and psychological impact that the negative stereotypes held by the teachers has had upon participants, as can be accentuated from Khadijah's narrative was found. The interactions were found to have left, not only an indelible memory, but a sense of injustice, premised on a perceived denial of rights to an education and corollary limitation on career opportunities. Khadijah's, as well as the other second generation participant's (both male and female) experiences of racism reveal the participants cognition to see oneself through the eyes of the oppressor and the potential deleterious consequences for the way this image, imprinted upon their minds, impacted perceived agency going forward. The adverse impact on self-esteem and confidence and associated stress, due to perceived discrimination during adolescence has been found to have long-lasting physical and psychological health effects. Suggesting that negative external identity inscriptions that fuel negative stereotypes function to diminish lives and perpetuate health inequalities (Yang et al 2019).

The external identity constructions and stereotypes pertaining specifically to the Muslim section of the Asian community, namely Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups can be explicated from Khadijah's narrative above. Particularly the cultural preference for early marriage and children, invoked by the teachers, supports the assertion made in the previous chapter of the nuanced ways in which Islam has been a longstanding feature of external identity configuration of Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim communities. The

findings suggest that female participants experienced the phenomena of “believers” as opposed to “achievers” (see previous chapter) and this misidentification was rooted in cultural and religious stereotypes held by the teachers about Muslim female pupils. As Khadijah points out below and the demographic profile, highlighting the qualifications attained by the female participants demonstrates (Appendix 1), such negative representations and assumptions were unfounded.

> “….we came from families, where a lot of the parents were illiterate…we didn’t get the right sort of level [of support]…my parents were supportive, they wanted us to go to school and, but they couldn’t help us or they couldn’t understand what we were studying...” (Khadijah)

Contrary to the teachers popular believes, female participants were found to have full parental support to pursue higher education and career aspirations, but unfortunately, were at a disadvantage, as, in the main, parents were not educated and therefore unable to provide academic input, support and guidance. The poor educational background of the parents and the lack of English proficiency meant that parental engagement with the school was limited, which appears to be misinterpreted by the teachers as a lack of interest and support for the education of girls.

> “…There was no parent/teacher relationship, parents never got involved at school… my parents didn't speak great, you, know kind of English…” (Aisha)

Thus, female participants faced a double bind which explains the sense of injustice expressed by Khadijah and found more widely within the data, as the teachers, schools and the overall educational policy failed to identify and address barriers to improve home-school relationship and create a package of supportive interventions that would have enabled the participants to fully avail the educational opportunities and excel academically. Rather the findings suggest that the negative assumptions held by the teachers activated uncritical assessments and biases that actively functioned to misrecognise and dismiss the natural academic aptitude and aspirations of many of the respondents. The cultural stereotypes and perceptions about the expectations of marriage and children upon girls, held by the teachers, clearly was an impediment to academic achievement that curtailed career pathways. As Aisha notes:

> “…I was really good at maths but for some reason they put me in the bottom set…again you feel was it because of your background, and then obviously your parents not vocal…”

The findings suggest that the underlying ideology, values and assumptions framing the problem of educational inequalities, identified the Asian Muslim community as the source of the problem (Byrne et al 2020). Such a framing is perhaps unsurprising as schooling reflected wider societal perspectives on race, particularly a lack of recognition of the existence of racial discrimination (Vaughan 2019). However the data clearly demonstrates that participants were exposed to overt racial discrimination, making them cognisant of race and racism at an early age. Respondents overwhelmingly identified skin colour, language and cultural practices as the distinguishing features that set them apart and were the basis for unfavourable and unequal treatment that adversely impacted their educational attainment.

> "…I found the teachers quite harsh. And I remember one teacher, feeling that she was racist, actually I felt she didn't like me because of my, the colour of my skin and that I was Asian and different…she was very, very horrible, not tolerant at all…I was talking about something to the teacher and I said the word film but I said it how you say it at home which is filam and she just said what did you say and I said it again. And she shouted at me and she hit me across my leg and she was so angry and I had never seen anyone so angry… [It was] quite, terrorising at that time and that stuck with me for a while actually and I really did lose my confidence…. I was like 7 or 8 years old at that time. So yes that was difficult…" (Aisha)

It is evident from Aisha's account above that she was able to recognise the disdain emanating from the teacher towards her identity characteristics at a very young age. This was confirmed by the teacher's inappropriate and disproportionate response to the mispronunciation of a word. The teacher in failing to recognise Aisha's mistake as indicative of her learning and support needs, meant an appropriate response, by way of tailoring educational strategies was not activated. Rather, Aisha was both verbally and physically reprimanded, suggesting that the teacher correlated lack of English proficiency with foreignness and corollary inferiority, demonstrating the prevailing cultural superiority of the English language. Thus revealing an important insight regarding the entanglement of biological and cultural racism that strongly identifies with the concept and definition of racism as being rooted in power and structure as opposed to a scientific reality of human superiority and inferiority as discussed in the literature review. Interestingly Aisha perceived the interaction to be racially motivated, because she felt that the disdain conveyed was triggered by Aisha's ethnoracial and cultural characteristics. The encounter left Aisha feeling humiliated and belittled, eroding her sense of value and self-worth and adversely impacting her self-esteem and confidence. The depth of associated emotions and the

trauma of that incident was clearly evident in the detailed way Aisha recounted the events over thirty years later. The account was relayed with expressions of sadness, pain, disbelief and ultimately a sense of injustice and betrayal that racism was carried out by educationalist with power and privilege to promote and uphold principles of fairness and equity, at a minimum in interpersonal interactions, even if institutional policies and practices restricted incorporation of diverse cultural needs.

There were no requirements upon public institutions to recognise difference, rather institutions were shaped by notions of humanity that reflected a Western Eurocentric image. Racialised minority groups, did not fit this image and so the denial of fundamental human rights were rationalised as a humanising project, evidence of which manifested in multifarious ways within the data. Many of the female participants shared distressing accounts of being denied the right to cover their bodies appropriately and in accordance with their cultural and religious requirements, as the school uniform policy was universalised such that it only recognised the majority cultural dress code.

> "…that meant going to school wearing a skirt, not being able to kind of cover your legs…so the dressing that was quite difficult…I was really good at hockey and I really wanted to play when I was like 15 -16…and I couldn't because of the clothes that I had to wear because it was a short skirt… I found it (the policy) quite restrictive…" (Aisha)

> "…the school uniform at that time for girls, was that you had to wear a skirt…no ifs, no buts...there was that pressure to fit in and there wasn't an allowance about, well actually, if you don't, wear skirts, you can wear trousers, that wasn't an option, so you just kind of assimilated…" (Alyesha)

It was evident within the data that institutional policies were formulated to reflect the dominant cultural norms and practices, as would be expected. However enforcement of these cultural norms and practices was found to be problematic for the participants on a number of fronts. Firstly, it enforced exclusion, as Aisha notes, though having an aptitude for hockey, she could not participate in the sport beyond the minimum requirement i.e. she could not take part in extra curricula activity and join the school hockey team. Secondly, it enforced assimilation, as can be accentuated from Alyesha's narrative, there were no options or opportunities to negotiate alternatives, suggesting a negation of other cultures that forced the first generation to comply and work within the established system so as not to fall foul of the compulsory education law. However, conceding did not mean a negation of one's ethnoreligious identity and therefore engaging in extra curricula activity, as alluded

to by Aisha, was a compromise too far. The lack of ethno-cultural and religious recognition within institutional arrangements was found to create barriers to participation in the whole school life for female participants. Whilst it is perfectly reasonable to expect that institutional policies were formulated to reflect dominant cultural norms and practices, it is the meaning imbued within these policies and the inflexibility to accommodate cultural difference that accentuates the racial ideology that they enshrined. According to Stephenson (2016), school uniforms, gained greater significance post-war and the associated period of decolonisation when national identity was perceived to be under threat. The school uniform was imbued with social values, prestige, ideals and behaviours which were institutionalised as uniquely British and perceived as a symbol of national pride, conveying core national values of freedom, equality and education. It reflected a wider western hegemony of cultural superiority premised on the belief of innate capacities purported by race science. Any concessions to the uniform policy therefore could arguably have been perceived as a threat to national identity and corollary the superiority of White British cultural norms and values.

A nationalist policy orientation both within the education system (Tikly 2022) and more broadly in society that demanded assimilation of racialised minority groups, through the adoption of British values and traditions is suggestive of institutionalised racism that created the conditions to legitimise overt racially discriminatory practices and behaviours. It appears that racism within a nationalistic project, promoted a belief system that created and reproduced structures of domination that emboldened individual, interpersonal, micro level acts of racism (Ibid).

5.2.2 The Trauma of Racism

It is important to attend to the participant's emotional presentation during the interviews, manifest through changes in voice, posture and facial expressions that conveyed stress, anxiety, sadness, pain, disappointment and powerlessness, when recalling perceived racist incidents. The overtly racist incidents, documented in this and the previous chapter, were evidently traumatic and even as children, without the tools of critical thinking to name or recognise an incident as racism, they clearly felt it. The fact that teachers, as individuals in positions of power, authority and trust, were the perpetrators of racism, could explain the deep sense of injustice and betrayal that was voiced by the participants. A fundamental human right to education had been disrupted, requiring compromises and compensatory strategies to minimise the impact and fulfill their educational and career ambitions and aspirations. The incidents reported, thus can be conceptualised as racial trauma that has been shown to increase the risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Studies suggest that groups exposed to racial discrimination, directly and indirectly, are at

a greater risk of developing PTSD with increased severity of symptoms as compared to their white counterparts. The vulnerability of developing PTSD and severity of symptoms following a racially traumatic event is found to be compounded by the negative effects of historical and chronic exposure to racism. That is, at an individual level, a racially discriminatory encounter cannot be divorced from the everyday exposure to racism woven within the social fabric of society, manifest in institutional arrangements, as well racialised discourses more widely. However there is a danger of pathologising racially marginalised groups for the reasonable responses and reactions to racism, especially when tools and criterion for assessing symptoms and responses to trauma reflect a White, Eurocentric modus operandi (Williams et al 2021 and Carter et al 2019). This point is explicated further in the next sections, as the data reveals how the mobilisation of internal resources in particular by the first generation migrants that functioned as protective strategies to mitigate against racism and it's traumatic effects, have come to be misconstrued and weaponised against the South Asian Muslim community. Thus explicating how explanations for the disadvantaged positions of racially marginalised groups, framed through a victim blaming lens, function to deny the complex factors that allow racism to be reproduced to sustain a racialised social order.

5.2.3 Politeness, Power and Racism

To conclude this section on "Old School Racism", analysis of the data pertaining to what appeared to be an outlier from the overtly racially discriminatory experiences, overwhelmingly reported by the second generation cohort, is presented and discussed, as critical insights to the centrality of power dynamics in racism can be gleaned. The analysis of two specific contexts, schooling and neighbourhood, demonstrate Mahmoona's experience of being racialised to be more nuanced as opposed to being deracialised through an active anti-racist strategy that eradicates the application of race as a signifier in the hierarchical social ordering of humans (Stevens 2014).

Although Mahmoona, like her peers described racism to be a part of growing up as a brown child and experiencing racial slurring from members of the majority community whilst living in the inner city, the situation appears to have changed when the family moved to the suburbs. Firstly Mahmoona's experiences of schooling appear to be in stark contrast to those reported by her peers, especially her relationship with the teachers, which was seemingly constructive.

> "… OK I would say secondary so my relationship with teachers, it was pretty positive I would have to say, yeah because I think I was quite privileged growing

> up, happened to be in a privileged….school which was well to do I would say looking back. So…so educationally... you know I had no sort of issues with the teachers I don't think…"

Mahmoona describes her interactions and encounters with the teachers to be positive and does not perceive that there were any issues, but as she reflects back, doubts begin to emanate and she appears unsure by stating, *"I don't think"*. It would be reasonable to deduce from Mahmoona's uncertainty that, as Ahmad suggested earlier and as discussed in the previous chapter, it was difficult to fully appreciate and comprehend racism at a young age and be able to assert with absolute certainty that the encounters were free of racism, especially if racism was not overtly expressed. But also the narrative highlights another point made by Ahmad (see above) about closing one's mind to racism, suggesting that Mahmoona is now questioning, whether she had chosen to ignore and dismiss any discriminatory behaviours. That said when asked to clarify what she meant by privilege she explained that her family had moved into an affluent area, out of the inner city, which meant she attended a well-resourced school, with fewer non-white pupils and where people were, as she states, *"polite"*

> "…so if you have got enough money you can move to a good area where there are good schools and there are good families who have similar, who are educated… so they were very polite…"

Mahmoona appears to be suggesting that spatial affluence and educational status of the majority community influenced behaviours such that overt expressions of racism were less widespread. The choice of words used to articulate her experiences, suggests that Mahmoona encountered a greater level of tolerance but it cannot be inferred that she was accepted or that negative beliefs and stereotypes did not exist. Rather visible cues of ethnoracial differences were not perceived as a threat and problematised, given that there were very few non-white people living in the suburbs. Displays of politeness are also suggestive of a colour-blind approach (discussed further in section 5.3.5.) wherein ethnoracial differences are not attended to, which is not necessarily indicative of the absence of racism or the acceptance of the perceived other. It points to a negation of ethnoracial differences such that racism is invisibilised which would explain Mahmoona's uncertainty about whether she experienced racism at school. Also tolerance of ethnoracial differences does not necessarily address the fundamental beliefs and attitudes of racial and cultural superiority and inferiority that are held by the dominant white group. Racial tolerance, conceived as restraining negative attitudes, is indicative of a power dynamic in which the dominant group has the power to intentionally withhold that power, to negatively

impact ethnoracial minority groups. That is, exercising a choice not to express racism, does not eliminate or prevent racism and can arguably perpetuate racism in subtle ways that creates a veneer and gives semblance to a post-racial society. Especially if it does not engender rational debate and critical examination of the racial ideology that structures and marginalises the lives of racially minoritised groups and prevents them from living their authentic self (Balint 2016 and Ikuenobe 2019).

At the neighbourhood level, Mahmoona recalls that whilst the majority of the neighbours were polite, friendly and tolerant, there was very little interaction between them, with the exception of one neighbour who was particularly vocal in expressing his disdain towards Mahmoona and her family.

> "…Interesting that actually when we first moved we did think that the neighbour next to us didn't like us and always had a problem with us actually…when we had guests he felt the need and he felt he could come up to us and shout at us and have a go at us for our guests parking where they were parking and leaving late at night…we did have to tell our guests could you be really quiet when you shut the car doors… We weren't noisy, we didn't have parties there was no loud music, it was just people leaving the house and driving off…"

Whilst the neighbour did not display any overt declaration of racism, for example racial slurring, it appears that normal, everyday activities of parking a car or entering and leaving the house, at particular times, were racialised, as these everyday mundane activities, were reframed and problematised by the neighbour and conceived as unacceptable and breaching the normal standard of expected behaviour, in a majority white neighbourhood. Evident from Mahmoona's narrative is the sense of entitlement that the neighbour perceived he had to reprimand Mahmoona's family, who in turn react passively and compliantly, by asking their guests to be quieter. This interaction is illustrative of a dominant and subordinate dynamic that is grounded in the belief of the superiority and normalisation of a white racial identity that is built into society's systems and structures to drive individual biases. Racialised interactions arise from the consumption of negative representation of non-white groups in various communication channels, including entertainment, as noted in the previous chapter, that convey explicit racial animus (Banaji et al 2021). The passive reaction by the family, Mahmoona explains, was to maintain a harmonious relationship, and put their neighbours at ease in order to minimise and mitigate against the adverse consequences of racial tensions. This suggests that the first generation were acutely aware of the lack of acceptance of their presence and carried the burden of conviviality i.e. the need to put the majority community at ease, rested with them (Redclift et al 2022).

A trend emerged within findings that points to the toleration of racism, by the first generation, not as a choice but lack of agency. Though interpersonal level encounters of racism were reported, it is the power relationship within these encounters that points to the structures which uphold the racial ideology of white normativity that empower some and not others, as discussed earlier and further expanded upon in section 5.3 below. In addition, the ability to constructively challenge the neighbour for his unreasonable expectations of them, as a minimum, required English language proficiency skills, the absence of which served to maintain an unequal power relationship at the interpersonal level. This suggests that improved language proficiency would help groups and individuals to constructively challenge and resist racism, at least, at the interpersonal level, due to a shift in the agentic state and the ability to exert control over the oppressive violations experienced in everyday life as exemplified by Mahmoona and more broadly by the second generation cohort of participants, within this section (Cavazzoni et al 2021). This point is elaborated upon further in the following sections, as well as the next chapter, as participant's experiences of external identity inscriptions, mechanisms of racialisation and the real and tangible manifestations of racism, accentuate the relationship between agency and structure, which has been shown to be strongly correlated with racial health inequalities.

That said it does not negate the agency of the participants and particularly the first generation migrants to mobilise personal resources to survive the racial hostilities and protect their well-being which emerged when comparing and contrasting the childhood experiences of the second and third generation participants. Data revealed a shifting picture in racial discriminatory experiences, the analysis and discussions of which are presented next.

5.3 Multiculturalism and the Semblance of a Post-racial Era

In contrasting narratives of the second and third generation participants, insights are provided into the shifting discourse on race, racism and racialisation and how relationships and interactions between the majority community and the minority communities at an interpersonal and institutional level evolved and changed. The rebuttal of race as a scientific reality, diverted attention to the social arrangements that unfairly discriminated against racialised minority groups. Race relations legislation and the introduction of the multicultural policy agenda of the 1970's and the 1980's, allowed for adjustments and adaptations to recognise and accommodate the cultural and religious needs of racialised minority groups that conveyed a positive attitude towards difference (Tyke 2021, Mason

2017 and Modood 2017). Multiculturalism emerged as a key phenomenon, perceived by both cohorts of participants, as critical in improving the conditions for the integration of migrant communities and improving minority and majority relationships. In this section, examination of the data that presents the real and tangible manifestations of a multicultural context and its impact provides the opportunity to glean critical insights that speak to contemporary debates about multiculturalism, in relation to creating the conditions that produce poorer social and health outcomes for racialised groups, particularly South Asian Muslim communities.

The data revealed an overwhelming consensus across the intergenerational cohort of participants that overt levels of racism had declined significantly by the 1980's and 1990's. The negative attitudes towards ethnoracial identity, as discussed in the previous section, were found to have given way to the positive recognition of difference and a celebration of ethnoracial diversity, which involved accommodation of cultural and religious needs within public institutions.

This section builds on some of the tangible examples already presented and discussed in the previous chapter that illustrated the shifts in identity markers, such as the prominence of skin colour giving way to ethnicity, which represented culture, language and religion. In presenting participants lived experiences of a multicultural turn, critical insights can be gleaned to the shift from overt to covert racism and the emergence of cultural racism (Modood 2005), through which the lives of the participants continued to be marginalised. In this respect the demographic data is instructive when cross-referenced with the qualitative data, as it indicates that both set of cohorts left school with little to no qualifications. Thus bringing in to focus the efficacy of race equality legislation and multiculturalist policy approaches to improving educational outcomes, as well as wider socio-economic and health outcomes.

The section begins with an analysis of the data that explicates the strategies deployed by the first generation migrants to mitigate against racism by creating safe and secure spaces for their families. Thus providing an important context and back story to the positive childhood experiences reported by the third generation participants, as well as critical insights to the debates surrounding social capital and its link to health inequalities. In addition, attending to the strategies deployed by the first generation, is particularly instructive as they predate the legislative and multiculturalist approaches to improving race relations. The analysis offers a contribution to contemporary debates surrounding the purported claims that the Muslim community (particularly South Asian Muslims) are

choosing to lead segregated and parallels lives, allegedly refusing to integrate, asserting that this presents a threat to community cohesion.

The section then presents an analysis of the data, specifically pertaining to the third generation participant's experiences of multiculturalism that attempts to offer an explanation for the poorer secondary level educational outcomes observed for both cohorts of participants. It specifically speaks to the issue of cultural recognition and accommodation being instrumentalised to repackage racism with a shift towards culture and the proclamation of a raceless society. In addition, the findings also reveal that in light of their personal experiences of racism, the second generation, deployed various strategies to support the educational achievements of their children. Thus the findings make an important contribution to contemporary debates in which claims to a post-racial era, with improved educational outcomes for certain ethnoracial groups being used as evidence to contest institutional racism (Sewell 2021).

5.3.1.Compensatory Strategies to Mediate Against Racism

The third generation cohort of participants overwhelmingly reported positive childhood experiences, free of any hostilities or discrimination based on race or the colour of their skin. They noted, living in multicultural neighbourhoods facilitated friendships with children from diverse racial backgrounds (See section 4.2.1, previous chapter). The third generation participant's recollection of growing up in neighbourhoods which were ethnically diverse, evoked very pleasant memories of a happy, safe and carefree childhood, where their encounters with members of the dominant community were friendly. This generated feelings of safety and security, inferring they had a childhood free of discrimination, certainly at a neighbourhood level.

The positive experiences reported by the third generation cohort can in part be attributed to the demographic changes instituted by earlier generations in response to the racial hostilities that they had experienced. The second generation cohort, noted that families moved into areas where there were other Asian families. It appears that demographic changes were functionally driven with language and cultural factors influencing the first generation migrants need to coalesce and forge strong supportive relationships. This helped them navigate their new and unfamiliar surroundings and way of life, as well as mediate against the challenges that migration brought, including isolation and racism.

> "…when our parents came across, there were very few and so they had to bond together to some extent…their wives would come over and their wives would know

> nobody else, couldn't speak English so they would become friends…their kids will become friends as well… [They] shared experiences and worried about the same things, their parents being in Pakistani and having to support them and all those things were common…" (Shakoor)
>
> "…our mum and dad when they came they had nobody so they had to stick as a community…" (Yousef)

The excerpts above reflect a consistent pattern found within the dataset, which cut across both cohorts of participants, highlighting the pull and push factors for families to coalesce in particular neighbourhoods. It appears that the first generation forged bonds amongst other families who were like them in terms of culture and language. Thus suggesting that networks of relationships were actively developed to avail underlying critical internal resources of trust, connections and reciprocity. The establishment of strong intra-group relationships were reported to be driven out of necessity and mobilised to help advance each other, as the prevailing assimilationist approach (as discussed earlier and in the previous chapter) meant institutional support had not been forthcoming in the form of helping new comers to settle in and overcome obstacles and barriers to integration i.e. they were expected to "fit in" to existing structures and systems.

The social support that intra-group networks offered were critical and were reported positively by the participants, with relational ties functioning as important familial social capital in the absence of actual blood relations, to foster a sense of belonging, safety and security.

> "……we didn't miss not having immediate like uncles and aunts because everybody was your uncle and aunt…looked out for each other…" (Khadijah)
>
> "…I think they felt that security living within their own you know, community…" (Zakia)

According to the findings the social networks functioned in a similar way to familial social capital (Prandini 2014), that is, individuals were able to draw upon assets and resources that contributed to the wellbeing of families as well as the community as whole. This was perceived by the participants to be a fundamental social resource that facilitated the settlement of the first generation migrants. What is particularly noteworthy is that the concept of the family was not limited to parent-child relationship, blood relatives or in-law relationships, suggesting that perceptions of connection, affection and protection, afforded

through these wider networks fell outside of the criteria of family social capital adopted by Alvarez et al (2016). This then has implications for measuring social capital and assessing the assets and resources and their significance to groups who operate beyond the Western conceptualisation of family, given that social capital has been shown to be linked to health (Ehsan et al 2019). According to the findings the family institution was embedded within a wider constellation of relationships that played an important role in the participants lives, for instance Haroon refers to a teacher who was from the same ethno-religious background to him.

> "…mum and dad they are not fluent in English…and we had a teacher called Mr Aslam who was like everyone was scared of him because he knew everyone's parents…so you kind of had that fear in your mind if you do something wrong Mr Aslam would find out and before you even got home mum and dad might know...so that was a kind of a way…keeping everything in check…so let's not do this..."

It appears that having a teacher from the same background, reinforced family values, norms and expectations to influence and moderate the behaviour of the South Asian Muslim pupils, with possible negative consequences arising from parents being informed of pupils misbehaving in school, functioning as a deterrent. The ethno-religious pairing of teacher and pupils also served to diminish cultural and linguistic barriers to parental involvement and strengthened the home-school relationship. It can be gleaned from Haroon's narrative that community networks functioned as a wider family, with collective responsibility for the welfare of its members, indicative of both bonding and bridging social capital, considered to be an important component for transmitting civic virtues, reciprocity and trusting attitudes from the family to the wider society (Prandini 2014). Bonding and bridging, two dimensions of social capital, appeared to be working in tandem, with formal and informal ties operating simultaneously at the level of the family and wider community setting to facilitate integration.

