Understanding Everyday Experiences of Othering and Discrimination in Britain: Focus on Mosque Staff and Minority-owned Business

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PREFACE

The proposed thesis follows a three-paper format. Professor Neli Demireva is the co-author of the first paper and her contribution covers 15% of the paper. There are no co-authors on the second, third paper and other chapters.

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ABSTRACT

The proposed dissertation follows a three-paper format. The articles represent the distinct but interrelated strands of research; The first paper discusses the everyday hate crime experiences of mosques staffs which located in the UK and the transformation of the British Muslim community into a “suspect community”. The second paper deals with the antagonistic attacks and conflicts faced by mosques, which are the identity of the British Muslim community in the public sphere, in terms of typology and ethnic enclave. The third paper discusses minority business owners' everyday experiences of racism and discrimination. All three pieces focus on the everyday experiences of othering and discrimination of the British Muslim community and other visible minorities.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS I

PREFACE II

ABSTRACT III

LIST OF TABLES VI

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION 1

INTRODUCTION 2

REFERENCES LIST 10

CHAPTER II: EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES OF BEING PART OF A 'SUSPECT COMMUNITY': A STUDY OF IMAMS AND MOSQUE STAFF IN BRITAIN 12

ABSTRACT 12

INTRODUCTION 13

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 15

1.1. Increasing Hate Crime in the UK and the Muslim Community *15*

1.2. Muslims as the "Suspect Community"? *17*

1.3. Brexit, COVID-19 and the Muslim Community in Britain *20*

2. METHODS AND DATA 21

3. FINDINGS 24

3.1. Normalisation of Anti-Muslim Attack Targets in the Shadow of the Climate of Tension *24*

3.2. Known Muslim Profile: Target of Hate Crime *26*

3.3. Negative Impact of Media/Political Discourses on Portrayal of the Muslim Profile *30*

3.4. Brexit Concerns of the British Muslim Community *32*

3.5. Pandemic, British Muslim Community and Discrimination Triangle *33*

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION 34

REFERENCES LİST 38

APPENDICES 43

CHAPTER III: BRITISH MOSQUES AND CONFLICT IN PUBLIC SPACES 45

ABSTRACT 45

INTRODUCTION 46

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH THEMES 48

1.1. Research on mosques and conflict in European cities *48*

1.2. Ethnic Enclaves *54*

1.3. A Typology of British Mosques *55*

2. METHODS AND DATA **60**
2.1. Description of the Sample and Methods of Access *60*
3. FINDINGS **71**
3.1. Mosque Conflict: Local Response to Establishment of New Mosques *71*
3.2. Mosques That Have Never Been Attacked *77*
3.3. Low and High-Level Severity Attacks in the Context of the Ethnic Enclave and Typology *80*
4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION **91**
REFERENCES LIST **96**

CHAPTER IV: EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES OF RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS ETHNIC MINORITY SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS **101**

ABSTRACT **101**
INTRODUCTION **102**
1. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK **104**
1.1. Adversarial Experiences of Minority-owned Small Businesses *104*
1.2. Brexit, Discrimination and Hate Crimes *111*
2. METHODS AND DATA **116**
3. FINDINGS **120**
3.1. Mapping the Nature of Experiences of Ethnic Minority Business Owners *121*
3.2. Triggering Factors and Brexit Impact *127*
3.3. Effects of Experiencing Everyday Racism: Social Life and Families *131*
4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION **133**
REFERENCES LIST **136**

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION **141**

CONCLUSION **142**
REFERENCES LIST **150**

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER II

Table 1: Muslim Population and Participants by Regions…………………………………...43

Table 2: Participant Profiles……………………………………………………………….44

CHAPTER III

Table 1: Mosque Numbers by Typologies and Local Area Diversity ……………………….69

Table 2: Mosque Typologies by Number of Attacks…………………………………………70

Table 3: Mosque Local Areas Diversity by Number of Attacks……………………..............70

Table 4: Establishment Date of Mosques and Number of Attacks…………………………...71

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Sociological studies and research on the antagonistic attitudes faced by ethnic and religious minorities have been addressed by scholars for more than a century. Changing borders after wars, migration waves in a globalizing world, and an environment of social conflict brought about by terrorism and political issues all keep research on antagonism against ethnic and religious minorities on the agenda. In the case of the United Kingdom, the wave of immigration to Britain from different parts of the empire after the Second World War is a significant point when researching discrimination and racism. Following the war, immigrants with different ethnic and religious backgrounds from different parts of the Indian subcontinent migrated to Britain (Ansari 2018). Discrimination, othering, and antagonistic attitudes faced by new immigrants and subsequent generations, as well as social issues such as identity, integration, and multiculturalism, have been frequently discussed over the years. The diversity of prejudices and motivations that drive racism towards ethnic and religious minorities is complex and this thesis strives to capture important and often overlooked nuances.

This research is firmly embedded in a sociological tradition of studying practices of normalization of othering and of discrimination (Haynes, Schweppe, and Garland 2023). In particular, the work of Herek, Cogan, and Gillis (2002) assists in understanding how, despite evidence of sharp conflicts and antagonistic negative contact with different groups, respondents may still question or minimise the severity of their experiences and fail to report them, frequently rationalising their own victimisation. Research on microaggressions and their impact on ethnic and religious minorities has been receiving sustained focus in recent years, and this thesis provides important evidence in this respect (Levin and MacDevitt 2013).

A hate crime is any crime perceived by the victim or any other person to be based on prejudice or hostility towards their actual or perceived identity (race, religion, ethnicity/national origin, disability, or sexual orientation) (Awan and Zempi 2016; Sun 2006).

While, Feldman and Allchorn (2019), stated that a broad and vague hate crime definition cannot be useful for policy makers interested in the detection and response to hate crimes that Muslims face in daily life, and the definition of anti-Muslim hate crime should be precise and specific in scope. Studies discussing hate crimes faced by the British Muslim community focus more on reported/recorded crimes, and in this context the definition of hate crime is narrow for this study (Allen 2017; Awan 2014; Awan and Zempi 2016). Everyday hate crime can be defined as often random or opportunistic verbal harassment, physical assault, and vandalism of a community, individuals, and their property, especially in public spaces (Copsey et al. 2013; Iganski 2008).

The sociological perspective considers discrimination as a broader phenomenon with an exclusionary aspect, and defines it as discrimination and exclusion in a multi-ethnic and cultural environment due to identities (religion, race, gender, language, etc.) that are often not under the control of the individual (Foroutan 2011). Foroutan (2011) stated that when two or more identities that cause discrimination come together, it further exacerbates the existing discrimination. “Othering” is the process in which the differences of an individual or a group with negative meanings are perceived as a threat in daily life, and it includes the negative and devaluing processes of those other than "me" and "us" (Özensel 2020; Silva 2017). There are studies discussing both concepts specifically for the British Muslim community and other visible minority communities. Research discussing the discrimination experienced by the British Muslim community has focused mostly on perceived discrimination (Lindemann and Stolz 2021; Robinson 2005). Many members of the Muslim community and other visible minority groups may have different levels of ability to understand or different perceptions of attacks of racism and discrimination. Therefore, a broader concept of everyday discrimination and othering will be used over different themes. This thesis is very much embedded in the sociological tradition of understanding everyday experiences, the role these experiences play

in the lives of people, and their relationship to communities (Back 2015). In resisting practices of othering, links can be built between community members and the mosque leaders. Chapter 2 provides examples of the forging of such common links and the providing of means of resistance to rising tides of religious discrimination. The mosque leaders, shopkeepers, and small business owners interviewed for this study exemplify different forms of resilience, and this thesis dwells effectively on their coping mechanisms for dealing with negative contact and everyday practices of othering.

Addressing the hate crime attacks suffered by the British Muslim community and other visible ethnic minorities, this thesis focuses on the everyday experiences of discrimination and othering of ethnic and religious minorities in the United Kingdom. The thesis consists of three articles discussing the mosques of the Muslim community, mosque staff (Chapters 2 and 3), and small business owners (Chapter 4) from other visible ethnic minorities. The subject of each research paper's fieldwork was different (mosque staff, mosques and small business owners) and this allowed a broad perspective in the discussion of everyday antagonistic attacks, discrimination and othering in the UK. Mosques represent the presence and identity of the British Muslim community in the public space. Therefore, the anti-Muslim attacks that mosques face are very important for understanding and conceptualising the nature and severity of antagonism towards the Muslim community. Additionally, mosque staff, particularly imams, are generally knowledgeable about the antagonistic attacks experienced by members of the local Muslim community. Many mosques have effective programs to cope with discrimination and hate crimes towards by members of the community. Moreover, imams are not only religious leaders but are also the person consulted for many socio-economic issues for the community. When viewed in this context, mosque staff are key for leading discussions about the nature of the discrimination and othering of the Muslim

community. On the other hand, minority business owners are inherently more likely to face everyday racism and discrimination.

The field studies in this research focused on the participants' experiences in their everyday life. Details of everyday life are matters for researchers who focus on social issues. In his study of social stratification through Christmas lights, Back (2015) presents arguments for why everyday life is important to researchers. There are public issues that remain alive in the ordinariness of everyday life, and the smallest stories and daily interactions can capture important social issues (Back 2015). The sameness and continuity of everyday life, that is, its routinisation, may cause some social issues to be overlooked (Neal and Murji 2015). The everyday life experiences of the field study participants of the three research papers that make up this thesis were important for a multidimensional discussion of social issues, such as discrimination and othering. In the fieldwork with mosque staff, the lives of the participants, families and the local minority community in public spaces were the focus. The attitudes they face on public transportation, on the streets, and in public institutions were examined. For most participants, antagonistic attitudes and behaviours encountered in daily life have become almost ordinary, and these attitudes are ignored by the victims. Thus, the findings of this thesis can be seen in the context of seminal sociological work on micro-aggression and the practice of normalisation of othering (Herek, Cogan, and Gillis 2002). In particular, during the fieldwork conducted with minority business owners, it became more obvious how important a focus on everyday life is for the issue of othering and discrimination. The transformation of verbal and physical attacks into a part of working life for minority small business owners was apparent in almost all interviews. If, like in most previous research on the British Muslim community and other minorities, the focus had been only on recorded attacks, it would have been difficult to explore the details of the antagonistic attitudes, normalisation and coping mechanisms faced by the community.

The subject of these research papers was quite sensitive and due consideration to various ethical considerations was given. For example, in the fieldwork with the British Muslim community, the aim was to break down barriers and build up trust by choosing to use by choosing to use Islamic jargon rather than official language when communicating with them for the first time. Similar strategies were followed in the fieldwork with minority business owners. Participants may have had painful past experiences, and during the interviews they were encouraged to answer questions about attacks such as discrimination and hate crimes. Some previous studies have shown that victims may sometimes be unable to understand/perceive the attacks (Brennan 2016). While the pandemic made it difficult to contact participants, the fact that the semi-structured interviews had to be conducted online limited the field research. Potential participants may have had limited online interview technology proficiency, and due to the sensitive nature of the research topic, participants may have been hesitant to talk about the details of their experiences. Furthermore, another limitation of the field research was the language barrier. Many potential participants declined to participate in the study because they were not confident in their English language skills. Some participants had difficulty conveying their experiences and the concepts were simplified for the participants during the interviews.

Early research reports suggested that ethnic and minority people in the UK faced aggression and discrimination during the pandemic. There were antagonistic attitudes towards minorities during the COVID-19 pandemic period and the British Muslim community were frequently subjected to anti-Muslim hate crimes (Awan and Khan-Williams 2020). Mosques became a subject of discussion during the pandemic period, and pandemic restrictions and the closure of mosques just before the Eid brought about discussions of discrimination (Binding 2020). The Brexit campaign was also among the main themes that determined the framework of field studies. The Brexit referendum was held in the United Kingdom in 2016, and the campaign

arguments brought with them a number of sociological discussions (Burnett 2017; Khalili 2017). There is evidence that the campaign may have increased antagonism and hate crimes faced by both the British Muslim community and other visible minorities (Flatley 2019). The language used in the campaign and the impact of immigrant and welfare nationalism on the experiences of both mosque workers and minority business owners are important themes of this thesis (Donoghue and Kuisma 2022). In the field studies, the changes in the participants' social lives before and after Brexit, as well as the cracks in their relationships with local communities, were examined. It was discovered how effective the harsh and anti-immigrant language of the campaign, as revealed by previous reports, was in the everyday othering experiences of ethnic and religious minority individuals.

Moreover, the pressure put on the Muslim community by Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and the terrorist attacks in the UK in recent decades, and how the Anti-terrorism Act turned the Muslim community into a "suspect community" have also been discussed (Awan 2012; Bonino 2013; Pantazis and Pemberton 2009). The present research, which discusses the concept of a “suspect community” in terms of the experiences of mosque staff of everyday hate crime and discrimination, contributes to the literature on discrimination and “othering”. This thesis shows that it is important to consider the Muslim community as the new suspect community in Britain. The chapter which presents the research with mosque staff shows that we need to consider the effects on the daily lives of the British Muslims while being treated as a suspicious community; for example, antagonistic experiences can completely change their daily routines and living conditions. Maybe they are afraid to go out, or they are worried about being alone in public spaces; they constantly worry that someone is watching them. Muslims with traditional clothes and beards are surprised when they are not stopped and checked at the airport. Additionally, the experiences of mosque workers are not limited to the mosque's surroundings; they are subjected to attacks on the street, in the gym, and on public

transportation. They have talked about not only their own experiences, but also those of family members, friends or members of the local Muslim community. These experiences have turned into public fear. Fear is deeply embedded in the lives of all of them.

However, the British Muslim community is multi-ethnic, and places of worship are diverse. Previously, British mosques were classified in terms of functional and structural aspects (Ahmed 2019; Saleem 2013). In this thesis it is argued that the severity of anti-Muslim hate crimes experienced between mosques may differ, and previous mosque classifications are inadequate to detail the differences in the severity of the attacks faced between mosque buildings. Therefore, a new typology of mosques is proposed based on function and visibility, drawing on previous mosque classifications: symbol mosque, community mosque and masjid. Following this typology of visibility, it is expected that symbol mosques have the highest level of visibility, and therefore accrue a greater number of more severe attacks, followed by community mosques and finally masjid mosques. Moreover, the ethnic enclave might also play a role. Here, an ethnic enclave is created based on the proportion of the White British population where the mosques are located. Symbol and community mosques can be in areas with a high presence of co-ethnics and a low presence of white British individuals, which can have a protective effect. Previous mosque literature has focused mostly on the tensions and conflicts created by newly built mosques (Allen 2017; Cesari 2005; McLoughlin 2005). Contrary to previous literature, this work shows that old and new mosques are targets of antagonistic attacks. Additionally, unlike previous literature, it classifies mosques according to their visibility and functions and reveals the differences in violence to which they are exposed. This thesis contributes to the literature by presenting and discussing the need in future studies to consider both the suggested mosque typology and mosques as a whole, without distinguishing between old and new.

All three research papers presented in the main chapters of this work provide important clues about the ways in which victims normalise their everyday experiences of antagonistic attacks, discrimination, and othering. Many victims do not consider their experiences important enough to report (Haynes, Schweppe, and Garland 2023). At this point, there are two approaches: not being able to perceive the attack or being exposed to it frequently. These were encountered frequently at both points during the field work. Many victims ignored verbal attacks in particular when reporting their experiences, and this was more common among first-generation immigrants. Whereas, repeated exposure to attacks reduces the severity of the next attack. The attacks frequently experienced by victims and their families play an active role in normalising the antagonistic attitudes faced by members of ethnic and religious minority communities. However, the severity of the attacks is effective in normalising the crime by the victims (Brennan 2016). This situation was encountered frequently, especially during the fieldwork with minority business owners. Verbal attacks are often perceived as a situation that comes with business life and being a foreigner; thus, they are ignored, and a kind of coping mechanism is created. However, most of the time, physical attacks that injure someone or cause property damage to businesses fall outside the established coping mechanism and are reported to the police. Following this introductory chapter there are three chapters which present the research and outcomes of the fieldwork. They cover the everyday experiences of the mosques, the mosque staff and minority small business owners dealing with racism and discrimination. Lastly, a concluding chapter is presented, along with ideas for future research.

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CHAPTER II: Everyday Experiences of Being Part of a 'Suspect Community': a Study of Imams and Mosque Staff in Britain

ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to understand the complex experiences of "othering" of the Muslim community in Britain today. Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and 7/7 and almost two decades of operation of the Prevent programme, more recent major shifts in the British political climate such as Brexit, the hostile immigration environment as a policy, and the major crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, an increasing number of hate crime incidents targeting Muslims have been documented. Based on 44 semi-structured in-depth interviews with imams from mosques in locations around Britain, this paper discusses the reality of living in a "suspect community".

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on imams and mosque staff in Britain and reflects on experiences of being Muslim in an increasingly “hostile” climate. Practices of normalisation of targeting and being singled out are discussed, and in particular hate crime in the wake of Brexit and during the COVID-19 pandemic are considered. Research suggests that Muslims in Britain are experiencing increasing levels of discrimination and hate crime (Ali 2015; Khattab and Modood 2015). Whereas some of this hate crime is primarily expressed online Awan and Zempi (2015); Awan and Khan-Williams (2020); Feldman and Littler (2014), research shows that individuals in traditional Islamic clothing can be targeted particularly (Zempi and Chakraborti 2015). Mosque staff members, and in particular imams, play an important role in the local community; mosques as religious sites frequently bear the brunt of targeted attacks (Birt 2006).

There are several characteristics that make mosques unique field sites. There is a dominant ethnic majority in mosques, and a mother tongue other than English; these are important features which are reflected in the perceptions of anti-Muslim assaults and discrimination among mosque workers and families that make up the mosque community (Githens-Mazer and Lambert 2010). Imams and mosque staff are not only religious leaders but are also guides for the members of the community who regularly come to the mosque, where all kinds of social/economic problems are discussed and solved. Among the areas where imams and mosque staff provide guidance is hate crime. Most mosques have effective hate crime response programmes for the local Muslim community, working in partnership with the police, local authorities and third-party reporting centres (e.g. Tell MAMA). Therefore, it is likely that mosque staff will be familiar with the everyday experiences of discrimination and othering experienced by victims and local communities. In addition, the mosque is seen as a facility where funerals, weddings, and religious and ethnic culture are preserved. It is a place

where social problems that reflect their identities are solved for Muslim individuals. However, the Muslim community is not one composite whole, and there can be important distinctions along racial, ethnic and national lines (the Muslim community may include individuals that identify as black or white in terms of ethnicity, as Turkish, Asian, or Arab in terms of both ethnicity and nationality) (Peach 2006). Many of these categories are interconnected and perceived discrimination may thus differ alongside racial, ethnic effects and national lines. This paper will further explore the complexity of this issue by interviewing Mosque staff that fall into a variety of these categories, in order to provide a wide-ranging scoping overview of these issues.

This paper is based on 44 in-depth interviews completed with mosques staffs in the period from July 2020 to March 2021. In order to be able to comment on the multiplicity of the aforementioned issue, mosques have been identified that represent different ethnic and national groups in Britain; and staff have been interviewed whose self-identification ensure the capturing of the views of individuals that belong to different racial, ethnic and national groups. Considering the ethnic diversity of Islam, the structures of mosque buildings, their purpose of use and management, various differences can be expected between imams (Rahman, Ahmed, and Khan 2006). However, mosques are generally established under the umbrella of a specific ethnic organisation, and in particular, mosques outside London belong to a dominant ethnic group (Rahman, Ahmed, and Khan 2006). In terms of the scope of the field work, all regions of the UK were covered.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Increasing Hate Crime in the UK and the Muslim Community

In recent years, the growing number of hate attacks against Muslims, the UK's largest religious minority who make up 4.4% of the population, has been found to be even higher than against other religious minorities (Flatley 2019) . A significant increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes was observed immediately after the 9/11 terrorist attack (Hanes and Machin 2014). Also, an increase was observed in online threats, physical attacks and harassment after the 7/7 terrorist attack in the UK; and more recently, the killing in May 2013 of Lee Rigby incited anti-Muslim hate crime on social media and on the streets of Britain (Awan and Zempi 2016). In 2017, the Finsbury Park Mosque was targeted with violence causing the death of one and injury to many. This attack has had a profound impact upon the Muslim community in Britain (McGarry 2017).

Over the years, several studies have looked at the tensions between mainstream society and the British Muslim community (Abbas 2007; Ahmed 2010; Hanes and Machin 2014; Johnston and Lordan 2012; Poynting and Mason 2006; Shaw 2012). Many of them look at the sustained attacks towards British Muslims that have been experienced since 9/11. In particular, Muslim communities in Britain have become targets of sustained attacks (Sheridan 2006; Sheridan and Gillett 2005)**.** Although all minority groups may be subjects of discriminatory treatment Borell (2015), there is evidence that Muslim groups are particularly hard hit (Hanes and Machin 2014). Terrorist attacks serve to increase both the realistic threat and the symbolic threat towards a community that now has become suspect by association with the act of terror (Borell 2015; Ciftci 2012; Hanes and Machin 2014). Media narratives can play an important role in shaping this sentiment and further stoking feelings of outrage (Jaspal and Cinnirella 2010). Representations of Muslims as “the other”, as a community opposed to integration and sharing different values can create a sense of social distance

between the minority and the majority group (Ahmad 2006; Saeed 2007). Some studies report that minorities living in ethnic enclaves are experiencing less discrimination (Bécares, Nazroo, and Stafford 2009; Schofield et al. 2016); however, some more recent studies contest this positive finding (Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2016).

Moreover, the majority of studies addressing hate crimes faced by minorities in the UK tend to focus on reported crimes, and there are a significant number of hate crimes that Myers and Lantz (2020) terms the "dark figure" that are not reported to the police by victims. Three important symbolic functions play an active role in reporting crime to the police: the victims' trust in the law, the police being an active actor and the police being the right address to deal with the crime suffered (Myers and Lantz 2020; Zaykowski 2010). The main reasons for not reporting crimes to the police are the lack of trust in the police by minority groups, fear of reprisals and further discrimination, shame and embarrassment, and advice from the victim's environment not to report (Myers and Lantz 2020). Furthermore, the fact that some victims do not perceive the crime or do not value the crime suffered is also an important factor in not reporting crime to the police (Haynes, Schweppe, and Garland 2023). While the likelihood of reporting hate crimes in the UK has increased over time, third-party reporting centres (e.g. community centres, voluntary organisations) are making a significant contribution to the reporting of hate crimes in the country and reported hate crimes reflect relatively positively on hate crime prevention policies and practices (Myers and Lantz 2020).

A hostile climate introduced by successive British governments and supported through the Prevent programmes can be seen as being in alignment with anti-Muslim campaigns and condoning anti-Muslim sentiment. Some scholars have argued that this is a form of religious discrimination, albeit done for the sake of prevention of terror attacks and through increased surveillance programmes (Bonino 2012; Choudhury and Fenwick 2011; Fox 2019; Joppke 2009). Thus, the prevention policies based on anti-terrorism laws, especially the 2001 Anti-

terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA), which has been expanded over time, have transformed British Muslims into a “suspect community”, altering the social fabric of society, and increasing the tensions experienced by Muslims in Britain, not only from members of the community but from the British government itself (Akbaba and Fox 2011; Gilks 2020; O'Toole, DeHanas, and Modood 2012; Pantazis and Pemberton 2009). Moreover, this increased securitization goes hand in hand with the consolidation of prejudices and concerns against Muslims which existed before the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and 7/7. It is intended to bring about a challenge to existing anti-discrimination and multiculturalism policies, and to provide a basis for restrictive political agenda (Cesari 2009; Fox and Akbaba 2015). One public and political effect is the increased stress experienced by the Muslim community (Bonino 2012). It is possible to see the "suspect community" debates, stress and pressure on the British Muslim community during the Brexit campaign and the Covid-19 pandemic in the last decade.

1.2. Muslims as the "Suspect Community"?

Since the 2001 Anti-Terrorism Act came into effect, statistical data show that at least 237 people have been arrested on terrorism charges between 2001 and 2010 (Choudhury and Fenwick 2011). However, the effects of securitisation policies of consecutive British governments have had broader social repercussions upon the Muslim community in Britain, and police and security forces have been given further powers (Brown 2010; Choudhury and Fenwick 2011). Qualitative studies suggest that these powers are associated with a rise in perceived discrimination within the Muslim community (Brown 2010; Choudhury and Fenwick 2011). For example, mostly male members of the Muslim community are exposed to “stop and search” Choudhury and Fenwick (2011) which disproportionality can be seen as a form of discrimination (Brown 2010; Choudhury and Fenwick 2011). On the other hand, it was alleged that the practice of stopping and searching Asian Muslims harassed and

discriminated against young Muslim men. At airports following 9/11, Muslims men felt especially targeted (Choudhury and Fenwick 2011). In a study based on the “stop and search” practice between 2001 and 2003, Brown (2010) found that while British Asians (4% of the population) saw a 302% increase in their experience of their terror prevention policing in the period between 2001 to 2003, in 2004, compared to the whole population, it was stated that the rate of Asians involved in “stop and search” activities was 12.4%. Similarly, Bonino (2012) stated that British Transport Police figures indicated that in the period after the attacks up to August 10, 2005, Asians were five times more likely to be stopped and searched than white British people after the 7/7 London bombings. The disproportionate experience of “stop and search” has had its defenders –usually the young age profile of British Muslims is cited as a reason Joppke (2009); however, it can also be seen as solidifying a process of “othering”, not experienced by British Muslims since the height of the 1989 Rushdie affair (Poynting and Mason 2006).

Counter-terrorism policing in practice also involves increased surveillance of the Muslim community through hidden and open CCTV cameras placed in predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods or through the infiltration of mosques by undercover police officers: the PVE (Preventing Violent Extremism) strategy carried out with various leaders and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) of the Muslim community (Awan 2012b; O'Toole, DeHanas, and Modood 2012). These strategies have been seen as very alienating (O'Toole, DeHanas, and Modood 2012), and damaging the trust of the Muslim community in the broader society (Awan 2012b).

These practices of targeting can be seen to have made the Muslim community a “suspect community” in Britain. The concept of “suspect community” was first used in the Hillyard (1993) study of how Northern Irish people became a “suspect community” because of the conflict between the IRA and the government (Awan 2012a; Hussain and Bagguley 2012;

Bonino 2013). Parallels can be drawn however to the Muslim community, with British Muslims as the dominant target of the state's attention (Pantazis and Pemberton (2009). A community of suspects will see such preventative actions targeting all members of the community, regardless of whether he or she had been involved in a particular crime. Thus, individuals belonging to a sub-group of the population considered to be “problematic” by the state can be targeted, not as a result of their suspect behaviour, but only because they belong to that sub-group Pantazis and Pemberton (2009) defined as race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, language, accent, dress, political ideology, or any combination of these factors. These practices of “othering” can be adopted by society at large Cherney and Murphy (2016), although some critics believe that such a comparison cannot be made (Greer 2010).

