



Optimising Virtual Intergroup Contact Interventions to Improve Intergroup Relations

By

Bashirat Abiodun Ibrahim

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield
Faculty of Science
Department of Psychology

September 2023

Acknowledgment	3
Dedication	5
Chapter One: General Introduction	7
Introduction	7
Overview of Methods.....	60
An Overview of Islamophobia.....	73
The Current Programme of Research.....	75
Impact of Covid 19 on the Programme of Research.....	79
Chapter Two: Qualitative Study with Non-Muslim White Britons	81
Introduction	81
Methods.....	82
Results and Discussion.....	92
Conclusion	128
Chapter Three: Qualitative Study with Muslims of Middle Eastern Descent	131
Introduction	131
Method.....	133
Results and Discussion.....	147
Conclusion	205
Chapter Four: Development and Testing of Virtual Intergroup Contact Intervention	207
Introduction	207
Methods.....	211
Results.....	229
Discussion	241
Chapter Five: Discussion, Contributions, Limitations and Future Research	257
General Discussion	257
Conclusion	279
References	281
Appendices	340

Acknowledgment

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ

O Allah, our Lord, to You Alone belongs all praise.

I am deeply grateful to my dedicated and supportive supervisors, Dr Chantelle Wood and Dr Claudia von Bastian. Their unwavering commitment, guidance, patience, care, and profound knowledge have transformed this academic journey into a beautiful and enriching experience. Their mentorship was not only of academic supervision but was also a profound source of inspiration and growth.

My gratitude also goes to my internal examiner, Dr Nicola J Buckland, and external examiner, Dr Jenny Paterson, for their invaluable insights and rigorous scrutiny, which greatly enriched my work.

I am equally indebted to the exceptional staff of the faculty and the department, with special thanks to Mrs. Jayne Whitley. Your collective contributions have enriched my academic voyage in numerous ways.

I wish to express my appreciation to the Faculty of Science at The University of Sheffield for funding my doctoral research. The financial support was crucial in the successful completion of this endeavour.

To my treasured mother, whose prayers, love, sacrifice, and unwavering support have been my guiding light throughout this journey. Your encouragement has been ceaseless, your belief in me boundless, and your love unconditional. You've been both a mother and a mentor, teaching me the values of hard work, resilience, and compassion. Jazak Allah Khayran my beloved mother, Alhaja Ramotallah Akanke Mohammed. Aameen Yaa Rabb.

To my siblings, who have been my constant companions and sources of joy and comfort. Your endless support, understanding, and encouragement have helped me navigate the challenges of this journey. Your belief in my potential and your genuine excitement for my achievements have been sources of motivation. Sharing this journey with you has made it all the more meaningful, and I am grateful for the bond that we share, which has only strengthened over time. Your collective presence in my life has been a blessing, providing me with the courage to pursue my aspirations and the strength to overcome obstacles. This achievement is as much yours as it is mine. I am grateful to Almighty Allah for the gift of your love, particularly the nurturing care of Alhaja Nimotallah and Professor Fauziyah, as well as the endearing love from Risqoh and Aishah. I also wish to acknowledge the invaluable and unrelenting support of my uncles and their wives, Dr Abdulganiyy Ibrahim and his wife, Mummy Ibrahim, Professor I. A. Oladosu, as well as Professor and Alhaja Kuranga. I cannot be grateful enough.

My heartfelt love and gratitude go to cherished family members, Alhaja Adedola Hassan, late Alhaja Abebi Akosile, Alhaja Olobi Hassan, late Alhaji Agba Hassan, late Alhaja Hajara Abdulmumin, late Alhaji Jimoh Ibrahim, my late stepfather and mother, Alhaji and Alhaja Umar Muhammed, late Alhaja Mummy Tajudeen, Alhaji Abdulrasheed Hassan, Alhaji Abdulfatahi, mummy Alicisse and mummy Biola, Uncle AbdulYekeen and mummy Mariam.

I hold in high esteem the steadfast love and support of Alhaja Taibat Hassan, Mummy Aunty Bashirat, Alhaja Amudat Hassan, Alhaja Wosilat Hassan, and Alhaja Fatimah Ajanaku. My love and gratitude also go to the rest of my beloved family too numerous to mention. I do not take any of your love for granted. Your prayers and encouragement have been a source of strength, and for that, I am truly thankful.

May Almighty Allah in His infinite mercy forgive our dead and reunite all in Al Jannah Firdaus. Aameen thumma aameen.

In moments when the journey became challenging, the unwavering support, profound kindness, and enduring love of Dr Haifa Bin AbdulAzeez, Dr Siham Albesis, and Dr Fidan Turk will forever be etched in my heart. Your remarkable presence in my life during those critical times went beyond mere assistance; it was a testament to the truest form of friendship and solidarity. For this, I am eternally grateful and profoundly honoured.

I hold in high regard the unwavering affection and support extended by Dr Mudasiru Salami and Dr Aliyu Suleiman. Thank you Dr Eric Manalastas, Ankita Mishra and Zhuozhuo Hu for your warm and endearing friendship.

I am appreciative of the encouragement received from Professor A. A. Abdullahi, Professor Luqman Saka, Professor U. A. AbdulRaheem and Professor J. F. Olorunfemi. Furthermore, I convey my appreciation to Professor B. O. Ehigie, Professor D. E. Okurame, Professor K. O. Taiwo, and Professor P. O. Olapegba for their thoughts.

Indeed, "Kindness Is A Mark of Faith, and Whoever Is Not Kind Has No Faith." - Prophet Muhammad (May Peace and Blessings of Allah Be Upon Him).

Dedication

To

Almighty Allah, Zul Jalaali Wal Ikram,
The Possessor of Majesty and Honour.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَاهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ۝ ١٣

O Humanity, Indeed We Have Created You from Male and Female and Made You Peoples and Tribes That You May Know One Another. Indeed, The Most Noble Of You In The Sight Of Allah Is The Most Righteous Of You. Indeed, Allah Is All-Knowing And All-Aware.

Al-Hujurat, Qur'an 49:13.

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ۝ ١٣

So Which of the Favours of Your Lord Would You Deny?

Surah Ar-Rahman, Qur'an 55:13.

Abstract

The PhD designed and assessed the effectiveness of a virtual intergroup contact intervention, targeting negative attitudes among Non-Muslim White individuals towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. The research comprised three interconnected studies: two online qualitative surveys aimed at informing the intervention's content and one experiment assessing its efficacy.

Qualitative Study 1 explored the perceptions of Non-Muslim White British individuals regarding Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. It revealed complex attitudes, encompassing positive views of personal characteristics but negative associations concerning religious extremism and terrorism. Further, the knowledge or perception of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent held by the participants was predominantly positive. In contrast, the reported knowledge or perception of these Muslims by the broader UK society was predominantly negative.

Qualitative Study 2 examined the perspectives of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in response to Study 1 findings. Participants emphasized the influence of media representation, dispelled misconceptions about their faith, and acknowledged the impact of prejudice and Islamophobia.

Study 3 developed and evaluated a virtual intergroup contact intervention in a randomised controlled experiment. Drawing on Studies 1 and 2, the intervention adopted simulated conversations using avatars representing Muslim Middle Easterners. These avatars via pre-scripted text ostensibly facilitated dialogues with participants, encouraging them to share their thoughts and queries during the interactions. While the intervention showed some positive effects at the initial stage, it did not significantly reduce stereotype endorsement, prejudice, or intentions for intergroup contact. Potential reasons for this included the intervention's lacking to address all concerns raised by Study 1 and 2 participants adequately.

Contributions include understanding the complexities of prejudice reduction. Limitations highlighted the need for improved methodological rigor, application of contact theory, and enhanced intervention taking context of specific negative attitudes into account. Future research should address societal factors and authority support in intervention development.

Chapter One

Introduction

"Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization"
Mahatma Gandhi.

Prevalence of Negative Intergroup Relations

Negative intergroup relations are exhibited through prejudice and discrimination in societies. The pervasive nature of negative intergroup relations has significantly shaped the global order to the extent that United Nations peacekeeping forces are tasked with preventing violence by reducing tensions between different groups worldwide (Dovidio et al., 2011). The findings of a national British survey by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Abrams et al., 2018) showed that 42% of people living in Britain experienced prejudice in the twelve months before the survey. The findings of Abrams et al. (2018) further showed that a significant number of minorities in the United Kingdom have experienced prejudice based on their group status: 70% of Muslims, 64% of ethnic Blacks, 61% of people having a mental health condition, and 46% of individuals who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, and 26% of older adults had experienced age-related prejudice. Similarly, Cénat et al. (2022) asserted in the report of their study among 845 Black Canadians that in a typical week, a minimum of 4 out of 10 respondents experienced racial discrimination. Respondents' responses to the items on the racial discrimination scale showed that 46% of respondents were accorded less courtesy when compared with the courtesy accorded to other people. Further, 43% indicated that people acted towards them as if they were not smart while 41% were threatened or harassed. Using secondary data obtained from an Australian population-based study, Schuch et al. (2021) reported that 11.5%

of their 2,798 respondents acknowledged their experience of racial discrimination within the year before the study. Indeed, prejudice and discrimination are highly prevalent social phenomena in multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies. Such high prevalence exists in tandem with its negative consequences.

Negative Intergroup Relations as a Social Problem

Negative intergroup relations are a global, social problem (Hadler, 2012). Prejudice and discrimination have marked effects on individuals, society and the economy. Negreiros et al. (2022) attempted a comprehensive review of 72 articles examining the consequences of prejudice and discrimination on account of ethnicity, colour and nationality. They reported that 20 of 72 (27.80%) reviewed articles found the impact of prejudice and discrimination on the socialization of victims. For instance, educational settings including university campuses were reported as contexts in which minorities experience prejudicial treatment. This leads to the “two separate worlds” phenomenon whereby the lived experience differs starkly based on someone’s positioning in social categories like race, ethnic groups, and religion. There typically exists facades of racial and ethnic diversity in such educational settings but there is hardly tangible promotion of positive environments. People who do not belong to the dominant social positions like immigrants, Black people, Muslims, and women suffer from heavy baggage of prejudice and discrimination (Fang et al., 2000). The stark difference in people’s daily lives based on their social positioning is a direct consequence of the politics of belonging, described as the “dirty work of boundary

maintenance” (Crowley, 1999: 30). The politics of belonging is at play when people categorize other people as ‘them’ rather than ‘us’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 368).

Prejudice and discrimination have negative psychological and physical health implications for victims. Negreiros et al. (2022) further reported that a quarter of reviewed articles acknowledged the psychological aftermath of minorities’ prejudicial and discriminatory encounters. Psychological conditions reported include the exhibition of antisocial behaviours, sad behaviours, trauma, depression, eating disorders, stress, alienation, anxiety, and anger, among others. The review generally demonstrated that increased experience of discrimination increases the likelihood of experiencing psychological malaise. Likewise, racial discrimination predisposed respondents to oral health impairment. Among individuals who experienced racial discrimination, 53.2% had impaired oral health, compared to 38.1% of those who did not face racial discrimination. Moreover, this impairment was significantly more manifest among respondents of low socio-economic status (Schuch et al., 2021). Further, the study of Cénat et al. (2022) further showed that a significant and inverse relationship was recorded between racial discrimination and life satisfaction as well as self-esteem. Weeks et al. (2022) attempted an analysis of postnatal, secondary survey data of the 2012-2015 Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) of the United States. They found that pregnant women who experienced racial discrimination and who were upset about such an experience were three times more likely to experience postpartum depressive symptoms. Prejudicial encounters are indeed consequential for people’s health and well-being, and it is a pervasive experience among people belonging to non-dominant social categories.

Other consequences of prejudice and discrimination have been noted. In a publication dedicated to prejudice and discrimination against immigrant populations, Esses (2021) expounded that the effect of prejudice and discrimination occurs largely at the psychological level, and there are negative consequences for the receiving societies. The points-based schemes of immigration in some Western countries imply that highly skilled persons are admitted to migrate. With discrimination in employment, migrants become unemployed or underemployed and then the immigrants' skills are poorly harnessed. This affects the psychosocial and economic well-being of migrants and brings about a loss of tax revenue for the receiving societies.

Prejudice and discrimination also undermine social cohesiveness (Reitz & Banerjee, 2009), which also undermines the well-being of societies. Empirical findings show that outgroup avoidance is upheld as a way to reduce the chance of contracting diseases. In a bid to test the parasite-stress hypothesis, O'Shea et al. (2020) analysed secondary US data and found that White respondents ($N > 702,000$) who live in US states that record higher prevalence of diseases exhibited stronger anti-Black or pro-White attitudes. The significance of this finding remained even after controlling for age, education, gender, income, and religious or political ideology. Further findings indicated that Black respondents ($N > 149,000$) who reside in such states with high prevalence of disease exhibited stronger anti-White or pro-Black attitudes. This phenomenon can lead to scapegoating, where out-groups are blamed for societal issues, including public health threats, further intensifying perceptions of these groups as threats to in-group safety and societal well-being. Certainly, prejudice and

discrimination are detrimental to the prejudiced, discriminated, and the society at large.

Undoubtedly, negative intergroup relations are a social problem of global significance (Hadler, 2012). Given the above discussion, it is clear that prejudice and discrimination have a marked effect on individuals, society and the economy. Hence, practicable and efficient interventions that can improve intergroup attitudes outside the research realm are needed (Lemmer & Wagner, 2015). The next section discusses the most common type of interventions used: those based on the principles of contact, and the mechanisms that underlie their effects on reducing intergroup bias.

Intergroup Contact

Intergroup contact became a subject of interest to social scientists after World War II (Williams Jr., 1947), with its most well-known proponent being Gordon Allport. Allport's (1954) proposition, which is seen as one of the most influential in social psychology, hypothesised that contact between outgroup members (i.e., intergroup contact) can reduce prejudice if the contact situation satisfies the conditions of "equal group status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support of authorities, law or customs" (Dovidio et al., 2008). These conditions are interconnected rather than independent (Koschate & van Dick, 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Hence, the more conditions co-present in a contact situation, the higher and more enduring the impact will be (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006).

Although, Allport's conditions have been described as facilitating rather than essential for intergroup contact to be effective in prejudice reduction (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008). However, consistent with Allport's framework, Amir

(1969) extended the intergroup contact theory by emphasizing the importance of several additional factors. These factors include not only the equal status principle, cooperative and competitive elements, and institutional support, but also the inclusion of contact opportunities, interactions with esteemed representatives from minority groups, the distinction between casual and profound contact, individual personality traits, and the direction and intensity of the initial attitude. Amir's elaboration of the intergroup contact approach underscores the multifaceted nature of intergroup dynamics, where these nuanced factors can significantly shape the outcomes of intergroup contact efforts. However, while Amir's factors highlights the complexity of intergroup contact, it risks becoming conditions that seem insurmountable in practice. By expanding the criteria for effective intergroup contact so broadly, the practical implementation of such strategies may become daunting for researchers and practitioners. The factors could inadvertently suggest that unless all these conditions are met, intergroup contact is doomed to fail, which could potentially discourage efforts to initiate such contact. Hence, it is crucial to balance the theoretical ideal with practical achievability.

A well-known meta-analysis by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) with 713 independent samples from 515 studies is one of the major empirical evidence that lends credence to the efficacy of intergroup contact. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) reported that summarily, prejudice reduces as contact increases, as indicated by a significant mean correlation r of -0.215. A large body of evidence documents that intergroup contact works beyond ethnic and racial groups for which it had been originally developed, earning it the status of a general social psychological theory.

Indeed, it has been judged effective in prejudice reduction so much that researchers have argued that research continuing to demonstrate its effects is unnecessary (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Studies evidencing direct intergroup contact (face-to-face interactions between members of different social groups) effects have largely used self-report measures but its effects go beyond this. Contact correlates with stronger explicit attitudes (Vonofakou et al., 2007) and positively correlates with implicit outgroup attitudes (Hewstone, 2009). Hence, people perpetrate less of prejudice with more contact (Blascovich et al., 2001), although the effect of continued contact will diminish at some point (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Building on the above premise, the cognitive component of attitude also changes with intergroup contact by lessening ideological bases of discrimination, such as social dominance orientation (Dhont et al., 2014; Dixon et al., 2007). A correlational study also found engaging in contact with outgroups enhances the ability to comprehend their perspectives (Aberson & Haag, 2007). This improved perspective-taking, in turn, correlates with decreased intergroup anxiety, decreased stereotype endorsement and increased positive attitudes towards the outgroup. Similarly, an experimental study by Kotzur et al. (2019) found interconnected effects of intergroup contact on cognitive, affective, and behavioural intentions components of attitude. This study found that positive intergroup contact improved German perceptions of asylum seekers' warmth and competence. These perceptions influenced specific intergroup emotions such as pity, sympathy admiration, and participants who interacted with an asylum seeker showed more positive attitudes and support for collective actions in favour of asylum seekers. Finally, a survey study found using

intergroup contact theory as a framework that the quality of intergenerational contact positively influenced attitudes and behavioural intentions, mediated by intergroup anxiety (Bousfield & Hutchison, 2010). Thus, taken together, intergroup contact has been shown to reduce the ideological bases of discrimination, enhance perspective-taking abilities, lower intergroup anxiety, decrease stereotype endorsement, and foster more positive attitudes towards outgroups. Experimental and survey studies also highlight the interconnected effects of intergroup contact on cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects of attitudes. These findings collectively emphasize the significant role of intergroup contact in shaping cognitive dimensions of attitudes and promoting improved intergroup relations.

Direct intergroup contact also has broader effects. When people know of ingroup members who engage in positive intergroup contact, they are also encouraged to engage in same (Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017). It has also been demonstrated to have macro-level effects, occurring indirectly through interactions that people have in their social networks, for example in school and at work (Hewstone, 2015), which correlates with reduced prejudice (Wagner et al., 2006), more than individual intergroup experiences would, whether or not people know the ingroup members engaged in these larger social network contacts. Hence, these macro-level effects encompass widespread changes in attitudes, fostering greater social cohesion, and initiating shifts in social norms towards increased acceptance and inclusivity of diverse groups. Over time, these transformed attitudes and norms can influence policies and organizational practices, promoting more equitable and inclusive environments. Hence, the benefits of intergroup contact transcend

individual experiences, indicating that such interactions can catalyse societal-level changes in attitudes toward outgroups, significantly contributing to the reduction of prejudice across communities. Intergroup contact effect has also been established in applied situations such as schools, workplaces, and conflict-ridden societies (Koschate & van Dick, 2011). Furthermore, it produces secondary transfer effects (a phenomenon where positive experiences and attitudes developed from interacting with members of one outgroup generalize to more favourable attitudes and behaviours toward other outgroups, even without direct contact with those other groups) from one outgroup to another, although this is limited to groups similar to the primary group within the contact scenario (Pettigrew, 2009; Pratto et al., 1994; Schmid et al., 2012, 2014; Tausch et al., 2010; Ünver et al., 2022; Vezzali & Giovannini, 2012), and there may be exceptions given specific circumstances. For instance, in a longitudinal study (Laar et al., 2005), interaction with Asian American college roommates increased prejudice towards other outgroups among White Americans. This outcome could be attributed to the perception of Asian Americans as a successful ethnic group in the US. Such exposure might trigger unfavourable comparisons with lower-status ethnic groups like African Americans and Latinos, thus triggering negative attitudes towards those outgroups, while fostering admiration for Asian Americans. Moreover, the study indicated that Asian Americans exhibited higher racial prejudice levels than other groups. This suggests that individuals might adopt the attitudes of their Asian American roommates through processes such as peer influence, shared beliefs, and attitude adaptation, potentially contributing to the development of prejudice.

Nevertheless, direct intergroup contact is indeed significantly useful in prejudice reduction (Vezzali et al., 2014).

Indirect Intergroup Contact and Intergroup Attitudes

Despite the robust support for direct intergroup contact, there are potential limitations with implementation. Direct intergroup contact can only be implemented where and when there is an actual opportunity for direct physical contact (Crisp et al., 2009; Turner et al., 2008). Negative intergroup relationships can be found where limited opportunities for interaction exist. Common examples include segregation between Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland, UK (Hewstone et al., 2006), White and other communities including Black and Asian in the US (Logan, 2013). Yet, it is in such cases that contact interventions are needed the most (Crisp et al., 2009; Turner et al., 2008). More importantly, direct intergroup contact between competing groups can also harm the relations between groups (Dovidio et al., 2011) by exacerbating tensions rather than alleviate them. When conducted without equal status or under circumstances that highlight power imbalances, such contact may reinforce stereotypes or foster new conflicts. Negative encounters, including misunderstandings or perceived disrespect, can deepen mistrust and animosity. Furthermore, in contexts where group identities are pronounced, contact can trigger defensiveness and perceived threats to group identity, potentially leading to increased hostility. In the absence of effective facilitation, these interactions may focus more on differences than on shared commonalities, further polarising rather than reconciling the groups. These practical limitations have propelled the exploration of indirect forms of intergroup contact (Hewstone, 2009; Hewstone et al., 2014). Indirect forms of

intergroup contact refer to interactions with outgroup members that occur not through direct, personal interaction, but through alternative means. In fact, direct contact is unnecessary in improving intergroup relations (Birtel et al., 2018), as indirect contact has been shown to work as well as a prejudice reduction intervention (Pettigrew et al., 2007) and it is also cheaper. However, other studies including experimental and surveys found indirect contact generally does not produce effects as strong as direct contact (Paolini et al., 2004; Turner et al., 2007). Nonetheless, the benefits of the various forms of indirect intergroup contact have garnered empirical support (Dovidio et al., 2011; Lemmer & Wagner, 2015). Indirect intergroup contact efficacy occurs independently of direct contact (Dovidio et al., 2011) and prepares people for eventual direct contact (Pettigrew et al., 2011). These forms of indirect intergroup contact include extended, vicarious, imagined, and virtual/computer-mediated contact.

Extended Intergroup Contact

Extended contact is based on the premise that knowledge of an ingroup member's positive relationship with outgroup members can improve intergroup attitudes (Wright et al., 1997). Even when the effects of direct contact are controlled for, extended contact has been found to improve intergroup attitudes and reduce prejudice (Cameron et al., 2006, 2011; Dovidio et al., 2008; Gómez et al., 2011; Hewstone et al., 2014; Husnu et al., 2018; Paolini et al., 2004; Turner et al., 2008a; Turner, Hewstone, et al., 2007; Vezzali et al., 2014). Hence, people benefit from intergroup contact even when they do not personally experience it, as long as they know an ingroup member who does and does so positively (Hewstone, 2015). Unlike

direct contact, which largely produces effects via affective components of attitudes, extended contact produces effects via both affective and cognitive components (Birtel et al., 2018). Extended intergroup contact has been found to improve intergroup tolerance (i.e. prejudiced attitudes, opinions and behavioural intentions towards the outgroup, Liebkind & McAlister, 1999), as well as cognitive attitude including increased perceptions of outgroup variability (Paolini et al., 2004), increase knowledge of positive outgroup behaviour, more inclusion of outgroup in the self, and reduce perceived outgroup ignorance (Eller et al., 2011). It also influences the behavioural component of attitude such as improving intended behaviour, and outgroup trust (Husnu et al., 2018; Tausch et al., 2011), increasing voluntary engagement with outgroup culture (Eller et al., 2012), and increasing the likelihood of future cross-group friendship (Schofield et al., 2010).

Research has shown that extended contact effects are not limited to real-life knowledge of ingroup members having outgroup friends. Its effects can be achieved via storytelling about an ingroup member having outgroup contact (Liebkind & McAlister, 1999; Vezzali, Stathi, Giovannini, et al., 2015), and being able to identify with ingroup members in extended contact moderate its effects (Vezzali et al., 2015). Hence, the closer the ingroup member having the outgroup contact is as a significant other to oneself (e.g. family and friends vs colleagues and neighbours), the stronger the effects of extended contact (Hewstone, 2009; Husnu et al., 2018; Tausch et al., 2011). Extended contact has been found to be effective when direct contact is of reduced quality (Cameron et al., 2011), there is no, or only limited direct contact (Christ et al., 2010; Eller et al., 2012), as long as ingroup members engage in positive intergroup

contact (Hewstone, 2009) otherwise, extended contact becomes ineffective in improving intergroup dynamics (Eller et al., 2012; Christ et al., 2010), as found in both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies (Eller et al., 2012). Since extended contact is mediated by ingroup norms (by highlighting ingroup norms that favour positive relations with outgroups, thereby influencing individuals to adopt attitudes and behaviours consistent with these observed social standards), among other factors, unsurprisingly, extended contact effects may be higher in collectivist societies, where the emphasis is on cohesiveness and group norms (Wang et al., 2019).

Although direct contact is more effective on the intergroup attitude of majority group members (Gómez et al., 2011; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005b), extended contact is comparably effective on both majority and minority groups' attitudes (Gómez et al., 2011). This is because extended contact leverages the power of perceived ingroup and outgroup norms – when individuals learn that a member of their group has positive relationships with members of an outgroup, it challenges and changes their expectations about what is typical or acceptable within their ingroup. This mechanism works similarly across both majority and minority groups. Importantly, not only is positive extended contact more likely to occur than negative extended contact (Wang et al., 2019), but positive extended contact is also more effective at reducing prejudice (Graf et al., 2014).

After the influence of direct contact is taken into account, extended contact demonstrates a moderate effect, which closely mirrors the effect of direct contact (Zhou et al., 2019). Both contact methods are equally valuable, but extended contact offers advantages like ease of implementation, low intergroup anxiety, and the

potential to generalize positive outgroup behaviour to the entire group due to high group saliency and low perceived individual characteristics (Hewstone, 2009), especially because it is even more effective when extended contact is perceived than actual (Zhou et al., 2019). That is, when individuals have not directly experienced interactions between their ingroup members and an outgroup, instead, they are aware or believe that such positive interactions occur within their social circle or community. Hence, just the mere perception of positive extended contact may be enough to produce desired outcomes. However, while positive extended contact is more common (Wang et al., 2019), a major limitation of extended contact is that this positivity of the contact experience cannot be guaranteed or manipulated. As effective as extended contact is, it is limited by requiring direct contact to take place, which is a challenge, especially in highly segregated communities (Crisp et al., 2009).

Vicarious Contact

Vicarious contact is to observe an ingroup member interact successfully with an outgroup member, which can also improve intergroup relations (Mazziotta et al., 2011). Based on social cognitive theory, Mazziotta et al. (2011) argue that while extended contact relies on the knowledge of successful cross-group contact between an ingroup and an outgroup member, vicarious contact is instead based on direct observation of successful intergroup interactions. Vicarious contact indeed results in more positive intergroup attitudes (Mazziotta et al., 2011; Vezzali et al., 2014). It contributes to improved evaluations of outgroup members, encompassing positive traits and diminished negative traits (Gómez & Huici, 2008). Furthermore, it enhances perceptions of both ingroup and outgroup norms (Dovidio et al., 2011) and increases

willingness to engage in direct intergroup contact (Dovidio et al., 2011; Mazziotta et al., 2011). Observing other people's actions, especially people one identifies with can influence one's behaviours (Dovidio et al., 2017). Hence, vicarious contact presents to the viewer a model of how positive intergroup contact is done (White et al., 2015). This influence can happen even without the observer being consciously aware of it. For example, Schiappa et al. (2005), found lower prejudice among people who viewed positive intergroup contact on television. In addition, vicarious intergroup contact also improves meta-stereotype evaluations (the collective beliefs held by members of a social group regarding how they perceive the outgroup's perception of their group, Gómez & Huici, 2008). However, just like extended contact, vicarious contact is not always positive and therefore potentially subject to negative effects. For instance, Whites who viewed subtle negative nonverbal expressions of bias from White people to Black people on television showed increased bias towards Black people (Weisbuch et al., 2009). A major limitation of vicarious contact especially in segregated communities is that it requires direct contact to take place at some point (Crisp et al., 2009). Therefore, an intergroup intervention is needed that can be implemented without the limitations posed by vicarious and other contact interventions.

Imagined Contact

Imagined contact is an indirect intergroup contact method in which people actively engage in a cognitive/mental simulation of a positive intergroup contact encounter (Crisp & Turner, 2009). Meta-analysis has confirmed the effectiveness of imagined contact on attitudes, emotions, intentions, and behaviour (Miles & Crisp, 2014). Primary research has demonstrated that imagined contact reduces general

intergroup bias (Turner et al., 2007), intergroup anxiety (Crisp & Turner, 2009; Crisp et al., 2010; Husnu & Crisp, 2010; Turner et al., 2007), hostility towards outgroups (Brambilla et al., 2012), stereotyping (Crisp & Turner, 2009, 2012; Vezzali et al., 2015), including self-stereotyping (Crisp & Turner, 2009), specifically on competence and warmth ratings (Cameron et al., 2011). Imagined contact also lessens anticipatory physiological responses such as alterations in heart rate variability and changes in electrodermal activity in subsequent direct contact (West et al., 2015) making people less anxious about expectations of having direct contact.

In addition to reducing negative attitudes and behaviours, imagined intergroup contact also promotes positive attitudes and behaviours. Imagined contact has been shown to yield several positive outcomes in intergroup relations. It enhances the perception of warmth and competence for dehumanized groups, while also promoting the perception of warmth and competence for envied and paternalised groups (Brambilla et al., 2012). Moreover, it increases intergroup tolerance (Crisp & Husnu, 2011), positive evaluations (Turner et al., 2007), and intergroup trust (Vezzali, Capozza, Stathi, et al., 2012). Imagined contact also contributes to the perception of greater outgroup variability (Turner et al., 2007) and similarity with outgroups (Stathi et al., 2014).

Imagined contact also has an effect on behaviours and behavioural intentions. Furthermore, imagined contact leads to the projection of perceivers' positive self-traits onto outgroups (Crisp & Turner, 2009; Stathi & Crisp, 2008), as well as positive behaviours like cooperative and prosocial actions (Meleady & Seger, 2017). Positive behavioural intentions, such as future helping intentions (Vezzali et al., 2015) and

intended friendship behaviours (Cameron et al., 2011), also result from imagined contact. Additionally, individuals who engage in imagined contact demonstrate positive behavioural intentions (Vezzali et al., 2012) and express intentions to participate in future intergroup contact (Crisp et al., 2010; Crisp & Husnu, 2011; Crisp & Turner, 2012; Husnu & Crisp, 2010; Stathi et al., 2014; Turner et al., 2013). This intervention also enhances individuals' contact self-efficacy (Stathi et al., 2011), leading to a range of positive effects on intergroup attitudes and behaviours. Imagined contact also elicits positive implicit (Crisp & Turner, 2012; Turner & Crisp, 2010; Vezzali et al., 2012) and explicit (Crisp & Turner, 2012; Vezzali et al., 2012), intergroup attitudes (Crisp et al., 2010; Crisp & Husnu, 2011; Crisp & Turner, 2009; Stathi et al., 2014), and general intergroup relations (Crisp et al., 2009).

Imagined contact is more appropriate in some circumstances, for example, situations of conflict or in segregated communities, and it is more effective when initial prejudice is higher, though the mechanism is unclear (West et al., 2017). Imagined contact is also most effective with majority group members with lower group identification and higher personal self-saliency (i.e. when the majority group members think about their personal characteristics first before thinking about the outgroup), and it works more for the projection of positive self-traits to the outgroup as a whole for majority groups (Stathi & Crisp, 2008). Imagined contact is also effective in improving attitudes and relations towards several outgroups (Dovidio et al., 2017; Husnu & Crisp, 2010; Turner et al., 2007), including gay men (Turner et al., 2007; Turner et al., 2013), older adults (Turner et al., 2007; Turner & Crisp, 2010), ethnic groups (Husnu & Crisp, 2010), religious groups (Turner & Crisp, 2010), people with

disabilities (Cameron et al., 2011; Stathi et al., 2012), asylum seekers (Turner et al., 2013) and immigrants (Harwood et al., 2011; Vezzali et al., 2012; Vezzali et al., 2012).

Virtual Contact

Virtual contact, also known as computer-mediated contact or e-contact, is a form of non-physical interaction between people that is made possible by computer applications including social media, other electronic media and virtual reality (VR). White and Abu-Rayya (2012) introduced the term "e-contact," which denotes computer-mediated interactions for intergroup engagement. Originally, this term referred to synchronous text communication. Subsequently, the definition was broadened to encompass various forms of online communication, including video interactions and hybrid modes of communication (White et al., 2015).

Aside from virtual contact with fellow humans, another form of social interaction that is commonplace is with avatars in video games (Vang & Fox, 2013). Virtual contact with avatars in video games can influence people's attitudes towards ingroup and outgroup members. Games can perpetuate real-world beliefs about minorities, leading to more elitist attitudes among frequent players, irrespective of real-world intergroup contact opportunities (Behm-Morawitz & TA, 2014). However, the common ingroup identity model suggests that intergroup bias and conflict can be reduced when members of different groups re-conceptualize themselves as part of a larger, more inclusive superordinate group rather than as separate groups. When this guides virtual contact, cooperative or competitive games with outgroup members resulted in a more positive evaluation of black avatars compared to white avatars (Vang & Fox, 2013). Hence, virtually simulating contact with outgroup members is

effective in mending real-life intergroup relationships (Hasler et al., 2014), while general virtual contact can equally yield positive intergroup attitudes (Hasler et al., 2014; Schumann et al., 2017), as virtually interacting with an outgroup representation reduces social distance, especially when the avatar is customised to look like the self. An avatar that looks like the self can reduce social distance and improve intergroup attitudes because it enhances personal identification with the interaction by increasing similarity with one's virtual self (Alvídrez, 2018).

However, unlike other intergroup contact methods, there have been inconsistent reports as to how virtual contact works (Alvídrez, 2018). Generally, its effects tend to be weaker compared to effects of direct or extended contact (Dovidio et al., 2017; Lemmer & Wagner, 2015). Hence, the potential of computer-mediated communication/virtual contact in improving intergroup relations is unclear (Walther et al., 2015).

Research indicates that virtual intergroup contact can improve intergroup attitudes. Imperato et al.'s (2021) recent meta-analysis of 23 studies (spanning 29 effect sizes and 6576 participants) demonstrated that online intergroup contact has a moderate and significant effect on reducing prejudice. For example, research has demonstrated that virtual intergroup contact can reduce prejudice (Andrews et al., 2018; White et al., 2019) decrease intergroup bias (White et al., 2020) and anxiety (Abu-Rayya, 2017; White et al., 2020). In addition, the effectiveness of intergroup contact has been demonstrated with contact occurring through synchronous text-chat (Abu-Rayya, 2017; White et al., 2020), asynchronous text-chat (Maunder et al., 2019), video (Andrews et al., 2018) and through online role-playing game (Mancini et al., 2018).

Other studies have also demonstrated the effect of virtual contact on outgroup prejudice. Walther et al. (2015) attempted to test the contact hypothesis by conducting a quasi-experimental study to examine if computer-mediated communication would decrease intergroup prejudice among students taking an online, yearlong course. Results indicate that the virtual group encounter had a significant effect on participants' outgroup prejudice measured by an adapted scale from Molloy & Lavie (2001): They found that Muslims' prejudice against Jews reduced post-virtual contact, while religious Jews' prejudice against Arabs also reduced post-virtual contact. Furthermore, Schumann et al. (2017) conducted an experiment whose procedure featured text chatting between student groups. Findings indicate a general reduction in negative sentiments towards the out-group, increased feelings of warmth towards the out-group and increased identification with a superordinate group. However, there is also some evidence that virtual intergroup contact is not consistently effective - earlier meta-analyses (based on a smaller data set) found very limited evidence for the effectiveness of virtual intergroup contact (e.g. Lemmer & Wagner, 2015), and Imperator et al.'s (2021) meta-analysis found significant effects of online intergroup contact in only 18 of 29 studies. Similarly, others have argued that effects of virtual contact seem to be weaker than those of direct or extended contact (Dovidio et al., 2017) - an argument corroborated by Lemmer & Wagner's (2015) meta-analysis which found weaker effects for virtual contact compared to direct or extended contact.

Virtual Contact is More Effective on Affective than Cognitive Attitude

Research suggests that virtual intergroup contact may have differential effects on different types of intergroup bias, showing more promise with affective rather than cognitive attitude. Alvírez et al. (2015) conducted an experimental study involving 104 Spanish undergraduates to explore the impact of stereotype disconfirmation and group identity on prejudice reduction towards an outgroup in a virtual context. Ethnic minority outgroup members displayed stereotype-disconfirming behaviour such as sociability and cheerfulness in conditions with their group identity on display, leading to decreased prejudice perception due to increased attraction towards individual outgroup members. However, stereotype-disconfirming behaviour did not reduce the overall stereotype perception of the outgroup. The findings of Alvírez et al. (2015) are therefore partially supportive of notions applauding virtual contact as a technique for improving intergroup attitudes as it is effective with affective but not with cognitive attitudes in this study. In a related study, Kim and Wojcieszak (2018) examined the impacts of both direct and extended online contact on attitudes toward the outgroup. Concomitantly, Kim and Wojcieszak (2018) conducted an online experiment ($N = 396$) to test the effect of online contact with two different outgroups, i.e., gay people or undocumented immigrant. Findings indicated that in direct online contact, there was a significant reduction in social distance, general threat and symbolic threat towards gay people. However, the realistic threat towards the same group did not reduce significantly. On an antithetical note, in the same direct online contact, there was no significant reduction in threat and distance towards undocumented immigrants. Hence, specific characterisation of outgroups and online

contact are important factors affecting the effectiveness of virtual contact in bringing about positive intergroup attitudes. The differential outcomes observed between groups could be attributed to societal norms and the perceived legitimacy of the groups within a given social context. For example, societal acceptance of gay people may be increasing, making contact more effective in reducing prejudice. In contrast, undocumented immigrants might be viewed through a lens of legal and economic concerns, which are less amenable to change through mere contact. Furthermore, the pre-existing levels of threat and prejudice against these groups might influence the effectiveness of contact interventions, with groups facing higher initial prejudice potentially requiring more intensive or prolonged interventions to achieve similar effects (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Furthermore, Andrews et al. (2018) experimented in the context of indirect contact gained through playing online poker, which reveals only the national identity of players. The experimental procedure involved the watching of a video recording of online poker by participants ($N = 157$). Participants watched a video recording of online poker where a fellow ingroup member had negative or positive contact with an outgroup member. Findings indicated at post-test that watching a video of negative contact led to a significantly negative prejudicial attitude towards the outgroup while watching a video of positive contact led to significantly lower outgroup prejudice, an affective variable. However, the character of the video watched (negative or positive) had no significant effect on the perception of outgroup variability, a cognitive variable.

Limitations of Existing Intergroup Contact Methods

The limitations of existing direct and indirect intergroup contact methods, including virtual contact in its current form, present significant challenges to their efficacy in reducing negative attitudes and improving intergroup relations. Direct contact, while potent under Allport's optimal conditions, faces practical challenges such as geographical separation and social segregation (Hewstone et al., 2006). Individuals belong to several social groups, but the requirement for face-to-face interaction restricts the ability to engage with multiple outgroups, limiting direct contact's applicability in diverse societal contexts given the impracticality of achieving interpersonal closeness at scale (Paluck & Green, 2009; Wright et al., 1997). These limitations significantly restrict the accessibility, scalability and real-world applicability of direct contact interventions. Additionally, negative experiences during direct contact can reinforce or exacerbate existing prejudices rather than diminish them (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Tropp, 2003).

Indirect intergroup contact methods, such as extended, vicarious, and imagined contact, while offering alternative avenues for intergroup interaction, often lack the depth and richness of direct encounters, potentially diminishing their impact on fostering meaningful attitude changes. Indirect methods, including extended, vicarious, and imagined contact, present innovative approaches to reducing negative attitudes and fostering positive intergroup relations by circumventing the logistical and practical challenges of direct contact. However, these methods have limitations that question their applicability in achieving sustained attitude change.

Extended Contact

The concept of extended contact, where knowing that an in-group member has a positive relationship with an out-group member can reduce prejudice, relies heavily on the strength and visibility of these cross-group friendships to first take place and then influence perceptions. While extended contact can theoretically broaden the impact of positive intergroup relations beyond direct participants, its efficacy is contingent upon individuals' motivation and capacity to update their attitudes based on second-hand experiences. Wright et al. (1997) suggest that extended contact can be beneficial, but its reliance on indirect knowledge makes it susceptible to the variability of individual interpretative processes and the quality of the observed relationships. Hence, its impact may be weaker than direct contact because individuals do not experience cross-group friendships personally. There is also the risk that extended contact may reinforce superficial stereotypes if the in-group member's relationship with the out-group is seen as exceptional rather than representative.

Vicarious Contact

Vicarious contact, involving the observation of positive intergroup interactions through media or storytelling, faces challenges related to the authenticity and relatability of these portrayals. While vicarious experiences can provide exposure to positive intergroup dynamics without requiring personal involvement, the impact is limited by the observer's ability to identify with the characters or scenarios presented and perceive the interaction as positive (Mazziotta, Mummendey, & Wright, 2011). Research by Mazziotta et al. (2011) highlights the potential of vicarious contact to challenge stereotypes, yet the effectiveness is diminished if the narratives do not

resonate with the observer's personal experiences or if the media perpetuates existing prejudices.

Imagined Contact

Imagined contact, the mental simulation of positive interactions with out-group members, offers a low-cost, easily accessible strategy for prejudice reduction. However, Crisp and Turner's (2009) work illustrates that the effectiveness of imagined contact is dependent on individuals' imaginative and empathetic capacities. This method assumes that people can vividly conjure and emotionally engage with hypothetical scenarios, which may not hold true for all. Furthermore, imagined contact lacks the complexity and unpredictability of real-life interactions, potentially offering a sanitized version of intergroup engagement that may sometimes fail to prepare individuals for the nuances of direct contact.

Virtual Contact

Virtual contact, heralded for its potential to overcome the physical limitations of direct contact, also encounters obstacles that hinder its effectiveness. The inconsistency in findings regarding virtual contact's efficacy (Alvídrez et al., 2015) underscores the challenges of translating intergroup contact principles to digital platforms. Virtual interactions often lack the nuanced non-verbal cues and the richness of face-to-face communication, which are crucial for building empathy and understanding. Furthermore, the anonymity and depersonalization possible in virtual environments can exacerbate negative behaviours, such as cyberbullying, counteracting the positive outcomes of intergroup contact. Additionally, virtual contact interventions have struggled to systematically incorporate and manipulate

mediators of contact effectiveness, such as intergroup anxiety and threat, within the interaction design. This limits the depth of engagement and the potential for attitude change, as the interactions may not adequately address the underlying psychological mechanisms driving negative attitudes. Moreover, the characterisation of outgroups and the nature of online interactions influence the success or otherwise of virtual contact interventions. Without a clear understanding and careful design of these elements, virtual contact risks reinforcing stereotypes rather than dismantling them, thus failing to achieve its intended outcomes.

General Limitations of Indirect Methods

A significant limitation common to all indirect contact methods is their potential lack of depth in addressing the root causes of stereotypes and prejudice. Additionally, indirect contact methods do not provide the opportunity for reciprocal feedback or real-time interpersonal learning that direct contact facilitates, limiting the development of genuine empathy and understanding. Pettigrew (2008) noted that intergroup contact interventions have not been effectively transformed into easily applicable solutions in real-world contexts. Hence, while direct, indirect, and virtual intergroup contact methods each offer unique avenues for attitude change, their efficacy is moderated by their limitations, which necessitate the need for a nuanced approach to employing indirect contact strategies, one that recognizes their potential while addressing their shortcomings. These shortcomings—ranging from practical implementation challenges to the failure to engage deeply with psychological mechanisms of attitude—highlight the need for innovative intervention approach.

Such approach must transcend traditional and digital barriers, offering scalable, emotionally engaging, and psychologically informed interventions to foster meaningful attitude change.

Optimising Virtual Contact

The literature regarding virtual intergroup contact and its effectiveness include inconsistent findings in previous studies. Some meta-analyses have shown limited evidence of its effectiveness, while others suggest weaker effects compared to direct or extended contact (Dovidio et al., 2017; Lemmer & Wagner, 2015). Furthermore, research indicates that virtual intergroup contact may have varying effects on different types of intergroup bias, particularly showing promise in affecting affective rather than cognitive attitudes (Alvídrez et al., 2015). The specific characterisation of outgroups and the nature of online contact are also noted as important factors influencing the effectiveness of virtual contact in promoting positive intergroup attitudes (Kim & Wojcieszak, 2018). A critical gap in the existing literature is the under-exploration of the mechanisms through which virtual intergroup contact influences attitudes and behaviours. Understanding these mechanisms is paramount for designing interventions that can effectively leverage technology to reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations (Paluck & Green, 2009). Hence, the weaker effects of virtual contact seemingly stem from the absence of clearly defined conditions specifying the nature of interactions between outgroups within virtual contact settings. This may result in a lack of proper intervention design in virtual contact research (Alvídrez et al., 2015).

However, virtual contact presents an innovative avenue for overcoming some of these limitations. Despite mixed evidence regarding its effectiveness, with some

studies suggesting weaker effects compared to direct or extended contact, virtual intergroup contact offers unique advantages over forms of contact that rely solely on naturalistic contact situations. Virtual contact may be a more suitable tool for groups experiencing deep-seated conflict (Ellis & Maoz, 2007). A correlational study found a negative association between virtual contact via Facebook and affective prejudice between Iranians and Israelis, whose countries have been in a politically hostile relationship since the 1980s (Schwab et al., 2019). Moreover, the evolving digital landscape and the increasing ubiquity of social media platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for virtual intergroup contact, allowing for diverse and scalable interventions that can reach wider audiences more effectively than traditional methods. Hence, virtual interventions can transcend geographical limitations, enabling widespread dissemination and accessibility. This scalability can address the challenge of reaching diverse and dispersed populations, making interventions more inclusive and representative.

Further, an advantage of virtual contact lies in its capacity to control the nature and dynamics of interactions in line with Allport's (1954) conditions for optimal intergroup contact. By minimizing information about participants' social status, virtual contact facilitates unbiased, equal-level communication within a safe environment that transcends geographical barriers, reduce costs, and mitigate anxiety associated with face-to-face interactions and allows for cooperation between groups (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006). One of the most significant advantages of virtual contact is that virtual environments allow for the direct manipulation of interaction conditions and content, offering opportunities to explicitly address and

manipulate mediators of contact. This adaptability is crucial, as it gives the opportunity to tailor interventions to address specific biases or barriers to positive intergroup interactions, which can increase the efficacy of these interventions. The adaptability of virtual contact also allows for the innovative use of technology, such as artificial intelligence or scripted content to enhance the interaction experience. As such, virtual contact provides an opportunity to elaborate on and manipulate factors that may mediate or increase the effectiveness of intergroup contact within the interaction itself, including intergroup anxiety (Birtel et al., 2018; Turner et al., 2008), intergroup threat (Birtel et al., 2018) and knowledge of the outgroup (Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017). Thus, there are arguments that virtually simulated contact provides a controlled platform for implementing various facilitating factors (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006) and presenting emotionally engaging content for enhanced experience and social interactions (Parsons & Phillips, 2016) inducing superordinate goals (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006; Walther, 2009). Tausch et al.'s (2010) study on secondary transfer effect of contact underscores the need for interventions to strategically target the psychological processes of mediators to maximize the positive impact of intergroup contact. By optimising contact interventions using mediators, contact will not only facilitate direct positive interactions between group members but also leverage the psychological changes induced by these interactions to foster wider social cohesion and tolerance. However, there is a dearth of literature on the duration and effectiveness of virtual contact interventions. This highlights the necessity for longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impacts of virtual intergroup contact, ensuring that interventions produce

sustainable changes in attitudes and behaviours. Nevertheless, White and Abu-Rayya's (2012) phased virtual contact intervention demonstrates that carefully designed virtual experiences can improve intergroup attitudes in both short and long-term periods.

By utilizing virtual intergroup contact, interventions offer the potential for greater accessibility, scalability, and structured content delivery, overcoming the limitations of traditional intergroup contact interventions. The integration of virtual reality (VR) technologies could further enhance the immersive quality of virtual interactions to be more lifelike and engaging experiences that may more effectively mimic the benefits of direct contact (Bailenson et al., 2008). In the absence of less common VR, avatars, which are readily available, could serve as a cheap alternative to give engaging experiences in scripted interventions. Virtual platforms can also facilitate the collection of longitudinal data including qualitative data to track changes in attitudes over time as well as qualitative feedback from participants. This capability can provide valuable insights into the durability of intervention effects and the factors that influence long-term outcomes, which can be useful in intervention iteration and improvement. Furthermore, the opportunity for participants to give qualitative response in the course of the intervention allow for the personalization of contact experiences, which can improve the relevance and impact of the intervention. Given the aforementioned, this programme of research can therefore contribute to bridging the gap in the literature by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of a novel virtual contact intervention in promoting positive intergroup attitudes. It also addresses the limitations of existing interventions and offer insights into the

applicability and potential real-world usefulness and limitations of virtual intergroup contact interventions in fostering positive intergroup relations.

Attitude

An attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour. Attitudes are enduring systems of positive or negative evaluations, emotions, and proclivity for action toward a wide range of phenomena. This definition encompasses attitudes toward people, objects, issues, or concepts and underscores that attitudes encapsulate cognitive (beliefs), affective (emotions), and behavioural (actions or intentions) components (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Attitudes serve several functions, including organizing, simplifying experiences, and guiding behaviours in a consistent manner relative to the attitude object. Hence, attitude plays a fundamental role in understanding and predicting human behaviour in various personal and social contexts.

Attitude Components

Attitude components encapsulate the cognitive, affective, and behavioural elements of how individuals and societies perceive and interact with social groups, highlighting the interconnectedness of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination.

Stereotype. A stereotype is a fixed, overgeneralized belief about a particular group or class of people. Stereotypes are cognitive structures that contain the perceiver's knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about a social group (Macrae et al., 1996). They can be positive, negative, or neutral and are used to simplify social reality and facilitate the rapid processing of social information. However, stereotypes can lead to inaccurate assessments of individuals based on their group membership.

Prejudice. Prejudice is an unjustified or incorrect attitude (usually negative) towards an individual based solely on the individual's membership of a social group. It is an affective component of social attitudes, involving emotional responses or feelings towards other groups (Allport, 1954). Prejudice can manifest in negative feelings, such as hostility or hatred, and can exist against any social group on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, and more.

Discrimination. Discrimination refers to the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people on the grounds of race, age, sex, or disability, and more. It involves behaviours, often negative, towards individuals or groups based on their membership in a particular group (Dovidio et al., 2005). Discrimination can manifest in various forms, including exclusion, avoidance, verbal abuse, and physical violence, and can occur at individual, institutional, or societal levels.

Attitude as a Multifaceted Construct

Attitude is multifaceted, comprising affective, cognitive and behavioural connotation components (Zanna & Rempel, 2008). The tripartite model of attitudes holds that stereotypes are the cognitive component of attitudes while prejudice is the affective component (Ramasubramanian, 2010). Stereotypes are commonly described as the traits or attributes linked to individuals or groups belonging to specific social categories, prejudice on the other hand is generally understood as the favourable or unfavourable judgment directed towards a social group and its members (Mackie & Smith, 1998). Stereotype leads to prejudice, which subsequently results in discrimination (Dovidio et al., 1986). Hence, altering knowledge about a group can reduce intergroup bias, forming the basis of the contact hypothesis (Allport (1954;

Amir, 1969). Allport (1954) posited that direct intergroup contact could reduce prejudice by changing cognition. For example, research suggests that intergroup contact reduces intergroup bias by increasing knowledge of the outgroup (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), and reduces social dominance orientation (defined as one's degree of preference for inequality among social groups (Dhont et al., 2014; Pratto et al., 1994). Hodson and Hewstone (2013) reported that three routes of cognitive, affective and behavioural could serve as the mechanism for prejudice reduction. The consensus is that cognitive and affective routes can serve as mechanisms for prejudice reduction, although, the effect is stronger via the latter route (Birtel et al., 2018; Dovidio et al., 2017; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005a; Turner et al., 2007;).

Cognitive theories of emotion propose that cognition plays a role in shaping the valence and intensity of affect (Reisenzein, 2020). However, there was an argument challenging the notion that affect is post-cognitive, as they are both believed to be independent and can influence each other (Zajonc, 1980). Nevertheless, there was a resurgence in recognizing that affect results from cognitive processes, where appraisal of a phenomenon's significance precedes the elicitation of emotions (Lazarus, 1982). In this view, affect/emotions arise from the cognitive evaluation of a situation's relevance to one's interests (Lazarus & Smith, 1988). Cognition and emotion are interconnected, with cognitive processes playing a crucial role in processing and experiencing emotions (Storbeck & Clore, 2007).

Similarly, findings from experimental studies show that both high-prejudiced and low-prejudiced individuals possess similar knowledge of stereotype content

about outgroups but differ in their endorsement of these stereotypes (Augoustinos et al., 1994; Devine, 1989). Consequently, it is not merely the knowledge of stereotypes that contributes to prejudice, but the agreement with these stereotypes based on the belief in their truthfulness (Devine, 1989). Therefore, to be non-prejudiced, individuals need to disagree with negative stereotypes associated with outgroups. This can be achieved through intergroup contact that helps to dispel such stereotypes as untrue. When individuals are faced with counter-stereotypical members of outgroups, their responses can vary. Some might ignore these counter-examples, keeping their stereotypes intact, while others might create subtypes, essentially exceptions to the rule that do not alter the overall stereotype (Park et al., 2001). This indicates that people have inherent cognitive mechanisms that aim to protect and maintain their existing stereotypes and prejudices, even when confronted with evidence to the contrary. This maintenance of stereotypes underscores the challenge of changing prejudiced attitudes and highlights the importance of repeated and diverse intergroup interactions that challenge and expand existing perceptions. Furthermore, Zanna (1994), posits that prejudice is influenced not only by stereotypical beliefs but also by symbolic beliefs, emotions, and past experiences related to the outgroup. Prejudice, therefore, relies on a complex belief system. Hence, to address prejudice effectively, it is crucial to correct not only stereotypical beliefs but also the broader belief system. Thus, intergroup contact needs to be encompassing in challenging stereotypes and broader belief system. However, existing contact interventions have often focused on researchers' chosen content to design interventions, which may not be as relevant to the participants as issues that are participant-led (Newlands et al., 2022; Sanders &

Stappers, 2008). This approach may overlook the nuanced and dynamic nature of intergroup relations, potentially missing key aspects that only emerge from the lived experiences and perceptions of participants themselves (Paluck, 2009). Participant-led approaches add value by ensuring the content of interventions is directly pertinent and responsive to the actual concerns, misconceptions, and informational gaps experienced by participants, fostering a more meaningful and impactful engagement (Newlands et al., 2022; Sanders & Stappers, 2008). However, these approaches may also face limitations, including challenges in generalizability and scalability of findings, as well as the risk of reinforcing idiosyncratic biases if not carefully managed (Greenwood & Levin, 2006). Nevertheless, what is essential is not merely addressing any outgroup knowledge decided by researchers but specifically focusing on the knowledge and issues that are relevant to the group in question.

Mediators of Intergroup Contact Intergroup

Knowledge of the Outgroup

Allport (1954) proposed that knowledge about the outgroup leads to reduction of prejudice. Ignorance, conversely, has been linked to fostering prejudice (Stephan & Stephan, 1984). Similarly, Pettigrew (1998) argued that a crucial step in mitigating intergroup bias through contact is increasing knowledge about the outgroup.

Intergroup Contact and Knowledge of the Outgroup. Knowledge of the outgroup is indeed a mediator of intergroup contact (Hasler & Amichai-Hamburger, 2013; Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017). Positive interactions with members of an outgroup can enhance an individual's understanding and knowledge about that outgroup. This increased knowledge, in turn, can lead to more positive attitudes

towards the outgroup. In fact, knowledge-building stands as one of the most frequently discussed cognitive mediators in the context of intergroup bias reduction (Hasler & Amichai-Hamburger, 2013). This knowledge acquisition aids in reducing uncertainty in intergroup interactions (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Reducing uncertainty not only lessens the avoidance of outgroup contact but also alleviates discomfort in intergroup interactions (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). Moreover, when individuals possess more information about outgroup members, they tend to view each other in personalised ways, enabling the formation of novel, non-stereotypical perceptions of the outgroup (Kawakami et al., 2000). However, knowledge of the outgroup has not proven as effective in reducing prejudice when compared to other factors that mediate the effects of intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017). Researchers propose that the prevalent focus on learning facts about the outgroup could explain this phenomenon. Therefore, they suggest that shifting the emphasis towards increasing knowledge of similarities and differences between the ingroup and the outgroup might be more effective at improving intergroup attitudes (Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017; Wolsko et al., 2000). Increased knowledge of similarities between groups is anticipated to result in more positive evaluations of outgroup members (Pettigrew, 1998). Further, gaining insights into the beliefs and values of an outgroup contributes to a better understanding of how to engage with its members, thus diminishing uncertainty in interpersonal interactions (Stephan & Stephan, 1985).

Therefore, as part of the programme of research, the knowledge held by Non-Muslim White Britons regarding Muslims of Middle Eastern descent was explored. Specifically, the exploration sought to uncover participants' perspectives on Muslims

of Middle Eastern descent and their perceptions of how UK society also views them, even if they did not personally hold such views. By exploring individual and collective viewpoints, this research aimed to uncover broader issues. Given that prejudice is deemed socially undesirable (Beyer & Liebe, 2015), exploring participants' thoughts concerning the views of others proves advantageous. Individuals tend to be more open in expressing negative opinions attributed to external sources rather than admitting to such views themselves. This phenomenon aligns with concepts like social desirability bias and external attribution. Social desirability bias refers to the tendency of respondents to answer questions in a manner that will be viewed favourably by others, often leading to underreporting of negative or socially undesirable attitudes and behaviors (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). External attribution involves attributing one's actions or opinions to external factors rather than internal dispositions (Heider, 1958). Additionally, aspects of the culture and religion of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent that Non-Muslim White Britons were interested in learning about was also explored. This approach not only facilitated the exploration of pertinent information but also the similarities and differences between the two groups.

Ingroup Norms

In-group norm is a standard that is shared by members of a particular group and regulates their behaviour within the group. In-group norms are a cognitive mediator that operates in an extended intergroup contact situation (Wright et al., 1997). Extended intergroup contact involves having knowledge of an ingroup member's behaviour whilst engaging in intergroup contact (Turner et al., 2008). Therefore, an individual will need to know that an ingroup member has a positive relationship with an outgroup member to stimulate the perception of positive ingroup norm about the

outgroup and consequently influence the development of positive outgroup attitudes (Dovidio et al., 2011; Hewstone, 2009).

Emergence of Ingroup Norms. In a recent scholarly editorial on the “dynamic nature of social norms”, van Kleef et al. (2019: 1) asserted that the “development of norms over time is poorly understood” (page 4). This poor understanding of the emergence of social norms was identified as one of the four challenges confronting the literature on the dynamics of social norms. Nevertheless, some literature has expounded bases of norm development.

Social Identity and Self-categorization in the Context of Social Interaction. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) and its associate, the self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), concurs that individuals are characterized by varying selves. These selves include intra-psychic identities and social identities, which are borne out of cherished group memberships (Postmes et al., 2000). When group membership is prominent, individuals will appropriate their group’s norms, and tap into the qualities of their social identity in defining appropriate conduct. Social contexts frequently shape the self-concept or self-categorization that individuals adopt. These contexts highlight or imprint social identities, influencing how individuals see themselves in relation to others (Turner et al., 1987). For example, in a multicultural neighborhood, an individual's identity as a member of a specific ethnic group (e.g., White British or Middle Eastern Muslim) may become more salient during community events or discussions about cultural heritage. This heightened awareness of one's group membership can influence interactions with members from other ethnic

groups, potentially affecting perceptions and attitudes towards them. Another example, in the context of a social interaction with peers in an organization, the social identity derived from the peer, i.e., the value and importance ascribed to membership of the peer, may be more prominent. If the context of social interaction shifts to the leaders of the organization, the social identity of the organization, which speaks to the values, goals and significance of the organization, may become more prominent. This way, social identity and self-categorization serve as antecedents of the norm motivating an individual. Titlestad et al. (2019) also expounded that cooperation norm is engendered when individuals in groups are unambiguously categorized.

Reicher et al., (1995) explored the creation of social identity in social contexts where norms are yet to be clearly defined. In such contexts, individuals infer norms from observed behaviour, making norms a socially constructed, social-interaction-dependent phenomenon. Notwithstanding, the process of norm formation is not merely passive but negotiated and contested. Moreover, norm formation is directed by a group's socio-historical and ideological dynamics (Reicher, 1996). The position of Titlestad, Snijders, Durrheim, Quayle, & Postmes (2019) pervades this narrative about the development of norms. They expounded on how cooperation norms develop across group types. According to them, peculiarities that are endogenous to groups, such as social interaction, direct the course and content of norm development.

Intergroup Contact and Ingroup Norm. Ingroup norms constitute a variant of cognitive mediator that is relevant in the context of extended intergroup contact situation (Wright et al., 1997). Intergroup contact outcomes such as reduced outgroup threat, improved intergroup expectations (Dovidio et al., 2011), lessened intergroup

anxiety are driven by the perceived ingroup's approval of the outgroup. This is especially the case if the ingroup member in the contact situation typically represents the ingroup as a whole (Turner et al., 2008) and even more so when the observer also possesses a salient ingroup identity (Dovidio et al., 2011). This is not unexpected as extended contact gives room for high group saliency because the observer is not aware of the outgroup member's personal characteristics (Dovidio et al., 2011; Turner et al., 2008; Wright et al. 1997), this makes generalising the new positive attitudes from the individual outgroup member to the entire group easier. Hence, ingroup norms are a mediator of extended contact and intergroup attitudes as well as positive intergroup expectancies (Dovidio et al., 2017; Gómez et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2019), which shows the observer that their ingroup has tolerant norms about the outgroups than hitherto known (Gómez et al., 2011; Turner et al., 2008).

Exploring ingroup norms and the reasons for the norms will afford the opportunity to address such reasons. Therefore, the programme of research explored the norms guiding Non-Muslim White Britons behaviour towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent as well as explanation for why such norms exist.

Intergroup Anxiety

Intergroup anxiety encompasses apprehensions of negative outcomes, such as discrimination, fear, or unfavourable evaluations, both toward oneself and interaction partners, either before or during intergroup interactions. It can stem from concerns about inappropriate behaviour from either party or a lack of positive prior experiences with outgroup members, leading to pessimistic expectations (Stephan & Stephan, 1985).

Causes of Intergroup Anxiety. The following are explanations why outgroups may trigger anxiety in individuals.

Associative Learning. Associative learning encompasses both operant conditioning and Pavlovian conditioning, commonly referred to as classical conditioning. The process of associative learning is through linking one stimulus to another, which is referred to as acquisition (Gottlieb & Begej, 2014). By regularly matching a conditioned stimulus (CS) and an unconditioned stimulus (US), acquisition takes place. Research on anxiety disorders has focused heavily on Pavlovian conditioning, which is also known to trigger fear-related evolutionary adaptive responses (Fanselow & Sterlace, 2014). Fear of the outgroup or anxiety towards the outgroup is associative learning. According to Navarrete et al. (2009, 2012), anxiety towards members of the outgroup is simpler to learn than anxiety towards members of the ingroup, and in some circumstances, it is resistant to extinction (Olsson et al., 2005). These narratives support the position that the learned fear of members of the outside group results from evolutionary processes (O'Donnell et al., 2019). According to (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005), fear of outgroups can be understood as an evolutionary adaptation aimed at ensuring the physical safety of the ingroup.

A theoretical explanation for the function of evolution in associative learning is provided by Seligman (1971) preparedness theory. Preparedness theory postulates that specific CS subtypes are biologically “prepared” or preferentially connected with specific US subtypes. Cues that have presented lethal threats to humans throughout evolutionary history are more likely to cause fear (McNally, 2016). Hence, an outgroup

perceived as a threat will elicit fear. This evolutionary predisposition towards fear acquisition implies that humans may have developed a heightened sensitivity to potential threats from outgroups, considering them as unknown or unpredictable, which historically could have signified danger. This sensitivity may activate automatically in the presence of novel, never-before-seen outgroup members, reflecting an ingrained survival mechanism. Moreover, the perception of outgroups is influenced by social, cultural, and situational contexts, which shape the criteria for distinguishing between ingroups and outgroups. These group definitions are not fixed; they evolve over time and can be based on a wide array of characteristics such as beliefs, customs, or physical appearance. Despite the fluid nature of group affiliations, the fundamental mechanism of identifying an 'outgroup' hinges on the recognition of differences, whether superficial or deep-seated, from the perceived norm or ingroup standard. This mechanism underscores the human tendency to categorize social entities, facilitating the identification of outgroups even amidst varying and complex social landscapes. Another illustration would be the phobias of snakes. Hence, humans may exhibit preferential learning of anxiety towards any outgroup (Olsson et al., 2005). The preferential acquisition of fear towards minimally defined groups exhibits characteristics of prepared learning. Navarrete et al. (2012) in their study discovered that, when examining groups that were distinguished only by arbitrary criteria, individuals exhibited a tendency to more readily learn to fear the outgroup compared to the ingroup. This finding suggests that people are more naturally inclined to associate fear with those who are not considered part of their own group, even in the absence of significant differences between groups. These

results for arbitrarily defined groups imply that even in the absence of an evolutionary conflict or socially constructed preconceptions, humans have a tendency to predominantly acquire a fear-based response towards outgroups.