Social capital is a complex multidimensional construct and this multidimensionality makes it difficult to disentangle and capture the various aspects and effectively operationalise the different dimensions in order to identify their specific relationship with health. However both bonding and bridging social capital have been found to be predicators of good health but are context dependent as negative health effects have also been noted (Ehsan 2019).

Another important insight emerging from the findings, relates to how and why social capital is built and the conditions that drive particular forms of social capital to be operationalised. The data suggests that social capital was grounded in identification with context, groups,

actors and the benefits derived from these social connections. Therefore identity and social identification are important considerations within social capital and racial health inequalities research. As accentuated by the findings, the first generation drew upon internal resources, forging social networks to mitigate against the hostile conditions that they encountered upon arrival to the UK. The need for social support, a sense of belongingness and protection from racism, including the direct and indirect experiences of racial harassment, as reported by the second generation cohort (noted earlier and also discussed in the previous chapter) were found be the key forces driving increased racial diversity within neighbourhoods. Therefore the type of social capital formation i.e. bonding, was a direct response to macro and micro forces that limited the formation of other forms of social capital, particularly linking social capital, which refers to the connections with institutions and those in power. Though bridging social capital, that is connection between diverse groups, was evident within the data, linking social capital, that is the formation of social ties through which resources embedded within social structures can be mobilised, was found to be weaker. Social capital, therefore, is evidently subject to powerful external forces that influence and regulate its formation, constricting or expanding the ability of groups to access health enhancing social resources, notably linking social capital, which has been found to be correlated with racial health inequalities. (Munn 2019, Gelderblom 2018).

Therefore it is argued that families coalesced and forged strong internal supportive networks as a protective strategy to mitigate against the negative impact of othering and racism. Arguably the hostilities of the external environment restricted lives and enforced segregation, limiting access to wider societal social and material resources. As such racial segregation is not a choice but rather a relationship strongly connected to racialised systems and structures that give rise to racism and the unequal distribution of resources along racial lines. As a consequence individuals and groups are endowed with differential forms of agency which can be activated in the face of problems (Ray 2019), as is evident by the actions of the first generation migrants, who mobilised internal resources, however limited and constrained, to offer invaluable emotional, psychological and physical support in order to navigate and mitigate against the adverse consequences of an unfamiliar and hostile environment.

It is important to recognise that labour market forces, also influenced residential settlement patterns amongst the first generation migrants as employment opportunities were strongly associated with post-war labour shortages, in manufacturing industries, in urban areas, characterised by low wages and wider poverty related issues (Shankley et al 2020).

5.3.2 “We moved in and they moved out” The White Flight Phenomena

The data also revealed an interesting phenomena which offers alternative explanations for increased non-white neighbourhood density beyond those found in contemporary hegemonic discourses about racially minoritised group’s refusal to integrate. Both second and third generation participants ruminated about white neighbours gradually moving out of an area, as it became more racially diverse. An inference can be made to the “white flight” phenomena which describes neighbourhood migration of white people out of geographical areas which become more racially diverse (Kye 2018).

> “…Once we moved in and a few more Asians moved in to the area, I think they [White neighbours] moved out very quickly. I am not sure why that was…. I know we used to have this culture of giving food out to everybody and maybe they didn't like our food...” (Fawad)

> “…we moved to [area] and the neighbour we had on one side was a white British family and we experienced quite a bit of trouble… another neighbour one door away from us, and they were like they never used to be like this, there used to be a white couple that lived there first [the house that Haroon and his family moved into]. And it was a case of I think they had issues with us as an Asian family moving in... We experienced difficulties in the first year or two when we moved in there but eventually when they moved out everything was fine…” (Haroon)

> “…but then the English families they moved out…within a couple of years anyway…there was no racism as such…” (Amir)

A consistent pattern was found within the data of neighbourhood migration to be a two way flow, as racially minoritised families moved into an area, white families moved out. And as the excerpts above indicate, whilst this could account for the decline in overt experiences of racism reported by the third generation, it does not necessarily indicate that racism was no longer a problem. Rather, racism found expression in covert and aversive ways as exemplified by the data, suggesting that some white people didn’t want non-white groups for neighbours. It can, therefore, be inferred that the preference for living amongst one’s own is not a unique characteristic of racially minoritised groups, as such the South Asian Muslim communities are wrongly implicated in (self) segregation charges that have been levied at them, particularly over the last two decades.

Interestingly, “White flight” as the data suggests, has been contested on the grounds of neighbourhood disadvantage, deprivation and socioeconomic status, identified as the key

drivers of movement out of an area by white groups, as opposed to an intolerance of racially minoritised groups. And claims that the poorer circumstances of racially minoritised group's limits their ability to leave undesirable areas. (Kauffman and Harris 2015, Harris et al 2017). Such arguments not only deny racism as a motivation and the agentic shifts in expressions of racism but also fail to account for the movement of racially minoritised people out of areas with high level of deprivation, as found within the data.

> "…we moved out from [inner city area] and went to [suburb] and there were a lot of white people [there]…" (Yousef)

> "…we grew up in Sneinton…there were lots of racist incidences from people around that area but then I moved to a better area…" (Mahmoona)

> "…the area I grew up in was it had a good mix [of diverse group of people]…I live in a different area now [suburb]…" (Amir)

Many of the third generation participants recalled spending their early childhood in ethnically diverse inner-city areas and then at a later stage moving into more affluent, outer suburbs of the city. This suggests that as communities became established and acquainted with systems and the way of life in Britain, they acquired the necessary skills to become competent to confidently negotiate and traverse their surroundings. This meant that reliance upon personal social networks with people from their own cultural backgrounds decreased, leading to a weakening of ties and increasing geographical mobility out of racially dense areas characterised by poverty and deprivation. The demographic data in conjunction with the participant narratives demonstrates a level of social mobility which arguably facilitated a move to affluent neighbourhoods. This resonates with the literature that shows a decline in segregation levels especially amongst the Muslim population due to the greater movement of Muslims out of geographical areas with high racial density (Gale 2012). Interestingly research into minority suburbanisation trends shows significantly greater levels of "white flight" in affluent neighbourhoods, confirming an independent relationship between racial/ethnic presence and "white flight", suggestive of racism as an impediment for residential racial integration (Kye 2018). Easton and Pryce (2018) claim that true conviviality and prejudices are revealed at the immediate neighbourhood level, observing that white British homeowners were more likely to move out if Pakistani or people with Muslim names moved within close proximity as opposed to people with white British names.

It is important to highlight that increased neighbourhood diversity had a positive association with the development of a diverse social circle of friends for the third generation cohort of participants. So whilst “white flight” may lead to a decrease in the size of the white population in areas with increased racially diversity, it also, according to Finney and Simpson (2009) increases the spread of all ethnic groups, thereby reducing clustering and isolation of one particular group. That said, clustering and isolation have been found to be the greatest amongst the white ethnic population, with the average white person living in areas with 94% white people (Ibid)

> “…I mean my friends were mostly Pakistani, whereas, my children, they’ve got friends from lots of different cultures, Indian, Pakistani, English, which is good…the Pakistani community was our family. Whereas, for our children, you know, our neighbours are Pakistani but my children hardly know them…” (Khadijah)

> “…So growing up I had a variety of friends…English friends, you know…white friends. Didn't realise what religion someone is associated with, whether they were atheist whether they were even Christians…” (Fawad)

The above excerpts, consistent with the data across the two cohorts, demonstrates increased inter-ethnic mixing overtime and a weakening of intra-group ties, especially for the third generation cohort. Two possible explanations can be offered for the changes. Firstly changes at the individual family unit and its extension with marriage of the second generation meant that reliance on bonding social capital shifted from wider community networks to family networks. Thereby community ties, that were, originally, critical sources of support for the first generation migrants did not have the same significance for the third generation. Secondly and relatedly, the changes in community characteristics overtime influenced social adaption to the once unfamiliar environment but importantly this adaption was enabled by wider societal changes. That is legislative changes and multiculturalist approaches that recognised and accommodated cultural differences are argued to be the enablers in the successful social adaptation of second and third generation migrants. As they reduced the threat and stress of racism and the assimilationist approaches of the 1960’s and 1970’s, which the first and second generation had to contend with. It also points to acculturation patterns of second and subsequent generations of British born Muslims as elaborated upon next.

5.3.3 Structure, Agency and Patterns of Acculturation

Though the study does not apply an acculturation theoretical perspective, nevertheless, it does require consideration, as the data revealed a range of different acculturation patterns that were found to be contingent upon the socio-political context of the time. Three patterns of acculturation have been identified within the literature and have supported the data analysis to explicate the structural processes and mechanisms that supported or hindered acculturation for the participants. These processes are important considerations as acculturation has been found to have consequences for psychological wellbeing and racial health inequalities (Kunst et al 2015, Anjum et al 2019). Firstly, acculturation, which takes the form of complete adoption of dominant society's culture and way of life, including participation in activities forbidden within own culture, i.e. assimilationism. Second is partial acculturation wherein individuals express deference to dominant and heritage cultural norms and practices by fusing different ways of being whilst maintaining core cultural and religious values that are central to their identity, i.e. integrationism. Finally, de-acculturation, is the complete adherence to one's cultural norms and practice, i.e. segregationism. Acculturation patterns are context dependent, influenced by a range of socio-political factors that articulate the acculturation expectations of the minority group by majority members of society, which in turn shapes how racially minoritised groups respond

The data suggests that secondary socialisation processes in the social milieu of the majority community accompanied by changes in the sociocultural and political context that accommodated difference, that is a shift away from assimilationism towards more integrationism, invariably influenced the diffusion of host and heritage cultural norms and practices, reducing barriers to participation and engagement within the wider society. Notably increased English language proficiency, a decline in overt forms of racial hostility and increased neighbourhood level racial diversity, were found to reduce both threat and sense subordination, to positively influence interactions with the wider society. Thus cultural exchanges facilitated diffusion of host and ethno-cultural lifestyles, reflective of integrationism patterns of acculturation. For instance, during the interviews, it was observed that, non-hijab wearing second and third generation female participants, all, adopted a western attire in public and professional spaces. On the other hand, participants who had activated a religious orientation were found to adopt a religious attire in diverse ways, including wearing the hijab with modest western outfits or in the case of the hijab with the abayah, the choice of colour i.e. non-black was notable (though not obligatory, Black is often the preferred colour for hijab and abayah in some Islamic countries). This suggests that the participants were conscious of the effect the hijab has on western perceptions (as discussed in previous chapter) and therefore modifications in style and colour were a display of deference to host culture whilst retaining spiritual convictions.

The dress code of both hijab and non-hijab wearing participants is illustrative of an integrationism acculturation strategy, more widely adopted by the second and third generation cohort of participants. Wherein both host and heritage cultural norms and practices were found to be blended in the process of forming a strong sense of self-identity that reflected the connection and feelings of belonging to the country of birth, without desecrating the central tenets of religious and cultural heritage. A strong religious identification, irrespective of religious observation, as discussed in the previous chapter, provided meaning, purpose and anchorage, with ethnic heterogeneity of Islam serving to reduce the conflict and stress that cultural homogeneity demands within an assimilationist acculturation strategy. Integration as an acculturation strategy has been found to have significant positive physical and psychological health benefits, as it positively promotes racial identity, thereby improving quality of interactions and relationships between the dominant group and racially minoritised groups which can buffer against and reduce racial discrimination and its negative health consequences (Choy et al 2021).

However as the findings suggest, acculturation strategies deployed by first generation migrant and the subsequent generations differed. The former deployed strategies akin to segregationism, with the coalescing of the first generation, presenting an image of separation to the wider society. But as the findings demonstrate this separation and segregationism was enforced and involuntary. The latter group on the other hand were found to deploy integration approaches due to secondary socialisation influences, which supported the formation of hybrid identities, through the borrowing and fusion of both host and heritage cultures to improve cross-cultural interaction (as discussed in the previous chapter and elaborated upon in the next chapter). Acculturation approaches were found to be contingent upon the socio-political context, that is, particular strategies deployed by individuals and communities are a direct response to wider external social forces of othering and exclusion or the recognition, acceptance and inclusion of difference. Individuals and communities can use multiple acculturation strategies, some of which are considered to be obstacles to adaptation and integration and are instrumentalised in the promotion of hegemonic pathologising discourses about racially minoritised groups. The adaptation and integration of racially minoritised groups in a dominant society is a reciprocal process that requires favourable societal conditions in which ethno-cultural and religious differences are not problematised as a strategy to deflect attention away from structural factors of exclusion and marginalisation and to shift the blame upon communities for their disadvantaged position in society (Khawaja 2016).

The data analysis and discussion of findings presented in this section contribute to the contemporary debates and explanations offered for the disadvantaged position of South

Asian, principally Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim communities. The findings offer a counter-narrative to claims of self-segregation and corollary parallel lives levied at the community and the failure of multiculturalism to support the integration of South Asian Muslim communities. This point is discussed further in chapter six, given that such a representation of the South Asian Muslim community and more broadly a Muslim identity, has become the dominant, hegemonic framework for analysing and advancing explanations of Muslim radicalisation but also wider social and health inequalities ((Phillips 2006, Gale 2012, Isakjee 2016, Bagguley and Hussain 2019, Sewell 2021). The participant voices and lived experiences provide real, tangible examples of the adverse consequences of such shifting discourses.

The next section examines the data pertaining to the reporting of a deracialised experience by the third generation cohort of study participants.

5.3.4 A Raceless State: “We were all treated the same”

In this section, data pertaining to the third generation cohort of participants and their perceived deracialised experiences of growing up in a reportedly multicultural society is examined. The section, in the main, focuses on participants schooling experiences, as this allows for comparisons to be made between the two cohorts of participants. An examination of the divergent experiences of racism illuminate the structural relationship between racism and racial inequality, demonstrating how racism is institutionally rooted, pervasive and continues to have adverse generational impact on outcomes.

The majority of the third generation cohort (five out six) attended inner city ethnically diverse primary and secondary schools and felt that they had not experienced racism from either the teachers or fellow pupils.

> “…primary school I think I had a good relationship… I look back at how I was back in secondary school… I was just very naughty is the best way to put it…you would get into detention and led to some suspensions at the time…” (Amir)

> “…I don’t think kind of race or culture played a part in that, I think maybe my own personality was more to play, so you know the teachers I got along with, they probably saw something they liked in me and the ones that I didn’t was probably because I annoyed them or I didn’t get my homework done on time and those kind of things so it wasn’t problematic at all...” (Tariq)

> "…School, I think primary school was mixed whites, blacks, Asians, it was mixed...So it wasn't like we were sticking out like a sore thumb and got picked on. So I wouldn't say I was effected by racism…the same with secondary school…either you are liked or you are hated and that was it not because of the colour of your skin…" (Yousef)

A consistent pattern was found amongst the dataset for the third generation cohort, suggesting that participants did not feel ethnoracial differences to be factors influencing their educational experiences and outcomes. As can be accentuated from the excerpts above increased racial and ethnic diversity within schools reduced feelings of otherness and increased feelings of belonging and inclusion. Participants reported that teachers treated everyone the same, and although they pointed to certain challenges and strained relationships with some of the teachers, this was attributed to a clash of personalities or their own poor behaviour as opposed to racism on the part of the teacher. This is suggestive of the covert ways in which racism is transmitted in contemporary western societies, through the invisibilisation of race within a racialised social system in which Whiteness is positioned at the apex. That is racism continues to be perpetuated, operating on many interconnected levels including at the individual level wherein racism is internalised (Ray 2021). The participant's negative self-evaluation of themselves, identified as the cause of strained relationships with the teachers and poorer educational outcomes is suggestive of internalised racism. Internalised racism, according to the findings appears to manifest at an unconscious level given that negative ethnoracial stereotypes were not overtly invoked during interactions, as was the case for the second generation participants. It appears that the multicultural turn in which ethnoracial diversity was positively promoted and celebrated reduced the sense of inferiority emanating from negative messages about ones ethnoracial group that are perpetuated within society by the dominant group (Pyke 2010). The data demonstrates that racism and its effects on the third generation participants manifested in multifarious ways beyond the traditional conceptualisation and definition of internalised racism (Ibid). The data did not point to a perceived sense of racial negative self-image to undergird interactions with the teachers and the poorer secondary education outcomes, rather it brings to the fore structural issues of racial inequality. The dominant values and structural arrangements that construct the other were found to be obscured by the myth of meritocracy in which teachers and the education system were perceived by the participants to apply objective standards, as everyone was purportedly treated the same. In this way racialised systems and institutional racist practices acquire a veneer of neutrality such that causes of racial inequalities foreclose hegemonic forms of racial domination inherent in westernised world systems (Pyke 2010, Grosfoguel 2016, and Seet 2021).

The data points to the process of racialisation by which bodies are categorised as superior and inferior by a range of socially constructed markers that do not preclude the privileging of certain behaviours and disqualifying others as deviant to signal incivility without invoking ethnoracial characteristics. Consequently racially minoritised groups are both blamed and accept blame for their disadvantage, by subscribing to a standard of behaviour that bears a racialised component as it is grounded in White western hegemonic discourses. In this way, an unconscious complicity in protecting and sustaining a racialised social order is observed that is rooted in internalised racism (IR) but void of self-hatred and resistance that has come to define IR and which has been shown to have harmful psychological and physical health effects (Pyke 2010, Seet 2021). This point is further illustrated in the analysis below as well as the next chapter.

Individual level responsibility for adverse outcomes was evident from the data but in analysing Amir's narrative below, the teacher's choice of punishment and reward is instructive. It highlights the nuances of racial discrimination and the various and subtle guises it can adopt to become imperceptible, nebulous and difficult to detect.

> "…so there was one teacher who sticks out to me who I think did disadvantage me and has had an impact on a lot of what has happened in my life. So it was my maths teacher who really disliked me because I was an idiot… I was quite good at maths but she put me in the intermediate [group]…which meant I could never get better than a C… bizarrely one of the [Pakistani boys] who wasn't the best at maths was put in the top set even though he struggled…I don't honestly think it was anything to do with racism…" (Amir)

The excerpt above reveals how racism is conceptualised by Amir and the third generation participants more widely. Any detriment that does not involve overt levels of interpersonal hostilities and disdain which make explicit reference to racial and/or cultural characteristics was not perceived as being racially motivated. But it can also be deduced from the narrative that the teacher's actions were foregrounded in stereotypes of problematised racial male masculinities, and unruly youngsters, which had begun to emerge in the 1990's (Cockbain and Tufail 2020, Hussain and Meer 2017). However, as the comparator from which to demonstrate differential and (un)favourable treatment is also another South Asian Muslim boy, substantiating such an inference becomes problematic. That said, favourable treatment shown towards the other pupil is not necessarily indicative of the absence of racism within the interaction. Placing Amir and his peer in ability groups for maths that were not commensurate with their respective abilities meant that both pupils were seriously disadvantaged. It appears that behaviour was a predictor of ability, with poor behaviour

judged as an indicator of low academic potential and good behaviour, finding favour, as it is assumed to be reflective of dominant behavioural standards and therefore equated with intelligence. Thus it is argued that behaviour is racialised and therefore the encounter relayed by Amir is racially patterned but clearly not understood as such by the participants.

Amir and many of the third generation participants who perceived race to not be a feature of their schooling experiences, suggests that being a member of a racialised group does not necessarily equip individuals with the critical faculties to understand the processes of racialisation and racism, especially when racism is subtle, covert and institutional. That said, Amir's reference to long-term negative consequences conveys his sense of unfairness and injustice of the teacher's actions, paralleling the experiences and perceptions of the second generation participants, albeit without explicit reference to race or culture.

As the third generation participants did not perceive their ethnoracial identity to be a determining factor for low educational attainment, alternative explanations were offered. In addition to personal behaviour and a clash of personalities, wider social challenges facing inner city schools, which lead to subsequent school closures, were identified as critical factors for adversely impacting educational outcomes. School closures were found to coincide with the most critical stage of the participants educational journey, with poor GCSE's results being noted by participants to have caused detriment, restricting higher education and career choices, or the length of time it took achieve aspirations.

> "…it was a good experience…I think we were treated all the same…I went to a very, very, rough school… I think a year after I left…it closed down so it just goes to show it was a really rough school… we had fights going off we had police coming to the school…I didn't come out with fantastic grades in school…it took a bit of time to get to where I am…"(Haroon)

> "…It was difficult...our last year of GCSEs was difficult because…that was the last year it was going to stay open. So a lot of teachers left so we were getting sub teachers, teachers that just don't know anything about subjects and just like kind of gave a baby sitting service almost because no one really cared. Because teachers who had actually been [with us] through for four or five years all of a sudden had to get another job…" (Yousef)

In an analysis of the failing school movement of the 1990's, Tomlinson (1997) found, schools with majority intake of pupils from poorer and minority ethnic backgrounds, were

at greatest risk of acquiring a failing school status and subject to closures. The failure to take account of contextual socio-economic factors and the educational needs of diverse student populations resulted in a mismatch between funding allocation and actual need, which negatively impacted school performance. Gee and Ford (2011) argue that educational policy of the time functioned to generate and perpetuate segregation and inequities amongst racial and ethnic groups, supporting contentions found more widely within the literature that the educational system is structured to reproduce racial dominance, with schools being critical sites for the construction and legitimation of social inequality, producing outcomes that benefit and privilege the white majority group (Tikly 2021, Domina et al 2017, Gilborn 2008).

Therefore, whilst the findings suggest that overall trends in overt racial discrimination at an interpersonal level had declined. And that a multiculturalist approach to tackling racism offered recognition to discrimination beyond the colour-line to create a greater sense of belonging, inclusion and fairness generated by the notion that everyone was treated the same. The data also points the limitations of multiculturalism in dismantling oppressive systems and shifting the fundamental power balance that (re)produce and sustain a racial hierarchy and corollary social inequalities along racial lines, as highlighted above. Thus the findings point to the structural dimensions of racism and how multiculturalism is instrumentalised to invisibilise and perpetuate racism. It is important to note that the study does not aim to offer an academic critique of multiculturalism. Rather an empirical investigation of the lived reality of multiculturalism is instructive, offering important contributions to contemporary debates about the failure or otherwise of multiculturalism in western societies, particularly in relation to Muslim communities and the issue of parallel lives as noted in the previous section.

The next section extends the analysis of this section “we were all treated the same” specifically examining the inherent colour-blind approach that was found to be operationalised to promote racial equality.

5.3.5 Colour-blind approach to Racial Equality

In the above section, the findings indicated the adoption of a colour-blind approach by the teachers, given that the participants noted that everyone was treated the same. That is ethnoracial characteristics, in the main skin colour, was not perceived to define interpersonal interactions and as such, third generation participants did not feel race to be a factor in their poor secondary educational attainment. As noted in the previous chapter the multicultural turn of the 1980’s in which ethno-cultural diversity was positively promoted,

as well as the repudiation of race science, appear to have functioned in muting overt expressions of racism. But also proactive displays of disassociation with racism were found within the data, suggestive of a colour-blind approach. This section specifically examines the data that illuminates the adoption of a colour-blind approach, how it manifested and some of the perceived drivers and justifications for the approach that were identified by the study participants.

Ahmad recalls, joining the public sector workforce in the 1980's, at a time when equality, as he states, was *"high on the agenda".* Equality and Diversity (ED) training was noted to be a widely used practice within the public sector to address issues of racial discrimination both in service provision as well as employment and career development opportunities.

However, Ahmad shared his observations of how the training was resented by individuals from the majority community on the grounds of a strongly held conviction of *"I treat everybody the same".* This conviction, as noted in the previous section was also evident more widely across the dataset and is exemplified in Mahnoor's ruminations of when she first started to wear the hijab (Chapter 4 section 4.3.1.2). A visible change in appearance, conveying a religious adherence, being met with an indifference by colleagues was perceived by Mahnoor as a negation of her identity and associated needs. That said, Mahnoor attempted to provide explanations for the indifference displayed by some colleagues, claiming that her colleagues did not feel comfortable and more importantly did not feel safe to talk to her about the change, due to fear. This suggests that fear of saying the wrong thing and being labelled a racist undergirded the sentiment of treating everybody the same and could also explain the resistance to the E&D training noted by Ahmad. According to Ahmad individual behaviour was being modified and overt expressions of racism were being regulated or policed in the workplace in order to demonstrate compliance with the law.