There are further distinctions within the Muslim community that are not often considered, and studies tend to assume that ethnicity and religion are interchangeable categories Khattab and Modood (2015); yet, there are important differences. For example, although white Muslims belong to the majority group in terms of ethnicity, they are in the Muslim community group in terms of faith. White Muslims, and those with mixed family origins may not be subjected to same treatment in theory (Khattab and Modood 2015). When the Muslim individual has an Islamic cultural identity that determines their presence in the public sphere, their religious cultural identity can supersede their ethnic identity Khattab and Modood (2015) in the perceptions of others. Khattab and Modood (2015) for example, argue that although Muslims are exposed to more labour market discrimination than other groups, there is a hierarchy according to ethnicity, and black Muslims experience the highest level of discrimination. This paper will reflect on the complexity of this issue by interviewing mosque staff that belong to various racial, ethnic, and national groups.

1.3. Brexit, COVID-19 and the Muslim Community in Britain

There are indications that Brexit may have compounded the negative sentiment towards Muslims in Britain (Burnett 2017). Between April 2016, when the United Kingdom's European Union membership referendum campaign started, and July 2016, when the referendum was held, there was a significant increase in the number of recorded religiously and racially motivated attacks (Flatley 2019). Commentators have argued that anti-Muslim sentiment has underlined the Brexit campaign (Abbas 2019). Nigel Farage, former head of the anti-EU UKIP party, handed out a poster featuring an image of thousands of refugees shortly before the referendum. There was a slogan on the poster which stated, "The EU failed us all." (Stewart and Mason 2016). Yet, it is difficult to adjudicate whether the EU referendum is a leading cause of discrimination of ethnic minorities in Britain; or rather, that issues such as Islamophobia, which has always existed against Muslims, became more prominent during the campaign (Burnett 2017; Virdee and McGeever 2018).

The COVID-19 outbreak not only revealed political and social cracks in societies, it also affected marginal groups and exposed the levels of sustained discrimination against them (Devakumar et al. 2020). During the lockdown, the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group 2020 has reported that a rise in fake news has brought about several waves of online hate speech targeting Muslims and Islamophobia (Awan and Khan-Williams 2020). There have been claims on social media that Muslims are "super-carriers" of the virus or "mosques are the source of the spread of COVID-19" (Awan and Khan-Williams 2020). After fake videos claiming that Muslims praying at Wembley Central in London were not practicing social distancing, Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) which is a national project that records and measures anti-Muslim incidents in the UK, made a statement that the video mentioned did not reflect the position of the Muslim community (Awan and Khan-Williams 2020). However, a report by the Commission for Countering Extremism (CCE) found that far-right groups called for action via Telegram, a social media application, to infect Jews and

Muslims with the coronavirus (COVID-19) (Commission for Countering Extremism 2020). While these attacks are primarily confined to the online spaces, concerns were expressed that these might have become physical once lockdowns were lifted (Poole and Williamson 2023). The first statistical studies to address the distribution of victims of coronavirus by ethnic minority show that the British Muslim community was one of the most affected religious groups. The Muslim community felt targeted in lockdown decisions. For example, the lockdown instituted hours before the Eid al-Adha (30/07-03/08 2020), which is one of the most important religious festivals of Muslims, drew reaction among the British Muslim community (Brown 2020). Britain's Health Secretary Matt Hancock announced that quarantine would be declared hours before the Eid al-Adha, citing the increase in coronavirus cases in the Greater Manchester, Lancashire, and West Yorkshire regions of the country (Binding 2020). Hancock said in a statement, "The spread (epidemic) is largely due to the gathering of household members and their non-compliance with social distance, and from midnight tonight, people from different households will not be allowed to meet indoors." (Binding 2020). The higher mortality rate among Muslims compared to other religious, non-Christian groups (ONS March to May 15th 2020), Jewish, Hindu or Sikh, White and Nafilyan (2020), was interpreted in media reports as evidence of non-compliances with social distancing restrictions. More recent data shows that the gaps in mortality between minority groups was smaller and other factors such as socio-economic disadvantage play a role.

2. METHODS AND DATA

This study is an investigation into the discrimination experiences of mosque staff, comprising imams, administrators and general staff, living in Britain. Forty-four interviews have been conducted using the semi-structured technique. Twenty-four imams, seven mosque association presidents, four secretaries general and nine board members participated in the research. Although initial ethical approval was granted for face-to-face interviews, the

ongoing pandemic meant that interviews were carried out online by Zoom. During the pandemic, it was difficult to reach the participants, as mosques were either completely closed or open only during certain prayer times due to lockdown rules; some did not have an active e-mail or office phone.

Despite their convenience, online methods of interviewing have their drawbacks. They can be limited in terms of body language and communication efficiency when compared to qualitative interviews conducted physically Weller (2017); although, some positive aspects can be noted as well, such as the distance between the participant and the researcher in an online setting makes the participant feel more comfortable. Especially for participants who are less confident, such a setting reduces the risk of research pressure and embarrassment (Weller 2017).

The average age of imams and staff in the study is 43, and the age range is between 23 and 68. Studies have demonstrated that older respondents could struggle with technology, and with Zoom in particular (Archibald et al. 2019). A great number of mosque staff (23 people) stated that they would accept only face-to-face meetings and refused to participate in the online study. This in itself is an interesting finding, and it might have been motivated by fears of recording and surveillance. However, in semi-structured interviews conducted online via Zoom, victims may not want to provide information due to the sensitivity of the subject and the fact that it is being recorded. Furthermore, three participants whom were contacted by phone to invite them to take part in the study talked about possible hate crime incidents, during the later interview they avoided giving details about their experiences. While the current pandemic continues to be of significant concern in the UK, it should be noted that some mosques are either part-time working or closed.

The sample on which this study was based has been carefully considered. The main aim was to cover a range of participants representing different ethnicities. As expected, considering the

density of the British/Asian population in the UK, the majority of the participants are Muslims of the Indian subcontinent origin. The study was conducted with Muslims of different ethnic origins, including Black African, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Cypriot, Berber, Albanian and mixed. Only eight of the participants stated that their birthplace was the UK, while the remaining participants stated that they were born outside the borders of the UK. In addition, among the participants, all of the imams stated that they had a traditional Islamic education degree, while the other mosque officials stated that they did not have an Islamic education degree.

Thus, this paper can reflect on regional and local factors and patterns of hate crimes across the UK. In addition, a balance was struck between the density of the Muslim population and the number of participants. In areas where Muslims are concentrated and where they live more together, fewer attacks of anti-Muslim sentiments seem to be documented (Kawalerowicz 2021). Approximately 1/4 of the participants were selected from regions where less than 2% of the population are Muslims (Table 1). Two mosques which have been targeted in the wake of 7/7 attacks belonging to two different ethnic groups became important research sites for this paper in a bustling town in the east of England, which is often referred to as beset by radicalism, and has a dense Muslim population (Yeginsu 2019).

There is geographical variation in this study - interviews were held with the staff of mosques in different parts of the United Kingdom (thirty-seven in England, five in Scotland, one in Wales and one in Northern Ireland). In addition, in order to discuss the differences in experience of hate crimes between ethnic minorities, interviews were carried out with members of mosques in the same city, which are located close to each other and where different ethnic minorities are dominant. Interviews with the staff of two different mosques in the city of Manchester, formed from Kurdish and Indian subcontinent Muslims, were conducted to reveal the differences between ethnic minorities in terms of anti-Muslim

sentiment. In addition, two mosque staff with different ethnic origins (British/Asian and Black African) from two different mosques in the same location in the city of Leicester were also interviewed.

The participants were informed in writing and verbally about the content of the study, and consent forms were signed by the participants prior to the interviews taking place. All of the information obtained from the participants has been stored securely. The study will be mainly based on sociology theories, but will be also informed by criminology theories, and literature in both fields will be taken into account.

3. FINDINGS

Many of the participants, in addition to their own experiences and feelings, also touched upon Islamophobic problems by referring to the experiences of the mosque community.

3.1. Normalisation of Anti-Muslim Attack Targets in the Shadow of the Climate of Tension

Many of the participants in the study referred to the normalisation of everyday hate crimes and discrimination in the climate of tension that emerged after the terrorist incidents. In addition to the experiences of the participants, the victims of everyday hate crimes among family and community members show that in this climate of tension, the targeting of Muslims is normalised.

> *When this incident of terrorism happens in London, then we try to not wear Islamic dress on the public transport or on the street. But others outside if there's nothing, no terrorism, then everything is okay. It is only when there is an explosion in London sometimes you feel worried about your safety.*
>
> ***Aaden, Imam***

> *…. And we found that there was a lot of anti-Muslim sentiment that was directed directly towards myself, my family, to the whole community of Muslims, and also non-Muslims who supported us. There was, you know, verbal threats, there was online threats. There was a lot of verbal abuse, there was protests against us, people taking photos, videos, you know, threatening local congregants who had*

attended for coming. And, you know, so there was a lot of different things that took place around that time.

Ali, Imam

Certainly, as a community, we feel that, you know, after September 11, things changed drastically, you know, so the way kind of Muslims were just, you know, part of the community and didn't really stand out, you know, the effect of September 11 was so traumatic on the conscience of people that I think come after that a lot of people, especially those who don't know a lot about Islam, or don't come in regular contact with Muslim people, they, I think, started having a much more negative kind of opinion of Islam, and you could certainly feel that everywhere.

Adnan, Imam

The hostile climate rests a lot on verbal attacks. Considering the frequency of verbal attacks targeting British Muslims, it seems that even serious verbal attacks have become a part of daily life. The state of normalisation is best captured by a sense of contradiction in the interviews – several of the participants stated that they were verbally attacked numerous times although they would state that they have not been victims of hate crimes.

I get incidents, nothing too serious, like, you know, sarcastic comments…. Yes, sometimes when after a terrorism attack, sometimes my wife has because she was wearing the Hijab when she's driving, people verbally abused her, shouted at her. Yeah, it happened to some of my relatives, my friends, several of them.

Abdurrahman, Imam

I have never been subjected to that kind of open sort of flagrant racism. There might be sort of mild form of underground racism. While sometimes you feel perhaps there is a bit, there isn't. But not any open racism at all. Ah, well, there had been a sort of verbal abuse, verbal abuse, yes. With members of our community in town, and people saying nasty things. You're a Muslim, you're there, you're terrorists. You do this, you do that. And you go home, go back to your country. And all that sort of verbal things. Nothing physical. But nobody came to any harm.

Ibrahim, Association President

The hostile climate and surveillance are interpreted by our respondents as responsible for changes in their usual way of life and conditions. Interviewees mentioned: avoiding using public transport; changing their daily rituals, such as not venturing away from their living spaces as much as possible; not being alone outside or wearing traditional clothing outside of their homes. In fact, it would not be wrong to say that in the periods when the climate of

tension was at its peak, our respondents renounced their freedom of religion and could not go to mosques.

> *So sometimes I used to change the hijab, whenever there was something for me just kind of move it to like, you know the bandana style and wear Polo neck and things. And so, I used to do that. And I don't know because I think, you know, I'm older and more confident. And I just thought, this is me, you just have to take me, but when I was younger, I did change my appearance to look less Muslim.*
>
> ***Aisha, Board Member***

> *Mainly for my wife and mother, I'm more concerned with my mom, who doesn't take the bus anymore, because she received some verbal abuse from people. So, she avoids that. My wife is more cautious where she goes and how she does things.*
>
> ***Ayaan, Secretaries-General***

> *But you know, we are more, you know, careful about our movements, especially my daughter, I don't allow her to go in the evening or night alone. I'm sort of because, you know, increasing acid attacks in East London. We had reports and other activities. So that is why we are careful about it. Now, with the mixing of social media.*
>
> ***Maahir, Imam***

Airport experiences were frequently mentioned as examples of moments of being "othered" and treated as a suspect, with many respondents admitting bracing themselves for the experience.

> *If they see a beard a little bit like mine, they always have an extra search and always extra questions, especially coming from Turkey. I mean, I came from Turkey a couple of days ago. Despite, I mean, I don't remember why they didn't stop me. They always stopped me for some reason. I don't know. Yeah. If I would shave, like they would never stop.*
>
> ***Irfan, Board Member***

> *I often get searched at the airport. That's a pretty regular thing. Even though it's meant to be random. It happens a lot. I've only not been searched once. And I've travelled, you know, dozens of times. So, when I wasn't searched once, I was quite surprised.*
>
> ***Ayaan, Secretaries-General***

3.2. Known Muslim Profile: Target of Hate Crime

The transformation in the motivation of the hate crimes to which the Muslim community is subjected following terrorist attacks makes the 9/11 attack one of the cornerstones of the

confusion between ethnic identity and religious identity. Due to the historical relations between the UK and the Indian subcontinent communities, the hate attacks on the British/Asian ethnic minority, which constitutes the majority of the British Muslim community, and the transformation from racism to anti-Muslim sentiment show that religious identity is more prominent due to these terrorist attacks. Hence, associating the Muslim community with the terrorist attacks explains this transformation more clearly. Given the details of the incidents experienced by the participants who had been victims of verbal attacks, the most common words used by the attackers are "terrorist, ISIS". However, swearing, gesturing, and mocking comments are also commonly used for verbal attacks.

*…mainly verbal, where people say bad words like, "Are you bl**dy Muslims?*

Hassan, Secretaries-General

So, we were driving in a car. There were some white people. I do not know, maybe about four or five of them. They threw a rock or stone on our car and smashed a window… I have had it myself in terms of physical, verbal, lots of times, you know, people saying, making gestures, like swearing with their fingers, making very, like shaking the hands like if someone's masturbating. So those kinds of things being called, you know, a terrorist, like Allahu Akbar, people who say things like that.

Dawoud, Imam

Some native people who, on the street, they shouted at me, "ISIS, terrorist!" But I have not had any physically attacks, only several verbal incidents.

Zahid, Association President

…when I came back from my mosque to my home in fajr time, some cars stopped in front me and they were shouting to me, "ISIS, ISIS!" because I had long beard and Islamic clothes. Maybe, they do not like my clothes and my beard. Maybe they did not like it. I heard many times people shout at me, "Isis, Terrorist!" because of my appearance. I just neglect them, and they go straight away.

Walid, Imam

…this is going back a few years now. I went to the gym. And in the gym, after a heavy workout, I was about to, you know, go for the shower. And somebody said to me, "Oh, you are not training for ISIS?" or, "You're not preparing for ISIS, are you?" And, as well, many times, I'm walking down the street, and somebody has shouted something like that.

Adnan, Imam

As stated by the participants, their religious identities appear to play a more prominent role in the hate crimes to which they are subjected. As discussed in the introduction, the multi-ethnic nature of the Muslim community makes it difficult to determine the identity that stands out in the motivation of these hate crimes.

Participants belonging to the white ethnic group had been subjected to many anti-Muslim attacks, such as verbal abuse and bullying, after becoming a Muslim, and these attacks, which they had not experienced before, were directed against their visible Muslim identity.

When examining the details of the attacks on the victims, it can be seen that the terrorist incidents that have taken place in the 20 years since 9/11 have put the ethnic identities of the multi-ethnic British Muslim community in the foreground and have highlighted their religious identity. While anti-Muslim sentiment experiences differ significantly among ethnic groups, the hate attacks to which Muslims are subjected are more directly proportional to these identified as having the profile of a Muslim, usually by virtue of Islamic dress.

> *With the emergence of Islamophobia after the 1990s, racism was converted to religion. The problem here is that far rightists or British racists cannot determine whether Turks are Muslim or not. They try to decide whether a person is a Muslim by looking at his dressing style and some physical characteristics. They try to decide on the basis of what they see in the media, the way ISIS, Iraqis, Afghanistan dress and, for example, they grow a beard. According to most non-Muslims, if you do not have a beard, you are not a Muslim because they are told it this way. Therefore, there are not many attacks on our mosque and society. While 90% of the attacks are against Bangladeshi, Afghanistan, Somali, Pakistani mosques and citizens who are members of the …….. Mosques Union, the attacks on Turks are 5%, because they could not detect it.*
>
> ***Burak, Association President***

The participants who took part in the fieldwork were divided into two groups: those with a more traditional appearance (long Islamic dress, long beard, Islamic cap) and those with a more “western” appearance (Table 2). Accordingly, it can be determined that those with a "traditional" appearance have experienced more everyday hate crimes than the other participants. The number of victims of hate and discrimination, even among participants of the same ethnicity, parallels the portrait of the "known Muslim”. For example, 15 of the 19

participants from the British/Asian ethnic group with a “traditional” appearance had been victims of a hate attack; while two of the nine British/Asian participants with a "western" appearance had been attacked (Table 2). Moreover, the “known Muslim” portrait is the determining factor in the hate speech to which they are exposed, among other ethnic origins (Berber, Turkish, Balkan). However, the fact that individuals in traditional dress are more likely to be targets of everyday hate crime in the public sphere is not true just for male Muslims. As stated by many of the participants, female Muslims are more common targets due to their traditional clothing (hijab, veil, niqab, and/or headscarf). Therefore, having a "known Muslim" profile increases the likelihood of being the target of an anti-Muslim sentiment attack, while leaving the victim’s own ethnic identity in the background. Some members of this floating mosque community have given up their traditional clothes and beards in order not to be subjected to Islamophobic attacks in public. Moreover, it has had a direct impact on the security perceptions of Muslims with a “traditional” appearance.

> *I've not changed my lifestyle at all. My wife, she wears the full niqab. And sometimes people do give her funny looks and say things, so now quite recently she's thinking of taking off or not wearing the full-face veil, that sort of thinking of doing that. And just wearing the scarf.*
>
> ***Zakariya, Imam***

However, the difference between perceived everyday hate crimes among the respondents is between those born in the UK and those born outside the country’s borders. Of the 18 respondents born in the UK, 15 had been victims of a hate crime, and it is noteworthy that all of the UK-born participants who wear traditional dress had experienced everyday hate crimes (Table 2). By contrast, one-fifth of those born beyond the UK’s borders had been victims of everyday hate crimes. The underlying reason for this sharp difference between these two groups may be the difference in their perception and understanding of everyday hate crimes. The fact that UK-born people attend local schools and grow up as part of an ethnic minority from an early age makes them more aware of everyday hate crimes and discrimination.

Hence, the anti-Muslim verbal abuse and bullying to which they have been subjected make them more aware of the perception of everyday hate crimes than those born outside the country's borders. As a matter of fact, some of the participants who were born outside the UK and who had been victims of everyday hate crimes stated that they did not encounter any serious physical assault, but only a few "simple" verbal attacks. Another reason for the difference in perception of anti-Muslim crime between these two groups is the language skills factor. Given the English language skills of UK-born people, it is inevitable that they will be more aware of and perceptive of verbal attacks.

3.3. Negative Impact of Media/Political Discourses on Portrayal of the Muslim Profile

The influence of the Muslim portrait depicted by the media on drawing the "known Muslim" profile is undeniably clear. In particular, pictures and videos used in the mainstream media about terrorist attacks are effective in creating the "known Muslim" profile. In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attack, Muslims as well as Sikhs (who wear turbans) in the UK were subjected to widespread hate crimes within a month. Over the course of 20 years, Muslims with a "traditional" appearance have become targets of anti-Muslim hate attacks due to the media's portrayal of Muslim as well as the discourse of politicians.

> *I think they are. I think in Glasgow, we had an issue where a young girl, #####, a 15-year-old, joined ISIS, and the media were trying to say that ISIS are recruiting from Glasgow, and now she has joined ISIS and she is recruiting. So, some media tried to work on that. And that did bring a negative impact to some of the mosques. I remember a newspaper reporter was knocking on my door saying, "Did her family come to your mosque?" or something. And I said, although she did not, that does not mean that any mosque is part of this.*
>
> ***Hashim, Imam***

> *Even the local media is a bit like that. If something bad happens, they pick on it, and then they take a picture of the mosque, and put it alongside that article. And, indirectly, that sort of implicates the mosque. And then I think that that is bad. That is very bad. And our local press did that.*
>
> ***Ibrahim, Association President***

In addition, the negative views of the media about the Muslim community have affected some of the non-Muslim community, and some printed information about British Muslims has emerged. Furthermore, local media are responsible for vilifying the Muslim profile at least as much as the mainstream media. In particular, the public opinion formed in the media towards the mosques being opened negatively affected the attitude of society towards Muslims.

> *Of course, the media is very effective. In particular, they portray the entire Muslim community negatively.*
>
> ***Rashid, Imam***

> …because some media is teaching people that Muslims are potentially dangerous. Every Muslim is like a potential terrorist. And in this way the media portrayed us in a negative way. Because yeah, the terrorist is a terrorist, it is nothing to do with the religion, but they associate terrorists with Islam.
>
> **Yahya, Imam**

However, the government's strategy to prevent terrorism has also directly affected the Muslim minority. Anti-terrorism laws and prevention strategies have made the whole of society suspicious as well as being effective in preventing the Muslim community from being discriminated against. The fact that the 9/11 attack was carried out by plane led to an increase in security measures at airports. However, these security strategies that came into force did not target terrorists, but the entire Muslim community as a whole. As a matter of fact, the majority of interviewees, especially the participants seen as having a “known Muslim” profile, talked about their experiences of discrimination at airports.

> *The police, for example, at Heathrow Airport, when I was coming back from holiday with my family, I was coming back from I think it was Abu Dhabi or Turkey. I think one of those two countries. I was flying back. And when I landed, and I was going through the controls when they take the passport, I had all the documents, everything. But for some reason, they let everyone go before me. And they pulled me to one side suddenly, and then they started interrogating me and asking me questions. I do not know. And I ask them for a reason, but they say nothing at all. Only after some time did me and my family go on. I had my daughter with me as well, she was about two years old.*
>
> ***Zakariya, Imam***

> *I have experienced it in an interview. After the airport, after one month, I was contacted at an airport. They took me separately for four or five minutes. They talked to me. And they made an appointment for*

> *me with a police officer, at a local police station, after one month, and I attended that meeting with these people. I think it was 2014.*
>
> ***Yahya, Imam***

These extra security measures faced by Muslims, mostly with long beards and traditional clothing, are directly related to the portrait of the Muslim. Terrorism prevention strategies make British Muslims the target of people’s suspicions. However, it was stated by many participating security officials that mosques, especially Friday sermons, were often observed and monitored by officials. As discussed previously, in the process that started with the 9/11 attack, the British Muslim community constitutes the new “suspect” community in the country. After the terrorist attacks that took place, the negative portrayal of the Muslim community by the media and the fact that the security forces' strategies to prevent terrorism cover the whole of the Muslim community turned Muslims into a “suspect” community. However, attitudes towards this new “suspect community” have increased anti-Muslim hate crimes and have been instrumental in Muslims facing discrimination.

3.4. Brexit Concerns of the British Muslim Community

Respondents were also asked about Brexit and their experiences of it. Respondents expressed fear that the campaign had solidified negative sentiments towards them.

> *It has because you hear from some people that when they're talking about Brexit. They are talking about foreigners. And unfortunately, recently there has been so many people coming from Muslim countries as refugees and asylum seekers. And that is a blow to them as well.*
>
> ***Baraka, Imam***

Several participants went as far as to suggest that xenophobia has been on the increase, while others cited specific concerns. One of these concerns is the human rights concerns of the Muslims living in Britain as a religious minority. However, the majority of respondents, like any citizen, referred to the economic concerns that Brexit could bring. In particular, economic concern peaked among UK-born participants.

It is possible if things go wrong, especially economically. I believe there'll be some racism which will happen. possibly some attacks on Muslims in the future. I mean, I don't know what people are worried about.

Faisal, Board Member

Well, actually, there is a bit because there were some human rights which were being protected because of us being in the European Union. And those did protect zero contracts as an example. And I think there were a few other rights that existed as part of that which override what happened in British Government. Now that we're out of Brexit, it does mean we'll create our own laws, and we might change things for the worse, for British citizens. And in particular, maybe things which are worse for Muslims.

Ayaan, Secretaries-General

3.5. Pandemic, British Muslim Community and Discrimination Triangle

In the field study conducted with the participants, none of the them stated that they were exposed to Islamophobic attacks during the pandemic period. However, two of the participants stated that their mosques were attacked during the pandemic. However, these attacks on mosques during the pandemic period have led some respondents to fear a post-pandemic physical wave of everyday hate crime incidents, which could have been limited during the coronavirus pandemic and its restrictions in terms of social distancing.

*It is actually a debate that is unclear why it started around the end of June. R***** Hodja, a volunteer teacher of our mosque, and a British citizen were getting into a little quarrel. On the day of the debate, a pilgrimage was painted with spray paint on the wall of our mosque at night. So far it has only happened once. No, I know that only ****** Hodja is telling me. When he was leaving the mosque, the man was passing by the car. "Why are you getting in front of me?" he reacted. He overreacted without being too polite and pilgrimage was drawn on the mosque's wall in the evening. We reported the situation to the police, and we saw from the camera recordings that someone coming out of the same car came and painted, so it was the same person who drew this pilgrim.*

Aabid, Association President

Although some of the participants stated that some Muslims were discriminated against when seeking to benefit from healthcare facilities in general, there was no participant who had experienced discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic. Confusion seems to have happened because of the Eid decision. The day before Eid, which is important for Muslims,

when the government closed mosques in the north of England, was perceived as discrimination by the Muslim community. While most of the participants stated that this decision was discrimination against Muslims, some participants stated that even if there was no discrimination against Muslims, the timing of the decision was completely discriminatory.