Material or Immaterial Culture of Outgroup Members. Certain materials or depictions of members of the outgroup may cause emotions of uneasiness in the ingroup (Navarrete et al., 2009). In a study designed to compare the effects of engaging ingroup versus outgroup religious representations on intergroup anxiety, Shamo-Nir and Razpurker-Apfeld (2020) reported that Arab Muslim participants had significantly greater intergroup anxiety than Arab Christian participants when exposed to outgroup Jewish beliefs. This suggests that the specific content of the material or symbolic elements associated with an outgroup can significantly impact the emotional responses of the ingroup, especially in contexts where religious or cultural symbols are potent identifiers. On the contrary, intergroup anxiety reported by Arab Muslims while interacting with Jews did not differ significantly when they were conditioned to ingroup beliefs. This indicates that familiarity or alignment with one's own cultural or religious symbols can mitigate feelings of anxiety during intergroup encounters, highlighting the importance of cultural context in shaping intergroup dynamics.

Personality, Attitudes, Experiences, and Situations. In a comprehensive scholarly review and writing on the “theory, research and practice” of intergroup anxiety geared towards creating a theoretical framework on the subject matter, Stephan (2014) expounded that intergroup anxiety is the product of four causal factors.

The first factor is personality traits, including other resistant-to-change personal characteristics that underlie a predisposition to exhibit intergroup anxiety. Such traits include low self-esteem, simplicity rather than complexity of cognitive aptitude, poor self-confidence, poor ability to deal with ambiguities, hostility or aggressiveness, poor capacity for empathy, etc.

Attitudes and other related cognitions are the second factor(s) identified by Stephan (2014). Accordingly, holding onto negative attitudes, prejudice and stereotypes about outgroups is a germane precursor of intergroup anxiety. Prejudice is specifically important, as it makes individuals expect that the outgroup holds negative attitudes towards the ingroup in return, which causes uneasiness during interaction with people who are seen as disdainful. Several empirical findings support the position that negative attitudes and stereotypes causes intergroup anxiety (Berrenberg et al., 2002; Van Zomeren et al., 2007).

The third factor is personal experience. Poor contact with the outgroup results in a poor understanding and appreciation of the outgroup's characteristics and values. This is bound to breed uncertainty when groups interact. Poor contact hinders the development of empathy towards the outgroup and causes worries over rejection by members of the outgroup. Apart from poor contact, negative contact is worse in creating anxiety. Negative contact rather than neutral or positive contact solidifies the expectation of negative intergroup interaction. Several empirical research have indicated the negative association between contact and anxiety (Aberson & Gaffney, 2009; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Rohmann et al., 2006). Finally, Stephan (2014) contended that situational factors are antecedents of intergroup anxiety. Peculiarities

of social context like competitiveness, the imbalanced distribution of ingroup versus outgroup members, differential social status, poor familiarity with social context on the part of either group, the ambiguity of role expectations, etc., can have tremendous consequences for the creation of intergroup anxiety. Meanwhile, the literature is yet to be rich enough in the examination and reportage of the effects of situational factors (Stephan, 2014).

Intergroup Contact and Intergroup Anxiety. Although intergroup contact typically reduces intergroup anxiety (Paolini et al., 2004; Pettigrew, 1998; Voci & Hewstone, 2003), a negative contact experience increases intergroup anxiety, which consequently makes the contact experience ineffective (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Prior to or during intergroup interactions, individuals may anticipate negative outcomes such as discrimination, fear, or negative evaluations, towards both themselves and their interaction partners. This may be due to concerns over potentially unacceptable behaviour from either themselves or the outgroup members (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Intergroup anxiety is also experienced when individuals have no positive prior experiences with outgroup members, which makes them form negative expectations about intergroup interactions. This anxiety can then result in increased hostility toward outgroup members and a reluctance to engage in interactions with them (Plant & Devine, 2003). Although, the absence of prior experiences does not necessarily predispose individuals to form negative expectations. The expectation can vary among individuals, with some potentially holding neutral or even positive outlooks towards future interactions. This variability suggests that individual predispositions, external influences such as media portrayals, societal

narratives, and personal values play a significant role in shaping expectations in the absence of direct experience. Hence, people may experience anxieties related to negative expectations of the outgroup as well as concerns over evaluations by their own ingroup for interacting with the outgroup (Turner et al., 2008). Indeed, the desire to avoid interactions with members of the outgroup has been shown to be predicted by intergroup anxiety (Plant, 2004). Intergroup anxiety stands as one of the most difficult factors that attenuate the potential impact of intergroup contact in fostering improved intergroup attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and can have negative outcomes on intergroup relations (Turner et al., 2008).

Intergroup anxiety is also associated with reduced cognitive and perceptual processes during intergroup interaction (Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 2000), reliance on stereotypes about the outgroup, limited attention to the contact situation, or the avoidance of intergroup encounters (Wilder & Simon, 2003), thus, intergroup anxiety can inhibit positive intergroup contact interaction and diminish the benefits of the experience. Therefore, intergroup anxiety plays a pivotal role in intergroup relations (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Intergroup anxiety is one of the strongest documented mediators of intergroup contact and prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Intergroup contact reduces anxiety, which in turn reduces prejudice. Intergroup anxiety is both a mediator of direct contact (Birtel et al., 2018; Hayward et al., 2017; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Stathi et al., 2012; Turner et al., 2007), extended contact (Birtel et al., 2018; Gómez et al., 2011; Paolini et al., 2004; Turner et al., 2007; Turner et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2019) imagined contact (Turner et al., 2007; Turner et al., 2013), virtual contact effects (Hasler & Amichai-Hamburger, 2013; White et al., 2015b), as well as extended

contact-outgroup variability and outgroup attitude (Paolini et al., 2004). This is perhaps possible because extended contact enables observing intergroup contact from a safe distance, thus, allay the anxiety of outgroup interaction (Paolini et al., 2004).

Intergroup anxiety plays a significant role in various aspects of intergroup contact. Firstly, it serves as a mediating factor in the relationship between contact and prejudice, particularly among individuals with weaker ingroup identification (Hewstone, 2009). This phenomenon occurs because those with weaker identification may not as strongly adhere to their ingroup's stereotypes and biases towards outgroups. As a result, they might be more willing to engage in intergroup contact, leading to reduced anxiety and prejudice through positive experiences. This openness makes the impact of intergroup contact more significant in altering their attitudes; as their lesser attachment to ingroup norms allows for greater influence from direct interactions with outgroup members. Additionally, intergroup anxiety serves as a mediating factor in the positive association between both the quality and quantity of contact and outgroup attitudes. This suggests that as individuals experience higher quality and more frequent interactions with members of an outgroup, their levels of intergroup anxiety tend to decrease. This reduction in anxiety, in turn, facilitates more favorable attitudes towards the outgroup. Essentially, positive encounters serve to challenge and mitigate the fears and apprehensions that individuals may have about outgroup members, leading to improved intergroup relations. Intergroup anxiety also mediates the link between contact and the perception of outgroup variability (Hewstone, 2009) as well as prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Furthermore, intergroup anxiety is implicated in the relationship between group saliency in

intergroup contact and outgroup attitudes, and subsequently, the perception of outgroup variability (Hewstone, 2009). Additionally, it mediates the effects of negative intergroup contact (Hayward et al., 2017). In general, intergroup contact lessen intergroup anxiety (Paolini et al., 2004; Pettigrew, 1998; Voci & Hewstone, 2003). Therefore, when contact experiences are positive, intergroup anxiety diminishes, rendering contact beneficial. Conversely, negative contact experiences tend to heighten intergroup anxiety, leading to unfavourable consequences for intergroup relations (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

As stated above, people experience anxiety when in contact with outgroup members because of fear, which comes from what is believed about the outgroup. Therefore, to explore causes of such fear and other related negative emotions, the current study explored why Non-Muslim White Britons may feel anxiety towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent.

Intergroup Threat

According to intergroup threat theory, intergroup threat consists of two components of perceived threat, that people feel regarding outgroup members: realistic threat and symbolic threat (Stephan et al., 2009). Realistic threat refers to risks that are perceived to be endangering the ingroup's welfare and safety, such as perceived threats to economic prosperity, political power, physical safety and so on. Symbolic threat refers to perceived threats emanating from the differential values and worldviews of different social groups which makes ingroup members feel that the outgroup is a threat to their values, beliefs and identity (Stephan et al.,

2009). Intergroup threat is an important factor in intergroup relations (Dovidio et al., 2011). It contributes to negative intergroup attitudes (Blascovich et al., 2001), and ultimately to the dynamics of intergroup relations (Riek et al., 2006), from interactions interpretation pattern (Hugenberg & Bodenhausen, 2004), to avoidance of contact (Plant & Devine, 2003).

Causes of Intergroup Threat. The following are explanations why individuals may feel threatened by the outgroup.

In-group Homogeneity. In-group homogeneity is a fundamental characteristic of groups. It functions in the mobilization of the in-group for collective action geared at protecting the in-group from the perceived threat of the outgroup (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Stott & Drury, 2004). Mobilisation is typically more achievable with increasing homogeneity of the in-group (Crump et al., 2010). In other words, increasing the perception of ingroup homogeneity increases the perceived capacity for ingroup defense against the outgroup (Abelson et al., 1998). In line with this premise, (Sacchi et al., 2009) reported that entitativity (the perception of the group as a unified entity) is associated with a reduced perception of threat from out-groups. This reduction in perceived threat from the out-group is linked to the increased sense of security provided by a highly entitative in-group, which is perceived as capable of intentional and protective actions towards its members. Thus, enhancing the perception of in-group entitativity can lead to feeling safer and perceiving less threat from external groups. Similarly, Bilali (2015) reported that low perceived in-group homogeneity was associated with a greater perceived threat in response to experimentally induced external cues of terrorist threats, leading to higher

legitimization of the U.S.'s war in Iraq. Conversely, high in-group homogeneity, combined with cues affirming in-group security, resulted in lower legitimization of war, suggesting that participants with high in-group homogeneity felt a reduced perceived threat from external cues. This aligns with the idea that a more unified or homogeneous group may feel more capable of coping with external threats, thus perceiving less threat from out-groups. In essence, increasing in-group heterogeneity functions to increase the perceived threat of the outgroup.

In-group Identification. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) upholds the position that increased ingroup identification (degree to which an individual feels a sense of belonging and connection to a particular group, considering its members, values, and norms as an integral part of their own identity) makes people more sensitive to potential harm against the ingroup (Bizman & Yinon, 2001). In light of this, a greater perceived threat may be predicted by ingroup identification. Following this premise, Riek et al. (2006) as well as Verkuyten (2009) reported ingroup identification to be a precursor of perceived threat.

Intergroup Contact and Intergroup Threat. Intergroup threat is one of the major mediators of intergroup contact and intergroup attitudes. Thus, it can be reduced through intergroup contact (Paolini et al., 2004; Pettigrew, 1998). Intergroup threat is a mediator of both direct intergroup contact (Schmid et al., 2014), and extended contact (Birtel et al., 2018b; Dhont & Van Hiel, 2009). Both realistic (Pettigrew et al., 2007), and symbolic threats mediate the effect of contact on attitudes independently by reducing these perceived threats, thereby improving intergroup attitudes (Hewstone, 2009; Pettigrew et al., 2007). Intergroup threat is also a predictor

of negative intergroup attitudes. It stems from perceived threats, whether real or imagined, that an outgroup poses to the well-being of the ingroup. These perceived threats can be reduced through intergroup contact (Paolini et al., 2004; Pettigrew, 1998; Stephan et al., 1998; Stephan & Stephan, 2000) by enhancing individuals' understanding that these perceived threats lack a basis in reality (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Therefore, to understand the causes of realistic and symbolic threats specific to the groups in this research, why Non-Muslim White Britons may feel threatened by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent was explored.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to experience other people's emotional state, such as having compassion for or feeling distressed over someone's negative situation (Birtel et al., 2018). The dimensions of empathy are parallel and reactive empathy. Parallel empathy is when people experience emotions like those experienced by the actual people in distress, while reactive empathy is when people experience compassion in reaction to the distressing situation of others (Davis, 2004; W. G. Stephan & Finlay, 1999).

Empathy Towards the Outgroup. The following are explanations as to why individuals may have empathy towards the outgroup.

Perspective taking. Perspective taking involves the cognitive capacity to consider the world from another individual's viewpoint. It is about understanding someone else's thoughts, feelings, and motivations, which can lead to increased empathy and improved interpersonal relations. Perspective taking is a concept related to the cognitive dimension of empathy which has received a lot of attention in the

literature (Galinsky & Ku, 2004; Wang et al., 2014). Perspective taking can make people realize that they are not very different from the outgroup. Adopting a different perspective can result in favourable assessments of marginalised or discriminated groups and has been shown to be effective in evoking empathic feelings like sympathy, compassion, tenderness, and concern for the outsider (Todd & Galinsky, 2014). Additionally, perspective taking fosters a sense of commonalities between the self and the outgroup and facilitates a larger self-other integration, both of which can promote an awareness of a shared humanity (Janezic & Arsenault, 2021). In order to elicit empathy, research participants are typically told to put themselves in the outgroup's situation and try to understand how they feel. Otherwise, research participants are usually asked to just think about how they would feel if they were going through a similar experience (Janezic, & Arsenault, 2021).

Perceived Similarity. It has been asserted that perceived similarity is necessary for evoking empathy. Some experiments have featured the alteration of perceived similarity to encourage perspective taking and the sharing of emotions (McKeever, 2015). Empathy may result from identifying with the outgroup as well as recognizing the similarities between the ingroup's personal experiences or characteristics and that of the outgroup (Mealy & Stephan 2010). In the study conducted by Janezic & Arsenault (2021), participants recounted that the comparability of their personal experience and sex were precursors of empathy, highlighting that perceived similarity helps the process of perspective taking.

Intergroup Contact and Empathy. Evidence has been documented for the relationship between intergroup contact and affective empathy (Swart et al., 2011).

Empathy is achieved when people can view issues from other people's perspective (Batson, Sager, et al., 1997), which usually happens where there is an opportunity for a form of contact, therefore, making it a viable means of advancing intergroup relations (Hewstone, 2009). Empathy can be increased via extended contact (Birtel et al., 2018), for majority and minority group members alike (Vezzali et al., 2017), and it is also a mediator of direct contact, where empathy as a result of contact leads to increased positive outgroup attitude (Abbott & Cameron, 2014; Hayward et al., 2017; Hewstone, 2009; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Swart, et al., 2011; Turner et al., 2007; 2013), and extended intergroup contact (Turner, et al., 2007; 2013; Vezzali et al., 2017). Similarly, empathy for an outgroup member in an intergroup contact can generalise to improve attitudes towards the whole outgroup (Batson et al. 1997; Pettigrew, 1997). Empathy is also a means by which self-disclosure improves positive outgroup attitudes (Hewstone, 2009), for both parallel and reactive empathy (Swart et al., 2011), advances social cohesion and prosocial behaviours (Davis, 2004; Pagano & Huo, 2007; Thomas et al., 2009) by inducing an inclusion of the outgroup in the self (Aron et al., 2003), and increasing not just intergroup attitudes and prosocial intentions (Abbott & Cameron, 2014), but also pro-social behaviour and altruism (Batson, 2010; Stephan & Finlay, 1999), therefore, making empathy essential in improving intergroup relations (Swart et al., 2010). Empathy also induces outgroup attitude change via cognitive dissonance experienced when people hold an attitude that is inconsistent with empathy simultaneously, this motivates attitude change so that psychological balance can be re-established (Stephan & Finlay, 1999), while parallel empathy arouses feelings of injustice to induce attitude change (Finlay &

Stephan, 2000). Hence, empathy induced intergroup contact potentially leads to attitude change.

Overview of Methods

The programme of research is an intervention development research using sequential exploratory mixed methods approach.

Intervention Development Research

Intervention development research is a process of developing and evaluating a complex intervention, which has several phases. The best practice is to develop interventions systematically, using the best available evidence and appropriate theory, and then to test them using a carefully phased approach (Craig et al., 2008).

Sequential Exploratory Mixed Methods

Sequential exploratory mixed methods is a research design where a qualitative study is conducted first and then its findings are used to inform a subsequent quantitative study. The initial qualitative phase aims to explore a phenomenon and generate insights, which are then tested in the quantitative phase using the depth and context provided by qualitative data. This design is particularly useful when little is known about a phenomenon (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

Hence, the programme of research involved the following process:

Qualitative Study Phase: To explore the problem, understand the Non-Muslim White Britons' and Muslims of Middle Eastern descent's perspectives, and inform the development of the intervention.

Intervention Design Phase: Intervention is developed based on insights gained from the qualitative phase.

Quantitative Study Phase: The developed intervention was tested through a randomized controlled experiment to assess its efficacy.

Qualitative Study Phase

Overview of the Phenomenological Approach in Qualitative Research

The phenomenological approach in qualitative research is founded on philosophical principles developed by Husserl (1913, 1962), who introduced the concept of examining experiences through direct perception, free of preconceptions. This approach was expanded by Heidegger (1967), who delved into the existential aspects of being-in-the-world, and further enriched by Merleau-Ponty's (2012) emphasis on the embodied nature of perception. Sartre (2004, 2022) contributed by focusing on existential phenomenology, exploring consciousness and human freedom. Together, these philosophies formed a theoretical background for phenomenology, which emphasises understanding human experiences from the first-person perspective to uncover the essence of these experiences.

The phenomenological approach was employed in the qualitative phase of the research. The phenomenological approach in qualitative research is a methodological framework aimed at exploring and understanding the lived experiences of individuals, focusing on how they perceive and make sense of their world. Phenomenology seeks to uncover the essence of phenomena as experienced from the first-person perspective. This approach is characterized by its emphasis on the subjective experience and the intentionality of consciousness (Heidegger, 1967; Husserl, 1913, 1962). Hence, phenomenological research involves in-depth exploration of participants' experiences related to a specific phenomenon, attempting

to describe and interpret these experiences to reveal their underlying meanings. Researchers employing this approach set aside their preconceptions and biases to fully immerse themselves in the participants' perspectives (Moustakas, 1994).

Suitability for Current Study. Phenomenological approach was employed in this programme of research, as the philosophy of the method is suited to the aims of exploring the subjective experiences, realities, perceptions and beliefs of Non-Muslim White Britons and Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. This research method is particularly well-suited for studies that aim to:

Explore Human Experiences. It is ideal for investigating complex, nuanced human experiences, where understanding the depth and richness of people's experiences is crucial.

Understand Perceptions and Beliefs. It is used to examine how individuals perceive their social world, including beliefs and attitudes towards social issues, cultural practices, or specific social groups.

Investigate Subjective Realities. Phenomenology is appropriate for delving into how different individuals construct their realities, especially in diverse cultural and social contexts.

Explore Conscious Experience. It is suited for studying consciousness and the lived experience, including the exploration of phenomena such as identity and group identification.

Strengths of the Phenomenological Approach. The strengths of the approach are discussed below.

In-depth Insight into Subjective Experiences. The phenomenological approach is unparalleled in its ability to provide deep, nuanced understandings of individuals' lived experiences of participants (Van Manen, 2001) including negative attitudes such as stereotypes, and prejudice. It captures the complexity of how these attitudes are formed, experienced, and sustained from the perspective of those directly affected.

Emphasis on Individual Perspectives. By focusing on the subjective experiences of individuals, phenomenology highlights the personal contexts and meanings attached to such experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 2012) that contribute to the development of negative attitudes. This approach respects the unique experiences of individuals, offering rich, detailed accounts that quantitative methods may overlook.

Reveals Underlying Mechanisms. Through its detailed exploration of personal narratives, phenomenology can uncover the underlying cognitive, emotional, and social processes (Moustakas, 1994) responsible for the formation and perpetuation of negative attitudes such as stereotype and prejudice. This insight is crucial for developing targeted interventions.

Flexibility and Adaptability. This approach can be applied to a wide range of topics and disciplines, making it versatile and adaptable to different research contexts and questions (Moustakas, 1994).

Limitations of the Phenomenological Approach. The limitations of the approach are discussed below.

Generalizability Concerns. While phenomenology offers profound insights into individual experiences, the findings from such studies may not be easily

generalisable to broader populations. The specificity and depth of the accounts, while valuable, may limit the applicability of the results to different contexts or groups (Giorgi, 2000).

Interpretive Complexity. The process of analysing phenomenological data is inherently interpretive, requiring the researcher to distil and understand the essence of participants' experiences. This complexity demands a high level of skill and reflexivity from the researcher to avoid imposing their own biases and interpretations on the data (Van Manen, 2001).

Resource Intensive. Conducting phenomenological research, particularly studies focused on sensitive topics like prejudice and stereotypes, can be time-consuming and emotionally taxing. Recruiting participants willing to share their experiences of negativity and bias, and engaging in in-depth data analysis, requires substantial effort and resources (Moustakas, 1994).

Ethical Considerations. Exploring the nature of negative attitudes and prejudice can involve delving into potentially distressing or traumatic experiences for participants. Ensuring ethical conduct and participant well-being throughout the research process is paramount, necessitating careful design and sensitivity (Merleau-Ponty, 2012).

In conclusion, the phenomenological approach is particularly suited for studies aiming to delve into the nuances of personal and shared experiences, beliefs, and perceptions. It seeks to gain a deep understanding of the phenomena as experienced from the participants' perspectives, making it an appropriate choice for exploring

stereotypes, attitudes, and social representations of specific groups within society. Therefore, in applying the phenomenological approach to explore the nature of negative attitudes such as stereotype and prejudice between groups, invaluable insights can be gained into the personal and societal underpinnings of such phenomena. Despite its limitations, this approach offers a tool for understanding the subjective reality of individuals affected by negativity and bias, providing a foundation for addressing and mitigating these issues in society.

Intervention Design Phase

The virtual intergroup contact intervention was designed using Pettigrew (1998) three-stage model.

Overview of Pettigrew's Three-Stage Model of Intergroup Contact. Pettigrew (1998) expanded upon the foundational principles of the Contact Hypothesis, originally proposed by Gordon Allport in 1954. The model is predicated on the notion that for intergroup contact to effectively reduce prejudice, improve relations between distinct social groups, and foster positive attitudes and generalized positive effects towards an entire outgroup, it must occur in a sequenced manner through three distinct stages: de-categorization, salient categorization, and re-categorization. These stages are structured to gradually expand individuals' perceptions from focusing on personal identities to embracing a broader, inclusive group identity.

Principles and Propositions. The core principle of Pettigrew's model is that progressing through these stages can transform perceptions and attitudes, moving individuals from seeing "us vs. them" to a more inclusive "we." The theory posits that:

De-categorization Stage. In the initial stage, the emphasis is on individual interactions that highlight personal identities over group identities. By focusing on the unique characteristics of individuals from different groups, this stage aims to promote personal liking and reduce anxiety. This personalized interaction helps break down stereotypes by allowing members of different groups to see each other as individuals rather than mere representatives of their respective groups.

Salient Categorization Stage. The second stage introduces group. Here, the positive feelings developed during personal interactions in the de-categorization stage are expanded to include group characteristics, facilitating the generalization of positive affect from individuals to the outgroup as a whole. This stage is crucial for transferring the positive outcomes of one-on-one interactions to broader group perceptions, aiding in the reduction of prejudice on a larger scale.

Re-categorization Stage. The final stage involves the formation of a new, superordinate group identity that encompasses members of both the ingroup and the outgroup. This re-categorization encourages individuals to redefine group boundaries, viewing themselves as part of a larger, inclusive group rather than separate, competing entities. By fostering a sense of shared identity, this stage aims to solidify the reduction of intergroup biases and promote unity.

Application. One of the key strengths of Pettigrew's model is its comprehensive approach to the process of intergroup contact, offering a detailed roadmap for reducing prejudice. It highlights the importance of structured and phased contact, providing practical implications for the design of intergroup

interventions. Elements of the model have guided design and assessment of interventions aimed at reducing prejudice and enhancing positive connections between groups in real-world applications, focusing on how structured contact changes attitudes and behaviours towards outgroup members. It promotes strategies like intergroup dialogues and cooperative activities, based on the model's stages, to foster positive interactions and reduce biases (Gaertner et al., 2000; Shani, 2015).

Quantitative Study Phase

Overview of Randomized Controlled Experiments. A randomized controlled experiment (RCT) is a research design that is considered the gold standard for evaluating the efficacy and effectiveness of interventions within the field of psychology and beyond. In an RCT, participants are randomly assigned to either the intervention group, which receives the treatment or intervention being studied, or the control group, which does not receive the intervention or may receive a placebo or standard treatment. This random allocation helps to ensure that any differences observed between groups can be attributed to the intervention itself rather than other factors, thereby minimizing bias and increasing the internal validity of the study. The theoretical background for randomized controlled trials (RCTs) primarily stems from principles of experimental design and statistical theory, rather than a singular theoretical framework. The development and utilization of RCTs are underpinned by several key concepts:

Causality and Experimental Control. The foundation of RCTs is the ability to infer causal relationships between interventions and outcomes. This is rooted in the scientific method emphasising the importance of randomization as a means of

achieving experimental control and reducing bias (Fisher, 1935). This ensures that any observed differences in outcomes can be attributed to the intervention itself.

Randomization. The theory behind randomization is central to RCTs. By randomly assigning participants to either the intervention group or the control group, the method aims to ensure that both known and unknown factors are evenly distributed across groups, thus minimizing selection bias and confounding variables. This concept is deeply rooted in statistical theory and is crucial for the internal validity of the experiment.

Comparison and Control. The use of control groups in RCTs is based on comparative analysis—a fundamental aspect of scientific research. This approach allows researchers to directly compare the effects of the intervention against a baseline (control condition), which might be no intervention, a placebo, or the standard of treatment. This principle is essential for isolating the effects of the intervention from other variables.

Evidence-Based Practice. The theoretical underpinning of RCTs also relates to the broader movement towards evidence-based practice in psychology, and other fields. This approach emphasizes the use of empirical evidence from well-designed and conducted research as the basis for making decisions (Sackett et al., 1996). Hence, RCT is considered the gold standard for generating reliable evidence because of its rigorous methodology.

Suitability for the Current Programme of Research. Among other use cases, RCT is suited for research aimed at both internal psychological processes and external behavioural manifestations as explained below:

Evaluating Treatment Efficacy. RCT is ideal for assessing the impact of interventions or psychological treatments on specific psychological outcomes. Thus, it provides evidence on whether the intervention works under controlled conditions (Kazdin, 2021). It thus helps to evaluate intervention efficacy in altering cognitive processes and emotions (stereotype and prejudice) related to attitudes.

Testing Behavioural Interventions. RCT is used to evaluate the effectiveness of behaviour change interventions aimed at improving behaviours or social skills, among others. It helps to determine the extent to which a particular intervention leads to desired behavioural changes (Michie et al., 2013). It therefore allows to also assess the observable outcomes of attitude change including discriminatory behaviours.

Strengths of RCTs in Testing Contact Interventions. These strengths are discussed below.

Causal Inference. RCTs provide a framework for assessing the causal impact of interventions (Kazdin, 2021), which can be used to assess the effect of intergroup contact interventions on reducing negative stereotypes and prejudice. By randomly assigning participants to intervention or control groups, RCTs can help to link observed changes in attitudes to the intervention.

Control of Confounding Variables. The random assignment characteristic of RCTs minimizes the influence of confounding variables that could otherwise skew results (Schulz et al., 2010). This control is crucial when examining sensitive outcomes like attitude changes to ensure that differences between groups are attributable to the intervention and not external factors.

Standardization of Intervention Delivery. RCTs ensure that the intergroup contact intervention is delivered consistently across all participants in the experimental group (Moher et al., 2010). This standardization is vital for evaluating the intervention's true effect on reducing negative intergroup attitudes.

Limitations of RCTs in Testing Contact Interventions. These limitations are discussed below.

Generalizability. While RCTs excel in establishing causality within controlled settings, the specific conditions and participant characteristics may limit the generalizability of findings to broader, real-world contexts (Rothwell, 2005). This is particularly relevant for intergroup contact interventions, where the naturalistic setting and the specificities of group dynamics play a significant role in outcomes.

Complexity of Attitude Change. Intergroup attitudes are influenced by complex social, cultural, and individual factors. The controlled environment of an RCT might not fully capture these complexities, potentially oversimplifying a phenomena and overlooking important contextual or individual differences that affect the intervention's impact (Westen et al., 2004).

Participant Dropout and Compliance. Attrition or non-compliance among participants can introduce bias and affect the external validity of RCT findings (Hollis & Campbell, 1999). In the context of intergroup contact interventions, differential dropout rates or varying degrees of engagement can skew results, especially if these issues are not evenly distributed across experimental and control groups.

Resource Intensiveness. Conducting RCTs requires considerable resources (Glasziou et al., 2007), particularly for interventions aimed at changing deeply ingrained attitudes like stereotypes and prejudices. The need for careful randomisation, blinding, and long-term follow-up to assess the durability of attitude changes can make RCTs challenging and expensive to implement.

In sum, while RCTs offer a powerful method for testing the efficacy of intergroup contact interventions in reducing negative attitudes and fostering positive relations, it has limitations that pose challenges. Addressing these challenges requires thoughtful design, execution, and interpretation of RCTs to ensure that findings contribute meaningfully to the understanding and application of intergroup contact principles. These factors as they relate to this programme of research are discussed in Chapter 4 where the intervention study is reported.

Participants Selection Rationale

The programme of research aimed to develop and test a novel virtual intergroup contact intervention. The goal is to develop an intervention that can subsequently be applied to improve relations between any social groups. However, to develop and test the efficacy of the novel idea, the programme of research focused on specific groups:

Non-Muslim White Britons

Study 1 engaged Non-Muslim White British participants, identified as the predominant ethnic group within the United Kingdom, according to the Office of National Statistics (2020). This demographic was selected to represent the majority social group within the scope of this research. The focus was specifically on Non-

Muslim British individuals to critically assess their perceptions and attitudes towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent residing in the UK. The qualitative nature of this study demanded participants with substantial residency in the UK, ensuring an understanding of the societal context of these intergroup dynamics. White Britons of Muslim faith were excluded, as the religious identity of the minority group in this research is Islam.

Muslims of Middle Eastern Descent

Study 2 encompassed Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living in the UK, without necessitating British citizenship to facilitate easier recruitment of participants. This group is among the smaller minority demographics within the country. The focus on this group was motivated by the goal to explore the outgroup amidst widespread religion-based prejudice, with Abrams et al. (2018) noting that 70% of Muslims experience such prejudice, the highest rate among religious groups. Hence, Non-Muslims of Middle Eastern descent were exempted for their religious identity.

Non-Muslim White Individuals

Study 3 assessed the attitudes of Non-Muslim White individuals towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. This was decided without requiring citizenship status for inclusion, as the study aimed to reduce prejudice and needed a broader participant pool for effective intervention testing, unlike Study 1, which sought qualitative data from participants with significant UK lived experience. Furthermore, the experiences of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent reported in Study 2 were with White individuals regardless of citizenship, since their lived experience would not reveal the citizenship status of the White individuals they had encountered.

An Overview of Islamophobia

Islamophobia is the term often used to describe negative beliefs, feelings, and actions directed towards Muslims and the Islamic faith (Uenal et al., 2021). The most widely used definition of Islamophobia is the presence of negative, fear-based attitudes and actions directed towards Islam and Muslims (Bangstad, 2016). As a result, significant instances of Islamophobia conflate issues related to Muslims as a social group with Islam as a theological notion.

Islamophobic conspiracy beliefs, another important aspect of Islamophobia, are still poorly understood and have not been included in existing conceptualizations (O'Donnell, 2018; Swami et al., 2018). The notion of a demographic threat fuels the belief in an Islamic plot or a covert, continuous "Islamization of the West," which has similarities to anti-Semitic beliefs. Some followers assert that there is a well-planned effort (like "EURABIA") to force Islamic customs on Westerners.

A notable precursor of Islamophobia is fear. Islamophobia has been conceptualised from a typical social psychology research approach, which places fear and uncertainty about outgroups at the core of the prejudiced worldview. This perspective bears similarities to notions like homophobia and xenophobia. The psychological definitions of Islamophobia that are most often quoted are that the primary affective component of the phenomenon is fear (Lee et al., 2013).

Islamophobia can also be seen from a socio-functional threat-based perspective (Neuberg & Schaller, 2016). According to the perspective, distinct social groups can elicit varying social threat perceptions, which in turn motivate particular behavioural,

emotional, and attitudinal reactions to effectively mitigate perceived threats. For example, research by Choma et al. (2012, 2016) has demonstrated that intergroup disgust sensitivity is a reliable predictor of Islamophobia.

Islamophobia may lead to very significant consequences. It is considered one of the most deadly forms of prejudice since it leads to irrational aversion and resentment (Allen, 2007; Iqbal, 2010). Similarly, Samari, (2016) argued that Islamophobia can have detrimental effects on health through its impact on various systems, including individual (such as stress reactivity and identity concealment), interpersonal (including social relationships and socialization processes), and structural (encompassing institutional policies and media coverage). Politicians have used Islamophobia as a way to explain anti-Muslim policies in recent campaigns. According to crime reports, hate crimes surge dramatically after incidents of public threat (Home Office, 2018). Furthermore, following the terrorist attack in Manchester in June 2017, hate crimes in England increased by 500% over the daily average (Dodd & Marsh, 2017). According to estimates from the US Department of Justice, hate crimes committed against Muslims have peaked and are comparable to the rates that followed 9/11 (Pavetich & Stathi, 2021). These reports cause concern because Muslims are expected to become the majority religion by 2050 and their population is growing (Poushter, 2015). If tensions are not resolved, negative perceptions and violence are likely to worsen as the number of Muslims rises. Therefore, it is crucial to understand why Muslims are the focus of such overt bigotry (Pavetich & Stathi, 2021).

The Current Programme of Research

The PhD programme of research consists of three studies: Study 1 (Chapter 2) and Study 2 (Chapter 3) are qualitative studies designed to develop the content of the virtual intergroup contact intervention. Study 3 (Chapter 4) evaluated the effectiveness of the intervention. The final chapter of the thesis (Chapter 5) discusses the overall contribution of the PhD research to the body of knowledge, limitations and future directions.

Study 1: Qualitative Study with Non-Muslim White Britons in the UK

Chapter 2 reports a qualitative study conducted to examine the perceptions of Non-Muslim White British individuals regarding their attitudes towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. The main objective of the study was to identify the underlying factors contributing to negative intergroup attitudes among White Britons towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK, so that responses to these could be included in the intervention.

The study specifically examines the experiences of Non-Muslim White Britons in relation to key factors that mediate the effects of intergroup contact on reducing negative intergroup attitudes. These factors include two cognitive mediators: knowledge of the outgroup and ingroup norm, as well as two affective mediators: intergroup anxiety and intergroup threat. Findings from the study informed the design of Study 2.

Study 2: Qualitative Study with Muslims of Middle Eastern Descent in the UK

Chapter 3 reports a qualitative study conducted among Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK to generate answers to questions of Non-Muslim White participants from Study 1. The study also addressed topics that were not previously

explored in Study 1: personal characteristics, superordinate goals, experiences of racism and prejudice and their ingroup norms regarding Non-Muslim White people in the UK. These topics were included to inform the development of an intergroup contact intervention based on Pettigrew's (1998) three-stage intergroup contact model, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

The primary objective of this study is to explore the perspectives of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent regarding the issues raised by Non-Muslim White participants in the initial study, aligning with the overarching goal of developing a comprehensive understanding of intergroup dynamics and facilitating positive intergroup attitudes. Findings from this study informed the design of Study 3, which is the design and evaluation of the virtual intervention.

Study 3: Virtual Intergroup Contact Intervention Study with Non-Muslim White Individuals in the UK

Chapter 4 reports the design and evaluation of the effectiveness of a virtual intergroup contact intervention to reduce intergroup bias among Non-Muslim White individuals towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. Drawing on qualitative Studies 1 and 2, the intervention took the form of simulated conversations with avatars representing Muslim Middle Eastern individuals. These avatars expressed their views on specific issues through pre-prepared text, engaging participants in dialogue and inviting their thoughts and questions. The intervention specifically targeted two cognitive mediators, namely knowledge of the outgroup and in-group norms, and three affective mediators, including intergroup anxiety, intergroup threat, and empathy, as well as superordinate goals.

Justification for Using Online Surveys in Phenomenological Studies 1 and 2

Given the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which precluded face-to-face interactions, and the initial reluctance of Non-Muslim White Britons in the pilot study to participate in voice-recorded discussions about Muslims, employing online surveys with open-ended questions emerged as a viable and effective method for collecting qualitative data in both qualitative studies. This approach allowed for the safe, remote participation of individuals while respecting participants' privacy concerns. Online surveys also offered a less invasive and more accessible means for participants to express their views and experiences concerning sensitive topics covered in the studies, as well the opportunity to recruit participants across the country.

Strengths of Online Surveys for Qualitative Data Collection

Accessibility and Convenience. Online surveys enable participation from a broader demographic and geographic range, overcoming the logistical challenges of traditional face-to-face methods. They offer participants the flexibility to respond at their convenience without scheduled face-to-face or online interviews, potentially increasing participation rates.

Anonymity and Comfort. The anonymity provided by online surveys can encourage more honest and open responses, especially on sensitive and controversial topics. Participants may feel more comfortable sharing their experiences without the pressure of a live interviewer.

Cost-Effectiveness. Conducting surveys online reduces the costs associated with paying participants for live interviews or focus group discussions (FGDs).

Uniform Methodology. Using the same online survey method for both studies ensured methodological consistency for all participants.

Limitations and Implications

Lack of Depth. While open-ended questions can elicit rich textual data, online surveys may not capture the full depth and nuance of participants' experiences and emotions compared to interactive methods like interviews or FGDs.

Misinterpretation of Questions. Without the immediate clarification that live interviews provide, participants may misunderstand or misinterpret open-ended questions, potentially affecting the quality of responses even though pilot studies were conducted to assess the face validity of the questions and make necessary adjustments.

Limited Rapport. The impersonal nature of online surveys limits the ability to build rapport with participants, which is often crucial for encouraging detailed and meaningful responses in qualitative research.

Implications for Intervention Design

Despite these limitations, the qualitative data collected via online surveys provided valuable insights into the nature of stereotypes, prejudice, and the lived experiences of participants. These findings informed the subsequent design of interventions aimed at reducing negative attitudes and fostering positive intergroup contact intentions among groups. The strengths of online surveys, particularly the alternative it provided for participants to express themselves freely, which would not have been possible given anonymity concerns, outweighed the limitations. These strengths contributed to the development of targeted, evidence-based interventions.

Impact of Covid 19 on the Programme of Research

The COVID-19 pandemic, declared in March 2020, significantly impacted research activities, necessitating rapid adaptation to new circumstances. This unforeseen global event coincided with the PhD program that began in October 2019, causing delay and affecting the methodology and execution of studies within the programme.

Impact on Study 1

Originally planned to explore the perceptions of Non-Muslim White British individuals towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK, data collection for Study 1 was conducted in November 2020. The timing of data collection fell during a period of heightened social and health-related anxieties due to the pandemic. To accommodate restrictions and ensure the safety of participants, the study shifted from face-to-face interactions to an online qualitative survey. This adaptation allowed the research to continue despite lockdowns and social distancing measures.

Impact on Study 2

Study 2, which aimed to capture the perspectives of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK, faced similar challenges. Conducted between March and April 2021, this study also resorted to an online qualitative survey approach. The timing coincided with ongoing lockdowns and a critical period in the pandemic when vaccine rollouts were just beginning, and uncertainty was still rampant. The shift to an online platform for this study not only ensured the continuity of research but also provided a safe environment for participants to express their views without the risk of virus transmission.

Study 3 and the Utilization of Virtual Methods

The pandemic's impact was perhaps most instrumental in shaping the execution of Study 3. The virtual intergroup contact intervention study, conducted from February to August 2022 (as low recruitment rates necessitated several rounds of data collection), was designed to leverage the virtual format from the onset. With a target to engage 1200 participants across the UK, the virtual nature of the intervention proved advantageous. It facilitated nationwide recruitment, allowing for a broad and diverse participant base and overcoming the geographical limitations that traditional face-to-face methods would have faced during the pandemic. This approach not only adhered to the necessary safety measures but also expanded the potential reach of the study, demonstrating the power of digital platforms in conducting large-scale research.

Overall Impact of COVID-19 on Research

The pandemic necessitated a significant shift towards online research methodologies across these studies. While initially challenging, this shift ultimately showcased the potential for virtual platforms to conduct meaningful and wide-reaching research. The pandemic underscored the importance of flexibility, adaptability, and innovation in research methodologies, revealing that even in times of crisis, research can continue to flourish. These studies, conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, contribute to the growing body of knowledge on how crises can catalyze methodological innovation and expand the possibilities for research engagement and data collection.

Chapter Two

Introduction

"The whole of humanity is like a single body. If one part is afflicted with pain, the whole responds with discomfort and fever." - Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib

This chapter reports the qualitative study of Non-Muslim White Britons in the UK and their perception of feelings towards and ingroup norms about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. The aim of the study was to explore the factors responsible for negative intergroup attitudes of Non-Muslim White Britons towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK, so that content addressing these factors could then be integrated into a virtual intergroup contact intervention to improve attitudes towards this group. Hence, conducting qualitative studies becomes necessary to uncover the issues important to the groups, while being guided by mediators identified in extant literature.

Specifically, the study explores how White Britons experience key mediators of intergroup contact, encompassing two cognitive mediators: knowledge of the outgroup and in-group norms, and two affective mediators: intergroup anxiety and intergroup threat. The third affective mediator, empathy, highlighted in Chapter 1, is not applicable to this study. Empathy is intended to elicit feelings of sympathy towards the outgroup that is subjected to stereotype and prejudice, therefore, questions on empathy are directed at Muslims of Middle Eastern descent to explore their lived experiences in the UK that may help Non-Muslim White individuals see issues from Muslims of Middle Eastern descent's perspective.

Study Objectives

The specific objectives of the current study were to explore the a) knowledge/perceptions; b) intergroup anxiety; c) realistic and symbolic threat; d) ingroup social norms of Non-Muslim White Britons towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK.

Methods

Design

The phenomenological approach was employed for the study. This offers a tool for qualitative in-depth exploration of participants' experiences. By focusing on the lived experience, phenomenology provides insights into the essence of phenomena to understand the myriad ways in which participants experience, perceive, and interpret their world. Asking participants to describe their perceptions and thoughts about a specific group's personal characteristics, work, and general life aligns with the phenomenological approach within qualitative research. Phenomenology focuses on exploring and understanding individuals' lived experiences and the meanings they attribute to those subjective experiences from the perspectives of participants (Lester, 1999; Merleau-Ponty, 2012). By asking open-ended questions, the study aims to uncover the essence of participants' perceptions and beliefs about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK to understand depth of these subjective experiences.

As highlighted in Chapter 1, COVID-19 pandemic made face-to-face interactions impractical, coupled with the initial hesitation among potential pilot study participants to engage in recorded discussions about Muslims. Consequently,

the adoption of online surveys featuring open-ended questions stood out as a practical and effective method for data collection. This method allowed the secure and remote involvement of individuals, honouring their privacy concerns in the process. Furthermore, online surveys presented a non-intrusive and more approachable avenue for participants to articulate their perspectives and experiences on the delicate issues addressed in the study. To ensure the authenticity and reliability of the online data collection, measures were implemented, including digital consent forms, anonymity assurances, and validation checks to verify participant responses.

Participants

The population of study were Non-Muslim White Britons who have spent most of their lives in the UK. Thirty participants were sampled to include people who identified as Non-Muslim White Britons, who are 18 or above, and who have spent most of their lives in the UK. Because there was a breach in anonymity of one participant, 29 data transcripts were analysed. Braun & Clarke (2013) recommend using data from 10-50 people when analysing participant-generated text with thematic analysis. Hence, the 29 transcripts were deemed adequate. See table 1, Chapter 2 for a summary of demographics.

Table 1, Chapter 2
Participants Demographics

Sample size	29
Age	
Mean	35.69 years
SD	13.34years
Range	18-74
Years lived in UK	

Mean	35.66 years
SD	13.30 years
Range	18-74

Gender

Male	6 (20.69%)
Female	23 (79.31%)

Sampling Procedure

The sampling method was primarily based on convenience sampling via Prolific—a paid online research participant recruitment platform. The platform identified and suggested the study to potential participants who met the inclusion criteria of White Briton, aged 18 years or above, and non-Muslim. Interested individuals were further filtered through Qualtrics software to ensure strict adherence to these criteria. This approach allowed for the ease of recruitment of sample participants who were willing to partake in the study.

Participant Recruitment

The study was ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Department of Psychology (REF 035920) before recruitment via Prolific. Potential participants were informed that they would be asked about their perceptions, beliefs and feelings about Muslims of Middle Eastern Descent in the UK, and what they would like to know about the cultural and religious practices of this group. Potential participants were informed that they would be required to provide their demographic information. They were also informed that they would be paid £4.38 for their time.

Data Collection

The questions focused on Knowledge of, feelings about and ingroup norms about relating with Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent living in the UK. The questions were constructed in simple English language for easy comprehension and interpretation, after which necessary changes were made based on feedback from the pilot study to ascertain the Face Validity of the questions. The list of questions is presented in Table 2, Chapter 2 and an edited sample of the study questionnaire is presented in Appendix 1.

Specifically, the questions were designed to explore the mediators of intergroup contact as experienced by the participants. Qualitative data was collected via an online survey using an open-ended questionnaire in November 2020.

After signing up for the study, participants were presented with the study information sheet and gave electronic consent to participate in the study. Participants were then presented with the questionnaire, and were asked demographic questions, including ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender and age. Participants were routed out of the survey if they did not meet the inclusion criteria. Questions were presented in the order detailed in Appendix 1. Participants were then presented with the debriefing information, and awarded their participation payment of £4.38, the going rate for 35minutes on Prolific, which was decided as appropriate time required after pilot study.

Table 2, Chapter 2

Questions for Study with Non-Muslim White Britons

Mediator: Knowledge
Please describe what you think a typical Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK is like in terms of personal characteristics, work and general life.

Please describe what UK society thinks a typical Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK is like in terms of personal characteristics, work and general life.

Please select which of the following you would most like to know about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK and their religion or culture. You can select more than one: religion, daily life, food, clothing, family and other relationships, music, housing arrangements, language and arts.

For the options selected in the previous question, can you please describe what you would like to know about these aspects of the culture or religion of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK and why?

Is there anything else (not already described above) that you would like to know about the culture or religion of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK, which you would be reluctant to ask in a face-to-face or public conversation? Please describe below if so.

Mediator: Anxiety

How much anxiety do you feel when you interact with, or there is a possibility of you interacting with Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK?

(If your response to the above question is "None at all") Please explain why you do not feel this anxiety. (If your response to the above question is between "A little" to "A great deal") Please explain why you feel this anxiety.

Mediator: Threat (realistic)

To what extent do you think Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a physical safety or security threat to White people in the UK?

(If your response to the above question is "None at all") Please explain why you do not think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent pose a threat. (If your response to the above question is between "A little" to "A great deal") Please explain why you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent pose a threat.

To what extent do you think Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a political power/balance threat to White people in the UK?

(If your response to the above question is "None at all") Please explain why you do not think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent pose a threat. (If your response to the above question is between "A little" to "A great deal") Please explain why you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent pose a threat.

To what extent do Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the job and economic opportunities of White people in the UK?

(If your response to the above question is "None at all") Please explain why you do not think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent pose a threat. (If your response to the above question is between "A little" to "A great deal") Please explain why you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent pose a threat.

Mediator: Threat (symbolic)

To what extent do you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent living in the UK pose a threat to the held values and beliefs of White People in UK?

(If your response to the above question is "None at all") Please explain why you do not think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent pose a threat. (If your response to the above question is between

“A little” to “A great deal”) Please explain why you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent pose a threat.

Mediator: Ingroup Norm

Please describe what White people in the UK would think about other White people having a positive relationship/friendship with Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK.

Please explain your answer to the above question.

Please describe what the likely reaction from other White people in the UK would be if you were to avoid, be unfriendly or unfair towards Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK.

Please explain your answer to the above question.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted using Nvivo software 1.5 (2021). The survey employed open-ended questions, which were designed to explore the issues under study. To structure the data analysis, the study's objectives were used as the primary nodes in the initial deductive coding process, followed by the inductive coding and themes development. The detailed process of the analysis is explained below.

Thematic Analysis Process

The process of thematic analysis entails pinpointing recurring patterns or themes within textual data. This methodological approach incorporates both deductive reasoning, starting from pre-defined concepts, and inductive reasoning, emerging naturally from the data. The procedure for conducting thematic analysis on this study's qualitative data adheres to the six-phase framework established by Braun and Clarke (2006), with additional considerations:

Data immersion. Initially, the study's transcripts were reviewed multiple times for a comprehensive understanding of the participants' responses and to deeply grasp the content's essence.

Deductive Initial Coding. Using the study's research questions as a foundation, initial codes were developed as a means to organize the data in the preliminary analysis phase. Each study objective was coded as a tree node/folder (e.g., "*Feelings about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK*"), while the corresponding open-ended questions for each objective were designated as sub-nodes (e.g., "*To what extent do you think Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a physical safety or security threat to White people in the UK? Please explain your reasoning for this perception*").

Inductive Identification of Codes. Subsequently, the initial, deductively-derived codes in the sub-nodes were examined for specific content attributes. This stage involved interpreting and categorizing the data based on emergent insights. Hence, the content within the sub-nodes informed the process of further coding by subdividing and labelling them accordingly into further nodes. These nodes were systematically broken down and refined until no additional nodes could be discerned.

Theme Development. Related codes gathered within different nodes were then aggregated to form overarching themes, facilitating the organization of data into meaningful clusters. The themes were named based on mediators of intergroup contact that served as the deductive bases of coding/organizing in the initial phase of data analysis given that the study aims to explore participants' lived experiences regarding intergroup contact mediators identified in extant literature. Additional theme names were generated from the features of the data itself. Thus, themes were

named based on contact mediators and the inherent characteristics of the data. Ensuring that the themes' names retain the labels of contact mediators is crucial for guiding readers through how these mediators shaped the research programme from inception to conclusion.

Theme Review. The nascent themes were scrutinised for coherence and consistency, with the terminology used for theme names refined to encapsulate each theme's core concept accurately.

Development of a Thematic Map. A thematic map was created to visually depict the interconnections among the identified themes, thereby streamlining the findings' presentation in an organized and comprehensible manner.

Writing the Narrative. The narratives inherent within the data were articulated, with data excerpts employed to substantiate the identified themes.

Validation of Themes. The authenticity of the derived themes was reassessed by revisiting the data, ensuring their resonance with the participants' shared experiences. Efforts to recognize and mitigate personal biases were integral to the analytical process given the importance of reflexivity.

Justification for Employing Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a “powerful yet flexible” (Kiger & Varpio, 2020: 1) tool for delving into the intricacies of rich, multifaceted, and contextually-bound phenomena. Its methodological flexibility is conducive to addressing a broad array of research inquiries and data forms. Unconstrained by any singular theoretical framework,

thematic analysis permits researchers to tailor the approach to their study's specific demands.

This method offers considerable flexibility in deciding the research questions to be addressed, selecting data sources, determining the scope of data analysis, and choosing theoretical or epistemological orientations. It also allows analysing data using either a deductive, theory-driven approach or an inductive, data-driven approach (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Such flexibility, combined with the ease of application, makes thematic analysis particularly accessible to both novice and experienced researchers alike. It supports the distillation and highlighting of key data features, enabling an in-depth exploration of latent meanings and patterns. Consequently, thematic analysis not only facilitates a profound understanding of the phenomenon under study but also serves as a foundation for various other qualitative analytical methods.

Given these attributes, the decision to utilize thematic analysis for interpreting the qualitative data of this study was a natural conclusion. As a fundamental aspect of numerous qualitative methodologies, the organization of information into thematic constructs is intrinsic to the qualitative research process (Riger & Sigurvinsdottir, 2016).

Strengths of the Thematic Analysis Approach

Broad Applicability. The adaptability of thematic analysis allows for its application across diverse research fields, addressing a wide range of questions and data types. This versatility ensures alignment with specific research goals (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Ease of Use. The method's straightforward process and independence from dense theoretical frameworks render it accessible to researchers of all experience levels, fostering depth and rigor in analysis.

Rich Insights. Thematic analysis's comprehensive data engagement and thematic development offer deep insights into data, uncovering the complexities and nuances within participants' experiences.

Theoretical Flexibility. The approach's openness to various theoretical perspectives allows researchers to integrate findings with a broad spectrum of conceptual frameworks, enriching the analysis.

Detailed Data Interaction. The iterative nature of data immersion and coding in thematic analysis ensures a thorough examination of the dataset, revealing subtle themes that might be overlooked otherwise.

Authentic Representation. Emphasizing reflexivity and thematic validation enhances the interpretive validity of the findings, ensuring that the themes authentically reflect the data and resonate with participants' experiences.

Limitations of Thematic Analysis

Despite these strengths, thematic analysis is not without its challenges. The method's inherent flexibility can sometimes lead to variability in the quality and rigor of the analytical process, contingent upon the researcher's methodological diligence and theoretical sophistication. In addition, owing to the flexibility of thematic analysis, it is prone to the values and beliefs of those who use it, just like any qualitative methods.

Additionally, the intensive nature of the data immersion by reading interview transcripts repeatedly and coding process can be laborious and time-consuming, requiring a significant investment of effort and attention to detail, and the emergence of consistent or recurring themes may prove difficult (Riger & Sigurvinsdottir, 2016).

In conclusion, thematic analysis stands as a cornerstone methodology within qualitative research, prized for its flexibility, accessibility, and depth of insight. When applied with methodological rigor and reflective practice, it holds the potential to yield rich, nuanced understandings of complex phenomena, thereby contributing valuable perspectives to the academic discourse.

Results and Discussion

The study aimed to explore the perceptions of Non-Muslim White Britons in the UK regarding Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. Specifically, the study objectives were to explore participants' experiences concerning mediators of contact, namely: outgroup knowledge, intergroup anxiety, intergroup realistic and symbolic threat, as well as ingroup norms regarding Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. A visual representation illustrating the data interrelations can be found in Figure 1, Chapter 2. Some typographical and grammatical errors in the data have been corrected for legibility and ease of reading.

Cognitive Mediators

Participants' responses were predominantly positive views of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in terms of their personal characteristics, work ethic, family values, and general life. However, participants reported a contrasting negative

perception of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent held by other Non-Muslim White Britons. This negative perception was associated with concerns related to religious extremism, terrorism, perceived lack of patriotism, and the belief that this group poses a threat and burden to the UK.

Regarding the perception of how the general UK society would react to unfair treatment of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, participants expressed varying opinions. Some believed such unfair treatment would be condemned, while others thought it might be welcomed and justified. The detailed findings are reported below.

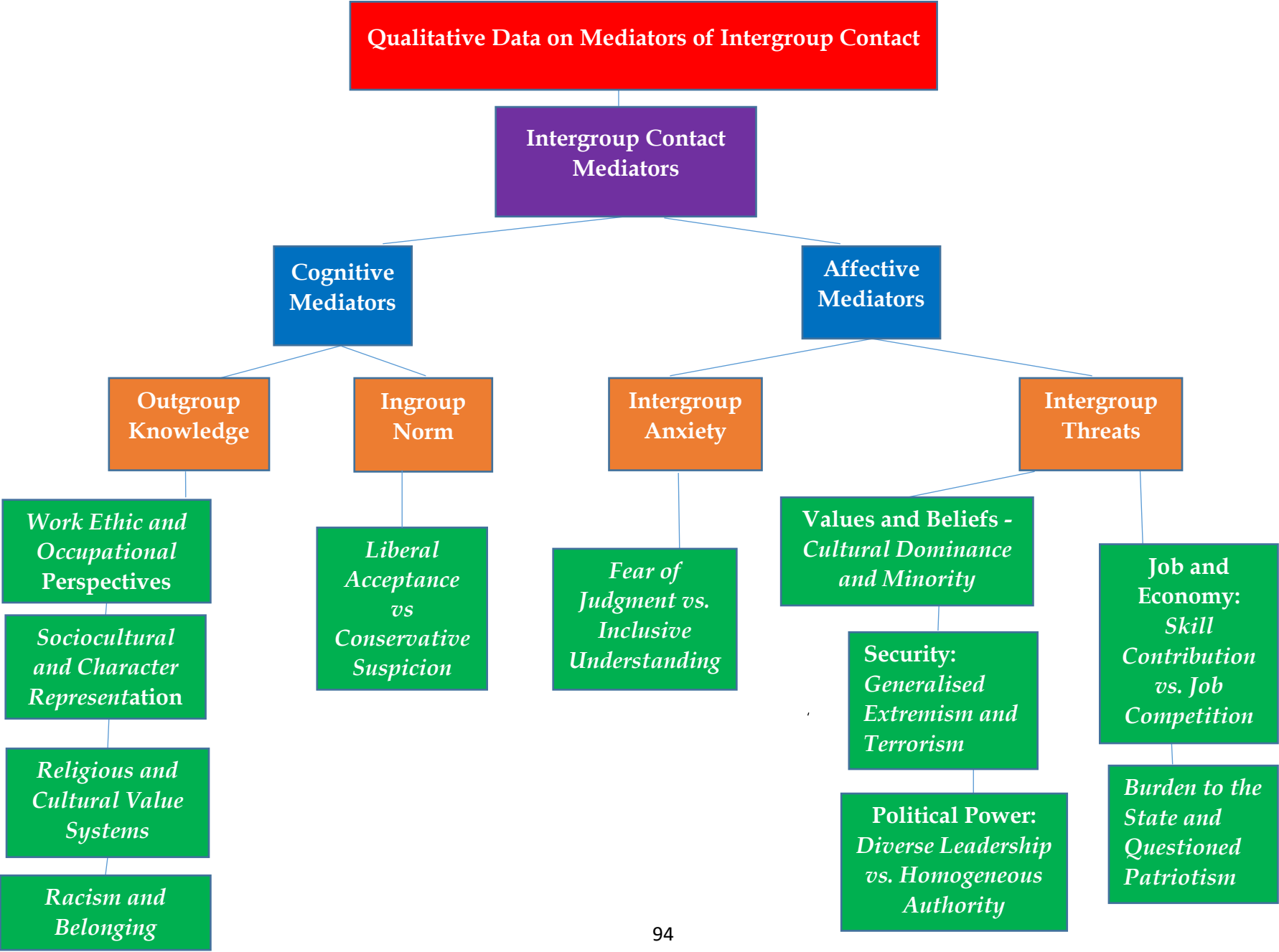
Outgroup Knowledge

Work Ethic and Occupational Perspectives. Participants shared their perceptions and thoughts about a typical Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK in terms of personal characteristics, work and general life. The data are presented below under sub-themes.

Work Attitude. Participants' views about work attitude were mixed but generally positive, highlighting characteristics of being hardworking, having a strong work ethic, and being respectful in the workplace.

From my experience, they are very respectful in the workplace, referring to people with formal titles and being respectful when asking questions or explaining topics (Participant 19).

Figure 1, Chapter 2: Representation of Data Interrelations



Some participants noted that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent work in low-paying jobs.

They are very hard working and can be in low-paid jobs or possibly could be in a high position in a company. They often work long hours in lower-paid jobs or run small businesses such as convenience shops (Participant 2).

Some participants however noted that in addition to working in low-paying jobs, Muslims of Middle Eastern descent could be criminals:

Likely to be in lower-paid work or criminal (Participant 26).

Sociocultural and Character Representation. Societal perceptions as reported by participants when asked to describe thoughts of people in the UK about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent were largely negative, bothering on negative attitude, terrorism, job and economic concerns. Some participants believe that people in the UK hold negative perceptions, attitudes and behaviours towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent.

I think UK society views typical Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent as a lower priority as if they are worth less in terms of jobs, provisions and respect than other groups (Participant 19).

Stereotypical Views. Another sub-theme from the data is the stereotypical views of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent held by Non-Muslim White individuals.

Muslims tend to be stereotyped due to ignorance and made into potential bombers by the public. Muslims from Pakistan or anywhere else are labelled as Pakis and the off-licence or small food shop is often labelled the Paki shop (Participant 3).

Poor Character. Participants opined that people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent have poor character. This was another sub-theme that emerged from the data.

UK society has a very negative impression of Muslim people. Thinking they are rude, arrogant and sex offenders due to the widespread publicity of the Muslim case (Participant 3).

Some participants think that this poor character includes ill-treatment of women, which is informed by strict religious beliefs.

Some believe that they are too strict in their religious beliefs, and so do not treat women well (Participant 18).

Religious and Cultural Value Systems. Perception of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent's culture and religion

Family Values. Virtually all participants reported that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent have strong family values. Some participants highlighted that roles within the family are well set out and that family ties are closely knitted.

I would imagine that a Muslim family is a very close-knit family where each member has a specific role to play when the family is more old-fashioned in nature. This can also be said of other ethnicities, however modern Muslim families I am sure are very similar in respect to White families, sharing similar characteristics and outlooks in life (Participant 12).

Living Arrangement. Some participants recounted that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent live with extended family members in large households, and their households are male-dominated where the men work outside the home, and the women are homemakers.

I would say from experience that a typical Muslim would live in a big house often with many other family members (Participant 3).

Perhaps male-dominated in that men go out to work for money and women are homemakers and look after children (Participant 7).

Some participants also believe that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent live mainly where there are similar ethnic minorities, which may be a result of alienation from the rest of the society:

I believe that they could potentially feel alienated from the UK population and so they could value community (and anything that gives a sense of community such as religion, family etc.) more than the average White UK citizen who feels fully represented in the UK (Participant 4).

Marriage and Gender Relations. Some participants want to know about women's rights, the state of arranged marriages, women's dressing, and the relation between men and women. These responses are presented below:

Do women feel like they have less rights? Are their marriages arranged and how do they feel about this? How do they feel about wearing face coverings/burkha? (Participant 18).

I would like to know what is expected from women, specifically young single unmarried women. I know opinions can change but I would be interested in what the

general expectations really are. E.g., focus on education, arranged marriages etc. (Participant 30).

Religious Practice. Some participants view the religious adherence of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in comparison to others in terms of how it makes them espouse good values.

I don't really understand much of the Muslim religion. But I believe it is a strict religion and yet a compassionate one as well. I understand that most Muslims practice their religion, whereas many White people don't - unless they too are Muslim (Participant 1).

In my experience, Muslims of Middle Eastern descent tend to be quite spiritual and tend to be led by their religious beliefs (Participant 19).

They have strong religious beliefs, which lead them to make positive contributions to society (Participant 6).

Racism and Belonging. A major sub-theme is about the experiences of racism. Participants were asked to indicate other things they would be interested in knowing about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living in the UK. Responses range from why their religion is fixated on extremism, women's rights, and what they feel about living in the UK to their experience of racism. Some participants asked to know about the experiences of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living in the UK, if they feel welcomed, and well-represented, and how life in the UK compares to where they came from.

Nothing else really, I suppose how some feel about living in the UK and whether they feel that can truly be themselves and belong (Participant 14).

Whether they feel welcomed, represented, and considered as a citizen of the UK, and how we can do better (Participant 5).

Other participants want to know about their experiences of racism in UK and how it has impacted their lives.

Do they perceive all (or most) White people as racist? Have they experienced racism? Are there things people do that they perceive to be racist, which they think people don't realise they are doing? (Participant 20).

I would want to ask about experiences of racism in the UK and how it has impacted their lives and how they feel about British society (Participant 9).

There are also views that White people think Muslims are different and that Muslims are more at the receiving end of racism.

People tend to have racist attitudes, particularly towards Muslim people (Participant 29).

It depends who you ask. Most people would say the same as I did (I think), however, there will be certain people in society who are racist and would therefore think that Muslims are different and have different motivations to white people (Participant 20).

Some of these participants are of the opinion that the real difference lies in how members of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are treated rather than differential characteristics.

I would strongly hope and do believe that a lot of people recognise that the differences between white people living in the UK and Muslims living in the UK are slight in terms of characteristics and the real difference is in treatment (Participant 17).