> "…Yes they might have racist tendencies but if you didn't show that…We can't change your mind but we can actually change your behaviour…" (Ahmad)

The defensiveness elicited by E&D training, suggests that anxieties are evoked about being identified with the problem of racism. The focus of E&D training according to Ahmad was on changes and modifications to individual behaviour, the consequences of which, albeit inadvertently, generated a sense of blame. It can be argued that the purpose of E&D training was to achieve racial equity by encouraging and motivating individuals to bring about changes on the ground. However in reality it appears that individuals felt the need to distance themselves from being implicated as a racist by actively portraying an egalitarian

self-image through claims of *"I treat everybody the same".* In this way individuals were able to present themselves as being fair and free of any prejudices. However such an approach, as can be explicated from Mahnoor's experiences, functioned to invisibilise her identity, as her colleagues failed to recognise and give due consideration to any specific needs. This not only generated feelings of unacceptance, disapproval, inferiority but more importantly functioned to exclude her. Certain hegemonic norms and practices remained intact, which relegating Mahnoor to the margins within the work setting, in subtle and covert ways. Interestingly, Mahnoor's feelings were confirmed by other colleagues, especially those in positions of power, who articulated their views openly about the oppressive nature of the hijab, views that conveyed a lack of acceptance and cultural superiority. This suggests that being critical of a religious practice was not considered to be an act of racism, as biological inferiority was not being invoked. Hostilities towards the cultural and religious practices of a group, as noted by Modood (2018) are not captured by the biologised racial framing of racism, yet are fundamentally intertwined with the genesis of racism (Grosfoguel 2016). Thus under the colour-blind lens, racism was sustained and perpetuated through the conceptual misrecognition of racism, which in turn allowed for cultural stereotypes to be recycled that legitimised criticism of ethnoreligious, cultural practices (see previous chapter 4.2).

The findings suggest that the utility and currency of a colour-blind approach was perceived by individuals from the dominant group to be an aspect of anti-racism activism, premised on the belief that not attending to physical ethnoracial identity characteristics, biases were being minimised and toleration was being displayed. It appears by not subscribing to the category of biologised framing of race, racism became abstract and an issue of the past, with racial discrimination losing its significance due to the decline in overtly racially discriminatory behaviours that targeted phenotype markers of identity. However racism conceived in this way and addressed as a matter of individual level prejudices, as the data suggests, has been shown to have limited efficacy. Individual level strategies to tackle racism fail to address the fundamental structural aspects of a racialised social system that emerged in history to justify racial domination and which has become embedded within the social structures of societies. In this way racism continues to be performative in (re)producing as notions of race and racial meaning are reconstructed to sustain the dynamic of domination and subordination. Consequently structuring the life chances of various groups, advantaging some and disadvantaging others, through the process of racialisation (Ali and Whitham 2021, Grosfoguel 2016, Bonilla-Silva 2015).

As can be elicited from the data, irrespective of the behaviours and attitudes of individuals, a dominant racial ideology serving to maintain racial inequality in racially neutral terms was

in play through the colour-blind approach. For example the macro-level policy and funding decisions regarding school closures, were not perceived by the study participants to be racially discriminatory because no explicit racial references could be identified; yet as noted earlier, the decisions disproportionately impacted schools with a large racially minoritised intake. This points to the subtle mechanisms within a colour-blind approach that produce racial inequality in a systematic way but which are difficult to detect. Therefore the third generation cohort of participants perceptions reflect the contemporary hegemonic discourse of a racial ideology that purports a post-racial era, whilst the demographic data pertaining to secondary education would suggest otherwise.

Colour-blind approaches have been found to be particularly harmful as they reduce awareness and sensitivity to the realities of racism and therefore have the potential to invalidate and dismiss claims of racial discrimination. Especially functioning to relegate to history the links between racialised identities, racism and inequities and invalidating contemporary forms of racism (Plaut et al 2018).

The findings suggest that culture came to occupy prime position in new racial logics and the construction of racialised identities with attribution of essentialised negative traits switching from biological to cultural characteristics, as exemplified by Irum in the previous chapter (See 4.2.1). That is racially minoritised groups were being expected to fit into the dominant cultural norms and practices that shape organisational structures and systems that enshrine a belief system of the racial and cultural superiority of the dominant group. As exemplified by Mahnoor's experience when she started to wear the hijab, which was perceived to be an unacceptable cultural practice as it did not fit the hegemonic notion of gender equality. Parallels can also be drawn with the assimilationist approach that was found to prevail in the 1960's and 1970's that enforced the exclusion and marginalisation of second generation participants, by imposing conformity to prevailing sociocultural norms. According to the data, a colour-blind approach can be understood as an expression or form of racism in and of itself, but which is subtle and covert. That is not to suggest that a colour-blind approach demands conformity or assimilation, particularly when it coexists within a multicultural framework but rather a colour-blind approach is indicative of the salience of racism in contemporary western societies and therefore conceptualised as colour-blind racism, to more accurately reflect its effect, irrespective of its intent (Seet and Paradies 2018). That is cultural rather than genetic inferiority provides the rationale by which the racialised social system remains firmly intact, especially as it denotes an inherentism (Blum 2020), as is examined in the next chapter.

This is can be gleaned from the experiences of the third generation cohort of participants who though, not to having experienced the overt biological and even explicit references to cultural inferiority experienced by their parents (see section 5.2.1 above, as well as the previous chapter), nevertheless suffered detriment. That is their educational attainment was found to mirror that found for the second generation. It can, therefore, be inferred from the data that racism continued have salience in the lives of the study participants despite shifts in the legal and socio-political climate that made racial discrimination illegal, with overt expressions becoming socially unacceptable.

The limited ways in which racism was conceived and understood, therefore narrowly defined the perimeters of change. That is interventions focussed on equipping individuals with knowledge of the legislation and what was allowable or not. The training sought to prohibit explicit expressions of racism manifest in interpersonal interactions and/or in processes and procedures, within the work setting. Moderating individual behaviour without contextualising and analysing wider historical and contemporary socio-political forces that construct an inferior other, shifts the blame upon individuals, so that racism is conceived as a problem of individual level prejudices and discriminatory behaviour. This position ultimately deflects attention away from societal structures and institutions to maintain a racial hierarchy that privileges the white majority community, through seemingly neutral practices, as exemplified by the education policy and related funding decisions. It can be inferred from the findings that interventions were developed to demonstrate legal compliance and whilst this, as the data suggests, did have positive benefits such as a decline in overt expressions of racism at the interpersonal level, the various strategies did little to dismantle a racialised system and bring about transformative change to improve the lives of racially minoritised groups.

As has been illustrated in this section, a decline in old style overt racial discrimination experiences, due to strategies that focussed on modifications to individual level behaviours and the adoption of colour-blind approaches, did not positively correlate with improved secondary educational outcomes. So whilst a decline in overtly racially discriminatory behaviours was found, poor education outcomes continued to persist, the explanations for which were offered in non-racial ways by the study participants. This is because the participants could not offer tangible explicit examples upon which to legitimise claims of racism as the underlying cause for their poor education attainment. The raceless explanations however cannot negate the real consequences of racism, whether that be material, emotional and psychological. The sense of being wronged and failed by teachers and the education system which generated feelings of unfairness and injustice around missed opportunities (see 5.3.4) has long been recognised to be associated with impaired

health functioning (De Vogli et al 2007) . According to the findings a new formidable racial order emerged within a multicultural era that sustained a racialised social hierarchy, as racism continued to be transmitted in subtle and covert ways. This hegemonic ideological framing of race and racism evidently shaped the attitudes, beliefs and worldview of the participants, pointing to the internalisation of a racial frame without overt racially discriminatory experiences. It appears that the racial frame was internalised subconsciously that arguably illustrates coercion and/or consent (Seet 20212), albeit inadvertently, to the racialised social order. But also suggests that internalised racism is not dependent upon negative self-evaluation. Confirming the need to broaden the understanding of internalised racism to capture the impact of structural racism and its consequences for health and wellbeing of racially minoritised groups. Especially given that in the absence of any racial reference, feelings and perceptions of unfairness and injustice were found to exist (Seet 2021, Seet and Paradies 2018, Paradies and Williams 2008).

It is important to note that improvements in education attainment have been shown for the Muslim population in the UK, including for those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. That said the picture is complex with progress remaining inconsistent, as persistent educational disadvantage is notably found for the Pakistani Muslim group (Alexander and Shankley 2020, Khattab and Modood 2018). Differences in educational outcomes found between Muslim groups, other ethnoracial minority groups and the majority group in the UK, have been used as evidence to dismiss claims that racism is a fundamental driver of educational inequalities, with culture, religion and low aspirations offered as explanations (Tikly 2022, Sewell 2020). Interestingly the demographic profile of the study participants, points to significant participation in higher education, offering some credence to the contentions of the Sewell Report (2020). However the qualitative dimension, through the analysis of the participant's lived experiences, reveals an alternative narrative, challenging hegemonic discourses that seek to consign racism to history. The participants lived experiences suggest that success has been achieved despite racism and not because racism ceases to exist. The specific strategies found to be deployed by the participants to navigate and minimise the impact of racism are presented and discussed in the next section.

5.3.6 Explaining Education Gains

The findings demonstrate the resilience, drive and determination of participants to overcome both visible and invisible barriers that mechanisms of racialisation erects. The findings offer a counter-narrative to the purported claims that negate racism and ethnic penalties within education, the labour market and society more broadly, wherein cultural

deficits are offered as explanations for ethnoracial inequalities (Tikly 2022, Modood and Khattab 2015). Rather the opposite has been found within the study. The second generation, though unanimously agreeing that schooling experiences had changed and improved for their children, as noted in the previous chapter (4.2.1), were found to have deployed strategies to protect their children from the issues they had experienced at school, namely low teacher expectations, negative stereotypes and overtly discriminatory exclusionary policies and practices, which impeded their educational and career aspirations. Participants were found to be heavily involved in their children's education, attending parent's evening and actively challenging teacher's negative stereotypes, recognising the potential adverse consequences upon self-esteem, confidence and educational outcomes. Many also enlisted private tutors, whilst others moved into more affluent areas with better performing schools, with some choosing independent schools. One participant stated that the choice to send the children to an independent school, had caused financial hardship but it was a price worth paying to secure the children's future and protect them from the trauma of racism that she had suffered.

> "…because of my bad experience...I was thinking, no, my children have got to have the best…I mean independent school…because…I just didn't want to take that risk. I think I was so like scared…education is so important to me…I have struggled, there's times when I've not had a penny in my bank because it's gone through for school fees… it's not something that I regret…[I want to give them] the best chance…" (Khadijah)

> "…my mother was heavily involved in my education from investing in a private tutor to ensuring the work was done what needed to be done. Would come to the school regularly to meet with the teachers..." (Fawad)

> "…as parents because we have been through the whole system we know what needs to happen to them in terms of their education, we are so much on it you could say in terms of pushing them to you know telling the teachers if they are struggling with something or if they need to be moved up for example with their reading level or pushed with their work…" (Aisha)

The findings suggest that the second generation study participants, implicitly conceptualised racism with social power and sought to change the dynamic of subordination that they had encountered by ensuring their children had the best possible educational opportunities in order to avail social and economic privileges that had been

denied to them by the education system. But also many second generation participants, themselves were found to have overcome the initial educational impediments by pursuing educational and career aspirations later in life. It is important to note that because of the small number of study participants, details such as profession, role, position and organisation for each participant have not been specified in the demographic profile so as to maintain anonymity. However the fields related to qualifications and salary reveal the successes that the study participants, irrespective of gender, achieved despite poor secondary level educational attainment. It can therefore be inferred from the findings that education was highly valued and believed to improve career and employment opportunities and ultimately a means to attaining social mobility. The findings are indicative of both aspirations for the future and understanding realistically what can be expected to be achieved (Khattab and Modood 2018) in light of institutional barriers.

The prioritisation of education and the deployment of financial resources to realise education progress and success appears to be grounded in a response to the lived encounters of racialised othering and inferiority and not the absence of racism. A realisation, stemming from experience is demonstrated by the participants that success is contingent upon a greater level of investment of time, resources and hard work, as the bar was perceived to be set higher for the attainment of equivalent rewards that were afforded to less qualified white counterparts. This point is elaborated upon further in the next chapter.

The successes of the strategies deployed by the participants to navigate and minimise the adverse consequences of overt and covert racially discriminatory and exclusionary policies and practices within the education system, however, risk masking the pervasiveness of racism within society. Thereby giving credence to contemporary debates that utilise data demonstrating educational gains over the years for different ethnoracial groups as evidence to advance arguments of a post racial society. Such arguments fail to take account of and acknowledge the internal resources and strategies that some racially minoritised groups deploy as protective measures to mitigate against racism in all its manifestations. This has implications for understanding the nature and scale of ethnoracial social and health inequalities, particularly given that socioeconomic status (SES) is a key indicator for assessing health inequalities more broadly. The suppression of SES, by strategies utilised by racially minoritised groups could obscure the true cause of ethnoracial health inequalities, which as the literature and findings suggest is correlated with institutional racism (Elias and Paradies 2021).

The issue of racism, however, is contested in the case of the Muslim population, with refutations regarding the religiously motivated discriminatory phenomena, Islamophobia, as a form of racism, on the grounds that Islam is not a race. But as shown in the previous chapter, the participants experienced the racialisation of their Muslim identity, the consequences of which are demonstrated in the next chapter. The specific examples illuminate the real and tangible manifestations of discrimination experienced by the participants that were perceived to be religiously motivated and based on a range of cues to Muslimness and which were intertwined with ethnoracial markers of identity.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the analysis of the data and a discussion of findings, specifically focussing on the real and tangible manifestations of the consequences of a racialised identity. In examining the lived experiences of the intergenerationally diverse cohort of Muslim, the chapter has established and evidenced the multifarious, explicit and implicit manifestations of racism.

The shifts in how racial discrimination was displayed and experienced on the ground, was found to correspond to shifts in identity designations and racial categorisation, illustrating the relationship between external identity inscriptions, racialised othering and how racial discrimination is expressed and experienced. While the second generation cohort reported overt encounters of racism, that were directly related to physical characteristics, in the main skin colour, the third generation cohort recounted their experiences in seemingly deracialised ways.

The divergent experiences of racial discrimination were found to be contextually situated in the legal and socio-political discourses pertaining to race and racism. However the demographic profile revealed a consistent pattern of poor secondary level educational outcomes for both cohort of participants, from which it can be inferred that racism was an enduring feature of the participants' lives. This contention was further evidenced through a critical examination of data for both cohort of participants that specifically related to how the legislative changes and the multiculturalist framework were experienced on the ground, which in part was explicated in the previous chapter. The data revealed a complex interplay between ethno-cultural identity markers and pseudo-scientific constructions of race in biological terms. Though policy, practices and behaviours were found to be articulated in race neutral terms due to the advent of ethnicity, biological inferiorisation was supplanted by culture as the point of departure for race and so racism continued to be sustained through racialisation of cultural practices. The rebuttal of race as a category lead to the

desensitisation of the underlying processes, mechanisms and impact of racism. Leaving participants, particularly the third generation cohort, to question the reality of racism and its impact on their lives, as dominant ideas about individual and cultural deficits were found to be internalised and emitted. The widespread adoption of a multiculturalist framework and a colour-blind lens, both framed as anti-racism strategies, functioned on many levels to relegate racism to history, with hegemonic claims of a post-racial, meritocracy era that were reflected in the participants narratives. Thus illuminating the process of continuity and change that sustained a racialised social system beyond the dualism of the black/white binary.

The findings highlight, however, that irrespective of the particular form or expression that racism took, explicit or implicit, the ultimate effect, i.e. poor secondary level educational outcome, was perceived as an impediment to realising career aspirations. Secondary level education qualifications were considered to have fundamentally limited higher education choices and consequently careers, which generated strong feelings of unfairness and injustice that the education system had failed them. That is not to suggest that such articulations were a display of victimhood rather, quite the opposite, as the findings point to compensatory and protective strategies that have been deployed, to overcome the barriers and obstacles that visible and invisible forces of racism erected.

The findings offer an alternative narrative to claims of a post racial society in which race is no longer a factor determining the poorer socioeconomic and health circumstances of racialised minority groups. Grounded in the lived reality of the participants, the data points to the multifarious ways racism has been experienced and the range of strategies used to navigate, often bypass, racially discriminatory systems and structures. Consequently masking the existence of racism that have led to flawed, simplistic and inaccurate claims of having achieved racial justice.

Interestingly it is the protective and compensatory strategies, found to be deployed by the Muslim participants and their families in this study that have come under political scrutiny and weaponised against Muslim communities, particularly those of Pakistani heritage. Rather than used as evidence to explain the mediating role compensatory strategies perform in reducing the penalties that racialisation inflict, Muslim communities are allegedly leading parallel lives and refusing to integrate. The impact of such discourses were identified as a distinct form of discriminatory experience by the participants, the tangible manifestations of which are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Six. Living under a Cloud of Suspicion. The Real and Tangible Manifestations of Islamophobia

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data and a discussions of the findings of the real and tangible manifestations of discrimination that the participants perceived to be related specifically to their Muslim identity. It demonstrates how the once muted Muslim identity in the reporting of racial discrimination, particularly by the second generation cohort, had come to gain prominence in participant's contemporary experiences of discrimination and hostilities. Whilst on the other hand, revealing how the third generation cohort were confronting issues of an externally inscribed negative identity for the first time, by sharing experiences of overtly explicit, direct and indirect exclusionary practices.

The contemporary experiences of religiously motivated discrimination, arising from shifts in external negative identity inscriptions, were overwhelmingly reported by the intergenerationally diverse cohort of participants as Islamophobia. Numerous encounters in a range of settings were shared by participants, which were perceived to be Islamophobic in nature and wholly different to the racism, encountered by the second generation participants on the grounds of ethnoracial characteristics.

The data relating to this theme was rich and dense, as a vast and varied set of encounters were shared by the participants, revealing the multifarious ways and spaces and places where Islamophobia was being experienced. That said the notion of "suspect community" (Taylor 2020) emerged as a core defining feature and a thread that ran across the diverse range of discriminatory encounters that participants shared and which related specifically to a Muslim identity.

The section begins with an analysis and discussion of data that demonstrates the direct impact of a stigmatised social identity on the everyday life of the participants, specifically the places where they live and the spaces where every day activities of life such as shopping, going for a walk or catching a bus are undertaken. It then goes on to draw out specific experiences, reported by the participants of living under constant scrutiny and the policing of brown bodies by a range of law and non-law enforcement agencies. The chapter then goes on to specifically examine labour market experiences that reveal the complexities in differentiating between ethnic and religious penalties given the conflation of brownness and Muslimness (as discussed in chapter four). But also the processes of

racialisation of the Muslim body that points to a specific Muslim penalty. The data demonstrates the nuanced ways in which cues to a Muslim identity, irrespective of religiosity, functioned to determine labour market outcomes. Finally the chapter presents an analysis of the data that revealed how counter-terrorism measures have adulterated personal and private spaces, exemplified by the emergence of self-censorship as a self-preservation and protective strategy.

6.2 Negotiating Islamophobia in Everyday Places and Spaces

Respondents overwhelmingly reported how multiculturalism and the conviviality of the 1980's and 1990's was shattered by the events of 9/11 and subsequent terror related incidents that had been committed in the name of Islam and by those proclaiming to be Muslims. The ensuing war on terror declared by Western nations and the institution of counter-terrorism and security measures to minimise and eliminate the threat of terrorist acts, activated broader discourses about social cohesion and cultural belonging calling into question multiculturalism, as discussed in the previous two chapters. Relationships between Muslims and the majority community were destabilised by essentialist representation of those committing the criminal acts of terrorism, such that it synonymised Muslims and Islam as a terror threat. Thus the Muslim figure, a follower of an inherently violent religion that threatened the values and way of life of the majority community emerged and gained prominence within race relations discourses and was found to negatively impact interpersonal interactions on the ground.

The second generation cohort who had reported racism to be rife during 1960's and 1970's now claimed Islamophobia to be the biggest challenge facing Muslim communities.

> "…Islamophobia is rife…British nation has accepted diversity in colour but it hasn't accepted it in Islam [religious diversity]…" (Mahnoor)

> "…so I think the external forces are more about lumping all the Muslims together and seeing them as terrorists…" (Farzana)

Participants shared a range of encounters which were perceived to be motivated by anti-Muslim sentiments, particularly respondents who were visibly identifiable as Muslim, in the main, hijab wearing women and brown men with beards. The particular incidents relayed by Sakinah, a White British convert to Islam, who wears the hijab and abayah, illustrate the

cloud of suspicion and disdain that engulfed the participants, as they engaged in mundane everyday behaviours that had acquired racial meaning due to visible cues to Muslimness.

> "…When I am shopping I notice a difference between the cashier who will speak to the people in front of me and behind me and not me…in one particular instance…you know how you put your…bags in the trolley so you can put your food directly in to it for packing, he [cashier] actually asked me to lift all the bags out because...never said it verbally but everything he did was enough to say I am worried you are going to take something out without paying under there… sneaked something underneath in the trolley that I am not putting on the conveyor belt…another one [cashier]… short changed me. And when I quizzed him on it, it was obvious that he knew that's what he had done… it could have been because he thought I was thick and stupid with my hijab on, didn't know English, didn't know how to count currency, I don't know…"

The excerpt from Sakinah's interview, above, aptly captures the thread found more widely across the dataset. That is, Muslimness activates a range of imaginaries, attitudes and behaviours that have been influenced and shaped by contemporary terrorism discourses that provide a rationale upon which various actors in society justify ill treatment of Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim.

There was consistency in reporting of expressions of disdain encountered in interactions with frontline service providers, irrespective of sector, manifesting as minimal level of engagement that was of a transactional nature, but which at times was overtly rude, dismissive, belittling and judgemental. As captured by Sakinah, many of the participants reported that a friendly, warm and courteous interaction was often lacking, observing a notable difference in the treatment between non-Muslim and Muslim customers.

As can be accentuated from Sakinah's encounters above, participants were viewed through the prism of suspicion, displayed implicitly and explicitly through hyper-surveillance, carried out by a range of non-law enforcement agents, such as the cashier. Foregrounded in presumptions of guilt, the normative practice of arranging bags in a trolley for transferring and packing groceries after they have been scanned is scrutinised because Muslimness has come to denote untrustworthiness as illustrated by the cashier who asked Sakinah to remove her bags from the trolley to ensure they were empty.

In the case of incorrect monetary change being received, Sakinah asserts that the mistreatment she receives is due to her being perceived as a foreigner due to her hijab.

The visible cues to a Muslim identity appeared to denote foreignness and was found more widely amongst the hijab wearing participants. The perceptions of foreignness became manifest through a range of different encounters, some while ill-intended as was the case with Mahnoor, below, and others as reported by Sakinah (and also further evidenced below) functioned to generate as sense of not belonging or being perceived as the other and a stranger. In the majority of cases equating visible cues to Muslimness with foreignness activated discriminatory behaviours that manifested as less favourable treatment in various spheres of lives, as discussed in subsequent sections.

A second subtext can be deduced from the act of short changing, given that it was perceived by Sakinah to be deliberate. The interaction is illustrative of a power dynamic, a choice exercised by the cashier to withhold what was rightfully due to Sakinah. Demonstrating the power, agency and entitlement, individual members of the public have been endowed with, by contemporary hegemonic discourses about Islam and Muslims (Abbas 2020). It can be inferred that the encounter is foregrounded in disdain and anger, with short changing, serving as an act of vengeance rationalised as a form of retributive justice that the public, as non-law enforcement agents can deliver. This exemplifies the myriad of ways that informal policing, discriminatory treatment and everyday injustices were experienced by participants, in public spaces (defined here in broad terms to include café's shops and supermarkets, as well as public services) on a daily basis.

Mahnoor's encounter below illustrates how repeated exposure to stereotypical, negative attributes associated with Islam and Muslims, function to promote misconceptions that contribute to the development of implicit biases.