> *A lot of Muslims did feel that because of the timing. And it was made in the evening, just before. And then when it came to me when I heard comments from non-Muslims, also, that they were quite upset with how that happened. And then when it came to Christmas, it was you know, it was a total opposite. So, a lot of people do feel that was done that was targeting the Muslim community.*
>
> ***Suleyman, Imam***

> Yes, that was something, actually not for the first Eid because I think everything was locked down, but definitely for the second Eid, the way that was done overnight via Twitter message at 10 o'clock at night preventing most of the north from meeting together. That was definitely for Eid reasons. And yes, we were discriminated against because, yeah, so I mean, imagine if that happened during Christmas Eve, you know, people, there would be an outcry, so I definitely feel that was a target against Muslims.
>
> ***Ayaan, Secretaries-General***

> *They have said to me themselves, that was obviously wrong and racist. What happened to those areas up north with that, one thing is they're discriminating against places with Muslims. And the other one is they're discriminating against the North anyway. So, it was, it was bad. You can't do it. After people have spent hundreds of pounds of their money to have a nice feast and a nice event, even for just their like presents to give their grandchildren or meals like this, and then tell them that you're banned from even going to the masjid to pray, I think is completely wrong. And I think it was a discriminatory and racist policy. But I think the government knew that they could do it to Muslims and get away with it.*
>
> ***Hamdaan, Board Member***

> *The timing was, you know, very suspicious in terms of why they're doing this. Suddenly, just before Eid, declare this and then use this so that people can't go to the mosque. And, yes, I think there's a strong indication of discrimination there.*
>
> ***Ibrahim, Association President***

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Several studies have looked at the experiences of discrimination in Britain (Di Stasio et al. 2021; Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2020). Quantitative research has outlined the lack of availability of jobs to Muslim job seekers or their lack of progression in the labour market.

Some studies specifically address well-being and they can really capture the full expanse of experiences that characterize antagonistic relationships and negative contact, or for that matter capture the dynamics of the interaction. (Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2016). This is where the strength of this research lies. This paper discusses the everyday practices of "othering" of Muslims in Britain through the eyes of mosque staff (imams and mosque secretaries or board members) in Britain. Imams and mosques can be seen as spiritual centres of the community and symbolically they can be both targets of hatred and shields for locals (Allen 2017). By trying to cover a variety of different mosques located in different communities (of varying size), this study contributes to the literature in two important ways: first, it exposes the nature of everyday experiences of discrimination; second, it discusses the heterogeneity of impact that attacks have in light of the communities in which the mosques are placed.

This study demonstrated that the impact of attacks is manifold. The attacks experienced by the mosque leave their mark not only on the targeted individuals themselves, but also on other members of the British Muslim community. In the interviews, many participants referred to the experiences of family and community members, not just their own. The high visibility of targeted mosque staff in the community plays an important role in the community's imagination and awareness of anti-Muslim attitudes and attacks. Many of the interviewees spoke of the high likelihood of an Islamophobic attack, particularly encountering sarcasm, mocking, and backlash. Sadly, this research suggests that in many instances these experiences of been targeted and discriminated against have been normalised. This should be of great concern to policy makers as it demonstrates that the Muslim community in Britain experiences many feelings of insecurity. Thus, this study suggests that in the lives of our participants, incidents of "othering" have been normalised and they can lead to drastic changes in their day-to-day practices: restrictions to their social life, clothing and appearance, anxiety when travelling and interacting with other Muslims in public spaces. Although the

respondents frequently do not identify “incidents” as everyday hate crime or direct discrimination, it is clear that these have had an impact on the interviewees themselves and the broader community. Thus, this study suggests that quantitative studies and police reports underestimate the severity of the issue.

Thus, one of the main strengths of this study lies in its critical engagement with the concept of a “suspect community”. Similar to Ragazzi (2016), this paper argues that there is a need for differentiated counter-terrorism experience and that the heterogeneity within the Muslim community should be taken into consideration. Another crucial strength of this approach is that this is the first study that takes into account the ethnic heterogeneity of the Muslim community when studying hate crimes and discrimination directed at mosques. Frequently, “suspect community” studies overlook the different nature of anti-terrorism practices and equates harsh (community-targeted) methods and soft (community-focused) methods (Ragazzi 2016; Taylor 2020). Questioning the assumptions of a common subjective experience of the British Muslim community's attachment to "ummatic attachments", along with other Weberian assumptions that a "suspect community" was created because of the interaction of Muslims with prevention strategies, Ragazzi (2016) highlights that the fight against terrorism may involve competing political categories of individuals or communities deemed to be risky or credible. This is clear in the current study as well that identifies media attacks and speeches by government officials as a concrete source of tension.

This research demonstrates that the Muslim community is frequently left to deal with antagonistic interactions and even severe attacks on their own. They have these negative interactions in all different spheres. The expectation is that individuals will be able to guarantee the community’s safety and at the same time ensure that it is not vulnerable to terrorism. Thus, the study demonstrates that the Muslim community experiences a double penalty – being seen by authorities who should intervene to help as a “suspect community”,

and by antagonised individuals as “others”. Such a penalty calls into question the successful co-existence of the Muslim community in Britain and should be of grave concern to policy makers.

There are several limitations to this study. The interviews do not focus on a random selection of religious sites but only on mosques and staff who were willing to participate in this study. The topic is very sensitive and the full extent of the experiences of everyday racism may have been underestimated, as participants in the study would only share experiences after extended periods of time. The pandemic and carrying out the interviews on Zoom meant that only certain participants could be approached and were willing to participate in the study. Although due consideration has been given to different ethnic groups, a more extended analysis across ethnic groups and generations is needed; for example, there can be a consideration of the type of mosques along ethnic lines as well, whether some groups only occupy masjid or some only symbol mosques. Further work will disentangle these important differences.

The everyday hate crimes, discrimination and othering of imams and mosque staffs should be addressed more by social scholars. Mosque staff are key to the literature on discrimination and othering of the British Muslim community. The daily experiences of hate crimes and discrimination of imams and mosque workers should be addressed more by social scholars. Mosque staff are key to the literature on discrimination and othering of the British Muslim community. Research into everyday hate crime, discrimination and othering of the British Muslim community should also consider the concept of a “suspect community”.

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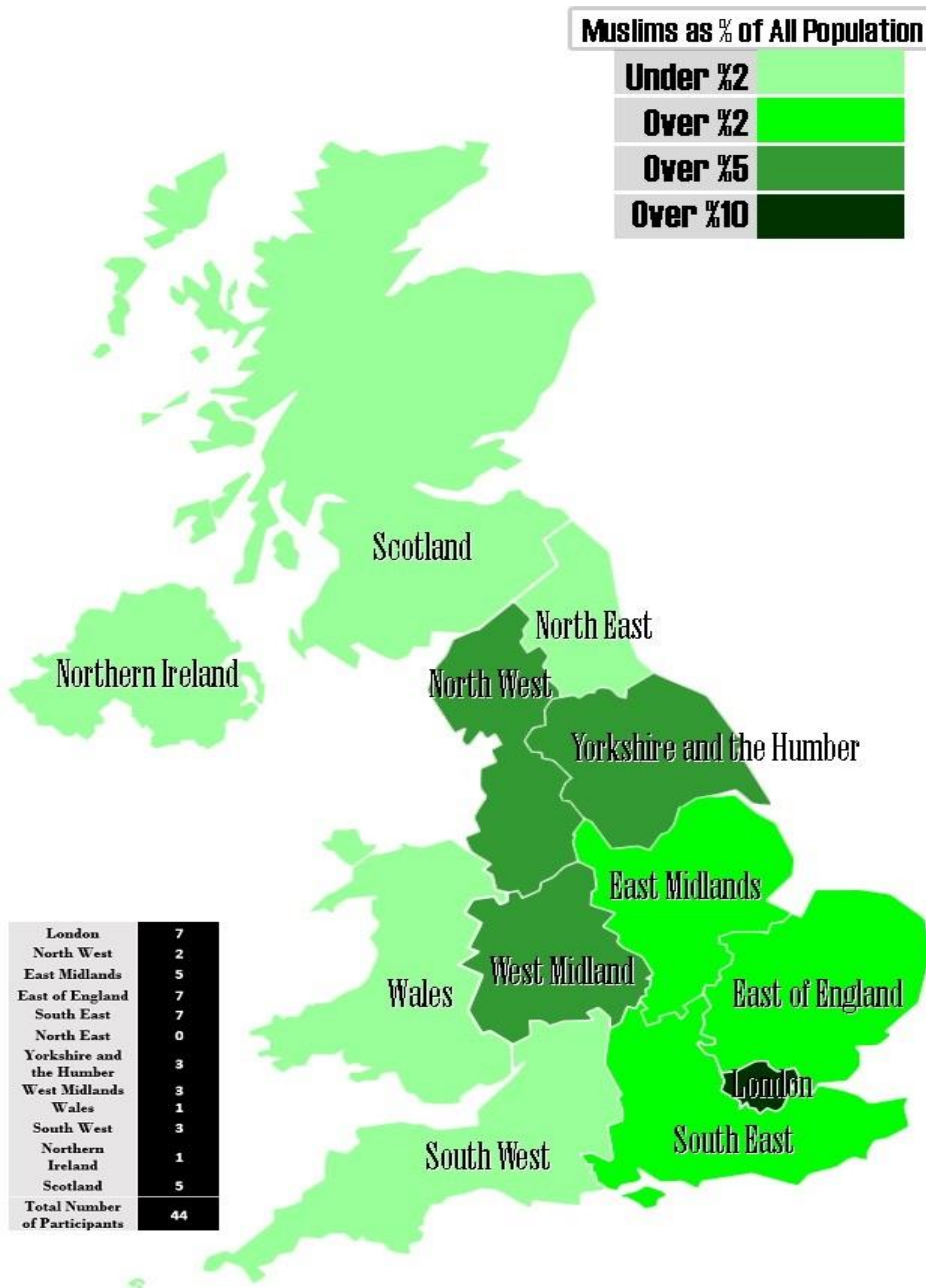
APPENDICES

Table 1: Muslim Population and Participants by Regions



Region	Participants
London	7
North West	2
East Midlands	5
East of England	7
South East	7
North East	0
Yorkshire and the Humber	3
West Midlands	3
Wales	1
South West	3
Northern Ireland	1
Scotland	5
Total Number of Participants	44

Table 2: Participant Profiles

	POSITION	AGE	ETHNICITY	BIRTHPLACE	EXPERIENCED	LOCATION
Traditional Appearance	Imam	42	British/Asian	Dewsbury	Verbal	Southeast of England
	Imam	39	Afro/Asian	Leicester	Verbal	Southeast of England
	Imam	28	British/Asian	The UK	Verbal	London
	Secretary	45	British/Asian	Birmingham	Verbal	West Midlands
	Imam	40	British/Asian	London	Verbal	East Midlands
	Imam	35	British/Asian	Leicester	Physical/Verbal	East Midlands
	Imam	42	British/Asian	Manchester	Verbal Bullying	Northwest of England
	Imam	45	Barbary	Libya	Verbal Abuse	Yorkshire and Humber
	Imam	25	British/Asian	England	Bullying	Scotland
	Imam	55	Black African	Tanzania	No Experiences	East Midlands
	Chairman	56	British/Asian	Pakistan	Verbal Abuse	West Midlands
	Imam	34	British/Asian	London	Verbal Abuse	London
	Imam	38	Somalian	Kenya	No Experiences	London
	Imam	34	British/Asian	The UK	Verbal Abuse	Scotland
	Imam	45	Dutch	South Africa	No Experiences	East of England
	Secretary	45	British/Asian	London	Verbal Bullying	East of England
	Imam	28	British/Asian	Pakistan	Verbal Abuse	Scotland
	Imam	68	British/Asian	Pakistan	No Experiences	East of England
	Imam	27	British/Asian	The UK	Verbal/ death threat	East of England
	Imam	46	British/Asian	Mozambique	No Experiences	Scotland
	Imam	53	British/Asian	Pakistan	No Experiences	West Midlands
	Trustee	30	White	The UK	Verbal/Bullying	North Ireland
	Imam	44	British/Asian	Pakistan	No Experiences	East of England
	Imam	30	British/Asian	The UK	Verbal Abuse	London
	Imam	41	British/Asian	Panama	Verbal Abuse	London
	Imam	30	British/Asian	The UK	Bullying	Scotland
Western Appearance	Chairman	53	Turkish	Turkey	No Experiences	East of England
	Trustee	48	Barbary	Libya	No Experiences	Yorkshire and Humber
	Chairman	56	British/Asian	Pakistan	No Experiences	Northwest of England
	Trustee	38	Azerbaijani	Azerbaijan	No Experiences	Wales
	Trustee	52	Black African	Kenya	No Experiences	Yorkshire and Humber
	Chairman	42	Turkish	Turkey	No Experiences	Southwest of England
	Trustee	29	British/Asian	The UK	Verbal Abuse	East of England
	Imam	51	Albanian	Kosovo.	No Experiences	London
	Trustee	52	Turkish	Turkey	No Experiences	Southwest of England
	Chairman	68	P. Not Say	Mauritius	No Experiences	Southeast of England
	Secretary	63	British/Asian	Pakistan	Verbal Abuse	Southeast of England
	Secretary	23	British/Asian	German	No Experiences	London
	Trustee	42	British/Asian	The UK	No Experiences	Southeast of England
	Chairman	39	British/Asian	The UK	No Experiences	East Midlands
	Imam	40	P. Not Say	Bosnia	No Experiences	East of England
	Chairman	50	British/Asian	Pakistan	No Experiences	Southwest of England
	Trustee	53	British/Asian	Bangladesh	No Experiences	Southeast of England
	Trustee	48	British/Asian	Pakistan	Verbal Abuse	East Midlands

CHAPTER III: British Mosques and Conflict in Public Spaces

ABSTRACT

Existing research on attacks on mosques and the broader implications of the level of conflict between different majority and Muslim minority groups is still nascent (McLoughlin 2005). Unlike studies such as Allen (2017), which predominantly focus on attacks on newly founded mosques and discussions around their establishment, this paper makes a significant contribution to the literature in two ways: it moves beyond a distinction of new and old mosques to establish a typology of mosques in the UK. Mosques differ in their appearance, visibility, and frequency of use (Saleem 2013). Because British mosques are different from each other in terms of design, architecture, and visibility, these differences are likely to affect the type and frequency of Islamophobic attacks. Based on interviews with the staff of 43 mosques in the United Kingdom, this study contributes to the literature on intercultural conflict and tensions in the UK. By considering differences between the levels of attack experienced by different types of British mosques and taking into account the ethnic composition of the areas in which they are placed and the perceptions of the mosque staff (in particular the perceptions of the imams, who hold positions of leadership in the local community), I present a multi-dimensional analysis of the nature of present-day conflict experienced by the Muslim community in Britain.

INTRODUCTION

Places of worship and prayer provide support to local communities in their efforts to express their identity and culture in public spaces (Allievi 2009; Cesari 2005). However, they can also become the focal points for xenophobic attacks and tensions with majority members (Dodd 2015). This paper focuses on mosques in Britain. There are over 1500 mosques in the UK and research reports by various institutions show that British mosques are facing serious anti-Muslim attacks (Ahmed 2019; Asad 2022; Feldman and Littler 2014). Therefore, research focusing on the attacks experienced by mosques and their staff is needed. This paper provides several substantive contributions. Much of the established literature on anti-Muslim attitudes towards mosques, both British and European, has focused on the conflict or collaboration that newly built places of worship bring. By comparison, research on established places of worship and the attacks they sustain is relatively sparse and there are a limited number of studies (Allen (2017).

This paper engages with several relevant research questions. Considering the nonhomogeneous distribution of the Muslim population in Britain, the paper considers whether there are any similarities or differences between the attacks on mosques in cities and smaller areas. It also questions whether the ethnic enclave in the community serves as a protective shield for mosques. Previous research has suggested that perceived discrimination is lower in ethnic enclaves and the local community may serve to shield individuals from attacks Demireva and Zwysen (2021); Knies, Nandi, and Platt (2016), although other research does not find shielding effects (Bécares et al. 2012). Thus, this paper relates to the broader literature on ethnic enclaves in questioning whether their protective effects extend to the local community. Another contribution of this paper lies in its consideration of the differences between British mosques. Important differences exist in terms of structure, function and visibility Saleem (2013) which can influence the nature of attacks. However, these

differences are often overlooked in the literature. While most mosques have been converted from old public buildings, there are also places of worship that have been built as mosques (Saleem 2013). It is likely that mosques that contain Islamic traces and look different from the buildings in the city may be exposed to more attacks (Saleem 2013). This paper advances scholarly knowledge on the topic by proposing a new mosque typology that better reflects the differences between mosque structures and their impact upon attacks. By drawing on previous studies on the functional and structural features of mosques (Ahmed 2019; Saleem 2013), this research suggests that differences between British mosques affect the nature of attacks. This research paper, which deals with the anti-Muslim attacks experienced by British mosques in a multidimensional way, contributes to the gap in the literature by revealing the conflict and anti-Muslim sentiments faced by all mosques, whether new or long-standing.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH THEMES

1.1. Research on mosques and conflict in European cities

The mosque is the most obvious sign of the presence of Muslim communities living in the western world in the public sphere. The transition from private houses and invisible masjids used by European Muslims in isolation from society to public mosques reflects the movement of Islam from the private to the public space, as well as the publicization of Muslim identity (Cesari 2005; Maussen 2007). These places of worship provide support for the local community and allow it to express its identity but can also become the focal point of many attacks and conflicts between majority and minority populations. The majority of existing research has focused on the opposition to mosque building as an expression of power conflicts and the dynamics of othering (Allievi 2009). Such conflicts may not necessarily be based around a specific place of worship but rather a general opposition to a minority group, which supports interpretations of such conflicts as power struggles (Cesari 2005).

Previous studies have indicated that the opposition to mosques is linked to a rise of xenophobia, processes of othering, and the questioning of the legitimate existence and presence of minorities in public spaces. Conti (2016) presents two different cases in Italian cities, Florence and Bologna. The debate over the mosque in Florence became a discussion regarding the legitimacy of the local Muslim community in the public sphere, the participation of local actors, and the handling of the issue as the "mosque of the city" (Conti 2016). In Bologna, the geographical marginalisation of the Muslim community and the perception of the potential danger of violence posed by Islam transcended the mere local dimension, becoming a debate not only about the building of the mosque but about the interaction between the Muslim and mainstream communities (Conti 2016). Similarly, considering the mosque in the Italian town of Lodi as a case study, Saint-Blancat and Schmidt di Friedberg (2005) argued that the existence, nature, and level of mosque conflicts are related

to the degree of social acceptance of Muslim minorities. The nature of mosque conflicts takes shape according to the tensions and uncertainties that already exist in society, and the Muslim community takes on the role of the "scapegoat" (Saint-Blancat and Schmidt di Friedberg 2005). In Badalona, Spain, Astor (2012) conducted 46 interviews with local associations, neighbourhood residents, local Muslim leaders, local bureaucrats, and many other actors which, in addition to an ethnographic observation of nearly two years, showed that it would be reductionist to explain the opposition to a local mosque in terms only of a negative p of Islam. The opposition to mosques in Badalona was largely based on local residents' interests in preserving the quality and image of the neighbourhood, and conditions they perceived as necessary to sustain their dignified communities against social change (Astor 2012). Moreover, Jonker (2005) stated that while there was a concerted opposition to a mosque that was planned to be built in Berlin in 1999, this harmonious opposition changed dramatically after the 9/11 attacks. Not only did the 9/11 attacks catalyse an "anger curve" in Germany, but there was also a marked shift in the arguments in opposition to the mosque (Jonker 2005). With German data, Jonker (2005) showed that there was a change in the perception of Muslims and Islam in society after the terrorist attack, and that the newly proposed mosques created suspicion and mistrust. In this paper I will explore the position of mosques in the public space and whether they have become ‘scapegoats’ for conflict and tensions between majority and minority groups in Britain.

Leadership can play a significant role in the interaction with the local community and majority members (Becker (2017). To better understand the role of local leaders in managing conflict, Becker (2017) conducted interviews with representatives (imams, directors, and coordinators) of fourteen key mosques which have been discussed in the media as both "controversial" and "exceptional", and eleven other central figures, to draw a portrait of contemporary Islam in Germany. The eleven central figures were the first generation of

Muslim theologians, DITIB leadership, Berlin's Turkish Community Organization leaders, Muslim civil society leaders, police officers specialised in intercultural affairs, and a lawyer focused on minority rights. The stereotypes attributed to Muslims and mosques as "threatening" were active in the mosque conflicts in Germany. Against this, the vision of the mosque leadership and its positive representation in the local context were crucial for changing the public opinion of mainstream actors and the local non-Muslim community and eventually the social adoption of the place of worship (Becker 2017). The leadership's vision created both solidarity in the local context and cooperation with other minority groups (Jewish and gay rights, etc.), and the anti-radicalism policy it produced ensured the nominalisation of the institution and received a positive response in society. Similarly to Becker (2017), this paper will comment on the role of local leaders in managing tensions in the local community and the symbolic role they play.

Importantly, this paper builds a complex picture of the nature of conflict. Conflict does not only happen in areas in which there is a significant presence of migrants and minorities. For example, Muslim minorities may be small in terms of absolute numbers in Central and Eastern Europe when compared to Muslim minorities living in the cities of Western Europe, however, tensions around mosques can be as heated as in Western Europe. Focusing on mosque conflicts in Poland, Narkowicz and Pędziwiatr (2017) conducted extensive qualitative research consisting of two data sets. The first data set consisted of individual and group interviews with the actors of the conflict, while the second set consisted of twenty in-depth interviews with representatives of different Muslim groups. Mosque conflicts in Poland are inconsistent with the Western European argument that mosques transition from invisible to visible because the Muslim community is not a new phenomenon and is also different in historical context (Narkowicz and Pędziwiatr 2017).

Visibility is a major and important theme in the research of mosques in European cities and it will be a part of the typology that this paper will create. Muslim identity in public spaces can be expressed in different ways, including the establishment of mosques and features of Islamic architecture such as minaret, but also in clothing such as by wearing a headscarf or burqa. These expressions can be often attacked as incompatible with the mainstream majority society and take the brunt of xenophobic attacks (Göle 2011; Simonsen, de Neergaard, and Koefoed 2019). Whilst there is ample evidence of the existence of multiple Muslim identities, such as British or Danish Muslims, reductionist and xenophobic narratives may choose to ignore this.

Minarets are prominent symbols of Islamic visibility in European cities. Although minarets are not used in accordance with their traditional purpose (call to prayer), they are frequently preferred by Muslims both in converted mosques and in purpose-built mosques (Shavit and Spengler 2016). This preference is related to establishing the minority group’s identity in the public space. Often minarets become the focal point of local debates and conflict between minorities and majorities. Kuppinger (2014) touches upon the fierce opposition faced by the Muslim community's request to add a minaret to a building, which has been used as a mosque for nearly 20 years. Perceived as a threat to the homogeneous German and Christian culture, the establishment of the minaret faced fierce local opposition from ethnic majority residents. The demand for minarets was a reflection of the Muslim community's desire to be visible in the city and their urban citizenship (Kuppinger 2014). The 9/11 attacks and the Swiss minaret referendum could have been among the triggers of this opposition (Kuppinger 2014). A few weeks before the Muslim community submitted its official minaret request to the municipal authorities, the Swiss minaret referendum was held, and many Germans found the referendum’s decision courageous and demanded similar moves to be implemented by German politicians (Kuppinger 2014). A comprehensive meeting was held to evaluate the

minaret request, and questions and comments were received in writing to ensure high participation (Kuppinger 2014). Contrary to expectations, notes of goodwill and tolerance were replaced by comments of concern, prejudice, and xenophobia[1] that most people could not express out loud (Kuppinger 2014). Minarets can also be relevant in the context of Britain and eight of the forty-three mosques where the field research was conducted for this study have minarets. This study will address visibility in several ways, including in the development of typologies.

Britain has also experienced a growing share of conflict in public spaces, with xenophobic attacks on mosques in particular (Abdelkader 2017; Asad 2022; Bombardieri 2010; Githens-Mazer and Lambert 2010; Skoulariki 2010; Winkler 2005). A recent report, conducted by Muslim Census and Muslim Engagement and Development based on an online survey with 113 mosque staff (imams, trustees, CEOs, etc.) in the UK between June and September 2021, Asad (2022) showed that the attacks on the places of worship of the Muslim community had risen to alarming levels. Almost half of the participants stated that mosques had been subjected to anti-Muslim attacks in at least three years, with vandalism being the most common attack (Asad 2022). Furthermore, physical attacks such as stabbing and punching were reported by nearly one-fifth of respondents, and four mosques experienced arson, the most violent form of attack (Asad 2022). These anti-Muslim attacks on British mosques have had a serious impact on the Muslim community, with negative effects including worshipers avoiding the mosque, experiencing fear and anxiety, and losing confidence in the police (Asad 2022). The gravity of the attacks and the method by which they have been carried out is important to consider. TELL MAMA (MAMA being an acronym for "Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks") identifies six categories of attacks: graffiti, broken windows, desecration,

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[1] Dodd (2015) claimed that the minaret ban was related to the different concept of secularism produced in Swiss society, while claiming that Muslims were likely to be excluded from society.

violent break-ins, arson, and bombings (Allen 2017). Allen and Nielsen (2002) use a similar categorisation in which smashing windows, graffiti, desecration, and anti-Muslim hate attacks are grouped under the title of "low-level" attacks, whilst arson, bombing and violent break-ins are "high-level attacks" (Allen 2017). This categorisation, however, does not suggest that low-level attacks have a low impact on the Muslim community: a graffiti attack classified in the low-level category may be quite effective in terms of visibility and meaning (Allen 2017). The graffiti in anti-Muslim attacks contains emotions and messages that target the entire British Muslim community, and the impact of the attack can be substantial. Therefore, an anti-Muslim form of attack which is categorised as low-level among mosque attacks has the potential to affect anyone who identifies with the group to which the threat is directed (Allen 2017). This paper will distinguish between these subtle nuances.

The work of Allen (2017) has been very important in informing this study. Based on research gathered by TELL MAMA[2] and in-depth interviews[3] collected with staff from ten mosques in the United Kingdom. Similarly to this study, Allen (2017) highlighted the need to focus not only on the opposition of local communities to new mosques but on the opposition to established mosques as well. His findings show however that in the case of new/proposed mosques, opposition usually becomes the focal point for symbolic conflict between groups, frequently because the site of worship does not exist yet. However, arson, graffiti, and vandalism were still recorded in opposition to older/established mosques (Allen 2017). Allen (2017) therefore concluded that opposition to the symbolic function of the mosque is underpinned by ideological Islamophobia. Thus, "Islamophobia" can be deployed not only

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[2] TELL MAMA had a trusting relationship with mosque staff who reported the attack, after which agency officials cited the research project and recruited participants for interviews.

[3] The research is also based on notes taken during the first meeting of the TELL MAMA representative with the participants who reported the attack by the researcher (Allen, 2017).

easily and quickly, but also in dynamic and protean ways. This research will build on this study in indifferent ways. I will distinguish between newly established and mosques which have been present in the community for 10 years or more. Following on the previous literature, I will also focus on the protective role that different enclaves can have.