On Knowledge of Muslims of Middle Eastern Descent in the UK

The findings offers a nuanced understanding of intergroup relations within the UK, revealing a spectrum of perceptions, ranging from positive personal beliefs to negative societal stereotypes. This shows the complexity of intergroup dynamics. Hence, the complex interplay of personal and societal perceptions held by Non-Muslim White Britons towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent.

Family values, work ethic and religious adherence emerged as areas where participants expressed generally positive views, indicative of respect and admiration for these attributes within the Muslim community. This tends to suggest some positive encounter between members of the groups. However, there are perceptions of negative stereotypes, such as those relating to extremism, women's rights, integration within UK society, and criminal behaviours with an agenda to change the UK and a burden to the government. This underscores the influence of societal narratives and media representations on shaping perceptions (Entman, 2007). The negative views about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent is supported by twenty years secondary data and surveys in Britain and France, which showed that there has been a rise in negative attitude towards Muslims over the last four decades. Compared to other religious groups, Muslims are seen as distant outsiders and highly suspected, (Bleich, 2009). Amongst other factors, the media representation of Islam as a terrorist ideology is implicated in the negative attitude that people in the West hold towards Muslims (Benzehaf, 2017; Konitzer et al., 2019). Indeed, some participants argued that the media play a key role in perpetuating these beliefs. Therefore, the positive personal perceptions juxtaposed against the negative societal beliefs thus highlight a

dissonance attributable to the lack of meaningful contact between these groups, which reinforces the necessity for contact interventions that foster such interactions. Hence, contact-based interventions effectiveness may be increased by directly addressing and challenging such negative and broadly held stereotypic beliefs, which makes exploring these issues in a qualitative study before intervention design apt.

The theme of living arrangements revealing a preference for community and extended family living among Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, potentially perceived as alienation by the Non-Muslim White British participants, suggests a misunderstanding of cultural practices. This finding speaks to the importance of contact interventions that highlights cultural diversity, which can enhance understanding and appreciation for diverse living arrangements and their underlying values (Sue, 2001).

Integrating media literacy content in contact interventions to educate individuals on critically evaluating media content could help to differentiate between stereotypical representations and reality (Kellner & Share, 2007) and mitigate the impact of negative stereotypes perpetuated through media representations of Muslims.

Participants also indicated that they would like to know more about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent cultures and religion, their feelings about living in the UK and their experiences of racism. Participants' desire for more knowledge about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent and their culture, religion, and experiences suggests an openness to engage and learn. This presents an opportunity for the development of educational interventions that provide accurate information about

Islamic practices, the diversity within Muslim communities, and the challenges they face, potentially fostering empathy and reducing prejudice (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). The expressed curiosity about aspects of Muslim culture and religion, coupled with concerns about discussing these topics openly, highlights the need for safe spaces for intercultural dialogue, which virtual intervention can provide. Hence, an opportunity for creating structured virtual intergroup contact intervention that facilitate open and respectful conversations, incorporate intercultural education that focus on the diversity of Muslim cultures and the principles of Islam could address knowledge gaps and reduce the reliance on stereotypical assumptions, which potentially increase understanding and reduced prejudices (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Ingroup Norms - Liberal Acceptance versus Conservative Suspicion

The exploration of social norms regarding Muslims of Middle Eastern descent among Non-Muslim White Britons reveals a complex interplay of acceptance, suspicion, and outright discrimination. Participants responded to questions about Non-Muslim White Britons's ingroup norms regarding Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent. The responses are presented below:

Non-Muslim White Briton's Attitudes toward Positive Relations with UK Muslims of Middle-Eastern Descent. Participants were asked to describe what Non-Muslim White Britons would think about fellow Whites having positive relationship with Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent.

Some participants stated that positive relationships would be seen as a good thing and people will be accepting of it:

I think the majority of people would think that it was a good and normal thing and not anything unusual (Participant 11).

While some participants believe that such relationships would be disapproved of:

Sometimes in the work place it is frowned upon. Different race groups stick to each other and going to sit with a Muslim would be a non-event, (Participant 23).

Other participants believe that people will find such relationship confusing and they will be suspicious of it:

I think many people would be suspicious and genuinely confused if a white person was friends with a Muslim (Participant 13).

Generally would be viewed with suspicion, whites and Muslims do not mix outside of work except in very multicultural areas (Participant 26).

Some of the participants are of the opinion that people do not hold strong opinions about such relationships, except if it is about marriage:

I genuinely think the majority of British people don't think about colour or religion when it comes to friendships. Maybe in the case of a marriage it would cause more questions, people might worry about a white woman being expected to wear a headscarf, (Participant 18).

Most of the responses revolved around the opinion that what people would think about such relationships will depend on the people around, where some people would be accepting of such relationship while others would not:

It kind of depends really. Some White people are more Liberal and open minded and it would never even be an issue or identified as such. Some White people would take the mick and give jibes about the situation and make stupid comments. Some think they are being funny but they are not. I do think its a very English stance as even after all the

years have passed from world war 2 they are still bringing up the war with the Germans
(Participant 3).

Generational differences in beliefs were raised by some participants, such that people of older generation were seen as potentially less comfortable with such relationship compared to younger people:

Most white people would have no problem with this, and even though some people (most likely of older generations who are less acclimatised to interacting with people from different cultures) may initially feel uncomfortable, they would be fine with it
(Participant 6).

I think some, possibly older people might think this was not right but I think this is something that is historical. For my generation I think it is less controversial
(Participant 7).

Location in the UK was also stated as another factor that can determine people's reaction to positive relationship with Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK:

I think this is dependent on what region of the UK people are from rather than as a whole and certain demographic factors, however I think at least half the population may think white people who have relationships with Middle Eastern Muslims may criticise and look down on this out of fear **(Participant 16).**

Some participants mentioned media persecution as a factor that can influence white people's attitude towards such relationships:

Due to the media's persecution of Muslims, some white people may perceive them as a threat and so be nervous when other white people don't believe that they are
(Participant 17).

Non-Muslim White Britons' Attitudes toward Negative Treatment of UK

Muslims. Participants gave varied responses on the reaction they would get from fellow Non-Muslim White Britons if they were unfriendly or unfair to Muslims of Middle Eastern descent.

Some participants reported that they would be challenged if their behaviour towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent were found to be unfriendly and unfair:

To avoid Muslims (unless it became obvious) would likely garner no reaction, but to be unfair or unkind would likely result in someone bringing it up in conversation in a negative light (Participant 6).

Most of the participants stated that the reaction would be mixed depending on where the situation takes place and kind of people present:

I think in certain areas it would be accepted or celebrated but in other, perhaps more diverse areas, it would be called out and frowned upon (Participant 19).

People who treat everyone fairly would want to stop me from being unfriendly to Muslims as they'd believe everyone should be treated equally regardless of their ethnicity. There would also be some people who would believe that Muslims deserve to be treated in this way, so they'd either allow me to behave like this without intervening, or they'd act in the same way (Participant 9).

Some participants indicated that unfriendly and unfair behaviours towards would be deemed acceptable:

The majority of the population would not be bothered and would probably encourage and condone this behaviour (Participant 13).

People are racist all the time and no one does anything (Participant 28).

Aside the convictions of people, other reasons given to explain for reactions that people will exhibit if Non-Muslim White Britons were unfriendly and unfair to Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK is people's level of education, socialisation experiences and the influence of the media:

More educated and possibly left wing British would be upset by this. Most people are racist in my opinion in this country (Participant 13).

People have differing views depending on aspects such as their upbringings, cultures and surroundings (Participant 2).

While some participants opined that there is still religious and ethnic division in the society:

I believe there still is a significant divide in the country with regards to race and religion (Participant 23).

The UK is currently split between those who want to maintain the British way of life, and those who feel we should pander to every minority, losing our own identity in the process (Participant 26).

On Ingroup Norms about Muslims of Middle-Eastern Descent in the UK

Participants gave mixed responses when asked about their group norms towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. While some participants believed that having a positive friendship/relationship would not be a problem, others believed that the UK Non-Muslim White Britons would treat such relationships with suspicion. Some explanations participants gave include the influence of Muslim persecution by the media, cultural differences and level of education, where the more educated would be less racist. However, research has shown that both high and low-educated

individuals are antagonistic to immigration (McLaren & Johnson, 2007). Similarly, some participants believe that if a White person were to avoid, be unfriendly or unfair to Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, there would be approval of it. Participants stated that this is due to past terrorist attacks in the UK involving individuals who are Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, which is the reason people have prejudice towards them. This finding can be explained by fairness norms usually prevent people from exhibiting blatant prejudice, unless the group is considered deserving of it, for example, terrorists (Mucchi-Faina et al., 2009), as outgroup dehumanization is mediated by how immoral such outgroup is perceived as compared to the in-group (Pacilli et al., 2016). Common ethno-centrism in the UK and Canada aside, a survey study on stereotypes found a rise in anti-Muslim sentiments due to the media's portrayal of Middle Eastern compared to other immigrants especially in UK (Konitzer et al., 2019).

To address issues on ingroup norms towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK, virtual intergroup contact intervention should address stereotypes and misconceptions perpetuated by the media. This could involve presenting accurate information and statistics about immigration, showcasing stories of positive contributions made by Muslims to British society, and highlighting instances of successful intercultural friendships and collaborations (Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Intervention content should emphasise the concept of fairness norms and the dangers of outgroup dehumanization (Crisp & Turner, 2009; Paluck, 2009).

The intervention could also leverage testimonials from Muslims who have faced prejudice to promote empathy and perspective-taking, encouraging participants to put themselves in the shoes of the outgroup can foster empathy, reduce prejudice, and promote more nuanced understandings of complex issues like immigration and integration (Batson et al., 1997; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000).

Affective Mediators

Participants recounted their emotions towards Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent over a range of issues. These are presented below.

Anxiety - Fear of Judgment vs. Inclusive Understanding

There are mixed reports about experiencing anxiety during interactions or in situations where there is a possibility of interacting with Muslims of Middle Eastern descent.

Participants who reported feeling anxiety towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent gave explanations that included experiences and cultural differences

Spent some time in Egypt and was warned about being robbed or attacked etc. They dress differently and talk in a foreign language, don't feel like they are part of, or proud of the country (Participant 26).

Some participants stated that they experience such anxiety because they feel Muslims of Middle Eastern descent do not like them and their lifestyle, and therefore could judge them:

Because I think they don't like me, because of the way I live my life and practice my religion. I am not afraid that I think they are going to cause me harm (Participant1).

Participants who reported not feeling anxiety towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK gave explanations that this outgroup are just like anyone else.

The participants' response below stated that despite the representation from the media, such generalisation is not logical and that there are bad people everywhere:

Because despite the media and general fear I would consciously recall the lack of logic involved with these beliefs and recognise the person I was intersecting with as an individual not a part of a group who the media and other source have encouraged fear against (Participant 17).

I interact with all people in the same way. Unless I have reason to not trust them. But that would not be based on where they are from. There are bad people in all societies (Participant 10).

Some participants recounted their positive lived experiences with Muslims.

I have been surrounded by Muslims for a large majority of my life, throughout education and during daily life. There are mosques in my area and as stated previously some of my closest friends follow Islam. I have never felt forced into discussing religion and the majority of the time this is not in our conversation. I have learnt that there is a maturity in addressing certain topics if they make you uncomfortable or anxious however as this is not my experience I have no reason to feel this way (Participant 30).

Experiencing Anxiety

Participants who experience anxiety regarding Muslims of Middle Eastern descent often trace these feelings back to apprehensions about potential harm, as well as concerns over rejection and being judged negatively. Anxiety towards outgroups can significantly diminish empathy levels, making individuals less empathetic

towards members outside their own group compared to ingroup members (Arceneaux, 2017). This phenomenon, coupled with the perceived exclusion by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, may help explain the bias exhibited by some White individuals in the UK, as ostracism is hurtful even if it is from a loathed outgroup (Gonsalkorale & Williams, 2007).

The anxiety expressed by participants towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, fueled by fears of judgment and concerns about personal safety, highlights the influence of both global events and local incidents on personal and community-level relationships. The application of social identity theory elucidates how distinctions between 'us' (in-group) and 'them' (out-group) are integral to understanding these anxieties. It underscores the importance of identity and the sense of belonging in the formation of attitudes towards those perceived as different or outside the norm (Tajfel & Turner, 2004, 2010). Moreover, media representation plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions and either exacerbating or alleviating intergroup anxieties. Studies indicate that negative portrayals of Muslims in the media contribute significantly to the development of Islamophobic sentiments and stereotypes (Saeed, 2007). Therefore, virtual intergroup contact intervention that highlight the media role and address negative representations of Muslims could serve as steps towards reducing unfounded fears and fostering a more inclusive society.

Safety and Security - Generalised Extremism and Terrorism Perception

Participants who believe that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent pose this threat gave reasons that range from citing past events of attacks, their belief that there

are extremists in every human group to role of the media and that some Mosques spread extremism.

Some participants simply stated the past events as evidence that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are a threat:

Sadly, terrorism does seem to stem from the countries in the Middle East against a western way of life. This is a very small minority of those people in my opinion but they do exist (Participant 21).

I chose a little as a pose to none at all as there is a very small chance of a terrorist sympathiser taking action such as at the Ariane Grand Concert or as has recently happened in France so none at all didn't seem to be the correct answer but it is a small chance (Participant 11).

Some participants mentioned specific issues such as evidence that some Mosques spread extremism, and that there are paedophiles who come from the group:

Radicalised Terrorist groups - though small numbers, there is evidence of mosques spreading extremism (Participant 26).

There is no denying that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent have a strain of violent extremism in their communities that pose a threat to everyone it's just realistic to acknowledge this. Also the paedophile gangs that have come from those communities also (Participant 8).

Most of the participants who reported not to perceive this threat about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent believe that Non-Muslim White Britons can also pose threat to fellow Whites, but Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent who pose threats get more news coverage:

Lots of different people pose a threat to people, white people also pose a threat to white people, I don't think that Muslims pose any more or less of a threat than anyone else, we just see more Muslims that are a threat on the news (Participant 17).

They pose no threat. Extremists are a minor part of the ethnic group - just as white people have their own group of extremist groups i.e. the IRA (Participant 23).

Some of the participants believe it would be unfair to generalise such threat to Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent:

It would be an unfair generalisation to say that people in the Middle East pose a threat to safety. There may be a small minority that do but it would be the same of any culture or place (Participant 25).

Some participants reported that people in the UK see Muslims of Middle Eastern descent as religious extremist and terrorists, who are also determined to convert people to Islam.

UK society believes that many Muslims are religious extremists and are ripe to be indoctrinated by ISIS (Participant 13).

There are some people who might perceive Muslims as a threat, think that they do not belong here, that they hold extreme beliefs (Participant 17).

I can't answer for others, because I don't know how other White people feel about Muslims in the UK. But I think many will be prejudice against Muslims, especially those of Middle Eastern descent because of Muslim fundamentalist, who have committed atrocious crimes in the UK and other Countries. This frightens me, so I imagine others will be frightened too and this tends to cause suspicion against Muslims (Participant 1).

There are also views that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are believed to have aim of converting people to Islam in addition to being terrorists:

That any Muslim's aim is to convert people to their religion by any means necessary. That they could have bad intentions e.g. terrorism etc. (Participant 30).

Participants seek to know why their religion is fixated with extremism, and if the ideology behind it is similar to that of Non-Muslim White people joining extremist groups.

I would likely be interested in how sections of their religion can become so fixated with extremism and are they far removed from the majority of Muslims or is there some relation to the religious doctrines that they follow that includes this. I would imagine and from hearing Muslims speak this is not so, but I would be interested to see what the answer would be. Also what do they think would cause a family member or friend to be influence in such a way. Is it similar to White people who decide to join extremist groups or is it more common than that (Participant 12).

Threatened Physical Safety and Security

The perception of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent as threats to physical safety and security in the UK, particularly in light of past terrorism activities by individuals identified with this group, underscores a significant issue of stigmatization. Participants in the study pointed out the role of media in amplifying the association between Muslim identity and religious extremism or terrorism. This media-driven focus not only exacerbates anxieties and fears towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent but also embeds terrorism as a salient characteristic of their

identity, leading to widespread stigmatization (Benzehaf, 2017). The phenomenon of generalization, where negative incidents involving members of a stigmatized outgroup are broadly applied to the entire group, while positive incidents are more likely to be attributed to respected outgroups, further deepens this issue (Paolini & McIntyre, 2019).

To combat this problem, a deliberate effort to counteract the generalization effect is essential. Hence, contact interventions highlighting positive stories and contributions of Muslims in the UK could serve as a counter-narrative to the prevalent negative stereotypes. Such interventions should provide accurate information about Islam and its teachings on peace and coexistence to help dismantle the misconceptions linking the religion to extremism. The intervention should further encourage interfaith dialogues to break down barriers of misunderstanding and fear. This can encourage direct interaction and communication between Muslims and non-Muslims to foster a mutual understanding that can challenge and eventually change prejudiced views (Abu-Nimer, 2001).

The portrayal of Muslims in media often emphasizes negative stereotypes, particularly around issues of terrorism and extremism. This not only reinforces existing prejudices but also exacerbates the perception of Muslims as a realistic threat. Historical events, such as terrorist attacks, have been pivotal in shaping public opinion and fear, despite the actions of a few not representing the broader Muslim community. Understanding the role of historical context and media narratives is essential in deconstructing the sources of perceived threats (Powell, 2011). Thus, virtual contact interventions can help people understand the mechanisms through which media

shapes perceptions so that individuals can become more discerning consumers of media, and less susceptible to the influence of sensationalist and biased reporting (Kellner & Share, 2007).

Political Power - Diverse Leadership vs. Homogeneous Authority

Explanations given for political power balance threat include that all religions pose a threat and that the threat people feel about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent is actually perceived due to cultural and political differences.

Again, I do not think they pose much threat, instead, I think it is more of a perceived threat by the UK due to cultural and political differences. Just because there is a difference in views does not mean there is actually any conflict, it is only the individual perception of this, which causes conflict (Participant 16).

Other explanations given include the belief that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent have different views, can upset the current power balance, and that they will change rules if they are voted into political offices:

They have different beliefs and hold different values to a western culture. I don't believe that it is necessarily a big threat but there will be an adjustment in the UK rules over time based on the number of non-Christian people in the country (Participant 21). As numbers grow, Muslims are being voted into positions of power and are able to change the country to suit them. Political correctness means that if you say anything against a Muslim it can be classed as hate speech (Participant 26).

Some participants stated not to have given it a thought before. Other participants are of the opinion that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are the ones being threatened due to discrimination:

Muslims probably feel more politically threatened due to the discrimination they face so how could they be the threat? (Participant 17).

A number of participants opined that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent politics should be diverse and representative of the people, hence, more Muslims of Middle Eastern descent should be in political offices:

If anything, political representatives could use more diversity, parliament is overrun with White British men who prove time and time again they will only care about themselves and hurt those in minorities to help themselves (Participant 19).

Others believe that if Muslims are voted for, then it is the will of the people, not threat:

I chose none at all as I do not think a threat is correct as public figures and parties are voted for, if Muslims are elected then that is not a threat but the will of the people (Participant 11).

Other participants believe that people's thought processes are the same and everyone wants what is best for the country and that the privilege White people enjoy cannot be overturned:

They do not pose a threat because their thought process is the same as ours - we all want what is best for the country. There are not enough Muslims represented in politics as it currently stands (Participant 23).

White people already have privilege in the UK and this is very unlikely to be overturned by any other culture (Participant 9).

Perceived Threat to Balance of Political Power

"There will be an adjustment in the UK rules over time". Findings from the current study indicate that some participants believe Muslims of Middle Eastern

descent pose a threat to the balance of political power in the UK, such that Muslim people may be able to control and change the country. This view corroborates the notion that immigrants are not trusted (Lee & Fiske, 2006), which perhaps make Non-Muslim White Britons see Muslims of Middle Eastern descent as not just an outgroup but also a political outgroup, that is, an outgroup who poses political threats. Correlational and experimental studies have shown that there is a perception of moral distance between political ingroups and political outgroups, leading to the dehumanisation of the outgroup (Pacilli et al., 2016). In particular, perceived realistic threat makes Muslim immigrants to be infra-humanized (that is, regarding one's ingroup as fully human while denying essential attributes of humanity to out-groups) more than their non-Muslim immigrants in the UK (Banton et al., 2020) underscoring the belief by some Non-Muslim White Britons that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are a particularly significant threat to UK political space.

In addressing the concern that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent may pose a threat to the balance of political power in the UK, a virtual intergroup contact intervention should include content that highlight the democratic values and political contributions of Muslims within the British context. Incorporating examples of Muslims who actively participate in civic and community engagement, advocate for social justice, and contribute positively to the political landscape can challenge the notion of them as a political outgroup (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Educational content that showcases the history of Muslim contributions to British society can also help to humanise this group and emphasise shared values of democracy, freedom, and equality. By presenting Muslims of Middle Eastern descent as integral members of the

UK who share common goals for the country's prosperity and well-being, the intervention can reduce perceived threats and foster a sense of shared identity.

Using superordinate goals, virtual intergroup contact content should be structured around topics such as common challenges within local communities, shared aspirations for the country's future, and ways to collaborate on social and political issues (Pettigrew et al., 2011). Highlighting instances where Muslims and non-Muslims have worked together successfully to address community issues or advocate for policy changes can provide concrete examples of positive intergroup collaboration (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2014a) which can reduce the moral distance between the groups and consequently, dehumanization and inhumanization of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent may be reduced.

Job and Economy - Skill Contribution vs. Job Competition

Participants gave explanations to why they believe Muslims of Middle Eastern descent pose threat to job and economic opportunities of White Britons.

Some participants believe that the more people available to work, the more competition there will be for the available jobs:

The more people who want or need a job in the UK the more competition for each job (Participant 2).

Some participants stated that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent might bring other factors to the job market such as ability to speak more languages, willingness to work for longer hours, and better education:

I opted for the middle choice as I like to think that there are equal opportunities so everyone has the same chances. My own chances might be affected as I may not be as

well educated or speak as many languages or willing to work such long as hours as some of the Muslims I have known (Participant 11).

Other participants however believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK get jobs because of their culture and religion, and will not be able to get certain job due to limited English language ability and education:

In some businesses (e.g. restaurants, even chains, it is impossible to get a job unless you are Muslim, but generally, they would be a second choice for skilled employment due to English skills and Education (Participant 26).

Below are some of the explanations participants gave for not perceiving Muslims of Middle Eastern descent as a job and economic threat.

Some participants believe that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent bring additional skills and more qualifications to the job market because they have qualifications that are needed for certain jobs, without which there will be a shortage of workers to fill some positions:

This argument could be used against any of the minority groups of Britain today, but there is no economic threat. In fact, as a generalised view, many Muslims tend to be incredibly qualified in roles such as doctors and lawyers, which need a specific set of qualifications to become. Most white people that tend to make this argument don't have these qualifications, so the jobs that they are 'stealing' are unavailable to those complaining in the first place (Participant 6).

I have looked into this slightly and listened to this being discussed on the radio. I do not see this as a threat at all, but I see additional skill sets being brought into the workplace to enhance and assist the current framework (Participant 12).

Other participants believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent bring diversity to the workplace:

Everyone is entitled to work, and often the people best for the jobs are chosen. I do not think ethnic groups steal jobs. I also think diversity in jobs and economics is a good thing (Participant 16).

Yet other participants believe that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent actually own businesses and create jobs:

If we're talking about first or second generation immigrants, statistically they are more likely to create jobs, pay more tax, and contribute more to the economy. For everyone else, they're more likely to experience prejudice and racism that restricts or slows their progress and job prospects, which should be a concern, not a threat (Participant 5).

Some arguments centres on the fact that there are enough jobs to go round, and that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are more hardworking and willing to take jobs that other people do not want.

There are lots of jobs to go round plus many Muslim people tend to have their own businesses and make job opportunity's for other people. At the end of the day if you work hard and do well you will get a job. If you are to lazy to get of your arse then it's easy to blame someone else (Participant 3).

I believe that most Muslims are harder working than their white counterpoints and are more willing to take jobs than most British (Participant 13).

While some participants stated that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent pose no more threats than Europeans, and that there are other factors that threaten the job market than immigrants.

They pose no more threat than Europeans (Participant 10).

Threats to the UK economy or jobs market are not due to immigration or migration of people from other countries. There are many other factors at play (Participant 25).

Some participants are of the opinion that Non-Muslim White Britons in the UK see Muslims of Middle Eastern descent as those taking jobs away from Britons.

I think that some (not all) think that most Middle Eastern people are immigrants who are taking White peoples jobs. They also do not understand their religious needs (Participant 23).

At work they would likely see them as a threat to their own security rather than seeing them complementing their skills or enhancing the skills of the workforce. Perhaps there is a slight mistrust at times from a section of the UK population (Participant 12).

Another major sub-theme is that Muslims of Middle Eastern Descent are seen as economic burden to the Government. Some participants think UK people see Muslims of Middle Eastern descent as those who take jobs that should be meant for Britons, others believe that what bothers the UK society about this outgroup is the economic implications of their living and working in the country.

They believe that they have very large families and get given very large council houses which they don't have to pay for as they have come here to live off the state (Participant 13).

That they claim benefits or come here for an 'easier' life. That they come here to earn more money but send lots of it back and essentially just take from the system/economy without fully using that wealth in our economy (Participant 21).

Another sub-theme is that White people reportedly believe that Muslims of Middle Eastern Descent will not be patriotic towards the UK due to their differing values and beliefs:

I think (this is not my opinion) people in UK society think that a typical Muslim of Middle Eastern descent might not have the same patriotism to the UK as they do because they possibly hold different values and beliefs. I think some people in the UK might see this as problematic because they believe it does not correlate with their own values and beliefs but I think with education they might see that we have similar values (Participant 7).

Threatened Job Opportunities and Economic Burden to the State

Some participants believe that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent pose job and economic threats because the more people who want jobs the more competition there will be for the available jobs, reducing Britons' chances of gaining employment. Others believe that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are an economic burden on the government. Anxiety about outgroup reduces empathy towards outgroup members, (Arceneaux, 2017), and such reduced empathy can be worsened by the innate tendency to desire privileged treatment for in-group members, which motivate outgroup discrimination, (Brewer, 1999). Economic downturns and social instability

can heighten the perception of realistic threats, where minorities are often scapegoated for broader societal issues. The perception of Muslims competing for jobs and resources taps into economic insecurities within the majority population, amplifying fears of displacement and loss (Esses et al., 2013).

To effectively address the perception of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent as job and economic threats in the context of a virtual intergroup contact intervention, it is imperative to incorporate content that dispel myths regarding employment competition and economic burden. Highlighting the economic contributions of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent to the UK, including entrepreneurship, workforce diversity, and cultural enrichment, can challenge stereotypes and demonstrate their role in enhancing the national economy. Virtual contact intervention can also showcase the positive impact of Muslim immigrant communities on innovation, job creation, and filling critical skill gaps in various sectors (OECD, 2020). By presenting evidence-based information, participants can gain a more nuanced understanding of the economic dynamics and the mutual benefits of a diverse workforce, reduce misconceptions and fostering a more comprehensive understanding of how economies thrive on diversity and inclusion (Bove & Elia, 2017).

Values and Beliefs - Cultural Dominance and Minority Influence

Participants gave reasons why they believe that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent pose a threat to British values and beliefs, some of which are presented below. Some participants believe that having Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK means more differing values and beliefs, which will influence the country:

Who is in the UK affects the culture of the UK, therefore held values and beliefs can change if there are more differing values and beliefs than there was before (Participant 2).

As they grow in number they are having more influence in the country, using hate speech legislation to stop others speaking out against them (Participant 26).

Other participants stated that religion adherents try to change people's values and beliefs, as well as grooming people to join extremists groups:

I believe, as with any religion there is always a small fear that some could follow their own path and attempt to alter other people's values and beliefs. However, I believe this to be as little of a threat as the vast majority I don't believe to have this intention (Participant 30).

I think there is a small threat to people being groomed to join groups that might want to cause harm to white oriole living in the UK (Participant 7).

Other participants made reference to the attitude of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent towards sexual minorities:

As mentioned before the attitudes towards sexual minorities is bad, however that is more of a problem with humanity in general than with this specific religion/culture (Participant 4).

Reasons given by participants to explain why Muslims of Middle Eastern descent pose no threat to the values and beliefs of White people in UK include are presented below:

Some participants stated that the presence of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent does not pose threat to White people in the UK:

I do not think their presence should affect the values and beliefs of White people. However would an increased influx of any other culture have an effect on the culture

of the UK as a whole. I guess it would if it were of a certain amount, regardless of that culture. Would this be an issue? I am not sure. Possibly, but in saying that I feel that what I have said would go against my own beliefs where we are all one species and all deserve the same rights (Participant 12).

Values and beliefs of people are a human right, as long as no one's rights are put down or restricted there is no threat, and it is somewhat to do with mutual respect of these values and beliefs which protect opposing opinions (Participant 16).

Some participants stated that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent and White have some shared values and beliefs, and that changes can be made where there are differences and where some values are not healthy without it being seen as a threat.

I think some of the values and beliefs of White people (particularly pride in 'The Empire' without acknowledgement of all the damage and distress we have caused to countless people throughout history) are pretty crummy and maybe should be threatened/examined. A lot of the positive values and beliefs across both groups are similar and that if we worked together we could build a better, stronger society, despite what divisive press would have some believe (Participant 5).

Some of the participants submitted that a multicultural society is good, and thus, different values and beliefs should co-exist and adapt:

I do not think there is a threat but there has to be some give and take to enable us to live together and appreciate each other's beliefs and customs (Participant 11).

We are a multicultural culture we can adapt and change without it being a threat (Participant 8).

While some participants however opined that White value and beliefs are dominant and people will strive to preserve it.

It's hard to imagine white people's culture under threat when it is so clearly dominant and there are clearly people who are going to work hard to preserve it without stopping to wonder if it is even worth preserving (Participant 17).

Threat to Values and Beliefs

“Who is in the UK affects the culture of the UK”. Some participants believe that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent have differing values and beliefs, which will influence the country, as well as grooming people to join extremists groups that will want to harm Non-Muslim White Britons in the UK. Beliefs such as Muslims of Middle Eastern descent potentially grooming people for terrorism can partly explain the negative attitude towards them by Britons. Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory (2004, 2010) posits that individuals derive a part of their self-esteem from their group memberships. When Non-Muslim White Britons perceive Muslims of Middle Eastern descent as a threat to their group's status or values, this can lead to discrimination as a means of protecting the ingroup's prestige. Although, the current study did not make a time comparison, a previous study with twenty years of secondary data and surveys in Britain and France showed that there is a rise in negative attitude towards Muslims compared to past decades from 1980s when compared to other religious groups, and they are seen as distant outsiders with suspicion (Bleich, 2009). Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are perhaps seen as outsiders and suspected because of media agenda setting and representation of them, which creates a stereotype about the culture of Islam and Muslims (Benzehaf, 2017). This media agenda setting is

confounded by Britons' seeming perception of Muslims as both symbolic threats to British customs and traditions, and realistic threats to ingroup resources (McLaren & Johnson, 2007).

Concerns about symbolic threats often stem from fears of losing one's cultural identity and values. This is exacerbated by a lack of understanding and interaction between communities, leading to the perception of cultural dilution (Verkuyten, 2005). To mitigate the perceived threat to values and beliefs that some participants associate with Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, it is crucial to design a virtual intergroup contact intervention that fosters mutual understanding and respect. Incorporating content that demystifies Islamic beliefs and practices, showcasing the diversity within the Muslim community, and highlighting shared values between Muslims and the broader British society can be effective in challenging stereotypes and reducing perceived threats (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Including information about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent contribution to British society in various capacities can humanise the group and dispel myths related to extremism (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). This can underline the common ground between communities, such as a shared commitment to peace, justice, and societal well-being. Contact intervention content can also include historical contributions of Islamic civilization and philosophy highlight the positive impact of Islamic culture globally, including in the West (Lyons, 2010; Turner, 1974). By appreciating the contributions of Muslims throughout history, participants may recognize the unfounded nature of fears related to the erosion of British values and beliefs. To address the concern of grooming for extremism, contact intervention

should explain the vast difference between the peaceful teachings of Islam and the ideologies of extremist groups, highlighting the efforts within Muslim communities to counter extremism and promote peace (Awan, 2017; Esposito, 2010).

The Next Study

The next qualitative study would involve exploring Muslims of Middle Eastern descent perspectives on the issues raised in the study with Non-Muslim White Britons. They would be asked about Middle Eastern cultures, Islam, motivation to practice Islam and how religion influence their daily lives. The responses will inform part of intervention programme to be designed for Non-Muslim White individuals to correct possible misconceptions and improve attitude towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. This strategy is intended to addresses misconceptions, fosters empathy, promotes factual knowledge, enriches content authenticity, and tackles bias roots. This approach emphasizes the importance of genuine insights to bridge intergroup gaps, ensuring the intervention reflects real experiences and challenges stereotypes by aiding a nuanced understanding and meaningful attitude shifts among Non-Muslim White individuals towards Muslims.

Conclusion

This study sets out to explore the factors responsible for negative attitudes by Non-Muslim White Britons towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. The study illuminates the complex landscape of perceptions held by Non-Muslim White Britons towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, revealing both positive

personal beliefs and negative societal stereotypes, pointing towards knowledge gaps, anxieties, and stereotypes as key areas for intervention.

Participants indicated a desire to find out more about the rules guiding marriage and gender relations among other issues, as well as how Muslims of Middle Eastern descent feel about living in the UK. Participants also indicated interest in knowing the reasons for religious adherence and extremism among Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. The study data also show that some of the symbolic and realistic threats participants feel about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent centre around negative judgment about them and security threats, being an economic burden to the country and altering the political and sociocultural order.

While some participants believe the general UK society would condemn unfairness towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, others believe that such unfairness would be welcomed and justified because of past terrorism that involved Muslims. There is a belief by participants that extremism is a principle of the Islamic faith. These findings underscore the need to address these factors in the virtual intergroup contact intervention. By addressing the specific areas of concern identified in the study, such as misconceptions about Islamic faith and concerns over national security, the intervention aims to foster empathy, reduce anxiety, and encourage positive perceptions among Non-Muslim White individuals towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent.

Therefore, findings presented in this Chapter informed the design of the qualitative study with Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. Hence, Chapter

3 presents the qualitative study where issues raised by Non-Muslim White Britons in the current study are responded to by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent.

Chapter Three

Introduction

“Cultural differences should not separate us from each other, but rather cultural diversity brings a collective strength that can benefit all of humanity” Robert Alan.

This chapter reports a qualitative study of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK, and their responses to the findings of the study with Non-Muslim White Britons reported in Chapter 2. The aim of the study was to explore the perspectives of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent to the issues raised by Non-Muslim White Britons. The content from both Chapter 2 and 3 will then be integrated into a virtual intergroup contact intervention to improve attitudes towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK.

Specifically, the study explores how Muslims of Middle Eastern descent respond to questions relating to key mediators of intergroup contact. These are two cognitive mediators: knowledge of the outgroup and ingroup norm, and three affective mediators: intergroup anxiety, intergroup threat and empathy; as well as superordinate goals. Participants were asked to generate goals they were willing to collaborate on with Non-Muslim White individuals in the UK.

Mediators of intergroup contact were explored by asking participants to respond to the issues raised by Non-Muslim White Britons reported in Chapter 2. As discussed in Chapter 2, empathy was not informed by findings from study with Non-Muslims White Britons. Empathy is the ability to experience other people’s emotional state, such as having compassion for or feeling distressed over someone’s negative situation (Birtel et al., 2018). Hence, the intervention content on empathy was about narrating the reported lived experiences of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent. To

generate content that can elicit empathy in the intervention, Muslim participants were asked to recount instances of racism and prejudice experienced by themselves and/or fellow Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK. The reported experiences informed part of the intervention to help Non-Muslims White individuals have compassion for Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent. This did not require any prior questioning from Non-Muslim White Britons in Study 1, unlike other mediators that were focused on the anxiety and threats they feel about the outgroup- Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent, or the knowledge they have about them. Questions on ingroup norm was also not informed by previous findings from Study 1 as participants in both qualitative studies were simply asked to report their respective norms.

Other two themes of questions in the current study that were not informed by the previous study in Chapter 2 are; personal characteristics and perceived superordinate goals. These themes were added as the findings of the current study informed an intergroup contact intervention, which was designed in line with Pettigrew's (1998) intergroup contact model. As discussed in Chapter 1, Pettigrew's three-stage model include de-categorization, focusing on individual traits to promote liking and reduce anxiety; salient categorization, emphasising group characteristics for positive affect generalisation to the outgroup; and re-categorization, replacing group identities with a superordinate identity. Hence, the inclusion of personal characteristics and perceived superordinate goals questions was to explore these issues for stages 1 and 3 of the intervention respectively. Thus, personal characteristics

and perceived superordinate goals informed the intervention content on de-categorisation and re-categorisation respectively.

Study Objectives

The specific objectives of the current study were to explore a) participants' values, beliefs and interests; b) aspects of Muslim Middle Eastern culture; c) perspectives about the reported beliefs and stereotypes held by Non-Muslim White Britons; d) ingroup norms about relations with Non-Muslim White individuals; and e) perceived superordinate goals of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK and Non-Muslim White individuals.

Method

Design

The phenomenological approach provides a method for qualitative researchers seeking to delve into the richness and intricacy of human experiences. By concentrating on lived experiences, phenomenology elicits profound insights into the core of phenomena, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the diverse manners in which individuals encounter, comprehend, and construe their reality.

Soliciting participants' insights and reflections on the distinct attributes, work life, and daily life of a particular group is emblematic of the phenomenological paradigm within qualitative inquiry. This approach dissects and comprehend the lived experiences and the subjective significances individuals ascribe to these experiences, viewed from their unique perspectives (Lester, 1999; Merleau-Ponty, 2012). Through employing open-ended questions, the study aims to elucidate the fundamental nature

of participants' viewpoints and convictions regarding their lived experience in the UK to understand these subjective experiences.

As stated in Chapter 1, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic rendered face-to-face approach unfeasible, coupled with the initial apprehension among Non-Muslim White British participants in the pilot study towards engaging in recorded discussions concerning Muslims. Consequently, online surveys with open-ended questions was employed for data collection. This facilitated the secure and remote involvement of individuals. Moreover, online surveys provided a non-intrusive and more accessible avenue for participants to express their perspectives and experiences on the issues raised in the study.

To guarantee the genuine quality and dependability of the online data-gathering process, protocols were put in place. These included the use of electronic consent forms, guarantees of participant anonymity, and verification procedures to confirm the accuracy of participant submissions.

Participants

Participants were 68 people in total who identified as Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent, who had lived in the UK for at least 1 year. See Table 1, Chapter 3 for a summary of demographics.

Table 1, Chapter 3
Participants Demographics

	Study		
	A	B	C
Sample size	22	24	22
Age			
Mean	27.18 years	26.86 years	27.73 years
SD	7.84 years	6.84 years	6.30 years
Range	19-48	19-44	19-37

Years lived in UK

Mean	12.73 years	9.56 years	10.34 years
SD	9.18 years	7.88 years	9.79 years
Range	1-29	1-23	1-31

Gender

Male	11 (50%)	10 (41.67)	11 (50%)
Female	11 (50%)	14 (58.33)	11 (50%)

Sampling Procedure

The sampling method utilised convenience sampling, facilitated by the recruitment of participants via Prolific—a paid online research participant recruitment platform. The platform identified users who matched the inclusion criteria of being Muslim, of Middle Eastern origin, aged 18 years and above, and having lived in the UK for at least one year. Those who expressed interest in participating were subsequently filtered using Qualtrics software, ensuring that participants met the study's specific criteria. This method provided a straightforward way to access a sample of participants who were available and interested.

Participant Recruitment

The study was ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Department of Psychology (REF 038117) before recruitment via Prolific. Potential participants were informed that they would be asked about their beliefs, feelings and experiences as a Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK, as well as common perceived beliefs of Non-Muslim White individuals in the UK about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent. Potential participants were also informed that they would be required to provide their demographic information. They were also made aware that they may find some of the

questions offensive, but the questions were essential to the objectives of the study, and that they would be paid £6.25 for their time.

Data Collection

The questions focused on characteristics of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK comprising of values, beliefs and interests, as well as other mediators of contact and perceived superordinate goals. These mediators include knowledge of the outgroup, ingroup norm, intergroup anxiety and, intergroup threat and empathy. Specifically, the questions were designed to explore the mediators of intergroup contact as experienced by the participants. The questions were constructed in simple English language for easy comprehension and interpretation, after which necessary changes were made based on feedback from a pilot study to ascertain the Face Validity of the questions. The list of questions is presented in Tables 2, Chapters 3, 3, Chapters 3 and 4, Chapter 3. Samples of the study questionnaires are presented in Appendix 2, 3 and 4 with details of explanations and sensitivity warnings presented along with the questions.

Qualitative data was collected via an online survey using an open-ended questionnaire between March and April 2021. After signing up for the study, participants were presented with the study information sheet and consent form to read and formally agree to participate in the study. Participants were then presented with the questionnaire to complete, and given debriefing information afterwards. After participants completed the questionnaire, they were awarded their payment of £6.25, the going rate for 50minutes on Prolific, which was decided as appropriate time required after pilot study.

Due to the high number of questions needed to ask in the study, the questions were split across three different participant samples of groups A, B and C to reduce burden and possible fatigue. Sixty-eight participants- 22, 24 and 22 respectively participated in studies A, B and C. Braun & Clarke (2013) recommend using 10-50 people when analysing participant-generated text using thematic analysis.

Group A Study

The questionnaire consist of sections on knowledge, threat, anxiety and empathy.

Table 2, Chapter 3

Questions for Study with Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in Group A

Mediator: Knowledge

Please describe with a few examples, the characteristics of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK in terms of the following:

Values - the things that you believe are important and that guide the way you live and work.

Beliefs - firmly held opinion and assumptions about the world.

Interests - the things that excites you and the things you will love to engage in for work and pleasure.

Some White people in the UK would like to know more about Islam to confirm if what they know about the religion is true and also because they think the media can give a biased perspective of this religion. With this in mind, please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them better understand Islam.

Some White people in the UK would like to know more about Islam, particularly relating to what motivates Muslims to practice Islam.

Please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them better understand Islam.

Please describe any other information about Islam that you think is relevant or useful for White people in the UK to know.

Please describe what daily life looks like in your culture. For example, what kinds of activities do people engage in on a daily basis and why; what are the unique traditions associated with your culture and why?

Please describe how religious restrictions affect the way you live your daily life.

Please state any other information about daily life in your culture that you think is relevant or useful for White people in the UK to know.

Some White people in the UK would like to know how marriage and family work in your culture for the following reasons: to clear their misconceptions about marriage and dating, and to understand how family and relationships work compared to other groups especially as family groups are perceived to be quite large. Please describe what dating, marriage and family life looks like in your culture, and why you think these are most common.

Please state any other information about family and other relationships in your culture that you think is relevant or useful for White people in the UK to know.

Some White people in the UK would like to know whether it is the case that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK live in large households with extended family members, and if so, why? Please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them better understand your culture.

Please state any other information about housing arrangements in your culture that you think is relevant or useful for White people in the UK to know.

Some White people in the UK would like to know more about Arts in your culture. Can you describe what kind of Arts are common in your culture (e.g., including art collections, music, dance and drama), and why you think they are common?

Please provide any other information about the arts in your culture that you think is relevant or useful for White people in the UK to know.

Please mention a common name in your culture and religion for both male and female genders (asked to generate names for the intervention avatars).

Mediator: Threat (realistic)

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK are sex offenders against women, and that they engage in ill treatment of women, which is informed by strict religious belief. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK say that there is evidence that some Mosques spread messages of extremism. How would you respond to this?

Some White people in the UK would like to know if extremism is related to Islamic teachings and principles. Please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them better understand Islam.

Mediator: Anxiety

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK have negative characteristics that include being rude, obnoxious, dishonest, secretive, arrogant, and aggressive. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Mediator: Empathy

Please describe an incident or incidents of racism or religious prejudice that you or other Muslim Middle-Easterners have experienced or that you have observed, and describe the impact that it has had on your life, so that White people in the UK can understand this from your perspective.

Group B Study

The questionnaire consists of sections on knowledge, empathy, perceived superordinate goals and threats.

Table 3, Chapter 3

Questions for Study with Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in Group B

Mediator: Knowledge
Are women as important as men in Islam? Please explain.
Please describe how you think women feel about wearing head coverings/burkha?
Is arranged marriage practised and why?
Some White people in the UK believe that wives in Islam walk behind their husbands. Please explain the reason behind this practice in Islam.
Please provide any other information about gender relations that you think is relevant or useful for White people in the UK to know.
Please describe the views that you think White British people hold about your culture (e.g., religion, daily life, food, clothing, family and other relationships, daily life, music, shelter, arts and language).
What would you tell people who may hold such views, in order to demonstrate that the views they hold about your culture are incorrect or oversimplified?
Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK are committed to religion. Please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them understand that religious commitment is important in Islam.
Mediator: Empathy
How have people's views and behaviour towards you (as a Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent), affected your life in the UK?
What could White people in the UK do to improve this?
Do you feel welcomed and considered as a UK citizen? Please explain.
Some White people in the UK would like to know about your experiences of racism in the UK. With this in mind, please answer the following questions.
There are negative ways you are viewed and treated as a Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent living in the UK. How does this make you feel?
Please describe any difficult situation that you or other Muslim Middle-Easterners are experiencing, because of your religion or ethnicity, which you want White people from the UK to know about.
Taking another person's perspective can be an effective way of uniting people from different groups. With this in mind, how would you like White people in the UK to see the above situation from your perspective?

Do you perceive all (or most) White people as racist? Please explain why.

Some White people in the UK hold negative attitudes and beliefs towards Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK. These include perceptions that Muslims are worth less and of lower priority. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Mediator: Perceived Superordinate Goals

What goals do you consider important enough that can make people of your culture and religion, and other cultures and religions, put aside their differences in order to work together as a team?

Why do you consider the goal(s) identified above important?

Mediator: Threat (realistic)

How would you respond to the belief by some White people in the UK that there are paedophiles among Muslims of Middle -Eastern descent in the UK which make people from your culture a potential source of threat to the UK?

Mediator: Threat (symbolic)

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK are not patriotic towards the UK, because they have different values and beliefs. Please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help dispel these beliefs.

Group C Study

The questionnaire consist of sections on ingroup norm, threat, anxiety, and empathy knowledge.

Table 4, Chapter 3

Questions for Study with Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in Group C

Mediator: Ingroup Norm

Please describe what Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK would think about other Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent having a positive relationship/friendship with White people in the UK.

Please explain your answer to the above question.

Please describe what the likely reaction from other Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK would be if you were to avoid, be unfriendly or unfair towards White people in the UK.

Please explain your answer to the above question.

Mediator: Threat (realistic)

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK live in council houses that they do not pay for; take benefits from the government which they are not entitled to and live off the state. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK work to send money to their home countries instead of spending the money in the UK economy. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK are religious extremists (i.e., they are terrorists, can be indoctrinated to become ISIS terrorists or groom other people to join, they are potential bombers and that they have aim to convert people to their religion). Please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them better understand Islam.

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to White people in the UK because of past events where some identified members of the group have been involved in terrorism, and that there are people with strains of violence in this group. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK believe that the presence of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the job and economic opportunities of White people in the UK due to the following reasons: the more people who want jobs, the more competition there will be for the available jobs, and Muslims of Middle Eastern descent take jobs that should be given to White people. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK believe that the presence of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the job and economic opportunities of White people in the UK due to the following reasons: White people may not be as educated, be able to speak more languages or be willing to work as long hours as Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK, which means that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK may get jobs ahead of such White people. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK believe that the presence of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the job and economic opportunities of White people in the UK due to the following reason:
People cannot get jobs in certain businesses such as restaurants or chains, unless they are Muslims. How a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK believe that the presence of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the political power or balance in the UK due to the following reason: there is the potential for some laws in the UK to be changed in order to accommodate the lifestyles of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK. How would you respond to this?

Some White people in the UK believe that the presence of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the political power or balance in the UK due to the following reason: it is believed that if Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK are voted into political offices in the UK, they will have the power to change the country. How would you respond to this?

Mediator: Threat (symbolic)

Some White people in the UK believe that having Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK means more differing values and beliefs, which will pose a threat to the held values and beliefs of White people in the UK. How would you respond to this?

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK try to change people's values and beliefs, which will pose a threat to the held values and beliefs of White people in the UK.
How would you respond to this?

Mediator: Anxiety

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK do not like the way they live their lives. They indicate that this may make them feel anxious when they interact with Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs and anxiety?

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK have a negative attitude towards LGBT+ people. How would you respond to this?

Mediator: Empathy

Can you describe an incident or incidents of racism or religious prejudice that you or other Muslim Middle-Easterners have experienced or that you have observed, and state the impact that it has had on your life, so that White people in the UK can understand this from your perspective?

Are there things White people do that is racist but which they don't realise they are doing? Please describe.

Mediator: Knowledge

Are women as important as men in Islam? Please explain.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted with Nvivo software 1.5 (2021) using open-ended approach, which allows qualitative interpretation of participants' responses.

To organize the data analysis, the objectives of the study served as the foundational nodes in the initial phase of deductive coding. This was succeeded by inductive coding and the formulation of themes. A description of the analysis procedure is provided below.

Thematic Analysis Process

The thematic analysis process featured the identification of patterns (themes) within the textual data. The process was both deductive and inductive. The steps involved in the thematic analysis of the qualitative data of this study follow the six steps identified by Braun and Clarke (2006) and beyond:

Data immersion. Transcripts of data were read and re-read to get familiar with participants responses and to gain a deep understanding of data content.

Deductive Generation of Initial Codes. The research questions served as the deductive bases of coding/organizing in the initial phase of data analysis. Each study objective was coded as a tree node/folder (*e.g., Cognitive mediator: Knowledge about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent*), while the corresponding open-ended questions for each objective were designated as sub-nodes (*e.g., "Some White people in the UK would like to know if extremism is related to Islamic teachings and principles. Please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them better understand Islam."*).

Inductive Code Generation. The deductive codes were scrutinized to identify features of the contents. The contents were made sense of and labelled based on the contents. Hence, the content within the sub-nodes informed the process of further coding by subdividing and labelling them accordingly into further nodes. These nodes were systematically broken down and refined until no additional nodes could be discerned.

Theme Development. Codes were organized into themes by grouping related codes within different nodes together, to facilitate the organization of data into meaningful clusters. The themes were labelled according to mediators of intergroup contact that served as the deductive bases of coding/organizing in the initial data analysis phase given that the study aims to explore participants' lived experiences regarding intergroup contact mediators identified in extant literature. Additional theme names were crafted based on the unique attributes of the collected data. As a result, themes were named with consideration given to identified contact mediators

as well as the distinct characteristics observed within the data itself. Incorporating the labels of contact mediators into the themes' names is vital for providing readers with a clear understanding of how these mediators influenced the research process from start to finish.

Theme Review. Emerging themes were examined to engender coherence and internal consistency. Words used to name themes were also reviewed to ensure that the essence of each theme was captured.

Development of a Thematic Map. A visual representation of themes to illustrate the relationships between themes was created. This engendered the organization and presentation of findings in a clear and coherent manner.

Writing the Narrative. The stories embedded in the data were recounted narratively. Selected quotes from the data were used to support each theme.

Theme Validation. The validity of themes was checked by revisiting the data and confirming that the themes resonate with the participants' experiences. Reflections on personal biases and preconceptions were attempted throughout the process of data analysis in the interest of reflexivity.

Justification for Employing Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a “powerful yet flexible” (Kiger & Varpio, 2020: 1) tool for exploring rich, complex, and context-dependent phenomena. It is a versatile approach that can be applied to a variety of research questions and data types. It is not bound by a specific theoretical framework, thereby allowing researchers to adapt the method to the unique characteristics of their study. Researchers have a great deal of flexibility

when it comes to the kinds of research questions that can be addressed, the kinds of documents and data that can be examined, the amount of data that can be analyzed, the theoretical and/or epistemological framework that can be chosen, and the ability to analyse data using either a deductive, theory-driven approach or an inductive, data-driven approach (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

Learning and using thematic analysis is not too difficult. Less experienced researchers can easily apply the same because it does not rely on theory to guide analysis. It enables researchers to analyse, condense, and emphasise salient characteristics of a variety of data sets. Thematic analysis engenders in-depth exploration of the underlying meanings and patterns within qualitative data. It allows researchers to identify and understand the nuances, complexities, and subtleties present in the data, providing a deeper insight into the studied phenomenon. Its techniques also serve as a basis for many other types of qualitative analysis.

Given the foregoing, the use of thematic analysis to make sense of the qualitative data of this study was almost inevitable. “Organizing information into themes is a process that forms the core of many qualitative approaches” (Riger, & Sigurvinsdottir, 2016:34).

Strengths of the Thematic Analysis Approach

Versatility in Research Application. Thematic analysis' adaptability extends to various domains, enabling its application across a spectrum of research questions and data types. This flexibility allows for a tailored analysis that is intimately aligned with the research objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Accessibility for Researchers. The approach is notably accessible to researchers at different levels of experience. Its procedural clarity and lack of reliance on specific theoretical underpinnings make it an approachable method for novice researchers, while still offering depth and rigor for more seasoned scholars.

Depth of Insight. Through the meticulous organization and interpretation of data, thematic analysis facilitates a profound understanding of the data's underlying meanings. This depth of insight can reveal the complexities and nuances of participants' experiences, offering a rich, detailed exploration of the research topic.

Flexibility in Theoretical Framing. The method's non-prescriptive nature regarding theoretical or epistemological commitments provides researchers the autonomy to integrate their analytical findings with a range of theoretical perspectives. This can enrich the analysis and facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the data.

Comprehensive Data Engagement. The iterative process of data immersion, coding, and theme development ensures thorough engagement with the dataset. This comprehensive interaction with the data helps to unearth subtle patterns and themes that might otherwise remain obscured.

Enhanced Interpretive Validity. By emphasizing reflexivity and the iterative review of themes against the dataset, thematic analysis strengthens the interpretive validity of the research findings. This rigorous process ensures that the themes developed are genuinely reflective of the data and resonate with the participants' experiences.

Limitations of Thematic Analysis

Despite its strengths, thematic analysis's inherent flexibility might introduce variability in analytical rigor, contingent upon the researcher's methodological diligence. The potential for researcher bias, the time-consuming nature of data immersion and coding, and the challenge of identifying consistent themes underscore the need for meticulous attention to detail and methodological integrity in thematic analysis.

In sum, thematic analysis is a cornerstone of qualitative research methodology, valued for its adaptability, user-friendliness, and the depth of understanding it provides. When conducted with methodological precision and reflective consideration, it offers the potential for generating nuanced insights into complex phenomena, significantly enriching academic discourse.

Results and Discussion

Due to the extensive data volume generated in this study, only a subset of the results is presented in this Chapter. A substantial portion of the data, not included in this Chapter, was utilised in designing the intervention study discussed in Chapter 4. Data pertaining to individuals' personal characteristics on values, beliefs, and interests, aligning with the decategorization stage, are grouped under a single overarching theme. Subsequently, themes encompassing data reflecting the mediators of contact, indicative of salient categorization, are presented. Finally, findings concerning perceived superordinate goals, signifying recategorization followed. A visual representation illustrating the data interrelations is provided in Figure 1, Chapter 3.

Some typographical and grammatical errors in the data have been corrected for legibility and ease of reading.

De-Categorisation - Personal Characteristics

Spirituality, Communality and Socio-Educational Engagements

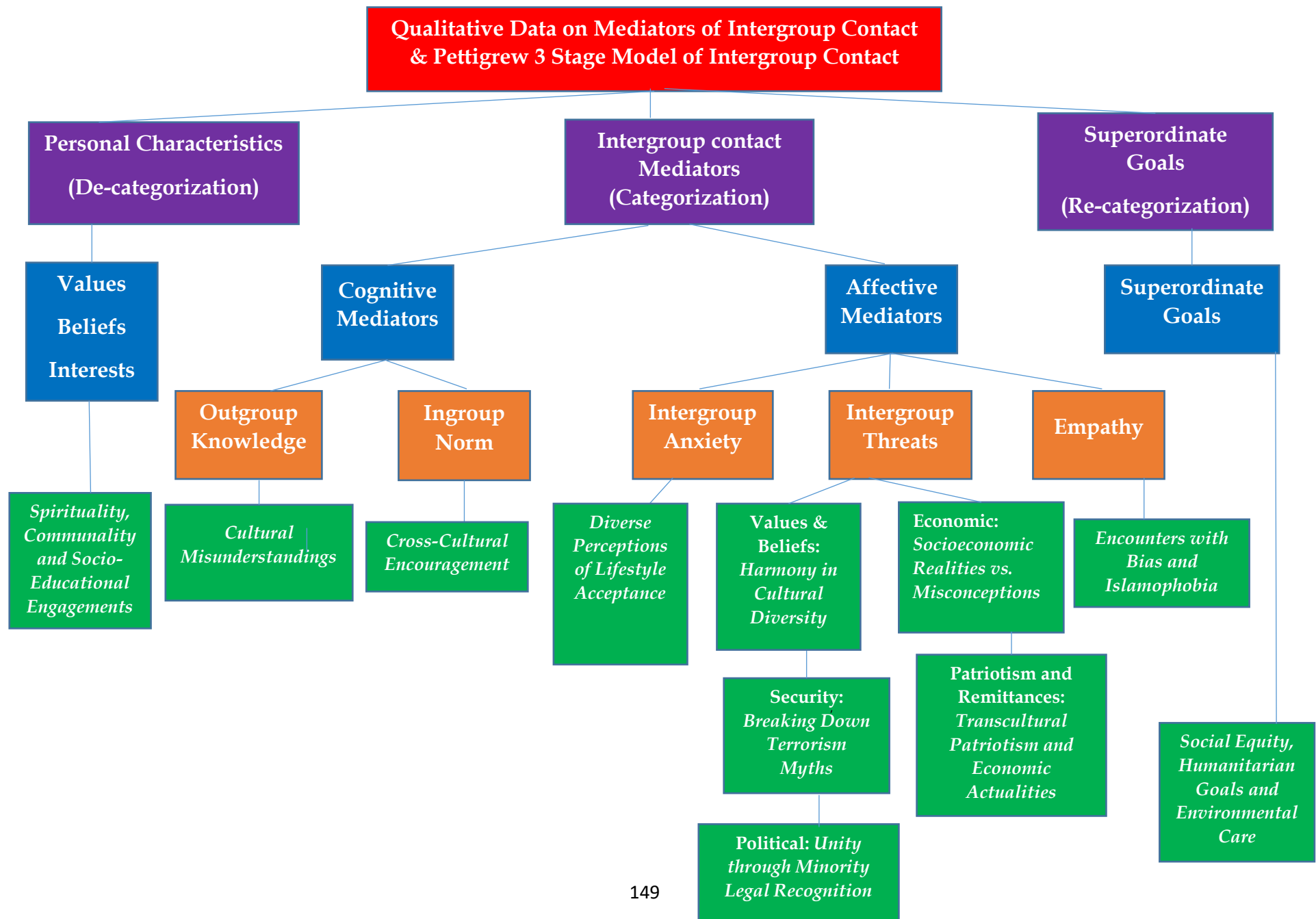
Participants provided descriptions of their personal characteristics in response to prompts related to their values, beliefs, and interests.

Values. Participants generally expressed positive views of the values held by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, which included an emphasis on family, tradition, worship, honesty, hard work, respect, ethics, compassion, equality, and ethics. The sub-themes that accrued under the subject of values centred around Islam and family, tradition and worship honesty, hard work, respect and ethics. For instance, some participants responded to the question of values as a phenomenon that centres on upholding family connectedness, community cohesion, cultural tradition and worship:

Family, tradition, caring for others, charity and faith (Participant A10).

Keeping culture intact (so not forgetting where you come from and what your origin is), ensuring there is space and time to prayer regardless of where you may be (e.g. in many UK places there are no prayer rooms) (Participant A14).

Figure 1, Chapter 3: Representation of Data Interrelations



Some participants also stated that being of good morals and tolerant are important values they hold:

I believe being moral and just is so important in my day-to-day life. I'm always conscious of even small acts that may be immoral such as backbiting or borrowing things without permission first. So being moral on every scale is very important (Participant A2).

To respect everyone around me irrespective of any cultural, racial and gender differences. To also help others in need especially the elderly, to be a good human being respected by others (Participant A5).

Other participants stated values centred on morals:

If the people of a land have no morals such land will go into chaos without laws (Participant A12).

I believe in helping those younger than me and respecting the elders (Participant A1)

Beliefs. Responses regarding the beliefs of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent cantered on obedience to God's commands, the role of religion in guiding individuals to be good people, the perception of Western involvement in the Middle East, and the existence of God. The sub-themes accrued under the subject of beliefs are obeying God's commands as well as politics and the West. On the question of belief, some responses centred on the existence of God and His commands:

I am quite a religious person, so my beliefs are Islam and what the Quran and God guide us to do. We as human beings need guidance to go on about our daily lives

and this guidance is important, while also respecting everyone's beliefs at the same time (Participant A5).

There is no justice in this world however, everything will be judged by God on the day of awakening (Participant A21).

I believe in democracy because the country that I come from is very corrupt (Participant A1)

Interests. Participants believed that the interests of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent were similar to those of most people, emphasizing nature and an interest in other people. The sub-themes that accrued under the subject of interests centred around nature and interest in other people as well as entertainment, celebrations, sports. When talking about interests, participants generally believe that they are not different from most people:

My interests are similar to most people. I don't believe my interests are tightly connected to me being middle eastern or muslim. My interests are in my area of education and spending time with family and progressing in my chosen field (Participant A2)

The thing that excites me is seeing people happy, I love to do whatever it takes to make the people around me and well taken care of. I love to educate and be educated (Participant A5).

Other responses on interests are about entertainment and celebrations:

Middle eastern music from our origin countries, celebrating yearly traditions (eg. nowruz) (Participant A14).

I love playing sports such as football and basketball. I watch sports on tv in my spare time. I love to go bike riding and watch movies and TV shows (Participant A1).

Interrogating De-Categorization Stage- Personal Characteristics

The findings shed light on the personal characteristics of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, revealing interplays of values, beliefs, and interests that reflect their cultural and religious heritage. These individuals navigate their identities within a multicultural context. These descriptions reflect the impact of social identity on individual values, beliefs, and interests. Social identity theory posits that group membership contributes significantly to self-concept and influences intergroup behaviour (Tajfel & Turner, 2004, 2010). The emphasis on family, tradition, and religion among Muslims of Middle Eastern descent can be understood as manifestations of a strong ingroup identity that fosters a sense of belonging and coherence. Future research could explore how these social identities interact with broader societal narratives and impact intergroup relations within the UK.

The findings also highlight the role of self-categorization in shaping the participants' self-perception and their perception of the 'West'. Self-Categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987) extends social identity theory by explaining how individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups. Hence, people use their respective identities to differentiate and categorise themselves from others. These categorizations will be used in designing interventions that promote more nuanced self-concepts that transcend simplistic ingroup-outgroup dichotomies, by emphasising the similarities among the similarities between the groups during the first stage of de-categorization in Pettigrew's (1998) intergroup contact theory. This

stage emphasise the characteristics of individuals involved in the contact, aiming to foster interpersonal affinity and reduce anxiety.

Salient Categorisation - Mediators of Intergroup Contact

Salient-Categorization is in line with Pettigrew's (1998) intergroup contact theory. This stage emphasise the group characteristics of members of different groups involved in the contact, with the goal of facilitating the generalization of positive affect to the entire outgroup. Hence, participants responded to the issues previously identified in Chapter 2, which were raised by Non-Muslims White Britons. These issues encompass various mediators, including outgroup knowledge, intergroup anxiety and intergroup threat. Further, this Chapter also explored additional mediators that were not addressed in Chapter 2, which are ingroup norms of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent and empathy.

Knowledge of Outgroup – Cultural Misunderstandings

Participants responded Non-Muslim White Britons' negative perceptions Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, including reports that they possess negative characteristics. Participants emphasised the diversity of characteristics within all groups, challenging the notion of broad generalizations. Additionally, positive traits of Middle-Eastern individuals were highlighted by participants. Cultural differences were identified as a factor contributing to misunderstandings, with generational perspectives also playing a role. The media's portrayal of Muslims was acknowledged as a source of negative perceptions. Participants proposed solutions, including urging White individuals not to let the media shape their opinions

and advocating for increased personal interactions with Muslims to dispel stereotypes and foster more realistic perceptions.