> "…I went to Matlock once and I went in to a cafe ordering two coffees to take out. And I actually said two coffees to take out, the women turned round and said *coffee take out,* I thought I have just said to you that, in English, why are you using symbols and gestures to respond. And I just looked at my friend…she just started laughing. And I thought, so it's your identity being, and she doesn't wear a hijab but when she ordered something she didn't get that response. I don't know why I got it. Her colour of skin is the same [as mine]..." (Mahnoor)

Mahnoor's encounter highlights how the hijab has become hard-wired within the public imaginary to signify a veiled woman belonging to a foreign place, lacking English language skills at best and at worst lacking intellectual substance. These misconceptions and stereotypes about the hijab, limited the ability of the staff serving Mahnoor to listen and hear how and what had been communicated by Mahnoor. It appears that the hijab became

a distraction, such that the member of staff was unable to pay attention to Mahnoor's ability to effectively articulate in English, a demonstration of implicit bias. The external noise emanating from the wider sociopolitical contextual factors were evidently performative in the interaction. Both Mahnoor and her friend were brown skinned Muslim females, but only Mahnoor, visibly identifiable as a Muslim, was categorised as foreign. Mahnoor's laugh, in response to the encounter, is indicative of the suppression of frustration of yet another incident that signals the wide ranging, stereotypical attitudes and beliefs held about the hijab. The interaction, though not overtly discriminatory in nature, it nevertheless was demeaning and belittling, illustrating the multifarious ways in which hijab functions to activate racial microaggressions (Haque et al 2018)

In specifically examining the issues of quality of customer care and service, Akbar's experiences are also instructive. As a White British convert to Islam, Akbar notes that because a beard on a white male is not emblematic of a Muslim identity, he does not encounter hostilities from the general public or in establishments where his Muslim identity remains muted, i.e. his name is not disclosed. However, in the company of his wife and daughters, who wear the hijab, he observes a difference in interactions towards individuals who are visibly Muslim, and those not perceived to be Muslim, as is the case with him.

> "…I don't see any for me personally…However with my family, my wife and my daughters wear headscarves, then that is a different matter altogether…There was only an incident yesterday, my wife was in [supermarket] and the counter staff there were overtly rude and it makes you wonder now, because of the way Muslims and Islam in the media are portrayed it makes you wonder is it because of the fact that she is wearing a headscarf that you treat her in such a rude manner. But yes I do notice that being with my family we are then put in a different category…"

Akbar's narrative, concurring with Sakinah's experiences, confirms that being visibly Muslim, exposed participants to unfavourable treatment, irrespective of ethnoracial characteristics. Akbar feels that once his identity is made manifest, he is placed in a particular category in which visibly Muslim individuals, like female members of his family, are placed and consequently they no longer enjoy the same rights as their non-Muslim counterparts. Once the Muslim category has been activated, it functions to set him and his family apart from the majority community, such that they are not entitled to be treated with the same level of respect and dignity, afforded to non-Muslims. Thus illustrating how a trip to the supermarket, or other service sector establishment, becomes a stressful experience, suggesting that displays of subtle forms of hostilities, that fall outside of what are considered hate crimes, are increasingly becoming socially acceptable.

The shift in ethnoracial categorisation and is further illustrated by Amjid, a Muslim of Pakistani heritage who does not display any visible signs of his Muslim identity, and though brown in appearance, he reports, not encountering any form of animosity or hostilities in public spaces. However in the company of his wife, he observes a change in the customer service experience he receives. The normal warm, polite and friendly treatment that he is accustomed to, turns frosty, upon being categorised as a Muslim by association, based on his wife's hijab.

> "…If I am doing a lot of those things on my own it's actually easy, it's alright. I get less feelings of anxiety generally…so I can go into a shop and I will get very good treatment partly because of the way I am dressed partly because of the way I talk. Partly because I have not got a beard or a female who is wearing a hijab standing next to me. But I do notice a slight difference when X[wife] is with me in terms of its not what's said it's the look, it's the sort of generally the approach…Because we are a Muslim…that somehow all Muslims are terrorists all Muslims are trouble, all Muslims can't be trusted you know, particularly Muslim men are you know are violent to their women or controlling or into grooming…" (Amjid)

In the company of his wife, who wears the hijab, Amjid's identity is reassessed and re-evaluated, Amjid feels he is repositioned from a level of normativity to alterity. His ethnic and gender identities, were performative in the process of delineating his Muslim identity, simultaneously being overshadowed and becoming hypervisible. The absence of visible cues and motifs signifying a Muslim identity amongst the non-white participants, was found to be performative in deemphasising perceptions of aberration, threat and fear and increasing levels of acceptability and incorporation into mainstream spaces. As observed by Mahnoor earlier *"…British nation has accepted diversity in colour…"* However that is not a signal to a post racial society or that there is a racial hierarchy of oppression and racial injustice. Rather it highlights the need to explicitly consider the specific and unique discriminatory phenomena of Islamophobia, triggered by perceptions of Muslimness and how multiple forms of racisms can intersect. Amjid experienced a reinterpretation of both his gender and ethnicity, once deemed, at least tolerable, becoming questionable when implicated with Muslimness, functioning in the (re)categorisation of Amjid as a dangerous brown Muslim man. It can be deduced from Amjid's narrative that the framing of the hijab as a form of patriarchal oppression within hegemonic western discourses, triggered the problematic Muslim masculinities logics that placed Amjid in a dangerous category.

As Amjid suggests, the heavily racialised constructs of the “terrorist” and “grooming gangs”, both terms argued to be problematic, as they cannot be attributed exclusively to a particular ethnoracial or religious group, have become firmly established in the public imagination to denote dangerous Muslim men (Cockbain and Tufail 2020, Abbas 2021). This reflects the shift of brown from an identity marker to the deployment of brown as an identification with deviation and threat when cues to Muslimness, either religious or non-religious motifs (see chapter four 4.3.1.3) were present. A recent Home Office report (2020) has found no credible evidence to support the assertion that Muslim men of Pakistani origin are over-represented in sexual exploitation cases, rather the report’s findings noted that group-based offenders (grooming gangs) are more likely to be White. Though, as Cockbain and Tufail (2020) highlight the disappointment noted by the then Home Secretary Priti Patel in her foreword regarding the lack of emphasis on ethno-cultural factors due to poor ethnicity data collection is indicative of the politicisation of the Muslim, Pakistani, male identity. The suggestion that ethnicity can reveal cultural characteristics to help understand the motivations of the abuser, implies that the Muslim culture and faith propagates sexual abuse and the subtext of such an assertion is ethno-cultural normativity of an ethnic White identity. Thus revealing how political discourses are instrumental in racialising crime and propagating messages that demonise British Muslim communities, especially Muslim men of Pakistani heritage. Such racialised narratives espoused by key political figures not only fuel fear but legitimise public hostilities, as noted by Amjid. There was an overwhelming consensus among the participants that the negative characterisation of Muslim men as well as the Muslim community more broadly within political and media narratives, were driving hostilities on the ground, as elaborated in subsequent sections.

The disruption to the expected standards of customer relations, upon discovering the identity of a customer to be Muslim, was found to be central in evoking a negative reaction towards the participants. Thus illustrating how narratives that esssentialise the Muslim identity and synonymise it with terrorism, dictate public perceptions about Islam and Muslims, with detrimental consequences for interpersonal interactions with the majority community in a range of settings that does not exclude public service provision.

It is important to clarify that the term customer is used, as the specific excerpts relate to interactions that involved the act of buying and selling goods. However the data also revealed a consistent pattern of varying degrees of hostilities encountered in public service based sectors such as local authority or health services, where individuals are considered service users, patients, citizen’s and even clients.

The public sector's attempts to develop positive categories or labels to describe individuals who utilise the myriad of services, aims to reduce stigma as well as address issues of power dynamics through explicitly communicating an ethos of serving the public. There is a recognition within the healthcare setting that negative labelling of particular behaviours as deviant, correlates with negative service user experience, suggesting that negative labels foster attitudinal biases (Costa et al 2019). This was evident within the data, as many participants reported negative encounters, from which it can be deduced that professionals, in the health sector or other public sector services, are not immune to the influences of implicit biases arising from the repeated exposure to hegemonic discourses that portray Islam and Muslims as antithetical to Western cultural values and beliefs (Pantazis and Pemberton 2009, Haque et al 2018).

> "…I have sometimes had people sort of tut and consider it to be an inconvenience to want someone who is a female [health practitioner] and sometimes the expression of annoyance is not hidden…I remember the nurse sort of being quite short with me on the phone…" (Sakinah)

It can be accentuated from Sakinah's narrative above that tolerance for accommodating specific religious needs of Muslim patients within healthcare setting is waning, which could create barriers for accessing a range of preventative and early diagnosis programmes and corollary, timely treatment. The identity characteristics of the participants were found to influence the interaction, with displays of negative attitude being manifest from the service provider.

Amina, the youngest participant (22 years of age), of dual, White British and Black African heritage, who wears the hijab, reports the consistent misrecognition of her identity, reflecting widely held judgements about Muslim women. These become manifest during interactions she has with professionals from various public sector institutions.

> "…that's work, education, even down to healthcare treatment, sometimes people are unfriendly and unprofessional or even patronising when they're talking to you, I had this one GP every time I would come in for anything she would make me repeat back her instructions to me as if I was unintelligent unable to understand the first time she said it…" (Amina)

Amina, is evidently being negatively evaluated, due to attributes associated with the hijab, ranging from foreignness and unable to speak English, which appear to influence the formulation of presumptions about intelligence. To unfriendly and patronising behaviours

that are activated by the influence of the widely promoted associations of the Muslim identity with threat. Such negative framings of a Muslim identity, foregrounded in the reification of Islam, are found to be evenly spread across political persuasions, and common amongst higher social grades. Stereotypes and generalisations about Islam as a belief system have been found to be acceptable amongst western feminists and liberal middle-class progressives, as legitimate criticism of religion, underscoring the anxiety about Muslims, amongst those otherwise, opposing discrimination and committed to tolerance. (Cockbain and Tufail 2020, Sealy and Modood 2021, Jones and Unsworth 2022). Thus discriminatory behaviours towards Muslims, find widespread acceptance amongst the population. The existing structural mechanisms of racialised discrimination that shape institutional policies and organisational culture, offers fertile ground for Islamophobia to be operationalised. Islamophobia then becomes the acceptable face of racism at the structural, institutional and individual levels but resisted and dismissed on the grounds that Islam is not a race, which as discussed in the literature review is an inaccurate conceptualisation of race and racism.

The UK approach to counter-terrorism has been pivotal in shaping the public policy landscape and creating a greater level of alignment in how social issues facing the Muslim community are being understood, represented and addressed. As is evident from the statutory nature of the Prevent strategy, placing a duty on all public bodies to identify and report signs of extremism and the concurrent requirement to promote Fundamental British Values (FBV) in schools, but which reverberate more widely in society and everyday speech. The necessity to explicitly promote the values and beliefs system of the dominant culture, is illustrative of the social processes central in creating a “them and us” narrative that transform institutional policies and practices to institutionalise Islamophobia. That is, racialised conditions are created to (re)produce racism to sustain a racial socially order. Beyond controlling and regulating, a savages, victims and saviours (Mutua 2001) subtext can be elicited from the subtext of the Prevent and FBV discourses, implying a civilising project of Muslim populations, that perpetuate anti-Muslim sentiments and invisibilise injustices (Sealy and Modood 2021, Patel 2017).

This is especially significant given the duty upon public bodies, in the UK, including the NHS to demonstrate compliance with the Government Prevent policy. Staff are required to undergo mandatory training to identify and report individuals, including colleagues and patients, suspected of being vulnerable to radicalisation. Given that terrorism, synonymised with Islam and Muslims, emerges as a contemporary race frame within Western societies and beyond, the UK Prevent programme has been found to disproportionately target

characteristics perceived to be associated with Islam (Younis and Jadhav 2019, Sharma and Nijjar 2018).

There is a growing body of literature that evidences increasing discrimination reported by Muslim staff and service users across a range of settings that determine health outcomes, such as employment, education, housing, criminal justice system and health. The lived experiences of the study participants', discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter, make significant contribution to this body of literature, especially the contestation of Islamophobia as a distinct form of racism.

6.2.1 "Keep Calm, it's a Matter of Life and Death": Policing Brown Male Bodies

Racial profiling is the activation of excess surveillance or scrutiny against individuals and groups based on visible cues that signify a racialised identity, rather than on reasonable suspicion of criminality (Bratina 2014), by a range of actors from the dominant group. However racial profiling in the main has been strongly linked to encounters that racially minoritised citizens have with law enforcement agencies (see literature review).

Participants perceived visible signifiers of a Muslim identity, namely brown young men, with or without a beard and women wearing hijab, placed them under greater scrutiny and suspicion, as illustrated in the previous section. That said policing of brown male bodies was identified to be a particular issue within the dataset, emerging as a gendered manifestation of Islamophobia requiring specific attention, especially as it provides insight to the phenomena of racialised police communication that is under-explored within the literature pertaining to Muslims and their experiences of Islamophobia within the context of the criminal justice system. The phenomena is explicated by two particularly distressing encounters with the police, shared by Tariq and Fawad.

> "….I had a bad police experience… it was over New Year's but it was also… Eid…I'd gone out and we'd come back and someone had reported seeing me and my cousins…with something which the police didn't say what it was, but the response was…very heavy handed, …police helicopters, police cars, the fire arms officers, surrounding us… we had police officers with guns pointed at our chest…it all turned out to be nothing…we hadn't done anything wrong… what didn't sit well with me afterwards was the fact that everyone in my community had seen this event unfold… the police hadn't come around to reassure anyone…so I was walking down the street thinking I wonder what this person thinks of me, I wonder what that person thinks of me…" (Tariq)

Tariq explained the backstory and context to the incident and how events unfolded, his cousin had been sick in the car and the actions of cleaning were interpreted by a neighbour has dangerously suspicious, triggering a call to the police. The police response, with the deployment of Firearms Unit and the National Police Air Service, suggests that the call provided sufficient grounds for the situation to be assessed as posing a significant level of risk and threat to an individual or communities. It appears that a group of young brown men, handling innocuous spray cleaning products and the mundane act of cleaning a car, were perceived as behaving suspiciously and representing a dangerous threat. The incident elucidates how dominant discourses in which Islam and Muslims are represented as a violent threat in need of containment in the name of national security, have penetrated the public consciousness, such that every innocuous behaviour and object is read as suspicious. It appears that framing contemporary terrorism as Islamist and the response that utilises a war narrative, has led to the dispensation of justice, freedom, rights and liberty that would normally apply in situations where criminality is suspected. Contours of racism can be accentuated within counter-terrorism discourses, due to the application of a racial frame that identifies Islamist terrorism as the principle threat to the West (See literature review). Therefore calls made to the police about brown men (conflated with Muslimness) behaving suspiciously illustrates the informal policing role enacted by the general public. This relieves the police from charges of the discriminatory practice of racially profiling the Muslim community.

Though the exact details of the report made to the police are not known, it points to what has been termed racialised police communication. A phenomena that refers to the practice of reports made to the police by white individuals about individuals from racially minoritised groups who are not engaged in criminal behaviour. The grounds for such reports, it is suggested, is often activated by implicit or unconscious bias, though a deliberate attempt to harm and victimise individuals (McNamarah 2019), or as discussed in the previous section, demonstrative of an act of retributive justice, cannot be negated.

The incident, whilst concluding safely, could have had devastating and potentially fatal consequences. As exemplified in the fatal shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes, an innocent citizen, by police, days after the 7/7 London bombing, in a case of mistaken identity. Though accepted as a tragic mistake, the local and broader context of the global “War on Terror” provided the justification for the actions of the Metropolitan Police Force, as Menezes was purportedly behaving suspiciously. The transposition of ordinary, everyday objects, places and behaviours, such as running for the bus or train, carrying a rucksack or wearing of oversized clothes, the specific dimensions reported as the grounds

for suspicion, illustrates the multiple cues that are performative in the racialisation of a Muslim identity. The very real and fatal consequences of the “Shoot to Kill to Protect policy” that had been approved on the grounds of suspicion, that implored racial profiling tactics to confirm suspicion and presumptions of guilt in advance of either a crime being committed or credible evidence being established, reverberated across the Muslim community, causing considerable anxiety and distress. Especially as the incident elucidated the biopolitics in the framing of the war on terror, that is those civilians who do not represent the dominant White, Western, Christian, corporeality are rendered a dangerous threat and the measures supposedly designed to protect life in reality function to restrict, threaten and destroy the lives of those perceived to be Muslim (O’Driscoll 2008, Vaughan-Williams 2007).

Parallels of the performativity of racial profiling in the case of Menezes and Tariq can be drawn. In Menezes case, eye witness accounts suggesting that Menezes was carrying a rucksack and wearing an oversized winter jacket with wires protruding, became firmly established within the public imagination, though the actual evidence did not support such witness accounts (Ibid). In the case of Tariq, the deployment of the Fire Arms Unit, suggests, the caller had alleged the young men were carrying weapons. This reveals the performativity of stereotypes and related images that esssentialise Muslims and synonymise a diverse community with terrorism, which implicates the whole Muslim community rather than individual suspects and in this way it becomes reasonable to suspect all those perceived to be Muslim. The power of dominant counter-terrorism discourses in activating fear, limit the construction of an alternative narrative, distort reality and disrupt objectivity to unleash a form of state terror upon law abiding citizens who are perceived to be Muslim. As is evident by Tariq’s narrative, not only law enforcement but also the general public as well as a range of other actors in society have been endowed with the duty and obligation (elaborated upon later in this subsequent sections) to contain the threat of terrorism, which implicitly connotes Islam and Muslims. This is illustrated by counter-terrorism measures such as the public transport campaign, See it. Say it Sorted.” found to be effective in increasing citizens sense of safety and subconsciously increasing awareness of surroundings and suspicious individuals, behaviours and objects (Hazebrouck 2020) or the Public Sector Prevent Duty, which has embedded surveillance logics and practices in duty of care principles (Kaleem 2022 p.284). But as findings of chapter four and further evidenced in this section and subsequent sections of this chapter, counter-terrorism measures are creating a climate of hostility, fear, terror and trauma for the participants, constricting lives and potentially perpetuating health inequalities that have been documented for this community.

The incident was clearly a traumatic experience for Tariq and his family, but interestingly the primary concern expressed by Tariq in the above excerpt is not about the possible fatal consequences. But rather, Tariq expresses his disappointment about the subsequent failure of the police to offer any form of support to him, his family and the neighbours. The fall-out from the incident, such as heightened fear and anxiety, the fuelling of suspicion and mistrust and the potential detriment upon community relations within the neighbourhood, appear not to have been given any due consideration or deemed important by the police. Interestingly Tariq notes, the police did not perceive it to be their remit to manage potential community tensions that the incident may give rise to, pointing to the transactional nature of policing, illustrative of reactive rather than proactive policing. Wider societal challenges, critically appraised, can inform the development of preventative and early interventions measures that minimise racialised police communication as well as racialised policing.

A number of insights can be gleaned from Tariq's expectations and the position adopted by the local police force after the incident. Firstly, the important leadership role that police forces can play in managing the anxiety, fear and trauma that arise from an incident of this nature for not only the targets of racialised police communication but also the wider community. The important contribution to building trust, confidence, tolerance and mutual respect within communities was perceived as a fundamental police duty that Tariq felt had been neglected. Secondly and relatedly in exercising that duty, police forces have the opportunity to tackle negative stereotypes and associated stigma to help build strong community relationships so that all sections of societies can feel safe and protected. This is particularly important given the climate of suspicion that envelopes Muslim communities at present. The inaction of the police force contributed to reinforcing suspicion and placing Tariq in a precarious position within his own neighbourhood as he felt he was left open to greater scrutiny and suspicion.

However Tariq explained that his mother visited immediate neighbours on either side of their home to offer an explanation and reassurance but the incident was witnessed more widely within the neighbourhood and she could not reasonably be expected to visit each and every household. But also the credibility of Tariq's mother's reassurances and explanations, as a hijab wearing Muslim woman were felt to be questionable. Whilst the message being conveyed maybe true, the person delivering the message, a visible representation of a threat, triggers implicit biases and prejudices that foreclose any meaningful dialogue. Thus the value and worth of the testimony, assessed through a pre-existing racial frame, is subject to a greater level of scrutiny and suspicion, consequently it is undermined and dismissed. Demonstrating the futility of individual efforts and the need for policing to assume greater levels of responsibility for addressing issues of racialised

police communication. This would help share the burden of conviviality and the need to put the neighbours at ease, especially crucial given that the testimony of bodies marked as racially inferior are equally rendered inferior and lacking credibility (Redclift et al 2022 and Dunne 2020).

Finally it is argued that the role of police forces in proactively assessing and mitigating the risks to community relations following a very public police operation of the nature experienced by Tariq and his family, is critical. Not only for the reasons stated above but as part of an active anti-racism strategy. Police forces, in challenging dominant narratives that serve to stigmatise groups and justify racial discrimination, can contribute significantly to creating safe spaces for all sections of the community and reducing racialised police communication. It also contribute to addressing concerns identified in the literature review, which suggests racial profiling and racial discriminatory practices within police forces to be a significant issue, compromising the safety and security of racially minoritised communities.

A heightened level of awareness of the fatal consequences of racialised policing emerged across the dataset, with a number of participants referencing the tragic fate of de Menezes, as means to articulate their fears and anxieties either for themselves or family members. Strategies such has adopting a non-resistance position and managing behaviour and emotions so that encounters conclude safely, as demonstrated by Tariq and his cousins, were evident and further illustrated by Fawad's encounter:

> "….without exaggeration a minimum of 20 police officers, police dogs, a helicopter in the sky, four or five vans, loads of police cars…it felt very strange…suddenly guns were pointed in our face…we felt immediately threatened…me and my friend froze…can you imagine seeing at least 20 police officers, police dogs barking at you…you see red dots on your chest, you think this is it, this is the type of stuff you see on the news…it was really, really, really frightening, what happened that day and it's left a lot of scars for us…"

The context once again was found to be triggered by the perception of a neighbour about the brown skinned male threat and reading innocuous teenager interaction as combative. Though the incident concluded safely, as no evidence of the reported threat and risk to life was established, the trauma of being swarmed by armed police and confronted by the aggression of police dogs, is evident from Fawad's narrative.

The findings suggest that racialised police communication is foregrounded in hegemonic discourses of national security that cultivate a sense of civic responsibility to normalise securitisation of those perceived to be Muslim. Counter-terrorism policing was found to extend beyond law enforcement agents to ordinary civilians performing informal policing roles in their everyday normal activities. Though racialised police communication has been found to be a racial discriminatory practice, it is difficult to establish that race was a factor in the call being made to the police. Therefore unlike hate crimes, sanctions to deter racialised police communication, especially in the context of terrorism and the risk logic that renders Muslims as a "suspect community", present a particularly complex set of challenges (Sharma and Nijjar 2018 and McNamarah 2019, Kaleem 2022) requiring further research.

It can be deduced from the two specific incidents that suspicion presents a real threat to life, with survival depending upon, submission and silence to the injustice of being in a perpetual state of suspicion. The powers endowed by the state upon law enforcement agents, public sector workers and the general public at large, were found to reduce the agency to resist and seek recourse for the various forms of injustices that participants experienced. The trauma and its long lasting impact cannot be underestimated with adverse consequences for psychological and physical wellbeing, an area that requires further investigation and research.

The next section building on the discussion above attends to participants' experiences of the legal obligation that has been placed on public sector workers to identify signs of vulnerability to radicalisation. A specific case that concerned more than one participant, elucidates the governance of Muslim religiosity that demonstrates the multifarious ways in which Islamophobia manifests.

6.2.2 Preventing Integration, Demanding Assimilation

As discussed in the previous chapters a strong sense of belonging and connection to a British identity was consistently found across the intergenerationally diverse cohort of study participants, especially amongst the third generation cohort. However the contemporary, dominant narratives about Muslims and Islam in the context of counter-terrorism, appear to have created various challenges. These challenges are explicated using two specific cases because they provide interesting insights, firstly the increased overt hostility towards those perceived to Muslim within suburban schools, where, as noted in the previous chapter the opposite was found for experiences of racism amongst the second generation. Secondly, the adoption of an overtly Islamophobic stance by one particular school, which

was identified, by a number of second generation participants, the findings for which are presented and discussed first.

Mahmoona's children attend a suburban secondary school, with a sizeable, religiously observant Muslim student population. However there is no prayer room and the Head teacher has refused, pupil and parents request, to identify a room, on health and safety grounds

> "…I think that the head teacher of that school had a problem with Muslims....there is a need at the school…a significant minority of children…need a place to prayer during the three winter months…when the prayer times are so short, that time falls within the lunch time….despite many parents over many years... and even children saying can we have somewhere to pray…he is just not willing to allow that to happen…"

Mahmoona's narrative suggests that the head teacher is refusing to engage with the Muslim students and parents to negotiate and find a mutually acceptable solution to the request for a prayer space. This is being interpreted by Mahmoona as the head teacher having a particular dislike for Muslims, making an inference to Islamophobia. In an attempt to minimise the perceived concerns of an exclusively Muslim space or Muslims being given preferential treatment by the school, the parents offered suggestions for creating a space that is inclusive for all pupils to use as a quiet and reflective space.