Previous research has highlighted the xenophobic nature of the attacks and has shown that the targeted local community can try to rationalise the attack and provide explanations for these tensions – a process which may serve to normalize conflict. This is an important theme that this study will explore further.

1.2. Ethnic Enclaves

Research by scholars shows that the ethnic diversity and population of ethnic groups in the UK are increasing both through immigration and the high birth rate of existing ethnic groups (Rees et al. 2012; Simpson and Jivraj 2015). However, the clusters formed by ethnic groups throughout the country, also known as ethnic enclaves, and the factors that slow down the rate of geographic dispersion have been the subject of discussion. Disadvantage in the housing market, racism and hostility, extended family relationships, religious and cultural activities, and competition in the labour market are the main factors in the clustering of ethnic groups and the main factors that slow down the rate of dispersion throughout the country (Demireva and Zwysen 2021; Ojo 2012; Peach 1996; Simpson and Finney 2009). The first Muslim immigrants from the Indian subcontinent were male workers, whilst the British Nationality Act, which was reissued in 1962, encouraged them to bring their families to the country (Ansari 2018; Saleem 2020). Immigrant families, who realised that they would not be accepted into the new community, especially in line with their, sought the establishment of their own cultural institutions, namely mosques, so that their children would not lose their identity in the new homeland Saleem (2020) and as a reprieve from experiences of racism and daily discrimination. However, the increasing number of immigrants resulted in clusters

within the immigrant diaspora based on ethnicity, language, or migration from the same region (Saleem 2020; Johnston, Forrest, and Poulsen 2002).

The effect of ethnic enclaves on perceived discrimination and hate crimes was an important part of my field research. Although research on the protective role of ethnic enclaves produces mixed results, recent studies have pointed out that while perceived discrimination is greater in areas where a community is concentrated, researchers such as Bécares (2014) and Pasco, White, and Seaton (2021) point out that actual experiences of racism are lower (Balaghi 2023). The formation of ethnic enclaves is motivated, among other factors, by the preservation and transmission of cultural norms (including language and religion), job opportunities, and a desire to reside with others of the same ethnicity which may reduce negative contact with outgroupers and help with the settlement of groups and provide invaluable advice and means of socialization. Liu and Geron (2008) stated that ethnic enclaves also protect people against hostility from the majority society. Testing the role of ethnic enclaves in racism experiences, Bécares, Nazroo, and Stafford (2009) found that ethnic density reduces both the experienced incidents of racism and the harmful impact of racism on the ethnic community. The same research also discovered that a quarter of the populations of Pakistani and Bangladeshi people, the largest ethnic groups, lived in areas where their ethnic group was 20% or more and that the ethnic group that reported the highest number of physical attacks were Pakistanis. For this study, ethnic enclaves can be defined as predominantly residential areas in which a specific ethnic or religious community lives and in which there is a low proportion of majority members.

1.3. A Typology of British Mosques

Previous research has largely disregarded the structure and functionality of mosques – it mostly focuses on newly built or to-be-built mosques, which some scholars define as purpose-built mosques (Allen 2017). This research, which deals with multi-dimensional Islamophobic

attacks on places of worship within the British Muslim community, aims to illuminate the relationship between the properties of the mosque and the attacks. Not all mosques are purpose-built. House mosques can be transformed into other mosques and thereby become visible (Allievi 2009; Cesari 2005). I will discuss whether such transformations have been seen in British mosques.

The clusters formed by these smaller ethnic communities enabled the establishment of different mosques in which religious understanding and identity, as well as different cultural traditions, were dominant. Mosques where a dominant ethnicity or regional local tradition has been established can be distinctive in structure and functionality. There have been previous attempts to classify and create typologies of British mosques. Classifying the places of worship of the Muslim community based on the architectural features and structural differences of British mosques, Saleem (2013) developed three typologies: house mosques, converted mosques and purpose-built mosques. House mosques are designed to enable the use of the mosque by the maximum number of Muslims. They are residential buildings drawn with signs of Islamic symbols (Saleem 2013). Converted mosques, on the other hand, are former warehouses, churches or workplaces that have been converted to make them suitable as mosques (Saleem 2013). While it is possible to see minimal changes in such converted mosque structures, Islamic symbols have been added by making complete changes to the exteriors of some structures. Finally, revealing the typology of mosques built for purpose, Saleem (2013) stated that these places of worship, built entirely from the ground up as mosques, are the culmination of the mosque development trajectory[4] of the Muslim

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[4] Something along the lines - not all purpose-built mosques have originated as house mosques or converted mosques (Ahmed 2019). In my research I have traced the development of the mosques and have found this to be rarely the case.

community. Among the mosques in these three typologies, the "house mosque" does not have a minaret. While minarets were later added to a small portion of converted mosques, purpose-built mosques generally have minarets as they bear traces of Islamic architecture.

Ahmed (2019) proposes another distinction based on the functionality of the mosques, including those which serve simply as a place of prostration (the Fard) that can fulfil the basic functions of religious worship, “Fard Kifaya” mosques that allow the fulfilment of social responsibilities, and “Sunnah” mosques, which can be used for a diverse and complex range of activities such as weddings, funerals, invitations to Islam and large-scale Islamic conferences. This paper uses a combination of both typologies whilst also considering visibility in greater detail. In reflecting the structural and functional differences of British mosques, it classifies places of worship as either a masjid, community mosque or symbol mosque. I elaborate on this distinction below.

"Masjid" are private prayer rooms reserved for prayer, which is the basic act of worship engaged in by Muslims. These can be located in associations, restaurants, and public buildings (such as universities or airports). They are small places of worship that allow Muslims to perform five daily prayers and Friday prayers. Therefore, while this category is similar to Ahmed (2019) “Fard mosque” model in that it allows the fulfilment of basic worshipping duties, it is also parallel to the "house mosque" model in that it contains the qibla direction, prayer rug and basic Islamic symbols. However, it does not include a minaret or other identifying symbol on the house and therefore is not outwardly visible. As a result of this, the places of worship in the "masjid" typology are mostly only known by regular attendees and the risk of Islamophobic attack on such places of worship is expected to be lower than for other typologies.

Next in my visibility typology is the “community mosque”. It is the most common type both among the mosques recruited for the fieldwork and among British mosques more generally.

The locality of the mosque or the presence of a dominant ethnicity or compatriot group defines the community mosque. As Saleem (2020) describes, with the arrival of immigrant families after the 1962 British Nationality Act, there were sub-ethnic, sectarian or compatriot clusters among the Muslim diaspora. These clusters accelerated the establishment of mosques (a sharp increase after the 1960s), which were the centre of their own subculture. Out of the participant Mosques included in this study, 74.4 per cent can be defined as community mosques, which were mostly also attended by specific ethnic groups (Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Turkish, Albanian, Arabs, African etc). Ony, a small proportion of the participating mosques did not state a dominant ethnicity (%23.25).

Although almost all of the mosques in the “community mosque” typology consist of converted buildings, for the purposes of researching conflict in the local community a more defining quality is their community membership of a local or small ethnic group. This type of mosque also has similarities to the “Fard Kifaya” mosque type. As pointed out by Ahmed (2019), mosques that enable social responsibilities and duties such as funerals and weddings can only exist among groups that know each other and operate at the level of the local community. "Community mosques" are likely to carry cultural traces of the dominant ethnic origin alongside religious identity. This may manifest in particular signage on the mosque that makes it clearly visible. For many of the mosques that I typologised as “community mosques”, the majority of the congregations were of a dominant ethnic origin. There are several underlying reasons for this. The clusters formed by the first immigrant communities that Ansari (2018) mentioned contributed to the formation of the "community mosque" type. In addition, minor differences in understandings of Islam among Muslim communities and the language of worship factor play an active role. Whilst the language of worship in Islam is basically Arabic, the language used in the sermon and Friday prayer speeches often differs. Although in most community mosques the Friday prayer speech is given in English as well as

the native language of the dominant ethnicity, in some mosques it is delivered only in the language of the dominant ethnicity. In these cases, the priority of Muslim individuals will be to attend the mosque where they pray in their native language rather than the one that is nearest.

Language is important in community mosques as it creates identity. Community mosques are not only buildings of worship but also factories of cultural and ethnic perpetuation and production. For example, a mosque in a community populated by Muslims of Iranian origin is not only a building where daily worship is performed but also a centre where activities related to Iranian culture are held and passed on between generations. These traces of ethnic culture may also influence relations with the local community and can be related to attacks against mosques. For example, the visibility and noticeability of the traditional clothing of the congregation of a community dominated by Pakistani Muslims is different from that of mosques dominated by ethnic origins such as Turkish, Balkan, and Azerbaijani who do not wear traditional clothing in daily life. It has been determined in previous studies that immediately after the 9/11 attack members of the Sikh religion who wore traditional headwear, as well as Muslims, were subjected to serious hate crimes (Sheridan and Gillett 2005). Therefore, the subjective dimensions of mosques in the “community mosque” category may result in different types of attacks, thereby justifying their categorisation.

The third type discussed in this paper is the "symbol mosque". Purpose-built mosques or British mosques with minarets, which are the symbols of Islamic places of worship, are classified as symbol mosques in this study. This type includes both "purpose-built mosques" and is parallel to the "sunnah mosque" model in terms of symbolic meaning. While minarets and Islamic architecture reflect the identity of the "other" in the public sphere, these places of worship are symbols of the permanence of the Muslim community. Indeed, one of the main reasons why almost all of the UK and European mosque conflict literature revolves around

purpose-built mosques relates to the symbolic meaning these structures hold. Compared to the "masjid" and the relatively less visible "community mosques", the "symbol mosques" stand out through their minarets. Since mosques with Islamic architecture are different from other buildings in their location, their visibility is higher than other mosque types (Alraouf 2011) . This difference is likely to result in higher rates of anti-Muslim attacks (Betz 2013).

Following my typology of visibility, it is expected that purpose-built mosques have the highest level of visibility, and therefore accrue a greater number of more severe attacks, followed by community mosques and finally masjid mosques. However, the ethnic enclave might also play a role. Purpose-built and community mosques can be in areas with a high presence of co-ethnics and a low presence of white British individuals, which can have a protective effect.

2. METHODS AND DATA

2.1. Description of the Sample and Methods of Access

This study relies on opportunistic and purposive sampling methods. Opportunity sampling is defined as selecting participants based on ease of accessibility and proximity to the researcher rather than using random or systematic criteria, whilst purposive sampling is a method in which researchers rely on their own judgment when selecting participants. The field research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and mosques were closed during certain periods, which is why I used the opportunity sampling method and contacted mosques on the MosqueFinder website. However, when recruiting mosques for interviews, I also took into account four main criteria: the type of mosque, the community's ethnicity, the area's ethnic diversity, and the level of conflict present. The section below outlines how each of these factors were considered.

This study gathered sensitive information and particular techniques were used to address this (Booth and Booth 1994). Firstly, I prepared an information sheet for participants which included the details of the project and its purpose, and suggested institutions they could contact if they have been exposed to Islamophobic attacks and vandalism. The information collected in the interviews corresponds with the main research themes in the study. Information regarding current conflicts and attacks in the past was gathered. 'Conflict' and 'attack' in this study have been defined broadly – I included information regarding any incidents, altercations, hate crime experiences, and everyday experiences of othering in the information sheet. I aimed to capture any attacks where participants felt othered. The information sheet also contained the contact details of myself, my supervisor, and the University, and I took the first step towards a trusting relationship by ensuring that participants felt safe to contact me whenever they wanted. Along with the information sheet, I also created a consent form, which contained concise information about how the interviews would take place and how they could withdraw from the research at any time. I delivered both forms to all the mosque employees I contacted.

I stored notes, interview recordings, and transcripts from fieldwork via Dropbox and kept them inaccessible to anyone except me and my supervisor. However, in order to protect the personal data of the participants, I anonymised them by randomly giving them common Muslim names. When discussing ethnic enclave and mosque locations, I made minor adjustments to the population proportions to prevent locations from being obvious. Additionally, I numbered the mosques to avoid providing any identifying information. I encrypted the participant list, the names and postcodes of the mosques, and their contact information in another file and never used this information on paper. By anonymising the personal data of both the participating mosque staff and information about the mosques themselves, I prevented participants' identities from being detected. All participants had been

informed in writing and verbally about the content of the study and consent forms were signed prior to the interviews taking place. All of the information obtained from the participants has been stored securely and anonymisation was used – all mosques were assigned a specific number that I have used in my research notes and all respondents were assigned different names reflecting their ethnicity (Mishra and Shirazi 2010).

43 Semi-structured interviews were conducted with mosque staff in England (36), Scotland (5), Wales (1) and Ireland (1). 24 of the participants were imams, while the remaining participants were mosque association presidents (7), secretaries-general (4), and board members (8). Some imams served in more than one mosque, whilst others worked in the mosque only for prayer times. The difference in the positions of the participants in the mosque management contributed to the research having a wider perspective. These different participants could provide different but insightful perspectives on the extent of the attacks their mosques had experienced. Imams are in the mosque on a daily basis due to their work and spend more time in the mosque than other employees. They frequently provided the most detailed accounts of the range of experienced attacks. On the other hand, the heads of mosque associations were more knowledgeable about the establishment of the mosque and if there were any conflict or cooperation issues.

The average age of participants interviewed in the study was 43.58 years old and the age range was between 23 and 68. 19 of the participants were first-generation immigrant Muslims, and 24 of them were second-generation. The higher number of second-generation immigrants among the participants may be related to language skills. The contact information of the mosques was publicly available and good language skills are required for good communication. In fact, three-quarters of the secretaries of the participating mosques are second-generation immigrants. 43 men and one woman (a board member) participated in this research. Although imams can serve more than one mosque, I gathered experiences they had

with their main mosque site. Due to the restrictions of the pandemic, all interviews were conducted online via Zoom (Gray et al. 2020). I started conducting field work in August 2020 and completed it in March 2021.

Participants were recruited for this study in various ways. Some were identified through the website MosqueFinder, which allows searches of the nearest mosque in a vicinity (Mazharuddin and Hendrianto 2012). First, I listed the mosques operating in UK cities and contacted those with an official website, social media account or contact number. Not all of the mosques had websites, and I sent emails to 218 mosques (151 community and sixty-seven symbol) with the information sheet and a message promoting the research. Only 11 mosques responded to my e-mail, and interviews were conducted with eight of them. Additionally, the interviewed mosque staff were asked about other potential mosques, but five of the six suggested mosques did not agree to participate, and one did not attend the arranged interview online. I also called mosques that had their contact numbers publicly available with my private mobile phone. After introducing myself in formal English and explaining the details of my project, I asked them if they would participate in the research. After the negative responses I received in the first 15-20 phone calls, I realised that I needed to establish a bond of trust with the mosque staff and decided to explain the project in simpler and plainer language and also use Islamic jargon. This resulted in positive responses. The duration of the telephone conversations varied. Almost three-quarters of the phone calls to mosque staff who refused to participate lasted for one-to-two minutes. Other phone conversations lasted between two and seven minutes, and those who agreed to participate asked more detailed questions about me and the research. I talked about where I am from, where I am doing my doctorate and the content of my studies. Online meetings were arranged with mosque members who agreed to participate.

I made approximately 280 phone calls, and the majority of the volunteers who participated in the field research were the mosque staff I had invited over the phone. Furthermore, I sent messages to 96 mosques that only had social media accounts to recruit them in the same way. Of those, six mosques responded to my messages, and only two (community mosques) agreed to participate in the field research. Those who politely refused to participate in the study did not give any reason. Overall an attempt was made to contact the staff of approximately 600 mosques in the UK via telephone, email, and social media. In addition, the mosque staff who were contacted were also asked about the contact information of other mosques in their cities. Finally, I requested contact information for Turkish mosques in the United Kingdom from the Turkish Embassy, Office of the Counsellor for Religious Services. From the list they sent me via e-mail, I contacted eight mosques outside London and only three of them agreed to participate in the interview. I did not contact more than ten Turkish mosques in London to ensure ethnic diversity.

I discovered that the language used is the most important factor in establishing a trusting relationship with participants, both at the interview invitation stage and during the interview. I started the interviews with greeting patterns used in Islamic daily life (e.g. salamun alaikum[5], inshAllah[6], jazakAllah[7] etc.), and this helped build a bridge between me and the participants. Also, I had a two-way exchange of information with the participants. While I was getting information from them with the questions I asked, I also helped them get information by expanding the questions. For example, some participants did not know how to react to concepts such as islamophobia or xenophobia, and after explaining these concepts by simplifying them and giving examples, some participants talked about the anti-Muslim

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[5] A greeting in Arabic that means “peace be upon you”.

[6] Meaning “if Allah wills”.

[7] An Islamic expression of thanks and gratitude that means “may Allah reward you with goodness”.

sentiments suffered by mosques. This made me reflect on my privileged positionality as a researcher due to my education and training and the importance of establishing rapport with the participants (Partington 2001). It is also, however, interesting to note that second-generation participants were much more likely to recognize the existence of islamophobia in the UK than first-generation ones. This aligns with previous research on perceived discrimination in the UK (Maxwell 2014). Second-generation participants also provided much more detailed descriptions of their experiences, as shown below in the results section (Robinson 2005; Yazdiha 2019). Second-generation Muslims are more familiar with British norms and social categories.

An important problem limiting this research was the English language skills of some participants. While contacting via the phone numbers of several mosques, some mosque staff (4) answered the phone only in their mother tongue. Some staff stated that they have a basic level of English proficiency but that they could only be interviewed in their mother tongue (Urdu and Turkish). Therefore, two of the interviews (Abid and Faisal) were held in Turkish and I then transcribed and translated them into English. However, I encountered the English proficiency barrier during some interviews (6) and as a result they lasted only approximately 20 minutes. When I felt that some of my questions were not clearly understood by participants, I explained my questions with examples of attacks. In addition, while I had difficulty understanding the accents of some of the participants during the interview, I overcame this problem by listening to the interview recordings several times whilst I transcribed them.

Interestingly, several mosque staff (3) invited for the interview stated that while they touched on some anti-Muslim experiences during the preliminary conversations, they could not share this information during the interview. Three participants whom I contacted by phone to invite to participate in the study talked about possible incidents. However, during the actual

interview, they purposefully avoided giving details about their experiences. Notably, although it was stated in the consent form that the data would be anonymised and accessible only by the researcher, some participants (2) preferred to give short answers to the questions. This situation can be associated with the language barrier and a desire to ignore the attacks. Both participants were first-generation immigrants, and it was obvious that they were not confident in their English language skills as they gave short and simple answers to all questions. I simplified the questions as much as possible and expanded the participants' answers using follow-up questions based on their short answers. These participants mentioned that they had not experienced any significant attacks on their mosques. With the questions I asked later, I discovered that they were actually subjected to serious anti-Muslim attacks.

I also focused on multi-ethnic cities to explore mosques with different dominant ethnicities. The study gives due consideration to the diversity within the British Muslim community. For example, by contacting mosques in the area where Somalians live densely, I ensured that in my field research there was a mosque where Somalian was the dominant ethnicity (one mosque). Among my respondents, 28 were from the British Asian ethnic minority. 17 participants identified as Pakistani, while three participants identified themselves as Bangladeshi, two participants as Indian/British, and six participants identified only as British/Asian. The identity preferences of these six participants can be explained by the possibility that minorities have strong dual identities (British national and ethnic identity) (Nandi and Platt 2015). More interestingly, all second-generation participants were from British Asian ethnic minorities. The remaining participants defined their ethnicity as follows: Turkish (3), Black African (2), and Barbary (2), with others identifying as Somalian, Afro-Asian, Kosovan, Azerbaijani, Dutch, and White. Two of the participants chose not to reveal their ethnicity.

An important contribution of this research centres on considering whether ethnic enclaves can indeed have protective effects and play an important role in supporting the mental health of their communities Knies, Nandi, and Platt (2016), although results can have mixed findings (Becares and Nazroo 2015). This definition can be based on previous research. The work of Ceri Peach (2012) suggests that Britain does not experience the same level of ghettoization as can be observed in the US. Furthermore, the definition of enclaves can be considered according to ethnicity rather than religious background. This is the approach of other studies such as Becares and Nazroo (2015) and Demireva and Zwysen (2021). This approach has its limitations, however, as the definition of enclave focuses on the majority presence of White British communities rather than on the presence of one dominant religious minority group, and the presence of a Muslim community although research may show that there is a firm alignment between ethnicity and ethnic group. By focusing on ethnicity, it is possible to consider work on other forms of perceived discrimination. For example, there was a significant difference between the dominant ethnicity around the mosques and the proportion of Muslims which recruited from the city of Bristol.

I took account of the density of the surrounding ethnic population in the ethnic enclave in several ways. I examined the population information in MSOAs (Middle Layer Super Output Areas between 2,000 and 6,000 households and between 5,000 and 15,000 persons). MSOAs are often used in research as markers of neighbourhoods where mosques are located (Jonsson and Demireva 2018; Laurence 2017). For this I used Census 2011 (England and Wales), Census 2011 (Scotland) and Census 2021 (Northern Ireland) information. Following research on ethnic enclavisation in Britain, I defined an enclave to be an area with a low presence of majority group members and a high presence of migrants and minorities (Johnston, Forrest, and Poulsen 2002; Peach 2012; Simpson and Finney 2009). MSOAs with a white British population of less than 60% are thus considered an "ethnic enclave local area", and areas with

a white British population above 80% were considered a white British local area. The density of the white population in predominantly white British local areas was also important, and I found that the white British rate was between 60% and 80%, indicating a medium level white British presence.

To recruit mosques for interviews, I first examined local authority districts where the Muslim population was more than 20%. Thus, about a quarter of mosques in cities such as Leicester, Birmingham, Bradford, London, and Manchester (cities with large Muslim populations) were contacted. I started my fieldwork in London, and I first got responses from 7 mosques based in London. Five of the seven mosques from which I received a positive response for the interviews were located in an ethnic enclave local area. Two of the mosques were in a predominantly white British Local area (≥60%). The interesting point here is that four of these seven mosques in London have more than 30% of the Muslim population in the MSOA area, and there is wide ethnic diversity around the remaining ones. Highly multicultural spaces may be less exposed to attacks (Vertovec 1997). However, they can also become the local points for outsiders who may wish to carry out attacks (Haque 2019).

This study considers several typologies in its set-up. Of the 43 interviews conducted, eight of them were with symbol mosques, 32 were with community mosques, and three were with masjid mosques. While creating lists of cities and mosques to contact, I also categorised the mosques for my typology based on the information on the websites. During the interviews I conducted with mosque staff, I verified these categories by asking for information such as the size of the mosque, minaret, madrasah, and its dominant ethnicity. In big cities, symbol mosques are more visible in terms of their appearance. Therefore, during the invitation process, I aimed to contact all the symbol mosques that I came across, regardless of the city, the density of the Muslim population, etc. Because the literature showed that research focusing on mosques and conflicts mostly dealt with symbolic mosques as subjects, and these

mosques were more the target of debates. My main research efforts focused on symbol and community mosques, as my research expectations based on the previous literature were that they may receive greater levels of attacks (Obe 2023). Indeed, the three masjid mosques that participated in the research had never experienced attacks, and the other masjid mosque staff I called who declined to participate in the research stated that they were based in a small building and had never been attacked or experienced any tensions (13 potential participants).

As previous research has highlighted the important distinction between new and old mosques, I attempted to recruit participants from both groups in this study. This research seeks to understand the local opposition, discrimination and conflicts that mosques face when they are established. Therefore, the establishment dates of mosques were also included in the research, and I divided them into two periods: before and after 2000. The first group consisted of mosques established before 2000, and these were established in the 60s (2 mosques), 70s (6 mosques), 80s (10 mosques) and 90s (5 mosques). The purpose of discussing the post-2000 mosques separately was to discover whether the newly established mosques faced tough opposition due to the changing perception of Islam and Muslims in the western world after the 9/11 attacks. 20 of the mosques that participated in the fieldwork were founded after 2000, and seven of them faced sharp opposition.

Table 1: Mosque Numbers by Typologies and Local Area Diversity

	Symbol Mosques	Community Mosques	Masjid
White British Dominant (WB≥80)	**3**	**18**	**2**
Medium Level Presence of WB (WB≥60)	**3**	**5**	**0**
Enclave (WB<60)	**2**	**9**	**1**
Number of Mosques	**8**	**32**	**3**
TOTAL		**43 MOSQUES**	

Table 2: Mosque Typologies by Number of Attacks

	Symbol Mosques	Community Mosques	Masjid
Number of High-Level Attacks	24.5%	18.4%	-
Number of Low-Level Attacks	54.5%	56.6%	-
Number of Mosques That Have Never Been Attacked	25%	25%	100%
Total Number of Attacks	*11*	*49*	*0*
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

Note: In the masjid typology the mosques have not experienced any attacks

Table 3: Mosque Local Areas Diversity by Number of Attacks

	White British Dominant (WB≥80)	Medium level presence of WB (WB≥60)	Enclave (WB<60)
Number of High-Level Attacks	26.9%	11.1%	10%
Number of Low-Level Attacks	52.2%	88.9%	40%
Number of Mosques That Have Never Been Attacked	21.9%	-	50%
Total Number of Attacks	*32*	*18*	*10*
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

Note: In the Medium level presence of WB (WB≥60<80) category all mosques have experienced attacks.

Table 4: Establishment Date of Mosques and Number of Attacks

	HIGH SEVERE ATTACKS			LOW SEVERE ATTACKS				NO ATTACK
	Bombing	Arson	Violent Break	Desecration	Graffiti	Windows Smashed	Intimidation	
Before 2000 (23 Mosques)	-	3	7	4	7	12	5	4
After 2000 (20 Mosques)	1	2	2	3	9	3	2	9
Total number of incidents	15			45				13

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Mosque Conflict: Local Response to Establishment of New Mosques

This research suggests that much of the conflict that mosques experienced did not necessarily happen at the onset of the mosques' establishment. As can be seen in the literature review, the opposition and tension that mosques face during the establishment phase is a consideration for the majority of mosque conflict studies (McLoughlin 2005). In this study, the staff of the mosques established in the 1960s and 1970s were second-generation Muslims, and some of them (3) stated that they had no idea about any establishment issues, while others (5) stated that they had heard about several anti-mosque incidents from the elders of the community, although they did not know the details. However, one of the oldest participants, Zahid (56 years old and the chair of the community mosque), mentioned that they faced some minor

problems and opposition when they decided to establish a mosque in the 1970s and talked about the harsh opposition they faced more recently in a new symbol mosque project (high in visibility with a minaret). This new mosque was needed because the mosque they converted from an old public building was not enough for the expanding community in a white British dominant area (WB≥80). Zahid was proud when he talked about the tough struggle he faced with the anti-mosque supporters. Notably, he underlined the support this new project is gathering in his diverse community and claimed that the opposition was concentrated in the hands of a few groups with a far-right agenda:

> *I am aware that we live in a multicultural society. While a large part of the local community supports our new mosque project, far-right groups are trying to prevent construction from starting. We have all the necessary permissions from the local authorities, but the protest of a group of people prevents the construction of the mosque. There are racist and Islamophobic elements in the content of these protests. They accuse our mosque as a "house of terror" and try to reflect it to the community as such. If you search for the name on the internet, you can see both our struggle and the protests.*
>
> ***Zahid, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)***

Indeed, they had been subjected to the EDL's (English Defence League) staunch Islamophobic protests. In June 2023, I visited the mosque’s official website, and, despite protests, they had started construction. Moreover, Ali and Omar, the imams of community mosques established after 2000, with one placed in an enclave area (WB<60) and one in a white British dominant area, said that after the protests animals’[8] heads were left in front of their mosques several times. Both participants faced these attacks shortly after the opening of their mosques (Table 4):

> *I suggest you search my name on Google, you can see more than 30 news about me and the mosque. You can see everything about the protests, the (animal part[9]) left in the mosque during the protest and more in the media. Otherwise, we need to talk for 2 hours just to answer this question.*

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[8] Pig organs.