Responses include that different people belong to all groups. Hence, the identified characteristics will be found among other groups of people including Whites:

There are so many characteristic behaviours between the 7 billion plus human beings on earth. Don't tarnish everyone with the same brush, there are good or bad in every culture, community, race and country etc. (Participant A21).

Other participants emphasised positive traits of Middle Eastern people:

As a group, we value respecting and honouring others and being respected ourselves, and wouldn't behave in a way which may jeopardise this (Participant A18).

Some participants stated that cultural differences cause some behaviours to be misinterpreted out of context due to different cultural norms:

As people of a different culture, it is very possible that certain actions can be misinterpreted as being rude or violent, even if you don't see it that way (Participant A1).

But generally I don't believe middle eastern Muslims inherently hold those characteristics, maybe those who are older do, but most are well integrated into society (Participant A2).

Participants also talked about the portrayal of Muslims in the media to be responsible for the negative perception of them:

I guess the media has an effect on people viewing Middle Eastern people as violent due to the news (Participant A1).

Some participants want White people not to let the media shape their opinions:

First, I would suggest that they have a better look at the reality and not make their opinion based on what they see on TV because it is not the truth. We as real Muslims have the exact opposite of the traits listed above (Participant A9).

On Knowledge of Outgroup: Islam and Middle East Culture

Issues raised by Non-Muslim White Britons in Chapter 2 under culture include daily living, religious restrictions, marriage, family, and household structures. Participants responded to views about their culture and religion that White people think they are primitive and their women are oppressed. A key theme participants responded to is that White people associate them with violence and terrorism, and hold negative beliefs about Islam. However, they also reported beliefs that there are some White people who hold positive beliefs about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent.

Gender related theme addressed include social standing of women, sexual offences and oppression of women among Muslims of Middle Eastern descent community. Participants' responses include that such has nothing to do with Islam, which urges that women should be treated with respect. Participants believe that there is misconception about women in Islam among White people. However, some participants acknowledge that there are some Muslims who hold strict religious views regarding women, but they are minority who do not

represent the group and such views may be influenced by culture. Other participants believe that there are more White people who are sex offenders and there are reports of children being sexually abused in churches.

These findings are consistent with previous research, where Muslim participants report that the Western media presents individual worst cases as the norm for Muslims (Mostafa, 2007). It has been argued that many Western scholars ignore or misrepresent the contributions of Islamic civilization to European development and instead horrendously represent Islam and Muslims. For instance, Islamic civilization brought scientific, philosophical and literal works to Europe in the medieval era and the pluralism of Islam allowed Muslim, Christian, and Jews co-exist (Deeb, 2014). Similarly, curricula in Western schools disregard “the rich Islamic cultural heritage” (Frager, 2002), thereby making schools another tool in the misrepresentation of Islam in the West (Mostafa, 2007).

Further, there is a misconception in the West that Islam oppresses women. However, Islam grants women the freedom over their lives including in education, business, and property (Syed, 2008). Shavarini, (2003) stated that the role of women in Iran negates the myth in the West about the place of women in the Islamic world. As participants pointed out in the current study, Shavarini also noted that cultural practices in some societies are responsible for the lower status of women in such cultures rather than because of Islam. Addressing misconceptions about Islam's treatment of women is critical. Intergroup contact interventions should include educational content that clarifies the distinction between cultural practices and Islamic teachings regarding women's rights can help to dispel myths and foster a

more accurate understanding of Islam (Moghadam, 2003). The misconception about the place of women in Islam by many westerners is understandable given the stereotypical rhetoric by the media and other western actors. The study's acknowledgment of the media's role in shaping perceptions is crucial. The cultivation theory (Gerbner et al., 1980) suggests that prolonged exposure to media content can shape viewers' perceptions of reality, often reinforcing stereotypes. In the context of this study, it is evident that media portrayal of Muslims often emphasises negative stereotypes, contributing to a skewed understanding of the outgroup. Further research could explore the impact of alternative media narratives that highlight positive stories and contributions of Muslims to UK society, examining their potential to counteract prevailing stereotypes (Aboud et al., 2012).

The suggestion by participants to Non-Muslim White individuals not to let media shape their opinions points to the need for media literacy education. Teaching individuals to critically evaluate media content for bias and stereotyping can empower them to form more informed opinions about outgroups (Kellner & Share, 2007).

The emphasis on cultural differences and generational perspectives underlines the importance of cultural competence in fostering positive intergroup relations. Intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954) suggests that under certain conditions, contact between members of different groups can reduce prejudice. Implementing structured virtual intergroup contact interactions that promote

cultural exchange and understanding could mitigate misunderstandings arising from cultural differences (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Further, highlighting the positive traits and contributions of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in contact interventions could counteract negative stereotypes. By incorporating empirical evidence that document the positive impact of Muslim communities on UK society, such as economic contributions, community service, and cultural enrichment into public discourse and education curricula could help to balance prevailing narratives (Allen & Nielsen, 2002). In general, there is a need to counter the political and mainstream media narrative about what constitute civilization and freedom. Hence, the responses generated from Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in this study constituted intergroup contact intervention content, which is presented in Chapter 4.

Ingroup Norm - Cross-Cultural Encouragement

Participants explain how other Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK would react if they engage in a positive relationship/friendship with or be unfair to White people in the UK. Cross-cultural encouragement as influenced by Islamic doctrine was the dominant overarching theme of the findings.

Positive Relationships with White People. The sub-themes that accrued under the subject of reactions to positive relations with White people (in-group norm as a cognitive mediator) centred on the pleasure that Muslims would derive from such positive relations and Islam's encouragement of such positive relations. Participants reported that their group members would rather have them engage in positive relations with White people:

I believe they would be pleased to see good relations between the two as it is in the benefit of both parties for us to get along well together and to be able to co-exist successfully (Participant C18).

Other participants reported that such relations are encouraged in their faith:

I think most of Muslims in the UK know and believe that there is nothing wrong with having positive relationship/friendship with white people in the UK. Our religion doesn't prohibit good relationships of other people on the contrary we are ordered to respect and treat fairly every human being on earth, especially our neighbours (Participant C11).

Avoidance or Unfair Treatment of White People. Respondents stated that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent would disapprove of avoiding, being unfriendly, or acting unfairly towards White people in the UK. They attributed this to Islamic principles, cultural norms, and a desire to avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes.

Some participants gave Islam as the reason they would not be unfriendly towards others:

In Islam we are ordered to respect and be fair to every human being on earth, especially neighbours and those with family ties. If you do the opposite then you are disobeying your Lord. Muslims should understand that. Racism is extremely prohibited in Islam (Participant C11).

Racism is prohibited in Islam, and avoiding White people because they are white is a form of racism (Participant C22).

Other participants gave reasons such as past rejections, which may inform Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent's attitudes:

Consider if there is a reason first. Maybe they are uncomfortable or have had racist experiences. Or maybe there is a language barrier but otherwise, such behaviour would be discouraged by others. And they would probably try and understand why they feel that way and try to encourage them to be friendly (Participant C13).

Others gave lifestyle preferences as reasons and that negative attitude aside such preferences is not right:

If you choose not to spend time with other white people because of your religion and lifestyle, it can be totally understandable. The religion is not the only reason for that. Women can prefer to spend time with feminist women, or black people can prefer to spend time with other black people. These are all ok. But, if you have negative feelings for white people this is not ok. This is exactly problematic and racist (Participant C10).

Ingroup Norm of Muslims of Middle Eastern Descent towards White People

The study provides an insightful findings on the cognitive mediator of ingroup norms among Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK in relation to forming positive relationships with or being unfair to White people. The findings highlight the encouragement of positive relationships based on Islamic teachings and the disapproval of unfair treatment due to religious prohibitions against racism.

On the theme of how their fellow Muslims of Middle Eastern descent would react to them dealing positively or unfairly with White people, participants said fellow Muslims would be pleased with them for having positive relations with White people

as Islam encourages it, and such will foster a healthy community whilst reducing stereotypes. However, a more intimate relationship would not be welcomed as Muslims of Middle Eastern descent like to keep marriage within the culture. Similarly, participants believe that other Muslims of Middle Eastern descent would disapprove if they exhibited negative attitudes towards White people. As above, religious reasons were given for such disapproval. The emphasis on Islamic teachings as a basis for encouraging positive relationships and prohibiting unfair treatment and racism underscores the importance of religious beliefs in shaping ingroup norms. As social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) suggests, group norms and values influence members' attitudes and behaviours toward outgroups, this finding illustrates how religious identity can foster inclusivity and tolerance. Future research could further explore how different interpretations of religious texts influence Muslims' attitudes towards intergroup relations (Saroglou, 2011).

Some participants responded that attitude towards others should be informed by character not race, while some participants believe that negative attitude towards White people would be tolerated by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent citing past experiences of racism by White people as reason. Other reasons given for avoiding White people include lifestyle differences and language barrier. Participants' references to past rejections and lifestyle preferences as potential barriers to positive relations with White people point to the need for addressing underlying factors that hinder positive intergroup attitude and contact. Intergroup contact that highlights experiences of racism and exploring commonalities in lifestyle preferences can help overcome these barriers (Dessel & Rogge, 2008).

The study's findings have practical implications for designing intergroup contact interventions. Highlighting Islamic teachings on fairness and respect, as well as addressing cultural and lifestyle preferences, can enhance the effectiveness of contact interventions in fostering positive intergroup relations between the groups. Hence, these findings will inform a component of the intergroup contact intervention to illustrate how Muslims of Middle Eastern descent perceive their interactions with White people, shedding light on the motivations that underlie these interactions or, conversely, their reasons for avoiding them.

Intergroup Anxiety- Diverse Perceptions of Lifestyle Acceptance

Muslims' Rejection of LGBTQ+. The sub-theme that accrued under the theme of anxiety about Muslims' views on White people's lifestyle (intergroup anxiety as affective mediator) centred around affirmation to the allegation, Islamic principles on LGBTQ+ and the fact that negative attitude towards LGBTQ+ is not from Muslims alone. Some participants agree that some Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent only tolerate LGBT people at best:

Yes, they have. they are right. There are really small number of people in middle eastern of Muslim community that supports LGBTQ+ people. And in that small group, most of them doesn't support, they just tolerate it. I know it. I know my culture. I know my religion. I know my people. So I wouldn't defend it because it is right (Participant C1).

Other participants stated that Islam forbids LGBTQ+ relationships but Muslims are commanded in Islam to respect and be kind to people regardless of differences:

I would explain to them that their views are incorrect. I would explain that in Islam we are taught to be empathetic and caring people. We are taught to accept people no matter what colour or orientation they are. We are asked not to judge anyone and that we are all gods children (Participant C5).

Other participants believe that negative attitudes towards LGBTQ+ are not from Muslims alone but common in many societies:

This is common among many societies and individuals in the world and not special for Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK. Many people think that homosexuality is a psychological disorder, not a sexual orientation (Participant C9).

Whites' Perceptions of Muslim Dislike for Their Lifestyles. Anxiety over Muslims' views on White people's *culture and lifestyle* is a sub-theme from the data that participants responded to. They also responded to questions about Islam and Middle Eastern culture. Participants presented varying perspectives on how Muslims of Middle Eastern descent perceive White people in the UK. While some believed that Muslims are generally peaceful and accept White people's lifestyles, others highlighted cultural differences and potential discomfort among Muslims about interacting with White people. Some participants emphasised the importance of multiculturalism, while others pointed out similarities between the two groups. Participants respond to this view as follows.

Muslims are Peaceful. Participants reacted to the question that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent do not like lifestyles of White people in the UK. Participants stated that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent are in the UK to live a peaceful life:

I believe that many of Middle-eastern Muslims are very successful people. They are kind, looking forward to live a peaceful normal life with their families in the UK. Therefore I ask every white person to try to explore more the relationship with Middle eastern people in the UK to see how the misjudgement based only on race or colour is not productive (Participant C14).

And that Muslims want their lifestyle respected:

Muslims are not aggressive people but as a white person you need to respect their beliefs such as dressing modestly or not doing haram things in front of them Islam teaches peace and to love one another so no Muslim should make you feel threatened (Participant C17).

Cultural Differences. Participants also stated the issue of cultural differences between the two groups and that Muslims feel judged by White people:

Everyone lives their lives differently regardless of religion background age etc not everyone will understand, and that is something Middle Eastern Muslims also feel anxious about. It is the basic concept of being scared of a spider but the spider is probably more scared of the human. We all need to stop being less anxious of each other and maybe we can start to understand each other better (Participant C13).

However, some participants agree that some Muslims do not like White people's lifestyles. They believe that those Muslims need to learn to respect the culture and lifestyles of the locals in the UK:

It is true that Muslim/ME people may not like certain aspects of a typical White person's life (e.g. drinking alcohol), but that doesn't mean that they cannot have friendly interactions with them (Participant C22).

An opinion was shared that White people's lifestyles dislike is not the case, but that the Muslims are just scared of change:

It's not that they dislike it it's that the cultures and beliefs are so different and people are naturally scared of change but for them to treat others differently because of it is extreme (Participant C6).

Furthermore, another participant expressed the importance of multiculturalism in a globalised world for advancement:

I think growing up in a society where people have different ways of living their lives is so important in this globalised world, how else can we learn from each other and grow? Islam, similarly to Christianity and Judaism has certain rules and beliefs that may not be as the modern world is however just because a person doesn't agree with a certain part of society doesn't mean that you don't like or would change others, just like people have different political points of view and can live in harmony, so too can people with different religious beliefs (Participant C4).

Cultural Similarities. Other participants share opinions that both Muslim and White people's culture and lifestyles are similar:

I would paint them a picture of my day to give them a good idea of what I do during my day and that will show them that I am no different to them so there would be nothing to be anxious about (Participant C5).

On the other hand, some participants acknowledge instances where Muslims demonstrate negative attitudes towards non-Muslims. The data is presented here:

They are totally right. Although I am a Muslim, I feel anxious when I interact with some Muslims. But they should avoid to make generalisation. There are extremist people in Jewish society, and Christian society as well. The mayor of London is a Muslim guy. Do they feel anxious when they watch or read the Mayor's speeches? I don't think so, because he is a very open-minded guy (Participant C10).

Intergroup Anxiety between Muslims of Middle Eastern descent and Non-Muslim White People

In Chapter 2, White participants reported that they were concerned about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descents' negative attitudes towards White people and LGBTQ+. Some White people believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent do not like their lifestyles, which makes White people anxious. However, some Muslim participants in the current study believe that this is misjudged because Muslims of Middle Eastern descent want to live peacefully in the UK and that they do not dislike White people for their lifestyles. However, some participants agreed with the concerns of White people, reporting that such feelings may be mutual as Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are equally anxious about White people's judgment of them. Other participants expressed the importance of multiculturalism and that both groups share similarities in lifestyles.

The findings reveal the nature of affective mediator of intergroup anxiety between Muslims of Middle Eastern descent and Non-Muslim White people, particularly focusing on perceptions regarding lifestyle differences and attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community. There is a nuanced landscape of beliefs and attitudes, shedding light on both conciliatory and contentious aspects of

intergroup relations. This study's emphasis on the views within the Muslim community concerning LGBTQ+ issues and lifestyle choices aligns with intergroup contact theory's premise that personal interactions can challenge and refine broad stereotypes. The acknowledgement by some participants that negative attitudes towards LGBTQ+ are not unique to Muslims but are prevalent in many societies further underscores the universality of certain prejudices and the potential for intergroup contact to mitigate these biases. Further, the findings that some Muslims of Middle Eastern descent affirm traditional views on LGBTQ+ due to religious beliefs, while also advocating for respect and kindness towards all individuals, reflect the complex interplay between religious identity and broader social norms of tolerance and empathy. This duality shows the potential for leveraging shared human values in intergroup contact to bridge intergroup divides.

In a qualitative investigation, it was found that among Muslim Americans, there is no consistent pattern indicating that one's beliefs about the cause of homosexuality predict their attitudes towards it. Additionally, higher levels of religious practice within the Muslim American community do not correspond to more negative attitudes towards homosexuality and Muslims demonstrated similarities in their approaches and viewpoints regarding homosexuality (Alnagar, 2018). Similarly, in a correlational survey conducted in predominantly Muslim Malaysia, it was observed that although there exists a prevailing prejudice against homosexuality, a substantial proportion of respondents, exceeding half, displayed positive attitudes toward homosexuals (Malayalam, 2020). While these studies buttress the claim by

participants in this study, some factors have been identified as responsible for the strife between Muslims and Westerners. According to Huntington (2011), Muslims have confidence in their values and civilization compared to Western civilization. Additionally, they have a sense of indignation towards the West for its efforts to universalize Western values and these explains the clash between the two groups. Therefore, it is imperative to foster an understanding among White people in the UK that some Muslims' non-acceptance of LGBTQ as a lifestyle should not be equated to hatred for those who do accept it. A correlational study conducted in Malaysia found that factors such as religion and educational level did not have a significant influence on the attitudes of Muslim respondents towards homosexuals. The only significant factor affecting attitudes toward homosexuals was having direct contact with homosexuals (Malayalam, 2020). This underscores the importance of intergroup contact in reducing intergroup bias. Such intervention should provide information about Islam's teachings on compassion and respect, as well as the diversity of views within the Muslim community regarding LGBTQ+ issues, views such as Muslims having respect for other people's lifestyles can help counter stereotypes.

To address the anxiety stemming from the belief among some White individuals that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent do not favour their lifestyles, and to enrich the design of a virtual intergroup contact intervention, it is essential to incorporate elements that foster mutual understanding and respect for differing cultural norms and practices. Intergroup contact interventions should include content on Islamic principles teaching peace and respect for all individuals,

regardless of their cultural or religious background to demystify the religion. Such content can leverage scholarly references to provide a nuanced understanding of Islamic teachings and how they align with universal values of respect and coexistence (Esposito, 2011; Ramadan, 2017). Highlighting examples of Muslims contributing positively to British society can also counteract narratives that paint Muslims as outsiders or as not integrating into British culture. Contact interventions should also include content that teaches the outgroup's customs and ways of life to bridge cultural divides and appreciate cultural differences (Lemmer & Wagner, 2015; Zick et al., 2008). Fostering a sense of shared identity and superordinate goals that transcend cultural and religious differences can be pivotal. Emphasizing common objectives, such as community well-being, environmental stewardship, or social justice, can help participants see beyond their differences and work collaboratively towards shared outcomes (Dovidio et al., 2009; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2014).

Threats to Physical Safety and Security- Breaking Down Terrorism Myths

Participants countered the beliefs by some White people in the UK that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are religious extremists, terrorists, and potential bombers by highlighting that Islam opposes extremism and that such views are based on misunderstandings and media portrayals.

Participants responded that Islam stand against extremism:

Muslims are prohibited even to frighten another human being, even a cat. They believe they should respect others and treat others fairly otherwise they are not following their religion correctly. What the media conveys about Muslims being

terrorists is so far from the truth. They are of the most peaceful human beings on earth
(Participant C11).

According to some participants, there are more White terrorists than Muslims, systemic racism, genocide etc., but all White people cannot be held responsible for them:

Islam literally means religion of peace. It goes against all teachings and beliefs that small minority does not represent the majority. Islam is closer in teachings and values to christianity if it helps to think if the person is a christian do you see yourself joining isis? probably not ! There are more white terrorists than muslim ones ! would you like me to assume that all white people are white supremacist terrorists, no that would be wrong **(Participant C13).**

Islam is a religion and have clear rules, just like Christianity. People who bend these rules are the extremist and nobody approves them in the Muslim community. Saying every Muslim is responsible for ISIS is like saying every white person is responsible from, systemic racism, slavery, colonialism and genocides **(Participant C7).**

Just as Christian priests abusing children does not represent Christianity:

Islam does not condone any kind of terrorism, and if this is being used as an excuse to murder and terrorise, then they are wrong, and have been indoctrinated or have sick minds. They should not represent all of us or our religion. If this kind of logic is applies to us, then lets look at another case- what about Christianity, where there have been countless cases of priets abusing children- it does not mean that all Christians are child abusers does it **(Participant C2).**

Some Muslims misunderstand Islam:

A very small portion of Muslims are extremists just as there is a small portion of every other religion who are extremists and they can look at the Muslims of the Middle East who are against all terrorist activities against all human kinds (Participant C21).

Such Muslims are brainwashed because they do not read the Quran:

Terrorists are not Muslims or they are Muslims that have been brainwashed because this is not the way of the Quran a true Muslim would not commit these sins or suicide as that is a very big sin and guarantees hellfire (Participant C17).

Likewise, the teachings of the Prophet centred on kindness:

I would say that unfortunately just like in every society there are people who are violent and unpleasant and will find an excuse to be able to justify their horrific behaviour just like the right wing has extremists etc. On the contrary, Islam is a religion of peace, and our Prophet preached of kindness, honouring women, our neighbours and all beings (humans as well as animals. Charity is a pillar of Islam and it is a huge part of our religion. There are over 1.8billion Muslims; had it been a violent religion it would be very obvious (Participant C4.

Hence, Muslims equally hate terrorists:

ISIS and terrorism couldn't be further from the majority interpretation of Islam. All good muslims hate ISIS and terrorist groups more than any other group of people (Participant C18).

Islamic extremist movements is a result of invading other countries:

They have rights. There are some Muslims who think all Christians are a from of infidel who should be converted into Islam. However, they forget that Britain was an ally of the USA which invaded Iraq. The invasion of Iraq gave enormous stimulus to radical movements. Additionally, they should pressure their government who sell arms to Saudi Arabia, the nation that supports all the radical Islamic movements across the globe (Participant C3).

Other participants stated what they believed was the role of the West in the Middle East and the lack of democracy in their country:

The West is the opposition (e.g. because our countries are attacked by the West, it is the general view of Middle Eastern Muslims that America and the UK are fully against them (Participant A14).

Extremists ideologies are found in all groups and Muslims are not an exception:

I would explain to them that out of 1 billion Muslims you may get a few rotten eggs and this is the case with any religion and unfortunately these rotten eggs are not representative of Islam. I would ask them to stop reading the false narrative the media makes about islam and muslims in general and instead to communicate with their muslim neighbours and friends and they will find out for themselves that we are not a threat to them (Participant C5).

According to some participants, the media stigmatises Muslims:

The media is the biggest culprit for this belief. We Muslims are I think partially to blame for not doing enough to stop or reduce such stigma against us. This mentality can be diminished by identifying those who have such ideology against us and showing them the true side of Islam which I am sure with time will change their perspective. Another point that could be raised is that Muslims are hit by terrorism the most when compared to non-Muslim countries and White terrorism is on the rise is a major threat than any other thing (Participant C20).

Threat to Physical Safety and Security-Extremism and Terrorism

The findings reveal the perceptions and experiences of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK, specifically regarding the themes of extremism, terrorism, and the broader societal reactions and misconceptions they face. A key theme from the data was that Islam forbids violence even towards animals and that there are more White people involved in terrorism and genocide. Participants provided responses pertaining to their adherence to the Islamic faith, addressing questions encompassing various aspects of Islam, such as its fundamental tenets, personal motivations for embracing the faith, and the underlying reasons for their religious commitment. Other questions are about religious extremism, violence and terrorism. Participants criticised generalising instances of Muslims involvement in terrorism to the group, as it would be inappropriate to generalise abuse of children in churches and White terrorism to White people. Another theme focused on misinterpretation of Islam, arguing that there are extremists

who misunderstand the tenets of Islam, but that this is common to all religious groups.

Another theme is a belief by participants that terrorism is a result of Western invasion of Muslim countries and that the media is used to stigmatise Muslims. Participants' views on the impacts of Western foreign policies, particularly the invasion of Iraq and other countries in the Middle East, merit further exploration. Scholars have argued that these actions have contributed to the radicalization of some individuals and the exacerbation of tensions between Muslim and Western societies (Mamdani, 2005; Pape, 2008). Hunter (1998) argue that some scholars erroneously claim that Islam is an enemy to the West. Such scholars argue for the West, thereby not taking into account other important factors. For instance, the Middle East is at the centre of United States policy for its global hegemony strategy, which has destabilised the region, notably among such consequences is the Iraq war (Hinnebusch, 2007). The invasion and occupation of Iraq has been seen as an act of injustice, which motivated some acts of terrorism in Western Europe (Nesser, 2006). For Westerners, discussing these geopolitical dimensions can provide a deeper understanding of the root causes of tension between the Muslim world and the West.

It is believed that Muslims are seen as a threat to the West, a phenomenon Halliday (1996) consider an illusion and says the hostility of the West towards Islam and Muslims is anti-Muslimism propaganda (Halliday, 1996). Shadid and van Koningsveld (2002) argue that the so-called Islamic threat should be considered a myth for a number of reasons. He argued that Muslims have not significantly

attempted militant offensive against the West, while Muslims are constant victims of far right terrorism, rejecting them and wanting to expel them from their countries. Such experiences by Muslims are as a result of Islamophobia, which is informed by US policies designed to sustain the US (Kumar, 2021). Therefore, the belief that Islam and/or Muslims as a threat to the West is a misconception. Islamic principles centres on “peace and prosperity for all human beings” (Syed, 2008). Likewise, pluralism and religious tolerance originated from non-Western societies, many of which are from the Islamic world even though these philosophies are usually associated with Western scholars today (Gabbay, 2010). Another theme from the data is that the media is used to stigmatise Muslims.

The findings identify the media's role in shaping perceptions of Muslims as extremists or terrorists. Previous research has demonstrated how media representation can influence public attitudes and perpetuate stereotypes about Muslims and Islam (Poole, 2002; Said, 1997). Hence, there is a misconception about Islam in Europe (Beckingham, 1976) notably the belief that adherents of the religion are terrorists (Syed, 2008). A number of explanations have been given for the image of Islam and its adherent among Westerners. Western media portray Islam as fanatic and violent (Hafez, 2000) and presents the religion and Muslims as a threat to the West (Abu-Fadil, 2005). Incorporating scholarly texts on how the media is responsible for the anti-Islam narrative into contact intervention can strengthen the argument that media narratives contribute significantly to the stigmatization of Muslims.

The attack on Islam has been described as a politically motivated campaign to misrepresent Islam to protect Western hegemony (Safi, 1996). Hence, the image of Islam and Muslims is misrepresented in the West (Mostafa, 2007). A critical discourse analysis of two incidents in Canada (2021) and New Zealand (2019) scrutinising the linguistic techniques used in framing Muslims and Islam in a negative light reveals deliberate attempts to conceal the religious identities of Muslim victims while not revealing the agency and identity of Islamophobic attackers (Sufi & Yasmin, 2022). Islamophobia has historical roots dating back to the Crusades, a series of medieval military expeditions by European Christians to the Holy Land in Asia Minor during the 11th century, where they encountered Muslims (Bordbar et al., 2020). After the attacks on September 11, 2001, Islamophobia experienced a significant surge in the West, particularly in European countries (Vandenbelt, 2021). However, a multilevel analysis of survey data spanning 30 countries in Europe suggests that Muslims were predisposed to experiencing prejudice, even before September 11, 2001 attacks (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008). Furthermore, the intensity of Islamophobia increased significantly after the September 11, 2001, posing a serious challenge in Western countries (Sufi & Yasmin, 2022). A comparative analysis spanning from 1989 to 2001 in Britain and Australia reveals instances of state-led racial and ethnic targeting of minority groups, suggesting a causal link between such actions and shifts in patterns of racial hatred, and discrimination. The study also observes an evolution in xenophobic ideologies, transitioning from anti-Asian and anti-Arab racism to anti-Muslim racism in both Britain and Australia (Poynting & Mason, 2007). Similarly, in a systematic review involving content analysis of 56 academic studies on

Islamophobia, it was found that political leaders such as Donald Trump, Narendra Modi, Emmanuel Macron, and Boris Johnson were noted for their use of Islamophobic discourse (Sufi & Yasmin, 2022).

The above underscores the need to address Islamophobia by encouraging the majority White population to view issues from the perspective of Muslims, moving beyond prevailing stereotypes by the media and public figures. Using intergroup contact intervention as a driver to address this, it is vital to underscore that Islam, like many world religions, promotes peace, compassion, and mutual respect among all individuals. The findings reflect participants' emphasis on Islam's opposition to extremism and violence. This perspective aligns with scholarly interpretations of Islamic texts that advocate for peace and condemn violence (Esposito, 2002; Nasr, 2009). Highlighting these teachings can provide a counter-narrative to the stereotypes and misconceptions prevalent in media portrayals.

Hence, some of the arguments made by Muslims in the current study were presented in the intervention designed for White people as a means of making salient an alternative argument to those found in mainstream Western media. Further, arguments by Muslims participants in this study about bad individuals in every group could help White people see issues differently, and therefore have a shift of orientation from media narrative that a bad Muslim represents the entire group. Incorporating these elements into a virtual intergroup contact intervention can not only address specific anxieties and misconceptions but also promote a broader understanding and respect for cultural and religious diversity.

Threats to British Values and Beliefs - Harmony in Cultural Diversity

The sub-themes that accrued under the theme of threat to British values and beliefs due to differential values and beliefs of Muslims (affective mediators, intergroup threat) centred around Islamic teachings, respect for each other, other cultures and religions and that diversity can enrich society. Participants argue that minorities cannot change UK culture and values and the fact that Muslims share some UK values. They argued that minority groups' inclusion should not pose a threat.

Participants stated that they do not pose a threat because of what the Quran teaches:

We are all human and must accept one another for our beliefs and values in the Quran it is stated that "you have your religion and I have mine" which means we must not hate or argue with one another based on our beliefs differing but we can educate each other (Participant C17).

Some Participants believe people should respect each other's culture and religion:

Everyone should respect each other. And it is not one way. If you don't respect the Middle Easterners, Muslims or other minorities beliefs or life styles, they also don't respect you. and both sides try to eliminate each other. Try to be respectful to keep the peace. Same for middle eastern people. If they are here, in a country that has a totally different culture, they need to accept it and respect it. If they want to keep their traditions or cultures, you are welcome to do so. But looking at each other in a negative way doesn't help to both sides. It is not a one-way thing. I know many people in my culture/religion thinking that white people or western cultures are ruining our culture so they are extremely mad about it. this is not healthy (Participant C1).

Exposure to other cultures cannot be avoided and it is good to learn from one another:

I think that we are living in the internet age in which we are exposed to the values and beliefs of all types of people and religions, it is something we cannot avoid however learning from each other and accepting differences is the key to harmony (Participant C4).

It should be viewed as a good thing there are many benefits to greater diversity. And it would do everyone benefit to be more forgiving and tolerant of others instead of living in a "bubble" where it is only white people, maybe we can learn from each other (Participant C13).

Some participants believe that minority cannot change UK values and culture:

I think the if the majority has certain values and beliefs, the minority can't change it (Participant C11).

Some participants believe that some values are mutually shared by White people and Muslims:

In Turkey, we have Christians they have been in the country for decades although Turkey is majority Muslim nobody says they will pose a threat to anything. There are many Christian Middle Eastern descent, in the same situation. The problem is not religion it is intolerance (Participant C7).

Discussing the Threats to Values and Beliefs

The study's exploration into the affective mediator of perceived threats to British values and beliefs by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent uncovers insights into intergroup dynamics within the UK. While some participants from Chapter 2

indicated that they felt threatened that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent will change their British values & beliefs because both groups hold differing ones. Muslim participants in the current study however believe they do not pose such threats, citing religious explanations and that both groups owe each other mutual respect. Others espoused the benefits of diversity and exposure to other cultures. Other participants expressed the belief that the UK is a multicultural country and that minorities cannot change the mainstream culture, while others believe that both groups share similar values and beliefs. The responses from Muslim participants, emphasising the peaceful teachings of Islam, the importance of mutual respect, and the enrichment diversity brings to society, offer a counter-narrative to the often-negative portrayal of Muslims in media and public discourse.

The belief that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent potentially threatens British values is present in both academic scholarship and the media. According to Smock (2002), some academic work misrepresents Islam with rhetoric like anti-democratic and anti-human rights. For instance, Savage (2004) warned Europe over the threat that Islam may change the region's collective identity and public values. Others point out that at the core of Islamic ethics is the principle of democratic consultation known as "Shura" (Smock, 2002), and that Islamic civilization played a role in Europe's development in the medieval era (Mostafa, 2007). Hence, public discourses on the subject of Islam being incompatible with the West are by sensationalising some cases, which were informed by anti-Islam and anti-Muslim prejudice (Shadid & van Koningsveld, 2002). Studies have shown that negative media portrayals of Muslims contribute significantly to Islamophobia and societal tensions (Poole, 2002; Saeed,

2007). Given the role of the media in shaping perceptions of Muslims, contact intervention should include analysis of media content and its impact on public opinion.

Social identity plays a role in perceptions of threat and belonging (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). By helping individuals understand the influence of social institution such as media and politics influence how they categorize themselves and others, intergroup contact can reduce out-group biases and foster a more inclusive national identity that embraces diversity. The perception of threat can also be dispelled by integrating in contact intervention a multicultural framework, emphasising that integration does not mean assimilation into a monocultural identity but rather the coexistence and mutual respect of diverse cultures (Modood, 2013).

Threats to Political Power Balance - Unity through Minority Legal Recognition

The sub-themes that accrued under the theme of threat to political power balance due to potential law changes to accommodate Muslims (affective mediator, intergroup threat) centred around Islam's teaching, the plurality of minorities, and the social beneficence of all laws. Hence, participants generally did not agree Muslims of Middle Eastern descent pose a threat to the country's political power balance, highlighting that laws should accommodate various minorities to ensure equal protection.

Participants asserted that threats do not exist given what Islam teaches:

In the hadith we are told to follow the laws of the land that we live on Muslims are not here to change anything as long as we not being forced or made to do something that is uncomfortable to our beliefs (Participant C17).

Laws should be regulated to accommodate and protect the several minorities in the country:

Laws and regulations have to be adjusted for everyone living in that country including minorities of course. So again, this is not specific to middle eastern people here, there are other minorities living in the UK that have rights to be treated in a way that they deserve and get the respect they needed. So, this is again being a decent government 101. Laws and regulations have to be adjusted to accommodate everyone's, majorities' and minorities', lifestyles. Period. Basic human rights (Participant C1).

Everyone has the right to live. This is one of most fundamental right in the UN declaration of Human rights. I have not seen any right of Muslim people hurt or degrade people of white colour. Furthermore, even if any laws come into effect that accommodate Muslims, should be respective as it shows a society being tolerant of other people believes (Participant C20).

Changing laws should not be a problem as long as it is to improve the society:

Again, I haven't even heard of this just sounds like an assumption and if there are to be any law changes then it would be for the benefit of society as a whole (Participant C13).

Changing laws in itself is not necessarily a good or bad thing. It depends on the laws being changed (Participant C22).

Interrogating the Threat to Political Power Balance

The study's examination of the perceived threats to the political power balance by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK provides insight into the

complexities of intergroup relations and perceptions of minority influence on policy and social norms. Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are thought by White people to be a threat to the political landscape in the UK with their participation in politics as well as potential changes to the laws given their presence in the UK. Participants responded by giving religious reasons to counter the allegation. Some participants say Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are not the only minorities in the UK and that laws should exist to protect everyone including minorities. Participants believe that laws change over time to benefit society. Others argued that accommodating everyone does not negatively affect White people. Some participants argued that White people have changed other people's culture too including that of Middle Easterners.

To alleviate the fears of White people, intergroup contact should emphasise historical instances of successful integration and contribution of Muslims to British society to counterbalance the narrative of threat. Emphasising the roles Muslims have played in enriching the UK's cultural, economic, and social fabric can provide a counter-narrative to fears of cultural and political domination (Modood, 2013) while elucidating how democratic societies have historically accommodated diverse groups without compromising their core values or political stability (Kymlicka, 2012). Another idea that will be useful in contact interventions is the inclusion of a comparison analysis with other minority groups' political engagement and perceived threats could offer a broader perspective on the challenges and opportunities of multiculturalism. This comparison can reveal whether the fears associated with Muslims are unique or part of a broader pattern of minority integration in Western democracies (Vertovec, 2010).

Expanding on the role of media and public discourse in shaping perceptions of threat could enhance contact interventions. Analysing how media portrayals of Muslims influence public opinions and policy debates can uncover the mechanisms through which stereotypes and fears are propagated (Poole & Richardson, 2010). According to Mostafa, (2007), some researchers have equally posited that Islam is a threat to the West and have called for a reformulation of European foreign policy to forestall the threat (Savage, 2004). Warner and Wenner (2006) argue that the age-long ingrained fear of Islam has raised concerns and apprehension about Muslims in Europe co-opting domestic and foreign policies, aligning them with those of Muslims from different regions, and altering the secular character of Europe and the US, which are rooted in the belief of Muslims' potential transformative power. However, this concern lacks empirical substantiation, as the Muslim world itself is highly politically decentralized and marked by ethnic diversity. This decentralization makes it challenging for Muslims to coordinate large-scale collective actions to achieve policy goals in Europe (Warner & Wenner, 2006). An in-depth examination of the political power dynamics within the UK, including the representation of Muslims in political offices and their actual influence on policy-making, could offer a more grounded perspective on the perceived threats. This analysis should include statistical data on Muslim representation in local councils, Parliament, and other political bodies to contextualize their real versus perceived political influence (Suleiman & Anderson, 2016) and presenting a picture of the real influence can help to reduce the negative attitude resulting from the threat perception.

Threats to Job and Economic Opportunities - Socioeconomic Realities vs. Misconceptions

The sub-themes that accrued under the theme of threat to the job and economic opportunities of White people due to competition from Muslims (affective mediator, intergroup threat) centred on racism, media attitudes, appropriation of capital, qualification determinant of job placement, the culpability of Western leaders, and they emphasised that diversity benefits the economy.

Some participants believed that people who maintain such opinions are racist and that research says it is harder for Muslims to get jobs:

I would just say that this is racist and not even argue about it. Probably I wouldn't talk to this person ever again. If those people are living here legally of course, they will have the same opportunities as the white people. If you want to be employed, go and work hard to do at least one thing good. Apparently, you are not good at thinking so avoid white-collar jobs (Participant C1).

There is research that in fact it is harder for Muslims to get jobs despite sometimes being more qualified because of their religion or ethnicity, I am of the belief that a job or any other resource should not be given to a person based on their ethnicity but rather their personal attributes and that these aspects of life need to become fairer (Participant C4).

The media plays a role in perpetuating the belief:

The media could be blamed for exaggerating the threat. some Arabs work in jobs that have very little demand, which the government is currently conducting job recruitment campaigns for (Participant C8).

The UK being a capitalist economy means the wealth will be retained in the UK:

The UK is the mainland of capitalism, which gives wealth to the UK. The main principle of Capitalism is " free competition is good". Because competition makes people to be more qualified and prices go down. These help the country to develop more. So competition is good. For example, the vaccination of COVID-19 was found by two Muslim immigrants in Germany (Participant C10).

When immigrants in general go to a country and look for work, they may initially take jobs that White people would have otherwise held. However, as the number of people in a certain community increases due to immigration, the new immigrants would require more goods and services. This means that current businesses would expand or new ones would open, creating new jobs that could be held by White people. Unless the rate of immigration is very high, immigration could be a net positive to the economy (Participant C22).

Jobs will be given to those who are suitable:

I believe there is an issue in understanding economy and how jobs work in those who hold these views. The job will be given to those who are most competent to carry out the job and those who hold the right sort of qualifications so we aren't stealing your jobs, it may be we are more suitable for the types of jobs you're hoping for and this is why you hold those views (Participant C18).

Other participants attribute the problem to the foreign policies of Western governments:

Again. If their governments, searching for profit and money, do not diminish their nation and economy it would be much easier for Muslims to find a job and establish a life in their own country rather than thousands of miles away (Participant C3).

Interrogating the Threat to Job and Economic Opportunities

The findings on the perceived threats to the job and economic opportunities posed by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK offer an overview of the complexities involved in public perceptions and the actual economic impacts of immigration. Participants responded to allegations about the job threat they pose due to their educational qualifications, language, religion and work style. Responding to claims that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are a job and economic threat to White people, participants argued that such views are “racist” and that research says the opposite, which is that their group finds it harder to secure jobs. Muslim participants blame this threat view on the media. Participants also believe that more people, qualifications and diversity are good for the economy, while some participants stated that Western governments’ influence in the Middle East caused Muslims of Middle Eastern descent to migrate to the West. Yet, the misrepresentation of Islam in the West makes Muslims victims of strong prejudice and discrimination, which negatively affects their lives, including in education and employment (Mostafa, 2007).

Contact interventions should emphasize the positive economic contributions of immigrants, including those from Middle Eastern backgrounds. As participants

opined, studies have indeed shown that immigrants often fill critical gaps in the labour market, contribute to innovation, and start new businesses that create jobs for everyone, not just for their communities (Borjas, 2001, 2019). Virtual contact also provides an opportunity to showcase the economic principle that the labour market is not a zero-sum game. The addition of workers to the economy can lead to job creation through increased demand for goods and services, rather than simply increasing competition for a fixed number of jobs (Peri, 2012). Perhaps, integrating in contact interventions how systemic discrimination and bias in hiring practices affect job opportunities for Muslims and other minority groups. This can improve empathy for outgroups as well as show the need for more equitable hiring practices that can address the root causes of employment disparities (Pager & Shepherd, 2008).

One concern by white people is how Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are a burden to the state. This concern about strain on public services can be addressed by pointing to evidence that immigrants contribute more in taxes than they consume in public benefits over their lifetimes, thereby having a net positive effect on public finances (Damas De Matos, 2021). These positive contributions by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent to the UK's economy, whether through entrepreneurship, participation in the workforce, or community service, can humanize the outgroup and counteract stereotypes (Collett & Petrovic, 2014). Beyond economic contributions, interventions can also emphasise how cultural diversity brought by immigrants, including Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, enriches the cultural fabric of the host society, promoting creativity, innovation, and a more dynamic community life (Alesina & Ferrara, 2005). Incorporating these nuanced elements into contact

interventions can provide a more balanced, evidence-based view of the role of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK's economy, challenging stereotypes and promoting a deeper understanding of the benefits of diversity.

Patriotism and Remittances - Transcultural Patriotism and Economic Actualities

On the question of lack of patriotism to the UK, participants expressed that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK are generally patriotic, loyal to the country, and contribute positively to society. The sub-themes that accrued under the theme regarding the lack of patriotism to the UK (affective mediator, intergroup threat) centre around the love for own culture and the UK, empirical evidence on patriotism, Islamic attitude to patriotism and evidence of minorities' conduct in Muslim countries. Some participants asserted that Whites should understand other cultures. There are also responses like, we have our culture but still love the UK and are patriotic to the UK even though Muslims are subjected to hate in the UK. Other responses are as follows:

I do understand, but this is a fear of the unknown, if they learn about different cultures, they may have more respect and understanding, rather than judging from afar. We love this country, but we also have our way of life, and I think that the two can go hand-in-hand without conflict (Participant B10).

A lot of Muslims are subject to so much hate in the UK from groups such as else, so it's hard to love a country that hates you back (Participant B17).

Studies have confirmed that Muslims are the most patriotic in the UK:

This is not true. Many studies have been conducted on this issue and it has been found that British Muslims are amongst the country's most loyal, patriotic and law-abiding citizens (Participant B13).

A major survey of British Muslims has shown they are "amongst the country's most loyal, patriotic and law-abiding citizens". The nationwide poll found that most British Muslims want to "fully integrate with non-Muslims in all aspects of life". Check <https://www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/922200/survey-most-patriotic-brits-are-muslims/> (Participant B18).

Muslims who understand their religion will give their best to the UK:

Practising Muslims who have a very good understanding of their religion will give the best in their communities and the countries they live in.", even if they have different values and beliefs, as this is what Islam teaches (Participant B12).

Islam requests that believers be loyal to the government and protect their homes as long as the government is not committing crimes against humanity. Thus, Muslim people will be patriotic in the place they are living as long as the government is not committing crimes (Participant B2).

There are other nationals and Christian minorities in Muslim countries too. They are patriotic just as Muslims are here:

*I am not British so I cannot comment specifically. However, I would like to give an example as an Egyptian. Egypt is a majority Muslim country with a Christian minority. Even though Muslim and Christian values do not always align, Egyptian Christians still love Egypt and are patriotic. I would imagine that Muslim Brits would feel the same (**Participant B24**).*

Remittances. The sub-themes that accrued under the theme of remittances to home country and living off the State centre around the definition of the UK as home, the need to support one's family after paying dues in the UK, the normality of remittances and individuals' right to spend their money as desired.

Some participants berated the making of the media representation. Muslims consider the UK as their home:

*This is not true. Many of my relatives and friends consider the UK as their home and they buy houses here and plan to live all their lives in the UK (**Participant C14**).*

*This is untrue - again media misrepresentation has allowed for these false beliefs to manifest (**Participant C8**).*

Maybe they feel unaccepted here and feel the need to invest at home or they have families to support in their country:

They are right. But this is very understandable. If you feel them "unaccepted" in the UK, then they seek to invest where they think as their home. So, if white people support minorities about accepting them as a part of this great country, then Muslims think that this country is their home and this nation is their own nation as well. And begin to spend and invest more in the UK. In addition to this, maybe they have families in other countries and so they spend money (Participant C10).

Remittances are normal with everyone living abroad. UK also receive it from Brits abroad:

Remittances are common amongst EVERYONE not just Muslim middle Eastern. They are natural inflows and outflows of an economy; the UK receives millions if not billions worth of money from remittances. Which is exactly the same thing, UK residents abroad sending money back to their home country the UK. So why is ok for the UK to receive remittances but Arabs can't send any back to their home country that would only be unfair surely? As UK residents we pay our taxes our national insurance council tax etc so we are contributing what we need to and im sure money is still being spend within the UK with a small sum being sent back home. If you came from a poor war-ridden country and moved to get a better life and earn more would you not want to help your family back home? (Participant C13).

Ultimately, it is their money and they should rather be concerned with their banks in Muslim countries:

Every person has the right to choose the way he or she spends money. Living in the UK is not cheap and most people spend their money to sustain themselves in this country. They pay rent, buy food and pay their taxes as other people do and this does contribute to the UK economy. As for the extra money that they send is their right and it's their money and no one should be allowed to dictate how one deals with his or her personal finances (Participant C20).

Their banks, HSBC, Barclays, etc alongside their local partners in Muslim countries, steal every year millions, if not billions, of dollars. They should be concerned about that rather than how a Muslim spend his money. Additionally, it is not the business of them how a Muslim spend his or her money (Participant C3).

Discussing the Dearth of Patriotism towards the UK, Living off the State and Remittances

The findings reveal narratives that challenge prevalent perceptions and stereotypes, illustrating the multifaceted nature of the Muslim immigrant experience. Through economic, sociocultural, and political lenses, the data shed light on the nuanced realities faced by this community, focusing on themes of patriotism, economic contributions, and remittances. Participants said they love both their countries of origin and the UK, and are loyal to both despite having different beliefs from White people. Participants also state that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are dedicated to serving the UK as they see it as their home and are grateful to be here,

just as foreigners in the Middle East like it there. Other participants said studies show they are the most patriotic to the UK despite being subjected to “hate”. On the question of not spending money in the UK to develop the economy, participants stated that this view is a making of the media as Muslims of Middle Eastern descent consider the UK as home and spend their earnings in, as well as invest in the UK. Other participants believe that some Muslims of Middle Eastern descent may choose to invest back home because they do not feel accepted in the UK. Others however agree that people send only small amounts of money home to support their families, as it is expensive to live in the UK, which means they only have little left to send home, while others posit that remittances are part of the normal inflow and outflow of every country. Other participants stated that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent have a right to spend their money as they please and that Western institutions take money from the Middle East.

It has been argued that the belief that Muslim immigrants in the West are not loyal to their host countries but to their countries of origin is a myth (Shadid & van Koningsveld, 2002). To dispel this myth, it is necessary to include in contact interventions how Muslims of Middle Eastern descent navigate their dual identities and express patriotism towards the UK, challenging the binary perception of loyalty (M. Wright & Bloemraad, 2012). Such content can include affirmation by Muslims and indeed, studies that demonstrate that Muslims are the most patriotic people in the UK, whilst demonstrating the global nature of remittances, emphasizing their role in poverty reduction, economic development, and global financial flows in and out of every country, which all contribute to global economy (Ratha et. al., 2019) as well as highlight the benefits of multiculturalism by recognising the contributions of

immigrants, including Muslims of Middle Eastern descent to British society (Vertovec, 2007).

In response to the issue of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living off the state, participants said their religion is against laziness, hence they are productive and pay taxes. Some participants however agree that there are some refugees from war torn countries in the Middle East who need such support when they first arrive the country, and that people from other countries also get such benefits. Other arguments are that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent equally hold such opinion of living off the state against White people. Muslim participants also argue that the invasion of Middle East by the West is the reason Muslims of Middle Eastern descent migrate over. It has been argued that the economic recession of 2007-2009 in Western countries contributed to Islamophobia, as some saw Muslim immigrants as an economic burden (Sufi & Yasmin, 2022). Kincheloe & Steinberg, (2004) posit that Westerners rationalise the conquest of the Muslim world, their economy and interference with their governance for centuries, while on the other hand mis-educate Westerners through school curricula and the media about this history, thereby misrepresenting Islam and its followers. Hence, the view that Muslims of Middle Eastern descent are an economic threat is the deliberate making of a myth. Therefore, contact interventions should highlight how media representation influences public perceptions of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, particularly regarding issues of patriotism, economic contributions, and remittances and how it perpetuates stereotypes (Baker, 2010; Poole, 2011). Contact interventions should equally emphasise and showcase the positive economic impact of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, on the UK economy,

including their role in filling labour market gaps, contributing to the public treasury through taxes, and fostering innovation and entrepreneurship (Dustmann & Frattini, 2014). By incorporating these elements, interventions can move beyond surface-level contacts to explore the complex realities of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK, highlighting their contributions, challenges, and experiences in a more nuanced and evidence-based manner. Hence, some of the perspectives of Muslim participants on the above issues will inform the intervention with the expectation that such alternative views from Muslims will influence attitude change on the part of White people.

Empathy- Encounters with Bias and Islamophobia

The sub-themes that accrued under the theme of experiences of racism and prejudice by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent (affective mediator, empathy) centred around the experience of racism, the experience of abuse, the experience of Islamophobia, attack on account of wearing hijab and teaching kids about racism.

A participant recounted as follows:

*I have not experienced anything. Nonetheless, as a Muslim, I could say that it is better for immigrant to try to adapt to British culture rather than trying to transform Britain into a middle-eastern country. If they like Middle East so much, they could return (**Participant C3**).*

Some participants experienced abuses at public spaces and accused of terrorism:

I was in the countryside and had 2 instances where people in the public swore at me and shouted at me for no reason, other than what I assumed was because of my race

(this was mostly white community in the UK), it made me feel humiliated and embarrassed, generally made me feel like I wanted to leave (Participant C2).

I was walking home from school and I was alone I had a long day of PE and science classes so my bag was really packed then this car pulled up next to me shouting have you got a bomb in there don't kill us and laughed while driving off I was 13 I felt like an outcast people stared at me weird (Participant C17).

Some participants recounted that Islamophobia made them scared and anxious:

The most significant racist behaviour was the "Harm a Muslim Day" some years back where people were actively encouraged to harm Muslims. During that time my mum didn't leave the house at all and couldn't go to the mosque which was one of the few activities she enjoyed (Participant C18).

When I was walking home with a full backpack from school a car stopped in front of me and shouted is there a bomb in there are you gonna bomb us all the people just stared at me and I walked away uncomfortable I was in year 7 (Participant C6).

Some participants experienced being cursed at for wearing a Hijab and being asked humiliating personal questions:

One day I saw that in a coffee shop, a customer cursed a Muslim woman with her two children loudly because of her head cover. Do you think how humiliating is this? If you are a Muslim woman wearing a head covering you become anxious and feel stressed when you are outside (Participant C10).

I have had people comment on my hijab asking whether I have hair under there (in my workplace), I have had my hijab removed (as a joke) at a work social, I have had people talk about Muslims as terrorists whilst I am there (Participant C4).

People even teach racism to kids:

I was waiting for a bus and two adult males and two young girls (less than 10 years old) were about to pass in front of me. They stopped a couple of steps before me and one of the adults gave the older child a vuuzela. As they are passing me the child turned to me and played that annoying thing towards me. That day that adult male made a child who is less than 10 years old a racist. In front of me, he teaches that child how to commit a hate crime. I still pray for that child to have better adults in her life and for her not to learn any more racist behaviours. It broke my heart to think someone could use a child to be hateful (Participant C7).

Discussing Empathy: White People's Attitudes towards Muslims of Middle Eastern Descent

The study delves into the experiences of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK, highlighting their encounters with racism, prejudice, and the challenges and opportunities related to integration. This analysis reveals the multifaceted nature of their experiences. Participants responded to questions relating to empathy, including whether they feel welcomed in the UK and how they feel given they are treated with less priority and stereotyped negatively. Participants also recounted difficult situations they have experienced while in the UK, what they think White people should know about such experiences, and if they perceive all White people as racists. Some of the incidents of racism or religious prejudice participants recounted include

abuse, being accused of terrorism, and being told to return home. Participants said they are scared of Islamophobia and fear being attacked and humiliated.

A systematic review and content analysis found prevailing theme across the reviewed articles revolves around the construction of anti-Muslim ideology through the depiction of Muslims and Islam in a negative light, leading to their portrayal as 'outsiders' or 'others' (Sufi & Yasmin, 2022). Islamophobia exerts a detrimental influence on health across various levels, and therefore warrants significant consideration as a significant contributor to adverse health outcomes and health disparities within affected populations (Samari, 2016). Qualitative and quantitative data from the United States show the emotional and relational distress Muslims experience as a marginalised group in the US because of how Islam is portrayed (Haque et al., 2019). Likewise in Europe, Muslims are frequent victims of right wing terrorists who want Muslims expelled (Shadid & van Koningsveld, 2002). Islamophobia at the individual level disrupts stress reactivity and prompts identity concealment. Interpersonally, it strains social relationships and hampers socialization processes. Additionally, Islamophobia permeates structural facets, including institutional policies and media coverage (Samari, 2016b). Further, a systematic review found the consequences of Islamophobia for Muslims to encompass a pervasive sense of isolation, recurring experiences of endangerment due to Islamophobia, identity crises, and the enduring impact of psychological trauma. Such multifaceted effects underscored the threat posed by Islamophobia to the well-being of both individuals and the broader societal fabric (Sufi & Yasmin, 2022). Research by Batson et al. (1997) on empathy-induced altruism suggests that fostering empathy

towards out-group members can reduce prejudice and increase pro-social behaviour. Hence, empathetic content can lead to a more nuanced understanding of the challenges Muslims of Middle Eastern descent face, fostering a more inclusive society. Studies have shown that experiences of racism can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and a sense of alienation (Pascoe & Richman, 2009). Highlighting these effects in contact intervention can promote greater awareness and understanding among the broader population and improve their attitude towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. Stereotypes about Muslims as extremists or not patriotic contribute to a lack of empathy towards them. Hence, contact intervention that counters stereotypes and provides accurate information about Islam and the diverse experiences of Muslims can help dispel these stereotypes (Elkassem et al., 2018; Rousseau et al., 2015; Rousseau & Jamil, 2008, 2010).

Stereotypes can also be countered by using contact interventions to showcase the positive contributions of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent to the UK, including economic contributions, community service, and cultural enrichment. Highlighting these contributions can challenge the narrative of Muslims as a threat and instead portray them as valuable members of British society (Hussain & Bagguley, 2013). Further, intervention content needs to emphasise that integration does not mean assimilation into a monocultural identity but rather the coexistence within a multicultural society that advocates for the recognition and inclusion of minority cultures within the public sphere (Modood, 2007).

Incorporating these mean contact interventions can move beyond documenting experiences of racism and prejudice to explore deeper societal, psychological, and

cultural dimensions. This approach can foster a more empathetic understanding of the challenges faced by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK, highlighting their resilience, contributions, and the importance of inclusivity in society.

Re-Categorisation - Superordinate Goals

Social Equity, Humanitarian Goals and Environmental Care

The sub-themes that accrued under the theme of promoting peace, respecting cultural diversity, acknowledging shared values, fostering economic development, and protecting the environment (perceived superordinate goals) centred around hard work and being good for the future, acknowledgement of religious and cultural diversity, bridge gaps and build better relationships among communities, and promoting the good of the world. Participants talked about the importance of creating a peaceful world for the future generations:

*The goal is to live in a peaceful place and to respect one another, despite our differences. Respect is a goal that I strive for. As long as we have respect, we ensure that our children will grow up in a better place and without such conflict that we have experienced in our lifetime. Humans have basic needs- to have food, shelter, and warmth, but to be happy; we need to have good relationships and equality (**Participant B10**).*

Some participants talked about the need to acknowledge and accept diversity:

*More acceptance of need for cultural diversity, dealing with these cultural differences and language barriers (**Participant B15**).*

*For everyone to acknowledge that we are all the same just with different beliefs (**Participant B17**).*

Some participants talked about saving the planet, eradicating poverty, diseases and making the world peaceful:

We need to help protect the planet from ourselves. We need to work together to reduce pollution. We need to all work together to reduce poverty across the world because everyone deserves a healthy life (Participant B21).

There are lots of people dying because of hunger and disease because they do not have the same life qualities. Working together and helping these poor conditioned people should be our number one goal to make our world more peaceful and healthy (Participant B7).

Expressed Superordinate Goals

To develop the third stage of the intergroup contact intervention, data on perceived superordinate goals between Muslims of Middle Eastern descent and White people were collected. This third stage is in line with Pettigrew's (1998) intergroup contact theory focusing on re-categorization. This stage emphasises replacing the group identities of the people in intergroup contact with an all-encompassing superordinate group identity. Therefore, superordinate goals between the two groups as perceived by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent were explored. The emphasis by participants on promoting peace, respecting cultural diversity, acknowledging shared values, fostering economic development, and protecting the environment as superordinate goals provides a solid foundation for building better inter-community relationships.

The concept of superordinate goals is grounded in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) and its extension, the self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987). These theories suggest that individuals categorize themselves and others into various social groups, leading to in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination. The introduction of superordinate goals, as suggested by the common ingroup identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2014), proposes that focusing on shared objectives can help merge these in-group and out-group distinctions into a more cohesive, overarching group identity, thereby reducing intergroup biases and conflicts.

Participants were prompted to generate goals they consider important enough that can make them set aside their differences and work together as a team with White people. Participants underscored the significance of overarching objectives, including the promotion of peace, the recognition of cultural diversity, the acknowledgement of shared values, the advancement of economic development, and the preservation of the environment. These superordinate goals were seen as pivotal in bridging divides and cultivating enhanced inter-community relationships. Research by Sherif et al. (1961) in the Robbers Cave experiment provides a classic empirical example of how superordinate goals can reduce intergroup hostility. When two groups of boys were brought into competition, intergroup hostility emerged. However, when presented with tasks that required joint efforts to achieve shared goals, such as restoring the water supply, these groups started to cooperate, leading to a reduction in intergroup hostility. This experiment illustrates the potential of superordinate goals to transcend group boundaries and foster intergroup cooperation.

Further, field and laboratory findings align with Pettigrew's (1998) proposal that over time, processes like de-categorization and re-categorization can contribute to reducing intergroup bias. Notably, these categorization-based approaches can complement and reinforce each other in the pursuit of bias reduction (Gaertner et al., 2000). Another experimental study on intergroup relations found that the introduction of compelling shared goals, which necessitated collaborative efforts from all group members, effectively reduced conflict between the groups. Before the intervention, the groups had developed unfavourable attitudes, derogatory stereotypes, and social distance from each other (Sherif, 1958). Structured dialogues centred on superordinate goals have also been found to enhance intergroup trust (Swaab et al., 2021). The emphasis on cultural diversity and environmental protection as superordinate goals by study participants aligns with the broader societal movements towards multiculturalism and sustainability. Acknowledging and respecting cultural differences while jointly working on environmental initiatives can serve as practical and meaningful platforms for Muslims of Middle Eastern descent and White populations to collaborate, fostering mutual respect and understanding (Mohai et al., 2009).

Incorporating superordinate goals into the design of intergroup contact interventions offers a promising avenue for reducing prejudice and fostering positive intergroup relations. Building on the participants' views on the importance of superordinate goals, the intervention design could leverage these shared objectives to promote intergroup contact. Hence, findings from the current study with Muslims of

Middle Eastern descent were included in the design of the re-categorisation stage of the intervention study presented in Chapter 4.

Conclusion

This study explored the perspectives of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent regarding concerns voiced by White participants, as delineated in Chapter 2. It delved into the intrinsic characteristics of this group, encompassing values, beliefs, and interests, in addition to examining their ingroup norms toward White individuals within the UK context. Participants acknowledged the presence of unfavourable elements within their community but emphasized that this phenomenon is not exclusive to them and can be observed across all societal groups.

A significant critique was directed toward the media for its role in amplifying the actions of a minority among Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, thereby casting a generalized shadow of negativity over the entire group. This critique aligns with the broader discourse on media representation of minority groups, where research has consistently demonstrated the media's influence in shaping public perceptions through selective and often sensationalized reporting (Entman & Rojecki, 2001).

Furthermore, participants vehemently contested prevalent misconceptions surrounding their faith and cultural practices. They articulated that while their values may diverge from those of White communities, what is often perceived as oppressive or aberrant from an external viewpoint is, in fact, a manifestation of their cherished lifestyle, deeply rooted in their values and beliefs. This assertion underscores the importance of cultural relativism, a concept that advocates for the understanding and

evaluation of a culture within its own context, devoid of ethnocentric bias (Herskovits, 1948).

In response to apprehensions and perceived threats attributed to them by White individuals, participants unequivocally refuted claims of posing any danger to the UK. Instead, they highlighted their own experiences of prejudice and Islamophobia, pointing to a reversed victimization narrative that often goes unnoticed. This revelation is supported by the European Islamophobia Report (Ragozina et al., 2020), which documents the widespread prevalence of Islamophobic incidents across Europe, illustrating the grim reality of discrimination and exclusion faced by Muslim communities.

Mass media emerged as a potent influencer that exacerbated the phenomenon of Islamophobia. Through its portrayal of Muslims and Islam in undesirable, stereotypical, and one-sided manners, the media played a pivotal role in shaping negative public perceptions. This portrayal resulted in the propagation of fear, anxiety, and unrest among the general populace, ultimately fostering prejudiced attitudes, racism, and societal conflicts. Consequently, this media-driven narrative contributed to the degradation of societal harmony and peace in various European countries (Sufi & Yasmin, 2022). This underscores the need to address Islamophobia, its sources, and its impact by addressing the sources of wrong misconception, anxieties and threats White people have towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. Thus, findings presented in this Chapter informed the content of a multistage virtual intergroup contact intervention to reduce intergroup bias by White people towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in UK, which is reported in Chapter 4.

Chapter Four

Introduction

"Human beings are members of a whole, in the creation of one essence and soul. If one member is afflicted with pain, other members uneasy will remain. If you have no sympathy for human pain, the name of human you cannot retain." Saadi Shirazi. Abū-Muhammad Muslih al-Dīn bin Abdallāh Shīrāzī

This chapter reports a quantitative study evaluating the effectiveness of a virtual intergroup contact intervention designed to reduce Non-Muslim White individuals' negative stereotypes and prejudice towards and increase their intentions to engage in contact with, Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living in the UK.

The Current Study

Virtual intergroup contact is a form of non-physical interaction between people belonging to different groups, which is made possible by computer applications and software including social media and other electronic media (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006; White & Abu-Rayya, 2012). The extant literature indicates that the effects of virtual contact are inconsistent (Alvídrez, 2018; Walther et al., 2015). However, virtual contact has shown to be promising given its advantages over direct and other indirect forms of contact. There is a significant opportunity to maximize the potential of virtual intergroup contact by actively manipulating key factors that play a pivotal role in reducing intergroup bias through contact. The current study therefore designed and evaluated the effectiveness of a virtual intergroup contact intervention to reduce intergroup bias of White people towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. Specifically, building on the results of the qualitative

studies reported in Chapter 2 and 3, this intervention was designed to take the form of an ostensible conversation with avatars representing Muslim Middle Eastern individuals. The avatars presented their views on predetermined issues (presented as pre-prepared typewritten text). After presenting their views on each issue, the avatars asked participants for their thoughts, and to ask questions if they have any. The issues deliberately addressed two cognitive and three affective mediators: knowledge of the outgroup, intergroup anxiety and intergroup threat (Chapter 2), empathy and ingroup norm (Chapter 3).