> "…it doesn't just have to be a Muslim [space] it can be reflective of anybody it can be you know work it however you like, we will have even parents coming in if you like [to supervise]…"

Parents also offered to volunteer and supervise the children over the lunch period so that it would address the health and safety concerns raised without impacting on school resources, but the request and pleas were to no avail.

> "…Because he doesn't have to by law… that's actually contributed to my child feeling the otherness…because he very much wants to pray his prayers on time in the winter months and so he runs the risk of getting caught and getting told off but he still does it…"

Mahmoona explained that as the children are not allowed into the school building over the lunch period, her son has to breach the rules and risk being reprimanded for performing a

religious obligation. She feels the stance adopted by the head teacher serves to other her child and create a hostile school environment. His school life is lived in a constant state of threat and fear of being caught and punished for performing his religious obligation. The normal daily routine and requirement of prayer which is considered a source of strength, resilience, spiritual and moral development appears to be disrupted and governed, with the potential to negatively impact self-esteem and confidence and indirectly disrupt learning, with longer term consequences for social mobility (Bi 2020). The school is evidently performing a regulatory and governing role, wherein it is denying Muslims pupils the opportunity to perform their true and authentic identities and develop as human beings. They are being forced to leave a fundamental aspect of their identity at the school gate, illustrative of an assimilationist approach, wherein Muslims are expected to fit into the cultural norms and practices of the dominant group. Suggesting that the developments of the 1908's and 1990's that were found to have been positively associated with a sense of equality, inclusion and belonging were beginning to erode for the participants.

Interestingly, Mahmoona, notes that the school does not have a legal obligation to provide a prayer space, suggesting that Mahmoona is an informed parent and understands the ambiguities within the legislation which allows the school to behave in a discriminatory manner. This suggests that Muslim parents and Muslims more generally are aware of the limitations of the equality legislation and the precariousness nature of rights, freedoms and liberty that arise from the elusive Muslim category (Younis and Hassan 2018).

Though the Department for Education, guidance to schools regarding the Equality Act 2010 (DfE 2014), highlights religion and belief to be amongst the specific protected characteristics covered in the law, requiring schools to demonstrate that they have fully considered the equality implications of their decisions and actions. The Equality Duty does not specifically require schools to have prayer facilities. According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2014) the aim of the duty is to promote equality by eliminating discrimination and disadvantages experienced by pupils from different protected characteristics and create an inclusive space. However the emphasis of equality legislation continues to remain upon biological characteristics, as sociocultural characteristics are conceptualised as a matter of individual choice, causing ambiguities that create conditions for discriminatory practices to be exercised (Bi 2022). But when contextualised within the wider "war on terror" discourses that have created a suitable enemy (Fekete 2009) a climate of fear and the prioritisation of national security, justify the restriction of freedom and liberty of Muslims both local and globally but which evade the accusation of racism. Thus compromises to the spirit of the equalities legislation find legitimacy and anti-Muslim

racism finds toleration and acceptability within society at large, which was articulated by the participants as Islamophobia.

Alexander and Shankley (2020) found Pakistani Muslim pupils to be amongst the most educationally disadvantaged, who are being further adversely impacted by the Prevent policy, as it functions in the racialised surveillance of Muslim and South Asian children. They argue that racial stereotyping and discrimination continue to be entrenched within education, asserting that education offers the opportunity to support cultural integration and address both educational inequalities and wider social inequalities given its potential for achieving social mobility. In this context the resistance to the reasonable requests of the pupils and the parents for a prayer room, can be considered a dereliction of duty enshrined within education policy as well as the equalities legislation. Whether the actions of the school are within the letter of the law or not, it appears that a lack of commitment to equality is expressively being conveyed.

Mahmoona substantiates her claim that the head teacher was acting discriminatory by comparing the policies and practices of another school in the area, which had created a space for the Muslim children to pray.

> "…And there are lots of schools in the area, well there is a school in the area that not only provides a place to pray they give the kids passes to get out of lunch to go and pray…"

This would suggest that the Equality Duty is being interpreted and inconsistently applied by schools with regards to the provision of prayer spaces, revealing the shortfalls in the equality legislation, allowing local level interpretation and disparate application, while remaining within the legal parameters, hence the call for reforming the Equality Act (Bi 2022).

Mahmoona, further provides evidence to the head teacher's discriminatory behaviour by sharing an incidence, where a letter was sent to the Muslim parents during Ramadhan, informing them of the Islamic exemption to fasting when Ramadhan, coincides with examination time, especially over the summer period, when the hours of fasting are longer.

> "…so he wrote a letter about…children not fasting in Ramadan when it was their exams because they fast for so long. He felt the need to patronise the Muslim parents…he didn't actually get any advice from all the Muslim governors on the

panel he just sought the advice of one person…that person did say that I don't think it's a good idea to patronise Muslim parents…"

The Muslim parents were particularly incensed by this action and felt patronised. It served to reinforce their perception about the head teacher's Islamophobic views, and the creation of an anti-Muslim environment, in which religious observation was not respected or supported.

"…the head teacher, held the view that Muslim kids are forced to fast…that has a trickledown effect to the rest of the school so the school is a little bit… hostile is strong, whatever is less strong than hostile but more stern than friendly, they are not at all welcoming about Muslim faith…"

"…it sends a message to kids that they don't feel welcome, they are not welcome to make the choice to fast…"

In addition Mahmoona explains that the head teacher had been subjective, selectively using Islamic material and the guidance from the National Association of Head Teachers' (NAHT 2020) regarding fasting. She believes that he had inaccurately interpreted and misrepresented the information and guidance from both sources, particularly noting that he had chosen to ignore the NAHT tips to support fasting children.

"… [the Head used] a minority kind of obscure marginalised opinion carries no kind of weight… it's like the MMR thing…there is one opinion that says it causes autism, you don't take that as the main majority, the mainstream opinion…"

"…he had got…the association of head teachers guidelines and he cited that one thing that said inform the kids that they don't have to fast. Ignore the other lots of points that he could have also mentioned which was provide a cool classroom, don't make them do PE if they don't want to, consult with them…Lots of things that were supportive and affirming and make the children feel confident about their identity…"

Mahmoona, as the governor at the time, raised the collective concerns of Muslim parents, in a signed letter. This however had serious repercussions for Mahmoona, as she feels, she was publically humiliated, by the head teacher at the Governors meeting. The letter and actions of the parents, were likened to the "Trojan Horse" incident in 2014, in which a number of inner city state schools, attended predominantly by Muslim pupils from diverse

backgrounds, in Birmingham, were allegedly failing to promote integration and children were deemed at risk of being radicalised.

> "…he has been heard and known to say that Muslim parents are very aggressive and they are very, he mentioned the… Trojan horse scandal. He likened my bringing this letter as a Trojan horse thing like that happened in Birmingham he completely wanted to humiliate me…"

Mahmoona feels that the head teacher, in likening the action of the parents to the "Trojan Horse" affair, was an attempt to vilify and stigmatise the parents, portraying them to be intolerant and aggressive, in order to discredit and dismiss their concerns. Thus a particular form of narrative was developed by the school to confirm a Muslim threat, promulgated to give credence and defence to the head teacher's actions. And ultimately used to deflect any criticism or allegations of Islamophobia on the part of the school. The incident reveals how the narrative produced by the school was shaped by the wider socio-political and media constructions of Muslims as an anathema to Western liberal values (Poole and Williamson 2021) to pursue restrictive, oppressive and discriminatory practices and behaviours within the school, as common sense logics (Kaleem 2022).

The particular likening of parents grievances to the "Trojan Horse" incident is particularly instructive. It reveals the head teacher's biases, which point to the contours of liberal progressive sensibilities, which have become so firmly established that critical faculties' and the need to establish facts in order to make sound judgements without prejudice are considered irrelevant when imposing sanctions that restrict religious expressions. As is illustrated by the head teacher's refusal to create a space for the children to perform their religious obligations, or questioning the religious authority and validity of young people choosing to fast. In both cases health and safety concerns was used as the pretext to govern religiosity and freedom to religious expression. The claim by the school that the decisions and actions were purportedly rooted in concerns for the pupils' welfare, were deemed disingenuous by the parents, who perceived the actions to be overtly Islamophobic in nature. The expressed refusal of the school to engage in a dialogue with the parents and the pupils to jointly identify challenges, barriers and solutions to the concerns of each party. And the bullying and intimidation tactics deployed by the school to humiliate, belittle and undermine the parents by misrepresenting their reasonable grievances, as a plot to Islamise the school, illustrates the structural hegemony of the Prevent Duty (Ibid). That is surveillance, governance and regulation have been embedded in duty of care principles, coded through the language of safe guarding and civic duty that limit the social sanctions

applied to anti-Muslim discriminatory behaviour, making Islamophobia difficult to detect and even harder to combat (Ibid and Jones and Unsworth 2022).

The experiences of Mahmoona, her fellow parents and the pupils at the centre of Mahmoona's narrative are examined in the context of the socio-political climate, specifically a brief review of the "Trojan Horse" scandal reveals the continuities and changes in sustaining a racial ideology.

Operation Trojan Horse was a high profile case made public, by the media, claiming Islamist Extremist were planning to takeover state schools in Birmingham. The story received considerable media attention and was deemed a significant public issue and the Government response, presented the allegations as an established fact. An inquiry commissioned by the then Secretary of State Michael Gove, gave credence to the allegations, as an association to violent Islamist extremism was implied, with the appointment of a former Scotland Yard head of counter-terrorism, to lead the enquiry (Cannizzaro and Gholami 2020 and Poole 2018).

A number of investigations were also undertaken by various bodies and though inconsistent findings have been reported, Awan (2018) notes that the most significant report by the Government Education Select Committee (2015) found no evidence of extremism or radicalisation in any of the schools except for a single isolated incidence. Holmwood and O'Toole (2018) note that the allegations from the outset were vexatious given the school, at the centre of the controversy, had been previously commended by Ofsted. They argue that the swing in the pendulum from being an exemplar school to a failing school, engaged in extremism and radicalisation, in a short space of time was situated within a socio-political climate, being shaped by, as well as shaping and shifting debates about community cohesion towards counter-terrorism. The case was used to reinforce government claims that multiculturalism and toleration of difference resulted in separatism which allowed for Islamist extremism and corollary terrorism to flourish. In this way legitimising policy interventions, such as strengthening the securitisation features of the Prevent agenda. As evidenced by the subsequent rollout of the Prevent Duty in 2015 to all public services, with the added requirement for schools to promote "Fundamental British Values" (FBV) (Cannizzaro and Gholami 2020 and Poole 2018,).

The "Trojan Horse" affair provided the government the opportunity to continue to promote and strengthen the narrative of an Islamist extremism threat, allowing for state security infrastructure to become embedded across every public service, endowing civilians with greater surveillance powers. In addition the complicity of government in presenting the

narrative as an Islamist extremism threat, in the media, served to deflect attention away from issues of poor governance, that implicate deregulatory education policies, identified as fundamental underlying causes of the challenges facing the schools. This meant that local and central government evaded charges of wrong doing, allowing the government to pursue interests and further otherwise questionable policy decisions (Cannizzaro and Gholami 2020). These public policy decisions have wide ranging negative implications for the wider population, because injustice underpins inequalities (Dorling 2015) but when justified along racial lines, the disproportionate negative consequences for the Muslim communities can be observed.

The dominant hegemonic narrative, the presupposed guilt, created conditions that weakened procedures and processes to deliver justice, as implicit bias and/or the emboldening of racist attitudes and behaviours had been activated by the framing of the case as a security threat. Many of the teachers at the schools, at the centre of the "Trojan Horse" controversy, were dismissed and faced disciplinary action. And one governor, at one of the school's, received a lifetime teaching ban. Ofsted placed previously ranked 'outstanding' schools into special measures. The year the scandal broke out a significant drop in GCSE results in contrast to the previous year were noted. In 2017 the case against all the teachers was dropped, denying individuals the right to clear their names. This not only illustrated the premises upon which cases were brought against the teachers, were flawed but it is allowed the official narrative to continue to peddle suspicion. Lively hoods of those directly impacted by the incident were lost and the incident cast a long lasting shadow as links to the schools in question were hard to erase (Abbas 2017, Holmwood & O'Toole 2018, Awan 2018, Holmwood et al 2020 and Bi 2020).

Finally the 2017 Conservative Party Election Manifesto identified the Equality Act of 2010, as an instrument to combat extremism on the grounds that terrorism threatens human rights (Holmwood et al 2020). Suggesting that human rights are conditional upon greater alignment to dominant cultural values, norms and practices. This would explain why Mahmoona and her fellow parents were placed in the category of Islamist Extremist. The targeting of actions and behaviours, such as fasting and prayer, which are neither illegal nor found to be indicators of a terrorist threat are viewed with suspicion and sanctioned on the logic that they, do not reflect majority values, norms and practices. Rather these practices are perceived to represent a faith based ideology through which seeds of extremism and terrorism germinate. Thus placing concern for the welfare of pupils and society at large, more centrally, offers the school vindication from the charge of Islamophobia. However it can be explicated from Mahmoona's narrative that the school was enforcing suppression of Muslimness which was causing considerable anxiety for both

the parents and the pupils. The pupils were being forced to fulfil the religious obligations in secret, for fear of being punished for their religiosity. This suggests that schools are not safe spaces for Muslim pupils, rather they are spaces where surveillance, policing suspicion and othering is experienced. The emotional, psychological and physical health impacts of living in a precarious state as a result of institutionalised Islamophobia is an under researched area, especially as Islamophobia continues to be a contested concept (see literature review).

The findings of this study demonstrate the implications of the “Trojan Horse” affair, which appear to have reverberated more widely amongst the Muslim community. Restrictions and sanctions of religious freedom have adopted a respectable veneer within safeguarding language to evade charges of racialised religious discrimination. The privileging of dominant values implied within the Prevent Duty, has created fertile conditions for a “them and “us” narrative to be deployed that polices Muslim claims-making (Hussain and Meer 2017).

As the data suggests the hegemony of Prevent has recalibrated the terms for race relations, wherein the mode of integration has come to be defined by an assimilationist strategy. That is Muslims are expected to conform to western cultural norms and practices, in order to reduce, but not necessarily eliminate, the threat, anxiety and fear that has come to be inscribed upon the Muslim identity.

Mahmoona’s narrative points to current tense and challenging relationships between schools and the Muslim pupils and parents that have been the consequence of almost two decades of dominant discourses, synonymising Islam and Muslims with terrorism, and the intensification of ensuing counterterrorism measures that unduly target and disadvantage Muslim communities (Awan et al 2019). However in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, third generation cohort accounts reveal the fertile ground upon which political discourse designating Muslims and Islam as the greatest threat to western civilisation, were readily taken up and enacted. Even in the absence of current legislative tools that require public sectors workers to police and discipline Muslimness. This is explicated by Fawad who, as noted in chapter four, until 9/11 had not experienced the problematisation of his identities, brown, male and Muslim.

In examining Fawad’s narratives the shifting and nuanced processes of racialisation and experiences of racism can be explicated.

Fawad is an outlier amongst the third generation cohort of participants, as he attended an out of catchment secondary school in the suburb. Therefore his notably different experience of schooling to the majority of the third generation participants is instructive in the context of advancing understanding of the enduring but mutational force of racism. Also Fawad's experience, offer important insights about the profile of perpetrators of racism, especially Islamophobia, when comparing and contrasting Mahmoona's, a second generation participant, experiences, who attended a suburban school in the 1970's.

> "…fortunately or unfortunately whichever way you look at it, my parents fought hard to get me into a better school. And I was kind of taken away from my friends from a very deprived inner city type of school and upbringing, to a very you know quite a different more affluent area, I think the school was a Beacon school. And there weren't many Asians, there weren't many blacks, and you certainly felt out of place a little bit…"

The sense of an outsider is striking in Fawad's narrative, he was in a completely unfamiliar environment and amongst pupils whom he could not identify with, in terms of affluence, social class and race. That said his parent's aspirations for his educational achievements are evident as it appears they navigated the schools admission policy to secure a place for him at a top performing, out of catchment school. Upon first arriving at the school Fawad recalls a hostile environment that manifested in multifarious ways.

> "…what was noticeably different was the harshness from the teachers…the way they would interact if you were Asian [Pakistani] or black was certainly harsher and more of a, try to take the mick out of you in front of everybody, that was the difference you noticed…children just chit chatting in a room rather than the whole group being addressed you would be addressed…"

Fawad reported troubling incidents of being singled out by the teachers along with fellow Black and Pakistani pupils and mocked in the presence of a majority white classroom. He recalls teachers disproportionately targeting BAME pupils, for innocuous behaviours that all pupils were engaged in, such as talking in class. The fact that the same behaviour of white pupils was not being problematised points to racial profiling and implicit racial biases of the teacher and the racialisation of behaviour. The pupils' visible identity served as a proxy for problematic behaviour. But the public manner in which the teachers sought to ridicule, humiliate and demean sections of the racially minoritised group of pupils implies that the pupils and their behaviour was considered an aberration that justified denigration. Though racial slurs or racially disparaging language was not used by the teachers, it is the

differential treatment between BAME pupils and their white counterparts, from which racial discrimination can be accentuated.

Teachers were found to use bullying and intimidation tactics at everyone opportunity a significant deterioration in the relationship between Fawad and his teachers following the events of 9/11, which had immediately followed the race riots between White and Asian men of Pakistani heritage in northern towns of England. Fawad recalls an incident, wherein upon returning from a holiday in Pakistan he was informed by his tutor that he had been struck off the school register and told to go home. Fawad recalls being distressed and anxious by the teacher's remarks and having to remain at school for the rest of the day unsure of whether he should be there or not.

> "…I was just a child… upon my return attending the class… [the white male] tutor threw a comment and said what are you doing here...you shouldn't be back here… we may have kicked you out of school so you may not have needed to come in, you are no longer with this school…so as a child you can imagine, we are talking I believe it was year 8 so about 11-12, so very confusing time to be told we have kicked you out...what was I to feel for the rest of the day well do I stay here do I go, I have been dropped off at school…"

Fawad's parents reassured him that his leave had been authorised and that he had nothing to worry about, suggesting the teacher's behaviour was of a vexatious nature that amounts to harassment, intimidation and bullying. It appears that Fawad's Pakistani Muslim identity was sedimented by his trip to Pakistan. And given the negative portrayal of Pakistani Muslim men in discourses pertaining to both terrorism and community cohesion, suggests that the teacher's action were a demonstration of abuse of power and authority. A strategy to "keep him in his place", a form of disciplining without any wrong doing being committed other than for being a brown, Muslim male. These intersecting identity characteristics are codified as signifiers of difference and this difference has come to represent a threat (Ali 2020) which must be, as a minimum contained, if not eliminated. Elimination in this case was the teacher's attempt to strike Fawad off the school register, which suggests that suburban schools are conceived as white spaces and therefore the teacher was using his authority in attempt to maintain racial separation, albeit unsuccessfully A fabrication of the truth certainly breached the professional teaching standards, falling short of demonstrating honesty, integrity and providing a safe learning environment for pupils (Department for Education 2012). Rather trauma was inflicted that has been subsequently triggered by similar events since, as can be elicited in the previous section and is further explicated in the following sections. Fawad endures structural violence and injustices on a daily basis

because his humanity is called into question by external identity inscriptions which position him at the sub-human, second class citizen level.

Interestingly, Fawad's parents offered reassurance without raising the matter with the school. It is difficult to make any inferences or draw conclusions as to why that was the case. However the literature suggests that personal experiences of racism and its impact are often a factor in how parents respond to racism, with avoidance possibly being used not only as a coping strategy but also as a strategy in socialising their children to racism in order to minimise associated stressors and build resilience to racialised encounters (Smalls-Glover et al 2013).

On another occasion Fawad recalled the Head of Year making extremely, disparaging remarks directed, personally at him.

> "…our year head had said to me…you will be a failure and you will become nothing, you will make nothing of your life a kid like you…"

In the absence of explicit and tangible references to ethnicity and religion, it is difficult to assert that the communication was racially discriminatory. But the use of the phrase "*a kid like you*" is illuminating as it is implies a reference to ethno-religious characteristics, entangled with the inner-city post-code with which Fawad is associated and corollary poverty and deprivation are arguably all performative in the interaction. Inner city, also evoke images and stereotypes about racially dense neighbourhoods and related ideas about segregation and parallel lives that threaten community cohesion. But comments such as *"…you will make nothing of your life, a kid like you…"* whilst elusive in nature, nevertheless suggests that negative ascriptions of intelligence and ability to achieve success stem from racial stereotypes and assumptions. Such stereotypical views and overly low expectations are found to be significant barriers within the education system, particularly for Muslim pupils (Stevenson et al 2017). Thus it is argued that the interaction corresponds to racialised othering, constructed through the war on terror discourses, framing Muslims, conflated with brownness, as a racialised threat.

A number of important insights can be gleaned from Fawad's encounters, firstly political discourses that were constructed following the 2001 riots and the events of 9/11 were readily taken up by the suburban, majority white middle class school. In contrasting Fawad's experience to that of Mahmoona, a second generation participant, who was an outlier within her cohort as she too attended a school in the suburbs in the 1970's, a noteworthy observation emerges. Though all the second generation participants attended

predominantly white schools, overt racism was found to be more prevalent within inner city schools, with Mahmoona reporting a deracialised experience, akin to that found for the third generation cohort who attended inner city schools. But according to Fawad's encounters a reverse relationship emerges within the data between racism and inner city schools. The politeness and progressiveness described by Mahmoona to have influenced a deracialised experience of schools in the suburbs appears to have been superseded by racial microaggressions by early 2000. This shift appears to coincide with a turn in the wider socio-political context following the riots in Northern towns of England and also the 9/11 terrorists attacks. Demonstrating that the dominant narrative of the brown skinned male as a problematic threat, to have become firmly imprinted upon the public imagination and manifested in discriminatory attitudes and behaviours of teachers reported by Fawad. The reversal in the phenomena a generational later reflects Jones and Unsworth (2022) contention that whilst biologised understanding of racism and related overt expressions and discriminatory behaviour are found to be socially unacceptable. A new form of racism, Islamophobia, defined as prejudice towards Islam and its teachings, as was illuminated earlier by the actions of the head teacher, has found legitimacy and become socially acceptable, even amongst those groups, otherwise opposed to discrimination.

A shift from biologised to cultural inferiorisation can be accentuated to reveal the nuanced and complex ways in which racism continues to remain intact, transforming to be become subtle, elusive and acceptable and difficult to detect but no less destructive and harmful (Pearce 2019). This is elaborated upon further in the next section, which specifically focuses on labour market experiences, a cogent theme that emerged from the data to evidence the codification of the Muslim identity from which a specific Muslim penalty is revealed.

6.3 The Muslim Penalty in the Labour Market

In comparing and contrasting the lived experiences of the diverse cohort of participant's critical insights were gleaned regarding the socio-cultural and political factors shaping labour market conditions, to further understanding about the relationship between racialised identities, employment and working conditions, shown to be strongly correlated with health and health inequalities.

All participants, except one, were found to be in paid work, either employed or self-employed, in a variety of sectors. The majority were employed within the public sector, a significant number were self-employed, and two participants were employed in the private sector and one in the voluntary and community sector. Variance in salary and income as

well occupation groups was observed between the participants (see participant profile Appendix 1).

The both cohort of participants entered a post, race relations legislation labour market, wherein discrimination on the grounds of a range of characteristics was illegal. Opportunities arising from the equality legislation, particularly within the public sector to, not only, increase workforce diversity but also address discrimination in service provision and offer accessible, appropriate and responsive services to the diverse population, were found to have been a positive development This was evident for a number of participants, with cultural and linguistic skills and connections with and access to local communities, recognised as an essential criteria for certain roles within certain job roles. The various initiatives set up by different public sector organisations to break down barriers and improve service provision and uptake of services amongst minority ethnic groups, served as a springboard for personal and professional development and the establishment of careers, where previously limited qualifications would have been a barrier.