[9] This attack was covered in the national media. Some details of the attack were withheld to avoid revealing the identity of the participant.

Ali, Community Mosque, Enclave Area (WB<60)

> *Initially from the starting, there was a lot of negativities from the community, they would come outside the masjid, and they would do their protests, and they went to the newspapers and things like that. But I don't know over time, that's kind of died down. So initially, there was someone left like wrapped up bacon outside the masjid on someone's call. And so there was negativity in that manner.*

Omar, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)

Zakariya, the imam of a community mosque in a white British dominant area, mentioned that the mosque was exposed to vandalism several times directly after the protests. Dawood, the imam of a community mosque in a medium white British dominant area, mentioned that the broader Muslim community was exposed to anti-Muslim attacks after the protests in addition to the mosque:

> *Our mosque is located in an area where the white and working class is very dense, and when we first opened our mosque, there were reactions from the local people and there were some vandalism incidents at first. Worse still, at first, non-Muslim neighbours verbally attacked those who came to the mosque. Especially women who came to the mosque were exposed to verbal attacks for a while. This situation affected the community very much at first, but it was seven years ago and now we do not encounter such events as before. In the early days, there were many attacks on women, not only in the mosque, but also in the town centre. But as I said, there were many times when we opened the first mosque, now it's not that much of a problem.*

Dawood, Community Mosque, Medium Level Presence of WB Area (WB≥60<80)

While previous research suggests that in large part the opposition and attacks against mosques are concentrated on symbol mosques, this research builds a much more complex picture. Thus, not only purpose-built new mosques but also other mosques faced serious opposition when they were being founded. Regardless of whether they were new symbol mosques or community mosques that had been converted from existing buildings, the perceived conflict and tensions between the different communities played a role. For example, Aisha, a staff member at a community mosque founded in the 1970s in a white British dominant area, said that the anti-mosque opposition was not very intense during its establishment, but that there have been demonstrations every 5-6 months in the last ten years to close the mosque. She said

that the opposition demonstrations were organised by the local far-right group, and also stated that these demonstrations turned into anti-Muslim attacks involving violence, vandalism, broken windows, and egg-throwing:

> *Our mosque was exposed to protests and attacks many times, but in 2017, our mosque was filmed by one of the far-right leaders [...] and in this video, he referred to our mosque as "Islamification of the mainland" and our mosque as a "den of iniquity". We applied to the court for this video and the person who made this was arrested, but he was sentenced for another crime instead of this video.*

Aisha, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)

Aisha said that they have faced serious protests many times, and in the last protest, the right-wing group filmed an attack on the imam. The imam was seriously injured, and the protests involved intimidation attacks as well as violent vandalism.

Some mosques experienced few conflicts and relatively mild opposition. In these cases, participants mentioned that the concerns of the local community were more likely to involve parking space and noise and that they cooperated with communities to overcome these problems. Tahir, the imam of the newest participating symbol mosque in the study, which was established a few years ago, talked about the local conflict and the resolution process:

> *Our mosque is located in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural city. We applied to the local authorities by preparing a detailed project of 1127 pages for the Masjid project. It cost us a quarter of a million pounds. But we were so delighted when the planning committee met the city council [....] People in the area where we built the mosque had concerns about noise and parking. We interviewed a few tours of our local neighbours for this. We told them how to solve this problem and they were convinced. Later, the local authority arranged consultation meetings attended by about 400 people (don't remember the exact number). The mosque project and how to resolve their concerns were discussed with those who attended the meeting. Only 32 people who attended the meeting opposed the mosque project. Those who objected were people who were generally anti-mosque. We established our mosque in cooperation with the consent of more than 90% of the people who attended the consultation meetings.*

Tahir, Symbol Mosque, Medium Level Presence of WB Area (WB≥60<80)

Some participants were not as lucky as Tahir and mentioned that they could not get permission to open a mosque due to the local opposition, conflicts and protests they encountered while getting permission to open, and they found other buildings:

Before the building we are in now, the leaders of our community purchased two more buildings to open a mosque and applied to the local council for permission to open a mosque. But both buildings faced very strong opposition, and I know there were some protests. After fierce opposition from the local community, authorities did not grant permission to open either mosque building. Finally, they bought this building we were in and were able to get permission to open a mosque for it.

Adnan, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)

The mosques where Ali and Ibrahim worked, which were not surrounded by ethnic enclaves, also encountered a similar situation. Mosque opening permits for several purchased buildings were cancelled by the authorities after opposition and protests from the local community.

In addition to the local opposition that mosques faced during the establishment phase, one of the important points of the research was whether they faced institutional discrimination. Eight participants did not have information about whether they encountered any discrimination during the opening process of the mosque. Six of them were mosques established in the 80s, while the imam of two mosques established after the 2000s stated that they had been working in the mosque for several years and did not have information about the opening process. Apart from these eight mosques, more than one-third of the other 35 mosque participants talked about their experiences and stories of institutional discrimination during the opening process. The common complaints of these participants were that the opening permit took a lot of time and that the authorities did this on purpose. However, some of the participants mentioned that they felt discriminated against when applying for an opening permit but did not have evidence to prove it. For example, one participant stated that:

I can say that I felt discrimination from the local council when I applied for the opening. They asked for many problems and paperwork. It took us almost 8-9 months to get the opening permit.

Harun, Symbol Mosque, Medium Level Presence of WB Area (WB≥60<80)

However, four participants stated that they were aware of this institutional discrimination and that they followed an easier method, mentioning that obtaining mosque opening permits was difficult:

Permission to open a mosque is quite difficult, we knew that this would be difficult because of the other mosques that had been opened in the city before, and that is why we applied as a community centre rather than a mosque when applying to local authorities. Local authorities made it easier for us to open a community permit. If we had applied for the opening of a mosque, we would not have been able to get permission.

Abdurrahman, Community Mosque, Medium Level Presence of WB Area (WB≥60<80)

The level of opposition to the newfound mosque varies according to the perceptions of Muslims in the local community. The positive relations developed by the mosque with the local community play an active role in the perception of Muslims. Mosque staff had developed methods to moderate negative local reactions, the most common being "open door days". Mosques that opened the doors of their mosques to the local community on certain days of the week were able to introduce themselves in a way that strived to create friendly relations with the local community. Many mosque staff talked about the projects they carried out with schools to improve relations and eradicate racism and Islamophobia, as well as social responsibility projects designed to improve their relations with the local community. Food banks were one of them and four mosques with a white British dominant area in their MSOA had food bank projects developed.

The majority of mosque staff stated that they had difficulty making sense of the motivations behind attacks and protests. They also had difficulty understanding attempts to block the building, which had all the necessary permissions from the local authority. This controversial topic brought a lot of agitation to my interviewees as they explained how they resolved issues such as parking problems and noise that were objected to by the local community. All of the interviewees were in favour of cooperation and made efforts towards this. They discussed the steps they took to keep relations warm, and the effort was often, but not always, rewarded. The majority of participants mentioned their cooperation with the local authority and community, other religious groups, and ethnic communities. I observed that despite all efforts and initiatives, conflicts and attacks disappointed the participants. Some participants touched

on the meaninglessness of what was happening while describing the negative attitudes towards their mosques and the Muslim community, despite all their efforts. However, a few participants wanted to maintain hope by associating what happened with a minority of rude and racist people in the local community. Some mosque staff stated that they increased security measures after the attacks, while others touched on the impact of the attacks on the community. However, mosque attacks not only affected the anxiety and security concerns of the Muslim community but also caused members to face psychological problems such as low confidence and depression. It was echoed by several participants that there was a decline in the attendance of mosque-goers for some time after the attacks.

Both academic research and fieldwork have shown that anti-mosque opposition in Britain has continued for almost half a century. It is clear that since the 2000s, 9/11 and other attacks have brought fierce and sharp opposition to new mosques into a controversial spotlight (Awan and Zempi 2015). While 20 of the mosques participating in the field research were established after the 2000s, the remaining 23 were established before the 2000s, and many of them faced local conflicts while they were established. Even though years had passed, the methods and dynamics of the opposition were almost the same. Some mosque staffs mentioned about protests organized by local right-wing groups and how their mosques were often described as "houses of terror" or "occupation centres" by demonstrators. However, as many participants mentioned, protests also involved anti-Muslim attacks. Therefore, regardless of old or new, mosques are likely to be the focus of local opposition and conflicts, and mosque conflict literature should consider mosques as a whole phenomenon.

3.2. Mosques That Have Never Been Attacked

Before evaluating the anti-Muslim mosque attacks from field research, it is worth mentioning that there were mosques in this research that had never been attacked. How did these mosques, which make up almost a third of the participating mosques, avoid attacks? Did the

typology and characteristics of the ethnic enclave have an impact? When we look at the mosques that were not attacked, the first detail that draws attention is the size of the ethnic community in the local area in which the mosque is located. Seven of the 13 mosques were located in a white British dominant area, while other mosques have had enclave areas are in their MSOAs. Moreover, some participants who spoke of the presence of other minorities in their local areas and the protection it conferred about the mosque implied that this was a factor in not being attacked:

> *I can say that only Muslims live in the place where the mosque is located. There are almost no non-Muslims around the mosque. That's why we didn't encounter any attacks, thankfully.*
>
> ***Yahya, Community Mosque, Enclave Area (WB<60)***

One of the expectations of the field research was that mosques in cities with large non-white or ethnic enclave areas such as Birmingham, Luton, and Leicester are likely to face fewer attacks. Indeed, all of the mosques recruited for research from these cities were surrounded by large co-ethnic communities and had either never been attacked or were subject to low-level severity attacks. This suggests that the ethnic community in the local area in the location where the mosque is located can indeed play the role of a protective shield.

Despite being located in a small city with the lowest Muslim population in England, the proportion of Muslims in the MSOA where one of these mosques was located was ten times greater than in the city. Still, the imam detailed several strategies that focused on diminishing the physical presence of the mosque that were used to avoid attacks, thus evidencing that they did not entirely trust the protection that the ethnic community could provide:

> *Our mosque is located in a town dominated by the white working class and the number of Muslims is very low here. We decided not to put a sign in our mosque. When we look from the outside, there is no indication that the building is a mosque. I can safely say that we did it to avoid vandalism and EDL attacks. The other mosque in the city has a sign and is subject to many vandalism and graffiti attacks, but our mosque is only known to Muslims and has never been attacked by anti-Muslims as there are no indications.*
>
> ***Hamza, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)***

These findings from fieldwork exemplify the protective shield that the ethnic enclave often, but not always, creates. There were 12 mosques in ethnic enclave areas and only half of them were attacked (Tables 1 and 3). However, more than two-thirds of the 23 mosques located in white British dominant areas in the MSOA experienced attacks (Tables 1 and 3). Moreover, almost 85% of both low-level and high-level severity attacks occurred at mosques which were not in ethnic enclave areas in their MSOA (Table 3). It is very difficult to claim that the ethnic enclave is a definitive protective shield because there are examples of mosques in a strong ethnic enclave that have faced attacks. However, the levels of attacks, their numbers, and altercations indicate that the role of the ethnic enclave should not be ignored.

When I considered the typology of mosques that were not exposed to any attack, I reached interesting findings. Mosques in the “masjid” category of the typology in general face no or low severity level anti-Muslim attacks. In my sample, there were no recorded low or high-severity attacks against them (Table 2). The fact that the rate of attack of the mosques in this typology is low compared to other typologies is related to their low visibility. The participants of the masjid mosques mentioned during the interview that the prayer buildings are small and are predominantly active only during prayer times. When comparing ethnic enclave and visibility, it is possible to say that visibility is a greater determinant of exposure to attacks. When I evaluated the attacks according to mosque typologies, the two mosques that were not attacked among the symbol mosques were located in a white British dominant area. However, all symbolic mosques surrounded by ethnic enclaves or medium-level presence of WB (WB≥60) experienced attacks.

Furthermore, more than half of the mosques that did not suffer any attacks were "community mosques" (Table 2). Interestingly, these mosques belonged to a dominant ethnicity. This reflected the cluster formed by British Muslims who migrated from the same region or who were of the same ethnic origin. For example, it is possible to clearly see community mosques

in large ethnic enclaves where Balkan Muslims are the dominant ethnicity. The Balkan Mosque examined in this study was located in an ethnic enclave area and three-quarters of the population in the MSOA were Muslim. The imam of the mosque, Abbas, mentioned that although the mosque is open to all Muslims, the majority of the congregation was of Balkan origin. The language of worship in community mosques is the same as that of the dominant ethnicity. Hence, these community mosques were founded by Muslims of the same ethnic origin living together, and the mosques serve not only as a place of worship but also as a community centre. Six of the seven mosques with a dominant ethnicity examined in this study did not experience attacks, and it is therefore possible to infer that community mosques with a dominant ethnicity have stronger protective shields. Similar findings were observed among "community mosques" dominated by other ethnicities, such as Turkish, Pakistani and Bangladeshi.

3.3. Low and High-Level Severity Attacks in the Context of the Ethnic Enclave and Typology

Among the findings from the field study, a different type of crime to those previously highlighted by Allen (2017) and used by TELL MAMA was identified. This was mentioned by four participants and involved intimidating regular attendees of mosques by threatening them and instilling fear. Two community mosques (one with predominantly Pakistani ethnicity and the other Bangladeshi) located in different cities in white British dominant areas faced several death threats immediately after the Christchurch Mosque attack, and the participants from the two mosques mentioned the chaos and tension created by the threat:

> *Right after the Christchurch Mosque attack, someone called me because my number is on the mosque's website. A man, probably middle-aged, said he would come to the mosque tomorrow and kill everyone inside, and hung up. I immediately informed the head of the mosque and reported the situation to the police.*
>
> ***Abu Bakr, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)***

> *When the mosque was first opened, we faced negative behaviour from the local people, they even left bacon in front of the mosque with a paper containing Islamophobic messages. Of course, we didn't care about this situation. But the letter we got recently was more horrible, someone had thrown a letter inside the mosque saying that he had a gun and that he would come to the mosque and kill everyone. This time the situation was serious, and we informed the police.*
>
> ***Omar, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)***

The first threat to the mosque was probably perceived as a casual Islamophobic attack and was not reported to the police, but the threatening letter was perceived as more serious. Based on this, it is possible to say that many Islamophobic attacks have been normalised among the participants. It was not a new phenomenon for British mosques to be subject to threats after national and international events in which Muslims were deemed responsible. Aisha, who managed the communication network of her mosque, stated that they received many letters and phone calls immediately after the 9/11 attack and that the callers threatened with profanities to burn the mosque and kill the community. The threat to kill everyone in the mosque can also be made not only by phone or letter but also physically. The imam of one symbol mosque in an ethnic enclave area, which had also been subject to an incident approximately ten years ago where an animal head was left in the courtyard of the mosque, talked about repeated attacks in recent years after someone drove in front of the mosque during Ramadan and threatened to kill Muslims who entered the mosque.

> *After the van driver incident, someone started to stick newspaper pages containing Islamophobia news on the door of the mosque using glue. As we cleaned this newspaper page, they were pasting a new newspaper article. This was repeated 4-5 times.*
>
> ***Uthman, Symbol Mosque, Enclave Area (WB<60)***

Ali, who is the imam of another community mosque in an enclave area, explained that an aggressive attacker followed and videotaped staff while they were distributing food to the local community with the mosque’s food bank service during the pandemic period. He argued that Muslims were breaking lockdown rules and attacked them with aggressive anti-Muslim

rhetoric. Reporting that the attacker, who is well-known to local authorities as anti-Muslim, shared the video he took with Islamophobic statements, my interviewee said that they later reported the incident to the police and the video was removed. These threat-focused attacks are better categorised as “intimidation” than as "violent break-ins" or "desecration". My interviewees who were subjected to this type of attack shared the belief that intimidation attempts did not work and that they were not frightened by them.

3.1.1 Low-Level Severity Attacks

Low-level severity attacks involve methods such as graffiti, breaking windows, and desecration. Broken windows were the most common low-level severity attacks experienced by the mosques that participated in the field research (Table 4). Although the participants from mosques that experienced these attacks made similar points during the interview, the way they handled the attacks differed. When respondents were asked whether their mosques had been attacked, some participants, such as Suleyman, who is the imam of a community mosque located in a white British dominant area, mentioned broken windows several times after saying that there were no significant anti-Muslim attacks. In fact, while most participants had difficulty making sense of the anti-Muslim mosque attacks, the general trend was that the attacks were ignored unless someone was injured or there was major property damage. Attacks in which no one was harmed were normalised by participants, though severe attacks were still acknowledged. The prevalence of broken windows may have contributed to participants' disregard for this type of attack. Twelve participants addressed broken window attacks at different times. Hassan, the secretary of one of the community mosques in Birmingham, spoke of a significant attack:

> *When the Christchurch events happened, a few weeks later we were attacked. The mosque was attacked; probably a couple hours before fajr [prayer] time about two o'clock in the morning. And I was making my way home about four o'clock in the morning. Then the imam rang me up and saying, the windows have been smashed. So, to be honest, I didn't really think of it as much of a problem because thinking for fajr time, there's quite a few people around. Then my brother rang me up and said, you*

need to come down here because there's been all the windows are broken. And I found the mosque had been vandalized from outside. There are quite a few different mosques in the area. And then we found out about five mosques windows broken.

Hassan, Community Mosque, Enclave Area (WB<60)

Another important finding that caught his attention in the attack was that five mosques had windows broken, even though the mosques were closed during the pandemic period. Moreover, some mosques that were attacked by smashed windows had graffiti drawn on the mosque walls, though the messages used in the graffiti attacks were different from each other. One of the community mosques affected by these attacks had a dominant ethnicity of Pakistani Muslims and was located in a medium-level white British area (WB≥60). The walls of the mosque were graffitied with obscene messages. The participants did not want to repeat the obscene messages:

We've had graffiti as well, some very Islamophobic and very offensive graffiti. You know, splayed on the side of our mosque, it wrote something very personal about our Prophet Muhammad and it was something very offensive. I wouldn't like to even repeat it. But it was something it was an image and some graffiti. And it was very, very offensive.

Adnan, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)

In addition to Islamophobic messages, some graffiti contained racist, xenophobic, and threatening messages. For example, one of the community mosques in a white British dominant area in a small town was graffitied with the phrase “Kill the Muslims” and an image of a swastika. A participant from another mosque that had been graffitied with a swastika described an incident that happened the day before the graffiti:

A man I did not know had an argument by saying insulting words by blocking the Imam at the exit of the mosque. However, since our imam's English was not sufficient, he did not understand most of what was said. The imam told me what happened, and when we went to the mosque the next day, a swastika was drawn on the door of the mosque. Probably related to the incident the day before.

Abid, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)

"Go home" was written on the wall of a symbol mosque located in a small city in a white British dominant area. Some of the participants mentioned that they could not read the graffiti drawn on their mosques and did not know its meaning. Although graffiti messages are low-severity attacks as mentioned before, their impact is high because many people can see it. It is possible to say that the graffiti messages encountered in the fieldwork are not only Islamophobic but also question the belonging of the Muslim community and are the most obvious cases of othering, hate and threats against Muslim identity. While the Nazi symbol and messages such as "Go Home" marginalise Muslim identity, the message "Kill the Muslims" may raise concerns about security and freedom of worship in the Muslim community. For the participants, such attacks seem to have almost become a part of life. The majority of participants who were only exposed to attacks such as graffiti, desecration or window breaking described them as minor attacks. The underlying reason for this is that these attacks are very common. Graffiti drawn on the wall does not hurt anyone or cause major material damage, but the messages conveyed are effective in alienating and isolating the Muslim community.

Desecration, one of the low-level severity attacks, involved similar methods throughout my field research. Pork and alcohol, which are forbidden for Muslims, were used in almost all of the attacks in this category. Participants from mosques where animal organs were left in the gardens agreed that the attacks were symbolic and unacceptable. This type of attack contains a sarcastic message that directly targets Muslim identity. In addition to one of the symbol mosques located in a white British dominant area in London, animals' heads were thrown in the gardens of other mosques in the same area. Aside from attacks relating to animal organs and alcohol, the Qur'an was left disrespectfully[10] on the door of a community mosque located in a major city in a medium white British area. The imam of the mosque (Abdulhamid, 63

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[10] Situations such as burning or tearing Quran.

years old) said that the Qur'an was left so disrespectfully that he did not want to talk about the details.

Low-level severity attacks were the most common attack category I encountered in my fieldwork, covering 75% of all attacks (Table 4). When typologies and low-level attacks are considered together, masjid mosques did not suffer any attacks, while more than half of the attacks suffered by symbol and community mosques were low-level (Table 2). The low-level severity attack rate in both typologies was greater than 50% (Table 2). However, the number of low-level attacks suffered by community mosques was higher than that of symbol mosques (Table 2). It is possible to explain why the rates of low-level severity attacks experienced by these mosque categories were close to each other by examining the functional activities of community mosques rather than the visibility dimension of symbol mosques. Attacks in this category, such as threats, windows broken, desecration and graffiti, target the local Muslim community as a whole. Therefore, the low-level attack rates suffered by mosques which function as community centres as well as mosques were close to those in the symbol mosques category. The difference in rates between the two mosque typologies will likely widen in high-level severity attacks that tend to target mosque buildings.

These findings allowed me to explore the relationship between ethnic enclaves and low-level attack rates in MSOA areas where mosques are located. Considering the ethnic enclave in mosque MSOAs and the number of low-level attacks, almost one-fifth of mosques in white British dominant areas (WB≥80) did not face any attacks, while 52.2% of the attacks suffered by the remaining 25 mosques were low-level attacks (Table 3). Moreover, 88.9% were of low-level severity in MSOAs located in medium level white British dominance areas (WB≥60), but each of these eight mosques faced at least one attack (Table 3). In mosques located in ethnic enclaves, the number and rate of low-level severity attacks decreased, and half of the mosques whose MSOA was surrounded by ethnic enclaves were not subjected to

any attacks. Only 40% of the anti-Muslim attacks that the other half were subjected to were low-level attacks (Table 3).

The fact that the low-level attack rates experienced were highest for mosques surrounded by a medium level presence of white British (WB≥60<80) is directly related to the fact that all of these mosques experienced at least one attack. However, it should also be taken into consideration that the Muslim community in the areas where the mosques were located, and the visibility of these mosques, may play an active role. The Muslim community and mosques may be less visible in MSOAs with higher white British dominance (WB≥80). Hamza and a few other imams touched on this point. However, in ethnic enclave areas (WB<60) it is possible to identify the role of visibility as a protective shield. Therefore, mosques surrounded by a medium level of white British presence of WB, which are located between the White British Dominant (WB≥80) and the enclave areas (WB<60), are more visible, but this visibility is insufficient as a protective shield, which explains why they are exposed to a higher rate of low-level attacks.

3.1.2 High-Level Severity Attacks

High-level severity attacks included violent break-ins, arson, and bombings. None of the fieldwork participants talked about bombings, but one of the symbolic mosques in London was faced with an attempted bombing. I learned about this bombing attempt, which was reported in the newspapers, after the interview, but the participant did not mention this issue during the interview. He talked at length about the more advanced security systems and the fact that the mosque is the most well-known mosque in Europe and the attacks on other mosques. Abdullah, the secretary of the symbol mosque located in an enclave area, and the youngest participant in the field research, did not refer to this attack, possibly thinking that the security systems and the mosque's association with this attack could affect its reputation.

Arson came up several times during my field research. One of the symbol mosques in London was set on fire during the night by a petrol bomb. Habib, the imam of the mosque, was sure that this attack was done to send a message. He could not understand why the attack occurred at night whilst the mosque was closed and there were no people present. This mosque was surrounded by an enclave area. All four of the other mosques subjected to arson attacks were located in white British dominant areas. A participant from a community mosque in a small city, the windows of which had been broken several times and which had been graffitied, talked about the recent arson attack which they experienced:

> *The last attack was different from the previous ones. At midnight, the mosque was set on fire with a Molotov cocktail. Of course, until he (the imam) realised this, the mosque was badly damaged, and he had to keep the mosque closed for a long time. However, the person who burned the mosque with the help of CCTV was arrested and sentenced to three years in prison.*
>
> ***Adnan, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)***

Explaining how their white-coloured mosque turned black after an arson attack, the head of one symbol mosque located in a white British dominant area said that no attacker was found:

> *At midnight, someone threw an oil bomb inside the mosque and the mosque burned within hours. All the carpets and walls of the mosque were burned. The view of our mosque, which was white in colour, was pitch black in the morning.*
>
> ***Ibrahim, Symbol Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)***

The mosque, which started burning after midnight, became unusable within a few hours. Ibrahim, the oldest participant who stated that everything inside the mosque burned down, mentioned that it took a long time for the mosque to be put into service again. Another one of the community mosques, located in a white British dominant area, fared better than the other mosques that suffered the arson attack:

> *Our mosque has a fire alarm system, and it gave an alarm warning around 5.30 in the morning. The imam of the mosque stays in a room immediately adjacent to the mosque. When the alarm went off, the imam woke up and put out the fire. Only some of the carpets were burned. If the imam had not been there, the entire mosque would probably have burned down. Worse, if there was no alarm system,*

maybe the room where the imam was staying would have burned down together with the mosque and our imam would have died.