Furthermore, given that long-term experimental virtual intergroup contact interventions have proven to be effective (White & Abu-Rayya, 2012), the intervention designed in the current study used Pettigrew's (1998) intergroup contact theory to guide intervention content in 3 stages, over several weeks. Pettigrew (1998) proposed a model consisting of three stages to achieve optimal generalization of contact effects. The first is the de-categorization stage, which emphasizes the individual characteristics of members of different groups in the contact to promote interpersonal liking and reduce anxiety. The second is the salient categorization stage, which emphasizes the group characteristics of members of different groups in the contact to facilitate the generalization of positive affect to the outgroup as a whole. Finally, the third is the re-categorization stage, which involves replacing the group identities of members of different groups with an all-encompassing superordinate group identity. Therefore, the current intervention used example personal characteristics and superordinate goals identified by Muslim participants in Chapter 3, to support de-categorisation (Stage 1) and re-categorisation (Stage 3) respectively.

As discussed in Chapter 1, attitude is multifaceted, comprising of affective, cognitive and behavioural connotation components (Zanna & Rempel, 2008). The tripartite model of attitude holds that stereotypes are the cognitive component of attitudes while prejudice is the affective component (Secord & Backman, 1974). Hodson & Hewstone (2013) reported that all three routes of cognitive, affective and behaviour could serve as a mechanism for prejudice reduction. In general, contact-based interventions seem to be more effective with affective than with cognitive components of bias (Alvídrez et al., 2015; Gómez & Huici, 2008). By providing a platform to directly manipulate the content of an interaction, simulated virtual contact may be more effective at reducing cognitive components of intergroup bias than other contact intervention methods. Hence, this study evaluated whether participants receiving the intervention showed less negative stereotyping and prejudice and greater behavioural intentions to engage in future contact with the outgroup, relative to participants who did not receive the intervention.

Study Hypotheses

In line with previous research, it was predicted that there will be a significant effect of the virtual intergroup contact intervention on participants' ratings on warmth and competent stereotype, prejudice and intention to engage in future contact with Muslim Middle Eastern individuals in the UK.

Therefore, the following hypotheses were tested:

H1: Participants in the intervention group will report significantly higher warmth and competence stereotype ratings of the outgroup progressively at each

stage of the intervention compared to control group participants, who should show no change over time.

H2: Participants in the intervention group will report significantly higher warmth and competence stereotype ratings of the outgroup compared to control group participants.

H3: Participants in the intervention group will report significantly lower prejudice ratings of the outgroup progressively at each stage of the intervention compared to control group participants, who should show no change over time.

H4: Participants in the intervention group will report significantly lower prejudice ratings of the outgroup compared to control group participants.

H5: Participants in the intervention group will report a significantly higher intention to engage in contact with the outgroup progressively at each stage of the intervention compared to control group participants, who should show no change over time.

H6: Participants in the intervention group will report significantly higher intentions to engage in contact with the outgroup compared to control group participants.

The following exploratory hypotheses were also tested and answered:

To maintain consistency with the pre-registered protocol, exploratory research question E3 continues to be referred to as E3 in the current chapter. The study preregistration can be found at <https://osf.io/cr985>.

E3: Will the time spent engaging with the intervention by intervention group participants be correlated with significantly lower intergroup bias (i.e. higher warmth and competence stereotype ratings, lower prejudice and higher intention to engage in contact ratings) towards the outgroup? This exploratory hypothesis seeks to understand the relationship between participant engagement and the effectiveness of the intervention. The underlying assumption is that greater time spent interacting with the intervention content may lead to a deeper processing of the material, potentially resulting in more significant attitudinal and behavioural changes towards the outgroup. It aligns with the notion suggesting that the extent of exposure to positive outgroup representations can directly influence the reduction of intergroup bias by allowing for more comprehensive counter-stereotypic learning and increased empathetic connections.

Methods

Design

The current study had a 2 (study group: intervention vs. passive control) x 3 (intervention stage: 1 vs. 2 vs. 3) mixed experimental design, with repeated measures on the last factor. There was an additional repeated measures factor (Stereotype content dimension: warmth vs. competence) for the stereotyping outcome. Participants were randomly assigned to either the intervention group or control group by the Qualtrics software in approximately equal numbers. Dependent variables were stereotype warmth and competence, prejudice and behavioural intentions to engage in intergroup contact.

Participants Inclusion Criteria

The participant inclusion criteria is that individuals identify as ethnic White ethnic group, who are 18 years or older, do not identify as Muslim, and currently live in the UK.

Sampling Procedure

The sampling strategy utilised a combination of convenience sampling and voluntary response sampling methods. The recruitment was conducted through sponsored advertisements on Facebook and communications via university staff and student volunteer mailing lists. Participants who showed interest in the study were subsequently screened using specific inclusion criteria set in Qualtrics software. These criteria required participants to self-identify as ethnic White, be 18 years or older, currently live in the UK, and identify as non-Muslim.

The choice of voluntary response and convenience sampling utilising online recruitment was justified by the need for a large number of participants (1200) and to engage a broad and diverse participant base across different regions of the UK, making it possible to test the intervention's impact in a wide-ranging context rather than participants from one city. Hence, the virtual nature of the intervention was leveraged to facilitate the nationwide recruitment of participants.

Participant Recruitment

The study was ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Department of Psychology (REF 044662) before recruitment via sponsored adverts on Facebook and through University staff

and student volunteer mailing lists. Potential participants were informed that the study involved completing three online questionnaires about their thoughts, feelings and beliefs about people from different groups in the UK, over 2 to 3 weeks. Potential participants were also informed that they might also be asked to read and respond to a conversational text from another person about their thoughts, feelings, beliefs and experiences, as well as provide their demographic information. They were also told that they would be allowed to enter into a prize draw to win 1 of 15 Amazon e-vouchers (1 x £100, 4 x £50, 10 x £20: 1 entry per stage of the study completed).

Power Analysis

The effect sizes of contact interventions are generally small (Paluck et al., 2021; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Hence, power analysis assuming a small effect size was conducted using GPower. Power analysis (assuming a small effect size of $f = 0.1$, 80% power, $\alpha = .05$) indicates that 526 participants are needed to detect the main effect of the intervention condition). Given anticipated attrition at stages 2 and 3 of the study, and the need to exclude participants who did not complete all outcome measures at the relevant stage, we aimed to recruit 1200 participants for Stage 1.

One thousand and nineteen participants completed Stage 1 of the study, 421 participants completed Stage 2 (58.68% attrition from Stage 1: 59.78% intervention group; 57.80% control group) and 296 completed Stage 3 (70.95% attrition from Stage 1: 69.89% intervention group; 71.81% control group).

However, inconsistencies were observed, with some participants generating codes that did not align with those they had previously provided. Consequently, data from all 296 participants at stage 3 could not be included in the analysis, as repeated

measures ANOVA necessitated data from participants whose submission can be matched across all three stages. Therefore, ANOVA was done with data from 250 participants (75.47% attrition from Stage 1: 73.63% intervention group; 76.95% control group).

Participants were predominantly female and practised no religion. Mean ages ranged from 37.9 to 38.1 years across the three stages. The average participant had spent more than three decades in the United Kingdom. Breakdowns of sample size and demographic characteristics are reported in Table 1, Chapter 4, Table 2, Chapter 4 and Table 3, Chapter 4.

Table 1, Chapter 4

Distribution of Participants' Experimental Condition, Gender and Religious Affiliation across the Three Stages of Intervention.

Characteristics	Sub-groups	Stage 1 (n = 1019)		Stage 2 (n = 421*)		Stage 3 (n = 296**)	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Experimental condition	Control group	564	55.3	238	56.5	159	53.7
	Intervention group	455	44.7	183	43.5	137	46.3
		1019		421		296	

Table 2, Chapter 4

Cross-tabulation of Participants' Experimental Condition, Gender and Religious Affiliation across the Three Stages of Intervention.

Characteristics	Experimental condition	Sub-groups	Stage 1 (n = 564)		Stage 2 (n = 189*)		Stage 3 (n = 136**)	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender	Control group	Male	148	26.2	47	24.9	39	28.7
		Female	375	66.5	129	68.3	87	64.0
		Non-binary	33	5.9	12	6.3	9	6.6
		Prefer not to say	3	0.5	1	0.5	1	0.7
		Prefer to self-define	5	0.9	0	0		
	Experimental group		Stage 1 (n = 455)		Stage 2 (n = 161*)		Stage 3 (n = 127**)	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
		Male	108	23.7	35	21.7	28	22.0
		Female	314	69.0	115	71.4	89	70.1
		Non-binary	28	6.2	10	6.2	9	7.1
Religious affiliation	Control group		Stage 1 (n = 564)		Stage 2 (n = 189*)		Stage 3 (n = 136**)	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
		Christianity	126	22.3	46	24.3	31	22.8
		Atheism	63	11.2	21	11.1	15	11.0
		Judaism	9	1.6	3	1.6	1	0.7
		Buddhism	6	1.1	1	0.5	1	0.7
		No religion	295	52.3	98	51.9	74	54.4
	Experimental group	Prefer not to say	10	1.8	3	1.6	1	0.7
		Other	55	9.8	17	9.0	13	9.6
			Stage 1 (n = 455)		Stage 2 (n = 161*)		Stage 3 (n = 127**)	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
		Christianity	97	21.3	33	20.5	24	18.9
		Atheism	52	11.4	13	8.1	11	8.7
		Judaism	7	1.5	3	1.9	2	1.6
		Buddhism	9	2.0	6	3.7	4	3.1
		No religion	238	52.3	89	55.3	73	57.5
		Prefer not to say	5	1.1	4	2.5	2	1.6
		Other	47	10.3	13	8.1	11	8.7

Note: *Gender and religion information on 71 participants were missing at the second stage of data collection.

**Gender and religion information on 33 participants were missing at the third stage of data collection.

Table 3, Chapter 4

Summary of Participants' Age and the Number of Years Spent in the UK across the Three Stages of Intervention.

Characteristics	Stage 1				Stage 2				Stage 3			
	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Age	18	78	38.1	13.3	18	78	37.9	13.6	18	78	37.9	13.6
*YinUK	1	78	35.4	15.3	1	78	34.8	15.8	1	78	34.8	15.6

Note: * Years spent in the UK

Materials

Virtual Contact Intervention

The virtual contact intervention took the form of three ostensible ‘conversations’ between Muslim avatars and participants, with pre-scripted conversational text from the avatar, and opportunities for participants to respond. The content of the avatars’ conversational text was derived from the previously conducted qualitative studies with Non-Muslim White Britons living in the UK (Chapter 2) and Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living in the UK (Chapter 3). Specifically, the Muslim male and female avatars presented pre-scripted conversations that brought up issues raised by White participants in Chapter 2, relating to triggers of negative intergroup attitudes and topics that would increase White participants' knowledge of the outgroup. The avatars then addressed those issues based on responses from the Muslim participants in Chapter 3. As stated above, conversation content was guided by mediators of intergroup contact, two cognitive and three affective mediators: knowledge of the outgroup, intergroup anxiety and intergroup threat (Chapter 2), empathy, ingroup norm and perceived superordinate goals (Chapter 3). Intervention content did not include all the responses from Muslim participants in anticipation that confrontational content in the intervention would have an undesired effect and trigger defensiveness from participants (Hornsey, 2005).

Pettigrew’s (1998) Three Stage Intergroup Contact Theory. The structure of the overall intervention was designed using Pettigrew’s (1998) three-stage intergroup contact theory. This theory suggests that intergroup contact should follow a pattern

of stages from de-categorisation, salient categorization to re-categorization for optimum generalization of contact effects. To enable this staging, the intervention was split across three separate time-points (3 separate conversations) over several weeks. To balance participant burden across the stages, the conversation at the first time-point (Stage 1) included content relevant to de-categorisation and salient categorization. The third time-point (Stage 3) also included content relevant to salient categorisation and re-categorization. Below are the stages of the intervention and the issues discussed at each level. See appendices 5, 6, and 7 for the full content of the intervention.

Intervention Design

Stage One, De-categorisation and Salient Categorisation. At the first time-point, intervention content emphasised individual characteristics of the participant and the Muslim avatar to promote interpersonal liking and reduce intergroup anxiety. Topics discussed at this stage include personal characteristics (“I strive to find time for religious worship and going to Mosque. I believe in good education, career and general ambitiousness and to be a useful member of the society”), general attitudes of Muslims towards outgroups such as LGBTQ+ people (“Just like in Judaism and Christianity, Islam forbids LGBTQ relationships but Muslims are ordered to be respectful and kind to everyone irrespective of lifestyle differences”), religious commitment and daily lifestyles (“In terms of being committed to Islam, that is correct. In the Western world, I feel like religion is more personal and is kept private. However, Islam is a more social religion, which determines the law, social relations, hygiene, relationships, and finances. So our religion is integrated into our daily life - family,

work, relationships with others, dealing with different situations and many more”).

Below is an example excerpt from Stage 1 of the intervention.



“I think there are probably some Muslims who see non-Muslim people’s lifestyle negatively, but most of the Muslims in the UK understand that they live in a country with a different culture and lifestyle than theirs and are accepting of this.

Funny enough, there are also many Muslims of Middle Eastern descent who think White people in the UK don’t like their lifestyle!

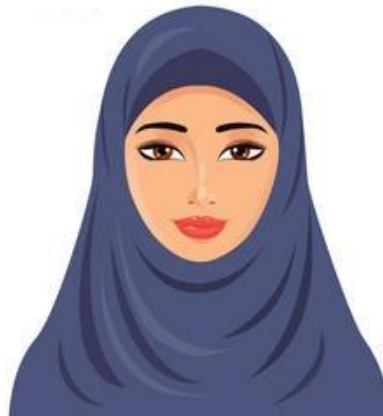
Really, we all need to stop being anxious about each other’s ways of living that are different from our own and maybe we can start to understand each other better.

I know that some of my White friends had wondered what Islam is about before we met, and wondered what motivates us to be committed to practising Islam.

Do you know much about Islam?”

Stage Two, Salient categorization. At the second time-point, intervention content emphasised group-based characteristics of the participant and the Muslim avatar to aid the generalisation of positive affect to the outgroup as a whole. Topics covered in this stage include typical marriage and family dynamics (“In the olden days, there used to be forced marriage when some parents wanted to be the only decision maker for the marriage of their child. However, forced marriage is forbidden in Islam where people are meant to have a choice in who they marry”), gender relations (“Islam grants women, as it does men, fundamental rights. Islam states that

both genders complement each other for their respective strengths and weaknesses. However, their roles are different. Their responsibilities and their rights are also different”) and other affairs of Muslims within the UK (“In Islam, we are told to follow the laws of the land we live in. We are not here to change anything as long as we are not made to do something uncomfortable to our beliefs”). Below is an example excerpt from Stage 2 of the intervention.



*“I know that people worry about the Sharia law in the UK.
Do you think that laws in the UK will or should be changed to accommodate the lifestyle and values of Muslim people?*

In Islam, we are told to follow the laws of the land we live in. We are not here to change anything as long as we are not made to do something uncomfortable with our beliefs.

I think diversity of values and beliefs is a good thing- A multicultural and multi-religious society is a healthy and creative one. That is what is great about the UK; it is multicultural. I personally have not seen any Muslim person forcing their values and beliefs on other people. Muslims just want their values and beliefs to be respected and in no way pose a threat to people of other faiths and values- so I think that laws should be inclusive and encompass a range of values.

Of course, there will be people who want everyone to agree with their values, but this is not something that can be generalised for Muslims of the Middle East. People like this are in every culture and religion.”

Stage Three, Salient Categorisation and Re-categorization. At the final time-point, the intervention content further emphasised group-based characteristics and

then superordinate goals to encourage re-categorization whereby participants adopt an all-encompassing group identification with Muslims. Some of the issues discussed at this stage include Muslims' patriotism towards the UK ("We love this country. That we have different beliefs does not necessarily mean that we reject British values. A society is nothing without the sharing of different cultures and beliefs. Despite us being from a different country, we now live in the UK and we see the UK as our home and would do nothing to harm it"), White people's attitude towards Muslims ("As I grow older, the racism is often more and more subtle which makes you feel like you cannot always point it out and stand up for yourself so you just have to endure it. Sometimes it's still overt racism though as well"), and superordinate goals ("I just wanted to emphasise that rather than emphasise our differences; we should work together for our common good. For starters, we need to help protect the planet from ourselves. We need to work together to reduce pollution, stop climate change, and save the environment. The consequences of climate change are lethal"). Below is an example excerpt from Stage 3 of the intervention.



"Some White people have alleged that we are not patriotic towards the UK. We love this country. That we have different beliefs does not necessarily mean that we reject British values. A society is nothing without the sharing of different cultures and beliefs."

Despite us being from a different country, we now live in the UK and we see the UK as our home and would do nothing to harm it.

Similarly, there are people of other religions, including Christians, who are minorities in the Middle East. Even though the values of Muslims and these minorities do not always align, they still love the Middle East and are patriotic towards it. Muslim Brits feel the same here.

In Islam, Muslims must obey the laws of the land and not cause destruction but live peacefully within it. Practising Muslims who have a very good understanding of their religion will give the best in their communities and the countries they live in, even if they have different values and beliefs, as this is what Islam teaches.

There is no contradiction between Islam and civil rights and obligations. In fact, many studies have been conducted on this issue and it has been found that British Muslims are amongst the country's most loyal, patriotic and law-abiding citizens. You can check this report in the Telegraph here <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12000042/How-patriotic-are-British-Muslims-Much-more-than-you-think-actually.html>

Do you think we can be the most patriotic group in the UK and still want to harm the country?"

Rationale for Incorporation of Diverse Perspectives in the Intervention

To enhance the intervention capacity for real-world change, the intervention leverages insights from qualitative studies and integrates real-world perspectives.

Hence, the inclusion of information shared by a professor on social media and a White British public figure enriches the intervention content by providing authoritative, alternative viewpoints that counteract the often one-sided narratives perpetuated by media and political discourse through the following.

Countering One-Sided Narratives. The intervention seeks to challenge the prevalent stereotypes and misconceptions by presenting informed opinions that reflect a more nuanced understanding of the Muslim community.

Enhancing Content Authenticity. Incorporating views from recognized figures adds a layer of credibility and relevance to the intervention content, making it more engaging and relatable for participants.

Facilitating Applied Learning. As an applied intervention, the inclusion of real-world voices underscores its goal to effect tangible change in societal attitudes and behaviours towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK.

Utilisation of Avatars

Avatars were chosen as the representational medium for the outgroup due to practical constraints and strategic considerations. Given the limitations of resources, specifically the absence of capabilities for video production, and relying solely on Qualtrics software, an asynchronous chat-based intervention was conceptualized. This approach allowed for the creation of a cost-effective and manageable virtual environment where participants could engage with pre-scripted dialogues simulating real-life conversations. Avatars served as stand-ins for actual members of the Muslim Middle Eastern community, facilitating a controlled interaction that aimed to educate, challenge stereotypes, and foster empathy without necessitating live participation from both parties, which is the essence of a virtual contact intervention that can be scaled.

Gender Representation: Male and Female Avatars

The decision to include both male and female Muslim avatars was grounded in a desire to present a balanced and comprehensive view of the Muslim Middle

Eastern community. This choice was informed by findings from study with Non-Muslim White Britons, where issues specific to gender dynamics such as women's rights were raised. Hence, the gender-inclusive approach by including both male and female avatars to address issues specific to respective genders.

Outcome Measures

Outcome variables are stereotype endorsement, prejudice and behavioural intention. More details can be found along with the intervention in appendices 5, 6, and 7.

Stereotype Endorsement. Stereotype endorsement was assessed based on the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al., 2002) adapted by (Awale et al., 2019). The scale consists of 12 attributes in two dimensions: warmth (friendly, honest, trustworthy, warm, likeable, sincere) and competence (competent confident, assertive, efficient, intelligent, skillful). Participants indicated the extent to which they consider Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK to possess each of the attributes on a 5-point scale (Not at all, Slightly, Moderately, Very, Extremely).

A mean score for each of the two subscales of the stereotype scale (warmth and competence) was calculated for each participant, such that a higher score indicates higher warmth/competence. Cronbach alpha for the Stereotype Warmth subscale is very good at $\alpha = .943$ and that of the Stereotype Competence subscale is good at $\alpha = .821$.

Prejudice. Prejudice was assessed with the Subtle and Blatant Prejudice scale (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). Participants responded on a 4-point Likert scale to twenty items assessing these two dimensions of prejudice (e.g., Blatant prejudice:

“Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK have jobs that the White/British should have”; Subtle prejudice: “Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here should not push themselves where they are not wanted”). Scale anchors differed across items, but items were coded such that a higher score indicates higher prejudice. Item 6 on subscale 1 (Threat and rejection factor) and all items on subscale 2 (Intimacy factor items) and 4 (Positive emotions factor items) were reversed scored. A mean score was then calculated for the overall scale for each participant. Cronbachs alpha for Prejudice scale is very good at $\alpha = .909$. Below are the scale items.

The Blatant and Subtle Prejudice Scales and Their Five Subscales

Threat and rejection factor items: the blatant scale

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK have jobs that the White/British should have.

Most Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here who receive support from welfare could get along without it if they tried.

White/British people and Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK can never be really comfortable with each other, even if they are close friends.

Most politicians in Britain care too much about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK and not enough about the average British person.

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK come from less able races and this explains why they are not as well off as most White/British people

How different or similar do you think Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here are to other White/British people like yourself – in how honest they are?

Intimacy factor items: the blatant scale

Suppose that a child of yours had children with a person of very different color and physical characteristics than your own. Do you think you would be Very bothered, Bothered, Bothered a little, or Not bothered at all, If your grandchildren did not physically resemble the people on your side of the family?

I would be willing to have sexual relationships with a Muslim of Middle Eastern descent in the UK.

I would not mind if a suitably qualified Muslim of Middle Eastern descent in the UK was appointed as my boss.

I would not mind if Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK who had a similar economic background as mine joined my close family by marriage.

Traditional values factor items: subtle scale

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here should not push themselves where they are not wanted.

Many other groups have come to Britain and overcome prejudice and worked their way up. Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK should do the same without special favour.

It is just a matter of some people not trying hard enough. If Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK would only try harder they could be as well off as White/British people.

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here teach their children values and skills different from those required to be successful in Britain.

Cultural differences factor items: subtle scale

How different or similar do you think Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here are to other White/British people like yourself (Very different, Somewhat different, Somewhat similar, or Very similar)?

In the values that they teach their children?

In their religious beliefs and practices?

In their sexual values or sexual practices?

In the language that they speak?

Affective prejudice factor items: subtle scale

Have you ever felt the following ways about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK and their families living here (Very often, Fairly often, Not too often, or Never)?

How often have you felt sympathy for Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here?

How often have you felt admiration for Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here?

Behavioural Intentions. Behavioural intentions to engage in intergroup contact were assessed following Husnu & Crisp (2010). Participants responded on a 9-point Likert scale to four items assessing behavioural intentions: “How much do you intend to interact with Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK in the future?” (not at all, ... very much); “How much time do you think you might spend learning about Islam in the future?” (none at all, ... a lot of time); “How important do you think interacting with Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK is?” (not at all important, ... highly important); “How willing would you be to attend a mosque gathering to learn more about Islamic beliefs and practices?” (not at all willing, ... very

willing). A mean score was calculated for each participant, such that a higher score indicates stronger behavioural intentions to engage in contact. Cronbach's alpha for the Behavioural Intention scale is good at $\alpha = .820$

Control Group Description

Control Group Design. The study utilised a passive control group. Participants assigned to the control group did not receive any form of intervention or placebo content. Instead, their involvement was limited to responding to outcome measure questionnaires at the three stages of the study. This approach ensured a clear demarcation between the experiences of participants in the intervention and control groups, thereby facilitating a straightforward comparison of outcomes related to stereotype endorsement, prejudice levels, and behavioural intentions towards the outgroup.

Justification for a Passive Control Group. The decision to employ a passive control group, rather than an active control or placebo group, was guided by the objective to isolate and measure the specific impact of the virtual contact intervention. This approach allows for a direct assessment of changes in attitudes attributable solely to the intervention content, without the potential confounding effects of exposure to alternative stimuli (Wampold & Imel, 2015). Moreover, a passive control group serves as a baseline to evaluate the natural progression of attitudes over time, providing essential insights into the intervention's effectiveness relative to no intervention at all.

Data Collection

Participants were randomly assigned to either the intervention or control group in Qualtrics. At the start of each questionnaire, participants were asked to create a self-generated unique identifier (based on the last two letters of their first name, birth date ranging from 01 to 31, and the last two digits of their personal mobile phone number) during all three stages of the study to allow data to be linked across questionnaires. Participants completed three online questionnaires for the study, via Qualtrics (Qualtrics, Provo, UT), an online survey platform between February to August 2022. Participants accessed the first survey via a link on the study advert. Participants were then invited (via email) to complete the second and third questionnaires one week after completion of the previous questionnaire, with a reminder sent after one week if needed. Unforeseen circumstances meant that some surveys were sent later than one week after the completion of the previous questionnaire. In addition, many participants did not complete the surveys until the reminder email was sent. This meant that the actual time between each survey ranged from 7 days to 28 days.

Intervention group participants engaged in an ostensible online conversation with avatars representing Muslim Middle Eastern individuals, at each of the 3 time points. A male avatar was used at Stages 1 and 3, and a female avatar was used at Stage 2 where the topic of gender relations was addressed. At each time point, the avatar presented its views on predetermined issues (pre-prepared typewritten text). After presenting its view on each issue, the avatar asked participants for their thoughts, and to ask questions if they had any.

Participants were informed beforehand that the virtual interaction is not in real-time, but the Middle Easterners represented by the avatars have provided the content and will see their responses afterwards. At the end of each time point, participants completed the measures of stereotype content, prejudice and intentions to engage in contact. Control group participants did not participate in a virtual conversation, and only completed the outcome measures at each time point. There was no specific information in the instructions on how long participants were expected to take to engage with the intervention. At the end, participants were then presented with a debriefing form to read and were then entered into the prize draw.

Results

Data Screening

The normality of the distributions of the mean score of stereotype warmth and competence, prejudice and behavioural intention across the three stages of the study were screened with the use of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results indicated that normality could not be assumed in any of the distributions except for behavioural intention where results indicated that four of the six distributions were not normal ($ps < 0.05$). These significant deviations from normality remained when the data was subject to a log transformation (all $ps < 0.05$) except the distribution of prejudice of the intervention group in the second stage of intervention, which became normalized ($p > 0.05$). However, examination of histograms indicated that data was sufficiently normally distributed. Given ANOVA is relatively robust to slight deviations from normality when sample sizes are similar, the data was considered suitable for parametric analyses. For stereotype, the results of Mauchly's test show that sphericity

was violated ($\chi^2(2) = 11.12, p = 0.0074$ and Greenhouse-Geisser Epsilon was > 0.75 (0.958). For prejudice, the results of Mauchly's test show that sphericity was violated ($\chi^2(2) = 12.49, p = 0.002$) and Greenhouse-Geisser Epsilon was > 0.75 (0.953). For behavioural intention, the results of Mauchly's test show that sphericity was violated ($\chi^2(2) = 20.602, p = 0.000$ and Greenhouse-Geisser Epsilon was > 0.75 (0.926). Accordingly, analyses are reported with Huynh-Feldt correction for all outcome measures. Levene's test indicates no violations of assumptions of homogeneity of variance (all p 's $> .05$).

Effect of Virtual Contact Intervention on Stereotype Endorsement

A 2 (Intervention group: Intervention vs. control) x 3 (Intervention stage: 1 vs. 2 vs. 3) x 2 (Stereotype content dimension: Warmth vs. competence) mixed ANOVA with repeated measures on the last two factors.

Interaction Effect of Experimental Condition and Stage of the Intervention on Stereotype Endorsement

Contrary to H1, there was no significant interaction between the intervention condition and stage of study on the endorsement of stereotypes: $F(1.96, 486.35) = 0.056, p = 0.943, \eta_p^2 = 0.000$. Figures 1, Chapter 4 and 2, Chapter 4 are a representation of means of warmth and competence stereotypes among participants of the control and intervention groups across the stages of the study (see Tables 4, Chapter 4 and 5, Chapter 4 for descriptive statistics).

Figure 1, Chapter 4

A plot of Mean Warmth Stereotype Scores in the Intervention and Control Groups across the Three Stages of the Study.

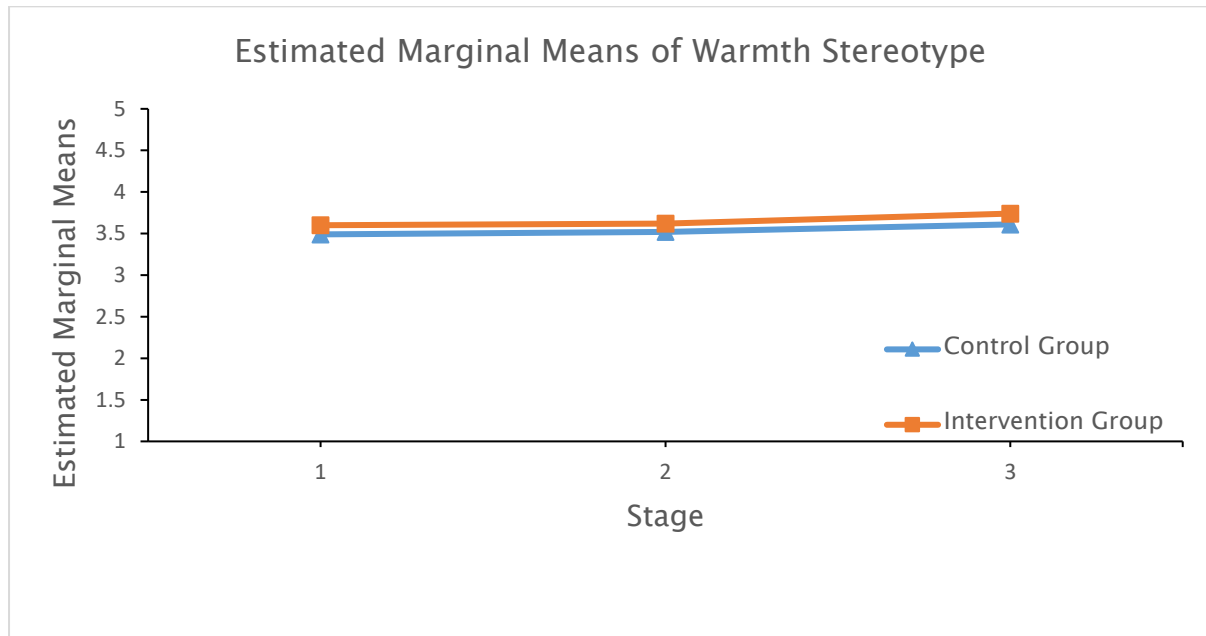


Table 4, Chapter 4

Indicators of Participants' Warmth Stereotype in the Intervention and Control Group across the Three Stages of Study

Stage of Intervention	Experimental Condition	Mean \pm SD
Stage 1	Control Group ($n = 130$)	3.49 \pm 0.74
	Intervention Group ($n = 120$)	3.60 \pm 0.68
	Total ($n = 250$)	3.54 \pm 0.71
Stage 2	Control Group ($n = 130$)	3.52 \pm 0.77
	Intervention Group ($n = 120$)	3.62 \pm 0.69
	Total ($n = 250$)	3.57 \pm 0.73
Stage 3	Control Group ($n = 130$)	3.61 \pm 0.83
	Intervention Group ($n = 120$)	3.74 \pm 0.75
	Total ($n = 250$)	3.67 \pm 0.80

Figure 2, Chapter 4

A plot of Mean Competence Stereotype Scores in the Intervention and Control Groups across the Three Stages of the Study.

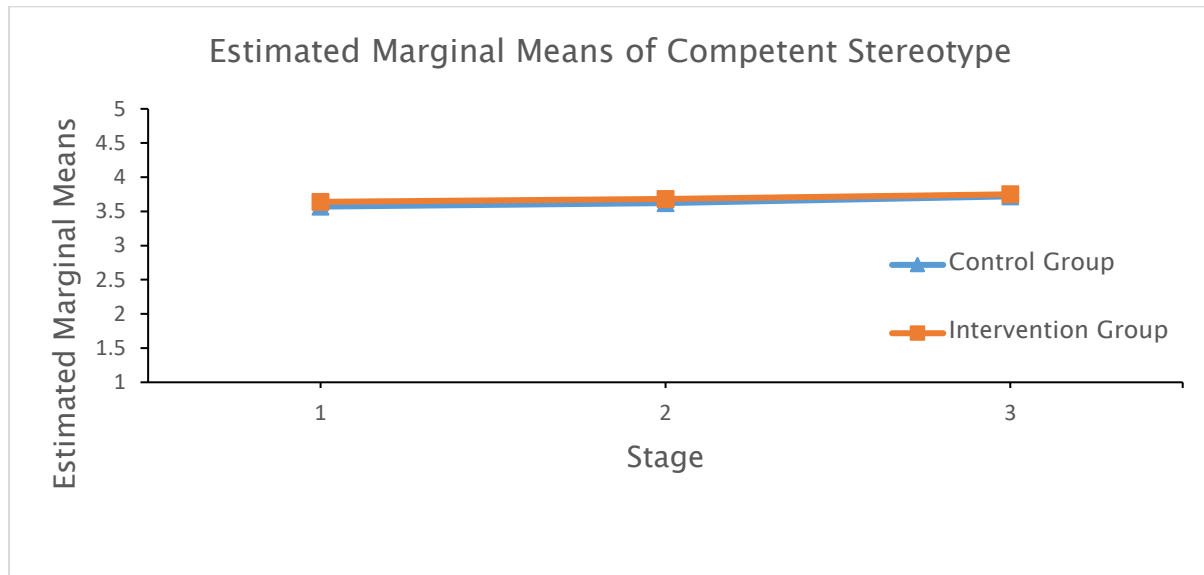


Table 5, Chapter 4

Mean Competence Stereotype among Participants in the Intervention and Control Group across the Three Stages of Study

Stage of Intervention	Experimental Condition	Mean \pm SD
Stage 1	Control Group ($n = 130$)	3.57 \pm 0.58
	Intervention Group ($n = 120$)	3.64 \pm 0.53
	Total ($n = 250$)	3.61 \pm 0.56
Stage 2	Control Group ($n = 130$)	3.62 \pm 0.56
	Intervention Group ($n = 120$)	3.68 \pm 0.63
	Total ($n = 250$)	3.65 \pm 0.59
Stage 3	Control Group ($n = 130$)	3.72 \pm 0.63
	Intervention Group ($n = 120$)	3.75 \pm 0.66
	Total ($n = 250$)	3.73 \pm 0.64

Main Effect of Experimental Condition on Stereotype

Contrary to H2, there was no significant effect of the intervention condition on the endorsement of stereotypes: $F(1, 248) = 1.302, p = 0.255, \eta_p^2 = 0.005$. Mean stereotype warmth and competence scores are very similar in the intervention group (mean = 3.67, SE = 0.053) when compared with the control group (mean = 3.59, SE = 0.051).

Effect of Virtual Contact Intervention on Prejudice

A 2 (Intervention group: Intervention vs. control) \times 3 (Intervention stage: 1 vs. 2 vs. 3) mixed ANOVA with repeated measures on the last.

Interaction Effect of Experimental Condition and Stage of the Intervention on Prejudice

Contrary to H3, there was no significant interaction effect between intervention condition and stage of study on mean prejudice scores: $F(1.92, 478.18) = 2.64, p = 0.074, \eta_p^2 = 0.011$. Figure 3, Chapter 4 is a representation of mean prejudice among participants of the control and intervention groups across the stages of the study (see Table 6, Chapter 4 for descriptive statistics). Figure 3, Chapter 4 also indicates that prejudice is parallel between the two groups across the three stages of intervention, hence, H3 is not supported.

Figure 3, Chapter 4

A plot of Mean Prejudice Scores in the Intervention and Control Groups across the Three Stages of the Study.

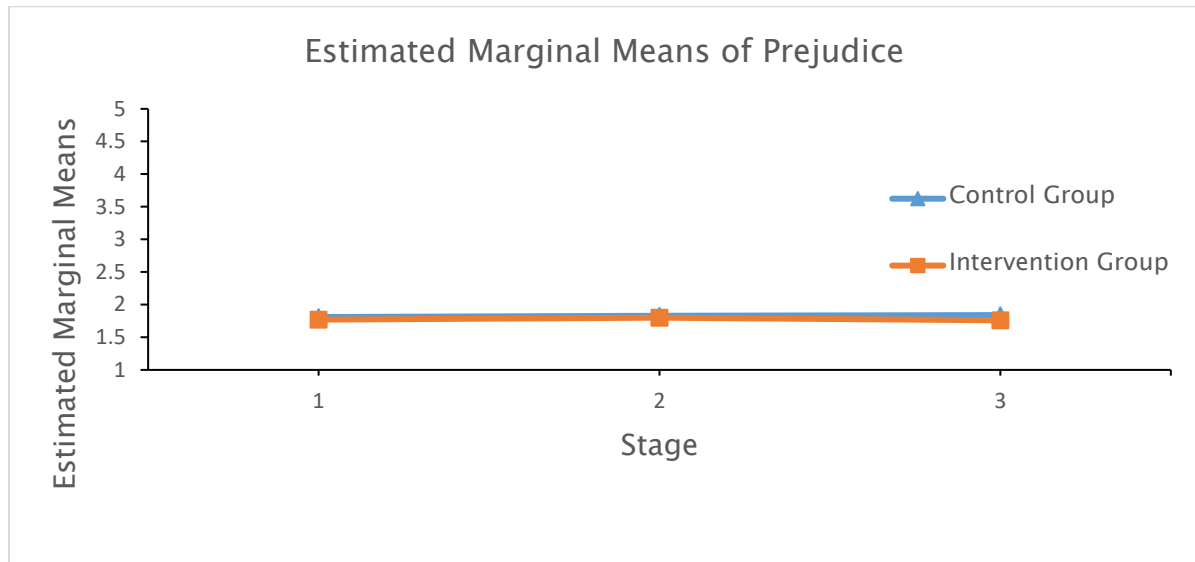


Table 6, Chapter 4

Indicators of Participants' Prejudice in the Intervention and Control Group across the Three Stages of Study

Stage of Intervention	Experimental Condition	Mean ±SD
Stage 1	Control Group (<i>n</i> = 130)	1.81±0.48
	Intervention Group (<i>n</i> = 120)	1.77±0.38
	Total (<i>n</i> =250)	1.79±0.44
Stage 2	Control Group (<i>n</i> = 130)	1.83±0.48
	Intervention Group (<i>n</i> = 120)	1.80±0.41
	Total (<i>n</i> = 250)	1.82±0.45
Stage 3	Control Group (<i>n</i> = 130)	1.84±0.52
	Intervention Group (<i>n</i> = 120)	1.76±0.40
	Total (<i>n</i> = 250)	1.80±0.47

Main Effect of Experimental Condition on Prejudice

Contrary to H4, there was no significant effect of the intervention condition on prejudice: $F(1, 248) = 0.725$, $p = 0.395$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.011$. Mean prejudice scores are very similar in the intervention group (mean = 1.78, SE = 0.040) when compared with the control group (mean = 1.83, SE = 0.038).

Effect of Virtual Contact Intervention on Behavioural Intentions to Engage in Contact

A 2 (Intervention group: Intervention vs. control) \times 3 (Intervention stage: 1 vs. 2 vs. 3) mixed ANOVA with repeated measures on the last factor.

Interaction Effect of Experimental Condition and Stage of the Intervention on Behavioural Intentions to Engage in Contact

Contrary to H5, there was no significant interaction effect between intervention condition and stage of study on mean behavioural intention scores: $F(1.87, 464.42) = 2.433$, $p = 0.093$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.010$. Figure 4, Chapter 4 is a representation of mean behavioural intention among participants of the control and intervention groups across the stages of the study (see Table 7, Chapter 4 for descriptive statistics). Figure 4, Chapter 4 also indicates that behavioural intention did not cross between the two groups across the three stages of the study. Therefore, H5 is not supported by data.

Figure 4, Chapter 4

A plot of Mean Behavioural Intention Scores in the Intervention and Control Groups across the Three Stages of the Study.

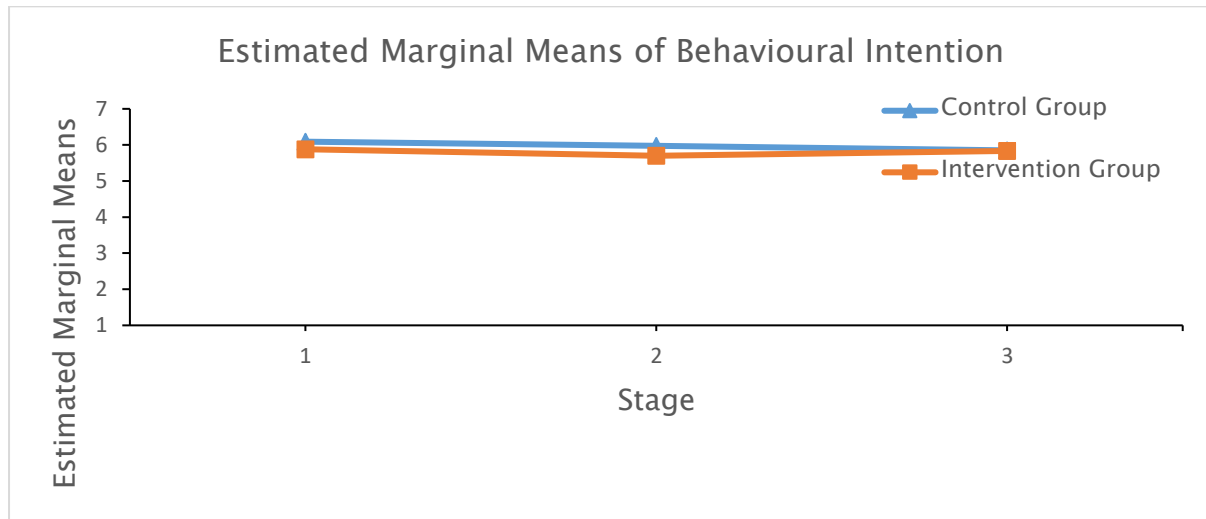


Table 7, Chapter 4

Mean Behavioural Intention among Participants in the Intervention and Control Group across the Three Stages of Study

Stage of Intervention	Experimental Condition	Mean ±SD
Stage 1	Control Group (<i>n</i> = 130)	6.09±1.74
	Intervention Group (<i>n</i> = 120)	5.88±1.70
	Total (<i>n</i> =250)	5.99±1.72
Stage 2	Control Group (<i>n</i> = 130)	5.98±1.76
	Intervention Group (<i>n</i> = 120)	5.70±1.73
	Total (<i>n</i> = 250)	5.85±1.75
Stage 3	Control Group (<i>n</i> = 130)	5.85±1.82
	Intervention Group (<i>n</i> = 120)	5.83±1.83
	Total (<i>n</i> = 250)	5.84±1.82

Main Effect of Experimental Condition on Behavioural Intention

Contrary to H6, there was no significant effect of intervention condition on behavioural intention: $F(1, 248) = 0.645$, $p = 0.423$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.003$. Mean behavioural

intention scores are highly similar in the intervention group (mean = 5.80, SE = 0.153) when compared with the control group (mean = 5.97, SE = 0.147).

Exploratory Analyses

Due to time constraints, exploratory research questions E1 and E2 from the pre-registered protocol are not evaluated in this Chapter. Additional exploratory analyses that were not included in the pre-registered protocol were also reported. An analysis examining whether there was a significant effect of the intervention on outcome variables (in the direction specified in H2, H4 and H6) when examining data at Stage 1 only. Challenges in recruitment and a very high attrition rate over time meant that the current study was underpowered to detect a small main effect of the intervention across the three stages. To explore if low power was a plausible explanation for the absence of a main effect of the intervention, analyses were run on Stage 1 data where sample sizes were the largest. However, note should be taken that the first stage of the intervention is not encompassing, as it did not contain most of the content that addresses the intergroup issues the programme of research intended.

Another exploratory analysis conducted examined whether participants who completed all three study stages differed in any outcome measure compared to non-completers.

Effect of Time Spent Engaging With the Intervention on Outcome Variables in the Intervention Condition

Exploratory research question E3: Will the time spent engaging with the intervention by intervention group participants be correlated with significantly lower

intergroup bias (i.e. higher warmth and competence stereotype ratings, lower prejudice and higher intention to engage in contact ratings) towards the outgroup?

For the intervention condition, correlations were calculated between the time spent completing each questionnaire at each stage of the study, for each of the outcome variables (stereotype warmth and competence, prejudice, behavioural intentions to engage in contact). As shown in Table 8, Chapter 4, there were no significant correlations between mean stereotype warmth, stereotype competence, prejudice and behavioural intentions scores with time spent completing each questionnaire at Stages 1, 2 or 3 (all p 's > .05. There was, therefore, no evidence that the length of time spent on digesting and responding to the interventions was associated with mean scores on any of the outcome variables.

Table 8, Chapter 4

Relationship Between The Duration Of The Study And The Warmth Stereotype, Competence Stereotype, Prejudice And Behavioural Intention Of Participants Of The Control And The Intervention Groups In The Third Stage Of Intervention (N = 296)

Dependent variables	Indicators of relationship	Study duration
Prejudice	Pearson's r	-.022
	p -value (one-tailed)	.355
Warmth stereotype	Pearson's r	.001
	p -value (one-tailed)	.496
Competence stereotype	Pearson's r	-.028
	p -value (one-tailed)	.317
Behavioural intention	Pearson's r	-.023
	p -value (one-tailed)	.345

Effect of Study Completion on Outcome Variables among Intervention Group Participants across the Three Stages of Data Collection

Independent sample t-test indicated that the completion of all three stages of the study by intervention group participants did not affect their stereotype warmth,

stereotype competence, prejudice and behavioural intention across all the three stages of data collection ($p > 0.05$). Hence, there was no statistically significant effect of study completion on the outcome variables across all three stages ($p > 0.05$).

As shown in Table 9, Chapter 4, this result suggests that the completion of the intervention did not differentially impact the perceptions of warmth and competence attributed to the stereotyped group, nor did it significantly alter prejudice levels or intentions for behaviour towards the group.

Main Effect of Intervention Condition on Outcome Variables at Stage 1

One-way MANOVA indicated that there is no statistically significant difference in the stereotype warmth, stereotype competence, prejudice and behavioural intention based on the experimental condition during the first stage of intervention, $F(4, 1014) = 1.98, p = 0.95 (p > .05)$; Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.992$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.008$; Observed power = 0.597.

However, the pattern of mean scores was consistent with extant literature, which is instructive. Hence, the implications are discussed later in this Chapter and Chapter 5.

As seen in Table 10, Chapter 4, mean stereotype warmth scores were slightly higher among participants of the intervention group when compared with the participants of the control group. Similarly, mean prejudice scores were slightly lower among participants of the intervention group when compared when the participants of the control group. Mean stereotype competence scores were similar in the

intervention group and control group. Mean behavioural intention scores were also similar in the intervention group and control group.

Table 9, Chapter 4

Effect of study completion on outcome variables among intervention group participants across the three stages of data collection

Outcome variable	Participant category	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	T test for equality of means	
					t*	p value*
Stereotype Warmth @ stage 1	Non-completer	335	3.50	0.73	-1.314	0.190
	Completer	120	3.60	0.68		
Stereotype Warmth @ stage 2	Non-completer	63	3.54	0.76	-0.674	0.502
	Completer	120	3.62	0.69		
Stereotype Warmth @ stage 3	Non-completer	17	3.96	0.82	1.056	0.303
	Completer	120	3.74	.0755		
Stereotype Competence @ stage 1	Non-completer	335	3.62	0.61	-0.441	0.660
	Completer	120	3.64	0.53		
Stereotype Competence @ stage 2	Non-completer	63	3.65	0.65	-0.336	0.737
	Completer	120	3.68	0.63		
Stereotype Competence @ stage 3	Non-completer	17	3.97	0.63	1.349	0.191
	Completer	120	3.75	0.66		
Prejudice @ stage 1	Non-completer	335	1.82	0.45	1.111	0.268
	Completer	120	1.77	0.38		
Prejudice @ stage 2	Non-completer	63	1.88	0.51	1.027	0.307
	Completer	120	1.80	0.41		
Prejudice @ stage 3	Non-completer	17	1.86	0.55	0.755	0.460
	Completer	120	1.76	0.40		
Behavioural Intention @ stage 1	Non-completer	335	5.93	1.88	0.276	0.783
	Completer	120	5.88	1.70		
Behavioural Intention @ stage 2	Non-completer	63	5.66	2.12	-0.140	0.889
	Completer	120	5.70	1.73		
Behavioural Intention @ stage 3	Non-completer	17	5.53	2.12	-0.554	0.586
	Completer	120	5.83	1.83		

* Equal variances not assumed

Table 10, Chapter 4

Descriptive Results of One-Way MANOVA of Stereotype Warmth, Stereotype Competence, Prejudice and Behavioural Intention between Participants of Control and Intervention Groups at Stage 1

Outcome Variable	M	SD
Stereotype Warmth		
Intervention Group	3.5	0.7
Control Group	3.4	0.8
Stereotype Competence		
Intervention Group	3.6	0.6
Control Group	3.6	0.6
Prejudice		
Intervention Group	1.8	0.4
Control Group	1.9	0.5
Behavioural Intention		
Intervention Group	5.9	1.8
Control Group	5.9	2.0

Discussion

The study aimed to evaluate the efficacy of a virtual intergroup contact intervention to reduce negative stereotypes, reduce prejudice and increase behavioural intentions to engage in intergroup contact. None of the hypotheses were supported by the findings. That is, participants in the intervention group did not report significantly greater endorsement of warmth and competence stereotypes, nor lower prejudice scores, or greater behavioural intentions to engage in contact, relative to control group participants. Similarly, there was no evidence that the effectiveness of the virtual contact intervention significantly increased over the three stages of the study. The effect sizes are very small across the various measures of stereotype endorsement, prejudice, and behavioural intentions to engage in contact. These small effect sizes shows that the intervention had a minimal impact on altering participants'

endorsement of warmth and competence stereotypes, prejudice, or behavioural intentions to engage in contact with the outgroup, relative to control group participants. Exploratory analyses were conducted and time analyses indicated that the null effects cannot be explained in terms of lack of engagement with the intervention. The exploratory One-way MANOVA on Stage 1 found no significant effect of the intervention on the outcome measures.

To some extent, the current findings diverge from some findings in the literature. Several research reports have supported the effectiveness of virtual intergroup contact in bringing about a reduced level of prejudice. Imperato et al.'s (2021) recent meta-analysis of 23 studies showed that 18 of the 29 effect sizes included were significant. Imperato et al. (2021) further reported that the overall effect size was moderate and significant ($0.36, p < 0.05$). However, despite reporting an optimistic placement of virtual intergroup contact in prejudice, the study also suggests otherwise. Imperato et al.'s (2021) study shows that in 11 of 29 analyses, non-significant effects of virtual intergroup contact were recorded. The findings of Imperato et al. (2021) show that effect size was significant and stronger for surveys ($0.46, 10$ of 29 studies) when compared with experimental studies ($0.29, 19$ of 29 studies). Imperato suggested that this phenomenon might be attributed to the fact that in naturalistic settings, individuals had the freedom to decide whether to engage in dialogue with outgroup members. This free choice of interacting with outgroup members could potentially result in participants coming into contact with individuals for reasons unrelated to their outgroup membership. Consequently, such interactions might trigger de-categorization mechanisms. This can therefore explain the lack of significant effect

found in the current experimental study. However, research by Walther et al. (2015), which focused on religion-based prejudice reported a significant effect of the virtual contact experience in participants' religious sector concerning their outgroup prejudice at the pre-test and post-test. Other findings suggest that virtual intergroup contact may not always be effective at reducing prejudice. In the meta-analytic study of Lemmer and Wagner (2015), it was found that, unlike direct and extended contact, the effectiveness of virtual contact interventions remains inconclusive in methodologically rigorous research, while there is some indication of potential positive effects in less rigorous clusters of studies.

Below are other potential explanations for the lack of significant results recorded in the main analyses of the current study.

Strength of Intervention Content

The content discussed in the intervention for the current study such as terrorism and security threat are issues associated with Muslims. White participants in the initial study raised these issues as reported in Chapter 2. However, the issues were addressed with a minimalist approach with arguments that there are extremists and terrorists in every group of society. There was a justifiable strength of feeling in the responses of Muslims (some of which include the UK's role in extremism and terrorism) in Chapter 3 to questions about extremism and terrorism by White participants from Chapter 2. To avoid White participants becoming overly defensive, Avatar's conversational text was revised to be less confrontational and thus more acceptable to White participants in the intervention study. Defensive confidence involves individuals' perception of their ability to protect their attitudes against

conflicting information (Albarracín & Mitchell, 2004). A meta-analysis underscores the tendency of individuals to selectively expose themselves to information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs (Hart et al., 2009). Even when comments are objective, group-directed criticisms can still trigger significant levels of defensiveness (Hornsey, 2005). Likewise, attitudes can serve an ego-defensive function to protect one's self-concept from counter-attitudinal messages about the self. Therefore, messages that threaten salient aspects of one's self-concept may activate ego-defensiveness, leading to rejection of the message and source derogation (Knight Lapinski & Boster, 2001). As stated above, the Avatar's conversational text was revised to be less confrontational and thus more acceptable to White participants. However, the toned-down intervention content may not have been convincing enough for participants to contradict their existing stereotypes, thereby decreasing the effectiveness of the virtual contact intervention.

Similarly, (Legault et al., 2011) experiments show that highlighting societal standards as a means to motivate individuals to reduce prejudice resulted in higher levels of both explicit and implicit prejudice compared to no intervention. Hence, the intervention goals which were quite explicit in suggesting anti-prejudice standards may have had unintended effects on participants.

Cognitive Attitude is More Resistant to Change than Affective Attitude

It is more difficult to influence change in cognition than emotion (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Although the current study did not find a significant effect on all three – cognitive, affective and behavioural intention components of attitude, the pattern of

mean scores was consistent with extant literature. Mean stereotype warmth scores were slightly higher among participants of the intervention group when compared with the participants of the control group. Similarly, mean prejudice scores were slightly lower among participants of the intervention group when compared with the participants of the control group. Similarly, the observation of the highest effect sizes under prejudice, an affective component of attitude, equally aligns with the established literature suggesting that affective attitudes are often more susceptible to change than cognitive attitudes (Petty et al., 2003).

Stangor et al. (1991) discovered in experimental studies that emotional reactions towards outgroups were a more reliable predictor of attitudes and social willingness than social stereotypes. While data on consensual social stereotypes contributed minimally to attitude variance, a significant association exists between endorsing negative social stereotypes and having unfavourable attitudes toward disliked groups. These findings suggest that emotions, particularly in situations where people may be unwilling to acknowledge their stereotypes of others, tend to be more accessible and recognized. Hence, the fact that change in stereotype is difficult (Rothbart & John, 1985) may explain the lack of effect recorded in the current study. Furthermore, virtual contact may especially have a limited effect on cognitive attitude. For instance, in Andrews et al.'s (2018) study, negative contact increased out-group prejudice, while positive contact decreased it. However, no distinctions emerged in perceived out-group variability, which constitutes a cognitive attitude. These outcomes somewhat align with the present study's findings, where exploratory

analysis demonstrated some positive results on stereotype warmth and prejudice at Stage 1 despite the intervention content not being robust at this Stage where the main focus was de-categorization. Notably, stereotype warmth, in contrast to stereotype competence, pertains to the emotional dimension of stereotypes and is closely related to affective attitudes.

Initial Attitude Level, Selection Bias and Study Power

Another possible explanation for the findings in the current study is the application of contact theory. Taber & Lodge (2006) argue that individuals with firmly established pre-existing attitudes are the least susceptible to being swayed by communication, information, and media narratives. Moreover, such individuals may even use incoming information to strengthen their existing attitudes. Similarly, Peña et al. (2021) found in their study evidence that suggests how the reception of counter-attitudinal information could potentially reinforce pre-existing beliefs. This point should however be considered with caution. The mean prejudice score of the control group participants indicates that prejudice was not particularly high among study participants. Hence, strong pre-existing prejudice is not likely applicable to this study, which might make it difficult for the intervention to have a significant effect, as experimental studies by West et al. (2017) discovered that imagined contact was notably more effective when initial prejudice levels were higher.

Despite seeming counterintuitive, Imperator et al.'s (2021) meta-analysis on virtual contact revealed an intriguing pattern. Specifically, in 4 out of 7 studies analysed, more positive contact was paradoxically associated with lower effect sizes. This

finding contrasts with expectations. Moreover, their analysis showed that situations characterized by high conflicts, such as the historic conflicts between Jews and Muslims in the Middle East, Protestants and Catholics in Ireland, and Iranians and Israelis, yielded higher effect sizes when compared to situations with relatively lower conflict levels, such as interactions within college fraternities. This difference in effect sizes aligns with the anticipated trend. In the context of the current study, it is noteworthy that the characteristics associated with lower effect sizes in previous research are also present. The intervention in the current study was intentionally designed to facilitate positive contact experiences for White participants in contact with avatars representing Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. Additionally, considering Imperator et al.'s examples above, the situation between these groups in the UK can be described as a relatively low-conflict scenario. Thus, these are plausible explanations for the null effects observed in the current study as is the case with Imperator et al.'s (2021) meta-analysis on virtual contact findings.

On the other hand, the study may be influenced by self-selection bias, where individuals with lower levels of prejudice are more inclined to participate and complete all three study stages. This bias arises because individuals with pre-existing prejudices often avoid intergroup contact (Pettigrew, 1998). Initially, 2293 participants signed up for the study, but only 1019 completed stage 1. Subsequently, the numbers decreased further to 421 at stage 2 and 296 at stage 3. Hence, it is plausible that those who completed all study stages had lower levels of prejudice. This potential self-selection of less prejudiced participants could explain the lack of significant reduction in intergroup bias through the intervention. However, the independent sample t-test

indicated that the completion of all three stages of the study by intervention group participants did not affect their stereotype warmth, stereotype competence, prejudice and behavioural intention across all the three stages of data collection. This result suggests that the completion of the intervention did not differentially impact the perceptions of warmth and competence attributed to the stereotyped group, nor did it significantly alter prejudice levels or intentions for behaviour towards the group. This lack of significant difference observed between completers and non-completers could be due to the low sample size, hence, attrition across the study stages did not significantly influence the results. Furthermore, the high attrition rate, coupled with the challenge of not being able to match some data across the study stages due to inconsistent code generated by participants, made the final analysis to be conducted with data from 250 participants. This led to an underpowered study, which is a plausible explanation for the insignificant findings recorded with the main analyses. As explained above, this plausibility is supported by some significant findings recorded at stage 1 despite the intervention content at this stage not encompassing enough.

Another noteworthy participant characteristic to consider is age. According to a meta-analysis of field experiments involving 69 interventions (Hsieh et al., 2022), these interventions tend to be more effective for school and college cohorts compared to adults. Given that the average age of the participants in the present study is 38 years, this demographic characteristic might account for the absence of significant findings.

Potential Subtyping Effects

Subtyping is a cognitive process wherein individuals classify specific members of an outgroup as exceptions to the stereotypes associated with that group as a whole (Park et al., 2001). In the current study, it raises the question of whether participants, after interacting with avatars representing the outgroup in the virtual contact situation, subtyped these avatars as unique or atypical members of their group, ultimately preserving their pre-existing stereotypes and attitudes towards the outgroup as a whole.

In a study exploring how individuals respond to those who defy stereotypes, Kunda & Oleson (1995) found that participants adjusted their stereotypes after learning about individuals who contradicted stereotypical expectations, but only when they were not provided with additional neutral attributes about these individuals that could justify categorizing them as exceptions. When such neutral attributes were presented, participants tended to categorize these individuals into subgroups, preserving their original stereotypes. The neutral attributes were perceived as justifications for considering these individuals as exceptions rather than examples that challenged the stereotype, thus preventing changes in stereotypical beliefs. In the current study however, there are reasons to create subtypes. White participants in the current study may have used the atypical messages from the avatars, which are different from the stereotype of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent as reasons to subtype the avatars, thereby not generalising from the avatars to the outgroup.

If participants in the current study indeed engaged in subtyping, perceiving the avatars as exceptions to their pre-existing stereotypes, this could partly explain the

lack of significant findings in the study, given that subtyping preserves stereotypes (Richards & Hewstone, 2001). Furthermore, stereotype change is typically higher after a dispersed as opposed to a concentrated exposure to disconfirming information (Hewstone, 1994). However, the current study represents a concentrated exposure to the intervention presenting the views of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. Thus, lack of spread-out of the exposure may not have been conducive for a cognitive attitude change.

One significant challenge in addressing this question is the absence of measurements specific to the avatars encountered during the virtual contact. The study focused on assessing participants' attitudes change towards the outgroup as a collective entity, rather than towards the individual avatars. Consequently, there is lack of direct data to evaluate whether participants indeed subtyped the avatars as exceptions to their preconceived notions about the outgroup.

Absence of Mutually Agreed Superordinate Goals

The study was designed in line with Pettigrew's (1998) intergroup contact model, which emphasises the importance of the third stage of contact in establishing a collective group identity that transcends individual group affiliations. However, there was an oversight in the qualitative study with White Britons reported in Chapter 2. In this phase, White Britons were not queried about superordinate goals they deemed significant and would be willing to cooperate with Muslims on. Consequently, the superordinate goals employed in the intervention were derived from the study involving Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, as presented in Chapter 3. It is essential to note that these superordinate goals were intended to be mutually agreed upon by

both groups. Thus, there exists the possibility that the goals identified by Muslims may not hold the same level of importance for White participants in the intervention study. This potential misalignment may have compromised the effectiveness of the stage 3 of the intervention, ultimately affecting the significance of the intervention.

Limitations of Using a Passive Control Approach

While the use of a passive control group in a randomized controlled experiment offers valuable insights into the specific effects of an intervention, this approach also encompasses several limitations. These are discussed below.

Lack of Engagement Comparison

One of the primary limitations of employing a passive control group is the inability to compare participant engagement levels across conditions. Active control or placebo groups participating in an alternative form of engagement could provide comparative data on how engagement itself, irrespective of the intervention content, influences outcomes. This comparison is crucial in understanding whether the observed changes are due to the specific intervention content or simply the result of any form of engagement (Kazdin, 2021).

Potential for Differential Expectations

Participants in the intervention group, aware of their exposure to the virtual contact intervention, may develop different expectations about the study outcomes compared to those in the passive control group. These expectations can inadvertently affect participants' responses, a phenomenon known as the Hawthorne effect (Adair, 1984). Without an active control to mimic engagement without the specific

intervention content, disentangling the effects of the intervention from those of participant expectations remains challenging.

Missed Opportunity for Blinding

The clear distinction between the intervention and control conditions in a passive control design hinders the possibility of blinding participants and researchers to group assignments (Anderson-Cook, 2005). Since the intervention was delivered via software, which acts uniformly based on its programming without the capacity for bias in delivery, the intervention delivery is inherently "blinded" in terms of consistency and lack of variability that might come from human involvement in administering the intervention. However, participants will likely be aware of whether they are engaging in the virtual contact intervention or not. This awareness is inherent to the intervention's design and does not necessarily compromise the study's integrity, but it is a factor to consider as participants' knowledge of their involvement could influence their responses.

Distinguishing Effects of Avatar and Social Media Content

The inclusion of comments from a professor and a White British public figure as part of the intervention content introduced an additional component that was distinct from the scripted conversations of the Muslim avatars. Incorporating real-world voices- comments from a professor and public figure provided credible, alternative narratives to those commonly presented in the media, a strategic approach to enrich the intervention content. By presenting diverse and authoritative perspectives, and emphasizing shared values, this strategy aligns with the aim of

challenging stereotypes and reducing prejudice. The application of such content in a virtual intergroup contact intervention is supported by literature suggesting that exposure to counter-stereotypic information can effectively reduce stereotyping and prejudice (Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001). However, this decision, while aimed at enhancing the authenticity and relevance of the intervention, presents a methodological limitation in isolating the effects attributable to each component of the intervention. If the results had aligned with the tested hypotheses, determining whether these outcomes were a consequence of interactions with the avatar or the influence of the social media content would pose a challenge.

This limitation underscores the importance of designing interventions with clearly delineated components to allow for precise assessment of their individual and combined effects. Future studies could benefit from implementing a factorial design, where different elements of the intervention are introduced separately across various conditions. This would facilitate a more granular analysis of the contribution of each component to the overall effect of the intervention.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Practical limitations in matching up data points across the time points limited the usable sample size in the analyses, and thus their power. Specifically, as stated above participants self-generated and reported a unique code based on the last two letters of their first name, birth date (i.e. between 01-31), and the last two digits of their mobile phone number at each of the three stages of the study. However, there was a high number of errors with the codes participants reported, which constrained the

matching up of data. The study may also have been affected by the low sample size. Hence, being an underpowered study could also explain for the observed outcome.