> "…the equality agenda as soon as I started working was quite high…" (Ahmad)

> "…I mean my job in itself was a specialist role when I first came into the [public sector], it was a protected role, it was for BME black and minority ethnics so in that sense I got very well protected…" (Mahnoor)

> "…So I'd got no qualifications at that stage... first part time job in the [public sector]… about access to services [for Asian people]…" (Alyesha)

A voluminous amount of data was generated for this domain and two overarching themes emerged, firstly, participants who did not feel their identity, either ethnic or religious had any negative consequences for realising their career aspirations. Secondly, there were a set of participants who shared numerous incidences of discrimination and detriment which some identified as Islamophobia, whilst others struggled to make a distinction between the primacies of ethnoracial over religious factors as drivers for unfavourable treatment.

6.3.1 The Realities of Meritocracy

The participants, who did not display any visible cues to their Muslim identity, primarily a hijab or a beard, but were visibly non-white, reported a seemingly deracialised experience of the labour market in which ethnoreligious identity was not perceived to have had any detriment for employment and career development and progression.

> "…at work I have not really found it [being Asian/Pakistani and Muslim] a problem…I have still succeeded…So I have not found it difficult…" (Aisha)

> "…Yeah fine, I don't feel as if I have been discouraged or stopped to do anything or had any sort of negativity because … because I am a Muslim…so I have never been restricted or sort of held back…" (Irum)

> "…I mean I have always been accepted as being [name] the worker and appreciated for my skills and experiences and my knowledge. And my faith has never led to have any impact on my work life…" (Nazia)

> "…I genuinely don't recall ever been treated differently for my colour, my religion or anything…" (Amir)

At first glance, the data suggests, participants who could be visibly identified as different from the majority, dominant group by virtue of phenotypical distinctions, in the main skin colour, did not appear to suffer any labour market penalty. This could be explained by the social unacceptability for expressions of explicit forms of biologised racism as discussed in the previous two chapters but also because racial discrimination in employment has been illegal in the UK since 1968 (Heath and Di Stasio 2019). Therefore this sub-set of participants reported a general satisfaction with respect to treatment in the workplace and felt opportunities for development and success were not predicated on race, ethnicity or religion, implying that hard work and merit were rewarded, though as discussed later the data suggests otherwise. The idea that success is earned through hard work is rooted in the idea of meritocracy. That is everybody has the same and equal chances to success (Bukodi and Goldthorpe 2022). However various labour market studies have shown both an ethnic and specifically a Muslim penalty in the labour market. Higher rates of unemployment and lower levels of earnings have been found for Muslims (Ibid, Li and Heath 2020, Khattab 2016 and Khattab and Modood 2015). But labour market trends also show some progress in labour market outcomes for sections of racially minoritised groups (Heath and De Stasio 2019). This mix picture highlights the complexities, challenges and particularly limitations surrounding arguments that purport a post-racial era, wherein racial discrimination is dismissed as an explanatory factor for racial disadvantages, shown to be disproportionately experienced by the Muslim community.

The data revealed an interesting trend wherein non-white participants, irrespective of visible cues to religiosity noted that they are expected to work harder in order to be recognised and receive the equivalent rewards of their white counter-parts, if at all.

> "…you don't rely on just being good you have to be better…" (Amjid)

> "…I have always had it in my head that as a non-white individual I will have to work harder, rightly or wrongly that's just what I believed…I have never been discriminated although I genuinely believe that I have had to work harder or demonstrate it harder that I am capable and willing to do the next step up…" (Amir)

The data thus reveals the racialised contours of meritocracy, as not everyone has the equal chance to reap the rewards of hard work. The need to worker harder to demonstrate suitability points to a racial frame being productive in the purportedly meritocratic era, as further evidenced in subsequent sections of this chapter. The vehement denial of ethnoreligious discrimination by Amir and other participants, is particularly illuminating, pointing to racial discrimination being understood by the participants to mean overt expressions of racial prejudice at an individual level.

That said Amir shares an epiphany moment, when he realises success was not predicated on hard work, but rather the privileges and advantages endowed to the white majority group by organisational structures and system that dictate the parameters of what constitutes merit.

> "…I almost had a bit of a reality check… about 6-7 probably years ago…I am sick and tired of this job, it's a dead end job…I looked around…and everybody was white, every manager above them was white bar one person, one black lady… at the time I thought was purely just to balance their diversity on their books and there was no balance at all…"

In scanning the organisation and concluding that the lack of BAME representation within the management structures is suggestive of the existence of an invisible barrier that is impenetrable, Amir decides to leave. Amir's decision to walk away rather than stay and work hard to disrupt the exclusively white senior management structure of the organisation not only runs counter to his assertion that negates racism and affirms meritocracy. But it also explicates the cognisance of structural racism which not even hard work can surmount. Suggesting that meritocratic discourses promoting the idea that success is merited on ability and effort, create the conditions for, deserving, those that work and the underserving,

the idle, discourses to be propagated. In this way a racial ideology continues to be efficacious in sustaining a racialised social order and hierarchy, without invoking race (Bukodi and Goldthorpe 2022).

A consistent trend, found across the dataset, revealed a similar pattern of behaviour amongst the participants, scanning the senior management team of an organisation to evaluate whether it represents a diverse workforce. Participants were able to judge an organisations commitment and competence to issues of racial justice, which in turn influenced their employment choices and decisions. That is, some participants, like Amir pursued employment opportunities in alternative organisations and sectors, others chose self-employment as a means of overcoming racialised barriers to success, whilst some demonstrated longevity within a particular sector and organisation, irrespective of the barriers to development and progression. These various strategies demonstrate a consciousness of structural racism. The data illuminates, on the one hand, a narrow understanding of racism, as individual instances of racial discrimination. Whilst at the same time revealing an awareness of racism as a fundamental political issue, an ideology that is embedded within the structures and systems of society that must be circumnavigated, as Ahmad notes:

> "...you can't start battles which you are not going to win…"

The findings reveal the limitations of the political rhetoric of meritocratic social mobility as a solution to social inequality, confirming the recurring theme within critiques of meritocracy from different disciplinary positions, of the "myth of meritocracy". That is, despite being a political objective of the western world, limited progress in the establishment of a meritocratic social order has been found, and the prevailing meritocratic discourses are shown to have damaging consequences for those unable to achieve success (Ash and Nazroo 2016, Bukodi and Goldthorpe 2022). Bukodi and Goldthorpe (2022) have confirmed a wider contention in the critique of meritocracy of the link between meritocracy and populism.

6.3.2 The Gendered Muslim Penalty

Many of the female participants who were visibly identified as Muslim because of their hijab reported a range of challenges that were felt to be driven by Islamophobia, as opposed to racism. As demonstrated in chapter four, as well in section 6.2 of this chapter specific cues to a Muslim identity were found to activate deeply visceral emotions that manifested in unfavourable treatment of the participants but which were subtle and covert in nature.

They reported being consistently bypassed for development and progression opportunities, citing, where possible, particular instances where non-Muslim BME colleagues and non-visibly identifiable Muslim colleagues, as opposed to white colleagues, were used as comparators to substantiate their claims of suffering a specific Muslim penalty. Though it is important to note the limitations of comparators in religious discrimination cases pertaining to Muslims, given the current socio-political climate (Bi 2019)

Mahnoor entered a public sector in a specialist, protected role as a BAME worker, which she felt offered her protection. For example she did not need to hide her potentially stigmatising identity characteristics, such as her attire, her ability to speak another language, or speaking up about racial inequalities that would reinforce stereotypes of not being fully integrated, or deemed a threat. However, though she was able to make various sideway moves, progressions and promotional opportunities presented greater challenges. Mahnoor identifies the informal practice of work based socialising in pubs after working hours, as performative in negatively impacting development and progression opportunities.

> "…[I was not] part of that club or group where people are socialising…in the pubs…you realised that actually there was another inner circle as well… because I was not in a circle I wasn't privy to some of the stuff that is said and done about work…"

Firstly as noted in chapter four, Mahnoor had activated an intra-religious conversion and corollary lifestyle changes that were deeply spiritually rooted. The commitment and intensification to religiosity meant she refrained from taking part in practices and frequenting places that would compromise her spiritual convictions. However Mahnoor highlights an organisational practice, albeit informal, of after work drinks culture, which was performative in consolidating workplace networks. Serving to advance work related conversations, with possible disclosure of confidential information that created affiliations, a shared work-based identity and positionality to foster trust and reciprocity. However Mahnoor feels that the informal networking opportunities were exclusive, implying that they resembled an "an old boys club", a metaphor used to advance understanding of barriers to women's progression in the workplace (Fernandez and Rubineau 2019).

It is important to highlight that Mahnoor worked in an all-female team and what can be deduced from her reference to "club or group" and "inner circle" is that the criticism levied at men for exclusionary practices that erect invisible barriers for the progression of women, appear to be replicated by her female colleagues. Mahnoor feels that she was excluded

from opportunities to informally network with her colleagues because of the failure to accommodate her religious needs by way of considering alternative venues to pubs and activities that did not involve alcohol. In this way Mahnoor felt her access to benefits that were availed by other colleagues such as development and promotional opportunities were restricting and denied to her.

> "…So…then I subtly started to realise there were certain opportunities, even though I was getting the nod and the wink when I applied I didn't get the job. But the person [BAME female] who had been part of those [circles]…she was friends with the person on the panel…they were socialising they were going to each other's houses…but I wasn't, doing that… it was like knowing that her competency and her experience and skills were not good, her interviewing style of skill because I got that feedback from certain people as well…"

Mahnoor and other participants who had activated a greater level of religiosity, noted the accommodation of religious requirements such as dietary needs, at work related business events. But it was the importance of informal social activities outside of work that Mahnoor refers to as being critical for career progression. The exchange of key business information at the informal social events was felt to deliver advantages for members of the social network, whilst disadvantaging those, like herself, who cannot access the networks for religious reasons. In the above excerpt Mahnoor recalls an occasion of being rejected for a promotional opportunity as the position was offered to an individual, from a BAME background (non-Muslim) who was part of the social network of the management team but who did not possess the requisite skills, knowledge and competencies for the role. Demonstrating how informal social networks can disrupt equality of opportunity and hinder racial equality and exacerbate a specific Muslim penalty. Privileged access to information shared amongst members of the network, afford an unfair advantage to individuals subsequently seeking development and promotional opportunities.

> "…on one hand generically we are talking about equal opportunities and on the other hand actually there is no such thing…" (Mahnoor)

In Mahnoor's experience, equality and diversity policies exist to demonstrate an organisations compliance with the law rather than delivering racial equality. Suggesting that hiring practices cannot mitigate against the soft social capital resources delivered by informal networking, found to be critical currency in purchasing benefits that support career progressions for members of the network. As exemplified by gender inequalities scholarship, which in the main denotes disadvantages that women suffer in society

because of the way that structures and systems have been established that bring about discriminatory outcomes for women. The barriers and challenges to women's career development and progression have been described using a range of metaphors, such as the glass ceiling, glass slipper, glass cliff and maternal wall, and the old boys club. Metaphors are considered a useful means of uncovering organisational practices and patterns of behaviour otherwise hidden and difficult to detect because of well-established, accepted cultural norms and practices. And in the main, the metaphors capture a broad set of barriers, affecting all women's career advancement, but importantly highlight subtle power processes that bring to the fore how discrimination is experienced (Bruckmüller and Braun 2020, Arifeen and Gatrell 2020). Thus the explanations for gendered inequalities are centred on powerful, external, structural forces that shape institutional practices and individual behaviours rather than women themselves.

As exemplified by Mahnoor, work-based networks facilitate, bonding, bridging and linking social capital (See chapter five) to strengthen trust and reciprocity amongst work colleagues and advance careers. It illuminates how working life is conducted, but how Muslim women with a greater level of religious orientation are locked out of these critical networks as socialisation activities are rooted in dominant cultural norms and practices.

Interestingly, in contrast to how the underlying causes to gender inequalities are framed as external to women and found to reside in socio-political societal forces, the disadvantages and inequalities experienced by Muslims in general and Muslim women specifically do not appear to follow the same logic. Parallels can be drawn with the modus operandi of the informal networking conducted by Mahnoor's female colleagues and the old boy's network, which has been found to create the conditions for the glass ceiling effect, the invisible barrier to women's career advancement. Visibly identifiable Muslim women are shown to experience particular challenges and barriers in the labour market, and whilst gendered Islamophobia has been recognised to be a feature of the labour market experiences of Muslim women (Bi 2020). All too often internal socio-cultural factors, have been offered as explanations for Muslim women's labour market inequalities, deflecting attention away from the performativity of cultural racism (Tariq and Syed 2017 and Arifeen and Gatrell 2020). However internal forces have been found to be less consequential in determining labour market patterns (Sweida-Metwally 2022), with Islamophobia and discrimination found to be significant factors in determining labour market outcomes for Muslim groups, especially Muslim women (Bi 2020, Khattab and Johnstone 2014). The greater emphasis on internal forces, serves to shift the responsibility upon the Muslim community more generally and Muslim women specifically to adapt and change according to the organisational environment and cultural norms and expectations, something which is not demanded of

women more generally when identifying solutions to address gender inequalities. Some of the internal pressures faced by women are not unique to Muslim women, for instance research shows that women continue to shoulder a heavier burden of responsibilities of marriage, motherhood and caring for family members, with significant negative consequences for career progression (Pew Research Centre 2013, McKinsey & Company 2022). There are both commonalities and differences in gender based cultural practices that need to be considered in order to determine external factors that have a differential impact for racially minoritised groups in the labour market.

Mahnoor's experiences when contextualised within contemporary hegemonic narratives which have constructed Muslims and Islam as an existential threat, affirmed through the public sector Prevent Duty, illuminate the challenges of addressing the Muslim penalty not only in the labour market but across all socio-economic domains that impact racial health inequalities. The findings point to the role of the state and government policy making in shaping race relations on the ground, repackaging racism as a security issue, which exacerbate ethnoreligious penalties for the Muslim community.

Mahnoor was not an isolated case, nor was the reported incident episodic, rather a series of encounters, experienced on a regular basis, were relayed by Mahnoor, which were deeply emotional and upsetting as they brought to the fore the injustices that have been suffered over the life course.

All female participants bearing visible cues to their Muslim identity reported a multitude of incidents of discrimination which they perceived were related to their visible Muslim identity. Whilst Sakinah, a white British convert to Islam, was able to identify a specific religious dimension for the discrimination, participants of non-white background used racism and Islamophobia interchangeably to describe their experiences. This could be explained by the fact that racism is co-constituted and intersectional, in that it is connected to ethnicity, religion, gender and class (Atrey 2021). For instance Khadijah, as noted in chapter four, having circumnavigated the adverse impact of racism and stereotypes within the state education system, attaining a post-graduate professional qualification, shares the challenges she encountered to career progression.

> "…I don't think I've been given the equal opportunities to progress…I have the experience and the skills and the knowledge, and there's no reason why I shouldn't (progress)…there's been jobs that I've been deterred to apply for…verbally told not to apply because I don't have enough experience…the other applicants had no more experience than me…throughout the last eight years, this has happened on

a number of occasions…having eight years of experience, you know, you can't say that I haven't got enough experience and this keeps occurring…"

Khadijah has made numerous unsuccessful applications for promotional opportunities within her team and has been consistently told she does not have the requisite experience for the positions. What is particularly noteworthy is that on occasions, she has been actively deterred from making applications.

Khadijah shares specific incidences in which she feels her race and/or religion have been decisive factors in the manager's actions, especially, as she is the only worker of a BAME background who is also a hijab wearing Muslim, in an all-white female team.

It could be deemed that Khadijah's sense of her abilities, skills and experience are subjective and her experiences of not being able to progress do not necessarily infer discrimination to be taking place. It could be that the manager believes, Khadijah does not have the requisite skills, knowledge and experience, but if that is the case then why has a development plan not been put in place to support Khadijah to avail promotional opportunities?

Khadijah highlights that she has been with the team for over eight years and although she has shared her career aspirations with her seniors, she has not been offered any developmental support to address the gaps identified within her experience. So Khadijah reported being proactive and taking personal responsibility for her development by taking on added responsibilities and projects to improve her prospects for promotion. Whilst the managers are happy for Khadijah to take on extra responsibilities, there is no recognition, as Khadijah neither secures promotion nor is she appropriately remunerated. Khadijah highlights that she has remained in the same pay band, since joining the team, over eight years ago, although she is undertaking duties commensurate to fellow colleagues on higher pay bands. She contrasts her experiences to that of her white colleagues, who have been actively supported and prepared for any promotional opportunities that come up within the team.

"…I'm, basically, doing the same job as a, as my colleagues, who are paid at a higher banding…a lot of incidences like that happen in my job and they happen to me, and I question why…I'm constantly being, treated differently…I do sometimes feel like it is because of who I am [Pakistani/Muslim], and not because I've been incompetent…when I was told I didn't have enough experience, you know, there's nothing to develop me to get that experience…"

Khadijah, having shared multifarious ways in which she is experiencing differential treatment, which she perceives is unfair, struggles to categorically state that she is being discriminated against on the grounds of her ethno-religious identity. That said, Khadijah does feel that the only reasonable explanation for the differential treatment is her ethno-religious identity. This would be a judicious inference to make and has resonance to the literature which highlights the complexities of contemporary discriminatory practices and behaviours which can be difficult to prove but cannot be negated. Racism in all its manifestations has been found to play a fundamental role in the working lives of racially minoritised groups, as noted earlier and its consequences are far reaching, constricting career advancement, adversely impacting social mobility and also health and well-being (see literature review).

It is important to highlight, Khadijah's emotional presentation during the course of the interview, becoming visibly upset and also incensed by her colleagues' behaviour. But Khadijah drew upon her faith, referring to divine decree to find acceptance, peace and comfort for the injustices that's she has and continues to experience. This coping strategy emerged more widely across the dataset, irrespective of levels of religiosity, wherein participants drew upon their faith when confronted with the realities of Islamophobia and its negative impact. Faith was found to be a protective force, serving as an adaptive device to deal with racial injustices and corollary manage the distress.

Farzana, who joined the organisation in a specialist BAME role, reports two contrasting encounters which are particularly illuminating, as one points to overt racially discriminatory behaviour, whilst the other, at first glance, appears innocuous and be can be framed as a proactive strategy to support racial leadership development.

> "…I joined the [public sector] yes there was individuals who had very narrow views but maybe it's because of the [sector]… it was a bit more challenging because people assumed I was there as a token gesture and things like that…"

Farzana sensed that she was perceived by her team members, to be a "token gesture" is confirmed by actual comments made by senior colleagues, when viewing pictures from a high profile national event that Farzana had attended on behalf of her team and the organisation.

> "… So when there were pictures that came out and it was just me there I got a few comments about oh so you are the token for our organisation and things like that..."

The expression used by Farzana's colleagues suggests that they perceive Farzana's position within the team and the organisation as inconsequential and a perfunctory attempt by the organisation to display diversity. Though the comments could be interpreted as a recognition and acknowledgement of the lack of representation within the workforce. They also signal to what Ash and Nazroo (2016) note to be "white resentment" (p: 5) wherein White British colleagues feel that equality and diversity initiatives afford BAME colleagues preferential treatment and an unfair advantage. For Farzana, the comments suggest that she is being perceived as unqualified for the job, with no regard or respect for any skills, knowledge and experience she may possess. Her perception is that her colleagues do not feel she has been employed on merit for her skills and competencies but rather as the "poster person" to promote an inclusive organisation. Such sentiments and hostility, whilst placated by meritocracy can have detrimental, hurtful and harmful effects both directly in terms of mental wellbeing but also in terms development and promotional opportunities within the workplace (Ashe and Nazroo 2016), as can be accentuated from the excerpt below.

> "… [made me feel] annoyed because I knew I was there on my own merits I knew when I got that job I did a very, very good interview I knew I brought all my voluntary experience, I brought all the hard work I had done to that interview and I demonstrated I was the best person for the job and that's why I got the job. And I knew a token person couldn't have done that job because it was very, very challenging…"

Farzana also noted an oscillation of the pendulum from one extreme to the other, wherein she recalls incidents of encouragement for development and promotional opportunities. However scepticism and mistrust of the goals and motivations of her colleagues can be accentuated from Farzana's narrative below.

> "…sometimes I think I did get pushed I don't know that was because….of my culture and my identity, or because I was the best person to do the job. But I feel like it was the opposite, to the glass ceiling, I felt pressured to sort of progress and take on more responsibilities...I felt like oh are there hidden reasons, and things like that…I am Muslim and I am being pushed to prove that there is no discrimination…"

It can be deduced from the encounters experienced by Farzana, that her visible appearance has the communicative power to work in different ways, at times she is subjected to discriminatory behaviours and practices, which seek to marginalise her, whilst

at other times she experiences what can be interpreted as advantageous or preferential treatment but both have the potential for detriment. Detriment resulting from the former is perhaps more evident, but in the case of encouraging and supporting progress, detriment is difficult to classify. Individuals who are alone or the only representative of a racially minoritised group promoted to senior positions can experience greater isolation and discrimination, attracting a greater level of attention, scrutiny and criticism (Krivkovich et al 2018, Ryan 2022).

In examining male participants experiences of the workplace, many similar encounters of being denied development and promotional opportunities reported by visibly Muslim female participants, were found. Whilst some of the encounters have been discussed in chapter four, to illustrate the links between external identity constructs and the process of racialisation. A consistent pattern emerged within the data that evidenced the existence of a specific Muslim male penalty, which was rooted in the conflation of brown skin with Muslimness. Male participants of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage, irrespective of religiosity and in the absence of specific cues to a Muslim identity reported the subtle ways in which the brown Muslim male threat was performative in unfavourable treatment in the workplace and ultimately labour market penalties. The association of the threat of terrorism and “grooming gangs”, with brown Muslim men has become established within the public consciousness (Sharma and Nijjar 2018 and Cockbain and Tufail 2020) and the gendering of Muslim identities. When considering both brown, male and female participants with no cues to their Muslim identity, the findings suggest that brown male participants experienced disproportionate levels of discriminatory and unfavourable treatment.

Amjid explains that he finds it difficult to disentangle his ethnicity from his religious identity as they are perceived to be co-constituted, symbolically conveying an image of threat that activates hostilities and discrimination.

> “…I think it’s being Muslim and being black I think they are interchangeable the way that you get treated…you see differential treatment in the way people talk to you and the way they respond to you…”

The use of the term “black” is also instructive as it demonstrates Amjid’s sensitivity to the political conceptualisation of non-white people in their shared experiences of racism and their collective participation in ant-racism activism (Alexander 2017). But it also highlights the impossibility of separating non-whiteness from Muslimness given the broader histories of race and racism in which biological, religious and cultural, characteristics have been intertwined and racially discriminatory policies and practices legitimised (see literature

review). Therefore as Meer and Spaeti (2015) argue, concepts beyond terms and the actual impact, captured through the lived experience of Muslims, accentuate the stigmatising and discriminatory effect of racialisation and race making beyond the black/white binary.

Amjid shared his wider ranging workplace experiences within the public sector, noting that the negative characterisation of the Muslim male, who is depicted as brown skinned in hegemonic terrorism and grooming gang discourses, contributed significantly to unfavourable treatment at work. Specific examples of unfavourable treatment ranged from being unsuccessful in securing promotional roles due to being overly qualified for the job. To, privately being recognised for delivering outstanding work above and beyond the requirements of the role but not receiving any public acknowledgement, unlike his white colleagues, who not only received bonus payments but emails sent to the wider team to highlight achievements that were within the expected duties of the job.

> "…I applied for a job which I was more than able to do within [organisation x] and two women interviewed me, white women and I didn't get the job. So when I got the feedback they said you know you were overly qualified you are just too good for this job. So not even realising how patronising that was, how wrong that was…So apparently an under qualified white women got the job because that's better than having overly qualified [non-white and/or Muslim person]…"

> "…Applied for another job which I was more than qualified to do more than able to do again three white people on the panel who said no you didn't, you just weren't there, you just weren't there. They weren't able to say where I should have been or what did, I miss, they just repeated those words. And they actually gave the job to a woman who wasn't qualified and she couldn't do the job, she was stressed because she was being overly promoted…"

> "…So promotional opportunities are there but sometimes you just don't want to go for them…I am that tired of that constant anxiety that you feel where you feel am I good enough, am I as good as, even though I am good if not better…"

It can be gleaned from the above excerpts that irrespective of qualification and experiences, a pattern of consistent rejections was being experienced by Amjid, a trend found more widely across the dataset for male participants. The appointment of underqualified individuals appears to be desirable over the appointment of a brown skinned Muslim male, suggesting the activation of biases that trigger application of disparate policies and procedures indicative of racial discrimination. The socio-political context in which the

Muslim male is constructed, imputes inferiority such that Amjid's ethnoreligious characteristics are performative in assessing mis-fitness for the role as it is underscored by the race frame that positions Amjid as an outsider. The dispensation of objective job related criteria and the appointment of an under-qualified white female by an all-white female recruitment panel, point to the moral panic surrounding Muslim men who purportedly represent a misogynistic cultural/religious regime. Therefore Amjid is subjected to greater level of scrutiny than his female counterpart, scrutiny that strays from the job criteria, which would explain why Amjid feels he is given ambiguous reasons for being unsuccessful. However the credentials of the white female candidate are not subject to the same scrutiny, suggesting that her in-group membership grants a privilege, not afforded to Amjid, as can be accentuated from the second incident. Amjid is either over qualified or not quite qualified enough, a position that his white female counterpart does not find herself in, because she exists in the Goldilocks Zone of "just right". The Goldilocks Zone is a principle applied in astrobiology to describe the optimal conditions for life to flourish (National Geographical Society 2022). It is a metaphor that can be used in the context of racial ideology in which the humanity of racialised people is not recognised, consequently constricting the conditions for individuals and groups from racially minoritised to flourish and grow.