Musa, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)

Violent attacks were among the severe-level attacks that I encountered frequently during the fieldwork. More than half of the severe attacks were violent attacks (Table 4). While the form of these attacks varied, many Muslims were seriously injured as a result. A community mosque located in a major city in a white British dominant area faced a serious attack:

After the recent attacks on mosques, during Ramadan our young members were waiting outside the mosque so that believers could pray safely. Two youths verbally assaulted the volunteer team after cycling around the mosque. Seeing that one of these young people had a military knife, a friend of our volunteer team tried to prevent him from entering the mosque. Meanwhile, he was stabbed by one of the teenagers. Fortunately, his wound was not deep, and he was taken to the hospital immediately. The young people who carried out the attack were later arrested by the police.

Irfan, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)

Another injury occurred at a community mosque located in a small town in a white British dominant area:

On a hot day, we were praying by keeping the windows and doors of the mosque open. During the prayer, someone threw a large stone through the window, and it came to the face of an old man in the front row. The old uncle, whose face was bleeding, could have been blind because the stone had come right under his eye. We reported the situation to the police, but they couldn't find anyone.

Umair, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)

Umair reported the attack to the police, but the attacker was not caught. This can cause the local Muslim community to feel lonely and isolated, as well as create anxiety and concern that the attack may have an impact on the entire community. The attacks caused the Muslim community to increase their security measures, and Umair talked about two more attacks that took place two years following. During the first attack, eggs were thrown at the windows and doors during prayer time, whilst in the second attack flowerpots from the mosque garden were thrown inside. Umair said that they immediately ran after them in the last attack, adding: "We

could not catch them, but CCTV had caught their faces" and they were both arrested. Zahid, the head of one of the community mosques in a white British dominant area, talked about a similar attack and said that a pot from the garden was thrown through the window during prayer time. Zahid was luckier than Imam Umair, because there were metal grills on the windows of the mosque, and no one was injured. One of the other community mosques in a small town in Scotland also faced injury:

> *The imam before me was attacked. Before the prayer time, someone came to the mosque and after verbal attack, threatened to burn the mosque. At that time, he attacked the mosque imam, who was trying to calm him down, seriously injuring him.*
>
> ***Suleyman, Community Mosque, White British Dominant Area (WB≥80)***

Two community mosques located in white British dominant areas were subjected to similar attacks at very different times. Ayaan, the secretary of one of these mosques, mentioned that following the 9/11 attacks a group of ex-soldiers tried to break the door to get inside and verbally attacked attendees from outside. Faisal, the chair of one community mosque located in a white British dominant area, spoke at length about a similar attack that took place several years previously, signifying that the severity of this attack made it very memorable in his mind. Baki, the chair of a community mosque located in the same city as the mosque where Faisal is located but within an enclave area, talked about the serious damage caused by forced entry to their mosque, which was closed during the pandemic period. There was another violent attack on another community mosque located in an area with a medium white British presence, which caused serious damage to the doors and windows. Furthermore, Aisha, from a community mosque in a white British dominant area, mentioned that their imam was harassed and beaten by a group of far-right extremists after a protest outside their mosque. She also mentioned that a few months before the interview Muslims leaving the mosque were threatened by protesters with their cars attacked and bullied.

When considering severe-level attacks alongside the MSOA surrounding the mosques, the role of ethnic enclave areas becomes clearer. Two of the mosques located in ethnic enclaves faced severe-level attacks (Table 3). These were the mosques that were subjected to arson (Habib's Mosque) and violence (Baki's mosque). All other mosques that faced severe-level attacks were located in MSOAs with a predominantly white British population (two of them had a medium level presence of WB). The rate of high-level attacks in the ethnic enclave area doubles in the White British Dominant (WB≥80) area (Table 3). The fact that the rate is twice as high may be associated with the protective shield function of ethnic enclave areas. However, as only 43 mosques participated in the fieldwork it is not possible to say with certainty that the level of attacks increased as the size of the ethnic enclave decreased (Tables 1 and 3). However, my findings indicate that the inverse proportion between the ethnic enclave and the violence of attacks is not a coincidence. The ethnic enclave around the mosques and the size of the Muslim population are often, but not always, protective shields for British mosques.

Moreover, as I mentioned under the heading of low-level attacks, when rates of high-level attacks and mosque categories are considered together, the rate of attacks that symbol mosques are exposed to is likely higher than for other mosque categories. This is because high-level severity attacks focus on demolishing and destroying mosque buildings. Therefore, at this point, the visibility of mosques comes into play. The field research revealed that symbol mosques, which are more perceptible in terms of visibility, were more likely to be exposed to high-level severity attacks. While masjid mosques, which are relatively less visible, did not suffer any attacks, one in every four attacks experienced by symbol mosques were high-level attacks (Table 2). This rate decreased to 18.4% in community mosques (Table 2). When the symbol mosques that are exposed to high-level severity attacks and the ethnic enclave in their location are examined together, the importance of ethnic enclaves is quite

low. All symbolic mosques that have been subjected to high-level severity attacks are equally distributed across all three ethnic enclave categories. At this point, it is possible to say that visibility is more important for high-level attacks.

After the 9/11 and Christchurch attacks, mosques appeared to experience a greater number of incidents, especially of more violent types. This is true especially for community and symbol mosques irrespective of the density of the ethnic community surrounding them. These events may have served to catalyse tensions, which can explain why these incidents are perceived as conducted by outsiders to the community and less serious rather than by insiders.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated the importance of understanding how attacks and xenophobia experienced by Muslims in the UK vary by the religious sites of worship in which communities gather and discusses important strategies for avoiding tension. Three distinctive conclusions can be reached. Firstly, there has been little difference in the level of attacks between old and new mosques. Secondly, mosques that are highly visible experience the greatest number of attacks and the most severe ones. Finally, there is mixed evidence of the protective role of the ethnic enclaves. The remainder of this section discusses these in detail.

Muslims' places of worship are their identity in the public sphere. Therefore, Muslim properties, old or new, face a risk of attack. Most previous studies have focused on the opposition to newly established mosques, in particular symbol mosques (McLoughlin 2005; Simonsen, de Neergaard, and Koefoed 2019). One of the main strengths of this paper has been to develop a typology of mosques focusing on visibility and function, which has allowed me to better understand and contextualise different experiences of antagonism within local communities. My findings show that symbol mosques with minarets, which are important signifiers of Islam in the public sphere, are frequent targets of anti-Muslim attacks due to their visibility. In particular, the fact that high-level severity Islamophobic attacks (in particular

those that destroy property or use arson) on mosque buildings are more likely to occur when the target is a symbol mosque. Thus, this study suggests that images of Islam in the public space are marginalised and othered. Previous research Allen (2017) has suggested that this is the case only for new mosques. However, this study shows the full extent of the problem. In many ways, the Muslim community has been marginalised.

To my knowledge, this is also the first extensive study of community mosques. Community mosques are used actively at all hours of the day and have a certain ethnic identity. Community mosques face high rates of low-level severity attacks such as graffiti, desecration, and attempts to target the local Muslim community. This again exemplifies the need to classify mosques in research on anti-mosque sentiment, as if the focus remains only on new mosques or symbol mosques important types of attacks will be overlooked. I hope the mosque typology I put forward may lead and guide future studies as I have demonstrated its importance in capturing the range and severity of attacks.

While the findings showed that visibility is an important criterion in mosque attacks, the ethnic enclave should also be considered in order to make sense of local opposition to mosques. The protective role of the ethnic enclave has been considered in this study and the evidence regarding its impact is mixed. While the rates of low-level attacks are similar in neighbourhoods irrespective of their composition or the presence of an enclave, the rates of the attacks in MSOAs with a medium or high white British population are very high. However, as mentioned earlier, severe attacks that bring damage to mosque buildings do not happen in ethnic enclaves. Indeed, for many of the respondents, the local community indeed had a protective effect. Participants touched on the protective role of the ethnic enclave while underlining the size of their own religious/ethnic communities, as well as the cooperation and tolerance that can be developed with other minority communities. It is important to consider that, in addition to tolerance and cooperation, multiculturalism in ethnic enclaves can also be

effective. In multicultural ethnic enclaves, the circle of tolerance between ethnic and religious minorities is likely to be wider. It was frequently observed during fieldwork that local Muslim communities had the opportunity to introduce themselves more in a multicultural environment. In order to discuss ethnic enclave and mosque attacks in a multicultural context, more subjective research will outline the protective role of ethnic enclaves.

This research has highlighted that attacks are not concentrated and happen as a form of adversarial action after terrorist attacks. Indeed, for many mosque sites they are a presence since the establishment of mosques, and they create a feeling of not being safe. This created tension in communities and made the respondents feel like they had to be constantly vigilant. My research signals that there has been a steady increase in xenophobia post-Brexit and that violence has become normalised, even for severe attacks. This level of conflict should be of concern to policymakers. Policymakers often advocate for minorities to have greater interaction and ties with the majority community as a necessary part of integration (Cameron 2013). My research, however, builds a complex picture and, similarly to some of the quantitative work on this topic, it shows that minorities may not feel safe in these communities (Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2016).

This research has several important limitations. Opportunistic and snowball sampling has been used. Respondents were notified of the research aims of this study and respondents for whom this issue has been identified as a problem might have been more likely to participate. However, I have included responses from mosque staff whose mosques have not been attacked and have done my utmost to try to represent the dynamics in these neighbourhoods. Indeed, I considered stratified sampling by the ethnic density of the area. However, the results of this study may not be generalisable to all mosques in Britain. It is also possible that the study underrepresents the number of attacks – especially if respondents could not disclose this sensitive information to me. Rapport has been difficult to establish for several reasons.

The fieldwork took place in the shadow of the pandemic, and mosques were closed for several lockdowns. Considering that not every mosque has a professional website with a contact number and an email account that is regularly checked, it can be said that the COVID-19 restrictions directly affected the fieldwork in those only sites which contained this important information, and which were more publicly visible, were included in this study. Furthermore, some of the participants who were invited to join the study by phone declined to participate, claiming that the research would be used against their community or fearing that it was being conducted by the government (four mosque staff, corresponding to 9% of the total interviewed). These potential participants believed that research on their ethnic and religious communities would be used by the government, and two of them indirectly expressed their fear of similar situations by mentioning Turkish courses that were closed after research conducted in Belgium. It is possible to understand this situation in terms of concerns about institutional racism. In addition, a significant number of mosque staff (23 individuals, corresponding to 54% of the total interviewed) stated that they would accept only face-to-face meetings and refused to participate in an online study. Other studies have demonstrated that surveillance is a concern for some participants (Shesterinina 2019).

Despite their convenience, online methods of interviewing have drawbacks. Sensitive information is difficult to obtain via Zoom, as it is difficult to establish rapport (Archibald et al. 2019). They can be limited in terms of body language and efficient communication when compared to qualitative interviews conducted physically. Some positive aspects, however, can be noted as well. For example, the distance between the participant and the researcher in an online setting can make the participant feel more comfortable (Gray et al. 2020). Especially for less confident participants, such a setting reduced the risk of research pressure and embarrassment (Tsang and Chiu 2022). For this particular topic, body language can be very important and unfortunately, I could make very few notes regarding this. In the first minutes

of several interviews, participants' voices trembled, and their body language showed that they were trying to hide their excitement (they moved their hands and shoulders a lot). In addition, three participants said that they were excited and worried about the language during the interview. One participant turned off his camera, stating that he did not want to allow a video recording. Before starting the interview, I chatted with the participants who were excited and anxious about their daily life for a few minutes, helping them to calm down a little.

Finally, it has been difficult to establish the exact number of mosques in Britain. The typology I have established is based on the information that has been readily available to me. However, I am not certain if it covers all the places of worship in Britain.

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CHAPTER IV: Everyday Experiences of Racism and Discrimination towards Ethnic Minority Small Business Owners

ABSTRACT

In this research paper, the racism and discrimination experienced by minority-owned small businesses, whose numbers have increased in recent decades and who operate in various sectors are discussed. Through semi-structured interviews with 15 minority business owners in the cities and towns of the east of England, it has been found that they experience a variety of antagonistic, oppositional behaviours from customers and in some instances, these can be described as discriminatory. The vast majority of attacks are directed at the perceived identity of the victims. Everyday racism and verbal attacks have become a part of business life, especially in businesses in the food sector that serve until late at night, and these attacks have been normalised by minority small business owners. The paper also comments on whether Brexit plays a role. This paper aimed to fill a gap in the literature on experiences of discrimination, by addressing the multidimensional everyday hate crime experiences of ethnic minority businesses owners.

INTRODUCTION

After the end of the Second World War, the wave of immigrants and workers from the Commonwealth of Nations to the United Kingdom continued into the early 1960s (Joshi and Carter 1984; Schuster and Solomos 2004). Research suggests that despite equality legislation, these groups experience various forms of racism. Examining the experiences of ethnic minority small business owners can augment our understanding about inter-ethnic relationships in Britain (Jones et al. 2014). However, research on social issues such as racism, hate crime, and xenophobia faced by minority-owned small businesses is not plentiful, with scholars tending to focus more on the institutional discrimination these businesses faced, or the hate crimes perceived by immigrant/minority workers.

Academic research and media reports show that ethnic minority business owners are exposed to greater levels of prejudice following socio-political situations such as Brexit, war and terrorism in the UK and around the world. After some domestic terrorist attacks in the country, ethnic minority business owners increasingly became the target of hate crimes, cultural racism or instances of greater altercations with customers (Cole and Maisuria 2007). The religious identities of the terrorists who carried out the 7/7 London attack and the association of the attack with the Muslim community affected Muslim small business owners who have faced Islamophobic attacks (Cole and Maisuria 2007; Gilks 2020). However, while the impact of hate attacks on immigrants and ethnic communities in the country during the Brexit campaign was discussed by academics, immigrant business owners and their shops were also reported to be the target of hate crimes (Guma and Dafydd Jones 2019; Mintchev 2021; Rzepnikowska 2019; Younge 2016). Not only the socio-political issues in the country, but also the events that happen beyond the borders may trigger the attacks to which migrant business owners are exposed. For example, since the onset of the Ukraine-Russia war, Russian small business owners have also reported to have been subjected to hate attacks (Hill

2022). There is some indication that these attacks leave a deep imprint on the victim, and this study further aims to fill in this gap of knowledge.

This paper focuses on a range of antagonistic experiences of minority small business owners, characterized as: xenophobia, racism, or a variety of altercations with customers and is firmly embedded on sociological explorations of discrimination and racism in multicultural Britain and experiences in everyday life (Back 2015). First of all, the gap in the literature will be filled by framing the nature of the neglected everyday hate crime experiences of migrant business owners, which have previously not been adequately documented in the UK. This paper shows that ethnic minority business owners believe that Brexit and a variety of different events have played a very negative role in their interaction with local communities and with the majority population (white British). Secondly, this paper will comment on the normalisation of such practices among small business owners and migrant business owners, who have a desire to lead a normal life; sometimes the experience of hate attacks may indeed normalize the attacks and this paper will provide instances of such practices. The data set of the research paper is based on semi-structured interviews conducted with 15 minority small business owners based in the east of England.

1. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The literature on minority-owned small businesses in the United Kingdom is limited. The majority of research in the literature focuses primarily on the institutional barriers to the socio-economic success of these entrepreneurs (Carter et al. 2015). There is ample empirical evidence that ethnic minority business owners in the UK face discrimination and differential treatment in the financial market (Bates, Bradford, and Jackson 2018). Issues of racial constraints and institutional discrimination in ethnic minority businesses' access to markets and capital have also been discussed by many scholars (Fraser 2009; Rahman, Ullah, and Thompson 2018; Ram et al. 2003). Although the majority of the literature focused on economy, finance, enterprise and marketing, it briefly touches on important social issues such as racism, hate crime, xenophobia, and everyday hate crimes to which ethnic minority business owners are exposed. However, mainly these issues have remained in the background in the literature on ethnic minority businesses (Baldock and Smallbone 2003; Deakins et al. 2009; Jones et al. 2014; Rahman, Ullah, and Thompson 2018; Ram and Sparrow 1993; Ram, Jones, and Villares-Varela 2017). However, there are also studies in the literature focusing on the racism and discrimination faced by minorities and immigrants when applying for jobs (Nandi, Luthra, and Benzeval 2016; Zwysen, Di Stasio, and Heath 2020). Much more work on ethnic minority businesses has been carried out in other countries' contexts Mothibi, Roelofse, and Tshivhase (2015); Charman and Piper (2012), which will be used here as background information.

1.1. Adversarial Experiences of Minority-owned Small Businesses

Addressing the impact of hate crimes on regional economic development, Geisler, Enomoto, and Djaba (2019) conducted a quantitative study and discussed impact and relocation due to hate crime on a number of minority (Asian, Asian-Indian, Hispanic, and Black) firms in the United States. The study, based on hate crimes in Kentucky counties between 2007 and 2011,

revealed the negative impact of the attacks on a number of minority businesses in 2012 (Geisler, Enomoto, and Djaba 2019). Existing businesses belonging to ethnic minorities may be moved to another location due to hate crimes, or a minority entrepreneur may choose one region over another, taking hate crimes into consideration when establishing a new business (Geisler, Enomoto, and Djaba 2019). Counties experiencing a large number of hate crimes showed a decrease in the number of all minority-owned firms, and no impact was found on white-owned firms. It is possible that hate crimes committed against a certain ethnic group affect the members of that group more than other groups (Geisler, Enomoto, and Djaba 2019). An important point is whether the experiences of minority business owners who participated in the field study vary according to their ethnic identities. Another important study on ethnic minority-owned small businesses in America was produced by Kaplan (2023), using data from the Centre for Neighbourhood Knowledge and the Centre for Asian American Studies. During the COVID-19 pandemic, xenophobic discourses against Asians created by politicians and the media had devastating effects on Asian-American small business owners in the USA (Kaplan 2023). It was found that 233,000 small businesses which were operated by Asian-American-owners closed during the pandemic due to racialized misinformation and xenophobic attacks, representing a 28% decrease (Kaplan 2023).

Research shows that attacks against small business owners can be particularly frequent in divided societies. Dozens of people were killed or injured in xenophobic attacks against foreign small business owners in South Africa between 2008 and 2015 (Mothibi, Roelofse, and Tshivhase 2015). Using a qualitative research method, Mothibi, Roelofse, and Tshivhase (2015) conducted interviews with 18 immigrant small business owners, seven of whom were women. Participants were shopkeepers who had migrated from other African countries and had lived in South Africa for less than 15 years. The attacks ranged in severity. As a result of the physical and verbal xenophobic attacks to which foreign business owners had been

subjected, some had lost their lives or sustained injuries, in addition to material losses (Mothibi, Roelofse, and Tshivhase 2015). It has been argued by Mothibi, Roelofse, and Tshivhase (2015) that the main factor behind xenophobia in South Africa is that competition over scarce resources triggers anxiety among groups. The xenophobic attacks against immigrant shopkeepers in South Africa has drawn the attention of other researchers. Discussing attacks on foreign small business owners in South Africa, Charman and Piper (2012) used both quantitative and qualitative methods, and examined xenophobia in police reports and newspaper reports. They conducted 107 interviews with spaza shopkeepers (43 South African and 64 foreigners) in the field. Not all research agrees that such attacks are xenophobic in nature. Researchers have discussed attacks on migrant business owners as violent entrepreneurship rather than xenophobic, equating them with business competition (Charman and Piper 2012). In particular, this study will be able to adjudicate between competing claims through in-depth interviews with the small business owners, with the ethnicity of the shop owners and the nature of the adversarial interactions taken into account.

Moreover, previous research has looked at discrimination, prejudice and hate attacks that immigrants and ethnic minorities are exposed to in their workplaces from different perspectives (Kyriakides and Virdee 2003; Kamasak et al. 2019; Sahraoui 2020). Providing empirical evidence that immigrants face overt or covert racism, institutional discrimination and marginalisation in workplaces in London, Paris and Madrid, Sahraoui (2020) stated that the victim exposed to covert racism in the environment of interpersonal interaction often does not find the courage to resist such an attack. Stevens, Hussein, and Manthorpe (2012), who conducted research with the same professional group, revealed that the time spent in the United Kingdom, language skills, cultural differences and skin colour play an active role in racist and discriminatory attacks. Quantitative research based on field experiments suggests that little has changed over time (Di Stasio et al. 2021; Zwysen, Di Stasio, and Heath 2020),

and Muslim groups experience great levels of disadvantage (Lindley 2002). Stating that the social position of immigrants in the labour market has changed over time, Kamasak et al. (2019) claimed that the events of the past decades (Gulf War, 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist attacks etc.) have led to changes in the targets of religious and cultural racism in the United Kingdom, and the Muslim community has faced more discrimination and racism in the job market than other minorities.

The transformation of racism and cultural racism have been discussed by many scholars (Abbas 2019; Chua 2017; Modood 1997). Cultural racism is accepted as the transformation of race from a biological concept into a social structure, that is, Europeans are superior culturally rather than racially (Chua 2017; Wren 2001). The concept of cultural racism was based on the construction of the nation state and was not widespread in the British context until Barker (1981) used it. The theory was based on human nature and that people were equal, but cultural differences created closed communities within nation states, and relations between communities were fundamentally hostile (Wren 2001). Although the restructuring of the labour market in the early 70s stopped labour migration, family reunification of existing workers, repatriation and exclusion, unlike refugee issues, came to the fore (Wren 2001). This new racist discourse served the power structures by allowing the socio-economic inequalities of the process of exclusion and "othering" to be covered up and not discussed (Wren 2001). In this context, attitudes such as discrimination, cultural racism, hate crime and anti-immigrant attitudes in the workplace and labour markets play an active role in immigrants and minorities becoming self-employed (for example taxi and Uber drivers) and small business owners (Inal 2007; Ishaq, Hussain, and Whittam 2010; Kamasak et al. 2019).

The earliest studies investigating the hate crime experiences of minority business owners date back to the late 80s in the UK. In a study looking at local shop owners in Brixton, Ekblom, Simon, and Birdi (1988), found that four-fifths of the respondents reported that they had been

subjected to a hate crime or incident at least once a year. Local shop owners stated that 8% of the businesses were victims of racist attacks, and 4% stated that racist attacks occurred more than once in a year (Ekblom, Simon, and Birdi 1988). Moreover, claiming the negative effects of racism on the development of minority-owned small businesses, Ram and Sparrow (1993) conducted interviews with 50 Asian business owners and key players in the city of Wolverhampton. Ethnic minority businesses did not trade in crowded market locations (high streets); rather, they had a competitive advantage arising from their ethnic origins (Ram and Sparrow 1993). Although some participants preferred not to answer (were any details given of why they would not answer?), most of them cited racism as a stumbling block (Ram and Sparrow 1993). Faced with racial constraints, Asian business owners had to use white intermediaries to gain a foothold in their markets (Ram and Sparrow 1993). However, discrimination and the existence and persistence of racial restrictions put ethnic minority businesses at a disadvantage (Ram and Sparrow 1993).

Another important study was carried out between 1999 and 2000 by PROSPER (formerly Devon and Cornwall TEC and Business Link) in collaboration with the Rural Race Equality Project in the Southwest, and ethnic minority businesses in both regions were mapped and their characteristics depicted (Baldock and Smallbone 2003). In this context, short telephone interviews with 446 minority-owned small businesses, interviews with 17 ethnic minority businesses supporting organizations' employees and in-depth interviews with 42 ethnic minority businesses owners were conducted by the researchers. They discovered that 79% of the ethnic minority businesses participating in the research were serving in the restaurants and food industry Baldock and Smallbone (2003), which are the two main industries considered in this paper. It was also found by the researchers that the English language skills of the first generation caused communication problems (Baldock and Smallbone 2003). Moreover, Baldock and Smallbone (2003) explained why interview participants who own businesses in

small towns feel “remote” or “isolated” due to the distance from family and ethnic communities that can provide business support. These interviews reveal that participants perceived a range of barriers to their settlement in the UK. In addition to physical and verbal attacks from customers, allegations of racist and discriminatory attitudes from banks, local authorities and commercial institutions strengthen the isolation (Baldock and Smallbone 2003). The social isolation of minority business owners, revealed by previous research, is also an important point in this paper.

Several studies have been conducted with ethnic minority businesses in Scotland. Deakins et al. (2009) field research consisted of two steps. The core data set was the Scotland part (81 ethnic minority businesses located in Glasgow and Edinburgh) of a larger data set based on two-stage telephone interviews conducted by Smallbone et al. (2003) with 855 ethnic minority business owners in the United Kingdom between 2000 and 2001 (Deakins et al. 2009). These interviews, conducted over 12 months, relied on questions such as the profile (age, gender, generational status, education, motivation for start-up etc.), employment size and financial status (turnover, profitability etc.) of minority business owners (Deakins et al. 2009). The second data set was based on face-to-face interviews conducted with 41 ethnic minority business owners in Scotland in 2005 (Deakins et al. 2009). Due to the nature of the research, some interviews were conducted in the participants' first language, as the diversity of business owners is a known feature from previous studies (Deakins et al. 2009). Besides institutional discrimination in the financial sector, the research found examples of ethnic minority businesses with limited markets in a marginal economic environment, with high crime rates and open racist attacks against their owners (Deakins et al. 2009). Deakins et al. (2009) concluded that policies should be developed to eliminate the security concerns and racist attacks of these businesses.

Furthermore, in 2010 in Glasgow, one of the cities where many of Scotland's ethnic minority groups are located, a study dealing with the racist attack experiences of minority local shop owners was conducted by (Ishaq and Hussain 2010). This study can be used as an efficient guide to the research question in terms of its content. Aiming to identify the extent of racism experienced by ethnic minority business owners in Glasgow, Ishaq and Hussain (2010) conducted a qualitative field study and interviewed ethnic minority business owners. Verbal hate attacks were found to be more common than physical attacks, and Ishaq and Hussain (2010) stated that business owners born abroad (first generation) are more likely to be the target of attacks. The lack of accent and English language skills of business owners who migrated to the country make them an easier target (Ishaq and Hussain 2010).

However, more than a quarter of the participants attributed the trigger of hostile attitudes to alcohol and drugs, which are major social ills (Ishaq and Hussain 2010). Moreover, the researchers discovered that close to half of the victims ignored the attacks and only a small percentage of business owners reported the antagonistic experience to the police (Ishaq and Hussain 2010). This was directly related to the police’s method of investigating the attacks, and a belief among most of the shopkeepers that reporting the attack to the police would not yield any results (Ishaq and Hussain 2010). Ishaq and Hussain (2010) stated that a significant number of the participants stated that the police and the government were ineffective, especially in the fight against alcohol and drugs, and that minority business owners emphasized the need to strengthen the old laws.