Since the intervention content failed to encompass the entirety of responses given by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent to queries posed by White participants in the initial qualitative study, it is imperative to evaluate this intervention model with social groups whose concerns can be openly addressed. However, the specific groups for such testing are yet to be determined. Indeed, the essence of this intervention was to take difficult conversations away from different social groups and present it in ostensible virtual conversation. Hence, the model of this study should be replicated with other groups.

Defensiveness may also be overcome by integrating an extended intergroup contact scenario where the avatar in the ostensible conversation will represent an ingroup member presenting a point of view of the outgroup. Such intervention design could give more room for addressing contending issues more directly. Experimental research shows that when European American participants received feedback indicating that others held contrasting beliefs about African Americans compared to their initial estimations, it resulted in significant alterations to their own beliefs about the group. The changes were more pronounced when participants were exposed to opinions from ingroup members rather than outgroup members of other groups (Stangor et al., 2001).

Researchers primarily concentrate on either the emotional or cognitive foundations of attitudes, rather than exploring the combined influence of affect and cognition (Esses et al., 1993). The strength of the current study is that it focused on

both cognitive and affective components, as well as informed the intervention content on the findings of two separately conducted qualitative studies. Similar to the lack of significant effect of the intervention in the main analyses, [Paluck et al. \(2021\)](#) in a meta-analysis of 418 experiments highlighted that notable studies that stand out for their long-term interventions, innovative assessment methods, and openness, usually find limited effects. Furthermore, an examination of field experiments involving 69 interventions suggests that less conventional strategies, such as those related to perceived variability, might have higher effects compared to interventions based on intergroup contact ([Hsieh et al., 2022](#)). Hence, it is crucial to identify the most problematic implicit stereotypes and develop tailored interventions that address various prejudices ([FitzGerald et al., 2019](#)). Additionally, more investigation is needed to understand the conditions under which interventions succeed or fail ([FitzGerald et al., 2019](#)). In their extensive meta-analysis encompassing 418 experiments, [Paluck et al. \(2021\)](#) highlight the issue of publication bias. This concern raises the possibility of an inflated perception of the reported effects within the field. To address this challenge, the authors advocate for theoretical advancements and the promotion of collaborative endeavours in both psychological and structural interventions. Embracing the "thinking outside the box" approach holds the potential to expand the frontier of interventions aimed at mitigating intergroup bias.

While the inclusion of comments from a professor added a layer of depth to the virtual contact intervention, it introduced a complexity in interpreting the effects of the intervention. This highlights a critical consideration for future interventions

aiming to incorporate real-world voices: the need for careful design and hypothesis testing that can accurately attribute outcomes to specific intervention components.

In conclusion, while the passive control group approach provides a valuable baseline for assessing the effects of an intervention, it also introduces limitations related to engagement, differential expectations, and the absence of blinding. Future research could benefit from incorporating active control or placebo conditions that allow for a more nuanced understanding of the intervention's impact relative to engagement and participant expectations. Such methodological refinements would enhance the robustness and interpretability of findings in the field of intergroup contact research.

Chapter Five

General Discussion

“Diversity may be the hardest thing for a society to live with, and perhaps the most dangerous thing for a society to be without.” William Sloane Coffin.

This chapter marks the culmination of the research programme, which sought to design and evaluate a virtual intergroup contact intervention targeting intergroup bias among White individuals towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. The program encompassed three linked empirical studies: two qualitative investigations designed to generate the content for a novel virtual intergroup contact intervention, and one randomized controlled experiment designed to evaluate the effectiveness of that intervention. The qualitative studies delved into the underlying factors contributing to bias among White individuals towards this specific outgroup, while the experimental study focused on developing and assessing the intervention's effectiveness in mitigating intergroup biases.

The next section presents a comprehensive overview of the studies conducted, highlighting their key contributions. This is followed by a discussion of limitations, implications for future research and a concluding statement.

Summary of the Programme of Research

Study 1: Exploring Non-Muslim White British Perceptions of Muslims of Middle Eastern Descent in the UK

This chapter presents a qualitative study that delves into the perceptions, emotions, and social norms of Non-Muslim White British individuals in the UK regarding Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. The main objective of the study was to identify the factors contributing to negative intergroup attitudes among White Britons

towards this specific outgroup, and use this to inform the design of a virtual intergroup contact intervention to reduce intergroup bias.

The study explores the following intergroup contact mediators: cognitive mediators (knowledge of the outgroup and in-group norms) and affective mediators (intergroup anxiety and intergroup threat). To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences, a qualitative mixed-methods approach was employed, combining a phenomenological design and an online survey. The phenomenological approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of the lived and subjective experiences of participants (Lester, 1999). The data collection involved examining the characteristics of White individuals in the UK, as well as their knowledge, feelings, and social norms concerning Muslims of Middle Eastern descent.

Thematic analysis was carried out on the data from 29 participants, employing both open inductive and pre-structured deductive approaches. The study revealed intriguing aspects of Non-Muslim White British perceptions towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. Participants exhibited positive views concerning the personal characteristics and family values of Muslims, recognizing their strong work ethic and positive traits in general. However, when discussing the perceptions of other White Britons, the responses leaned heavily towards negative associations, particularly regarding religious extremism and terrorism. Additionally, some participants expressed concerns about Muslims being perceived as a threat and burden to the UK. Specifically, symbolic and realistic threats perceived by White Britons towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent included negative evaluations such as religious extremism, economic burdens, and concerns about potential

alterations in the socio-political landscape. The study also explored the perceived responses of the broader UK society to instances of unfair treatment towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. Findings were mixed, with some participants believing that such unjust treatment would be condemned by society. In contrast, others held the belief that it might be accepted and justified.

The identified negative perceptions towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent underscore the crucial need to address these factors in the design of virtual intergroup contact intervention. The findings from this study are essential in informing the development of a virtual intergroup contact intervention aimed at improving attitudes towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. By understanding the distinct contributors to negative intergroup attitudes, an ensuing intervention can be customized to effectively tackle these concerns. Therefore, Study 2 presents a subsequent qualitative study with Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK, responding to the issues raised by White participants and offering valuable insights for shaping effective interventions to improve intergroup attitudes.

Study 2: Understanding Muslims of Middle Eastern Descent Perspectives on Issues Raised by White People in Study 1

This chapter presents a qualitative study of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK and their responses to the findings from Study 1, which explored the perceptions of White Britons towards this group. The primary aim of this study is to gain insights into the perspectives of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent regarding the key mediators of intergroup contact's effects on reducing prejudice. The study explores cognitive (in-group norms) and affective (empathy) mediators, as well as

exploring participants' responses to the findings from Study 1. Additionally, participants responded to questions pertaining to personal characteristics and superordinate goals, which were not relevant to Study 1. These additional themes were included for informing the intergroup contact intervention according to Pettigrew's (1998) theoretical framework. Pettigrew's model, delineating a three-stage process, is instrumental for optimizing the generalization of contact effects to the entire outgroup.

A mixed-methods approach with a qualitative focus was employed, utilizing a phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. An online qualitative survey was conducted, split across three participant groups (A, B, and C) to minimize participant burden and fatigue. The questionnaire consisted of four sections that delved into various aspects, including participants' characteristics, mediators of intergroup contact, cultural and religious practices, and perceptions of superordinate goals. Thematic analysis was conducted on the data from 68 participants using an open, inductive approach.

The study elicited responses from participants on a wide range of topics concerning their group, such as personal characteristics, Islam, Middle Eastern culture, terrorism, relations with the UK, and superordinate goals. Participants expressed concerns about the portrayal of religious extremism and terrorism, highlighting the challenge of being viewed as a threat and burden to the UK. In discussing unfair treatment towards White people, participants believed that such actions would be condemned, but they also acknowledged the possibility of distancing themselves as a

coping mechanism, reflecting their own experiences of prejudice and Islamophobic attacks in the UK.

The findings also shed light on the perspectives of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent addressing key intergroup issues. Participants acknowledged the presence of individuals within their group whose actions may not align with their values, but they emphasized that such individuals exist in every group. They attributed the generalization of these few individuals to their entire group to media portrayals. Participants also sought to dispel misconceptions about their faith and culture, asserting that their values differ from those of White people, and what may be perceived as unusual or oppressive by some is, in fact, a preferred lifestyle according to their beliefs. Regarding anxieties and alleged threats posed by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, participants refuted these allegations, pointing out that they themselves experience prejudice and Islamophobic attacks.

The study's findings underscore the complexities of intergroup perceptions and the importance of addressing misconceptions and stereotypes. These insights from the study informed the development of Study 3: a multi-stage virtual intergroup contact intervention aimed at reducing intergroup bias, including stereotype endorsement, prejudice, and discriminatory attitudes held by White individuals towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK.

Study 3: Development and Assessing the Impact of a Virtual Intergroup Contact Intervention

This chapter presents the findings from the development and evaluation of the effectiveness of a virtual intergroup contact intervention aimed at reducing intergroup

bias held by White individuals towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent residing in the UK. Building upon earlier qualitative Studies 1 and 2, the intervention employed avatars representing Muslims engaging in pre-scripted text-based discussions to address key mediators of intergroup contact explored in Studies 1 and 2. The study assessed the impact of the intervention on cognitive and affective components of bias, striving to foster positive intergroup attitudes and promote real-world intergroup interactions.

The study's initial sample comprised 1019 participants, recruited through sponsored advertisements on Facebook and university mailing lists. Data were collected through a designed three-stage intervention, drawing upon Pettigrew's (1998) three-stage intergroup contact model. The intervention unfolded with 58.68% attrition from Stage 1, 421 participants completed Stage 2, and with 70.95% attrition from Stage 2, 296 participants completed Stage 3. However, only data from 250 participants, split between an intervention and a control group were utilised for the main analyses, as some participants' data could not be matched across the intervention stages. The intervention was spaced across separate time points, spaced over several weeks, with each stage emphasizing different aspects of intergroup relations. The study assessed stereotype endorsement, prejudice, and intentions to engage in intergroup contact in the future.

In contrast to some previous literature on virtual contact interventions' positive effects on prejudice reduction, the results indicated that the current virtual contact intervention did not show significant effects on stereotype endorsement, prejudice, or behavioural intentions to engage in contact. However, exploratory analyses, though

not significant as well, show some positive results at Stage 1 of the Study. Participants in the intervention group exhibited marginally higher mean stereotype warmth and lower prejudice scores compared to those in the control group. Potential explanations for the null results in the main analyses include the intervention's content not being sufficiently persuasive to challenge existing stereotypes and participants' defensiveness towards stereotype-disconfirming information, along with suboptimal statistical power across the three stages due to high attrition rates.

Reflection on Non-Muslim White Britons Questions' Alignment with Intervention Aims

The alignment of the questions asked by Non-Muslim White Britons with the aims of the intervention hinges on the principle that enhancing understanding, correcting misconceptions, and fostering empathy can significantly contribute to reducing stereotypes and prejudices. The questions designed to elicit detailed explanations about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent's values, beliefs, daily life, and perspectives on Islam were crafted to illuminate the common humanity and complexity of these individuals' experiences. By providing nuanced information that goes beyond simplistic or monolithic portrayals often found in media representations, these questions aim to challenge and refine the participants' existing perceptions.

The inclusion of questions addressing contentious issues such as extremism, gender roles, and cultural practices related to marriage and family life, directly confront stereotypes and prejudices by providing authentic explanations from the perspective of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. This approach is grounded in the Contact theory, which posits that increased knowledge about an outgroup, under the right conditions, can lead to a reduction in prejudice (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp,

2006). Further, by asking Muslims to describe incidents of racism and prejudice, the study facilitates empathy from the White British participants, making the impact of these attitudes on individuals' lives more tangible and personal. Empathy is a powerful mechanism for reducing prejudice and facilitating positive intergroup relations (Batson et al., 1997; Batson et al., 1997).

Rather than address just any knowledge of the outgroup, the study focused on "relevant knowledge of the outgroup". The knowledge was made "relevant" by soliciting questions from White participants about what they would like to know regarding Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. Hence, this was a strategic choice aimed at tailoring the intervention content to directly address the specific curiosities and concerns of the target audience. By allowing White participants to define the scope of the information they sought, the intervention aimed to enhance the relevance and impact of the knowledge conveyed, potentially making it more effective in challenging stereotypes and reducing prejudice.

However, the intervention's potential effectiveness was possibly limited by the selective inclusion of responses from Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. Responses deemed confrontational, such as those attributing the origins of terrorism to actions by Western governments, were excluded from the intervention content. While this decision was made to avoid potential ethical concerns and unintended negative effects, it may have resulted in an intervention that did not fully satisfy the curiosity of White participants or challenge their preconceptions as robustly as it could have. The omission of such confrontational but informative responses highlights a tension between the need to provide comprehensive, challenging content and the requirement

to maintain a non-confrontational tone conducive to ethical approval and participant receptivity. This balancing act underscores the complexity of designing interventions that are both impactful and acceptable within ethical and practical constraints. Future research could explore the effects of including more challenging content within a carefully moderated and supportive framework, potentially enhancing the intervention's capacity to address deep-seated stereotypes and prejudices. Moreover, the inclusion of confrontational but truthful responses could serve as a powerful mechanism for promoting critical reflection and dialogue, fostering a deeper understanding and reconciliation of conflicting perspectives. Such considerations point to the need for further exploration into the nuances of intergroup contact interventions, particularly regarding the content's confrontational nature and its implications for knowledge transmission and attitude change.

A potential way to address this challenge is using extended intergroup contact scenarios, utilizing avatars representing the ingroup to present confrontational but truthful content. This strategy may help in reducing defensive reactions and allow the exploration of difficult topics.

Contributions of the Research

Advancing Understanding, Unravelling Inconsistencies, and Enhancing Intergroup Bias Reduction Interventions

This research offers significant contributions that encompass various aspects of virtual intergroup contact interventions and bias reduction efforts. Firstly, by evaluating the effectiveness of a novel virtual intergroup contact intervention, the study advances the understanding of the potential and limitations of such

interventions in reducing intergroup bias. The study's use of Pettigrew's (1998) three-stage model of intergroup contact to guide the intervention content presents a strategic approach to fostering positive intergroup attitudes in long-term interventions (Pettigrew, 1998; White & Abu-Rayya, 2012). The findings add to the growing body of literature on contact-based interventions, shedding light on the complexities involved in attitude change and the differential effects on different components of attitudes (Alvídrez, 2018; Walther et al., 2015).

This research also uncovers inconsistencies in the effects of virtual intergroup contact interventions reported in the literature, identifying potential factors influencing their success or failure. These findings underscore the need for further exploration into the specific design and implementation of virtual intergroup contact interventions.

Despite the lack of significant effects observed, the research contributes to advancing intergroup bias reduction programs by addressing cognitive and affective components of attitudes through qualitative exploration. In sum, this research significantly contributes to prejudice reduction efforts, offers insights into the complexities of virtual intergroup contact interventions, and enriches the broader field of intergroup relations. Furthermore, the study highlights the universality of the virtual intervention model, which holds the potential for application across diverse social groups. Nevertheless, its efficacy in bias reduction may vary, exhibiting greater effectiveness in certain group contexts than in others. Consequently, this calls for a comprehensive examination of its strengths and limitations, including testing it with a wide array of social groups.

Exploring the Complexity of Attitude Change

One of the key contributions of this research lies in the comprehensive exploration of attitude components, including stereotype endorsement, prejudice, and behavioural intentions to engage in intergroup contact. By addressing all three components in the development and evaluation of the virtual intergroup contact intervention, the study offers an opportunity to further understand the complexities involved in intergroup bias reduction, given the multifaceted nature of attitude (Zanna & Rempel, 2008). This exploration of different components of attitudes aimed to allow researchers and practitioners to tailor interventions more effectively to target specific aspects of bias and prejudice.

The findings that the intervention did not show significant effects on stereotype endorsement, prejudice, or behavioural intentions to engage in contact contribute to a nuanced understanding of attitude change processes. Contact interventions are seemingly more effective with affective rather than cognitive components of attitudes (Gómez & Huici, 2008; Alvírez et al., 2015). The study sought to address all three components with the expectation that a reduction in negative stereotypes of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent would ultimately lead to a decrease in prejudice and an increase in intentions for future intergroup contact. However, the intervention did not yield the desired results across any of the outcome variables, including the affective aspect where contact interventions have shown success in extant literature. This unexpected outcome might be attributed to the intervention not fully encompassing the findings from Study 2, which involved Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. Consequently, not all concerns raised by White participants were adequately

addressed. This gap in the intervention may have inadvertently reinforced negative perceptions about the outgroup, rendering the intervention results insignificant. This offers valuable insights for future interventions that adopt a similar approach, underscoring the significance of comprehensively addressing issues. By enhancing the intervention's content, a more effective promotion of cognitive attitude change can be achieved, which may ultimately extend to affective and behavioural attitude change. However, intervention also needs to balance comprehensiveness and feasibility - given the attrition rates in the current study, an even longer intervention may have been even less successful.

In addition, the study's examination of potential defensiveness among participants provides valuable implications for understanding resistance to attitude change. The intervention's explicit anti-prejudice goals may have influenced participants' responses, potentially contributing to the lack of significant effects as individuals can exhibit substantial defensive reactions when faced with critiques directed towards their group (Hornsey, 2005). This indicates the importance of carefully designing intervention content to avoid triggering defensive reactions and resistance to change.

Understanding Mediators, Media Influence and White Britons' Perception of Muslims of Middle Eastern Descent

The qualitative studies of the research programme explore the key mediators shaping intergroup contact effects, encompassing intergroup anxiety, intergroup threat, empathy, knowledge of the outgroup, and group norms. It reveals how anxiety stemming from negative expectations and apprehensions about evaluations

intensifies hostility. The study uncovers that perceived realistic and symbolic threats posed by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent contribute to negative attitudes towards them. Additionally, it underscores the impact of knowledge and perceptions of the outgroup on intergroup attitudes, along with an examination of the norms guiding White Britons' interactions with the outgroup and the underlying reasons. This research presents a comprehensive understanding of White Britons' perceptions of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK, exploring various dimensions such as personal characteristics, work attitudes, family values, and general life. While individual perceptions are predominantly positive, the broader perception among White Britons tends to be negative, highlighting prevailing stereotypes and biases influencing negative intergroup attitudes. By investigating influences on attitudes, including perceptions, anxieties, and threats, it enriches our understanding of intergroup dynamics in general. The study supports extant literature on contact mediators while furthering our understanding of factors driving prejudice and discrimination.

Additionally, the study underlines the significant role of media representation in shaping negative perceptions and anxieties towards the outgroup, highlighting the media's contribution to perpetuating negative beliefs. It also emphasizes the importance of considering the perspectives of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent and by extension, outgroups in general to promote a comprehensive and empathetic dialogue for fostering positive intergroup interactions.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Improve Methodological Rigor

There are limitations with the design and execution of the study. The qualitative studies that led to the intervention design were conducted through an online questionnaire due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Standard qualitative studies of combining in-depth interviews with focus group discussions may have produced findings that were more robust, both regarding the White and Muslims of Middle Eastern descent participants. However, the online methodology used in this study offers a notable advantage in that participants may express their responses more candidly compared to scenarios involving interviews or focus groups with other people, where the tendency for self-presentation could be higher given the influence of social desirability (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). This approach potentially fosters a more genuine reflection of participants' perspectives.

To mitigate this limitation, a judicious approach could involve employing diverse qualitative methodologies for data collection in future studies. This strategy would leverage the distinct strengths inherent in each method, thereby enhancing the comprehensiveness and depth of the research findings.

Effective Application of Contact Theory

Another possible explanation for the findings in the current study is the application of contact theory. West et. al. (2017) found imagined contact to be particularly effective for individuals who initially held stronger prejudices. Hence, this suggests that indirect contact might serve as an effective intervention strategy for

reducing intergroup bias among individuals with stronger pre-existing negative attitudes. However, Taber & Lodge (2006) argue that individuals with strong pre-existing attitudes are the least susceptible to being swayed by communication, information, and media messages. Moreover, such individuals may even use the new message to reinforce their already held attitudes. Similarly, Peña et al. (2021), found in their study evidence that suggests how the reception of counter-attitudinal information could potentially reinforce pre-existing beliefs. These findings support Al Ramiah & Hewstone, (2013) argument that a simplistic application of contact theory, can lead to negative outcomes. Therefore, they propose that contact interventions should be intentionally designed to address such challenges. This challenge could potentially be addressed by incorporating extended intergroup contact scenarios, utilizing avatars that symbolize the ingroup to deliver the intervention content. This approach could effectively mitigate potential defensive reactions and facilitate a more direct exploration of challenging topics. Furthermore, unlike direct contact, which largely produces effects via affective components of attitudes, extended contact produces effects via both affective and cognitive components (Birtel et al., 2018). Hence, incorporating extended contact with virtual intervention could potentially help achieve a cognitive attitude change, which would ultimately influence affective attitude and behavioural intentions, whilst leveraging the scalability of a virtual contact.

Enhance Intergroup Bias Reduction Interventions

It should also be noted that intergroup contact interventions may not be a panacea for all forms of negative intergroup attitudes, especially in contexts where

there are structural and institutional factors that contribute to intergroup tensions like the case of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent and White people. Some of the structural and institutional factors were raised by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, which were not addressed in the individual-level intervention. Hence, there is the limitation of the intervention not providing adequate and convincing responses to the issues raised by White people. Specifically, the intervention's content did not include all Muslims of Middle Eastern descent's responses to White participants' questions from the initial qualitative study. As a result, the issues brought up by White participants were not sufficiently addressed. This limitation highlights the need to test the intervention model with social groups where issues can be addressed more openly and directly, enabling a more comprehensive exploration of difficult conversations between different social groups in the virtual context. Testing the intervention with other social groups whose issues can be addressed more freely will offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of this intervention model in tackling contentious issues between social groups. For instance, LGBTQ issues enjoy government support against issues of terrorism influenced by foreign policies of western governments (as claimed by Muslims of Middle Eastern descent), which is then blamed on Muslims by the media and politicians.

Furthermore, the present study also highlights the salience of authority support consistent with Allport's (1954) assertions. An analysis of Allport's conditions indicates that institutional support could hold particular significance in facilitating positive outcomes from intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Hence, replicating this intervention with social groups and topics that garner backing from

authority and foster unrestricted discourse, a more comprehensive approach to addressing intergroup issues can be achieved. Such an approach would be expected to amplify the impact of interventions on stereotypes, consequently influencing prejudice and behavioural intentions.

In addition, there should be an investigation of the conditions under which interventions succeed or fail by understanding the larger social context. Identifying problematic implicit stereotypes and developing targeted interventions may improve bias-reduction programs. For instance, in arguing for a multilevel approach in contact research, (Pettigrew, 2006) discussed the compositional fallacy, which involves drawing conclusions at the macro social structural level e.g. institution, organisation, based solely on individual data. He emphasized that societies function as intricate social systems, exceeding the sum of their individual components. While acknowledging the complexity of multilevel approaches, Pettigrew argues that they better reflect the complexities of the real world, making them more suitable for practical applications. Further, Pettigrew and Hewstone (2017) argued that the predominant focus of social psychologists centres on the meso-level, characterized by interpersonal interactions. However, they emphasized the necessity for social psychologists to consider whether their meso-level models are significantly influenced by dynamics at both the micro-individual and macro-societal levels. While the authors acknowledged the growing attention paid by social psychologists to personality and micro-level factors, through mediational analyses, they also highlighted the rare use of multilevel techniques to assess the impact of institutional macro-level effects. Since intergroup contact effects are influenced by both individual

differences and societal norms (Pettigrew, 1998), these arguments align with the notion that the macro-level determinants of cognitive dimension of attitude, encompassing beliefs leading to stereotypes and ultimately prejudice and discrimination, should be comprehensively addressed when formulating intergroup contact interventions. In fact, Paluck et al. (2021) likened typical interventions to treatments for minor ailments, emphasizing that the current global context, marked by prejudice manifesting as violence, discrimination, and exclusion, necessitates more robust and impactful interventions.

Another argument that buttress the above point is by (Tajfel, 2007). Tajfel argued that Individuals may also not be aware that their perception of others is inaccurate and therefore an oversimplification of the outgroup. Regarding the inaccuracy of the perception about outgroups, he argued on the cognitive aspect of prejudice that humanity has long held diverse beliefs about their place in nature with such ideas spreading slowly from specialized groups to the general population. Today, with the rapid growth of public information channels, ideas endorsed by influential individuals or groups can quickly and widely spread, with lasting effects. Tajfel argued that this poses a new challenge for social scientists, especially social psychologists. The widespread adoption and simplification of new perspectives on human nature and society can significantly influence the attitudes and behaviours of large populations in unprecedented ways. Tajfel's argument underscores how the macro-level societal factors influence micro-level individual factors and ultimately influencing the meso-level intergroup contact experiences and the need for the study of stereotype and interventions to be designed with these challenges in mind. Hence,

intervention should specifically challenge long held beliefs about oneself and others, which should help make cognitive belief more amenable to change.

One approach to addressing individual-level factors at the micro-level is to enhance intergroup contact interventions with socio-cognitive skills education. A meta-analysis of 81 research comprising 122 intervention–control comparisons in structured programs aimed at reducing prejudice or fostering positive intergroup attitudes among children and adolescents, revealed low to moderate intervention effects. Notably, interventions combining direct contact experiences with social-cognitive training programs such as integrative complexity, designed to enhance empathy and perspective taking exhibited the most robust effect sizes. Therefore, the inclusion of socio-cognitive education, which enhances participants' ability to perceive issues from the perspective of the outgroup, can strengthen contact interventions (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014).

Moreover, since prejudiced individuals often avoid intergroup contact, resulting in the challenge of selection bias (Pettigrew, 1998), incorporating social-cognitive training within contact interventions (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014) may encourage highly prejudiced individuals to remain engaged in these intervention programs.

Enhance Efficacy and Participant Engagement

Practical limitations in matching data points across the three time points in the Study 3 interventions resulted in a substantially reduced usable sample size and thus lower statistical power. These limitations could have contributed to the lack of significant effects observed in the outcomes. Nonetheless, exploratory analyses,

though not significant, indicated some favourable outcomes during Stage 1 of the study, wherein participants in the intervention group displayed slightly higher average stereotype warmth and lower prejudice scores in comparison to the control group participants. This finding is noteworthy because stereotype warmth, which pertains to the emotional aspect of stereotypes, is distinct from stereotype competence. Stereotype warmth is more closely related to affective attitudes. This result even at the first stage of the intervention corroborates existing literature that contact interventions appear to yield greater efficacy when targeting affective components of attitudes rather than cognitive aspects (Gómez & Huici, 2008; Alvidrez et al., 2015). To address this limitation and enhance the effectiveness of future interventions, a focus on maintaining participants' engagement throughout the intervention process is recommended. A promising avenue for future research involves incorporating qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to assess the acceptability of the current intervention. This could involve seeking participants' perspectives on their engagement with the intervention, its content and overall experience. Nonetheless, the data to understand participants' perspectives was collected in the present study; however, the analysis of the data to extract insights for informing future intervention design is still pending. The exploration of this feedback's potential to shape the design of future interventions holds promise. Leveraging these insights to refine future interventions could potentially foster enduring participant commitment and engagement across intervention phases.

This approach aligns with the principles of participant-centred intervention design (Newlands et al., 2022; Sanders & Stappers, 2008) and can provide valuable insights

into refining intervention strategies for better long-term outcomes. This could also help with the challenge of selection bias. Cross-sectional studies face limitations due to selection bias, as individuals with prejudices tend to avoid intergroup contact (Pettigrew, 1998). Out of the 2293 participants who initially signed up for the study, only 1019 completed stage 1. This number was further reduced to 421 by stage 2 and 296 by stage 3. Consequently, it is possible that those who completed the study were less prejudiced. Indeed, the mean prejudice score of the control group participants indicates that prejudice was not particularly high among study participants. Hence, a participant-centred intervention design approach, through future research cannot only address the challenges posed by reduced sample sizes due to highly prejudiced individuals potentially dropping out of studies but also create interventions that resonate with participants and promote meaningful attitude change within intergroup relations.

However, it is crucial to exercise caution in implementing bias reduction programs, considering the divergence from some previous findings. Future research should replicate the intervention model with other social groups and explore interventions specifically targeting emotional and cognitive components of attitudes.

Limitations Regarding Demographic Information and Sample Representativeness

One notable limitation of the studies discussed pertains to the absence of demographic data collection, particularly concerning socioeconomic status, employment status, and possibly other relevant demographic variables. The lack of such information constrains the ability to fully understand the characteristics of the participant pool and assess the extent to which these characteristics might have

influenced the findings. This limitation is crucial because demographic factors can significantly affect individuals' attitudes and experiences related to intergroup dynamics. For instance, socioeconomic status may shape people's exposure to diverse communities, their media consumption patterns, and even their personal experiences with members of outgroups, which in turn could influence their perceptions and attitudes towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK (C. W. Stephan et al., 2004).

Furthermore, the absence of detailed demographic information hampers the ability to evaluate the representativeness of the samples in each study. Without such data, it remains uncertain how well the study participants reflect the broader population of Non-Muslim White Britons and Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. This limitation impacts the generalizability of the study findings and their applicability to the wider community. Although the qualitative nature of Studies 1 and 2 aims to delve deeply into participants' perspectives rather than to achieve statistical representativeness, the lack of demographic diversity considerations still poses a challenge for fully capturing the range of experiences and views within each group.

In the context of the virtual intergroup contact intervention study (Study 3), the absence of demographic information further limits the ability to ascertain how different segments of the Non-Muslim White population might respond to the intervention. It is plausible that individuals from varied socioeconomic backgrounds or employment statuses might experience the intervention differently, potentially affecting its effectiveness across different demographic groups. This suggests a missed opportunity to identify for whom the intervention might be most effective.

Given these limitations, future research should prioritise the collection of comprehensive demographic information. Doing so would enhance the understanding of the sample characteristics, facilitate more nuanced analyses of the data, and improve the interpretation of how demographic variables might interact with intergroup attitudes and intervention outcomes. Addressing this gap is vital for advancing the field's understanding of intergroup relations and for the development of interventions that are inclusive and effective across diverse communities (Paluck & Green, 2009; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Conclusion

The programme of research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of a virtual intergroup contact intervention in reducing negative intergroup attitudes towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. The research design encompassed the development and implementation of the intervention, followed by an evaluation of its impact on stereotype endorsement, prejudice, and behavioural intentions. While the results did not yield statistically significant effects on these outcome variables in the main analyses, the study provides valuable insights that have implications for both future research and intervention design.

The findings shed light on the complexities associated with attitude change within the intergroup context. The study's nuanced exploration of intergroup bias reduction through a virtual contact intervention contributes to the growing body of literature on intergroup dynamics and interventions. Hence, this research signifies a

significant advancement in addressing intergroup bias and promoting positive intergroup relations in diverse societies.

In addition, this study adds to the discourse on the efficacy of virtual intergroup contact interventions by evaluating their potential to reduce negative stereotypes and prejudice. The research findings underscore the importance of contextually sensitive and meticulously planned interventions for effective intergroup bias reduction. The study highlights the need for further investigation into the conditions under which intergroup contact interventions succeed or fail. The future research recommendations provided hold the potential to deepen our understanding of intergroup dynamics and contribute to the promotion of harmonious intergroup relations in diverse societal contexts.

References

- Abbott, N., & Cameron, L. (2014). What Makes a Young Assertive Bystander? The Effect of Intergroup Contact, Empathy, Cultural Openness, and In-Group Bias on Assertive Bystander Intervention Intentions. *Journal of Social Issues, 70*(1), 167–182. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12053>
- Abelson, R. P., Dasgupta, N., Park, J., & Banaji, M. R. (1998). Perceptions of the Collective Other. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 2*(4), 243–250. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0204_2
- Aberson, C. L., & Gaffney, A. M. (2009). An integrated threat model of explicit and implicit attitudes. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 39*(5), 808–830. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.582>
- Aberson, C. L., & Haag, S. C. (2007). Contact, Perspective Taking, and Anxiety as Predictors of Stereotype Endorsement, Explicit Attitudes, and Implicit Attitudes. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 10*(2), 179–201. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430207074726>
- Aboud, F. E., Tredoux, C., Tropp, L. R., Brown, C. S., Niens, U., & Noor, N. M. (2012). Interventions to reduce prejudice and enhance inclusion and respect for ethnic differences in early childhood: A systematic review. *Developmental Review, 32*(4), 307–336. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2012.05.001>
- Abrams, D., Swift, H., & Houston, D. (2018, October 11). *Developing a national barometer of prejudice and discrimination in Britain* [Monograph]. Equality and Human Rights Commission. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication->

download/developing-national-barometer-prejudice-and-discrimination-britain

Abu-Fadil, M. (2005). *Is Coverage of Arabs, Islam Good? Western Media Under Scrutiny*.

6.

Abu-Nimer, M. (2001). Conflict Resolution, Culture, and Religion: Toward a Training Model of Interreligious Peacebuilding. *Journal of Peace Research*, 38(6), 685–704. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343301038006003>

Abu-Rayya, H. M. (2017). Majority members' endorsement of the acculturation integrationist orientation improves their outgroup attitudes toward ethnic minority members: An electronic-contact experiment. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 75, 660–666. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.06.010>

Adair, J. G. (1984). The Hawthorne effect: A reconsideration of the methodological artifact. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 69(2), 334–345. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.69.2.334>

Al Ramiah, A., & Hewstone, M. (2013). Intergroup contact as a tool for reducing, resolving, and preventing intergroup conflict: Evidence, limitations, and potential. *American Psychologist*, 68, 527–542. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032603>

Albarracín, D., & Mitchell, A. L. (2004). The Role of Defensive Confidence in Preference for Proattitudinal Information: How Believing That One Is Strong Can Sometimes Be a Defensive Weakness. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30(12), 1565–1584. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167204271180>

- Alesina, A., & Ferrara, E. L. (2005). Ethnic Diversity and Economic Performance. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 43(3), 762–800.
<https://doi.org/10.1257/002205105774431243>
- Allen, C. (2007). Islamophobia and its Consequences. In *European Islam. Challenges for Public Policy and Society* (pp. 144–167). CEPS Centre for European Policy Studies. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/chapter-detail?id=509731>
- Allen, C., & Nielsen, J. S. (2002). *Islamophobia in the EU After 11 September 2001: Summary Report*. EUMC.
- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice* (pp. xviii, 537). Addison-Wesley.
- Alnagar, H. (2018). ‘We’ve Never Talked about It’: Muslim American Attitudes Towards Homosexuality [M.A., University of California, Merced]. In *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*.
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2070393407/abstract/7D12850B4584924PQ/1>
- Alvídrez, S. (2018). *Virtual Intergroup Contact: How Visual Identifiability and Common Group Identity Cues Influence Prejudice Toward Latinos in Virtual Interactions*. International Communication Association’s 68th Annual Conference: Voices.
<https://pure.udem.edu.mx/en/publications/virtual-intergroup-contact-how-visual-identifiability-and-common->
- Alvídrez, S., Piñeiro-Naval, V., Marcos-Ramos, M., & Rojas-Solís, J. L. (2015). Intergroup contact in computer-mediated communication: The interplay of a stereotype-disconfirming behavior and a lasting group identity on reducing

prejudiced perceptions. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 52, 533–540.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.09.006>

Amichai-Hamburger, Y., & McKenna, K. Y. A. (2006). The Contact Hypothesis Reconsidered: Interacting via the Internet. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11(3), 825–843. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2006.00037.x>

Amir, Y. (1969). Contact hypothesis in ethnic relations. *Psychological Bulletin*, 71(5), 319–342. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0027352>

Anderson-Cook, C. M. (2005). Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*. <https://doi.org/10.1198/jasa.2005.s22>

Andrews, N. P., Yogeeswaran, K., Walker, M. J., & Hewstone, M. (2018). Effect of valenced vicarious online contact on out-group prejudice and perceived out-group variability: A study of online poker. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 48(10), 571–581. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12548>

Arceneaux, K. (2017). Anxiety Reduces Empathy Toward Outgroup Members But Not Ingroup Members. *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, 4(1), 68–80. <https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2017.12>

Aron, A., Aron, E. N., & Norman, C. (2003). Self-expansion Model of Motivation and Cognition in Close Relationships and Beyond. In *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Interpersonal Processes* (pp. 478–501). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470998557.ch19>

- Augoustinos, M., Ahrens, C., & Innes, J. M. (1994). Stereotypes and prejudice: The Australian experience. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 33(1), 125–141.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.1994.tb01014.x>
- Awale, A., Chan, C. S., & Ho, G. T. S. (2019). The influence of perceived warmth and competence on realistic threat and willingness for intergroup contact. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 49(5), 857–870.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2553>
- Awan, I. (2017). Cyber-Extremism: Isis and the Power of Social Media. *Society*, 54(2), 138–149. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-017-0114-0>
- Ayscue, J., Frankenberg, E., & Siegel-Hawley, G. (2017). The Complementary Benefits of Racial and Socioeconomic Diversity in Schools. Research Brief No. 10. In *National Coalition on School Diversity*. National Coalition on School Diversity. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED603698>
- Bailenson, J. N., Blascovich, J., & Guadagno, R. E. (2008). Self-Representations in Immersive Virtual Environments¹. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 38(11), 2673–2690. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2008.00409.x>
- Baker, P. (2010). Representations of Islam in British broadsheet and tabloid newspapers 1999–2005. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 9(2), 310–338.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.9.2.07bak>
- Bangstad, S. (2016). Islamophobia: What's in a Name?: Analysing the Discourses of Stopp Islamisering av Norge (Stop The Islamisation of Norway, sian). *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, 5(2), 145–169. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22117954-12341324>

- Banton, O., West, K., & Kinney, E. (2020). The surprising politics of anti-immigrant prejudice: How political conservatism moderates the effect of immigrant race and religion on inhumanization judgements. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 59(1), 157–170. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12337>
- Bassett-Jones, N. (2005). The Paradox of Diversity Management, Creativity and Innovation. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 14(2), 169–175. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8691.00337.x>
- Batson, C. D. (2010). Empathy-induced altruistic motivation. In M. Mikulincer & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Prosocial motives, emotions, and behavior: The better angels of our nature*. (pp. 15–34). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/12061-001>
- Batson, C. D., Polycarpou, M. P., Harmon-Jones, E., Imhoff, H. J., Mitchener, E. C., Bednar, L. L., Klein, T. R., & Highberger, L. (1997). Empathy and attitudes: Can feeling for a member of a stigmatized group improve feelings toward the group? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(1), 105–118. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.72.1.105>
- Batson, C. D., Sager, K., Garst, E., Kang, M., Rubchinsky, K., & Dawson, K. (1997). Is empathy-induced helping due to self–other merging? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73(3), 495–509. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.3.495>
- Beckingham, C. F. (1976). Misconceptions of Islam: Medieval and Modern. *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 124(5242), 606–614. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41372379>

- Beelmann, A., & Heinemann, K. S. (2014). Preventing prejudice and improving intergroup attitudes: A meta-analysis of child and adolescent training programs. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 35*(1), 10–24.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2013.11.002>
- BEHM-MORAWITZ, E., & TA, D. (2014). Cultivating Virtual Stereotypes?: The Impact of Video Game Play on Racial/Ethnic Stereotypes. *Howard Journal of Communications, 25*(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2013.835600>
- Benzehaf, B. (2017). Covering Islam in Western Media: From Islamic to Islamophobic Discourses. *JELTL, 2*(1). <https://doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v2i1.33>
- Berrenberg, J. L., Finlay, K. A., Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. (2002). Prejudice Toward People With Cancer or AIDS: Applying the Integrated Threat Model. *Journal of Applied Biobehavioral Research, 7*(2), 75–86.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9861.2002.tb00078.x>
- Beyer, H., & Liebe, U. (2015). Three experimental approaches to measure the social context dependence of prejudice communication and discriminatory behavior. *Social Science Research, 49*, 343–355.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2014.08.017>
- Bilali, R. (2015). Do terrorist threat alerts increase perception of threat and legitimization of in-group's wars? The moderating role of perceived in-group homogeneity. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 45*(5), 300–310.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12296>
- Birtel, M. D., Vezzali, L., & Stathi, S. (2018). Extended Contact and Affective Factors: A Review and Suggestions for Future Research. *Tpm-Testing Psychometrics*

Methodology in Applied Psychology, 25(2), 213–238.

<https://doi.org/10.4473/TPM25.2.4>

Bizman, A., & Yinon, Y. (2001). Intergroup and Interpersonal Threats as Determinants of Prejudice: The Moderating Role of In-Group Identification. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 23(3), 191–196.
https://doi.org/10.1207/S15324834BASP2303_5

Blascovich, J., Mendes, W. B., Hunter, S. B., Lickel, B., & Kowai-Bell, N. (2001). Perceiver threat in social interactions with stigmatized others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80(2), 253–267.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.80.2.253>

Bleich, E. (2009). Where do Muslims stand on ethno-racial hierarchies in Britain and France? Evidence from public opinion surveys, 1988–2008. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 43(3–4), 379–400. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220903109326>

Bordbar, A., Mohammadi, S., Parashi, P., & Butenko, V. (2020). Globalization and Islamophobia: Critical View at Globalization's Impact on Expansion of Islamophobia. *Journal of Politics and Law*, 13(4), 72–80.
<https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/jpola13&i=844>

Borjas, G. J. (2001). Does Immigration Grease the Wheels of the Labor Market? *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, 2001(1), 69–133.
<https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/11/article/10345>

Borjas, G. J. (2019). *Immigration and Economic Growth* (Working Paper 25836). National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w25836>

- Bousfield, C., & Hutchison, P. (2010). Contact, Anxiety, and Young People's Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions Towards the Elderly. *Educational Gerontology*, 36(6), 451–466. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03601270903324362>
- Bove, V., & Elia, L. (2017). Migration, Diversity, and Economic Growth. *World Development*, 89, 227–239. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.08.012>
- Brambilla, M., Ravenna, M., & Hewstone, M. (2012). Changing stereotype content through mental imagery: Imagining intergroup contact promotes stereotype change. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 15(3), 305–315. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430211427574>
- Brauer, M., & Er-rafiy, A. (2011). Increasing perceived variability reduces prejudice and discrimination. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 47(5), 871–881. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2011.03.003>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners* (First published). SAGE.
- Brewer, M. B. (1999). The Psychology of Prejudice: Ingroup Love and Outgroup Hate? *Journal of Social Issues*, 55(3), 429–444. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00126>
- Cameron, L., Rutland, A., Brown, R., & Douch, R. (2006). Changing Children's Intergroup Attitudes Toward Refugees: Testing Different Models of Extended

Contact. *Child Development*, 77(5), 1208–1219. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00929.x>

Cameron, L., Rutland, A., Hossain, R., & Petley, R. (2011). When and why does extended contact work?: The role of high quality direct contact and group norms in the development of positive ethnic intergroup attitudes amongst children. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 14(2), 193–206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430210390535>

Cameron, L., Rutland, A., Turner, R., Holman-Nicolas, R., & Powell, C. (2011). ‘Changing attitudes with a little imagination’: Imagined contact effects on young children’s intergroup bias. *Anales de Psicología*, 27(3), 708–717.

Capozza, D., Falvo, R., Trifiletti, E., & Pagani, A. (2014). Cross-group Friendships, Extended Contact, and Humanity Attributions to Homosexuals. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 114, 276–282. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.698>

Cénat, J. M., Hajizadeh, S., Dalexis, R. D., Ndengeyingoma, A., Guerrier, M., & Kogan, C. (2022). Prevalence and Effects of Daily and Major Experiences of Racial Discrimination and Microaggressions among Black Individuals in Canada. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(17–18), NP16750–NP16778. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605211023493>

Choma, B. L., Haji, R., Hodson, G., & Hoffarth, M. (2016). Avoiding cultural contamination: Intergroup disgust sensitivity and religious identification as predictors of interfaith threat, faith-based policies, and islamophobia.

Personality and Individual Differences, 95, 50–55.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2016.02.013>

Choma, B. L., Hodson, G., & Costello, K. (2012). Intergroup disgust sensitivity as a predictor of islamophobia: The modulating effect of fear. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(2), 499–506.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2011.10.014>

Christ, O., Hewstone, M., Tausch, N., Wagner, U., Voci, A., Hughes, J., & Cairns, E. (2010). Direct Contact as a Moderator of Extended Contact Effects: Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Impact on Outgroup Attitudes, Behavioral Intentions, and Attitude Certainty. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36(12), 1662–1674. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167210386969>

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. *The Psychologist*, 26, 120–123.

Collett, E., & Petrovic, M. (2014). The future of immigrant integration in Europe: Mainstreaming approaches for inclusion. *Migration Policy Institute Europe*.

Cottrell, C. A., & Neuberg, S. L. (2005). Different Emotional Reactions to Different Groups: A Sociofunctional Threat-Based Approach to 'Prejudice'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88(5), 770–789.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.88.5.770>

Craig, P., Dieppe, P., Macintyre, S., Michie, S., Nazareth, I., & Petticrew, M. (2008). Developing and evaluating complex interventions: The new Medical Research Council guidance. *The BMJ*, 337, a1655. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.a1655>

- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2017). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. SAGE Publications.
- Crisp, R. J., & Husnu, S. (2011). Attributional processes underlying imagined contact effects. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 14(2), 275–287.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430210390721>
- Crisp, R. J., Husnu, S., Meleady, R., Stathi, S., & Turner, R. N. (2010). From imagery to intention: A dual route model of imagined contact effects. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 21(1), 188–236.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2010.543312>
- Crisp, R. J., Stathi, S., Turner, R. N., & Husnu, S. (2009). Imagined Intergroup Contact: Theory, Paradigm and Practice. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 3(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2008.00155.x>
- Crisp, R. J., & Turner, R. N. (2009). Can imagined interactions produce positive perceptions?: Reducing prejudice through simulated social contact. *American Psychologist*, 64(4), 231–240. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014718>
- Crisp, R. J., & Turner, R. N. (2011). Cognitive adaptation to the experience of social and cultural diversity. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137, 242–266.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021840>
- Crisp, R. J., & Turner, R. N. (2012). Chapter Three – The Imagined Contact Hypothesis. In J. M. Olson & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 46, pp. 125–182). Academic Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-394281-4.00003-9>

- Crowley, J. (1999). The politics of belonging: some theoretical considerations. In *The politics of belonging: Migrants and minorities in contemporary Europe*. Geddes, A. and Favell, A. (eds.), pp. 15-41, Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Crowne, D. P., & Marlowe, D. (1960). A new scale of social desirability independent of psychopathology. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 24(4), 349-354.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/h0047358>
- Crump, S. A., Hamilton, D. L., Sherman, S. J., Lickel, B., & Thakkar, V. (2010). Group entitativity and similarity: Their differing patterns in perceptions of groups. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 40(7), 1212-1230.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.716>
- Damas De Matos, A. (2021). The fiscal impact of immigration in OECD countries since the mid-2000s. In OECD, *International Migration Outlook 2021*. OECD.
<https://doi.org/10.1787/4ccb6899-en>
- Dasgupta, N., & Greenwald, A. G. (2001). On the Malleability of Automatic Attitudes: Combating Automatic Prejudice With Images of Admired and Disliked Individuals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81(5), 800-814.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.81.5.800>
- Davis, K. C. (2004). Oprah's Book Club and the politics of cross-racial empathy. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 7(4), 399-419.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877904047861>
- Deeb, G. (2014). Inventing a Myth: The Medieval Islamic Civilization through Western Perspectives. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 2, 139-177. <https://doi.org/10.15640/ijll.v2n4a9>

- Dessel, A., & Rogge, M. E. (2008). Evaluation of intergroup dialogue: A review of the empirical literature. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 26(2), 199–238.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/crq.230>
- Devine, P. G. (1989). Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56, 5–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.56.1.5>
- Dhont, K., & Van Hiel, A. (2009). We must not be enemies: Interracial contact and the reduction of prejudice among authoritarians. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 46(2), 172–177. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2008.09.022>
- Dhont, K., Van Hiel, A., & Hewstone, M. (2014). Changing the ideological roots of prejudice: Longitudinal effects of ethnic intergroup contact on social dominance orientation. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 17(1), 27–44.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430213497064>
- Dixon, J., Durrheim, K., & Tredoux, C. (2007). Intergroup Contact and Attitudes Toward the Principle and Practice of Racial Equality. *Psychological Science*, 18(10), 867–872. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2007.01993.x>
- Dodd, V., & Marsh, S. (2017). Anti-Muslim hate crimes increase fivefold since London Bridge attacks. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/07/anti-muslim-hate-crimes-increase-fivefold-since-london-bridge-attacks>
- Dovidio, J. F., Eller, A., & Hewstone, M. (2011). Improving intergroup relations through direct, extended and other forms of indirect contact. *Group Processes*

& Intergroup Relations, 14(2), 147–160.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430210390555>

Dovidio, J. F., Evans, N., & Tyler, R. B. (1986). Racial stereotypes: The contents of their cognitive representations. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 22(1), 22–37. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031\(86\)90039-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031(86)90039-9)

Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L., & Saguy, T. (2009). Commonality and the Complexity of “We”: Social Attitudes and Social Change. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 13(1), 3–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868308326751>

Dovidio, J. F., Glick, P., & Rudman, L. A. (2005). Introduction: Reflecting on The Nature of Prejudice: Fifty Years after Allport. In *On the nature of prejudice: Fifty years after Allport* (pp. 1–15). Blackwell Publishing.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470773963.ch1>

Dovidio, J. F., Glick, P., & Rudman, L. A. (2008). *On the Nature of Prejudice: Fifty Years after Allport*. John Wiley & Sons.

Dovidio, J. F., Love, A., Schellhaas, F. M. H., & Hewstone, M. (2017). Reducing intergroup bias through intergroup contact: Twenty years of progress and future directions. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 20(5), 606–620.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430217712052>

Dustmann, C., & Frattini, T. (2014). The Fiscal Effects of Immigration to the UK. *The Economic Journal*, 124(580), F593–F643. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eoj.12181>

Eagly, A. H., & Chaiken, S. (1993). *The psychology of attitudes* (pp. xxii, 794). Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.

- Effects of Direct and Indirect Cross-Group Friendships on Judgments of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland: The Mediating Role of an Anxiety-Reduction Mechanism* – Stefania Paolini, Miles Hewstone, Ed Cairns, Alberto Voci, 2004. (n.d.). Retrieved 26 August 2023, from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0146167203262848?casa_token=DVvdfaVdzPQAAAAA:n6S3aSHUV81SAXutCDSVp_bzJEWMDLpTj1-JvmswKfC8K-QoQsWnWpfkbME_s219HMDw5-5G-Sck8Q
- Elkasssem, S., Csiernik, R., Mantulak, A., Kayssi, G., Hussain, Y., Lambert, K., Bailey, P., & Choudhary, A. (2018). Growing Up Muslim: The Impact of Islamophobia on Children in a Canadian Community. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.10381607.0012.101>
- Eller, A., Abrams, D., & Gomez, A. (2012). When the direct route is blocked: The extended contact pathway to improving intergroup relations. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 36(5), 637–646. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2012.03.005>
- Eller, A., Abrams, D., & Zimmermann, A. (2011). Two degrees of separation: A longitudinal study of actual and perceived extended international contact. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 14(2), 175–191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430210391120>
- Ellis, D. G., & Maoz, I. (2007). Online Argument Between Israeli Jews and Palestinians. *Human Communication Research*, 33(3), 291–309. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2007.00300.x>

- Entman, R. M. (2007). Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 163–173. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00336.x>
- Entman, R. M., & Rojecki, A. (2001). *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America*. University of Chicago Press.
- Esposito, J. L. (2002). *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam*. Oxford University Press.
- Esposito, J. L. (2010). *The Future of Islam*. Oxford University Press.
- Esposito, J. L. (2011). *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam: Second Edition*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Esses, V. M. (2021). Prejudice and Discrimination Toward Immigrants. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 72(1), 503–531. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-080520-102803>
- Esses, V. M., Haddock, G., & Zanna, M. P. (1993). Chapter 7 - Values, Stereotypes, and Emotions as Determinants of Intergroup Attitudes**Editor's Note: This chapter was selected as the 1992 winner of the Otto Klineberg Intercultural and International Relations Award, given by the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. In making its selection, the award committee cited the chapter for offering a "substantial advance in our understanding of basic psychological processes underlying racism, stereotyping, and prejudice". In D. M. Mackie & D. L. Hamilton (Eds.), *Affect, Cognition and Stereotyping* (pp. 137–166). Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-088579-7.50011-9>

- Esses, V. M., Medianu, S., & Lawson, A. S. (2013). Uncertainty, Threat, and the Role of the Media in Promoting the Dehumanization of Immigrants and Refugees. *Journal of Social Issues*, 69(3), 518–536. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12027>
- Fang, D., Moy, E., Colburn, L., & Hurley, J. (2000). Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Faculty Promotion in Academic Medicine. *JAMA*, 284(9), 1085–1092. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.284.9.1085>
- Fanselow, M. S., & Sterlace, S. R. (2014). Pavlovian Fear Conditioning. In F. K. McSweeney & E. S. Murphy (Eds.), *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Operant and Classical Conditioning* (1st ed., pp. 117–141). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118468135.ch6>
- Finlay, K. A., & Stephan, W. G. (2000). Improving Intergroup Relations: The Effects of Empathy on Racial Attitudes¹. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 30(8), 1720–1737. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2000.tb02464.x>
- Fisher, R. A. (1935). *The design of experiments* (pp. xi, 251). Oliver & Boyd.
- Fiske, S. T. (2018). Stereotype Content: Warmth and Competence Endure. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 27(2), 67–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721417738825>
- Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J. C., Glick, P., & Xu, J. (2002). A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: Competence and warmth respectively follow from perceived status and competition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82(6), 878–902. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.6.878>
- FitzGerald, C., Martin, A., Berner, D., & Hurst, S. (2019). Interventions designed to reduce implicit prejudices and implicit stereotypes in real world contexts: A

systematic review. *BMC Psychology*, 7(1), 29. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-019-0299-7>

Frager, R. (2002). *The Wisdom of Islam: An Introduction to the Living Experience of Islamic Belief and Practice* (1st edition). Barrons Educational Series Inc.

Gabbay, A. (2010). *Islamic Tolerance: Amir Khusraw and Pluralism*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203871607>

Gaertner, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (1986). The aversive form of racism. In *Prejudice, discrimination, and racism* (pp. 61–89). Academic Press.

Gaertner, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (2014). *Reducing Intergroup Bias: The Common Ingroup Identity Model*. Psychology Press.

Gaertner, S. L., Dovidio, J. F., Banker, B. S., Houlette, M., Johnson, K. M., & McGlynn, E. A. (2000). Reducing intergroup conflict: From superordinate goals to decategorization, recategorization, and mutual differentiation. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 4(1), 98–114.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2699.4.1.98>

Galinsky, A. D., & Ku, G. (2004). The Effects of Perspective-Taking on Prejudice: The Moderating Role of Self-Evaluation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30(5), 594–604. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167203262802>

Galinsky, A. D., & Moskowitz, G. B. (2000). Perspective-taking: Decreasing stereotype expression, stereotype accessibility, and in-group favoritism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78(4), 708–724.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.78.4.708>

- Geddes, A., & Favell, A. (1999). *The Politics of Belonging: Migrants and Minorities in Contemporary Europe*. Ashgate.
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1980). The “Mainstreaming” of America: Violence Profile No. 11. *Journal of Communication*, 30(3), 10–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1980.tb01987.x>
- Giorgi, A. (2000). The Status of Husserlian Phenomenology in Caring Research. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 14(1), 3–10.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6712.2000.tb00554.x>
- Glasziou, P., Chalmers, I., Rawlins, M., & McCulloch, P. (2007). When are randomised trials unnecessary? Picking signal from noise. *BMJ : British Medical Journal*, 334(7589), 349–351.
<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.39070.527986.68>
- Gómez, Á., & Huici, C. (2008). Vicarious Intergroup Contact and the Role of Authorities in Prejudice Reduction. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 11(1), 103–114. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1138741600004169>
- Gómez, A., Tropp, L. R., & Fernández, S. (2011). When extended contact opens the door to future contact: Testing the effects of extended contact on attitudes and intergroup expectancies in majority and minority groups. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 14(2), 161–173.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430210391119>
- Gonsalkorale, K., & Williams, K. D. (2007). The KKK won’t let me play: Ostracism even by a despised outgroup hurts. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 37(6), 1176–1186. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.392>

- Gottlieb, D. A., & Begej, E. L. (2014). Principles of Pavlovian Conditioning. In *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Operant and Classical Conditioning* (pp. 1–25). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118468135.ch1>
- Graf, S., Paolini, S., & Rubin, M. (2014). Negative intergroup contact is more influential, but positive intergroup contact is more common: Assessing contact prominence and contact prevalence in five Central European countries. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 44(6), 536–547. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2052>
- Greenwood, D. J., & Levin, M. (2006). *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*. SAGE Publications.
- Hadler, M. (2012). The Influence of World Societal Forces on Social Tolerance. A Time Comparative Study of Prejudices in 32 Countries. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 53(2), 211–237. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.2012.01232.x>
- Hafez, K. (2000). *The West and Islam in the Mass Media: Cornerstones for a New International Culture of Communication in the 21st Century*. ZEI Discussion Papers: 2000, C 61 [Discussion Paper]. Center for European Integration Studies, University of Bonn. <http://aei.pitt.edu/181/>
- Halliday, F. (Ed.). (1996). *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. I.B.Tauris. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780755611973>
- Haque, A., Tubbs, C. Y., Kahumoku-Fessler, E. P., & Brown, M. D. (2019). Microaggressions and Islamophobia: Experiences of Muslims Across the United States and Clinical Implications. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 45(1), 76–91. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12339>

- Hart, W., Albarracín, D., Eagly, A. H., Brechan, I., Lindberg, M. J., & Merrill, L. (2009). Feeling Validated Versus Being Correct: A Meta-Analysis of Selective Exposure to Information. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135(4), 555–588.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015701>
- Harwood, J., Paolini, S., Joyce, N., Rubin, M., & Arroyo, A. (2011). Secondary transfer effects from imagined contact: Group similarity affects the generalization gradient. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 50(1), 180–189.
<https://doi.org/10.1348/014466610X524263>
- Hasler, B. S., & Amichai-Hamburger, Y. (2013). Online Intergroup Contact. In Y. Amichai-Hamburger (Ed.), *The Social Net* (pp. 220–252). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199639540.003.0012>
- Hasler, B. S., Hirschberger, G., Shani-Sherman, T., & Friedman, D. A. (2014). Virtual Peacemakers: Mimicry Increases Empathy in Simulated Contact with Virtual Outgroup Members. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 17(12), 766–771. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2014.0213>
- Hayward, L. E., Tropp, L. R., Hornsey, M. J., & Barlow, F. K. (2017). Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of Intergroup Contact: Descriptions and Mediators of Positive and Negative Contact Among Majority and Minority Groups. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 43(3), 347–364.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167216685291>
- Heidegger, M. (1967). *Being and Time*. Blackwell.
- Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations* (pp. ix, 326). John Wiley & Sons Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10628-000>

- Herskovits, M. J. (1948). *Man and His Works: The Science of Cultural Anthropology*. A. Knopf.
- Hewstone, M. (1994). Revision and Change of Stereotypic Beliefs: In Search of the Elusive Subtyping Model. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 5(1), 69–109. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14792779543000020>
- Hewstone, M. (2009). *Proceedings of the British Academy, Volume 162, 2008 Lectures*. British Academy.
- Hewstone, M. (2015). Consequences of Diversity for Social Cohesion and Prejudice: The Missing Dimension of Intergroup Contact. *Journal of Social Issues*, 71(2), 417–438. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12120>
- Hewstone, M., Cairns, E., Voci, A., Hamberger, J., & Niens, U. (2006). Intergroup Contact, Forgiveness, and Experience of “The Troubles” in Northern Ireland. *Journal of Social Issues*, 62(1), 99–120. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2006.00441.x>
- Hewstone, M., Lolliot, S., Swart, H., Myers, E., Voci, A., Al Ramiah, A., & Cairns, E. (2014). Intergroup contact and intergroup conflict. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 20(1), 39–53. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035582>
- Hinnebusch, R. (2007). *THE AMERICAN INVASION OF IRAQ: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES*. 19.
- Hodson, G., & Hewstone, M. (2013). Introduction: Advances in intergroup contact. In *Advances in intergroup contact* (pp. 3–20). Psychology Press.
- Hollis, S., & Campbell, F. (1999). What is meant by intention to treat analysis? Survey of published randomised controlled trials. *BMJ : British Medical Journal*,

319(7211), 670–674.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC28218/>

Home Office, UK. (2017/18). Hate Crime, England and Wales.

Hornsey, M. J. (2005). Why being right is not enough: Predicting defensiveness in the face of group criticism. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 16(1), 301–334.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10463280500436040>

Hsieh, W., Faulkner, N., & Wickes, R. (2022). What reduces prejudice in the real world? A meta-analysis of prejudice reduction field experiments. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 61(3), 689–710. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12509>

Hugenberg, K., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (2004). Category membership moderates the inhibition of social identities. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 40(2), 233–238. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-1031\(03\)00096-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-1031(03)00096-9)

Hunter, S. (1998). *The Future of Islam and the West: Clash of Civilizations Or Peaceful Coexistence?* Greenwood Publishing Group.

Huntington, S. P. (2011). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Illustrated edition). Simon & Schuster.

Husnu, S., & Crisp, R. J. (2010). Elaboration enhances the imagined contact effect. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 46(6), 943–950.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2010.05.014>

Husnu, S., & Crisp, R. J. (2010). Imagined Intergroup Contact: A New Technique for Encouraging Greater Inter-Ethnic Contact in Cyprus. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 16(1), 97–108.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10781910903484776>

- Husnu, S., Mertan, B., & Cicek, O. (2018). Reducing Turkish Cypriot children's prejudice toward Greek Cypriots: Vicarious and extended intergroup contact through storytelling. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 21(1), 178–192.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430216656469>
- Hussain, Y., & Bagguley, P. (2013). Funny Looks: British Pakistanis' experiences after 7 July 2005. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36(1), 28–46.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2011.645844>
- Husserl, E. (1913). *Phenomenology: A Science of Consciousness*.
- Husserl, E. (1962). *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Collier Books.
- Imperato, C., Schneider, B. H., Caricati, L., Amichai-Hamburger, Y., & Mancini, T. (2021). Allport meets internet: A meta-analytical investigation of online intergroup contact and prejudice reduction. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 81, 131–141.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.01.006>
- Infectious Disease Prevalence, Not Race Exposure, Predicts Both Implicit and Explicit Racial Prejudice Across the United States – Brian A. O'Shea, Derrick G. Watson, Gordon D. A. Brown, Corey L. Fincher, 2020. (n.d.). Retrieved 25 September 2023, from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1948550619862319?casa_token=rbnOp8s1r34AAAAA:2iK9UDGg20uTMVW3cjtuyqSPoS2T3kqhstuX6Z7XW3JBdEe9CI6iun3hzeuYk7DMiuzI4vPnrT4*
- Iqbal, Z. (2010). Islamophobia or Islamophobias: Towards Developing A Process Model. *Islamic Studies*, 49(1), 81–101. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41429246>

- Janezic, I., & Arsenault, S. (2021). How to Foster Empathy in Anti-discrimination Initiatives? Implication for Social Interventions – A Qualitative Approach. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 53(1), 47–68.
<https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/78/article/783670>
- Kawakami, K., Dovidio, J. F., Moll, J., Hermsen, S., & Russin, A. (2000). Just say no (to stereotyping): Effects of training in the negation of stereotypic associations on stereotype activation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78(5), 871–888. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.78.5.871>
- Kazdin, A. E. (2021). *Research Design in Clinical Psychology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kellner, D., & Share, J. (2007). Critical Media Literacy: Crucial Policy Choices for a Twenty-First-Century Democracy. *Policy Futures in Education*, 5(1), 59–69.
<https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2007.5.1.59>
- Kiger, M. E., & Varpio, L. (2020). Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131. *Medical Teacher*.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0142159X.2020.1755030>
- Kim, N., & Wojcieszak, M. (2018). Intergroup contact through online comments: Effects of direct and extended contact on outgroup attitudes. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 81, 63–72. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.11.013>
- Kincheloe, J. L., & Steinberg, S. R. (2004). *The Miseducation of the West: How Schools and the Media Distort Our Understanding of the Islamic World*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

- Knight Lapinski, M., & Boster, F. J. (2001). Modeling the ego-defensive function of attitudes. *Communication Monographs*, 68(3), 314–324.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03637750128062>
- Konitzer, T. B., Iyengar, S., Valentino, N. A., Soroka, S., & Duch, R. M. (2019). Ethnocentrism versus group-specific stereotyping in immigration opinion: Cross-national evidence on the distinctiveness of immigrant groups. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(7), 1051–1074.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1431109>
- Koschate, M., & van Dick, R. (2011). A multilevel test of Allport's contact conditions. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 14(6), 769–787.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430211399602>
- Kotzur, P. F., Schäfer, S. J., & Wagner, U. (2019). Meeting a nice asylum seeker: Intergroup contact changes stereotype content perceptions and associated emotional prejudices, and encourages solidarity-based collective action intentions. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 58(3), 668–690.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12304>
- Kumar, D. (2021). *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire: 20 years after 9/11*. Verso.
- Kunda, Z., & Oleson, K. C. (1995). Maintaining stereotypes in the face of disconfirmation: Constructing grounds for subtyping deviants. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68(4), 565–579.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.68.4.565>
- Kymlicka, W. (2012). *Multiculturalism: Success, Failure, and the Future*. Transatlantic Council on Migration, Migration Policy Institute.