Amjid points to the anxiety and distress triggered by the constant rejections, the loss of confidence, exhaustion, especially with the absence of formal development and support plans to address the gaps that allegedly hold him back. Fearing further rejections and anticipating discriminatory and unfavourable treatment lead to disillusionment. As a self-preservation/protective strategy, Amjid feels the need to withdraw from the perfunctory displays of equality and inclusion, recognising the systemic limitations to progression. Conceding to the unbearable burden of consciously working against the false perceptions of his racialised identity, which his colleagues associate with violence and misogyny, Amjid is forced to lower his career aspirations.

It is important to highlight that the return on education, not being achieved by Muslim women found within the literature (Shaw et al 2016) was equally observed for male participants in this study. This point is elucidated by Fawad, who recalls having to accept a post that was not commensurate with his qualifications in order to secure a role within his professional field. This was in stark contrast to his white friends from university who secured roles that corresponded to the qualifications, which placed them on a higher rung of the career ladder to Fawad. This was not an isolated incident, but was found more widely within the dataset, suggesting that the unequal return on education impacted both male and female participants.

> "…I then had to work at a very bottom pay grade in this particular field…bearing in mind I had done qualifications…and doing voluntary for a year…that should have pitched me at a particular entry level which was a few bandings higher…While I was in that junior post I was speaking to friends from university…they identify as white…they were at the advising position already…so what was really baffling was...if you were white you started where you should start. Now that's an eye opener and very annoying knowing that you worked hard, you have got all your qualifications you are eligible for the role but they won't give you the roles because I suppose why is it, because your face doesn't fit.

Once within the organisation he shared various incidences which were found to be consistent with Amjid's experiences, in that less qualified white colleagues were promoted or developed to secure promotional opportunities. Whilst Fawad, as someone with the qualifications and experience was overlooked, expresses very strong sentiments about the purpose and value of some of the initiatives within the public sector, to support the development of BAME groups in order to address labour market disparities.

> "…I chose to have nothing to do with these BME groups, these rubbish positive action because they don't actually do anything, it's a tick in the box and they have done whatever compliance they need to do as a public sector organisation…"

He explains how he refrains from engaging in programmes, which, in his view are tokenistic, serving as perfunctory displays to inclusion, a sentiment that was found to be echoed by many participants. He appears to be making an inference that the initiatives are indicative of racialised actions, because they focus on the group that is being marginalised rather than the systems and mechanism that operate to exclude them. He appears to be asserting that the actions to tackle issues of inequalities lack utility because they in themselves are discriminatory by their reductive and deficit approach, wherein a lack of success and achievement is attributed to the BAME communities. That is internal factors are the focus of interventions as to the external structural factors. As an educated third generation migrant he appears incensed by this approach and believes programmes at his place of work are disingenuous, which is why he refuses to engage with them.

In his view established migrant communities, have with each generation, achieved a level of educational attainment and overcome language barriers and integrated into a western society. Therefore for them to continue to experience disadvantage, as evidenced from the pervasive and entrenched inequalities facing BAME groups, is unacceptable but feels unsurmountable. Therefore his strategy is to shape his own future, rising up above the false

and inaccurate representations and navigate the racially discriminatory structures, institutions, practices and behaviours.

> "…I made that point in this forum that look we are experiencing racism today even when we are third or fourth generation…nothing is going to change we all need to as you say man up a little here and just crack on with it…"

Fawad's expression "man up" is suggestive of the refusal to become a victim and a possible coping strategy in which there is a sense of control and agency. This is an approach that was found to be persistently adopted by the participants. There appears to be an element of either keeping one eye closed or going in with both eyes wide open about the realities of racial injustices but either way understanding as individuals they lack the power to change the system. As illustrated by Ahmad below:

> "…I have been treated differently and I can give examples where I have been treated differently and I have been treated badly… I have had other colleagues who have actually acted disgracefully…you just keep your head down because for me I needed my work to bring a family up and it was more important for me to do that than to start academic battles and then be…on your own…Although I was at the forefront of some of these things, at a personal level I sometimes chose to turn a blind eye and move away from it or just accept it…"

Interestingly Ahmad, feels that whilst he was instrumental in leading the equality agenda in the organisation, at a personal level he accepted the discrimination he was experiencing, as he felt, raising his voice would only put him in a precarious situation. He feels it would have left him isolated and subject to being further victimised, with the real possibility of losing his job and livelihood, which would adversely impact his family. Suggesting that Ahmad is acutely aware of the professional and personal costs of raising individual level grievances of racial discrimination, pointing to the limitations of organisational equality policy and equality legislation in delivering justice. Thus the risks and fear of repercussions means that issues of racism often go unreported leading to an illusionary state which purports the myth of a post racial society (Bhopal 2018). As Bhopal (2018) argues the legislation and policies designed to protect individuals from racism and discrimination have in fact served to marginalise those groups to exacerbate inequalities further.

The data revealed the multifarious ways in which the participants were experiencing ethnoreligious discrimination in the workplace, as illustrated above. But incidents of being micro-managed, with performance overly scrutinised for clues of incompetence to justify oppressive and discriminatory practices, were also found. The majority of the participants were found to remain silent or leave rather than raise their voice against ethnoreligious discrimination within and perpetuated by the organisations, because policies such as Prevent exposes them to the dangers of being misrecognised for legitimate concerns and reinforcing stereotypes of angry aggressors, oppose western systems and values.

6.4 Self-Censorship: The Adulterated Private and Public Space

The data revealed the real impact of the "war on terror" and counter-terrorism measures on the everyday lives of the participants, particularly in producing a suspect community, a mechanism by which governmentality was found to be activated through surveillance considered a form of social control as evident by deployment of self-censorship strategies by the participants (Sian 2017). Combined with the discursive power of hegemonic counter-terrorism discourses through which messages are communicated for the purposes of inducing behaviour change, those enunciated as the other or "a potential terrorist in the amidst" are subjected to exclusionary measures by wider socioeconomic and political policies (Sabir 2017). As shown in the previous sections, participants deployed various self-preservation and protective strategies to minimise the risks and negative consequences.

The findings provide a glimpse into the extent of emotional labour expanded on a daily basis, even before participants left the house. Participants expressed concerns about the safety and security of the Muslim community as whole being compromised by counter-terrorism measures which were perceived to denunciate Islam and Muslims. Whilst some participants had experienced direct hostilities, others expressed concerns about government policies and media portrayals of terrorism, which specifically targeted Muslims, stigmatising a diverse community of ordinary law abiding British Muslim citizen's.

> "…I think it's very unfair that people aren't allowed to carry on with the normal day to day activities without being made to be conscious about what they are wearing, how they look…" (Ahmad)

The stress and anxiety induced due to a sense of precariousness of their existence arising from institutionalised processes of racialised othering, were manifest not just through specific examples of hostilities encountered in public spaces or places of work. The private space was found to have been adulterated by both government policy and media

messaging, specifically covert state surveillance tools. Participants were found to be conscious of their words and action in the private sphere. This was evident during the interviews as participants displayed a level of guardedness, constantly mindful of their language and expression, forever attempting to remain factual and objective, indicative of a Muslim self-consciousness that is situated within the structural context of racialisation and the positioning of Muslims in society's racial hierarchy. One participant in particular, once the interview was completed and the audio recorder switched off, spoke about not being able to fully express concerns, fears and experiences, not only in the interview but how, as a family they remain cautious in the private sphere, as the mobile phone device was perceived to be a surveillance tool. Feelings of insecurity, vulnerability, fear and a sense of injustice, were evident not only for this participant but found more generally across the dataset as already discussed. What was left unsaid during the interviews, is equally revealing of the consequences of institutionalised Islamophobia in suppressing voices and lives, through fear. This fear is not unfounded given Britain's international reputation for being a heavily surveilled nation. The Investigatory Powers Act (IPA) is recognised as an essential national security tool in the counter-terrorism arsenal that affords public bodies' (irrespective of whether or not they have a law enforcement function) extraordinary intrusive powers. The UK's mass surveillance practices, are found to treat everyone as a suspect through the capturing of communication of millions of innocent people and acknowledged to breach citizen's right to privacy and freedom of expression, leading Liberty, a human rights organisation to bring about a legal challenge against Government, regarding the IPA (Big Brother Watch 2021 and Liberty 2022).

Self-censorship emerged as a strategy used by participants to avoid attracting unwarranted attention and minimising risks of exclusion, arguably a reductive outcome of the counter-terrorism strategy, counterproductive for safeguarding all citizen's and the building of inclusive and cohesive communities, who can meaningfully and actively engage as citizens.

In addition, self-censorship points to an inherent multi-pronged fear pervading the lives of the participants. Multi-pronged because, as accentuated by the data, it relates to various actual and perceived threats that include street level harassment and hate crimes, discriminatory treatment in everyday interactions within public and private sector services, labour market, education and health penalties and being subjected to mass surveillance. As a result participants were found to activate strategies to navigate and negotiate the hostile terrain but which restricted freedoms that most citizens take for granted. Safety was prioritised over freedom, as many participants, particularly those visibly identified as Muslims, shared the varying level of planning and arrangements that they put in place when

they or members of their family leave the house. These varied according destination, time and mode of travel, with public transport and walking perceived as representing the greatest risk, particularly in white majority spaces (See chapter four), especially if alone and/or later in the evening.

> "…So within the inner cities I think you generally feel protected but if you are willing to go out anywhere after 9/11 I was very aware of who I was. After 7/7 I was very aware of my Muslim identity and we had heard stories and you know Islamophobic attacks happening, so it was like just stay local and try not to venture out too late. You know I was very aware of that…" (Mahnoor)

It can be deduced from Mahnoor's narrative that racially dense inner city spaces are considered safe spaces, offering protection from the threat of Islamophobic hate crimes. Spaces were Muslims can be free of fear to express their Muslimness. Yet, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, these spaces have become contested spaces, misrecognised and misrepresented in dominant discourses to further problematise the Muslim identity.

6.5 Conclusion

The chapter has captured and evidenced the real and tangible manifestations of Islamophobia, beyond Islamophobic hate crimes, which is one form of expression of Islamophobia that has been legislated against, within the criminal justice. As shown in the literature review, Islamophobic hate crimes have been a key measure of Islamophobia, the interpersonal encounters of violence, and crimes that are religiously motivated have been well documented. However Islamophobia that has been produced by

This chapter on the other hand captures the way that the participants experienced daily life in the context of anti-Muslim political discourses that have been institutionalised by counter-terrorism measures, especially Prevent to legitimise Islamophobia and govern Muslims in the name of national security. The chapter has demonstrated how unfair and discriminatory treatment is experienced in subtle and ambiguous ways by the participants. Multiple identity markers intersect to convey the inferiority and threat of the other, produced by hegemonic discourses, deploying mechanisms of racialisation, not dependent on the black/white binary (see also chapter four). Cues to Muslimness, either visibly displayed through apparel, in the case of Muslim women, practice such as fasting or praying, or deduced from skin colour, in the case of male participants, were found to be strongly associated with

negative encounters, in a range of settings, from which a visceral threat to well-being due to the denigration of a core aspect of participants identity can be accentuated.

The chapter revealed how gendered Islamophobia, understood here as the gender of both the perpetrator and the victim, in interactions between non-Muslims and the Muslim participants in the workplace, created conditions that constrained progression opportunities, confirming the Muslim penalty identified in the literature. That said the encounters shared by the participants illuminate the dynamics behind the Muslim penalty and how it is experienced and its negative consequences. An overwhelming number of participants reported white female colleagues and managers to be key perpetrators of Islamophobic discriminatory practices within the workplace, enacting exclusionary practices that have been identified as contributing to gender inequalities. Visibly identifiable Muslim female participants and male participants, who did not display cues to Muslimness were found to experience greater levels of discrimination, whilst female participants with no cues to Muslimness did not report suffering a labour market penalty. Suggesting that Muslim men by virtue of their Muslimness conveyed, through their name and/or skin colour, suffered a disadvantage comparable to visibly Muslim females. Pointing to the need to take an intersectional approach to gender inequalities that accounts for ethnoreligious discrimination to understand the labour market disadvantages experienced by Muslim men, an area where there is a dearth of literature.

The presentation and analysis of the data illustrating the multifarious ways and spaces in which Islamophobia was experienced by the participants offers a counter-narrative to the claims that Muslims are the architects of their own impoverished destiny. Meritocracy was not found to be a neutral entity rather the findings suggest that it is inextricably linked to the production and reproduction of human superiority and inferiority narratives, enshrined within racial ideology. The findings also demonstrate that Islamophobia is a real and tangible discriminatory phenomena, multiplicative in the racialised inequalities observed for the Muslim communities, which though related to racism, requires specific attention to further understanding of centrality of Islamophobia in producing ethnoreligious health inequalities.

Chapter Seven. Conclusion

The thesis has presented findings of an empirical study that explored the lived experiences of external identity constructions amongst an intergenerationally diverse cohort of British born Muslims, living in Nottingham. In so doing critical insights emerged, offering contribution to knowledge of the adverse impact of negative identity inscriptions and the consequences for patterning of ethnoreligious inequalities in health. The shifts, overtime, of the multifarious ways in which participants experienced external identity constructions, illuminate the processes of othering and racialisation, the consequences of which are structural and interpersonal encounters of racism and Islamophobia. The qualitative, biographical approach to the study design and the diversity of the study participants enabled analysis of how identities have been externally configured, reconfigured and negotiated over the life course, revealing generational shifts that situate the experiences within the political and economic context of the time. The findings demonstrate the tangible manifestations and the significant adverse impact of external negative identity inscriptions upon participant's daily life, limiting opportunities that drive social and health inequalities. Inequalities in health are avoidable, unfair, and unjust and a social injustice, signalling an unequal society, wherein power and resources are unfairly distributed.

Stark inequalities in health have been persistently documented for the UK Muslim population, but understanding the true scale, nature and drivers of these inequalities is hampered by data limitations, with ethnicity, in the main, Pakistani and Bangladeshi, used as a proxy for Muslim. However, Muslim identification, has been found to be recorded across all ethnic categories in the 2011 Census, highlighting the ethnic diversity of the Muslim identity and the complexities of researching health inequalities for the Muslim community. Ethnicity, as a driver of health inequalities has gained prominence over the years but appears to be inextricably linked to notions of race, along biologised markers of difference such as skin colour but which does not preclude cultural, linguistic and religious differences. However the dominance of the black/white binary framing of health inequalities, limits the examination of health inequalities for the Muslim population in the UK. This is because racism is precluded from the processes of measuring and analysing ethnoreligious inequalities in health in the case of Muslims on the grounds of the ethnoracial diversity of the population.

In recent decade's scientific research into the adverse health consequences of racism has meant that that racism is recognised as a fundamental cause of health inequalities for

racial/ethnic minority groups. But given the ethnoracial diversity of the Muslim population, Muslims are not considered an ethnoracial group, which means, whilst prejudice on the grounds of religious identity maybe recognised, racism is contested. This has implications for understanding and addressing health inequalities for the Muslim population in the UK. Especially as Islamophobia, a term used to describe discrimination that uniquely affects Muslims, irrespective of religiosity, is increasingly being evidenced as a form of racism that is grounded in processes of racialisation and traced to the historical concept of race. As discussed in chapter two, there is a growing body of literature that empirically and theoretically demonstrate the racialisation of religion, and the dehumanisation of its adherents, encapsulating the discriminatory phenomena Islamophobia, which is conceptualised as a form of structural racism, beyond religious discrimination. This gives rise to some key questions, to what extent is the higher risk of disadvantage, found for the Muslim community, a consequence of a Muslim identity, as opposed to ethnicity. Is a Muslim identity experienced, independent of ethnicity and if so what are the implications for advancing understanding of the social determination of health for an ethno-racially diverse Muslim population in the UK. The study design and specific objectives facilitated the development of answers to these questions which are presented and discussed in detail in chapters four, five and six.

The research aimed to advance understanding of the drivers of ethnoreligious health inequalities by considering the lived experiences and consequences of external identity inscriptions amongst an intergenerationally diverse group of British born Muslims living in Nottingham, UK. The specific objectives were:

- To examine, participants experiences of external identity inscriptions and compare and contrast the generational shifts that have occurred overtime
- To compare and contrast the impact of external identity constructs upon participants daily lives
- To identify, based on participants self-assessment of their identity, which, if any aspect of the multiple identities (age, gender, ethnicity and religion) were perceived to be have negative consequences in their daily lives

Research Question(s): What steps can public health research, policy and practice take to disentangle the independent influences of a reified Muslim religious identity, on ethnoreligious health inequalities to achieve health equity for Muslim communities?

This thesis contributes knowledge to the extant literature on racialisation, racism and Islamophobia, offering empirical evidence, which demonstrates the multifarious ways in

which external identity inscriptions, a key strategy deployed in the racialisation process, lead to direct and indirect racialised discrimination of Muslim participants. This racialised discrimination was found to be experienced in a range of settings and in a variety of ways, to illuminate interpersonal and structural level Islamophobia. The findings offer a nuanced reading of everyday life and how ideas about race, ethnicity and religion have shifted over time but a theme of continuity and change in the forms that racial discrimination was experienced, emerged. Specifically, the participants perceived the association with terrorism, evoked by religious characteristics, framed as an innate aberration, was a particularly virulent form of racialised discrimination, demonstrating how religion is raced.

A specific Muslim penalty was found, which can be difficult to disentangle from pre-existing anti-black/brown racism. However a nuanced reading of interview scripts that drew upon the researcher positionality, in-group status (see chapter 3 and section 7.2 below), as well as comparing and contrasting experiences across gender, ethnicity and levels of religious expression, allowed for the emergence of deeper, richer insights into the way religious (Muslim) discrimination has become pervasive. And how ethnicity is eclipsed, with participants shown to be reconfigured, re-racialised and re-ordered in society's racialised social hierarchy. The implication being that irrespective of socioeconomic position, ethnoracial identity or levels of religiosity, participants were found to experience anti-Muslim discrimination, termed Islamophobia. The study demonstrates the effects of external identity construction that conceptualise Muslims in racial terms as non-white and how this in turn limits wider socio-economic opportunities, central in achieving health equity. Importantly the study highlights performativity of processes of racialisation but how ethnoreligious inequalities in health are overlooked by current institutional conceptualisation, understanding and measurement of race and ethnicity, impeding progress and perpetuating inequalities in health for certain segments of racially minoritised groups.

Finally a sociological perspective of health, which postulates the social patterning of health and illness, formed the conceptual framework for the study. People living in poorer socioeconomic conditions, have the poorest health outcomes, with the health gap between the rich and poor shown to be widening. These inequalities in health are considered unfair, unjust and a clear signal of an unequal society. Therefore tackling health inequalities is recognised as a 21st century public health challenge, especially given public health's genesis in social reforms, accepted as having the greatest impact on improving life expectancy over the last century.

7.1 Key Insights

The study has found that racism and Islamophobia were experienced and understood wholly differently and distinctively from each other by the participants. The majority of the second generation participants reported their encounters, growing up, as racism. The concept of racism, was found to be rooted in inherent biological deficiencies, but did not preclude culture, with specific stereotypes accounting for disadvantage and detriment. Racism though felt to exist in society, was understood as a disdain held by some sections of society but the expression of which was becoming socially unacceptable in the main.

Islamophobia on the other hand, was conceived by the participants to designate adherents of the Muslim faith as defective through strategic discourses, fusing religious normativity and violence. In shifting the conceptualisation of terrorism from a political tactic to pathologising the terrorist identity as an exceptionally innate evil trait of Muslims, who are opposed to western values and way of life. Islam and Muslims are constructed as a threat and fashioned as an enemy, which requires, at best governance, and at worst elimination, thereby diminishing the value of Muslim life. Islamophobia was perceived by participants to be normalised by strategic discourses, with overt Islamophobic expressions and behaviour becoming socially acceptable, in name of national security.

In comparing and contrasting the experiences of second and third generation participants, historical continuities of the vilification of ethnoreligious identities within strategic discourses and policies was found. A hostile environment, created by counter-terrorism measures and anti-radicalisation programmes, was found to have restricted normal everyday activities and freedoms, especially amongst those who visibly embodied their Muslim identity. There was a heightened sense of fear and anxiety, pertaining to hate crimes, or the possibility of fatal consequences due to being racially profiled and misrecognised as a terrorist by the security forces. A sense of being terrorised by the counter-terrorism measures can be extrapolated from the findings and according to Karlsen and Nazroo (2004) fear of racial victimisation can have negative health consequences.

The prevailing mainstream discourses, were found to draw on the historical racial ideology of biological and cultural determinism with explanations for the exclusion and marginalisation of the Muslim community, predicated on claims that Islam and Muslims have an inherent propensity for aberrant values and behaviours. The allegations levied at the Muslim community for refusing to integrate and leading parallels has deflected the impact of structural ethnoreligious discrimination, upon the community. The study offers a counter-narrative to hegemonic narratives, contesting claims by revealing the material

reality of an inscribed negative social identity. Protective strategies deployed by the community to mitigate against the negative consequences of first racism and now Islamophobia, were found to be misconstrued and weaponised against the community, leading to alienation, marginalisation and the perpetuation of discrimination and inequality.

The study has demonstrated that the Muslim identity is being racialised, independent of ethnoracial signifiers i.e. a religious disadvantage was found, irrespective of ethnicity. Although ethnoracial and religious signifiers were evidently conflated, leading to multiplicative disadvantage, a complex interplay was found. Ethnoracial identity in the absence of visible clues to Muslimness by proxy of a brown skin, especially for men signified Muslimness. But signifiers of Muslimness such as hijab for women or beard for the brown skinned men consolidated the Muslim identity, from which racial profiling and discriminatory treatment followed. However, ethnoracial categorisation cannot be used as a proxy for religious based, identity and assumed discrimination, as evidenced by the experiences of the White converts to Islam, who were found to be racialised due to their embodied Muslim identity. Cues such as hijab for white Muslim females and a Muslim name for white Muslim males, were found to be key signifiers that activate the process of racialisation and the eclipsing of a White British identity.

Therefore it is argued that Muslim bodies need to be understood in the historical genesis of race to understand the process of racialisation and the multifarious manifestations of racism, beyond the black/white binary. This is demonstrated by Garner (2009) in the analysis of race in the Irish history and the analysis by Grosfoguel (2012) of the historical roots of Islamophobia, both evidencing the origins of racism to be rooted in religion and the embodiment of culture, through which inequality is inscribed upon bodies that are similar to the inscriber. The contemporary body-centric notion of race and racism limits the analysis, deflecting from the power relationships that ungird racism. The dominant group, other and pathologise difference, as evident from the findings through a process of (re)racialisation, from race to ethnicity to Muslim. As such, it is argued that the definition of racism and particularly structural racism needs to be expanded, to include specific reference to Islamophobia, so as to recognise the multiple layers of disadvantage, and unique discriminatory phenomena, Islamophobia, experienced by the participants.

Whilst literature suggests that Islamophobia is akin to racism, it cannot be a synonym, as racism understood in biologised form is, in the main, socially unacceptability whilst overt expressions of Islamophobia were found to be normalised and acceptable under the guise of legitimate criticism of Islam, freedom of speech and national security. This was found to

limit agency to resist and offer a counter-narrative, evident from participant's articulations of occupying a subordinate positionality (Modood and Thompson 2021).