Also, Ishaq and Hussain (2010) came across another interesting finding during his fieldwork. Almost a fifth of respondents associated racist attacks with jealousy. Underlining that owning a business makes the owners look rich, Ishaq and Hussain (2010) stated that there are stereotypes that emerged in 1980 that ethnic minorities, especially Asians, are very rich.

At this point, the Brexit referendum, which is discussed within the orbit of immigration and economic issues, constitutes an important topic for this research paper, dealing with the discrimination and racism experiences of minority business owners.

1.2. Brexit, Discrimination and Hate Crimes

The Brexit vote in the United Kingdom in 2016 had a direct impact on immigrants living in the country. The concept of "immigrant", which was used as an argument in the Brexit campaign before the vote, laid the groundwork for social scientists to discuss many sociological issues such as multiculturalism, tolerance, and “othering”. In addition to the studies discussing the sharp rise in temporary hate crimes immediately before and after the Brexit vote, it is possible to find qualitative and quantitative research based on immigrant groups and this field in the literature. In her fieldwork with Polish immigrant women living in Manchester, Rzepnikowska (2019) discussed the xenophobic expressions of immigrants from a “white” society before and after Brexit. Talking about the brutal xenophobic experiences of the participants before and after Brexit, Rzepnikowska (2019) claimed that racism and xenophobia were established before the referendum. So how did the racism and xenophobia that was established before the referendum affect the resident ethnic minority groups? In particular, the xenophobia, racism and daily hostility experiences of minority business owners, who are actively involved in social life due to their business, before and after Brexit make it even more interesting.

However, focusing on the daily experiences of xenophobia and racism of central and eastern European youths since the referendum, Sime et al. (2022) conducted a survey of 1120 respondents. Since the referendum, experiences of xenophobia and racism among immigrant European youth have become a normal part of daily life (Sime et al. 2022). Verbal and physical attacks, threats and insults, anti-immigrant speeches disguised as humour and jokes directly affect young people's sense of social belonging (Sime et al. 2022). The complexity of

the social racial hierarchy in the UK and the impact on Brexit settlement statuses also support this finding (Sime et al. 2022). The cloud of hostility that formed before, during and after the referendum campaign cast a shadow not only on immigrant white Europeans but also on other ethnic minorities. Resident ethnic minorities have been the target of anti-immigrant hostility, Islamophobic and xenophobic attacks (Abbas 2020; Awan and Zempi 2020). In particular, the increasing incidence of hate crimes, xenophobia, and anti-Muslim attacks during the campaign, as well as their reflections on social media, were also discussed (Awan and Zempi 2020).

Considering all this, Brexit, which is discussed in both economic and immigration terms, is likely to affect the experiences of antagonistic attitudes felt by economically well-positioned business owners. Therefore, this research paper aims to shed light on Brexit's discrimination and marginalisation idioms of minority business owners by discussing the campaign arguments before and after Brexit, based on the experiences of minority business owners and their altercations with customers.

1.2.1. The Immigration Card and Welfare Nationalism in the Brexit Campaign

There is evidence that focusing on the immigration debate has led to increased cases of xenophobia and racism and more aggression and attacks against immigrants (Hu 2022). Economic and immigration issues constituted the important cards of the Brexit campaign. In particular, the arguments of the campaign to leave the European Union have been discussed many times along the lines of "welfare nationalism" and "welfare chauvinism" (Donoghue and Kuisma 2022; D'Angelo 2023; Message 2023; Morris 2019).

The Leave campaign was centred around the idea of "taking back control" and this discourse was based on national welfare (Donoghue and Kuisma 2022). This meant reasserting the boundaries and membership of national solidarity, legitimizing the restriction of non-British citizens' (EU citizens) access to social citizenship rights (Donoghue and Kuisma 2022).

Restricting social citizenship rights solely to “our own” is a clear example of welfare chauvinism and has been used successfully in the “Leave” campaign to mature the UK's imagined community (Donoghue and Kuisma 2022). Discussing the arguments for the Leave campaign in four elements, Dowling (2021) claimed that EU migration, which is used as a threat to identity and security, is accused of being a burden on the British welfare system and labour market, and is used by right-wing actors as a compelling argument for the vote by associating it with the Syrian refugee crisis and terrorism. Another key element used in the Leave campaign was the alleged transfer of UK funds to the EU to be used for the NHS rather than the EU, and Powellist rhetoric was used to defend welfare institutions such as the NHS, to highlight certain histories of race, class and heredity (Dowling 2021; Fitzgerald et al. 2020). Therefore, by promoting the identity of “whiteness”, the campaign excluded non-White British citizens from social citizenship rights to housing, welfare and unionisation (D’Angelo 2023; Fitzgerald et al. 2020).

The issue of immigration, one of the most important arguments of the Leave campaign, has been frequently discussed by scholars. Analysing the discourses on the official websites of the organizations that campaigned for the "Leave" and "Remain" sides, the two extreme poles of the Brexit referendum, Zappettini (2019) focused on the discursive elements of "migration" along with "new trade" in his research. The researcher, who systematically analysed two websites for nine months, claimed that the "Leave" side, which produced economic arguments at the beginning of the campaign, made the immigration issue the main argument for the future (Zappettini 2019). The argument for mass immigration contributed to building the "moral panic", and the legitimation of Brexit has been provided by misconceptions of public safety and misrepresentations about EU freedom of movement (Zappettini 2019).

Similarly, discussing the use of immigration as an argument in the referendum campaign, Goodman (2017) analysed the discourses of both camps on the issue of immigration. The

Leave side, whose rhetoric about immigration as an out-of-control threat, portrayed immigrants as a threat to the jobs of those who were already employed (Goodman 2017). The discourse used in the Brexit campaign developed jargon of “border”, “belonging” and “us versus them” (Moss and Solheim 2022). In both camps, the immigration argument, monoculturalism and anti-immigrant prejudices have been made more prominent in the public arena than before (Moss and Solheim 2022). The increase in such discourses in the public sphere touched some of the feelings of society and caused the expansion of the field of expression of such views (Moss and Solheim 2022). Arguing that the campaign arguments of both camps implicitly or explicitly harbour race-based, ethnocentric and Islamophobic tendencies, Creighton and Jamal (2022) claimed that the referendum legitimizes the environment of anti-immigrant hostility on a reasonable basis. However, the latter trend results in the deliberate and strategic masking of the target group of the referendum campaign, while anti-immigrant sentiments are simultaneously stigmatized and normalised (Creighton and Jamal 2022).

Discussing whether the motivation behind the anti-immigrant sentiments in the Brexit referendum was economical concerns or racism, Hu (2022) claimed that race matters even when economic concerns are held constant. It is likely that white Britons voted to block immigration from the EU because of sociological considerations, i.e. preferring to preserve Anglo-Saxon culture (Hu 2022). The effect of socio-economic factors, on which the immigrant discourses of both camps of the Brexit campaign are based, on anti-immigrant sentiments is one of the important arguments of this research paper. In particular, business competition and economic concerns are likely to negatively impact the hate crime experiences of immigrant small business owners. For this research paper, which deals with the increasing number of ethnic minority businesses, it is essential to examine how the welfare nationalism

and chauvinism, immigration and immigrant arguments used during the campaign return to minority and immigrant business owners.

1.2.2. Post-Brexit Hate CrimesThe use of the immigration card as an argument in the Brexit voting campaign has been discussed in different dimensions by social scientists in relation to the hate attacks experienced by immigrant and ethnic minorities living in the multicultural United Kingdom. Albornoz, Bradley, and Sonderegger (2020), who proved the sharp increase in hate crimes with quantitative methods right after the Brexit referendum, explained the difference between regions (according to the voting results) and the sudden rise in hate crimes with social norm theory and information shock. Brexit triggered an update of social norms governing behaviours towards ethnic minorities and immigrants, and anti-immigrant sentiments were more prevalent than previously believed (Albornoz, Bradley, and Sonderegger 2020). The increase in aggression and attacks was particularly striking in regions that voted for the UK to remain in the EU. Albornoz, Bradley, and Sonderegger (2020) argued that this causes people with anti-immigrant feelings to hide or suppress their feelings due to the social norm phenomena towards immigrants in these regions. However, the perception of social norms updated with Brexit brought these oppressions to light and turned them into hate crimes against ethnic minorities and immigrants (Albornoz, Bradley, and Sonderegger 2020). Similarly, examining the sharp increase in hate crimes following Brexit with multiple methods, Carr et al. (2020) provide us with causal evidence for the impact of voting. The data obtained by the synthetic control method is related to the fact that there was no increase at the beginning of Brexit, and a temporary sharp increase was observed immediately after the voting result which created an information shock in the public opinion (Carr et al. 2020). Touching on Becker (1968) theory, Carr et al. (2020) explained this by reducing the cost of breaking a social norm when there is a perception that it is weaker than previously thought. So, as the cost of hate crime has decreased, society has reassessed its tolerance for racism

(Carr et al. 2020). There may be reasons behind the short duration of the shock, such as the increasing social reaction against racism and the fact that the voting result suppressed the excitement among the xenophobes (Carr et al. 2020). However, discussing the temporal cluster of hate crimes in the UK with different theories, Piatkowska and Stults (2021) explained the sharp increase in post-Brexit hate crimes with the enabling political environment. Piatkowska and Stults (2021) study was based on the Home Office bulletin tables 2016/17 O'Neill (2017), containing data on racially or religiously aggravated crime. The researchers examined the temporal clustering of religiously and racially aggravated offenses following the Brexit referendum by analysing daily and monthly attacks. The temporary and sharp increase in hate crimes immediately after the Brexit vote cannot be explained by the intergroup threat theory, because the lack of employment of hate crime perpetrators, the perceived threat and the associated feelings of revenge emerged after the vote (Piatkowska and Stults 2021). It indicates that perceived threats are put into action after they are politically legitimized. In this case, it is possible to explain maltreatment to the "other", which is legitimized by political and public discourse, with a climate conducive to crime (Piatkowska and Stults 2021).

2. METHODS AND DATA

This paper is based on qualitative research dealing with everyday racism, xenophobic attacks and altercations against migrant and minority-owned small businesses. The research area includes 15 male minority business owners from different religious and ethnic backgrounds in the east of England. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis and face-to-face contact was established with ethnic minority business owners from different sectors (food (8), retail (2), technology (1) and service (4)) in the towns within the boundaries of the research area. Four participants do not actively manage small businesses due to reasons such as racism, economic breakdown, loss of income, lack of staff. Fieldwork was conducted between 2020

and 2023 in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the pandemic restrictions and the workload of tradesmen during the pandemic period also had a negative impact. Nevertheless, many candidate participants, who were informed about the purpose and anonymity of the research, did not want to participate in the research, citing some barriers (language, time and customers etc.). Hundreds of ethnic minority business owners in Colchester, Ipswich, Chelmsford, Southend and many other cities and towns in the east of England region were randomly contacted.

The two biggest barriers to convincing them to participate in the research were trust and language skills. Due to racism and institutional discrimination in the country, this is a serious barrier for white researchers to gain the trust of ethnic minority business owners and conduct research (Marlow 1992). Potential participants did not agree to participate in the study after asking several questions about the research. These potential participants felt that the research could impact their workplace; a barrier of trust was encountered, and only one of the hundreds of potential participants agreed to participate in the study. Other participants refused to participate, citing their workload, customers, and language skills. The remaining participants were included in the study using the snowball technique.

Additionally, although potential participants were informed about the anonymity and reliability of the study, some declined to participate, fearing that being a part of the study would affect their business. Another barrier for some of the intended interviewees was the recording of the interviews. Once this was established it impacted the number of volunteers who wished to participate and the content of the statements they gave. In one situation Abolfazl, 45 years old (corner shop), who mentioned many incidents of violence and bullying while chatting in the shop before the interview, did not mention these attacks at all during the interview, even when prompted. On the other hand, the participant, who stated that he did not encounter any problems, said that his relations with all of his customers were excellent during

the interview and indicated he wanted to end the interview as soon as possible. This was despite efforts to ensure the anonymity of the participants: an alias was created for each interview and any personal information that could identify them was removed from the interview texts.

A large portion of the ethnic minority business owners who refused to participate in the research stated that their language skills were at a basic level, and they did not feel comfortable being interviewed in English unless the interviews were conducted in their mother tongue. Therefore, some interviews were conducted in Turkish and transcribed into English. Moreover, the samples provided diversity in terms of age, retail industry (corner shop, takeaway shop, kebab shop), and ethnicity/race. The ages of the participants ranged from 25 to 52 years. The ethnic minority business owners were Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Turkish, Macedonian, Azeri, Persian and Kurdish. In addition, some of the participants held British citizenship (7), while others held a residence permit.

A qualitative research method was preferred for the field study, because, at every step of the fieldwork, it allows the researcher to develop new approaches and methods that will increase the impact of the research (Alase 2017; Baltacı 2019; Fossey et al. 2002). The qualitative research method contributes to the effort of questioning, interpreting and understanding the problem in its natural environment (Bapir 2012; Qu and Dumay 2011). It gives the researcher the opportunity to capture the moment of occurrence of the phenomenon or events, and the meaning that people ascribe to the phenomenon and event (Sandelowski 2004; Williams 2007). Interviews are a technique that is frequently used to understand people's reactions to events and phenomena, their experiences, as well as their perceptions and emotional accumulations (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006; Knox and Burkard 2009; Peredaryenko and Krauss 2013). Semi-structured interviews of the field research were carried out by me and the interviews which lasted between 20 and 25 minutes on average, were recorded with a

digital device. The interview consisted of a number of open-ended questions. It is possible to evaluate the interview questions under several research topics: (Q1) The nature of xenophobia towards migrant small business owners; (Q2) The impact of these attacks on the close circle of the victims and the wider community; (Q3) The reaction of the victims to the attacks; (Q4) The impact of the attacks on the security and social belonging of the migrant business owners; and (Q5) Is owning a business a way to escape xenophobia? The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed in a digital environment and interview texts were created.

The interview texts obtained from the fieldwork were evaluated using thematic analysis, which is a qualitative research method. Thematic analysis allows the identification, reporting and analysis of patterns (themes) in the data, and provides the smallest size in the data set and the in-depth (rich) description (Braun and Clarke 2006). In other words, it is a strategy applied to organize, define and make sense of the data obtained for research (Awan and Zempi 2020). In thematic analysis, the themes of the data can be determined by using the inductive or deductive main method; Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that the preference of the researchers varies according to how and why they encode the data. The inductive approach means that the identified themes are strongly linked to the data, and in this context, the thematic analysis is completely data-driven (Braun and Clarke 2006). In contrast, the deductive approach seeks to provide more detailed analysis of some aspects of the data, rather than providing a condensed description of the overall data set (Braun and Clarke 2006). It tends to be influenced by the researcher's analytical interest in the field and gives the researcher the opportunity to code in line with a unique research question (Braun and Clarke 2006). In this paper, data sets are analysed within the framework of the deductive approach. The nature, impact and scope of xenophobia/racism discussed in the literature chapter provided information about the nature of xenophobia before the analysis of the data. Thus, to

answer a unique research question, the deductive analysis approach allowed for more detailed descriptions of some aspects of the data sets.

Braun and Clarke (2006) step-by-step thematic analysis guide was used for the analysis of the data obtained from the fieldwork with the thematic analysis method. First of all, the interview texts obtained by translating the audio recordings into text in the digital environment were read over and over by me, so I became familiar with the data and took the next step, taking note of the initial ideas for coding. Then, the data sets obtained from each interview text were filed digitally, thanks to the familiarity gained from the first step. Thus, the first coding process was carried out. The codes listed in the digital environment were re-examined and the third step was taken. Different codes were listed under potential themes and the codes were clustered as main and sub-themes. The ultimate goal here was to think about how the codes could create a more inclusive theme. The next step was to review the initial sets of themes created from the encodings. In this step, candidate themes were examined one by one, and some themes were divided, refined, or discarded. It was important that the final themes were parallel and clearly related to the research question. In the fifth step, the themes were defined and named for use in the analysis chapter and the data was analysed within the themes by simplifying them. However, considering the relevance of the simplified themes to the existing literature, the focus was on whether they overlapped with the literature. In the last step, the filtered themes were gathered under three comprehensive (nature of experiences and community effects) titles and made them ready for analysis. The themes covered in the analysis in the next chapter also include excerpts from the data. In this way, the explanation of the themes will be supported with quotations from the data.

3. FINDINGS

The interview texts obtained from the field research were analysed using thematic analysis techniques with a deductive approach. Three overarching main themes were developed from

the answers given by the participants in the interviews: (1) mapping the nature of xenophobia that immigrant small business owners faced; (2) underlying triggers of xenophobia which immigrant business owners experienced; (3) the effect of xenophobia on immigrant small business owners and their families. All these main themes were supported by quotations from the interviews and analysed.

3.1. Mapping the Nature of Experiences of Ethnic Minority Business Owners

To understand the nature of the antagonistic experiences of ethnic minority businesses, we need to start with their experiences of everyday racism. For shopkeepers who communicate with dozens of people a day as part of their job, they accept everyday racism as almost a part of their job and ignore it. While describing their experiences, the participants who were victims of hate crimes felt their everyday experiences of racism were in the background, when probed further these few 'insignificant' incidents can actually qualify as everyday hate attacks, and these attacks were normalized by the participants. Takeaway kebab shop owner Melih, 46, who was subjected to a racist attack in his shop and took it to court, said the following before mentioning the details of the attack:

> *Some customers who are dissatisfied with the prices or service can easily shout and say go home or something similar. In fact, we encountered such incidents four or five times. …… It is usually done by uneducated customers, and they do not know what the words they say mean. When I encounter this kind of situation, I usually talk to them. I've been operated this shop here for 14 years. I know almost all my customers…… Only one incident escalated, and we had to call the police.*

Melih, 46, Turkish, Food Sector, Ipswich

Everyday aggression to which ethnic minority business owners are exposed varies widely: including customers commenting on language skills, a bad joke, sarcastic remarks, mocking while receiving service, or the annoying attitude of a customer who is dissatisfied with the price and service, and swear words that eventually turn into racist remarks.

> *I encountered similar things while working in the catering industry before. For example, when we are very busy, we may make mistakes when placing orders. I can't say for all of them, but some people*

became aggressive very quickly. Again, I can't say it for all of them, but some of them were swearing and insulting. We encountered such incidents especially on weekend nights.

Arham, 31, Pakistani, Service Sector, Colchester

Imran, the manager of an Asian takeaway business in the food industry, also touched upon similar stories. In particular, he said, employees with lower English language skills were more likely to be subjected to annoying behaviour, accent-related jokes and bullying by some customers. Imran also mentioned discrimination as follows:

…… I have not experienced discrimination in this workplace, but I can tell you this honestly. People do not directly say racist or discriminatory words. They come from many different angles. Sometimes I feel this from the condescending looks, and sometimes from the strange questions and answers. .... There are quite a few pubs and nightclubs around the workplace. Especially on Friday and Saturday nights, we encounter the events you want to learn about. Because most of our customers are drunk.

Imran, 27, Pakistani, Food Sector, Colchester

Ali, 52, the oldest of the participants, who has been a shopkeeper for more than thirty years, talked about his experiences of verbal and physical attacks over the years. The antagonism towards immigrant/minority shopkeepers is not just a matter of today. Stating that in the ten years following 1992 when he operated his first small businesses in different locations, he and his staff were subjected to much everyday racism and some verbal and physical attacks with xenophobic motivation. Stating that there were more incidents in his shop in the early 2000s, Ali continued as follows:

Usually, this is a really quite annoy and upsetting me when they get the food, and they eat the foods when you turn your back, and they start throwing on the chips to your face or your back...... people came after the pubs or nightclub, they started to insult and booze, and they started swearing and bloody foreigners and go back to your country that kind of things...... And then again, there is lots of things happen like that kind issues. if we call the police, there will be over 1000 cases. So most of the time we try to handle ourselves.

Ali, 52, Kurdish, Food Sector, Colchester

In order to map the nature of xenophobic hate crimes, of which ethnic minority business owners are victims, it is possible to divide the attacks into verbal and physical. The number of

verbal attacks is so high that these ethnic minority victims have turned these attacks into a part of business life and normalized them. Therefore, participants who were victims of verbal attacks responded by generalizing the verbal attacks they experienced rather than specific events. As Ali, the oldest participant, said previously, if we had reported such attacks to the police, there would be thousands of cases. Although the language in xenophobic verbal attacks is similar, the language can sometimes be different depending on the ethnic and religious identity of the participants. While conducting fieldwork, the religious identities of the participants were not considered and were not asked during the interviews. Despite this, the religious identities of some participants played a more active role in the antagonistic attacks they were subjected to. The shopkeepers with a Muslim appearance, Melih and Imran were accused by the attackers of being terrorists, referring to their religious identities.

> *I was working in the kitchen at the back of the shop, and I heard arguments coming from the front where we were serving. One of my colleagues was in an altercation with a customer. The customer was complaining about the prices, and I wanted to calm him and my colleague down, but the situation escalated further. And the customer who swearing, unlike the racist words we always hear, but he started talking abusively about Muslims and shouted at us as terrorists because of our beard. These words about my faith hurt me and were unforgivable. I immediately called the police……This incident happened 5-6 years ago. He later went to court and never visited my shop again.*
>
> ***Melih, 46, Turkish, Food Sector, Ipswich***

> *Since we are busier on weekends, I encounter such issues more often. I'm not saying that all or all of my customers behave like this, just some of them are very rude and cause problems…… Of course, the language of the rude customer varies. They mostly say racist words towards our ethnic identity…… For example, I have heard words like bloody Indian, Paki etc. Sometimes they say we smell like rats……and lately, customers who cause trouble in the shop are calling us terrorists.*
>
> ***Imran, 27, Pakistani, Food Sector, Colchester***

However, the phrases most used in verbal attacks was “go home” or “go back your country”. Almost all participants had heard these magic words. Huzaifa, who has a small business in the retail sector, stated that these words are the most obvious weapon of the customers when he has an altercation with them.

…… I have heard these words many times. Even in the middle of the slightest arguments we had with some customers, they shouted "go back to your country!" along with swear words. Sometimes I come across more polite versions. Why do you live here? Aren't you thinking of returning to your country?...... I always say that I am here for England's beautiful weather and good food. (Laughing).

Huzaifa, 29, Pakistani, Retail Sector, Colchester

One morning, while I was walking on the high street, a man approached me and asked me for a cigarette. I don't smoke and I told him that. He was very angry with me, I didn't do anything wrong, I just said that I didn't smoke. Suddenly he started shouting and swearing. "Go back to your country," he said, along with a lot of swearing. I couldn't say anything and when he started walking towards me, two people who were watching us came to us and pulled him away. If it weren't for the people pushing him away, he might have attacked me.

Ivan, 50, Macedonian, Service Sector, Colchester

However, often verbal attacks turn into physical attacks. Generally, takeaway business owners stated that after verbal attacks, the attackers threw the food they were holding at them. But the physical attack that Eren, who runs a coffee shop in Ipswich suffered after the verbal attack was a little different.

I was trying to take an order from the customer, but he was trying to annoying me while ordering. We were in the lunch service at that time and were very busy. I said come on. Suddenly he shouted, "I'm the boss" and started swearing. I don't want to repeat the swear words he uttered…… they were not direct racist swear words, but if you listen carefully, you can understand the racist words (probably he means indirectly implied words such as scorns words). I tried to stay calm and calm him down, then he got up from the table and pushed me hard. My colleague intervened. Along with him, his brother also started swearing and shouting. When I immediately started calling the police, they left.

Eren, 48, Turkish, Food Sector, Ipswich

Ali touched upon some physical racism attacks that occurred in the shops he operated on different dates and locations as follows:

While I was running my first shop in the Clacton area, a few unforgettable events happened there. The first time was in 1992, when the windows were broken right after an argument with a customer in the shop in the evening. Two years later, a similar attack occurred again. Finally, in 2000, there was an argument with a customer in the shop. This time, in addition to the windows broken, he also physically attacked us. In that incident, the aggressive customer punched me. Along with the windows, the refrigerator where we kept cold drinks was also broken. Of course, this time the material damage was great, and they also attacked us. We called the police, and the case was taken to court. Apart from these

incidents that I remember, there were many verbal attacks that I mentioned before, but this was normal. Because there was a nightclub next to the shop. Now the street where my new shop is located is much safer and cleaner.

Ali, 52, Kurdish, Food Sector, Colchester

Ivan, 50, Macedonian, was one of the participants who was a victim of physical assault in Colchester.

I don't want to remember them too much, but I can explain it for you. Once when I was waiting for orders in front of the restaurant, I think it was a Friday night and everybody was on the road. When I was waiting in front of the restaurant, a man came and hit strongly to helmet and said some words. I don't know why. I was just waiting for an order. And when his friends saw that he hits me. They took him away from me.

Ivan, 50, Macedonian, Service Sector, Colchester

Okan, who previously ran two shops in the food sector, had been the victim of verbal and physical attacks many times, like the other participants. The nature of the attacks he suffered were similar to those of other participants. However, Okan changed his sector due to both family pressure and the difficulties of running a small shop and has been working as a taxi driver for the last five years. Almost a week before the date of our interview, he was subjected to a major physical attack in which he nearly lost his life.

Two young people got into a taxi at noon recently, and the destination they wanted to go was a short distance. Shortly after I got into the taxi, they started teasing me. Then they made sarcastic comments about foreigners, I understood that they were problematic, but I did not speak out. When we arrived at the destination they refused to pay, and we started arguing……. One of them punched me in the face from behind. I immediately got out of the car and went to the front of the car because there was a camera there and I wanted to film their faces for evidence. They also went out and the other one attacked me. My t-shirt was torn. The last one who hit me ran away. Meanwhile, we continued to argue with the other one. A few minutes later, the person who ran away came back with a large knife in his hand. I immediately got in the car, locked the doors, and pressed the panic button. They broke my right mirror while trying to escape. On the evening of this incident, they were both arrested, and I gave all the evidence to the police. …………. I definitely think he is racist. Even though the incident started with them refusing to pay money, the language they used during the incident shows the situation.

Okan, 46, Turkish, Service Sector, Ipswich

Metin, who was previously a small business owner, like Okan, changed his profession and became a taxi driver. The participant, who was the victim of verbal attacks several times while he was a taxi driver, touched upon the physical attacks he suffered when he was a business owner in the early 2000s.