- Laar, C. V., Levin, S., Sinclair, S., & Sidanius, J. (2005). The effect of university roommate contact on ethnic attitudes and behavior. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 41*(4), 329–345. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2004.08.002>
- Lazarus, R. S. (1982). Thoughts on the relations between emotion and cognition. *American Psychologist, 37*, 1019–1024. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.37.9.1019>
- Lazarus, R. S., & Smith, C. A. (1988). Knowledge and Appraisal in the Cognition – Emotion Relationship. *Cognition and Emotion, 2*(4), 281–300. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699938808412701>
- Lee, S. A., Reid, C. A., Short, S. D., Gibbons, J. A., Yeh, R., & Campbell, M. L. (2013). Fear of Muslims: Psychometric evaluation of the Islamophobia Scale. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 5*(3), 157–171. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032117>
- Lee, T. L., & Fiske, S. T. (2006). Not an outgroup, not yet an ingroup: Immigrants in the Stereotype Content Model. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 30*(6), 751–768. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2006.06.005>
- Legault, L., Gutsell, J. N., & Inzlicht, M. (2011). Ironic Effects of Antiprejudice Messages: How Motivational Interventions Can Reduce (but Also Increase) Prejudice. *Psychological Science, 22*(12), 1472–1477. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797611427918>
- Lemmer, G., & Wagner, U. (2015). Can we really reduce ethnic prejudice outside the lab? A meta-analysis of direct and indirect contact interventions. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 45*(2), 152–168. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2079>

- Lester, S. (1999). *An introduction to phenomenological research*.
- Liebkind, K., & McAlister, A. L. (1999). Extended contact through peer modelling to promote tolerance in Finland. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 29(5–6), 765–780. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-0992\(199908/09\)29:5/6<765::AID-EJSP958>3.0.CO;2-J](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0992(199908/09)29:5/6<765::AID-EJSP958>3.0.CO;2-J)
- Logan, J. R. (2013). The Persistence of Segregation in the 21st Century Metropolis. *City & Community*, 12(2), 160–168. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12021>
- Lyons, J. (2010). *The House of Wisdom: How the Arabs Transformed Western Civilization*. Bloomsbury USA.
- Mackie, D. M., & Smith, E. R. (1998). Intergroup relations: Insights from a theoretically integrative approach. *Psychological Review*, 105(3), 499–529. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.105.3.499>
- Macrae, C. N., Stangor, C., & Hewstone, M. (1996). *Stereotypes and Stereotyping*. Guilford Press.
- Malayalam, S. (2020). *Attitude Towards Homosexuals: A quantitative study on Young Adults of Malaysia*.
- Mamdani, M. (2005). *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*. Three Leaves Press.
- Mancini, T., Caricati, L., Balestrieri, M. F., & Sibilla, F. (2018). How to reduce intergroup hostility in virtual contexts: The role of alts in decreasing intergroup bias in World of Warcraft. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 83, 8–15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.01.021>

- Maunder, R. D., White, F. A., & Verrelli, S. (2019). Modern avenues for intergroup contact: Using E-contact and intergroup emotions to reduce stereotyping and social distancing against people with schizophrenia. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 22(7), 947–963.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430218794873>
- Mazziotta, A., Mummendey, A., & Wright, S. C. (2011). Vicarious intergroup contact effects: Applying social-cognitive theory to intergroup contact research. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 14(2), 255–274.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430210390533>
- McKeever, R. (2015). Vicarious Experience: Experimentally Testing the Effects of Empathy for Media Characters with Severe Depression and the Intervening Role of Perceived Similarity. *Health Communication*, 30(11), 1122–1134.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2014.921969>
- McLaren, L., & Johnson, M. (2007). Resources, Group Conflict and Symbols: Explaining Anti-Immigration Hostility in Britain. *Political Studies*, 55(4), 709–732. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2007.00680.x>
- McNally, R. J. (2016). The Legacy of Seligman’s ‘Phobias and Preparedness’ (1971). *Behavior Therapy*, 47(5), 585–594. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.beth.2015.08.005>
- Mealy, M., and Stephan, W. G. (2010). Intergroup Empathy. In J. M. Levine and M. A. Hogg (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of group processes and intergroup relations*. Los Angeles: SAGE, 475–478.
- Meleady, R., & Seger, C. R. (2017). Imagined contact encourages prosocial behavior towards outgroup members. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 20(4), 447–464. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430215612225>
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2012). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Routledge.

- Michie, S., Richardson, M., Johnston, M., Abraham, C., Francis, J., Hardeman, W., Eccles, M. P., Cane, J., & Wood, C. E. (2013). The Behavior Change Technique Taxonomy (v1) of 93 Hierarchically Clustered Techniques: Building an International Consensus for the Reporting of Behavior Change Interventions. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 46(1), 81–95. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12160-013-9486-6>
- Miles, E., & Crisp, R. J. (2014). A meta-analytic test of the imagined contact hypothesis. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 17(1), 3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430213510573>
- Modood, T. (2007). *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*. Polity Press.
- Modood, T. (2013). *Multiculturalism*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Moghadam, V. M. (2003). *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Mohai, P., Pellow, D., & Roberts, J. T. (2009). Environmental Justice. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 34(1), 405–430. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-082508-094348>
- Moher, D., Hopewell, S., Schulz, K. F., Montori, V., Gotzsche, P. C., Devereaux, P. J., Elbourne, D., Egger, M., & Altman, D. G. (2010). CONSORT 2010 Explanation and Elaboration: Updated guidelines for reporting parallel group randomised trials. *BMJ*, 340(mar23 1), c869–c869. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.c869>
- Mollov, B., & Lavie, C. (2001). CULTURE, DIALOGUE, AND PERCEPTION CHANGE IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 12(1), 69–87. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb022850>

- Mostafa, G. M. M. (2007). Correcting the Image of Islam and Muslims in the West: Challenges and Opportunities for Islamic Universities and Organizations. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 27(3), 371–386.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13602000701737210>
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. SAGE Publications.
- Mucchi-Faina, A., Pacilli, M. G., Pagliaro, S., & Alparone, F. R. (2009). Ambivalence in Intergroup Evaluation: The Role of Fairness Norm. *Social Justice Research*, 22(1), 117–133. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-009-0090-7>
- Nasr, S. H. (2009). *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*. Zondervan.
- Navarrete, C. D., McDonald, M. M., Asher, B. D., Kerr, N. L., Yokota, K., Olsson, A., & Sidanius, J. (2012). Fear is readily associated with an out-group face in a minimal group context. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 33(5), 590–593.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2012.02.007>
- Navarrete, C. D., Olsson, A., Ho, A. K., Mendes, W. B., Thomsen, L., & Sidanius, J. (2009). Fear Extinction to an Out-Group Face: The Role of Target Gender. *Psychological Science*, 20(2), 155–158. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02273.x>
- Negreiros, T. S., Dos Santos, F. Á., Bolis, I., & Silva, W. A. D. (2022). Ethnicity, Color and Nationality: An Integrative Literature Review Regarding the Relation of Cultural Prejudice and Discrimination. *Trends in Psychology*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s43076-022-00199-y>
- Nesser, P. (2006). Jihadism in Western Europe After the Invasion of Iraq: Tracing Motivational Influences from the Iraq War on Jihadist Terrorism in Western

- Europe. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29(4), 323–342.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100600641899>
- Neuberg, S. L., & Schaller, M. (2016). An evolutionary threat-management approach to prejudices. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 7, 1–5.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.06.004>
- Newlands, R., Duncan, E., Treweek, S., Elliott, J., Presseau, J., Bower, P., MacLennan, G., Ogden, M., Wells, M., Witham, M. D., Young, B., & Gillies, K. (2022). The development of theory-informed participant-centred interventions to maximise participant retention in randomised controlled trials. *Trials*, 23(1), 268. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-022-06218-8>
- O'Donnell, A. W., Neumann, D. L., Duffy, A. L., & Paolini, S. (2019). Learning to fear outgroups: An associative learning explanation for the development and reduction of intergroup anxiety. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 13(3), e12442. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12442>
- O'Donnell, S. J. (2018). Islamophobic conspiracism and neoliberal subjectivity: The inassimilable society. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 52(1), 1–23.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2017.1414473>
- OECD. (2020). Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees. OECD Publishing.
<https://www.oecd.org/regional/Local-inclusion-Migrants-and-Refugees.pdf>
- Office of National Statistics. (2020). Overview of the UK population.
- Olsson, A., Ebert, J. P., Banaji, M. R., & Phelps, E. A. (2005). The Role of Social Groups in the Persistence of Learned Fear. *Science*, 309(5735), 785–787.
<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1113551>

- O'Shea, B. A., Watson, D. G., Brown, G. D. A., & Fincher, C. L. (2020). Infectious Disease Prevalence, Not Race Exposure, Predicts Both Implicit and Explicit Racial Prejudice Across the United States. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 11(3), 345–355. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550619862319>
- Oskamp, S. (2000). *Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination*. Psychology Press.
- Pacilli, M. G., Roccato, M., Pagliaro, S., & Russo, S. (2016). From political opponents to enemies? The role of perceived moral distance in the animalistic dehumanization of the political outgroup. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 19(3), 360–373. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430215590490>
- Pagano, S. J., & Huo, Y. J. (2007). The Role of Moral Emotions in Predicting Support for Political Actions in Post-War Iraq. *Political Psychology*, 28(2), 227–255. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2007.00563.x>
- Pager, D., & Shepherd, H. (2008). The Sociology of Discrimination: Racial Discrimination in Employment, Housing, Credit, and Consumer Markets. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 34(1), 181–209. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131740>
- Paluck, E. L. (2009). Reducing intergroup prejudice and conflict using the media: A field experiment in Rwanda. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96(3), 574–587. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0011989>
- Paluck, E. L., & Green, D. P. (2009). Prejudice Reduction: What Works? A Review and Assessment of Research and Practice. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60(1), 339–367. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163607>

- Paluck, E. L., Porat, R., Clark, C. S., & Green, D. P. (2021). Prejudice Reduction: Progress and Challenges. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 72(1), 533–560.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-071620-030619>
- Paolini, S., Hewstone, M., Cairns, E., & Voci, A. (2004). Effects of Direct and Indirect Cross-Group Friendships on Judgments of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland: The Mediating Role of an Anxiety-Reduction Mechanism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30(6), 770–786.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167203262848>
- Paolini, S., & McIntyre, K. (2019). Bad Is Stronger Than Good for Stigmatized, but Not Admired Outgroups: Meta-Analytical Tests of Intergroup Valence Asymmetry in Individual-to-Group Generalization Experiments. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 23(1), 3–47.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868317753504>
- Pape, R. A. (2008). Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. In M. Perry & H. E. Negrin (Eds.), *The Theory and Practice of Islamic Terrorism: An Anthology* (pp. 129–132). Palgrave Macmillan US.
https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230616509_18
- Park, B., Wolsko, C., & Judd, C. M. (2001). Measurement of Subtyping in Stereotype Change. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 37(4), 325–332.
<https://doi.org/10.1006/jesp.2000.1460>
- Parsons, T. D., & Phillips, A. S. (2016). Virtual reality for psychological assessment in clinical practice. *Practice Innovations*, 1, 197–217.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/pri0000028>

- Pascoe, E. A., & Richman, L. S. (2009). Perceived Discrimination and Health: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135(4), 531–554.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016059>
- Pavetich, M., & Stathi, S. (2021). Investigating antecedents of Islamophobia: The role of perceived control over terrorism, threat, meta-dehumanization, and dehumanization. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 31(4), 369–382. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2512>
- Peña, J., Wolff, G., & Wojcieszak, M. (2021). Virtual Reality and Political Outgroup Contact: Can Avatar Customization and Common Ingroup Identity Reduce Social Distance? *Social Media + Society*, 7(1), 2056305121993765.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305121993765>
- Peri, G. (2012). The Effect Of Immigration On Productivity: Evidence From U.S. States. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 94(1), 348–358.
https://doi.org/10.1162/REST_a_00137
- Pettigrew, T. F. (1998). Intergroup Contact Theory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49(1), 65–85. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.49.1.65>
- Pettigrew, T. F. (2006). The Advantages of Multilevel Approaches. *Journal of Social Issues*, 62(3), 615–620. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2006.00477.x>
- Pettigrew, T. F. (2008). Future directions for intergroup contact theory and research. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32(3), 187–199.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2007.12.002>
- Pettigrew, T. F. (2009). Secondary Transfer Effect of Contact. *Social Psychology*, 40(2), 55–65. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335.40.2.55>

- Pettigrew, T. F., Christ, O., Wagner, U., & Stellmacher, J. (2007). Direct and indirect intergroup contact effects on prejudice: A normative interpretation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 31(4), 411–425.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2006.11.003>
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Hewstone, M. (2017). The Single Factor Fallacy: Implications of Missing Critical Variables from an Analysis of Intergroup Contact Theory1. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 11(1), 8–37. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12026>
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Meertens, R. W. (1995). Subtle and blatant prejudice in western Europe. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 25(1), 57–75.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420250106>
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(5), 751–783.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.5.751>
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2008). How does intergroup contact reduce prejudice? Meta-analytic tests of three mediators. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 38(6), 922–934. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.504>
- Pettigrew, T. F., Tropp, L. R., Wagner, U., & Christ, O. (2011). Recent advances in intergroup contact theory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(3), 271–280. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.03.001>
- Petty, R., Wheeler, S., Tormala, Z. L., Millon, T., & Lerner, M. J. (2003). Persuasion and attitude change. *Handbook of Psychology, Personality and Social Psychology*, 353–382.

- Plant, E. A. (2004). Responses to Interracial Interactions Over Time. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30(11), 1458–1471.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167204264244>
- Plant, E. A., & Devine, P. G. (2003). The Antecedents and Implications of Interracial Anxiety. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29(6), 790–801.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167203029006011>
- Poole. (2011). Change and Continuity in the Representation of British Muslims Before and After 9/11: The UK Context. *Global Media Journal*. <https://keele-repository.worktribe.com/output/406033>
- Poole, E. (2002). *Reporting Islam*. 1–240.
<https://www.torrossa.com/it/resources/an/5211228>
- Poole, E., & Richardson, J. E. (2010). *Muslims and the News Media*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Postmes, T., Spears, R., & Lea, M. (2000). The formation of group norms in computer-mediated communication. *Human Communication Research*, 26(3), 341–371. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2000.tb00761.x>
- Poushter, J. (2015). *Extremism Concerns Growing in West and Predominantly Muslim Countries*. <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/618985/extremism-concerns-growing-in-west-and-predominantly-muslim-countries/1600034/>
- Poynting, S., & Mason, V. (2007). The resistible rise of Islamophobia: Anti-Muslim racism in the UK and Australia before 11 September 2001. *Journal of Sociology*, 43(1), 61–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783307073935>

- Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L. M., & Malle, B. F. (1994). Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67(4), 741–763.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.67.4.741>
- Ragozina, S., Ferizaj, A., Aarbakke, V., Šemsović, A., Huseyinoglu, A., Dizdarevic, S. M., Tessieri, E., Wäckerlig, O., & Hafez, F. (2020). *EUROPEAN ISLAMOPHOBIA REPORT 2019*.
https://www.academia.edu/43396647/EUROPEAN_ISLAMOPHOBIA_REPORT_2019
- Ramadan, T. (2017). *Introduction to Islam*. Oxford University Press.
- Ramasubramanian, S. (2010). Testing the Cognitive-Affective Consistency Model of Intercultural Attitudes: Do Stereotypical Perceptions Influence Prejudicial Feelings? *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 39(2), 105–121.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2010.526317>
- Ratha, D., De, S., Kim, E. J., Plaza, S., Seshan, G. K., Shaw, W., & Yameogo, N. D. (2019). Leveraging economic migration for development: A briefing for the world bank board. *World Bank Group*.
- Reicher, S. D. (1996). ‘The Battle of Westminster’: Developing the social identity model of crowd behaviour in order to explain the initiation and development of collective conflict. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 26(1), 115–134.
[https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-0992\(199601\)26:1<115::AID-EJSP740>3.0.CO;2-Z](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0992(199601)26:1<115::AID-EJSP740>3.0.CO;2-Z)

- Reicher, S. D., Spears, R., & Postmes, T. (1995). A Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Phenomena. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 6(1), 161–198. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14792779443000049>
- Reisenzein, R. (2020). Cognitive Theory of Emotion. In V. Zeigler-Hill & T. K. Shackelford (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences* (pp. 723–733). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-24612-3_496
- Reitz, J. G., & Banerjee, R. (2009). Racial inequality, social cohesion, and policy issues in Canada. *Social Inequality in Canada: Patterns, Pathways, and Policies*, 273–294.
- Richards, Z., & Hewstone, M. (2001). Subtyping and Subgrouping: Processes for the Prevention and Promotion of Stereotype Change. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5(1), 52–73. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0501_4
- Riek, B. M., Mania, E. W., & Gaertner, S. L. (2006). Intergroup Threat and Outgroup Attitudes: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 10(4), 336–353. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr1004_4
- Riger, S., & Sigurvinsdottir, R. (2016). Thematic analysis. In *Handbook of methodological approaches to community-based research: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods* (pp. 33–41). Oxford University Press.
- Rohmann, A., Florack, A., & Piontkowski, U. (2006). The role of discordant acculturation attitudes in perceived threat: An analysis of host and immigrant attitudes in Germany. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30(6), 683–702. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2006.06.006>

- Rothbart, M., & John, O. P. (1985). Social Categorization and Behavioral Episodes: A Cognitive Analysis of the Effects of Intergroup Contact. *Journal of Social Issues*, 41(3), 81–104. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1985.tb01130.x>
- Rothwell, P. M. (2005). External validity of randomised controlled trials: “To whom do the results of this trial apply?” *The Lancet*, 365(9453), 82–93. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(04\)17670-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(04)17670-8)
- Rousseau, C., & Jamil, U. (2008). Meaning of 9/11 for two Pakistani communities: From external intruders to the internalisation of a negative self-image. *Anthropology & Medicine*, 15(3), 163–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13648470802355467>
- Rousseau, C., & Jamil, U. (2010). Muslim Families’ Understanding of, and Reaction to, ‘The War on Terror’. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 80(4), 601–609. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01065.x>
- Rousseau, C., Jamil, U., Bhui, K., & Boudjarane, M. (2015). Consequences of 9/11 and the war on terror on children’s and young adult’s mental health: A systematic review of the past 10 years. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 20(2), 173–193. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104513503354>
- Sacchi, S., Castano, E., & Brauer, M. (2009). Perceiving one’s nation: Entitativity, agency and security in the international arena. *International Journal of Psychology*, 44(5), 321–332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207590802236233>
- Sackett, D. L., Rosenberg, W. M. C., Gray, J. A. M., Haynes, R. B., & Richardson, W. S. (1996). Evidence based medicine: What it is and what it isn’t. *BMJ*, 312(7023), 71–72. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.312.7023.71>

- Saeed, A. (2007). Media, Racism and Islamophobia: The Representation of Islam and Muslims in the Media. *Sociology Compass*, 1(2), 443–462.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2007.00039.x>
- Safi, L. M. (1996). Islam and the Global Challenge: Dealing with Distortion of the Image of Islam by Global Media. *Islamic Studies*, 35(2), 191–202.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20836941>
- Said, E. W. (1997). *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine how We See the Rest of the World*. Random House.
- Samari, G. (2016). Islamophobia and Public Health in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 106(11), 1920–1925.
<https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303374>
- Sanders, E. B.-N., & Stappers, P. J. (2008). Co-creation and the new landscapes of design. *CoDesign*, 4(1), 5–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15710880701875068>
- Saroglou, V. (2011). Believing, Bonding, Behaving, and Belonging: The Big Four Religious Dimensions and Cultural Variation. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 42(8), 1320–1340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022111412267>
- Sartre, J.-P. (2004). *The Transcendence of the Ego: A Sketch for a Phenomenological Description*. Routledge.
- Sartre, J.-P. (2022). *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*. Taylor & Francis.
- Savage, T. M. (2004). Europe and Islam: Crescent waxing, cultures clashing. *The Washington Quarterly*, 27(3), 25–50.
<https://doi.org/10.1162/016366004323090241>

Schiappa, E., Gregg, P. B., & Hewes, D. E. (2005). The Parasocial Contact Hypothesis.

Communication Monographs. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0363775052000342544>

Schmid, K., Hewstone, M., Küpper, B., Zick, A., & Tausch, N. (2014). Reducing aggressive intergroup action tendencies: Effects of intergroup contact via perceived intergroup threat. *Aggressive Behavior*, 40(3), 250–262.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.21516>

Schmid, K., Hewstone, M., Küpper, B., Zick, A., & Wagner, U. (2012). Secondary Transfer Effects of Intergroup Contact: A Cross-National Comparison in Europe. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 75(1), 28–51.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0190272511430235>

Schmid, K., Hewstone, M., & Tausch, N. (2014). Secondary transfer effects of intergroup contact via social identity complexity. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 53(3), 443–462. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12045>

Schofield, J. W., Hausmann, L. R. M., Ye, F., & Woods, R. L. (2010). Intergroup friendships on campus: Predicting close and casual friendships between White and African American first-year college students. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 13(5), 585–602.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430210362437>

Schuch, H. S., Haag, D. G., Bastos, J. L., Paradies, Y., & Jamieson, L. M. (2021).

Intersectionality, racial discrimination and oral health in Australia.

Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology, 49(1), 87–94.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/cdoe.12581>

Schulz, K. F., Altman, D. G., & Moher, D. (2010). CONSORT 2010 statement:

Updated guidelines for reporting parallel group randomised trials. *Journal of Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics*, 1(2), 100–107.

<https://doi.org/10.4103/0976-500X.72352>

Schumann, S., Klein, O., Douglas, K., & Hewstone, M. (2017). When is computer-mediated intergroup contact most promising? Examining the effect of out-group members' anonymity on prejudice. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 77, 198–210. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.08.006>

Schwab, A. K., Sagioglou, C., & Greitemeyer, T. (2019). Getting connected:

Intergroup contact on Facebook. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 159(3), 344–348. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2018.1489367>

Secord, P. F., & Backman, C. W. (1974). *Social Psychology* (2nd edition). McGraw-Hill Inc.,US.

Seligman, M. E. P. (1971). Phobias and preparedness. *Behavior Therapy*, 2(3), 307–320.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7894\(71\)80064-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0005-7894(71)80064-3)

Shadid, W., & van Koningsveld, P. S. (2002). *The Negative Image of Islam and Muslims in the West*:

Shamoa-Nir, L., & Razpurker-Apfeld, I. (2020). Exposure to religious outgroup symbols and intergroup anxiety in Israel. *Israel Affairs*.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13537121.2020.1832333>

Shani, M. (2015). *A Theory and Practice of Coexistence: Improving Coexistence Orientation through Mixed-Model Encounters between Jews and Palestinians in Israel*.

<https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.2300.2721>

- Shavarini, M. K. (2003). Misconceptions About Islam and Women's Education: Lessons from the Islamic Republic of Iran (iri). *International Education*, 33(1), 40–50.
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/198732148/abstract/7996555D9CA34FA3PQ/1>
- Sherif, M. (1958). Superordinate Goals in the Reduction of Intergroup Conflict. *American Journal of Sociology*, 63(4), 349–356. <https://doi.org/10.1086/222258>
- Sherif, M., Harvey, O. J., White, B. J., & Hood, W. R. (1961). Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation: The Robbers Cave Experiment. Norman: University of Oklahoma Book Exchange.
- Simon, B., & Klandermans, B. (2001). Politicized collective identity: A social psychological analysis. *American Psychologist*, 56(4), 319–331.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.4.319>
- Smock, D. (2002). *Islam and Democracy*. US Institute of Peace.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12308>
- Stangor, C., Sechrist, G. B., & Jost, J. T. (2001). Changing Racial Beliefs by Providing Consensus Information. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27(4), 486–496. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167201274009>
- Stangor, C., Sullivan, L. A., & Ford, T. E. (1991). Affective and Cognitive Determinants of Prejudice. *Social Cognition*, 9(4), 359–380.
<https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.1991.9.4.359>
- Stathi, S., Cameron, L., Hartley, B., & Bradford, S. (2014). Imagined contact as a prejudice-reduction intervention in schools: The underlying role of similarity

- and attitudes. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 44(8), 536–546.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12245>
- Stathi, S., & Crisp, R. J. (2008). Imagining intergroup contact promotes projection to outgroups. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44(4), 943–957.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2008.02.003>
- Stathi, S., Crisp, R. J., & Hogg, M. A. (2011). Imagining intergroup contact enables member-to-group generalization. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 15(3), 275–284. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023752>
- Stathi, S., Tsantila, K., & Crisp, R. J. (2012). Imagining Intergroup Contact Can Combat Mental Health Stigma by Reducing Anxiety, Avoidance and Negative Stereotyping. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 152(6), 746–757.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2012.697080>
- Stephan, C. W., Renfro, L., & Stephan, W. (2004). The evaluation of multicultural education programs: Techniques and a meta-analysis. *Education Programs for Improving Intergroup Relations: Theory, Research and Practice*, 227–242.
- Stephan, W. G. (2014). Intergroup Anxiety: Theory, Research, and Practice. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 18(3), 239–255.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868314530518>
- Stephan, W. G., & Finlay, K. (1999). The Role of Empathy in Improving Intergroup Relations. *Journal of Social Issues*, 55(4), 729–743.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00144>
- Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. W. (1984). *The Role of Ignorance in Intergroup Relations*. 229–255. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-497780-8.50017-6>

- Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. W. (1985). Intergroup Anxiety. *Journal of Social Issues*, 41(3), 157–175. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1985.tb01134.x>
- Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. W. (2000). An integrated threat theory of prejudice. In *Reducing prejudice and discrimination* (pp. 23–45). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Stephan, W. G., Ybarra, O., Martinez, C. M., Schwarzwald, J., & Tur-Kaspa, M. (1998). Prejudice toward Immigrants to Spain and Israel: An Integrated Threat Theory Analysis. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 29(4), 559–576. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022198294004>
- Stephan, W. G., Ybarra, O., & Morrison, K. R. (2009). Intergroup threat theory. In *Handbook of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination* (pp. 43–59). Psychology Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781841697772>
- Storbeck, J., & Clore, G. L. (2007). On the interdependence of cognition and emotion. *Cognition & Emotion*, 21(6), 1212–1237. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930701438020>
- Stott, C., & Drury, J. (2004). The importance of social structure and social interaction in stereotype consensus and content: Is the whole greater than the sum of its parts? *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 34(1), 11–23. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.183>
- Strabac, Z., & Listhaug, O. (2008). Anti-Muslim prejudice in Europe: A multilevel analysis of survey data from 30 countries. *Social Science Research*, 37(1), 268–286. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2007.02.004>

- Sue, D. W. (2001). Multidimensional Facets of Cultural Competence. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 29(6), 790–821. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000001296002>
- Sufi, M. K., & Yasmin, M. (2022). Racialization of public discourse: Portrayal of Islam and Muslims. *Heliyon*, 8(12), e12211. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e12211>
- Suleiman, Y., & Anderson, P. (2016). *Muslims in the UK and Europe II*. Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge.
- Swaab, R. I., Lount, R. B., Chung, S., & Brett, J. M. (2021). Setting the stage for negotiations: How superordinate goal dialogues promote trust and joint gain in negotiations between teams. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 167, 157–169. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2021.08.001>
- Swami, V., Barron, D., Weis, L., & Furnham, A. (2018). To Brexit or not to Brexit: The roles of Islamophobia, conspiracist beliefs, and integrated threat in voting intentions for the United Kingdom European Union membership referendum. *British Journal of Psychology*, 109(1), 156–179. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12252>
- Swart, H., Hewstone, M., Christ, O., & Voci, A. (2010). The Impact of Crossgroup Friendships in South Africa: Affective Mediators and Multigroup Comparisons. *Journal of Social Issues*, 66(2), 309–333. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2010.01647.x>
- Swart, H., Hewstone, M., Christ, O., & Voci, A. (2011). Affective mediators of intergroup contact: A three-wave longitudinal study in South Africa. *Journal*

of Personality and Social Psychology, 101(6), 1221–1238.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024450>

Syed, K. T. (2008). Misconceptions About Human Rights and Women's Rights in Islam. *Interchange*, 39(2), 245–257. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-008-9062-3>

Taber, C. S., & Lodge, M. (2006). Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3), 755–769.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2006.00214.x>

Tajfel, H. (2007). The Roots of Prejudice: Cognitive Aspects 1. In *Psychology and Race*. Routledge.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (2004). The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior. In J. T. Jost & J. Sidanius (Eds.), *Political Psychology* (0 ed., pp. 276–293). Psychology Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203505984-16>

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (2010). *An integrative theory of intergroup conflict* (p. 190). Psychology Press.

Tausch, N., Hewstone, M., Kenworthy, J. B., Psaltis, C., Schmid, K., Popan, J. R., Cairns, E., & Hughes, J. (2010). Secondary transfer effects of intergroup contact: Alternative accounts and underlying processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 99(2), 282–302. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018553>

Tausch, N., Hewstone, M., Schmid, K., Hughes, J., & Cairns, E. (2011). Extended contact effects as a function of closeness of relationship with ingroup contacts. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 14(2), 239–254. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430210390534>

- Thomas, E. F., McGarty, C., & Mavor, K. I. (2009). Transforming “Apathy Into Movement”: The Role of Prosocial Emotions in Motivating Action for Social Change. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 13(4), 310–333.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868309343290>
- Titlestad, K., Snijders, T. A. B., Durrheim, K., Quayle, M., & Postmes, T. (2019). The dynamic emergence of cooperative norms in a social dilemma. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 84, 103799.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2019.03.010>
- Todd, A. R., & Galinsky, A. D. (2014). Perspective-Taking as a Strategy for Improving Intergroup Relations: Evidence, Mechanisms, and Qualifications. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 8(7), 374–387.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12116>
- Tropp, L. R. (2003). The Psychological Impact of Prejudice: Implications for Intergroup Contact. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 6(2), 131–149.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430203006002001>
- Tropp, L. R., & Pettigrew, T. F. (2005a). Differential Relationships Between Intergroup Contact and Affective and Cognitive Dimensions of Prejudice. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31(8), 1145–1158.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167205274854>
- Tropp, L. R., & Pettigrew, T. F. (2005b). Relationships Between Intergroup Contact and Prejudice Among Minority and Majority Status Groups. *Psychological Science*, 16(12), 951–957. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2005.01643.x>
- Turner, B. S. (1974). *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987a). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory* (pp. x, 239). Basil Blackwell.
- Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987b). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory* (pp. x, 239). Basil Blackwell.
- Turner, R. N., & Crisp, R. J. (2010). Imagining intergroup contact reduces implicit prejudice. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 49(1), 129–142.
<https://doi.org/10.1348/014466609X419901>
- Turner, R. N., Crisp, R. J., & Lambert, E. (2007). Imagining Intergroup Contact Can Improve Intergroup Attitudes. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 10(4), 427–441. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430207081533>
- Turner, R. N., Hewstone, M., & Voci, A. (2007). Reducing explicit and implicit outgroup prejudice via direct and extended contact: The mediating role of self-disclosure and intergroup anxiety. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93(3), 369–388. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.93.3.369>
- Turner, R. N., Hewstone, M., Voci, A., & Vonofakou, C. (2008). A test of the extended intergroup contact hypothesis: The mediating role of intergroup anxiety, perceived ingroup and outgroup norms, and inclusion of the outgroup in the self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95(4), 843–860.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0011434>
- Turner, R. N., West, K., & Christie, Z. (2013). Out-group trust, intergroup anxiety, and out-group attitude as mediators of the effect of imagined intergroup

- contact on intergroup behavioral tendencies. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 43(S2), E196–E205. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12019>
- Uenal, F., Bergh, R., Sidanius, J., Zick, A., Kimel, S., & Kunst, J. R. (2021). The Nature of Islamophobia: A Test of a Tripartite View in Five Countries. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 47(2), 275–292.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167220922643>
- Ünver, H., Çakal, H., Güler, M., & Tropp, L. R. (2022). Support for rights of Syrian refugees in Turkey: The role of secondary transfer effects in intergroup contact. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 32(2), 153–171.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2562>
- van Kleef, G. A., Gelfand, M. J., & Jetten, J. (2019). The dynamic nature of social norms: New perspectives on norm development, impact, violation, and enforcement. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 84, 103814.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2019.05.002>
- Van Manen, M. (2001). Professional Practice and ‘Doing Phenomenology’. In S. K. Toombs (Ed.), *Handbook of Phenomenology and Medicine* (pp. 457–474). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0536-4_24
- Van Zomeren, M., Fischer, A. H., & Spears, R. (2007). Testing the Limits of Tolerance: How Intergroup Anxiety Amplifies Negative and Offensive Responses to Out-Group-Initiated Contact. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33(12), 1686–1699. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167207307485>

- Vandenbelt, K. (2021). The Post-September 11 Rise of Islamophobia: Identity and the 'Clash of Civilizations' in Europe and Latin America. *Insight Turkey*, 23(2), 145–168. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27028544>
- Vang, M. H., & Fox, J. (2013). Race in Virtual Environments: Competitive Versus Cooperative Games with Black or White Avatars. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 17(4), 235–240. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2013.0289>
- Verkuyten, M. (2005). Ethnic Group Identification and Group Evaluation Among Minority and Majority Groups: Testing the Multiculturalism Hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88(1), 121–138. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.88.1.121>
- Verkuyten, M. (2009). Support for Multiculturalism and Minority Rights: The Role of National Identification and Out-group Threat. *Social Justice Research*, 22(1), 31–52. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-008-0087-7>
- Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(6), 1024–1054. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870701599465>
- Vertovec, S. (2010). Towards post-multiculturalism? Changing communities, conditions and contexts of diversity. *International Social Science Journal*, 61(199), 83–95. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2451.2010.01749.x>
- Vezzali, L., Capozza, D., Giovannini, D., & Stathi, S. (2012). Improving implicit and explicit intergroup attitudes using imagined contact: An experimental intervention with elementary school children. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 15(2), 203–212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430211424920>

- Vezzali, L., Capozza, D., Stathi, S., & Giovannini, D. (2012). Increasing outgroup trust, reducing inhumanization, and enhancing future contact intentions via imagined intergroup contact. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(1), 437–440. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2011.09.008>
- Vezzali, L., & Giovannini, D. (2012). Secondary Transfer Effect of Intergroup Contact: The Role of Intergroup Attitudes, Intergroup Anxiety and Perspective Taking. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 22(2), 125–144. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.1103>
- Vezzali, L., Hewstone, M., Capozza, D., Giovannini, D., & Wölfer, R. (2014). Improving intergroup relations with extended and vicarious forms of indirect contact. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 25(1), 314–389. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2014.982948>
- Vezzali, L., Hewstone, M., Capozza, D., Trifiletti, E., & Bernardo, G. A. D. (2017). Improving Intergroup Relations with Extended Contact among Young Children: Mediation by Intergroup Empathy and Moderation by Direct Intergroup Contact. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 27(1), 35–49. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2292>
- Vezzali, L., Stathi, S., Crisp, R. J., & Capozza, D. (2015). Comparing direct and imagined intergroup contact among children: Effects on outgroup stereotypes and helping intentions. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 49, 46–53. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.06.009>
- Vezzali, L., Stathi, S., Giovannini, D., Capozza, D., & Trifiletti, E. (2015). The greatest magic of Harry Potter: Reducing prejudice: Harry Potter and attitudes toward

stigmatized groups. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 45(2), 105–121.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12279>

Voci, A., & Hewstone, M. (2003). Intergroup Contact and Prejudice Toward Immigrants in Italy: The Mediational Role of Anxiety and the Moderational Role of Group Salience. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 6(1), 37–54.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430203006001011>

Vonofakou, C., Hewstone, M., & Voci, A. (2007). Contact with out-group friends as a predictor of meta-attitudinal strength and accessibility of attitudes toward gay men. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(5), 804–820.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.5.804>

Wagner, U., Christ, O., Pettigrew, T. F., Stellmacher, J., & Wolf, C. (2006). Prejudice And Minority Proportion: Contact Instead Of Threat Effects. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 69(4), 380–390. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019027250606900406>

Walther, J. B. (2009). Computer-Mediated Communication and Virtual Groups: Applications to Interethnic Conflict. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 37(3), 225–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00909880903025937>

Walther, J. B., Hoter, E., Ganayem, A., & Shonfeld, M. (2015). Computer-mediated communication and the reduction of prejudice: A controlled longitudinal field experiment among Jews and Arabs in Israel. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 52, 550–558. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.08.004>

Wampold, B. E., & Imel, Z. E. (2015). *The Great Psychotherapy Debate: The Evidence for What Makes Psychotherapy Work*. Routledge.

- Wang, C., Huang, F., & Vezzali, L. (2019). A test of positive and negative extended intergroup contact in a Chinese minority with perceived group norms and intergroup anxiety as mediators. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 49*(7), 399–408. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12532>
- Wang, C. S., Kenneth, T., Ku, G., & Galinsky, A. D. (2014). Perspective-Taking Increases Willingness to Engage in Intergroup Contact. *PLOS ONE, 9*(1), e85681. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0085681>
- Warner, C. M., & Wenner, M. W. (2006). Religion and the Political Organization of Muslims in Europe. *Perspectives on Politics, 4*(3), 457–479. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592706060300>
- Weeks, F., Zapata, J., Rohan, A., & Green, T. (2022). Are Experiences of Racial Discrimination Associated with Postpartum Depressive Symptoms? A Multistate Analysis of Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System Data. *Journal of Women's Health, 31*(2), 158–166. <https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2021.0426>
- Weisbuch, M., Pauker, K., & Ambady, N. (2009). The Subtle Transmission of Race Bias via Televised Nonverbal Behavior. *Science (New York, N.Y.), 326*(5960), 1711–1714. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1178358>
- Wells, A. S., Fox, L., & Cordova-Cobo, D. (2016). How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students. In *Century Foundation*. Century Foundation.

- West, K., Hotchin, V., & Wood, C. (2017). Imagined contact can be more effective for participants with stronger initial prejudices. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 47*(5), 282–292. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12437>
- West, K., Turner, R., & Levita, L. (2015). Applying imagined contact to improve physiological responses in anticipation of intergroup interactions and the perceived quality of these interactions. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 45*(8), 425–436. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12309>
- Westen, D., Novotny, C. M., & Thompson-Brenner, H. (2004). The Empirical Status of Empirically Supported Psychotherapies: Assumptions, Findings, and Reporting in Controlled Clinical Trials. *Psychological Bulletin, 130*(4), 631–663. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.130.4.631>
- White, F. A., & Abu-Rayya, H. M. (2012). A dual identity-electronic contact (DIEC) experiment promoting short- and long-term intergroup harmony. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*(3), 597–608. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2012.01.007>
- White, F. A., Harvey, L. J., & Abu-Rayya, H. M. (2015). Improving Intergroup Relations in the Internet Age: A Critical Review. *Review of General Psychology, 19*(2), 129–139. <https://doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000036>
- White, F. A., Maunder, R., & Verrelli, S. (2020). Text-based E-contact: Harnessing cooperative Internet interactions to bridge the social and psychological divide. *European Review of Social Psychology, 31*(1), 76–119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2020.1753459>

- White, F. A., Verrelli, S., Maunder, R. D., & Kervinen, A. (2019). Using Electronic Contact to Reduce Homonegative Attitudes, Emotions, and Behavioral Intentions Among Heterosexual Women and Men: A Contemporary Extension of the Contact Hypothesis. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 56(9), 1179–1191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2018.1491943>
- Wilder, D., & Simon, A. F. (2003). Affect as a Cause of Intergroup Bias. In *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Intergroup Processes* (pp. 153–172). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470693421.ch8>
- Williams Jr., R. M. (1947). The reduction of intergroup tensions: A survey of research on problems of ethnic, racial, and religious group relations. *Social Science Research Council Bulletin*, 57, xi, 153–xi, 153.
- Wolsko, C., Park, B., Judd, C. M., & Wittenbrink, B. (2000). Framing interethnic ideology: Effects of multicultural and color-blind perspectives on judgments of groups and individuals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78(4), 635–654. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.78.4.635>
- Wright, M., & Bloemraad, I. (2012). Is There a Trade-off between Multiculturalism and Socio-Political Integration? Policy Regimes and Immigrant Incorporation in Comparative Perspective. *Perspectives on Politics*, 10(1), 77–95. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592711004919>
- Wright, S. C., Aron, A., McLaughlin-Volpe, T., & Ropp, S. A. (1997). The extended contact effect: Knowledge of cross-group friendships and prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73(1), 73–90. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.1.73>

- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40(3), 197–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331>
- Zajonc, R. B. (1980). Feeling and thinking: Preferences need no inferences. *American Psychologist*, 35(2), 151–175. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.35.2.151>
- Zanna, M. P. (1994). On the nature of prejudice. *Canadian Psychology / Psychologie Canadienne*, 35, 11–23. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0708-5591.35.1.11>
- Zanna, M. P., & Rempel, J. K. (2008). Attitudes: A new look at an old concept. In *Attitudes: Their structure, function, and consequences* (pp. 7–15). Psychology Press.
- Zhou, S., Page-Gould, E., Aron, A., Moyer, A., & Hewstone, M. (2019). The Extended Contact Hypothesis: A Meta-Analysis on 20 Years of Research. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 23(2), 132–160.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868318762647>
- Zick, A., Pettigrew, T. F., & Wagner, U. (2008). Ethnic Prejudice and Discrimination in Europe. *Journal of Social Issues*, 64(2), 233–251.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2008.00559.x>

Appendices

Appendix 1. Qualitative Study 1 with Non-Muslim White Britons (Chapter 2)

Research Project Title: Knowledge, beliefs and feelings about Muslims of Middle- Eastern descent in the UK

Your invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the study's purpose?

The study aims to explore the beliefs and feelings that White people in the UK hold towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. This research is being conducted as part of a PhD qualification at the University of Sheffield.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been recruited via the Prolific Academic platform to participate in this study, as you meet the study eligibility criteria of being of White ethnicity, born in the United Kingdom, and over 18 years of age. It is expected that around 30 participants will be recruited to take part in the research.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to indicate your consent to participate on the next page. You can withdraw from the research at any time while completing the questionnaire without giving a reason, by shutting down your browser. However, once you have completed the questionnaire in full, you will not be able to withdraw your data, as data will be anonymised soon after your Prolific payment has been made. Please note that by choosing to participate in this research, this will not create a legally binding agreement, nor is it intended to create an employment relationship between you and the University of Sheffield.

What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?

The study involves an online questionnaire (taking around 35minutes) which will ask you to give answers to open-ended questions about your perceptions of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, including questions about your beliefs and feelings about this group of people, and what you would most like to find out about the cultural and religious practices of this group. You will also be asked questions about the beliefs, characteristics and social norms of White people in the UK. Additionally, you will be asked to provide demographic details (e.g. age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion etc.).

After completing the questionnaire, you will be asked to enter your Prolific ID in order for your study payment (£4.38) to be awarded. You will then be provided with a debriefing sheet that explains the objectives of the study in more detail.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

You may feel uncomfortable reporting aspects of the way you, or White people in the UK, think or feel about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. However, it is important for our research that you give honest responses. Your responses will remain confidential to members of the research team.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will be given £4.38 via Prolific academic to compensate you for your time.

Will my participation in the study be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you in the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and accessible only to members of the research team. You will not be identifiable in any reports or publications- we will make an effort to anonymise any answers that you provide in the course of the research, if these are perceived by the research team to compromise your anonymity. The data that will be generated from this research will be anonymised and only be shared with other researchers upon reasonable request. In case of such requests, we will make a reasonable effort to redact any potentially identifying information in the questionnaire data.

Your Prolific ID will be recorded when you take part in the study, but will be deleted upon completion of the project.

What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

As we will be collecting some data that is defined in the legislation as more sensitive (information about your ethnicity, religion), we also need to let you know that we are applying the following condition in law: that the use of your data is 'necessary for scientific or historical research purposes'.

What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?

The researcher and research supervisors will have access to the data, which will be stored

indefinitely. Anonymised data may also be shared with other researchers upon reasonable request. The research may be published in peer-reviewed journals, but you will not be identified in any articles or reports resulting from the research. If you wish to obtain a copy of the published results, please email the researcher (details below).

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is funded by a Faculty of Science PhD Scholarship awarded to Bashirat Ibrahim.

Who is the Data Controller?

The University of Sheffield is the Data Controller for this study and will be responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

The research has been ethically approved via by the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Department of Psychology [REF 035920].

What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research?

Should you have a complaint, you may contact the research supervisor (Dr Chantelle

Wood: chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk). If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the Head of Department (Prof. Elizabeth Milne, e.milne@sheffield.ac.uk), who will then escalate the complaint through the appropriate channels. If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University's Privacy Notice: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

Contact for further information

Researcher: Bashirat Ibrahim, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: baibrahim1@sheffield.ac.uk

Research Supervisor: Dr Chantelle Wood, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk

Taking Part in the Project

I have read and understood the project information provided so far (If this is not the case, please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean).

☐ Yes

I understand that taking part in the project will include completing an online questionnaire asking about my perceptions of Muslims of Middle Eastern descent, and the beliefs, characteristics and social norms of White people in the UK.

☐ Yes

I understand that by choosing to participate as a volunteer in this research, this does not create a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship with the University of Sheffield.

☐ Yes

I understand that my taking part is voluntary, and that I can withdraw from the research at any time while completing the questionnaire. I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw. I understand that I will not be able to withdraw from the research after completing the questionnaire, as data will be anonymised.

☐ Yes

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project, through the email addresses provided.

☐ Yes

How my information will be used during and after the project

I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs.

Yes

I understand and agree that authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

☐ Yes

I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

☐ Yes

So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers

I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.

☐ Yes

My Consent

I consent to take part in this research.

☐ Yes

What is your age?

Your response has indicated that you do not meet the eligibility criteria for this study. Thank you for your interest.

Please indicate where you currently live

☐ A country in the UK

☐ A country outside the UK

How long have you lived in the UK (in years)?

What ethnic group do you most identify with?

Asian or Asian British

Black, African, Caribbean, or Black British

White

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups Other

What gender do you identify as?

Male

Female

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-define

What religion do you identify with?

Christianity No religion Islam

Atheism Hinduism Sikhism Judaism Buddhism

Prefer not to say

Other (please specify below)

This questionnaire consists of 3 sections.

Section A: will ask about your knowledge about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK. Section B: will ask you about your feelings towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK.

Section C: will ask you about social norms about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK.

It is important that we understand people's true beliefs and feelings, so please be honest in your responses.

Thank you!

SECTION A: Knowledge about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK (The Middle East is a transcontinental region with most countries (13 out of 18) being a part of the Arab world. Countries of the Middle East includes but is not limited to, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Qatar, Oman, Morocco, United Arab Emirates).

Please describe what you think a typical Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK is like in terms of personal characteristics, work and general life.

Please describe what UK society thinks a typical Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK is like in terms of personal characteristics, work and general life.

What would you most like to know about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK? You can select more than one item.

Religion

Daily life

Food

Clothing

Family and other relationships

Music

Housing arrangements Language

Arts

For the options selected in the previous question, can you please describe what you would like to know about these aspects and why?

Is there anything else (not already described above) that you would like to know about the culture or religion of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK, which you would be reluctant to ask in a face-to-face or public conversation? Please describe below if so.

SECTION B: Feelings about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK

How much anxiety do you feel when you interact with, or there is a possibility of you interacting with Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK?

None at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please explain why you feel this anxiety.

Please explain why you do not feel this anxiety.

To what extent do you think Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the physical safety or security of White people in the UK?

None at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please explain why you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent pose a threat to the physical safety or security of White people in the UK.

Please explain why you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent do not pose a threat to the physical safety or security of White people in the UK.

To what extent do you think Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the political power/balance of White people in the UK?

None at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please explain why you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent pose a threat to the political power/balance of White people in the UK.

Please explain why you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent do not pose a threat to the political power/balance of White people in the UK.

To what extent do you think Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the job and economic opportunities of White people in the UK?

None at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please explain why you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent pose a threat to job and economic opportunities to White people in the UK.

Please explain why you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent do not pose a job and economic opportunities threat to White people in the UK.

To what extent do you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent living in the UK pose a threat to the held values and beliefs of White People in UK?

None at all

A little

A moderate amount

A lot

A great deal

☐☐☐☐☐

Please explain why you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent pose a threat to the held values and beliefs of White people in the UK.

Please explain why you think that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent do not pose a threat to the held values and beliefs of White people in the UK.

SECTION C: Social norms about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK

Please describe what White people in the UK would think about other White people having a positive relationship/friendship with Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK.

Please explain your answer to the above question.

Please describe what the likely reaction from other White people in the UK would be if you were to avoid, be unfriendly or unfair towards Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK.

Please explain your answer to the above question.

Please enter your Prolific ID here:

Debriefing

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this study.

Please take a moment to read the following information about the aims of the study.

Research indicates that 70% of Muslims have experienced religion-based prejudice (Abrams et al., 2018). There is therefore a critical need to develop effective techniques to reduce prejudice towards this and other groups in society. The aim of the current study is to gather information on the knowledge, beliefs and feelings of White people in the UK, towards Muslims in the UK, in order to develop more effective interventions to reduce prejudice.

The answers you provided in this research will therefore be used to design activities and techniques that may help to reduce prejudice towards Muslim people in the UK.

Thank you for participating in this research. Your time is appreciated. Your participation payment will be sent to you in the next few days.

Contact for Further Information

Should you wish to obtain further information or if you have a complaint, you may contact the researcher or the research supervisor via the email addresses below:

Researcher: Bashirat Ibrahim, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: baibrahim1@sheffield.ac.uk

Research Supervisor: Dr Chantelle Wood, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix 2. Qualitative Study 2A with Muslims of Middle-Eastern Descent (Chapter 3)

Research Project Title: Beliefs, feelings and experiences of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK

Invitation paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the study's purpose?

The study aims to explore the beliefs, feelings and experiences of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK. This research is being conducted as part of a PhD qualification at the University of Sheffield.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been recruited via the Prolific Academic platform to participate in this study, as you meet the study eligibility criteria of being a Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent, who has permanent residence in the UK. It is expected that around 60 participants will be recruited to take part in the research.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to indicate your consent to participate on the next page. You can withdraw from the research at any time while completing the questionnaire without giving a reason, by shutting down your browser. However, once you have completed the questionnaire in full, you will not be able to withdraw your data, as data will be anonymised soon after your Prolific payment has been made. Please note that by choosing to participate in this research, this will not create a legally binding agreement, nor is it intended to create an employment relationship between you and the University of Sheffield.

What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?

The study involves an online questionnaire, which will ask you to give answers to open-ended questions about your beliefs, feelings and experiences as a Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK, and also respond to common beliefs of White people in the UK about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent, in order to help them better understand your culture. The survey will take around 50 minutes. Questions may tap into your own beliefs, values and interests, your experiences (including experiences of racism and religious prejudice), and the broader beliefs, characteristics and daily life of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK. Additionally, you will be asked to provide demographic details (e.g. age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion etc.).

After completing the questionnaire, you will be asked to enter your Prolific ID in order for your study payment (£6.00) to be awarded. You will then be provided with a debriefing sheet that explains the objectives of the study in more detail.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

You may feel uncomfortable reporting aspects of your beliefs and experiences as a Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent living in the UK, including describing incidents where you have experienced racism or religious prejudice. In addition, you may find some of the beliefs of White people in the UK, which we are asking you to respond to, offensive or upsetting.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will be given £6.00 via Prolific academic to compensate you for your time. You will also be contributing to research which aims to develop effective interventions to reduce prejudice towards Muslims in the UK.

Will my participation in the study be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you in the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and accessible only to members of the research team. You will not be identifiable in any reports or publications- we will make an effort to anonymise any answers that you provide in the course of the research, if these are perceived by the research team to compromise your anonymity. The data that will be generated from this research will be anonymised and only be shared with other researchers upon reasonable request. In case of such requests, we will make a reasonable effort to redact any potentially identifying information in the questionnaire data. Your Prolific ID will be recorded when you take part in the study, but will be deleted upon completion of the project.

What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

As we will be collecting some data that is defined in the legislation as more sensitive (information about your ethnicity, religion), we also need to let you know that we are applying the following condition in law: that the use of your data is 'necessary for scientific or historical research purposes'.

What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?

The researcher and research supervisors will have access to the data, which will be stored indefinitely. Anonymised data may also be shared with other researchers upon reasonable request. The research may be published in peer-reviewed journals, but you will not be identified in any articles or reports resulting from the research. If you wish to obtain a copy of the published results, please email the researcher (details below).

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is funded by a Faculty of Science PhD Scholarship awarded to Bashirat Ibrahim.

Who is the Data Controller?

The University of Sheffield is the Data Controller for this study and will be responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

The research has been ethically approved via by the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Department of Psychology [REF:038117].

Feeling distressed?

If you feel distressed about any of the topics to be covered in this questionnaire, please see your GP. You may also find some of the below resources helpful.

Tell MAMA: <https://tellmamauk.org/>

Stop Hate UK: <http://www.stophateuk.org/> True Vision: <https://www.report-it.org.uk/>

What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research?

Should you have a complaint, you may contact the research supervisor (Dr Chantelle Wood: chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk). If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the Head of Department (Prof. Elizabeth Milne, e.milne@sheffield.ac.uk), who will then escalate the complaint through the appropriate channels. If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University's Privacy Notice: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

Contact for further information

Researcher: Bashirat Ibrahim, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: baibrahim1@sheffield.ac.uk

Research Supervisor: Dr Chantelle Wood, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk

Taking Part in the Project

I have read and understood the project information sheet or the project has been fully explained to me (If this is not the case, please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean).

☐ Yes

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project by providing relevant email addresses.

☐ Yes

I understand that taking part in the project will include completing an online questionnaire asking about the beliefs, feelings and experiences of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK.

☐ Yes

I understand that by choosing to participate as a volunteer in this research, this does not create a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship with the University of Sheffield.

☐ Yes

I understand that my taking part is voluntary, and that I can withdraw from the research at any time while completing the questionnaire. I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw. I understand that I will not be able to withdraw from the research after completing the questionnaire, as data will be anonymised.

Yes

How my information will be used during and after the project

I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs.

☐ Yes

I understand and agree that authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

☐ Yes

I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

☐ Yes

So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers

I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.

☐ Yes

My Consent

I consent to take part in this research.

☐ Yes

What is your age (in figure)?

Your response has indicated that you do not meet the eligibility criteria for this study. Thank you for your interest.

Please indicate where you currently live

☐ A country in the UK

☐ A country outside the UK

Are you a resident in the UK?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How long have you lived in the UK (in years)?

What ethnic group do you most identify with?

Black, African, Caribbean or Black British

Middle-Eastern or Middle-Eastern British

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

White

Other

What gender do you identify as?

Male

Female

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-define

What religion do you identify with?

Christianity

No religion

Islam

Atheism

Hinduism

Sikhism

Judaism

Buddhism

Prefer not to say

Other (please specify below)

This section is about aspects of culture.

Culture is a general term that encompasses the acceptable conduct and social behaviour of people in different societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, laws, and customs of the individuals in these societies. When we refer to 'your culture' in the following questions, we mean your culture connected with being a Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent living in the UK.

Please be as honest as possible in your responses.

Thank you.

Please describe with a few examples, the characteristics of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK in terms of the following:

Values - the things that you believe are important and that guide the way you live and work.

Beliefs - firmly held opinion and assumptions about the world.

Interests - the things that excite you and the things you love to engage in for work and pleasure.

The next set of questions report on negative or stereotyped beliefs of White people about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK. Because of this, you may find some of the questions offensive.

However, it is essential to the objective of the study to have your views on the beliefs held against your religion and culture by some people. Accordingly, it is important that the questions be presented to you as honestly as possible. You remain free to withdraw from the study by closing your browser at any point.

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK have negative characteristics that include being rude, obnoxious, dishonest, secretive, arrogant, and aggressive.

How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK are sex offenders against women, and that they engage in ill treatment of women, which is informed by strict religious belief. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK say that there is evidence that some Mosques spread messages of extremism. How would you respond to this?

Please describe an incident or incidents of racism or religious prejudice that you or other

Muslim Middle-Easterners have experienced or that you have observed, and describe the impact that it has had on your life, so that White people in the UK can understand this from your perspective.

Some White people in the UK would like to know more about Islam to confirm if what they know about the religion is true and also because they think the media can give a biased perspective of this religion. With this in mind, please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them better understand Islam.

Some White people in the UK would like to know more about Islam, particularly relating to what motivates Muslims to practice Islam. Please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them better understand Islam.

Some White people in the UK would like to know if extremism is related to Islamic teachings and principles. Please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them better understand Islam.

Please describe any other information about Islam that you think is relevant or useful for White people in the UK to know.

Some White people in the UK would like to know what daily life entails in your culture for the following reasons: to understand how it differs from their own; to connect better with Muslims

of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK that they may come across; to be able to tolerate diversity better and because the daily life of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK is not well represented in the media. With that in mind, please answer the following questions:

Please describe what daily life looks like in your culture. For example, what kinds of activities do people engage in on a daily basis and why; what are the unique traditions associated with your culture and why?

Please describe how religious restrictions affect the way you live your daily life.

Please state any other information about daily life in your culture that you think is relevant or useful for White people in the UK to know.

Some White people in the UK would like to know how marriage and family work in your culture for the following reasons: to clear their misconceptions about marriage and dating, and to understand how family and relationships work compared to other groups especially as family groups are perceived to be quite large. Please describe what dating, marriage and family life looks like in your culture, and why you think these are most common.

Please state any other information about family and other relationships in your culture that you think is relevant or useful for White people in the UK to know.

Some White people in the UK would like to know whether it is the case that Muslims of Middle- Eastern descent in the UK live in large households with extended family members, and if so, why? Please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them better understand your culture.

Please state any other information about housing arrangements in your culture that you think is relevant or useful for White people in the UK to know.

Some White people in the UK would like to know more about Arts in your culture. Can you describe what kind of Arts are common in your culture (e.g., including art collections, music, dance and drama), and why you think they are common?

Please provide any other information about the arts in your culture that you think is relevant or useful for White people in the UK to know.

Please mention a common name in your culture and religion for both male and female genders:

Male

Female

Please enter your Prolific ID here:

Debriefing

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this study.

Please take a moment to read the following information about the aims of the study.

Research indicates that 70% of Muslims have experienced religion-based prejudice (Abrams et al., 2018). There is therefore a critical need to develop effective techniques to reduce prejudice towards this and other groups in society. The aim of the current study is to gather information on the beliefs, feelings and experiences of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK, and their responses to the beliefs of White people in the UK concerning Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent.

As stated earlier, you may have found some of the questions offensive. The objective is to have your views on the beliefs held against your religion and culture by some people. The answers you provided in this research will be used to design activities and techniques that will help other people understand your group better, rather than hold on to negative beliefs. This will help to reduce racism and religious prejudice against Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent living in the UK.

Thank you for participating in this research. Your time is appreciated. Your participation payment will be sent to you in the next few days latest.

If you are feeling distressed about any of the topics covered in this questionnaire, please see your GP. You may also find some of the below resources helpful.

Tell MAMA: <https://tellmamauk.org/>

Stop Hate UK: <http://www.stophateuk.org/> True Vision: <https://www.report-it.org.uk/>

Contact for Further Information

Should you have a complaint, you may contact the research supervisor (Dr Chantelle Wood: chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk). If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the Head of Department (Prof. Elizabeth Milne, e.milne@sheffield.ac.uk), who will then escalate the complaint through the appropriate channels. If the complaint relates to how your personal

data has been handled, information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University's Privacy Notice: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

Contact for further information

Researcher: Bashirat Ibrahim, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: baibrahim1@sheffield.ac.uk

Research Supervisor: Dr Chantelle Wood, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix 3. Qualitative Study 2B with Muslims of Middle-Eastern Descent (Chapter 3)

Research Project Title: Beliefs, feelings and experiences of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK

Note: The information page is the same as study 2A

The next set of questions reports on negative or stereotyped beliefs of White people about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK. Because of this, you may find some of the questions offensive. However, it is essential to the objective of the study to have your views on the beliefs held against your religion and culture by some people. Accordingly, it is important that the questions be presented to you as honestly as possible. You remain free to withdraw from the study by closing your browser at any point.

Some white people in the UK would like to know about gender relations related to Islamic teachings and principles. For each of the following, please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them better understand Islam.

Are women as important as men in Islam? Please explain.

Please describe how you think women feel about wearing head coverings/burkha?

Is arranged marriage practiced and why?

Some White people in the UK believe that wives in Islam walk behind their husbands. Please explain the reason behind this practice in Islam.

Please provide any other information about gender relations that you think is relevant or useful for White people in the UK to know.

Please describe the views that you think Non-Muslim White British people hold about your culture (e.g., religion, daily life, food, clothing, family and other relationships, daily life, music, shelter, arts and language).

What would you tell people who may hold such views, in order to demonstrate that the views they hold about your culture are incorrect or oversimplified?

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK are committed to religion. Please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them understand that religious commitment is important in Islam.

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK are not patriotic towards the UK, because they have different values and beliefs. Please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help dispel these beliefs.

Some White people in the UK hold negative attitudes and beliefs towards Muslims of Middle- Eastern descent in the UK. These include perceptions that Muslims are worth less and of lower priority. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

How would you respond to the belief by some White people in the UK that there are paedophiles among Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK which make people from your culture a potential source of threat to the UK?

Sometimes we may hold goals that are important to people from different groups but which cannot be achieved alone by either of the groups unless they work cooperatively together in order to achieve it. With this in mind, please answer the questions below:

What goals do you consider important enough that can make people of your culture and religion, and other cultures and religions, put aside their differences in order to work together as a team?

Why do you consider the goal(s) identified above important?

The next section is about your feelings, beliefs and behaviours concerning the relations between your culture and other cultures. Please be as honest as possible in your responses.

Some White people in the UK would like to know about your experience as Muslim of Middle- Eastern descent living in the UK. With this in mind, please answer the following questions.

How have people's views and behaviour towards you (as a Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent), affected your life in the UK?

What could White people in the UK do to improve this?

Do you feel welcomed and considered as a UK citizen? Please explain.

Some White people in the UK would like to know about your experiences of racism in the UK. With this in mind, please answer the following questions.

There are negative ways you are viewed and treated as a Muslim of Middle-Eastern descent living in the UK. How does this make you feel?

Please describe any difficult situation that you or other Muslim Middle-Easterners are experiencing, because of your religion or ethnicity, which you want White people from the UK to know about.

Taking another person's perspective can be an effective way of uniting people from different groups. With this in mind, how would you like White people in the UK to see the above situation from your perspective?

Do you perceive all (or most) White people as racist? Please explain why.

Please enter your Prolific ID here:

Debriefing

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this study.

Please take a moment to read the following information about the aims of the study.

Research indicates that 70% of Muslims have experienced religion-based prejudice (Abrams et al., 2018). There is therefore a critical need to develop effective techniques to reduce prejudice towards this and other groups in society. The aim of the current study is to gather information on the beliefs, feelings and experiences of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK, and their responses to the beliefs of White people in the UK concerning Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent.

As stated earlier, you may have found some of the questions offensive. The objective is to have your views on the beliefs held against your religion and culture by some people. The answers you provided in this research will be used to design activities and techniques that will help other people understand your group better, rather than hold on to negative beliefs. This will help to reduce racism and religious prejudice against Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent living in the UK.

Thank you for participating in this research. Your time is appreciated. Your participation payment will be sent to you in the next few days latest.

If you are feeling distressed about any of the topics covered in this questionnaire, please see your GP. You may also find some of the below resources helpful.