The historical practice of designating and classifying the identity of groups of people as inferior was found to enmesh various somatic and non-somatic characteristics and traits, with prominence given to one over the other at different periods over the life course. Though shifts in classification from race, ethnicity to religion emerged within the findings, it was the meanings attached to the particular identity category and its discursive power in creating an in-group and out-group dynamic. This was found to be performative in the participant's experiences of exclusion and marginalisation from mainstream white majority spaces, over the life course, which has consequences for racial health inequalities, as disadvantage and discrimination was found across the key domains of the social determinants of health. A range of discriminatory acts and practices, both interpersonal and institutional were found to be legitimised, supported and normalised in the foregrounding of the Muslim identity. This manifested as individually mediated acts of physical and/or verbal abuse in public spaces as well as institutionalised systems of discrimination within public policies and practices, illuminating what has been termed the "Muslim penalty"

The contemporary framing of social challenges related to terrorism and their attribution to the Islamic faith and the Muslim community, within political and public discourse was unanimously noted by the participants to be the biggest challenge facing the British Muslim communities in the UK. It is argued that such a framing of a complex social, economic and geo-political issue, embedded in the racial ideology of the historical imperial colonial legacy and enshrined within the structures and systems of the UK and the West more broadly, deflects attention away from the structural drivers for the disaffection, exclusion and marginalisation of the Muslim community noted within the literature.

Therefore Islamophobia needs to be considered as structural form of discrimination and racism, with particular attention given to its unique manifestations and the impact upon Muslim communities.

In summary then, the Muslim identity was found to be racialised, a process by which othering and pathologising of difference as an aberration, was found to cause detriment across the key social determinants of health. Participants, especially those from established migrant communities, experienced their social identities problematised throughout the life course and the contemporary framing of their social identity as Muslim was found to be imbued with nefarious meaning. Though disentangling race and religion is complex, the study, through the experiences of the White converts to Islam, has

demonstrated how bodies not previously racialised, came to be racialised through an embodied Muslim identity. There is a need, therefore, to have a distinct focus within anti-racism work, on religious discrimination, as universal approaches will obscure the specific and unique experiences of discrimination and exclusion experienced by an ethnically diverse Muslim community.

7.2 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

A key strength of the study was the intergenerational approach taken, which helped to analyse the changing patterns in racial categorisation and to contrast the impact of this upon the participants over time. In addition as an empirically grounded qualitative study, which drew upon critical and ethnographic principles to centre the voices of a diverse intergenerational cohort of Muslim participants, the deep and rich insights, generated offer an analytical dimension to further understanding the health inequalities for this racialised minority group.

In-depth interviews utilising a biographical style, facilitated the organic emergence of deep and rich data to illuminate how the everyday conditions which impact health were being experienced on the ground. This approach moved beyond describing the situation to critically interrogating and interpreting data to construct meaning in order to understand how socially constructed realities are an outcome of power relationships.

Also a key strength was my positionality as female Muslim researcher with a professional background in public health. Though this meant that a binary position of an insider/outsider was not possible, partiality was recognised at the outset with the insider subjectivities recognised as a resource. The simultaneous and shifting aspects of commonalities and differences between the researcher and researched were advantageous and in drawing upon the specialist knowledge and insights, I was able to attend to nuances during the interview and data analysis stages to develop the findings. My insider positionality, sharing similar though not the same experiences meant that there was a validation rather than undermining, devaluing or judging of the respondent's experiences. The shared-ness of our marginal positionalities and self-ascribed Muslim identities, reduced the emotional drain of explaining and justifying encounters and associated feelings of not being understood or believed.

As richness and depth was sought, the sample size by design, was small and therefore reliability and validity of the findings were achieved by consistency checking across and

between the interviews. The emphasis was on depth as opposed to breadth, as such generalisability was not an intended outcome. Though the findings are not representative of the wider Muslim population group, their applicability to the wider Muslim community and contribution to the contemporary debates about the drivers of racialised health inequalities is of significance.

A wealth of data was generated and analysis was constraint by time and resources, working within the parameters and constraints of the PhD requirements. There is further potential to investigate data. The data could benefit from an intersectional analysis, this emerged as a finding during the course of the analysis. Applying an intersectional lens to explore how the Muslim identity of the respondents, intersected with other aspects of their social identity, such as age and gender, is an area for further in-depth exploration. Though an examination of occupation and educational attainment and neighbourhood characteristics, was not within the scope of analysis for this study, the demographic profile of the participants, at a crude level suggests that experiences of Islamophobia and racism are not correlated with socioeconomic status (SES) variable used in mainstream explanations of inequalities in health. Therefore it can be inferred that Islamophobia cannot be reduced to SES, as the data points to the normative racial privileging through the process of othering, which creates suboptimal conditions for health equity for Muslim populations; however this needs further exploration and investigation.

The absence of Black African and Caribbean, Muslim representation within this study is also noted as a limitation and the study is lacking due to this omission. Over 40% of African, Caribbean and Black other are Muslim (Runnymede Trust 2017), making up 10% of the Muslim population in the England and Wales (MCB 2015). The Black African communities are found to be at greatest at risk of poverty, experiencing disadvantage, more extreme than the Pakistani and Bangladeshi community (Karlsen and Pentazis (2017). Further research is required to take account of the Black Muslim experience.

7.3 Future Research

- An exploration of the intersections of multiple social identities is required to develop and strengthen the empirical evidence of the racialisation of religious identities as a determinant of health.

- In order to further understanding of the disproportionate burden of morbidity and mortality experienced by the Muslim community, a critical research approach which

dislocates certitude and destabilises dichotomous binary representations of racialised minority groups is required.

- The study has provided empirical evidence of the intergenerational transmission of racism over the life course. This requires further exploration in the context of the racism and health literature, which demonstrates the serious psychological and psychobiological health impact of racism over a long period of time “the weathering effect”.

- The need to consider Islamophobia as a specific discriminatory phenomena as a determinant in the unequal health outcomes that have been shown for the Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim communities specifically and Muslim communities more widely. Further research exploring the process and impact of racialisation of religious identities and the nexus of social conditions and health inequalities is required.

7.4 Recommendations

Public health has been at the forefront of leading social reforms and therefore it is uniquely positioned to meet the 21st century challenges of health inequalities by focusing efforts upstream to address the structural issues that determine the lives of people.

Racism, understood as a racialised social system in which social, economic, ideological and political mechanisms reproduce racial domination (Bonilla-Silva 2019), has been shown to be a fundamental cause of racial health inequalities (Link and Phelan 2015)

Given the persistent health inequalities documented for the Muslim community and in light of the findings which demonstrate Islamophobia to be perceived as a unique discriminatory phenomena by the participants and more broadly within the literature. It is recommended that public health incorporate Islamophobia within its lexicon to researching and addressing inequalities in health of racially minoritised groups. And specifically:

- **Adopt** – the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims, definition of Islamophobia as a form of racism.
- **Advocate** - for the APPG definition of Islamophobia, to be taken up more widely across local, government and the local health system. Thus facilitating the development of a systems approach to identifying and addressing the underlying fundamental causes of health inequalities for the Muslim community.

- **Apply** – a critical public health race praxis lens, firstly internally to deconstruct the problematic relationship between race and power structures within which the function operates and has been shown to perpetuate hegemonic discourses of biological and cultural determinism through the promotion of individual lifestyle risk factors (Ford 2016). Secondly, externally, to deconstruct the influence of power relationships and hegemonic interests in constructing reality, scrutinising knowledge claims and disentangling facts from ideology that promote the interest of the dominant group. For example, scrutinising government policy to critically assess adverse impact, such as that of the counter-terrorism measures, or the public sector Prevent Duty, which have been found to exacerbate issues of marginalisation and exclusion for the Muslim community and perpetuate health inequalities.
- **Act** –
    - Beyond individual level, biological and cultural determinism models of interventions, which attribute risk to ethnoreligious factors and thus blame communities for their disadvantaged position and focus on upstream actions which address the sociopolitical conditions which produce health
    - Taking a targeted approach to addressing the unfair and unjust inequalities being disproportionately experienced by the Muslim community
    - To improve data quality and ensure the religion category is routinely collected and analysed, remaining critical of the application of ethnic categories in the formulation of judgements and explanations for inequalities in health for the Muslim population

These recommendations are critical for recognising and accepting the existence of Islamophobia and the uniqueness of the phenomena, within a racialised social order. In explicitly, articulating a commitment to understanding, identifying and addressing the deleterious consequences of Islamophobia, a powerful message is conveyed to the Muslim community of recognition and inclusion to help build strong community partnerships of mutual benefit.

7.5 Final Thoughts

Though a thorough analysis of the Covid 19 pandemic falls outside the scope of the study timeframe, it would be remiss, to not highlight the ethno-religious inequalities exposed and the ensuing and competing explanatory narratives that continue to emerge. After adjusting for age, geographical factors and socioeconomic conditions and health, Pakistani and Bangladeshi men and women, were found to be 1.8 and 1.6, respectively, at greater risk

of Covid19 related mortality than their white counterparts, with substantial inequalities and high risk of mortality noted for Muslim people (Nazroo et al 2020).

The findings of the report by the Centre for Muslim Policy Research (2020) shows the Muslim community have the highest age standardised mortality rate from Covid19 and that a number of interrelated factors such as social inequalities, racism and Islamophobia have contributed to the disproportionate number of deaths amongst the Muslim communities. However alternative narratives and perspectives based on proximate analysis of the disproportionate impact of the pandemic upon certain groups detracts from the systemic and entrenched inequalities in health and the structural issues of racism that have been exposed by the pandemic (PHE 2020, Haynes 2020, Katikireddi & Niedzwiedz 2020, Apea et al 2021).

Perhaps never before have the stark inequalities experienced by the Muslim community been exposed and amplified, than by the Covid 19 pandemic. As the country is planning to rebuild, it is an opportunity to critically evaluate and recognise the consequences of structural racism and to pursue healthy public policies to achieve health equity. Public health has a central role and function in leading social reforms and therefore an explicit recognition of Islamophobia as a unique discriminatory would demonstrate commitment and influence development of policy and practice that is sensitive to systemic factors that perpetuate inequities for the Muslim community.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Participant Profile

Interview Number	Pseudonym	Ethnicity	Generation	Employment Status	Sector	Salary range	Age band	Highest Qualification	Postcode
MALE									
1	Amir	British Bangladeshi	Third	Employed	Private	50k +	30 - 40	Graduate	NG8
2	Haroon	Islam	Third	Employed	Private	30 – 39k	30 - 40	Postgraduate	NG8
3	Akbar	White British	N/A	Employed	Public	40 – 49k	40 - 50	Postgraduate	NG2
4	Ikram	British Pakistani	Second	Employed	Self/-employed	50k +	40 - 50	Postgraduate	NG11
5	Musa	British Pakistani	Third	Employed	Self-employed	21 – 29k	30 - 40	Graduate	NG8
6	Shakoor	Pakistani	Second	Employed	Public	40 – 49k	40 - 50	Postgraduate	NG2
7	Amjid	Pakistani British	Second	Employed	Public	30 – 39k	50 - 60	Postgraduate	NG8

8	Ahmad	British Pakistani	Second	Retired	Public	50k +	50 - 60	Postgraduate	NG5
9	Yousef	British Pakistani	Third	Employed	Self-employed	21 -29k	30 - 40	GCSE	NG5
10	Fawad	British Pakistani	Third	Employed	Public	21 – 29k	30 - 40	Postgraduate	NG8
11	Tariq	British Pakistani	Third	Employed	Public	21 – 29k	30 - 40	Graduate	NG5
FEMALE									
12	Aisha	Pakistani British	Second	Employed	Self-employed	50k +	40 - 50	Postgraduate	NG11
13	Mahnoor	Muslim British	Second	Employed	Public	21 – 29k	50 - 60	CSE	NG5
14	Khadijah	British Pakistani	Second	Employed	Public	21- 29k	40 - 50	Postgraduate	NG3
15	Mahmoona	British with Pakistani Heritage	Second	Full-time Mum	N/A	N/A	40 - 50	“A” Levels	NG2
16	Iram	British Pakistani	Second	Employed	Private	40 – 49k	50 - 60	Postgraduate	NG8
17	Sakinah	White British	N/A	Employed	Self-employed	10 – 15k	40 - 50	Postgraduate	NG6

18	Zakiah	Pakistani	second	Employed	Voluntary	10 – 15k	40 - 50	Diploma	NG7
19	Alyesha	Pakistani British	Second	Employed	Public	40 – 49k	50 - 60	Graduate	NG5
20	Farzana	British Pakistani	Second	Employed	Public	40 – 49k	40 - 50	Postgraduate	NG8
21	Nazia	British Pakistani	Third	Employed	Public	21 – 29k	30 - 40	Postgraduate	NG7
22	Amina	Mixed White/Black African	N/A	Student	N/A	N/A	18 - 30	N/A	NG6

Appendix 2

Nottingham Trent University

"Exploring the social determinants of health impacting the lives of Muslim communities living in Nottingham, UK"

Participant Information Sheet

Thank you for considering taking part in this study. Before you decide whether or not to participate in the study, it is important that you understand the reason why this research is being carried out, and what your participation will involve.

Participation is ***entirely voluntary*** and you are free to decline this invitation to participate.

Please take some time to read the following information carefully and please do feel free to discuss it with friends, family or other people if you wish.

If you are unclear about anything, or have any further questions, please feel free to ask the researcher, whose contact details are at the end of this sheet.

Please note, there are no right or wrong answers, your experiences and opinions are of interest and most valuable in this study.

What is the purpose of the study?

The links between health and wider factors in society, such as housing, employment, education, environment, crime, income and poverty, are well established. People who live in poorer circumstances often experience poorer health. Evidence suggests that some Muslim communities in the UK are experiencing worse health inequalities of this kind than any other UK community, due to their poorer social circumstances. According to the World Health Organisation, social circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age are shaped by economics, social policies and politics.

The purpose of this study is to understand how the above named social factors are being experienced by Muslims living in Nottingham. The study particularly seeks to learn about how these factors shape the lives of Muslims, what some of the challenges are, how Muslims are responding to the challenges, and what their impact is. The study aims to identify opportunities and solutions to inform policy and practice developments, and contribute to improving health outcomes for Muslim communities in the UK.

The method for gathering the information (data) will be to conduct face-to-face interviews on a one-to-one basis followed by two focus groups. A total of 36 people from a cross section of the Muslim community will be interviewed, including men and women.

Who is running the study?

The study is being undertaken by Doctoral Researcher Yesmean Khalil from the Doctoral School at Nottingham Trent University to fulfill the study requirements of the PhD programme.

The study is being supervised by a team lead by Jason Pandya-Wood who is the Director of Studies.

Who is funding the study?

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) is funding the study as part of the Researcher Development Programme and strategic research plans to grow and support research at NTU.

Who can take part in the study?

- Second and third generation Muslims from established minority ethnic communities living in Nottinghamshire.
- Revert/convert to Islam
- Male and female
- 18 years and over
- English speaking

What does taking part in the study involve?

Your participation in the study is voluntary. If, after reading the information sheet, you chose to take part in the study you will be asked to give your consent by signing a consent sheet.

You will then be invited to take part in a one-to-one interview which will last about one hour. The interview will take place in a local venue at a time that is convenient for you. The interview will be carried out by the doctoral researcher (Yesmean Khalil). The discussion will be guided by a set of themes shaped by the study question(s) and supplemented from a review of the literature.

To help accurately capture the discussion, your permission will be sought, for Yesmean, to tape record the interview. However, if you are not happy for a tape recorder to be used than that will be respected and the researcher will take hand written notes.

You will be asked to review transcripts of audio recordings and hand written notes to check them for accuracy.

Following your participation in the study, if you would like to hear about the findings and outcomes of the study then please inform the researcher and give your consent for your contact details to be retained by the researcher to arrange a feedback session.

What will happen to the information you give?

The information you share is extremely valuable and will inform understanding of factors influencing the health of Muslim communities in the UK. It will inform future research projects as well as make recommendations for developing policy and practice to improve health and wellbeing of Muslims in the UK.

The focus group and interview information will be transcribed and analysed to inform the development of findings, which will be written up as a thesis.

Once the interviews have been transcribed you will have the opportunity to review the transcripts to ensure accuracy of information you have provided.

How will your identity and the information you give be protected?

All information (data) will only be handled by the researcher in accordance with data protection requirements principles and Nottingham Trent University data management policy and protocols.

To protect your identity all personal, identifying information will be removed from the transcript and each transcript will be assigned a code/number. Quotes taken from the transcripts may be used in the write-up and presentation of findings, but these will be anonymised and only referred to by the corresponding code/number (for example participant 1). This will ensure the information and transcript cannot be traced back to you

Please note, only the researcher will have access to which code/number refers to which participant. This information will be kept securely in a password protected document, to only which the researcher will have access to.

All tape recorded and hand written information will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet and/or password protected electronic files and will only be accessible by the researcher.

The information will only be used for the purposes of this study and will not be passed on to any third party.

What does confidentiality mean?

Whilst interview data will be treated in the strictest confidence with only the researcher having access to it, confidentiality is bounded. In other words, if you were to disclose serious offences, or other matters of a related nature, then there is a duty to pass this information on to relevant authorities.

What are your rights if you choose to take part?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you have the right not to talk about and share information about things which are you are not comfortable with. As such, no known discomfort or harm should be incurred.

You have the right to withdraw your consent at any point during or within a month after the interview, after which it will not be possible to withdraw the data from the project. If you decide not to take part or withdraw from the interview you will not be asked to give any reasons.

Please note you will be asked some questions about your age, ethnicity, religion and postcode, this information is only for the purposes of the research as certain groups living in certain geographical areas face particular challenges and this study aims to identify these.

How to raise concerns about the study

If you have any concerns about the study and how it is being conducted you can raise these with the researcher directly or alternatively you can contact the Director of Studies Jason Pandya-Wood. Contact details can be found at the end of this sheet.

Next steps

Please feel free to ask any further questions or seek clarification before deciding to take part.

If you have no further questions and would like to take part in the research study, please read and sign the attached consent form.

Thank you

Contact details:

Researcher:

Yesmean Khalil
Doctoral Researcher
School of Social Sciences
Doctoral School
Nottingham Trent University
50 Shakespeare Street
Nottingham
NG1 4FQ

Email: yesmean.khalil2016@my.ntu.ac.uk

Director of Studies:

Jason Pandya-Wood
Director of Studies
School of Social Sciences
Nottingham Trent University
Shakespeare Street
Nottingham
NG1 4FQ

Email: jason.wood@ntu.ac.uk
Tel: 0115 8485503

Reference:

WHO - *www.who.int/social_determinants/final_report/key_concepts_en.pdf*

Appendix 3

Nottingham Trent University

"Exploring the social determinants of health impacting the lives of Muslim communities living in Nottingham, UK"

Informed Consent

1. I confirm that the purpose of the study has been explained to me, and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and about my involvement

2. I understand that as a participant I am guaranteed complete anonymity and that all identifying information will be anonymised.

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time and refuse to answer any questions I am uncomfortable with.

4. I have been informed that there is no known expected discomfort or harm involved in my participation in this study

5. I am aware that concerns about this study can be referred to Yesmean Khalil and/or Jason Pandya-Wood at Nottingham Trent University

6. I consent to the written publication of results using quotes as long as my details have been anonymised.

7. I consent to the interview being audio recorded. YES/NO

8. I consent to my details being held by the researcher for the purposes of organising any feedback sessions. YES/NO

Signed:

_____
Participant name

_____
Signature

_____
Date

Appendix 4

Nottingham Trent University

"Exploring the social determinants of health impacting the lives of Muslim communities living in Nottingham, UK"

Interview Guide
Ask participant for a pseudonym:
……..……
Unique code:
……..
Remind participants that they have the option not to answer any questions and also to stop the interview at any point.

Theme One: Personal Biography
If you could tell me a little bit about yourself:

- What do you do i.e. employment status, educational background?
- Where you live, how long have you lived there.
- Family situation (single, married, children) extended family, caring responsibilities.
- How long have you lived in the UK, did your family migrate to the UK, when and where from and why?

Theme Two: Faith/Islam and what it means to be a Muslim – personal account and reflections (Objective 1)
NB: At this stage elicit a personal reflection of meaning attached to being a Muslim and how that is expressed or practiced by participants without delving into challenges, barriers etc.

- Were you born into a Muslim household or did you revert/convert to Islam?
- If revert/convert:
  - What motivated you to embrace Islam?
  - How long have you been a Muslim?
- If you could tell me about your personal practice and expression of your faith within the following areas:
  - private
  - public
  - social
  - Professional.

Prompts: praying, visible appearance (beard, dress code, hijab and/or nikab), and dietary requirements, gender segregation etc.

- Do you follow a particular school of thought and if so what does that mean for you?
- What does being a Muslim mean to you - prompts: purpose, belonging, identity, other

Theme Three: Experiences of being a Muslim (Objective 1)
If you could share your experiences of being a Muslim:

- **As a child (if born into the Muslim faith):** what was it like growing up as a Muslim, if you could share your experiences, perceptions, thoughts and feelings of:
  - Friendships – who were your friends, what was the relationship like
  - School and relationship with teachers, the teacher and parent relationship.
  - Neighbours- who were your neighbours, how was your relationship with them.
  - Who were your role models
- **As an adult:** Do you feel things have changed for your children and how?

- **Within the family (ask both those who were born into the faith and those that have embraced the faith as an adult):** If you could share your experiences, thoughts and feelings about being a Muslim within in your own family :
    - Prompts: what would you say are some of the:
        - Positive and negative experiences,
        - Challenges or benefits?
- **Wider Muslim community:** If you could share your experiences, view and thoughts about being part of a wider Muslim community for example social networks, membership of groups or organisations.
    - Participation in groups/organisations – e.g. parent governor, volunteering
    - Political engagement

Prompts – challenges and opportunities

- **Within work/education setting:** Could you share your experiences and perceptions of being a Muslim within your work/study context?
    - How are you treated
    - What access do you have to development and promotional opportunities
    - Are there any specific initiatives and programmes specifically targeted for particular communities and what are your thoughts and feelings about these, what impact do they have? (BAME Networks, Unions – work and student, development programmes, bursaries etc)
- **Within wider local community:** What have your experiences been in your day to day life, such as shopping, using public services e.g. GP, schools, council services, police, or recreational facilities such as parks and open spaces and leisure facilities, public transport?
    - Prompt: Your perceptions of how you are treated and why and how does this make you feel.

Theme Four: Challenges/difficulties facing Muslims in the UK (Objective 2 & 3)

- What is life like for you as a Muslim living in Nottingham and in the UK:
    - Are there any challenges or difficulties?
    - In your view, what is the basis or where do these challenges and difficulties stem from? Prompts and probes needed depending on issues raised - why do you think that, what that means, could you explain, could give me an example etc.
    - Can you share any opportunities and positive experiences?
- Based on your experiences and more generally, what are some of the things that worry or concern you?
- How do these challenges and difficulties impact on you and your family:
    - What do they mean for you, how do they affect you and in what way exactly?
    - Have you changed the way you live your life, practice your faith or how you occupy work, study, social and public spaces?
- How do you personally negotiate and respond to some of these challenges and difficulties?

Theme Five: Opportunities and Way-forward: (Objective 4)

- In your view how can some of the challenges and difficulties be addressed?
- What needs to happen?
- Who needs to do what? (prompts - Muslim individuals, Community leaders, politicians, media etc)
- Who can/should be leading the work?
- What would you like to see happen?

Final thoughts:

I have covered all the questions and areas I needed to but is there anything else you would like to add or you think I have missed and need to cover?

Before we finish can I kindly ask you to complete the attached sheet about demographic information as explained in the participant information sheet, this is important as it helps to improve understanding about needs of particular groups and geographical areas.

Thank you for your time and invaluable insights

Demographic Information

1. **Participant name: ……..(insert code and pseudonym)**

2. **Gender: ……**

3. **Age:** Please indicate which age bracket you identify with.

18 – 30 30 – 40 40 - 50 50 - 60 60+

4. **How would describe your ethnic origin?**

.....

……

5. **Qualifications:**

……..

6. **Employment status:**
   a. Unemployed: ☐
   b. Student: ☐
   c. Employed: ☐
   d. Other: Please state:
   ……

If employed please describe the type of role/work you do (teacher, management, administrator, etc) and the type of sector you work in (public sector, private sector, self-employed, voluntary sector)

Type of role: ……

Sector (public, private, self-employed):

……

i. **Pay band:** Please indicate which pay band you identify with.

10k – 15k 16k – 20k 21k – 29k 30k – 39k 40k – 49k

50k +

7. **Please indicate the first 3 characters of your postcode:**

……

THANK YOU