> *One evening while I was running a shop, three people came and started shouting for no reason…… What are you doing here? ...go back to your country…. Go back to where you came from etc. This was an occasional thing…. However, a woman came and behaved similarly and this time the argument escalated. So we called the police…… In 2001, while the store was closed, someone broke all the windows with bottles and stones.*
>
> ***Metin, 48, Turkish, Service Sector, Ipswich***

Kemal, who has owned his own business for the last few years, touched upon the physical attacks in two different takeaway shops where he previously worked in 2009-2010. Both attacks were similar to those suffered by other participants: customers who do not accept payment or who throw their food at employees for no reason; attacks by swearing, racist and hateful words; fist fights and broken windows.

Based on the verbal and physical attacks suffered by the participating victims, these excepts from the interviews have been included to portray the nature of these hate attacks. Verbal attacks have almost become a part of business life for minority and immigrant business owners. When asked about their experiences, victims tended to describe verbal attacks as minor, insignificant, or regular. Another supporting element of the normalisation or acceptance of verbal attacks was the failure of victims to report the verbal attacks to the police and other authorities. This may be due to the high number of verbal attacks against minority and immigrant business owners, as mentioned by several participants. However, as Metin, one of the participants, said, no matter what topic starts the argument, the topic will definitely turn into racial harassment. The language used in the attacks contained exclusionary and alienating images, mostly indicating xenophobia (go home, etc.) and stating that immigrants and minorities did not belong to the country. In the verbal attacks, visible religious and ethnic

identities of the victims and insult words (rat, slave, etc.) were encountered during the fieldwork.

Physical attacks are more similar to each other. Attacks usually start when the customer refuses to pay, is dissatisfied with the service, and in very rare cases, for no reason. Based on the experiences of all physical attack victims, there is always a verbal hate crime before or after every physical attack. Physical attacks, which often cause injuries to business owners and employees and material damage to their shops, are reported more frequently than verbal attacks. Physical hate attacks are more common among small businesses serving in the food sector. It is a frequently encountered problem, especially for takeaway food shops that operate late on Friday and Saturday nights. However, many victims attributed the attacks to alcohol and drunk people. So in the next chapter the triggers for these attacks according to immigrant and minority business owners will be discussed.

3.2. Triggering Factors and Brexit Impact

The triggering factors of the everyday that ethnic minority business owners were exposed to were determined based on both the nature of the attacks and the answers of the participants who have been exposed to such attacks for many years. There were several points that appeared as triggering factors in both physical attacks and verbal attacks: traditional appearance, English language ability, alcohol. Participants Melih and İmran are two Muslims of different ethnic origins who felt they were verbally attacked because of their physical appearance. Both participants mentioned that the attacker accused them of being terrorists because of their beards. Melih had been the victim of verbal attacks several times before and had never reported them to the police. This time, he was injured by the Islamophobic language used about himself and about Islam in the verbal attack and so he reported it to the police. During the interview, he mentioned that he could not make sense of the attacker's verbal attack and the words he used.

He didn't know anything about me and accused me of being a terrorist just based on my appearance and colour during the altercation. He declared me a terrorist because of my faith.

Melih, 46, Turkish, Food Sector, Ipswich

One of the other important arguments used by attackers is the language barrier. On this issue, almost all participants agreed. Participants stated that employees who do not have sufficient language skills are more exposed to language jokes and sarcastic conversations. Victims of verbal attacks encountered open xenophobic verbal attacks, as well as sometimes veiled racist and discriminatory words. Another point was that the attackers and some customers tested the English language skills of ethnic minority business owners and employees. It was stated by several participants that if the employee is not fluent and proficient in English, this causes the attacker to mock and annoy the employee when ordering.

Sometimes our customers can be bullying. Not all of our employees speak perfect English and some of them have poor pronunciation. Sometimes our customers use this situation. They make fun of their accents or try to give incomprehensible orders and then bully them...... They come with racist approaches from different angles.

Imran, 27, Pakistani, Food Sector, Colchester

A similar situation was repeated by Ali, Kemal, and many participants.

If some racist customers realize that English is not good or that you are new to the country, they speak more forcefully. And if you don't understand them, they swear...... They would say, oh f---k up, speak English, you bloody f--king foreigner. I'm sorry, for the languages but that's what they do. They do use this kind of words and a lot of more strong language they use.

Ali, 52, Kurdish, Food Sector, Colchester

Another point that the participants emphasized when describing their attack experiences was alcohol. The minority-owners who serve in the food sector stated that they are very busy on Friday and Saturday nights when they are open late and the attackers were often drunk. Participants pointed out that sometimes even regular customers can create racist problems, and some of attackers came back the next day and apologized for the previous night's event.

Dheeraj and Huzaifa, who work in the retail sector, had also been subjected to racist attacks from drunk customers and agreed that this was a triggering factor.

> *Sometimes our customers are very nice but sometime people being bad for humanity. Unfortunately, if they are taking that alcohol and drugs, they cannot control themselves. And when someone is taking alcohols and coming in the shop, they can be very rude and racist.*
>
> ***Dheeraj, 35, Bangladeshi, Retail Sector, Southend***

> *Once, a few people came to the shop at night and they were drunk. First, they wanted to shop on credit and pay for it later. I refused and they asked for a discount. Then I said that I would not accept these requests and the argument began. The issue suddenly turned into a verbal racist attack based on my foreignness. They left when I said I would call the police.*
>
> ***Huzaifa, 29, Pakistani, Retail Sector, Colchester***

In a previous study conducted by Ishaq and Hussain (2010) with minority businesses in Scotland, more than a quarter of the participants stated that the most important trigger of the racism attacks they experienced was alcohol. A similar result emerged from this study. More than half of the participants stated that the triggering factor was alcohol or drugs. Particularly, participants who are business owners in the food sector highlighted the arguments initiated by drunk customers.

However, it has also been questioned whether Brexit, which has been on the agenda of the United Kingdom for the past few years and has political and socio-economic consequences, played an active role in the experiences of ethnic minority business owners. This fieldwork searched for strong evidence of arguments such as the distribution of social benefits and welfare nationalism used in the Brexit campaign put pressure on minorities and immigrants who own commercial businesses. Many participants touched on the economic burdens brought by Brexit and the commercial negativities on their businesses.

Dheeraj, 35, Bangladeshi, mentioned that there were many Europeans who lived in Southend and with the airport closed due to the pandemic, their businesses were dying because the Europeans could not come anymore. Almost all participants agreed that they believed Brexit

was effective in increasing prices and that their customers were gradually decreasing. However, Junaid, 42, had a different approach to Brexit than other participants.

> *Brexit did not disrupt the social and economic structure of the United Kingdom. Maybe prices increased slightly and caused a slight economic deterioration in small businesses, but it did not cause mainly economic changes……. It would be better if the borders were closed to a few poor European countries instead of Brexit.*
>
> ***Junaid, 42, Pakistani, Food Sector, Norwich***

Moreover, participants' answers differed as to whether Brexit would disrupt the social structure. While some participants said that there was no change in the social structure, others encountered some xenophobic incidents during the Brexit period.

> *I can't say for all of them, but some of my local (English) friends asked me if I would move out of the country after Brexit. Even though I insisted that I was not European and that I was a citizen, a few of them continued to ask such questions and make jokes……. In addition, during the days when the Brexit campaign was continuing, a customer got into my taxi and started talking about the agenda. These kinds of conversations happen a lot in taxis. Then the customer said that the government will send all f--k foreigners from the country and turned to me and asked when will you return to your f--ck country? I said that I was not European, and that Brexit would not affect me even if the "leave" side won. ..... He was very upset about this situation (laughing).*
>
> ***Okan, 46, Turkish, Service Sector, Ipswich***

Ali, on the other hand, mentioned that Brexit has changed the attitude towards foreigners and touched upon the impact of politicians and the media on this.

> *Absolutely, I mean, the first bit of Brexit is spot from Nigel Farage, which is he made everything and then he pulled out. He said I'd done it. I observed people's ideas and thoughts. In the early days, people had many questions in their minds...... Media played a very key role. Especially xenophobia was effective. They made people believe that foreigners are coming and taking our jobs. But now the point is very different. It is very difficult to find workers to work, production becomes difficult because there are no workers.*
>
> ***Ali, 52, Kurdish, Food Sector, Colchester***

Findings from the fieldwork revealed the negative economic impact of Brexit on minority and immigrant businesses, as well as the everyday racism experienced by business owners and

employees. However, it would not be correct to say that Brexit directly affects the hate crimes experienced.

3.3. Effects of Experiencing Everyday Racism: Social Life and Families

In addition to the nature and immediate impact of racism, daily hate crime, discrimination and xenophobic attacks experienced by ethnic minority business owners, how these experiences affect their social life, fears and anxieties, work lives and families is one of the important topics of this research paper. Previous studies have shown that minority business owners who are victims of racism experience health problems, fear, and anxiety following antagonistic attacks (Ishaq and Hussain 2010). Therefore, the fears and anxiety of the participants were investigated in this field study. To do this, first of all, with the intention of measuring the participants' fear and anxiety, they were asked to rate how safe they felt between 1 (lowest) and 5 (highest). The participants' degree of feeling safe was found to be generally around three. However, when the participants were asked whether the areas where their businesses are located and the high streets were safe, they mentioned that the areas that were not safe and the increasing crime rates. Participants almost unanimously agreed that the areas where their businesses are located have become much more dangerous than in the past. Dheeraj was the participant who complained the most about this situation.

> *This area used to be a very safe place and business was very good. Almost everything has changed in recent years. Things started to get very bad, and it ceased to be a safe zone. It is almost impossible to go out at night. Everyone has a knife and your risk of getting stabbed is quite high.*
>
> ***Dheeraj, 35, Bangladeshi, Retail Sector, Southend***

Moreover, after altercations with customers or racism during the day, some business owners were worried that the incident could continue outside.

> *I sometimes worry about my safety, especially after having problems with clients, some of them can be vindictive and attack you after work. After all, I don't know the customer. They can attack outside without giving any reason. Especially younger customers make me more nervous.*

Imran, 27, Pakistani, Food Sector, Colchester

> *…. I usually get very nervous after encountering such problems and this continues for a while……. I sometimes worry about whether customers who cause trouble in the store will become a nuisance later on. But since we often encounter the same things, it becomes a part of life.*

Ali, 52, Kurdish, Food Sector, Colchester

Okan has similar concerns, and even took a break from work for a few days after the most recent physical attacks he experienced. He has been living in the United Kingdom for more than ten years and is a citizen, and he mentioned that living conditions in the region he lives in have changed and become more difficult. He also mentioned that not only he but also his family were under pressure and threat and spoke about the Islamophobic brochure left in his mailbox at home.

> *It happened a few weeks ago. While my daughter was home alone, someone left a card in the mailbox, or rather something like a flyer. As soon as my daughter read the paper thrown from the mailbox, she opened the door and saw someone walking away. There are no Muslims other than us on the street we live in, and we have been living in the same place for years. Everyone knows us……. There was content that disparaged Islam and suggested we convert.*

Okan, 46, Turkish, Service Sector, Ipswich

Additionally, participants were asked whether they had reported the attacks to their family members and friends because the attacks and events experienced could affect not only the victims but also the people around them. Participants were divided on this issue. While some participants said that they did not tell their families and friends about any of the events in order not to worry them, a few participants said that they sometimes shared these events with their family members.

Ivan, 50, and Melih, 46, were in favour of not sharing the attacks and events they experienced with their family members and friends in order not to worry them. Dheeraj, 35, however, approached the issue from a slightly different angle; he believed that sharing the situation

with family members would not solve the problem. Huzaifa, 29, on the other hand, said that he had to pretend to his family and not mention the problems.

> *I don't tell my family anything about the negativities I experienced. If I tell my family the stories I experienced, my family will be very worried about me, and they will not let me work here (in the UK). So I don't tell them anything and try to show them that I'm very happy.*
>
> ***Huzaifa, 29, Pakistani, Retail Sector, Colchester***

The answers of the participants who shared some of their experiences with their family and friends were common. Participants' family and friends were very concerned about the safety of the ethnic minority business owners. It was stated many times by the participants that they were urged to remain calm, ignore it or report it to the police. When asked about their social circle most of the participants' friends were from their own ethnic group. Some also had friends from other ethnic groups, but only five participants mentioned British friends. Additionally, two participants had British employees, while the remaining participants had employees from other ethnic groups. The ethnic minority business owners who participated in the fieldwork generally tended not to feel anxiety in public following their experience of hate crimes; but some participants were apprehensive about speaking their own language in public.

> *I have to talk on the phone in my own language in public places, and if there are other people around me, I try to stay away from there. Because when I speak in my own language, the way people look at me is disturbing.*
>
> ***Imran, 27, Pakistani, Food Sector, Colchester***

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the examination of everyday racism and the experiences of shop owners and small business owners and staff in Britain. Even though the study focused on small business owners in different industries, with different customer bases, the nature of the attacks has been very similar. Attackers targeted visible “others” – based on the interpreted ethnic or religious identity. The ethnic identities of the minority business owners in whom the field

study was conducted varied, and although the religious identities of the participants were not considered in the field study, two of them had a traditional Muslim appearance (bearded, traditionally dressed). In this context, the research paper finds that Muslim minority businesses who have traditional appearance are more disadvantaged and argues that they face double antagonistic attitudes compared to other minority business owners due to both their ethnic and religious identities. Although Islamophobic findings were also encountered in the fieldwork, the experiences of minority business owners intensify within the orbit of everyday racism and xenophobia. Moreover, the level of attacks varied, and everyday antagonism, verbal attacks and bullying were much more common than physical attacks. Although the fact that verbal attacks are more intense is similar to the research conducted by Ishaq and Hussain (2010), there is a change in the verbal attack instruments. The overt religious identity of minority business owners has also become a target of verbal attacks. The clearest finding from the fieldwork is undoubtedly the normalisation of everyday negative interaction, which in some instances takes the form of hate crime.

Interestingly, the attacks experienced by the participants who have been business owners for decades and the participants who have been business owners for a few years, as well as their acceptance and perception of attacks, are almost the same. This signifies that a long presence in the community and having a good rapport with it did not necessarily protect the small business owners from crimes committed against them or from everyday practices of "othering". The only difference is the number of attacks they experienced. Even the smallest argument with a customer has a high probability of turning into hate crime speech and attack – pointing to a volatile environment in neighbourhoods, and potentially a huge loss of mental well-being on the part of small business owners.

Everyday negative altercations from some of the majority members (white British) of UK society, were ultimately accepted as a part of business life by ethnic minority business owners

and seen as an extra tax imposed on them. Some participants, tired of institutional discrimination in the local context and experiences that have become a part of business life, mentioned their efforts to avoid extra taxes. This was possible in two ways; operating a business in another town or city or changing jobs (taxi driver, courier, etc. dealing with fewer customers). While both escape routes caused loss of income for minority business owners, the concerns of their families were influential in these decisions of the participants who used to run shops. But often their job change strategies did not work, and they faced everyday racism in their new job. Moreover, these attacks and their consequences not only trigger their fear and anxiety, but also threaten their social integration. In addition to the fact that the participants' circle of friends in social life consists mostly of their own ethnic communities and other minority groups, the desire of some participants to return to their country of origin underlines the issue of integration.

Although not enough evidence was found to say that Brexit directly triggered the experiences of ethnic minority business owners, the immigration card used within the orbit of discourses during the campaign played an active role in the attacks experienced according to the participants in this study. The interviewees suggested that that whereas the call to "go back to your country" existed before Brexit, it became a normal occurrence during the Brexit period. Both first generation and second-generation minority owners have been attacked. Thus, many second-generation minorities felt very alienated by this experience. People that have experienced attacks may have been more likely to be willing to participate in the study. Rapport has been an issue, and this has been a sensitive topic which makes interviews more difficult to conduct; thus, only certain groups may have participated.

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CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

One of the main policy concerns for different governments in the UK over the last 20 years has been segregation; the growing disconnection between different communities in the UK and the possibility of increasing levels of “home grown terrorism” (Cameron 2013; Phillips 2006). Often the blame for such tendencies has been placed on the local community itself and its lack of connection to mainstream society. The foundation of the Prevent strategy in the UK has indeed focused on trying to minimise the likelihood of such occurrences of terrorism and tension in the UK (Behrendt et al. 2015; Thomas 2012). Prevention strategies have led to discussions about the presentation of UK Muslims as a “suspect community” and the Islamophobic experiences they have faced (Cohen and Tufail 2017; Qurashi 2018). This thesis has demonstrated that policy makers should instead focus on the normalisation of violence against ethnic minorities in the UK.

One of the main contributions of this thesis is that evidence has been provided of the existence of cultural racism and discrimination towards the Muslim community in the UK, as well as towards other visible minorities. This evidence not only puts minority communities, especially Muslims, at a socio-economic disadvantage, but also brings about the problem of alienation and questions the integration of these communities as a two-way process in which the majority also play an active role to create a welcoming environment (Berry 1992). These problems pose a risk of radicalisation of minority groups and may create conditions of actively antagonising them (Qurashi 2018). The antagonistic attacks faced by the Muslim community in the United Kingdom, fuelled by waves of national and international terrorist incidents for several decades, have played a role in increasing exclusion and othering (Awan and Zempi 2015). This thesis, focusing on the issues of discrimination, antagonism, othering and exclusion of the Muslim community and other visible minorities through religious figures (imams), places of worship and businesses showed that minority individuals, and ultimately

the identities that they can hold visibly and express in the public sphere, are targeted and in danger. However, the nature of the experiences of discrimination and antagonism faced by Muslims is complex and diverse, and this thesis has contributed to the literature by clarifying this diversity and complexity.

It was found that being born in the UK made little difference to the level or severity of attacks experienced by the respondents; however, second generation respondents were more likely to be vocal and voice their concerns. This can possibly be due to language skills and educational status. Second generation participants' awareness of implicit and explicit racism and bullying is more developed than that of the first generation. This aligns with other research on the topic (Alanya, Baysu, and Swyngedouw 2015). Many first-generation participants may struggle to understand verbal attacks and bullying or to respond to the language of antagonism. Contrary to Lindemann and Stolz (2021) research, there is a correlation between education level and perceived discrimination for Muslims. Different levels of education possibly play a part. For the second generation, who completed their educational degrees in the United Kingdom, the role of education in their awareness of the limits and severity of discrimination and antagonism is an inevitable fact. On the other hand, the first generation has difficulty understanding the nature and limits of most verbal attacks and discrimination attacks. Therefore, when conducting research on perceived racism and antagonism, intergenerational language skills and degree of education should be taken into consideration.

Hate crimes, antagonism and discrimination attacks vary in severity (Allen and Nielsen 2002). The severity of attacks ranges from serious injuries that may lead to death, or burning and destruction of private property belonging to minorities and buildings that represent their identities in public, to verbal attacks and discriminatory behaviour that sow the seeds of othering: manhandling, beating, stabbing, targeting members of minority communities. Many severe attacks were encountered frequently during this fieldwork. The frequency and severity

of these attacks cause fear and anxiety among members of the community (Awan and Zempi 2017). One type of severe attack that triggers the fears of minority communities is arson, bombing and destruction attempts against the communities' private properties (shops) and places of worship (Allen 2017; Ishaq and Hussain 2010), which directly target the Muslim identity. Symbolic attacks (graffiti, disrespect, etc.), which are seemingly lower on the attack severity scale but target the entire minority community, are at least as effective among minority communities as physical attacks, because they target the identities of minority communities as a whole.

The most frequently faced attacks involve discrimination, antagonism, verbal attacks and bullying. Attacks targeting the ethnic and religious identity of minorities, insults, humiliation, and language bullying are the most obvious attack instruments. The intensity of every day hate crime has become a part of the daily life of minority communities, and in particular, all members of the Muslim community are potential victims. However, the rate at which verbal attacks and bullying are reported to the police is very low. The reason behind this low rate of reporting is the nature of the attacks and the inadequacy of the police's combat methods. By nature, victims who face spontaneous verbal attacks in public spaces, places of worship, or shops need evidence to prove the attacks. The passage of time since these attacks took place is effective in making them less likely to be reported. Events lose their importance as time passes. In addition to the excessively bureaucratic and lengthy legal processes, concerns about institutional discrimination are effective factors towards the low rate of reporting. However, in field studies it has been found that physical attacks where someone is injured, or buildings are damaged are more likely to be reported to the police, because there is definitive evidence to prove these attacks: the injured person, broken shop windows, burned mosque, etc.

This thesis provides strong evidence of the normalisation of racism – frequently a coping strategy of shopkeepers and mosque staff alike. In particular, attacks in which no one is

injured, and buildings do not suffer material damage are ignored and disregarded. Not involving the police, except for the most extreme cases of attacks, leads to less antagonism of the local communities. For minority business owners, the representation of their shops is very important. Another way Muslim minority communities cope with attacks is through the strategy of improving relations with the local community. Developing relationships and the "open mosque" days implemented by many mosques are effective in breaking the down the armour of prejudice. Another important coping strategy for mosques is reducing visibility: no signage at all or avoiding signage in Arabic or the native language.

This work has examined both attacks against religious sites and against shop keepers. Both groups have an experience of attacks with similar severity; although mosques as religious sites were more likely to have been a target because mosques are definitely an indicator of the presence of the Muslim minority community in the public space. Therefore, they are targeted more by antagonism and Islamophobic hate-crime-motivated attacks. However, the risk of being the target of antagonistic attacks varies between mosques. Mosques that are different from the surrounding buildings in terms of architecture Biondo Iii (2006) and Islamic symbols (minarets, domes, etc.) have a higher risk of being the target of attacks because their visibility and noticeability are higher. Moreover, the risk of attack is likely to vary among mosques in the "community mosque" category. While a certain ethnicity is dominant in the majority of community mosques, most mosques also serve as community centres. Therefore, community mosques where a certain ethnicity is dominant or where the permanent congregation has traditional images (traditional dress, headgear, etc.) are at greater risk.

Mosques in both dominantly white British areas and in ethnic enclave areas were subject to attacks, so the ethnic enclave role cannot be said to be a definitive protective shield. However, mosques located in ethnic enclave areas were found to be more exposed to less severe attacks, the enclave preventing the more severe attacks to some extent. However, the same does not

apply to minority businesses. Apart from mentioning the wide range of customer profiles, it is not possible to comment on how effective ethnic enclave attacks are for minority businesses located near to the High Street.

All three field studies delved into the everyday experiences of discrimination and racism of members of ethnic and religious minorities and highlighted how and why the attacks suffered by victims were normalised by them. These daily experiences normalised by the victims not only put them at a disadvantage in daily life, but also appear in field studies as a barrier to integration. Experiences of everyday hate crimes and othering cause local ethnic and religious minority communities to repress and retreat into their shells. This situation brings with it debates about integration and multiculturalism, which have been frequently discussed in recent years. Local minority communities tend to adopt an environment of cooperation and multiculturalism as a method of integration and combating attacks. This effort consists of introducing their identity, getting accepted and trying to develop local relations. Mosque open days, local cooperation, and steps taken for social duties and responsibilities (e.g. foodbanks) are the main methods used. However, it was found in the fieldwork that efforts to impose the identity of local minority groups were often not met with a response from the society. If the effort remains unrewarded, it will cause minority groups to retreat further into their shells. Policymakers and researchers focusing on the issue of integration and multiculturalism should consider the barrier created by the normalisation of attacks, and in particular, they should consider the efforts of local minority communities and develop policies to eliminate this barrier to integration. Otherwise, everyday discrimination and hate attacks could trigger intergroup conflict. In this case, the identity of religious and ethnic minorities in the public sphere (mosques, shops) and even their members may be in danger.

Field research has several significant limitations. The nature of the severity of attacks faced by the Muslim community and other visible minorities makes this thesis a sensitive subject.

Therefore, the interviews that constituted the field research were built on sensitive issues. Conducting the interviews online due to pandemic conditions constituted an important limitation of the field study of this thesis. Fieldwork conducted online limits reaching out to potential participants. The target participant group had limited online interview experience and limited interaction with technology systems. This limitation in field research was encountered by other researchers who studied a similar target group in the same period (Maira 2023). The fact that the interviews had to be conducted online was also effective in the refusal of potential participants to be a part of the research. The opportunistic sampling technique used in the field study, especially with the Muslim community, would have yielded even more efficient results if the field study had been conducted face to face. This was due to the nature of the research being sensitive and face-to-face interviews with potential victims (mosque staff) would not only increase the number of participants, but also help bring to light the details of the antagonism experiences. Interviews conducted online also limit understanding of participants' body language and sensitivity towards exactly what they are feeling as they describe their experiences. Despite these limitations, online interviews are an opportunity for less confident, shy participants to be involved.

Another limitation of the study was the lack of time that some potential participants had available to take part. The most limiting aspect of the field research conducted with minority business owners was the participants' long working hours. The majority of potential participants did not want to participate in the study, citing busy working hours. However, both the sensitivity of the research topic and the concern that the business owners' representation of their workplaces would be affected were further important limitations. Although anonymisation and data privacy were mentioned, most potential participants were not convinced.

The most obvious obstacle in all the field research in this thesis was the language barrier. Many potential participants refused to participate due to lack of confidence in their language skills. Lack of language skills limited the revealing of details of the attacks and was also effective in participants ignoring the attacks. As a matter of fact, some participants who were not confident in their language skills talked about their serious antagonism experiences in the later parts of the interviews after mentioning that they were not victims of verbal attacks. These participants were unaware of some language bullying and verbal attacks.

The fieldwork was conducted with knowledgeable and experienced imams and mosque staff from Muslim communities, and with shopkeepers from different minorities. Future research orientated towards studying antagonism, hate crime and discrimination, especially targeting the Muslim community, needs to consider input from mosque staff and mosques. Discrimination and othering studies have overlooked the leadership, domination and advisory positions of mosque staff in the local Muslim community (Hough et al. 2021). Imams, in particular, advise the local Muslim community on many issues, especially social issues. These social issues include counselling on how victims of antagonism, hate crime and discrimination should cope with these attacks, and how to report the attacks. Therefore, mosque staff are more aware of the racial discrimination faced by local Muslim communities than anyone else. Many mosques also have effective hate-crime prevention programs. However, since mosques are the identity of Muslim communities in the public space, they are of great importance for studies of othering and discrimination. The mosque structure of the British Muslim community, which is multi-ethnic, is also mixed (Ahmed 2019; Saleem 2013). Mosque typologies classified in terms of function and visibility in this thesis will support future mosque research by preventing confusion.

Finally, the chapter concerning the ethnic minority businesses, which provides evidence of the prevalence of racism and antagonism attacks and how they are normalised by minority

communities, also highlighted the need for further research in this area. Due to the nature of their businesses being part of daily life, the minority owners are often involved in much more controversy than other minority individuals. Furthermore, research on minority business owners' experiences should also consider their lack of available time and language barriers.

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