Tell MAMA: <https://tellmamauk.org/>

Stop Hate UK: <http://www.stophateuk.org/> True Vision: <https://www.report-it.org.uk/>

Contact for Further Information

Should you have a complaint, you may contact the research supervisor (Dr Chantelle Wood: chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk). If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the Head of Department (Prof. Elizabeth Milne, e.milne@sheffield.ac.uk), who will then escalate the complaint through the appropriate channels. If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University's Privacy Notice: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

Contact for further information

Researcher: Bashirat Ibrahim, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: baibrahim1@sheffield.ac.uk

Research Supervisor: Dr Chantelle Wood, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix 4. Qualitative Study 2C with Muslims of Middle-Eastern Descent (Chapter 3)

Research Project Title: Beliefs, feelings and experiences of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK

Note: Information page is same as study 2A

Please describe what Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK would think about other Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent having a positive relationship/friendship with White people in the UK.

Please explain your answer to the above question.

Please describe what the likely reaction from other Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK would be if you were to avoid, be unfriendly or unfair towards White people in the UK.

Please explain your answer to the above question.

The next set of questions report on negative or stereotyped beliefs of White people about Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK. Because of this, you may find some of the questions offensive. However, it is essential to the objective of the study to have your views on the beliefs held against your religion and culture by some people. Accordingly, it is important that the questions be presented to you as honestly as possible. You remain free to withdraw from the study by closing your browser at any point.

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK do not like the way they live their lives. They indicate that this may make them feel anxious when they interact with Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs and anxiety?

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK live in council houses that they do not pay for; take benefits from the government which they are not entitled to and live off the state. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK work to send money to their home countries instead of spending the money in the UK economy. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK are religious extremists (i.e., they are terrorists, can be indoctrinated to become ISIS terrorists or groom other people to join, they are potential bombers and that they have aim to convert people to their religion). Please give a response that could be shared with White people in the UK, to help them better understand Islam.

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to White people in the UK because of past events where some identified members of the group have been involved in terrorism, and that there are people with strains of violence in this group. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK believe that the presence of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the job and economic opportunities of White people in the UK due to the following reasons: the more people who want jobs, the more competition there will be for the available jobs, and Muslims of Middle Eastern descent take jobs that should be given to White people. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK believe that the presence of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the job and economic opportunities of White people in the UK due to the following reasons: White people may not be as educated, be able to speak more languages or be willing to work as long hours as Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK, which means that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK may get jobs ahead of such White people. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK believe that the presence of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the job and economic opportunities of White people in the UK due to the following reason: People cannot get jobs in certain businesses such as restaurants or chains, unless they are Muslims. How would you respond to this in a way that could help dispel these beliefs?

Some White people in the UK believe that the presence of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the political power or balance in the UK due to the following reason: there is the potential for some laws in the UK to be changed in order to accommodate the lifestyles of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK. How would you respond to this?

Some White people in the UK believe that the presence of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK pose a threat to the political power or balance in the UK due to the following reason: it is believed that if Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK are voted into political offices in the UK, they will have the power to change the country. How would you respond to this?

Some White people in the UK believe that having Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK means more differing values and beliefs, which will pose a threat to the held values and beliefs of White people in the UK. How would you respond to this?

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK try to change people's values and beliefs, which will pose a threat to the held values and beliefs of White people in the UK. How would you respond to this?

Some White people in the UK believe that Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK have a negative attitude towards LGBT+ people. How would you respond to this?

Are women as important as men in Islam? Please explain.

Can you describe an incident or incidents of racism or religious prejudice that you or other Muslim Middle-Easterners have experienced or that you have observed, and state the impact that it has had on your life, so that White people in the UK can understand this from your perspective?

Are there things White people do that is racist but which they don't realise they are doing? Please describe.

Please enter your Prolific ID here:

Debriefing

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this study.

Please take a moment to read the following information about the aims of the study.

Research indicates that 70% of Muslims have experienced religion-based prejudice (Abrams et al., 2018). There is therefore a critical need to develop effective techniques to reduce prejudice towards this and other groups in society. The aim of the current study is to gather information on the beliefs, feelings and experiences of Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent in the UK, and their responses to the beliefs of White people in the UK concerning Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent.

As stated earlier, you may have found some of the questions offensive. The objective is to have your views on the beliefs held against your religion and culture by some people. The answers you provided in this research will be used to design activities and techniques that will help other people understand your group better, rather than hold on to negative beliefs. This will help to reduce racism and religious prejudice against Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent living in the UK.

Thank you for participating in this research. Your time is appreciated. Your participation payment will be sent to you in the next few days latest.

If you are feeling distressed about any of the topics covered in this questionnaire, please see your GP. You may also find some of the below resources helpful.

Tell MAMA: <https://tellmamauk.org/>

Stop Hate UK: <http://www.stophateuk.org/> True Vision: <https://www.report-it.org.uk/>

Contact for Further Information

Should you have a complaint, you may contact the research supervisor (Dr Chantelle Wood: chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk). If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the Head of Department (Prof. Elizabeth Milne, e.milne@sheffield.ac.uk), who will then escalate the complaint through the appropriate channels. If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University's Privacy Notice: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

Contact for further information

Researcher: Bashirat Ibrahim, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: baibrahim1@sheffield.ac.uk

Research Supervisor: Dr Chantelle Wood, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix 5. Virtual Intergroup Contact Intervention and Outcome Measures – Stage 1 (Chapter 4)

Research Project Title: Thoughts, feelings and beliefs about people from different groups in the UK.

Your invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the study's purpose?

The study aims to explore thoughts, beliefs, and feelings towards people from different groups in the UK. This research is being conducted as part of a PhD qualification at the University of Sheffield.

Why have I been chosen?

You are eligible to participate in this study if you identify as White, you do not identify as Muslim, are 18 years old or over, and currently live in the UK. It is expected that around 1200 people will be recruited to take part in the research.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to indicate your consent to participate on the next page. You can withdraw from the study at any time up until the 12th June 2022, by emailing Bashirat Ibrahim (baibrahim1@sheffield.ac.uk) and providing the unique ID that you will generate in each questionnaire. Please note that by choosing to participate in this study, this will not create a legally binding agreement, nor is it intended to create an employment relationship between you and the University of Sheffield.

What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?

This study will involve completing 3 online questionnaires about your thoughts, feelings and beliefs about people from different groups in the UK, over the next 2-3 weeks. You may also be asked to read and respond to conversational text from another person about their thoughts, feelings, beliefs and experiences. Your conversation partner will be represented by an avatar in the course of this study, and has already prepared their side of the conversation based on their experiences in the UK. The conversation you will have is therefore not in real time, but your responses will be shown to your conversation partner after you complete the study. Your responses are anonymous (your data will only be identified by a unique code). Therefore, please express your thoughts as honestly as possible if you decide to participate.

You will also be asked questions about your demographics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, religion, current country of residence and how long you have lived there). Each questionnaire will take between 15-35 minutes. You will be asked to create a unique ID code and report it in both questionnaires, to allow your data to be linked together.

You will be asked to provide your email address after each questionnaire, so that we can send you the following questionnaires and so that we can enter you into the participation prize draw. You will be asked to click on a link which will take you to a separate form to enter your email address so that this remains separate from your questionnaire responses.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

You may feel uncomfortable reporting aspects of the way you think or feel, or your beliefs about people from different groups. However, it is important for our research that you give honest responses. Your responses will remain confidential to the research team.

The questionnaires and/or conversational text may also contain views or beliefs that you do not agree with, or that you find offensive, inappropriate, or confronting. If you find this distressing, you remain free to withdraw at any point during the questionnaire by closing your browser. You can also withdraw

from the study at any time up until the 12th June 2022, by emailing Bashirat Ibrahim (baibrahim1@sheffield.ac.uk) and providing the unique ID that you will generate in each questionnaire.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will receive 1 entry into a prize draw to win 1 of 15 Amazon e-vouchers for each questionnaire you complete fully (i.e. 3 entries in total for all 3 questionnaires). You could win 1 £100 voucher, 1 of 4 £50 vouchers, or 1 of 10 £20 vouchers. We will be in touch via email if you win the prize draw.

Will my participation in the study be kept confidential?

All personal information that we collect about you in the course of the research (e.g., email addresses, will be kept strictly confidential and accessible only to members of the research team. If recorded, email addresses will be deleted once the study is complete and the prize draw has been conducted. However, if you win the prize draw, your email address will be stored securely for 7 years for reference in the event of a financial audit.

Your anonymised questionnaire responses may be included in reports or publications, or shared with other researchers via online open-access data repositories, but you will not be able to be identified. We will make a reasonable effort to redact any potentially identifying information in the data that you provide in the course of the research, if these are perceived by the research team to compromise your anonymity.

What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

As we will be collecting some data that is defined in the legislation as more sensitive (information about your ethnicity, religion), we also need to let you know that we are applying the following condition in law: that the use of your data is 'necessary for scientific or historical research purposes'.

What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?

Your data will be written up as part of a PhD qualification in Psychology at the University of Sheffield, and also written up for publication in a peer reviewed journal. You will not be identified in any articles or reports resulting from the research. Due to the nature of this research it is very likely that other researchers may find the data collected to be useful in answering future research questions. Your questionnaire responses may therefore also be shared with other researchers via online open-access data repositories. We will ask for your explicit consent for your data to be shared in this way.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is funded by a Faculty of Science PhD Scholarship awarded to Bashirat Ibrahim.

Who is the Data Controller?

The University of Sheffield is the Data Controller for this study and will be responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

The research has been ethically approved by the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Department of Psychology [REF: 044662].

What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research?

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the research and wish to make a complaint, contact the research supervisor (Dr Chantelle Wood: chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk) in the first instance. If you feel your complaint has not been handled in a satisfactory way, you can contact the Head of Department (Prof. Elizabeth Milne, psy-hod@sheffield.ac.uk), who will then escalate the complaint through the appropriate channels. If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University's Privacy Notice:

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

If you have a safeguarding concern, you can contact the Head of the Department of Psychology, Professor Elizabeth Milne (psy-hod@sheffield.ac.uk), who is also the Designated Safeguarding Contact for this research.

Contact for further information

Researcher: Bashirat Ibrahim, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: baibrahim1@sheffield.ac.uk

Research Supervisor: Dr Chantelle Wood, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield. Email Address: chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk

Taking Part in the Project

I have read and understood the project information sheet (If this is not the case, please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean).

☐ Yes

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project (via email)

☐ Yes

I understand that taking part in the project will include completing an online questionnaire asking about my thoughts, feelings and beliefs about people from different groups in the UK, on 3 different occasions, approximately 1 week apart.

Yes

I understand that by choosing to participate as a volunteer in this research, this does not create a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship with the University of Sheffield.

☐ Yes

I understand that my taking part is voluntary, and that I can withdraw from the study at any time before the 28th February 2022, by emailing the researcher with my unique ID code. I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw.

Yes

How my information will be used during and after the project

I understand my personal details such as my email address will not be revealed to people outside the project with the exception that if I win the prize draw, my email address (if provided) will be kept securely for 7 years by University finance.

☐ Yes

I understand and agree that my responses may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be identifiable in these outputs.

☐ Yes

I understand and agree that authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

☐ Yes

I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

☐ Yes

I give permission for the questionnaire responses that I provide to be deposited in an online open-access data repository so it can be used for future research and learning

☐ Yes

So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers

I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University

of Sheffield.

☐ Yes

My Consent

I consent to take part in this research.

☐ Yes

Age

What is your age?

Validation

Your response has indicated that you do not meet the eligibility criteria for this study. Thank you for your interest.

Residence Country

Please indicate where you currently live

☐ A country in the UK

☐ A country outside the UK

Years in UK

How long have you lived in the UK (in years)?

Ethnicity

What ethnic group do you most identify with?

Asian or Asian British

Black, African, Caribbean, or Black British

White

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

Other

Gender

What gender do you identify as?

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Non-binary

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Prefer to self-define

Religion

What religion do you identify with?

Christian

Islam

Atheism

Hinduism

Sikhism

Judaism

Buddhism

No religion

Prefer not to say

Other

Unique Code

Please generate a unique code using the last two letters of your first name, your birth date (i.e. between 01-31), and the last two digits of your personal mobile phone number.

Example: Jean was born on the 13th January and the last two digits of her personal mobile phone number are 52. So the ID code would be "AN1352".

Personal Characteristics

In this part of the study, you will have a conversation with a Middle Easterner, represented by an avatar. Your conversation partner has already prepared his side of the conversation based on his experiences in the UK. The conversation you will have is therefore not in real time, but your responses will be shown to your conversation partner after you complete the study.

Your responses are anonymous (your data will only be identified by a unique code). Therefore, please express your thoughts as honestly as possible.

Thank you.



My name is Abdullah.

I am a Muslim from the Middle East, but I now live in the UK.

I will like to tell you some things about myself and ask about you, if that is okay?

I will also share a few opinions of UK public official and a Christian who is a religious Professor at Rice University in the US.

The Professor is one of the few religious researchers around who shares his knowledge on social media.

My core values.

I strive to find time for religious worship and going to Mosque. I believe in good education, career and general ambitiousness and to be a useful member of the society.

I also believe in upholding family connectedness, community cohesion and cultural traditions. I believe being moral and fair is so important in my day to day life.

I'm always conscious of even small acts that may be immoral such as slandering or borrowing things without permission first. So being moral, upholding equality and fairness is very important to me.

I also strive to be compassionate especially to the young and aged, and I hate cruelty to humans and animals. I equally try to be altruistic, tolerant, be open and respectful to people and other cultures.

What about you? Do you mind telling me about your values?

Beliefs I hold.

I am a practicing Muslim. I believe that there is one God who is the creator of the world.

I also believe that there is heaven, hell, and that the world is only temporary, and that God will judge everything on the day of awakening.

Therefore, I follow the Qur'an. God created us to be good people on earth, and I believe that if the people of a land have no morals such land will go into chaos.

What sort of things do you believe in? Do you have a religion?

My interests and hobbies.

My interests are similar to most people's interests.

I want to be able to spend time with my family, and progress in my education and career.

I want to gain knowledge to better understand this world through learning new things and trying new experiences.

This is what I am passionate about.

I am interested in the arts nature, and politics. I also love cooking! I am also interested in Middle Eastern music, celebrating our yearly traditions, and socialising. I also love playing sports such as football and basketball.

I watch sports on TV in my spare time (the recent Olympics were great!), as well as movies & shows. I love to go bike riding.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Muslim Middle Easterners Attitudes



I have another question.

Many White people believe that we have negative attitudes towards LGBTQ persons.

Do you also think the same?

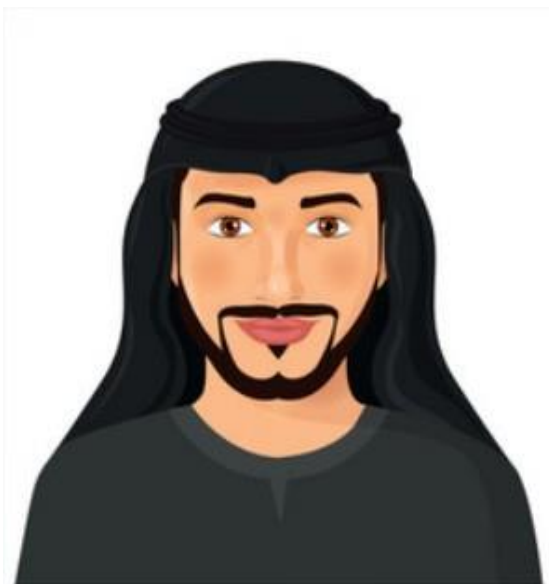
Just like in Judaism and Christianity, Islam forbids LGBTQ relationships but Muslims are ordered to be respectful and kind to everyone irrespective of lifestyle differences. So, if anyone has a negative attitude towards LGBTQ people, that reflects their personal attitude, and not all of us. These people are in the minority. Likewise, I suppose some White people also have negative attitudes towards LGBTQ people.

For example, some Christian right-wing groups finance anti-rights campaigns in Europe. You can read about it [here: https://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/us-christian-right-wing-groups-financed-anti-rights-campaigns-in-europe/](https://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/us-christian-right-wing-groups-financed-anti-rights-campaigns-in-europe/)

So people who are against LGBTQ rights are everywhere. I really hope this will change in the near future.

Living in a society where people have different ways of living their lives is so important in this globalised world, otherwise, how else can we learn from each other and grow?

What do you think?



Some White people believe that our attitudes are different from those of White people in the UK.

Do you agree with this?

Well, what I have to say is that we are just like any other group of people! We are equally diverse in our personalities with different traits that are good and bad just like you will find among other groups. I know some Non-Muslim White British people have really negative attitudes towards Muslims and think that we are secretive, aggressive, dishonest and arrogant or rude. And some also have more positive views that we have strong family values, and that we are hardworking.

But really, both these positive and negative characteristics can be found among our people but also among members of other religions, cultures, and ethnic groups - including White people.

It also might be the case that some behaviours of Muslims are misinterpreted out of context due to different cultural norms.

For example, when we are passionate, it is within our culture to act in a way that may seem aggressive to people who are more mild in their tones or actions.

However, I think part of the problem is that the media often portray us Muslims as violent people, and in movies Muslims are never portrayed as heroes but instead the bad person. This affects how people see us.

There are also a lot of stereotypes of Muslims due to limited exposure to people from our culture. I know a lot of non-Muslim people who had these views before, however after they get invited to a Muslim household, spend time with us and see who we really are, their views changed. Spending some time with people from our community means that you get to know us as individuals and find that we are not too different from non-Muslim British people.

Aside the believe about our attitudes, I also know that some White people believe that Muslims do not like the way they live their lives.

Is this something you feel as well?



I think there are probably some Muslims who see non-Muslim people's lifestyle negatively, but most of the Muslims in the UK understand that they live in a country with a different culture and lifestyle than theirs and are accepting of this.

Funny enough, there are also many Muslims of Middle Eastern descent who think White people in the UK don't like their lifestyle!

Really, we all need to stop being anxious of each other's ways of living that are different from our own and maybe we can start to understand each other better.

I know that some of my White friends have wondered what Islam is about before we met, and wondered what motivates us to be committed to practice Islam.

Do you know much about Islam?



Dr. Craig Considine 
@CraigCons

...

I believe that it is an appropriate time to add "Islamic" to the popular phrase "Judeo-Christian values."

The Abrahamic faiths share so much in common in terms of belief, history, & practices. Our similarities far outweigh our perceived differences.

Judeo-Christian-*Islamic.*

Islam is actually not too dissimilar from Judaism and Christianity, with many of the core beliefs and values shared. Islam is about submitting to Allah and worshipping Him alone. Islam teaches us to spread peace, love, selflessness and forgiveness among the people of the world.

It places emphasis on social good, helping others and being considerate towards others regardless of their religion or race etc. Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) was respectful to the Jews and Christians, so we should do the same.

So we are motivated because Islam preaches good virtues including peace, tolerance, compassion, humility, modesty and so on. It also preaches unity of all humans regardless of colour or origin and a fair world. Islam tells us to be good to our parents, to help the poor and orphans.

For instance, in Islam, there is a concept known as Zakat, which is one of the main principles of Islam. This concept is like donations where there are very specific rules that moderate the process and the main goal is closing the gap between the rich and the poor and trying to help disadvantaged people to get a good life.

I came across a short BBC article on Zakat recently- here it is if you're interested.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/znhhsrd/revision/6>

Islam is also a religion of good logic, so if something is prohibited, it is for the sake of protecting us.

In addition, knowing that on judgment day in the hereafter we will be asked about our actions on earth makes me wary of doing bad deeds.

Doing good deeds and staying away from bad deeds will help me get the reward of making paradise after I die. Doing good deeds can be anything big or small.

For example, even smiling at someone to make them feel good is recommended in our religion.

Religious Commitment & Daily Life



In terms of being committed to Islam, that is correct. In the western world, I feel like religion is more personal and is kept private. However, Islam is a more social religion, that determines the law, social relations, hygiene, relationship, and finance.

So our religion is really integrated into our daily life - family, work, relationships with others, dealing with different situations and many more. It all goes back to only one thing, doing the right thing and refraining from the bad in order to obey God, have a peaceful and structured life, while helping our communities the best way we can.

I believe the best way to learn about Islam is directly through the Quran, but I know that most people probably don't want to read the full Quran! So instead you can visit mosques and meet Islamic scholars and meet individual Muslims including White people who converted to Islam to ask them any questions. I am certain that 9 out of 10 times you won't be disappointed.

It can be a bit nerve-wracking to meet new people and ask about religion though! Is this something you'd be willing to do?

I sometimes think that the reason that White people don't have a lot of contact with Muslim people or visit mosques and talk to Muslim people is that they think that some mosques spread messages of extremism, which is definitely not the case!

Islam is a way of life that teaches peace, love and forgiveness. There is no teaching in Islam that promotes extremism or terrorism and no one can be Muslim if they follow extremist ideologies.

God asks us to practice Islam with moderation. It is in the Qur'an 5 verse 32 that killing one person is like killing the whole of mankind, saving a life is as if one saves the lives of all mankind, and unprovoked aggression is not acceptable under any circumstances.



Dr. Craig Considine ✓
@CraigCons



Muhammad is the only ruler in the 7th century who gave religious freedom to ALL citizens. He isn't only a Prophet. He's a revolutionary.

10:19 PM · Aug 9, 2016 · Twitter for iPhone

Prophet Mohammed (peace upon him) never threatened or forced non-Muslims living in Muslim countries to join Islam.

People of different religions lived together and non-Muslims were not discriminated against. You can read about Islam position on the subject of prejudice and discrimination in a BBC article via this link <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z3vrq6f/revision/6>

You may have concerns about Islamist extremism.

Islamist extremism is due to those who maliciously misinterpret the Qur'an, the teachings of the Prophet and the message of Islam. The verses that are commonly taken out of context are mostly talking about war situations, but what the terrorists do should not occur in non-war times.

These extremists are a very small minority of Muslims that are misguided just as very few Non-Muslim White British people are fascist. Their principles go against Islamic principles and they do not represent our religion in any shape or form.

Mosques are places of worship where we go to build connection with God. I do not know about any mosque that spreads extremism. All the mosques I have been to show the peaceful nature of Islam and they are strictly against extremism.

However, in every religion, there are extremists who will hate other people's religions; history can prove this easily. Therefore, extremists are everywhere in every religion and ideology.

However, that does not mean that everyone is an extremist. Therefore, some mosques, like some other

institutions including churches, may be guilty of doing this but they are an extreme rarity and will be condemned by the vast majority of Muslims. Just as the far right English Defence League doesn't represent the views of most White Brits, these few mosques aren't representative of who we are.

There is also the issue of terrorism that White people tend to ascribe to us.

Hopefully, when we do this again in a few weeks, I will share my thoughts on it. Please know that I am not just trying to defend my group and our religion here. Islam preaches peace. We as Muslims are against any messages of extremism and hatred because that isn't the message of our religion.

I invite you to visit a mosque and listen to speeches so you can judge yourself.

Do you have a mosque in your local area? Do you think you'd have an opportunity to visit it?



Some white people also wonder what our daily life looks like and how religious restrictions affect us.

Do you also wonder about this?

As in any culture, not all people live exactly the same way.

In my personal daily life like many Muslims, prayers are important.

First, we purify ourselves with ablution, that is, cleaning of body parts for ritual purification in order to observe prayers five times a day, either alone or together with others at certain times of the day.

It is also recommended that we read the Qur'an, which some people even try to memorise.

The Islamic daily life teaches discipline. We have to schedule our activities and take time out to pray every day. It takes around 5-10 minutes each time but we know what it is for, so we don't mind.

Sometimes it is difficult to find a place to do this outside the home though! We can't go to pubs, clubs, and we can't consume some things like pork and alcohol, sex outside marriage is prohibited, as are certain aspects of the financial system such as taking interest-based loans.

We are also to dress modestly and women need to wear a hijab.

However, I wouldn't call these restrictions because you get used to life how you live it, whether it is

climbing a mountain every day or running every day, you get used to it.

Other than the prayer aspect of our day, our daily lives are typically not that different to White people or anyone else in most respects. This includes having breakfast, sending kids to school, studies, going to work, house chores, cooking, hobbies, having fun with standard activities like Netflix, hanging out with friends and helping others.



Daniel Hannan ✓
@DanielJHannan

...

Muslims are Britain's biggest charity donors, then Jews, then Christians, then atheists.



thetimes.co.uk

Muslims 'are Britain's top charity givers'

Muslims are among Britain's most generous givers, topping a poll of religious groups that donate to charity, according to new research. Muslims who donate...

In Islam, there's a huge emphasis on generosity, hospitality and sharing food with those we know and don't know.

Generational interconnectedness is also encouraged. We respect our elders and community leaders. We are family-oriented; we visit each other, spend a lot of time together or live together as a support network.

Family is important and it is necessary to go see our parents and the elderly to make sure they're okay before we go out and I think that's fair because when we were young children, they took care of us, so it is only right to take care of them when they get older.

How does that compare to what you do each day? Do you think that our daily lifestyle is significantly different from yours?



Thank you for your time.

I will read your responses afterwards.
I look forward to doing this again soon.

Questionnaire Introduction

You will now be asked questions about your thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK.

Please respond as honestly as possible.
Thank you.

Stereotype

Please indicate the extent to which you consider Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK to possess the following attributes.

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
Friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Warm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Likeable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sincere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Confident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assertive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Efficient	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intelligent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Prejudice 1

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK have jobs that the White/British should have.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Most Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here who receive support from welfare could get along without it if they tried.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

White/British people and Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK can never be really comfortable with each other, even if they are close friends.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Most politicians in Britain care too much about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK and not enough about the average British person.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK come from less able races and this explains why they are not as well off as most White/British people.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

How different or similar do you think Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here are to other White/British people like yourself – in how honest they are?

Very different Somewhat different Somewhat similar Very similar

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Prejudice 2

Suppose that a child of yours had children with a person of very different colour and physical characteristics than your own. If your grandchildren did not physically resemble the people on your side of the family, do you think you would be:

Very bothered? Bothered? Bothered a little? Not bothered at all?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I would be willing to have sexual relationships with a Muslim of Middle Eastern descent in the UK.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I would not mind if a suitably qualified Muslim of Middle Eastern descent in the UK was appointed as my boss.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I would not mind if Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK who had a similar economic background as mine joined my close family by marriage.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

○ ○ ○ ○

Prejudice 3

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here should not push themselves where they are not wanted.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

○ ○ ○ ○

Many other groups have come to Britain and overcome prejudice and worked their way up. Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK should do the same without special favor.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

○ ○ ○ ○

It is just a matter of some people not trying hard enough. If Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK would only try harder they could be as well off as White/British people.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

○ ○ ○ ○

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here teach their children values and skills different from those required to be successful in Britain.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

○ ○ ○ ○

Prejudice 4

For each of the following statements, please indicate how different or similar you think Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here are to other White/British people like yourself:

In the values that they teach their children?

Very different Somewhat different Somewhat similar Very similar

○ ○ ○ ○

In their religious beliefs and practices?

Very different Somewhat different Somewhat similar Very similar

○ ○ ○ ○

In their sexual values or sexual practices?

Very different Somewhat different Somewhat similar Very similar

○ ○ ○ ○

In the language that they speak?

Very different Somewhat different Somewhat similar Very similar

○ ○ ○ ○

Prejudice 5

Have you ever felt the following ways about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK and their families living here?

How often have you felt sympathy for Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here?

Very often Fairly often Not too often Never

○ ○ ○ ○

How often have you felt admiration for Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here?

Very often

☐

Fairly often

☐

Not too often

☐

Never

☐

Behaviour Intention

The followings questions ask about your intentions to perform different behaviours in the future.

How much do you intend to interact with Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK in the future?

Not at all

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Very much

How much time do you think you might spend learning about Islam in the future?

None at all

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

A lot of time

How important do you think interacting with Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK is?

Not at all

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

important

Highly

important

How willing would you be to attend a mosque gathering to learn more about Islamic beliefs and practices?

Not at all

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

willing

Very

willing

Appendix 6. Virtual Intergroup Contact Intervention and Outcome Measures – Stage 2 (Chapter 4)

Research Project Title: Thoughts, feelings and beliefs about people from different groups in the UK.

Note: The information page is the same as stage 1 study.

Unique Code

Please generate a unique code using the last two letters of your first name, your birth date (i.e. between 01-31), and the last two digits of your personal mobile phone number.

Example: Jean was born on the 13th January and the last two digits of her personal mobile phone number are

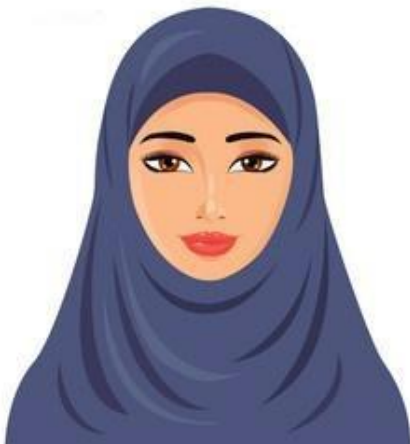
52. So the ID code would be “AN1352”.

Marriage & Family Dynamics

In this part of the study, you will have a conversation with a Middle Easterner, represented by an avatar. Your conversation partner has already prepared her side of the conversation based on her experiences in the UK. The conversation you will have is therefore not in real time, but your responses will be shown to your conversation partner after you complete the study.

Your responses are anonymous (your data will only be identified by a unique code). Therefore, please express your thoughts as honestly as possible.

Thank you.



My name is Mariam.

I am a Muslim from the Middle East, but I now live in the UK.

I am also not going to respond to you in real time, but I will read your responses afterwards. I look forward to it.

In addition, I will also share a few opinions of a Christian Professor with you.
I hope you enjoy it.



What were the things that you took away or remembered from your last conversation with the other Muslim Middle Easterner?

There are always going to be both similarities and some differences in our lifestyles. One thing that others have asked me for example is why arranged marriage is practiced in our culture.

Arranged marriages do exist, but they are probably different to how you imagine them. In the olden days, there used to be forced marriage, when some parents wanted to be the only decision maker for the marriage of their child.

However, forced marriage is forbidden in Islam where people are meant to have a choice in who they marry. We do have arranged marriages in some Muslim communities, which is often a bit more like match making.

In arranged marriages, parents want to ensure that their children form a relationship that is culturally compatible with their family, because we consider marriage to be between families, not just the couple.

Also, some parents think they can make better decisions than their children as they are more experienced and more objective! Before marriage, people can still date, but there are sometimes restrictions on that.

For example, meeting up with a potential spouse may happen with a family member present. It is not allowed in Islam to practice romantic dating before marriage, because it could lead to sinful acts such as pre-marital sex, which is strictly prohibited. So the easier authentic way is to get to know each other during arranged engagements. If the proposed couple agrees to it, they will get married. So, arranged marriage doesn't mean that we're in any way forced, and it doesn't mean we don't date or that we have to marry someone we have never met.

In fact, arranged marriages can work quite well, as they weed out completely unsuitable partners. However, nowadays, arranged marriage is also becoming less common as our parents are becoming more open- minded on the subject of marriage and will let their children choose their significant other to make them happy and feel more freedom.

How does it work in your family? Do you agree with the idea of parents setting their children up on dates?

Family dynamics do differ across cultures! Some of my White friends were curious about how family dynamics work in my culture, and about extended families in particular.

We often live in large households with our extended family, though not always. Family is a big thing in our religion and culture, we love being together or at least keep in touch and be each other's support system.

Also, kids are seen as a blessing so people do not shy away from having many kids. We also believe it is our duty to take care of our parents as they have sacrificed a lot for us.

So, sometimes a son that gets married continues to live with or near his parents in order to stay close to each other, because the son is often the one who has to take care of his parents, so he may keep them living in the house.



This arrangement is mutually beneficial though - the older generations help with childcare, and in turn, they are looked after as they grow older. Islam has given rights and duties to each family member.

Taking care of our parents and grandparents is very important. Not taking care of them, particularly your mother, is seen as shameful and embarrassing for that family.

However, there is no rule about living with extended family members, so it is each family's decision in the end.

Having said that, this practice of living in large family households is changing- Women in particular are increasingly living alone.

Privacy is also very important in our culture and some people just want privacy, which is difficult when living in large households with extended family members!

Other than that, family life is not significantly different from non-Muslim people's culture.

What about you and your family? Have you ever lived with extended family?

Gender Relations

Many White people believe that women are not as important as men in our culture and religion.

Do you share this belief?

Yes they are! I know there is a general view that women are seen as less important in Islam but the Qur'an actually teaches the opposite to this. Islam is in no regards a sexist religion nor is designed to be cruel towards women.

Islam strictly and explicitly stipulates that men should treat woman as equals and that men should take care of women and respect them, which includes lowering their gaze when talking to non-family women and not touching them.



Dr. Craig Considine 
@CraigCons

...

Prophet Muhammad said in his Farewell Sermon: “You must always treat your wives w/ kindness.”

He also said: “The best among you is one who is best to his wife” & “Paradise lies at the feet of the mother.”

Men, you want to treat women better? This is a start.

No exceptions.

Islam grants women, as it does men, fundamental rights. Islam states that both genders complement each other for their respective strengths and weaknesses. However, their roles are different. Their responsibilities and their rights are also different.

Men have more responsibilities and so decision-making power than women, including the responsibility of looking after women and provide protection, which may be seen as negative. However, it also means women are seen as special, and women do still have control over their personal activities and have their own independence. The prophet said that a good man treats women with honour.

Women are also more important in some specific situations. For example, the Qur'an mentions the mother more than the father. Also, heaven lies beneath the feet of our mothers, not fathers. This means that anyone who wishes to make it to paradise must please their mother. Islam covers rights for women in all aspects including in marriage.

For example, women get Mahr (in Islamic law, Mahr is a gift from groom to bride as a mark of love and respect for her, and as recognition of her independence). Muslim women retain their own surname and do not have to adopt that of their husband while married.

Women are free to get an education and have a job. As you will know, some people choose to oppress women but that is peculiar to them and unislamic.

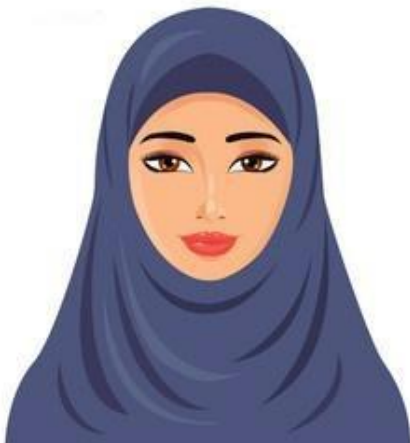
For instance, the Taliban try to control women's education in Afghanistan. However, Muslim women as early as 8th century have been receiving education outside the home. In fact, according to UNESCO, an Arab woman in Morocco established the first University in the world: The University of al-Qarawiyyin. You may want to read more about it in this Wikipedia article: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_al-Qarawiyyin

Further, in Islam, the money a woman earns belongs to her, she doesn't have to spend it on the shared household, and she does not have to discuss with her partner how much money she has. The household duties are not the responsibility of the women- Taking care of the household chores and children is completely a male duty.

In the event of divorce, child custody is the exclusive right of women but they can leave their children to their ex partner's care.

There is the concept of Islamic feminism, which is informed by Islamic principles. You can read more about Islamic feminism in this Wikipedia article https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_feminism

What is the gender dynamics like in your culture and religion if you practice any?



One thing that I think people also want to know (but are too afraid to ask) is about how Muslim women feel about wearing the hijab.

Have you also wondered about this?

We choose to wear hijab (and some of us burqa) as a way of demonstrating our submission to God as He commands us in the Qur'an to wear it. Hijab/Burqa keeps our dressing modest and especially protects women from the eyes of men.

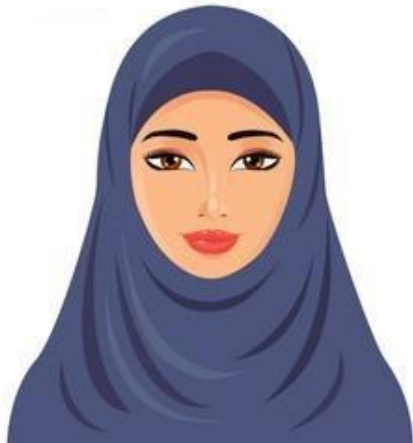
As a Muslim woman, I wear a head-cover, because I believe it empowers me. It represents my religion and sends people the message that I have my limits - that I do not want to share my personal space and body image with others. It shows people I am capable of choosing how I want to present myself and how I want to be treated. It makes me feel respected, secured, and somehow sacred. So, I choose to wear it for modesty, and it is my choice.

Some women want to wear them, and others don't. Women feel comfortable wearing it because it gives protection and a sense of identity. Overall, if a woman chooses to cover her hair or face we should

respect this, as women should have the right to be able to control what they wear.

I think maybe what people think is that Muslim men enforce wearing of hijab as a way to oppress women.

There is a general belief that Muslim men don't treat women well or abuse them. Is this something that you've heard of?



Some White people have asserted that our men maltreat women because of strict religious belief.

Do you also believe that this is true about our men?

There is nothing in our religious beliefs that condones abuse against women. However, unfortunately, all religions are often twisted and exploited to such ends, including Islam. Some men mistreat women because of gender stereotypes in a male-dominated society that makes men assume that they have the right to harm women. This is due to generations of old ways of thinking that still manifest.

There are some Muslim people who hold some strict views regarding women, but these views are personal opinions of some clerics and those who follow them. In other words, those who ill-treat women are doing so because they are bad people, not because of their religion.

This is common among all societies, regardless of their religion and ethnicity but the crime of a few do not define everyone.

Ultimately, any ill- treatment of women goes back to the individual irrespective of where they are coming from. As for Middle Eastern Muslims, there are White women who are married to our men. I think people who hold this view about us may ask these women about their experiences and lifestyles being in an interracial marriage.

Affairs with UK



I know that people worry about the Sharia law in the UK.

Do you think that laws in the UK will or should be changed to accommodate the lifestyle and values of Muslim people?

In Islam, we are told to follow the laws of the land we live in. We are not here to change anything as long as we are not made to do something that is uncomfortable to our beliefs.

I think diversity of values and beliefs is a good thing- A multi-cultural and multi-religious society is healthy and creative one. That is what is great about the UK; it is multicultural. I personally have not seen any Muslim person forcing their values and beliefs on other people. Muslims just want their values and beliefs to be respected and in no way pose a threat to people of other faiths and values- so I think that laws should be inclusive and encompass a range of values.

Of course, there will be people that want everyone to agree with their values, but this is not something that can be generalised for Muslims of Middle East. People like this are in every culture and religion.

In fact, I was walking in a park yesterday and there was a Christian preaching with a microphone trying to change people's beliefs. However, it is better for everyone to respect each other's beliefs and values.

This view may be influenced by the media, which make people believe we would "take over" the country and bring sharia law, to a point where people's fear is translated into hate. We are not seeking to take control of Britain, in fact, it is against Islam not to follow the rules of the society in which you live. We just want to live peacefully in the UK with the expectation that our human rights are protected. Moreover, Muslims of Middle Eastern descent share some values of White people, so in many respects, we're not that different!



Some of the things that I've read claim that our people take jobs that should be given to White people. And that we send our earnings to our home country instead of spending the money in the UK economy- or that we rely on unemployment benefits.

Do you also think that this is the case?

I think the media could be blamed for exaggerating this, and the government have also not helped to dispel these ideas.

When the number of people in a certain community increases due to immigration, the new immigrants would be requiring more goods and services. This means that current businesses would expand or new ones would open, creating new jobs that could be held by White people.

Also, people from any other ethnic origins, Muslims and non-Muslims do contribute to the growth of the UK economy. Some jobs require high qualifications that Muslim middle easterners sometimes have, or they would benefit from a multi-lingual employee. Diversity improves businesses and professions because we bring different capabilities and skill sets.

Moreover, there are businesses run by Muslims of middle eastern descent people where people of other ethnic groups work, so immigration can also create new jobs.

As for sending money back home, this is common everywhere in the world. They are natural inflows and outflows of an economy.

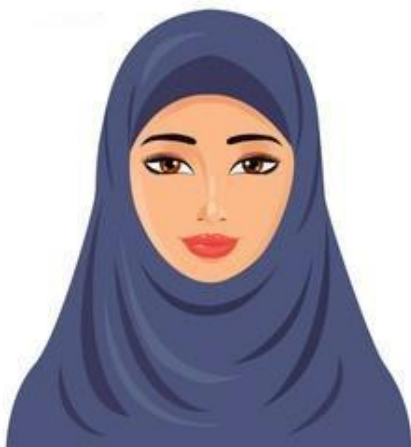
White people who are UK citizens also migrate to the Middle East and they send money back to their home country, the UK. For example, in a BBC report, I read of a person who migrated to the Middle East because of the salary, which enabled him to pay off his mortgage in the UK in one year. Another person said he left his good job in London because of the high rates of tax and relocated to the Middle East. If you're interested, you can read the report here: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/6219000.stm

The UK receives billions of pounds from Britons abroad annually. So if the UK receive money through Britons abroad, then it is okay if Muslim middle easterners send money to their home country.

In fact, in 2020, two of the top three source countries for sending money abroad are in the middle east. They are the United Arab Emirate and Saudi Arabia, the third country is the United States. You can read the report here <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/remittances>

Please know that I'm not defending my group here, I'm just explaining that things are not usually the way they seem if we don't seek the facts. The world economy is interconnected; hence, inflow and outflow of money is expected. As UK residents, we pay our taxes and other expenses, and many Muslims middle easterners invest in the UK. It is expensive to live in the UK, so we spend most of our money here! We only send a small amount back home to help our elderly parents and relatives back home who are unable to work.

How about you? Would you have a need to send money home if you lived abroad?



I think at the same time though, some White people believe that we live in council houses that we do not pay for and take benefits from the government which we are not entitled to.

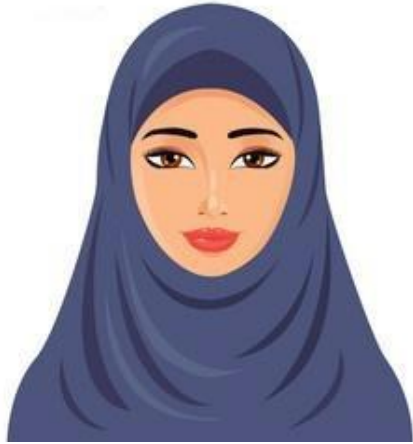
Whether people live in council houses or are on benefits is not related to their religion or ethnicity. Muslims work hard and do their best to contribute to their society with everything they can. People from some countries in the middle east which are war- torn may fall into this category, just as there are people from poorer European countries and other religious backgrounds, so it does not apply to Muslim middle easterners alone.

If you look at the census data from government, you will find that the majority of people who live in council houses are not Muslim middle easterners. The majority of Middle Eastern Muslims have jobs and pay taxes just as any other British citizen in the UK.

I'm against any misuse of benefits that someone can get from the government. Everyone regardless of

race or religion should find a way to be a productive person and not just sitting idle waiting for help of government.

However, there are certain cases where people really need support. A minority of them are Muslims and they are most probably new to the country, like refugees.



Thank you very much for your time.

I hope you enjoyed our conversation.

I look forward to reading your responses.

Questionnaire Introduction

You will now be asked questions about your thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK.

Please respond as honestly as possible. Thank you.

Stereotype

Please indicate the extent to which you consider Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK to possess the following attributes.

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
Friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Warm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Likeable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sincere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Confident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assertive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Efficient	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intelligent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Prejudice 1

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK have jobs that the White/British should have.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐
☐
☐
☐

Most Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here who receive support from welfare could get along without it if they tried.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐
☐
☐
☐

White/British people and Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK can never be really comfortable with each other, even if they are close friends.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐
☐
☐
☐

Most politicians in Britain care too much about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK and not enough about the average British person.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐
☐
☐
☐

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK come from less able races and this explains why they are not as well off as most White/British people.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐
☐
☐
☐

How different or similar do you think Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here are to other White/British people like yourself – in how honest they are?

Very different Somewhat different Somewhat similar Very similar

☐
☐
☐
☐

Prejudice 2

Suppose that a child of yours had children with a person of very different colour and physical characteristics than your own. If your grandchildren did not physically resemble the people on your side of the family, do you think you would be:

Very bothered?	Bothered?	Bothered a little?	Not bothered at all?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I would be willing to have sexual relationships with a Muslim of Middle Eastern descent in the UK.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I would not mind if a suitably qualified Muslim of Middle Eastern descent in the UK was appointed as my boss.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I would not mind if Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK who had a similar economic background as mine joined my close family by marriage.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Prejudice 3

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here should not push themselves where they are not wanted.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Many other groups have come to Britain and overcome prejudice and worked their way up. Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK should do the same without special favor.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

It is just a matter of some people not trying hard enough. If Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK would only try harder they could be as well off as White/British people.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here teach their children values and skills different from those required to be successful in Britain.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Prejudice 4

For each of the following statements, please indicate how different or similar you think Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here are to other White/British people like yourself:

In the values that they teach their children?

Very different	Somewhat different	Somewhat similar	Very similar
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In their religious beliefs and practices?

Very different	Somewhat different	Somewhat similar	Very similar
----------------	--------------------	------------------	--------------

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In their sexual values or sexual practices?			
Very different	Somewhat different	Somewhat similar	Very similar
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the language that they speak?			
Very different	Somewhat different	Somewhat similar	Very similar
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Prejudice 5

Have you ever felt the following ways about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK and their families living here?

How often have you felt sympathy for Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here?			
Very often	Fairly often	Not too often	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often have you felt admiration for Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here?			
Very often	Fairly often	Not too often	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Behaviour Intention

The followings questions ask about your intentions to perform different behaviours in the future.

How much do you intend to interact with Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK in the future?							
Not at all						Very much	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much time do you think you might spend learning about Islam in the future?							
None at all						A lot of time	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important do you think interacting with Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK is?							
Not at all important						Highly important	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How willing would you be to attend a mosque gathering to learn more about Islamic beliefs and practices?							
Not at all willing						Very willing	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Interim Debriefing & Contact

Interim Debriefing

Thank you for participating in this second part of this study. Please take a few more minutes to read the following information.

If you have completed the questionnaire in full, you will receive 1 entry into the prize draw to win 1 of 15 Amazon e-vouchers, if you have entered your email address.

We will contact you in 1 weeks' time to complete the next questionnaire. You may now close your browser.

If you are feeling distressed about any of the topics covered in this questionnaire, please see your GP.

Contact for further information

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Bashirat Ibrahim (baibrahim1@sheffield.ac.uk) in the first instance.

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the research and wish to make a complaint, please contact Dr Chantelle Wood (chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk) in the first instance. If you feel your complaint has not been handled in a satisfactory way you can contact the Head of the Department of Psychology, Professor Elizabeth Milne (psy-hod@sheffield.ac.uk), who will escalate as appropriate. If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, you can find information about how to raise a complaint in the University's Privacy Notice: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

If you have a safeguarding concern, you can contact the Head of the Department of Psychology, Professor Elizabeth Milne (psy-hod@sheffield.ac.uk), who is also the Designated Safeguarding Contact for this research.

Appendix 7. Virtual Intergroup Contact Intervention and Outcome Measures – Stage 3 (Chapter 4)

Research Project Title: Thoughts, feelings and beliefs about people from different groups in the UK.

Note: The information page is the same as the stage 1 study.

Unique Code

Please generate a unique code using the last two letters of your first name, your birth date (i.e. between 01-31), and the last two digits of your personal mobile phone number.

Example: Jean was born on the 13th January and the last two digits of her personal mobile phone number are 52. So the ID code would be “AN1352”.

Your responses are anonymous (your data will only be identified by a unique code). Therefore, please express your thoughts as honestly as possible.

Thank you.



Once again, my name is Abdullah.

I am a Muslim from the Middle East, but I now live in the UK. It's good to be back here.

I read your previous responses to my questions.

I appreciate the feedback. The insights I gained from your responses have helped my understanding of issues better.

I hope you will enjoy today's session and I look forward to reading your thoughts.



Arts & Patriotism

In this part of the study, you will have a conversation with a Middle Easterner, represented by an avatar. Your conversation partner has already prepared his side of the conversation based on his experiences in the UK. The conversation you will have is therefore not in real time, but your responses will be shown to your conversation partner after you complete the study.

I think many White people do not know about some origins of British Art. I feel that may be due to the level of interest in Art.

Do you like art or music? What is your favourite?

Music is very popular among the young and old people, including traditional, modern and religious music. We have traditional dance - including belly dancing that is loved by both men and women especially during weddings and other celebrations.

There are also TV series, films, theatre and folk dramas that tell historical tales. Middle Eastern culture has some of the most beautiful poetry and art (though I'm a little bit biased!). Also common are calligraphy, painting and drawing.

We have a burgeoning art sphere triggered by the Arab uprisings, which is less restricted compared to the past, but we don't draw people and sculptures. Otherwise, I don't see much difference in the arts in our culture and White or non-Muslim cultures.

In fact, there are many famous Arab poets that are part of history who have historically had an important influence on the arts in the western world. For example, Frederic Leighton was a British painter, draughtsman, and sculptor who was inspired by Arabic paintings when he travelled to the Middle East- if you're interested you can see Arabic art in the V&A museum and the Leighton House Museum in London.

Do you know about British Art history?



Some White people have alleged that we are not patriotic towards the UK.

We love this country. That we have different beliefs does not necessarily mean that we reject British values. A society is nothing without the sharing of different cultures and beliefs. Despite us being from a different country, we now live in the UK and we see the UK as our home and would do nothing to harm it.

Similarly, there are people of other religions, including Christians, who are minorities in the Middle East. Even though the values of Muslims and these minorities do not always align, they still love the Middle East and are patriotic towards it. Muslim Brits feel the same here.

In Islam, Muslims must obey the laws of the land and not cause destruction but live peacefully within it. Practicing Muslims who have very good understanding of their religion will give the best in their communities and the countries they live in, even if they have different values and beliefs, as this is what Islam teaches.

There is no contradiction between Islam and civil rights and obligations. In fact, many studies have been conducted on this issue and it has been found that British Muslims are amongst the country's most loyal, patriotic and law-abiding citizens. You can check this report in the Telegraph [here](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12000042/How-patriotic-are-British-Muslims-Much-more-than-you-think-actually.html) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12000042/How-patriotic-are-British-Muslims-Much-more-than-you-think-actually.html>

Do you think we can be the most patriotic group in the UK and still want to harm the country?

Terrorism



There is a belief in the UK that we are terrorists or groom other people to join, and that we aim to convert people to Islam. There is also the belief that our presence in the UK pose a security threat. This is believed because of past events where some Muslims have been involved in terrorism.

Islam is a religion of peace. Muslims are prohibited even to frighten another human being, or even a cat! Muslims are to respect others and treat others fairly otherwise, they are not following their religion. Our prophet was the kindest man in the world who taught us that everyone is equal as a human.

The people that think we are terrorists only look at a small proportion of people who are terrorists and who call themselves Muslims when in fact they are not. Islam does not condone any kind of terrorism. Terrorists have been indoctrinated or brainwashed or have sick minds. They do not represent all of our religion, or us and nobody approves them in the Muslim community.

Extremists are found in all groups, religions and ideologies, and Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent are not an exception. Saying every Muslim is responsible for terrorism is like saying every White person is responsible for systemic racism, slavery, colonialism and genocides.

For example, an article was published in Independent newspaper in 2020 that says more White people were arrested over terrorism than any other ethnic group for third year in a row in the UK. See here: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/terrorism-arrests-uk-white-ethnic-b1812288.html>

What about the shooter who went into shooting rampage in a mosque or school shooters? There are still neo Nazis in Germany. There are Christian terrorist groups. Identified White people throw acid on bystanders in London. There are incels all over the world killing women, majority of them are Whites. Here is an article from a German paper published in 2019 titled "Why a White Christian Isn't Called a Terrorist": <http://www.indepthnews.net/index.php/the-world/asia-pacific/2588-why-a-white-christian-isn-t-called-a-terrorist>

Muslims want to live a quiet life far from the craziness of terrorist groups. However, the media is not objective and therefore, they provoke the anxiety among the people. The media sensationalised news to present Muslims as terrorists/extremists especially since the 9/11 incident in the US.



Dr. Craig Considine 
@CraigCons



When I began my studies in 2003, I learned quickly about an Islamic view on the sanctity of life.

The Qur'an (5:32) says: "Whosoever has killed a soul, it is as though he has murdered all of mankind."

Yes, human life is sacred, for we are made in the image of God (Genesis 9:6).

Do not take this to mean that I am accusing White people of being terrorists. So do not be offended please. Islam and other Abrahamic religions forbid terrorism.

To emphasise, I am saying this so you will know that those who terrorise the world are from different races and religions. I would never blame all the Christians or White people for the crimes committed by other White people. So I will also expect that White people do not blame or fear me for things that were done by some random person that is not even related to me in any way other than my skin colour.

Do you have any idea on how everyday people like you and I can deal with the threats of terrorism?

White People's Attitudes



Some White people often ask if we feel welcomed as citizen in the UK?

Not always. Most people here have been amazing and have made me feel welcomed in the UK. However, there have been many times where I have felt targeted. For example, one time I was stopped by the police while travelling to work in a busy station where they wanted to know if I was legal. I felt so bad about it, and I felt like an outsider.

I also feel scared when I am alone. This is because I have my doubts given that there is a large number of people in the UK who still don't accept us and our culture. I had people behave rudely to me for speaking my native language on the phone and they threw things at me. I have experienced racism and when I do, it makes me feel like I will never be fully accepted as a UK citizen no matter what. I feel anxious and need to show others that I am no danger to society.

I try to smile and I am being vigilant not to attract attention. It is disappointing because I do not feel the same way towards anyone. No one can choose their descent, we are all born with it and for me to get treated differently because of mine makes it unfair as I treat everyone equally and will continue to do so.

I sometimes feel that I am not part of this community and I may not get what I deserve. Therefore, it feels like I have to work harder than everyone else to prove that I am worthy of even living in this country.

Have you or do you know any White person who live in a non-White country? What has the experience of living in such a country been like?



I think in particular, we do not feel welcomed as citizens because of racism and religious prejudice in the UK.

The most significant racist behaviour was the "harm a Muslim day" some years back where people were actively encouraged to harm Muslims. During that time, my mum did not leave the house at all and couldn't go to the mosque.

But there have been many more cases of racism and religious prejudice that I have faced directly. For example, one day when I was just 13, I was walking home from school and I carried a backpack. Then this car pulls up next to me shouting "have you got a bomb in there? Don't kill us!" and they laughed while driving off. I felt like an outcast as people stared at me weirdly!

In secondary school, my classmates were sometimes openly racist toward me, which has impacted my learning and confidence massively as I was always seen and treated as an outsider which made going to school very difficult for me.

As I grow older, the racism is often more and more subtle which makes you feel like you cannot always point it out and stand up for yourself so you just have to endure it. Sometimes it's still overt racism though as well. For example, just recently, I was walking down the streets of London and a group of guys said racial, offensive slurs towards me, and threatened me. It broke my heart because I was no danger to them and they chose to insult me without knowing who I am and what I stand for. If I ever see one of those guys in trouble I would help them even though they wronged me because that's how Muslims are supposed to be.

I also often experience name calling in the streets. Even when I have children walking next to me! This scares the children and it is not a way to live as we always have been very kind to the community around us. And my kids were told by White children that being Muslim is wrong! Another example was when my cousin had her hijab pulled off by two White young men, in what she thought was a relatively safe area of a university campus.

I personally have been told to 'go back to my country'. I have been told to 'get off the dole and speak English' among other things. What annoyed me the most was the generalisations as I have never been 'on the dole' and I pay taxes like everyone else. We are also often exposed to hatred via stereotypes and depictions in the media- sometimes it's just exhausting.

I did not choose to be born to Middle Eastern parents just as you didn't choose to be born in the UK as a White person. I don't want to feel anxiety in public places because of my colour, or my name, or my religion. It makes life harder.

So, I would like non-Muslims in the UK to imagine themselves in another country and try to think how they would feel if they were treated this way.

Why do you think that some people treat us this way?

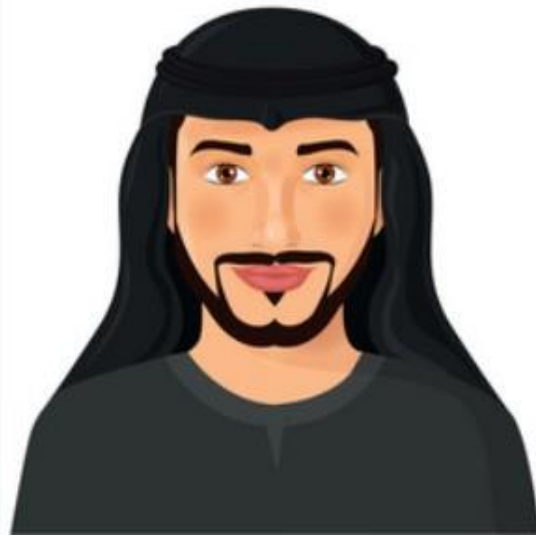
I must say that despite our experiences, we do not perceive all (or most) White people as racist.

It's a big mistake to generalise bad experiences with racism or anti-Muslim prejudice to all people. In every race, you get some bad people. I have met white people who have hearts of gold, and also met racist White people. It just depends on the individual.

Do you think White people would be interested in meeting members of our group to encourage friendship or not?

Relations with White People

Members of my group would want us to have a positive relationship/friendship with White people in



the UK.

The majority of Muslims are not radicals and they are absolutely ok for Muslims to be friends with other people regardless of their race or religion. In Islam, we are taught to accept everyone and so having a positive relationship with White people is a positive thing. Islam is a religion of peace and friendship. I have British friends, and friends from other parts of the world. I have Muslim friends that are married to non-Muslim people. Although some people say that romantic relationships between different religions are more complicated, my friends are living proof that it can work out well!



Dr. Craig Considine ✓
@CraigCons

...

People ask me, "how can you admire Prophet Muhammad & still be a Christian?"

For the same reason that Muhammad said he & Jesus are brothers from different mothers.

And for the same reason that Jesus said "if you believe Moses, you believe me."

I am inspired by kindred spirits.

It has been my experience that no one holds any negative opinions towards those who interact with White people or who have good friendships with them. There has never been an issue with that.

There are some people who consciously refrain from entering into good relations with white Christians. This may be looked upon as backwards and conservatives and narrow- minded. But I would consider

first if there may be another reason for it. Maybe they fear rejection or have had racist experiences, or maybe there is a language barrier. But definitely, it cannot be because of religion.

What about your friends? What would they do if you were unfriendly or unfair towards a Muslim person or a person of a different race?

Superordinate Goal



I just wanted to emphasise that rather than emphasise our differences, we should work together for our common good.

For starters, we need to help protect the planet from ourselves. We need to work together to reduce pollution, stop climate change, and save the environment. The consequences of climate change are lethal. Climate change increase the risk of infectious diseases like the coronavirus (COVID-19). You can read more about it in this World [Bank and ProPublica articles published in 2020: http://blogs.worldbank.org/climatechange/fighting-infectious-diseases-connection-climate-change](http://blogs.worldbank.org/climatechange/fighting-infectious-diseases-connection-climate-change)

You can also read a similar content from this article <http://www.propublica.org/article/climate-infectious-diseases>

No single group or society can protect the environment alone, except if we all cooperate to achieve it. These are global issues that affect us all and are very important to our existence. Therefore, we must act cooperatively to solve them. It is also important because I think we can achieve anything if we work together with no limitations. We are all humans at the end of the day.

How do you think our ethnic groups can work together in mitigating the effects of climate change on



public health?

Thank you very much for your time.
I look forward to reading your replies.

Do you have any final thoughts you like to share?

Questionnaire Introduction

You will now be asked questions about your thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK.

Please respond as honestly as possible. Thank you.
Stereotype

Please select the response that applies to you under the questions below.
Please indicate the extent to which you consider Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK to possess the following attributes.

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
Friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Warm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Likeable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sincere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Confident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assertive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Efficient	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intelligent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Prejudice 1

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK have jobs that the White/British should have.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐
☐
☐
☐

Most Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here who receive support from welfare could get along without it if they tried.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐
☐
☐
☐

White/British people and Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK can never be really comfortable with each other, even if they are close friends.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐
☐
☐
☐

Most politicians in Britain care too much about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK and not enough about the average British person.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐
☐
☐
☐

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK come from less able races and this explains why they are not as well off as most White/British people.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

☐
☐
☐
☐

How different or similar do you think Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here are to other White/British people like yourself – in how honest they are?

Very different Somewhat different Somewhat similar Very similar

☐
☐
☐
☐

Prejudice 2

Suppose that a child of yours had children with a person of very different colour and physical characteristics than your own. If your grandchildren did not physically resemble the people on your side of the family, do you think you would be:

Very bothered?	Bothered?	Bothered a little?	Not bothered at all?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I would be willing to have sexual relationships with a Muslim of Middle Eastern descent in the UK.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I would not mind if a suitably qualified Muslim of Middle Eastern descent in the UK was appointed as my boss.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I would not mind if Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK who had a similar economic background as mine joined my close family by marriage.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Prejudice 3

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here should not push themselves where they are not wanted.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Many other groups have come to Britain and overcome prejudice and worked their way up. Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK should do the same without special favor.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

It is just a matter of some people not trying hard enough. If Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK would only try harder they could be as well off as White/British people.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here teach their children values and skills different from those required to be successful in Britain.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Prejudice 4

For each of the following statements, please indicate how different or similar you think Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here are to other White/British people like yourself:

In the values that they teach their children?

Very different	Somewhat different	Somewhat similar	Very similar
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In their religious beliefs and practices?

Very different	Somewhat different	Somewhat similar	Very similar
----------------	--------------------	------------------	--------------

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In their sexual values or sexual practices?			
Very different	Somewhat different	Somewhat similar	Very similar
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the language that they speak?			
Very different	Somewhat different	Somewhat similar	Very similar
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Prejudice 5

Have you ever felt the following ways about Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK and their families living here?

How often have you felt sympathy for Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here?			
Very often	Fairly often	Not too often	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often have you felt admiration for Muslims of Middle Eastern descent living here?			
Very often	Fairly often	Not too often	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Behaviour Intention

The followings questions ask about your intentions to perform different behaviours in the future.

How much do you intend to interact with Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK in the future?							
Not at all						Very much	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much time do you think you might spend learning about Islam in the future?							
None at all						A lot of time	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important do you think interacting with Muslims of Middle Eastern descent in the UK is?							
Not at all important						Highly important	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How willing would you be to attend a mosque gathering to learn more about Islamic beliefs and practices?							
Not at all willing						Very willing	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Debriefing & Contact

Debriefing

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this study.

Please take a moment to read the following information about the aims of the study.

Research indicates that 70% of Muslims in the UK have experienced religion-based prejudice (Abrams et al., 2018). There is therefore a critical need to develop effective techniques to reduce prejudice. One potentially effective technique is virtual contact, which involves online interactions between members of different groups. The aim of the current study was to evaluate whether simulated online interactions between White people and Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent, can improve attitudes towards Muslims.

If you were assigned to the intervention group, you would have engaged in a simulated conversation with a number of people identified as Muslims of Middle-Eastern descent. Your interaction partner would have shared information about their experiences, beliefs and cultural practices, and you would have been invited to respond. You were then asked to answer a set of questions designed to measure your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about Muslims. If you were assigned to the control group you would not have participated in a simulated conversation, and instead would only have been asked to answer the set of questions about your thoughts, feelings and beliefs. This allows us to examine whether thoughts, feelings and beliefs about Muslims are different in those participants who experience the interaction, vs. those participants who did not.

Some of the questions asked you to respond to statements about Muslims that you may have found offensive or inappropriate. The questions included are widely used in research on prejudice to tap into direct and extreme forms of prejudice, as well as forms of prejudice that are more indirect and subtle. It is important that we ask these questions, so that we can evaluate whether the simulated online interaction helps to reduce different types of prejudice.

Thank you for participating in this research. Your time is appreciated.

If you have fully completed this questionnaire, you will receive another entry into the prize draw to win 1 of 15 Amazon e-vouchers.

If you are feeling distressed about any of the topics covered in this questionnaire, please see your GP.

Contact for Further Information

If you have any questions about this study or would like to get further information, please do not hesitate to contact Bashirat Ibrahim (baibrahim1@sheffield.ac.uk).

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the research and wish to make a complaint, please contact Dr Chantelle Wood (chantelle.wood@sheffield.ac.uk) in the first instance. If you feel your complaint has not been handled in a satisfactory way you can contact the Head of the Department of Psychology, Professor Elizabeth Milne (psy-hod@sheffield.ac.uk), who will escalate as appropriate.

If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, you can find information about how to raise a complaint in the University's Privacy Notice: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

If you have a safeguarding concern, you can contact the Head of the Department of Psychology, Professor Elizabeth Milne (psy-hod@sheffield.ac.uk), who is also the Designated Safeguarding Contact for this research.

